

# Impact of Social Support in Relation to Self-Esteem and Aggression among Adolescents

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**Abstract-** The term social support can be talked in terms of relationships that how much and to what level can it fit in relationships. The social support includes the help and assistance that one need from friends, family at any time of need, crisis so as to inculcate the positive self image. It not only improves the quality of life but also helps during adverse times. The self esteem means self image that buffers and improves upon one's beliefs. It is a personality trait which remains stable and is permanent in nature. Self-esteem includes various beliefs about self such as ones appraisal of own physical characteristics, i.e. appearance, the emotions that one carry and the positive self attitude and behavior. The term aggression is a kind of response that one gives to other which is unpleasant in nature. In psychology, the term aggression denotes any unpleasant stimulus that harms the physical and psychological characteristics in the environment. The aggression can be verbal, physical, anger and hostility. The aim of the current investigation was to study the impact of social support on self esteem and aggression. For this purpose, the perceived social support scale (Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet & Farley, 1988), Self-Esteem scale (Rosenberg, 1965) and Aggression scale (Buss & Perry, 1992) were administered to the sample of 100 students in the age range of 18-23 years. The sample was taken from different colleges of Chandigarh. The inter-correlation matrix was calculated. The results have shown and proved the hypotheses that there is a positive relationship between social support and self esteem ( $r = 0.19$ ) significant at 0.05 level and a negative correlation between social support and aggression ( $r = 0.22$ ).

**Index Terms-** Social support, Self-esteem, Aggression, Adolescents.

## I. INTRODUCTION

**S**ocial support is a kind of help and assistance that one gets from other people when one is there to care for you and that one is a part of the social circle where one lives and grows. The support and assistance can be in many ways like help in emotional way for example nurturance from closed ones, advice in form of the information, support in terms of finance, sense of belongingness and also on top of everything that is a personal support and advice. The term social support can be therefore measured or valued as a source of assistance that is available and when one is helped being the part of the social group. The support that one can get includes the family, friends, neighbors, pets, organizations, coworkers etc. According to Towey (2013)

social support is a part of one's relationships with others. It means having someone including family, friends in times of the different kinds of crisis and to enhance a sense of belongingness and to enhance the inner positive self image. The social support enhances and influences the quality of life and safeguards against any adverse life events. The forms of social support can be of different kinds:

Emotional refers to the actions and events when one is cared for.

Instrumental support includes the financial help when one gets such as in terms of money and housekeeping.

Informational support means to give a piece of advice and information of any kind.

Social support is linked with the characteristics of one as how one has developed the networking and how it helps the people to cope up from different problems or events in their life. It also enhances the psychological well being. House (1981) distinguishes between different kinds of support, like giving love, developing trust, empathy, caring etc. The social support also includes how and when the close friends, family members, neighbors help you at the time of crisis. The appraisal support includes the support for feedback, information for self evaluation, feedback purposes and also in terms of social comparison.

Berkman et al. (2000) defines the term social relationship that it has been related with the effects on the health education and health behavior. There is no theoretical framework that provides the connection between social relationships and health. The attributes that are closely linked with health and social relationships are social integration, social network and social support. The term social integration refers to the various characteristics or connections that exist in the social world. Social network includes the social relationships that one is connected to around oneself. Social support is an important component and functions of social relationships. Glanz et al. (2002) defines social networks as the association between the support that people provide and functions that they provide to serve than providing support.

The term self esteem describes as the person's overall sense of self worth and the personal value (Cherry, 2014). It is a kind of personality trait which remains stable, permanent and for longer duration. Self esteem involves the self belief, emotions and also the behavior. It also includes the physical characteristics like appraisal of one's own looks or appearance.

Braden (1969) describes the attributes of self esteem. Self esteem is an important need for the normal and healthy development of an individual. It increases based on the

individuals beliefs and awareness of their own self. It develops through the feelings, individual thoughts and their actions.

Science Daily (2014) defines aggression as a part of social and behavioral sciences and it refers to the behavior that causes physical and psychological harm and pain. The aggression can be in the form of physical, verbal, anger and hostility but the behavior will actually be considered as an aggressive even if it does not harm or gives pain to anyone.

Gabby (2013) defines aggressive behavior is that which causes the emotional or physical harm to others or even if the person is threatened by any stimulus. The aggressive behavior can take the form from being verbally aggressive to doing harm to the person's personal property. The people who are aggressive generally have the tendencies to be irritable, impulsive, restless etc. The aggressive behavior is mostly seem to be intentional in nature as it is done with some purpose to harm others, violating the existing norms of the society, or relationship disputes by causing an end to the relationship. The study has also shown that the emotional problems are seem to the common cause of having an aggressive behavior.

The aggression can also take the form of occasional outbursts and are commonly found in the present time. The aggressive behavior has taken its form as a frequent occurrence in any age range and at any time. The aggressive behavior is a behavior that is uncontrollable, occurs mainly from misunderstanding with the appropriate behavior. Therefore it can also come mainly from the conflict that occurs at times by not being able to prioritize the things or situations. The aggressive behavior at times can be very immediate or the purpose to take the revenge. It can be passive nature as well with an intuition to provoke others.

The aggression in adolescents could be because of the negative experiences in life or because of the chronic mental illness. Some people suffering from the depression, anxiety or post traumatic stress disorder or any other chronic illness or any illness for long time does show aggressive behavior because of their conditions. Aggression can also take its seat because of the frustration due to one or the other reason. The aggression can also occur when someone close to you stops caring. Therefore, there could be many reasons for such kind of behavior and if not controlled at right time can lead to various co-morbid conditions. Therefore the studies have proved statistically that there is a positive relationship between the social support that a person gets through various sources and that in turn influences the self esteem. The studies have also shown a negative relationship that exists between the social support and aggression. This concludes that a social support can in one hand develops the positive sense of self esteem but also increases the aggression level. This is seen mainly among the adolescents who have a more support of the friends than any other kind of social support.

## II. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Adolescence is a period of great joy, excitement and optimism during which the delights of autonomy, intimacy and the future is seen and possibilities are created for happiness, success and psychological growth throughout the life. Adolescence is an age bubbling with energy and it is in this transition phase that youth's energies have to be channelized

towards positivity to enhance and inculcate the positive skills that will help them to lead a well functioning adult life.

Social support is an important attribute during college time. The peers play an important role and peers are looked upon as the right source at the adolescent's age. The importance of support from peers rises in adolescents.

The present study mainly focuses on the social support and to see its impact on self esteem and aggression among adolescents. The research says that the social support does increase the self esteem. Also, social support mainly from friends and peer groups increases and facilitates the level of aggression. The adolescents show the aggression tendencies if encouraged, motivated and influenced by the peer groups.

## III. OBJECTIVES

On the basis of aforementioned literature, following objectives have been proposed for the present investigation:

1. To study the relationship between social support and self esteem among college going students.
2. To investigate the correlation between social support and aggression among college going students.

## IV. HYPOTHESES

The purpose of the study was to investigate the role of social support on self esteem and aggression. Based on the research, following hypotheses were proposed:

1. It is expected that social support would be positively related with self-esteem.
2. It is hypothesized that social support will be negatively related with aggression.

## V. METHODS

The sample consisted of 100 students. The data was collected from the different colleges of Chandigarh. The age range was 18-21 years of B.A., B.SC. & B.Com. The students in the sample were selected on random basis.

## VI. TESTS AND TOOLS

1. Perceived Social Support scale (Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet & Farley, 1988). This scale consists of 12 items. Each item can be scored from point 1-7, where 1 denotes very strongly disagree, 2 as strongly disagree, 3 mildly disagree, 4 as neutral, 5 if mild agree, 6 as strongly agree and 7 very strongly agree. The scale is divided into further sub variables like family as Fam, friends as Fri and significant others as SO. The scale can be used on any kind of sample.
2. Self-Esteem scale (Rosenberg, 1965). The scale consists of 10 items. The item can be scored from strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. The score for strongly agree (SA) = 3, Agree (A) = 2, Disagree (D) = 1 and strongly disagree (SD) = 0. There are 5 items which are

reverse scored where SA = 0, A = 1, D = 2, SD = 3. The scores are then totaled and higher the score, higher the self esteem.

3. Aggression scale (Buss & Perry, 1992). The scale consists of 29 items. The scale is further divided into sub variables like physical aggression (PA), verbal aggression (VA), anger (A) and hostility (H). The two items in the scale are reverse scored. The every time in the scale is denoted with the sub variables and the total of each sub factor is done and then the total aggression score is calculated from the sum of the each factor score.

## VII. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Variables	Social support	Family	Friends	Significant others	Self-Esteem	Aggression	Physical aggression	Verbal aggression	Anger	Hostility
Social support		0.80**	0.75**	0.77**	0.19*	-0.22*	-0.19*	-0.10	-0.09	-0.30**
Family			0.38**	0.44**	0.20*	-0.20*	-0.13	0.01	-0.14	-0.28**
Friends				0.37**	0.12	-0.09	-0.13	0.06	0.01	-0.15
Significant Others					0.10	-0.21*	-0.17	-0.07	-0.09	-0.25**
Self-Esteem						-0.29**	-0.24*	-0.04	-0.23*	-0.27**
Aggression							0.84**	0.60**	0.77**	0.65**
Physical aggression								0.33**	0.55**	0.38**
Verbal Aggression									0.39**	0.31**
Anger										0.26**
Hostility										

\*value of correlation sign at 0.05 level

\*\*value of correlation sign at 0.01 level

A high and positive correlation was found between the social support and friends ( $r=0.80$ ), high and positive correlation between social support and friends ( $r=0.75$ ) and social support and significant others ( $r=0.77$ ). The results have shown that there was a high and positive correlation between aggression and physical aggression ( $r=0.84$ ) and also a positive correlation between aggression and anger ( $r=0.77$ ).

The present study aimed to find out the positive correlation between the social support and self esteem. Social support was found to be significantly and positively correlated to Self Esteem ( $r=0.19$ ). The dimensions of social support was differently and positively related to Self Esteem, i.e. correlation of family and self esteem ( $r=0.20$ ), friends and self esteem ( $r=0.12$ ) and significant others and self esteem ( $r=0.10$ ). The previous research has also proved that a positive relationship does exist between social support and self esteem. The social support as being measured on the different aspects like family, friends and significant others. In the present study the correlation analysis has concluded that the adolescents have rated the family most as their social support. The reason could be that the family is the first and foremost attribute since the day the person is born and that is where the person's self image is created and person feels very much secured being in the family. When there is good interaction and family facilitates each other in every aspect there is always a probability of building up the self esteem.

A research on social support by Gecas (1972) found out that the adolescents were high on self esteem when in a social environment. It is important here to say that if the social support environment is improved it would lead to an increase in the level of self-esteem. According to Nolen et al., (1999) found out through the research that individuals with high self esteem are having probability to have more social support.

A study was done by Hoffman et al. (1988) on social support and self esteem among 76 Israeli. The factors under study included self-esteem, stressful life events and level of support. The study found out that low correlation was found between the paternal support and self-esteem. The study did found out that the friends support was high.

Cakar and Ikiz (2010) did a study to find out the relationship between perceived social support and self esteem among adolescents. The results show that there was a gender based significant difference of peer groups and teacher support levels but no difference was found on the levels of self esteem. The statistically significant and positive relationship was found among perceived social support levels and levels of self esteem among adolescents.

Social support was found to be negatively correlated to aggression ( $r=0.22$ ). The dimensions of social support was differently and negatively related to Aggression, i.e. family and aggression ( $r=0.20$ ), friends and aggression ( $r=0.09$ ) and significant others and aggression ( $r=0.21$ ). The correlation has found a very little difference in relation to the aggression with family and significant others. Through the results it can be seen that the reason of aggression to adolescents can be the family as well as someone who is considered as significant in their life. Apparently, the relationship was high with one dimension of social support both with self esteem and aggression and that dimension is family. So the present study has shown that

aggression and self-esteem both have been influenced by the family structure of the adolescents.

The above said results are also supported by a research done by Zelkowitz (1987) to find out the relationship between social support and aggressive behavior among families of children from low income. The relationship was mainly influenced by the categories of the members of the network that they belonged to and also the type of the support that they were offered by the same network members. The group members who had aggressive tendencies under study were had high probability to put the children under same aggressive tendencies than compared to the children whose members were polite.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

The purpose of the study was to find the impact of social support on self esteem and aggression. Based on the findings, it was seen that the hypotheses were proved. The social support has positive and significant relationship with self esteem. The social support was also found to be significantly and negatively correlated with aggression. The studies in relation to the present study have also shown the significant relationship of social support with self esteem and aggression. The social support does influence the self esteem of the person in every respect in a positive way. The social support can also influence negatively which could lead to aggression. The child learns firstly from home, i.e. the home environment should be calm and parents should not dispute on any issue in front of their child because it could lead to negative impression and slowly the child leads to the same behavior. The friend circle should also be supportive and encourage the love and affection among the peer group.

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