



## Effect Of Social Support On Mental Health

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### ARTICLE INFO

### ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to find out the effect of Social Support on the Mental Health of Higher Secondary School Students. A Sample of 100 students (50 Males and 50 Females), studying in various Higher Secondary Schools of in Durg Districts of Chhattisgarh State, were selected as a sample for the present study. Social Support Scale, constructed by **Indira Dhull and Sangeeta Godara (2015)** was used. Mental Health Scale, constructed by **Sushma Talesara and Akhtar Bano (2010)** was used. 2×2 Factorial Design Anova was employed for analyses of data and interpretation of the results. The Mental Health of the students having higher level of Social Support was better than the Mental Health of the students having low Social Support. Male and female students were having similar levels of Mental Health. There do not exist any significant effect of interaction between Social Support and Gender on the Mental Health of the students.

**Keywords:** Social Support and Mental Health

### INTRODUCTION

#### SOCIAL SUPPORT

Social support is another construct which defines the customer's encouragement and actual help that he/she receives from his/her friends and family, teachers, and other acquaintances. It is one of the most imperative facets of people's communication including those periods when their lives seem especially complicated – such as receiving adolescence. **House et al. (1988)** classified social support into three categories: from the relationship perspective, it is defined as emotional and informational support and instrumental support, stressing the prospective of stress and adversity protective support. Emotional support consists of empathetic statements and encouragement, assessment and information are given under this category; Informal support provides advice, guidance, and the resources or tools on how to solve problems; and finally instrumental support entails provision of monetary and physical assistance or the means to accomplish certain activities or chores.

Beside for those students at higher secondary schools, social support is a kind of coping resource in the face of developmental, academic, and social demands. Since kin are always associated with unconditional positive regard, they offer a firm base that in helping in decision making process. In a study completed by **Rueger et al. (2016)**, it was revealed that parental and teacher support has greatest impact on emotional outcomes in adolescents. Reliable source of academic support, professionalism, motivation and encouragement are provided by teachers. On the other hand, peer groups meet the need of acceptance hence play a great role in determining the health state and or self-image of an adolescent as cited by **Rosenfeld et al (2000)**.

Having or feeling as having adequate amount and kinds of support trustfully moderates life demands, and available resources in defining student's coping potential. **Sarason et al. (1990)** found that revealed youth who apperceive themselves as built-in in a actual acknowledgment from those about them will accredit to convalescent coping, affective resilience, and a positive attitude toward life. On the other hand, lack of social support makes the students to feel alone, develops negative self-image, and makes them prone to mental diseases, all these explain why students need social networks in their lives.

## MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health is an imperative part of general health and an individual well-being that comprises of well-being of the mind. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), mental health is a condition in which people are able to fulfil all the roles of life, face its ordinary stresses and achieve its full potential. Students of higher secondary school could express a unique significance of mental health, as they are under considerable academic stress, and face various either social or personal concerns in forming their identity. Sometimes these factors can exceed coping capabilities of an adolescent and therefore increase their vulnerability to mental health problems.

This explains why adolescence is considered to be a sensitive age for the health of human mind as it is the time for brain and emotions development. **Dumont and Provost (1999)** pointed out that if stress is reported, and the young person does not have resources to cope or get help, resultantly the chances of developing anxiety and depression increase. Some of the mental disorders that are familiar to teenagers include; anxiety, depression, stress and emotional instability. Such conditions may stem either from academic environment or family issues, peer conflict or problem with expectations.

In this context, **MHappy** defines students' positive mental health as the presence of the necessary emotional and cognitive assets for proper functioning when regulating distress. It brings dignity, reduces the risk of emotional disorder or psychological problems and gives the individual some meaning and value in life. **Alimoradi et al. (2020)** established that students who have sound mental health tasted improved academic accomplishment, integrated better interpersonal relations, and better cope with adversity chances. On the other hand, low mental health, directly influences the students' academic performance, social interactions, and involvement in co-curricular activities and activities that are beneficial to them in the future.

### Relationship Between Social Support and Mental Health

Analysis of empirical research suggests that there is a relationship between mental health and social support, as appreciated in the sociological and psychological literature. Social support is viewed as a source that assists in maintaining and enhancing a person's state of mental health. This means it helps manage the pressures of different and often unpleasant events in life. **Cohen and Wills (1985)** have formulated a theory called the 'buffering hypothesis', in which it is claimed that social support lessens the negative effects of stress some problems in addressing the person's mental health.

This has a number of implications about the role of social support in mental health. It has first, the concept that says security and belonging develops emotional strength. For instance, Adolescents who are (**Rueger et al., 2016**) argue that adolescents with strong support systems have lower risks of including depression and anxiety caused by loneliness and alienation, which is a notable aspect of feeling unsupported. Second, providing resources and information reduces stressors and makes most academic and personal difficulties experiencing lesser challenges. Third, they suggest the use of support networks that promote constructive coping strategies (such as problem-solving or help-seeking) and reduces the use of more harmful behaviours (like aggression or avoidance).

The kind and quality of social support matters too. **Zimet and others (1988)** emphasized the significance of the perception of support in judging its effectiveness. Family support creates the base of love and direction to adolescents in their emotional and moral mess. Peer support is no less important as friends help them understand and accept the teenage transitions and appreciate their individuality. Also, teacher support helps increase students' self-efficacy and motivation towards studies while ensuring that the environment is conducive for nurturing the students' mental health.

On the flip side, the absence or inadequacy of social support has been known to worsen stress and hence, the state of mental health. **Rosenfeld et al. (2000)** found that students who did not have close social relationships were more prone to stress, feeling of social aloneness, and social disinclination. This emphasizes the need to create a conducive and supporting atmosphere in the families and in the schools.

So, this research studies mental health of higher secondary school students clearly shows that their relationship with social support affects them significantly. According to **Dumont and Provost (1999)**, strengthening social networks can be achieved through more intensive school-based programmes, counselling services and family involvement, which in turn contributes to the mental health and well-being of students. Focusing on these aspects enables stakeholders to nurture a generation that is both emotionally resilient and mentally fit.

### OBJECTIVES:

- To study the effect of Social Support on the Mental Health of Higher Secondary School Students.

### HYPOTHESIS:

- There will be no significant effect of Social Support, gender and their interaction on the Mental Health of Higher Secondary School Students.

## METHODOLOGY:

### SAMPLE:

A Sample of 100 students (50 Males and 50 Females), studying in various Higher Secondary Schools of in Durg Districts of Chhattisgarh State, were selected as sample for the present study.

### TOOLS:

**Social Support:** Social Support Scale, constructed by Indira Dhull and Sangeeta Godara (2015) was used. This scale consists 40 items divided into four areas–I. Family Support, II. Teacher Support, III. Friend/Peer Support, IV. Online Social Support. It was administered on 400 Male + Female Students of Senior Secondary Classes.

**Mental Health:** Mental Health Scale, constructed by Sushma Talesara and Akhtar Bano (2010) was used. This scale consists of 54 items divided into three dimensions I. School - Related cause II. Home - Related cause III. Peer Group. It was administered on 210 students both the sex and urban-rural population. It was administered on age group 14 to 20 years.

## STATISTICAL ANALYSES:

2×2 Factorial Design Anova was employed for analyses of data and interpretation of the results.

### ANALYSES OF DATA AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULT:

**Hypothesis:** There will be no significant effect of Social Support, gender and their interaction on the Mental Health of Higher Secondary School Students.

Data collected with respect to the objective, to study the effect of Social Support on the Psychological wellbeing of students, was analysed by using 2×2 Factorial Design Anova. Summary of this analyses has been presented in table 1 below:

**Table 1 Effect of Social Support on Psychological Wellbeing of students**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F
Social Support	1551.324	1	1551.324	5.341*
Gender	679.429	1	679.429	2.339
Social Support × Gender	305.069	1	305.069	1.050
Error	27885.735	96	290.476	
Total	3715909.000	100		
Corrected Total	30660.910	99		

\*\*Significant at 0.05 level.

### EFFECT OF SOCIAL SUPPORT ON MENTAL HEALTH

From table 1 above it is evident that the f value of Social Support i.e. 5.341, df=1/96, was found to be significant at 0.05 level of significance. This reveals that there exists a significant effect of Social Support on the Mental Health of the students. Further to find out whether the students having high Social Support or low Social Support were have better Mental Health, the Mean and SD of Mental Health Scores was calculated, which has been presented in table 2 below:

**Table 2 Mean and SD of Mental Health Scores**

Social Support	N	Mean	SD
High Social Support	64	197.00	13.28
Low Social Support	36	189.14	19.13

From table 2 it can be seen that the Mean and SD of Mental Health Scores of students having High Social Support was 197.00 and 13.28 and the Mean and SD of Mental Health Scores of students having Low Social Support was 189.14 and 19.13. It can therefore be concluded that the Mental Health of the students having higher level of Social Support was better than the Mental Health of the students having low Social Support.

### EFFECT OF GENDER ON MENTAL HEALTH

From table 1 above it is evident that the F-value of Gender i.e. 2.339, df=1/96, was not found to be significant. This reveals that there do not exist any significant effect of Gender on the Mental Health of the students. Therefore, it can be concluded that male and female students were having similar level of Mental Health.

### EFFECT OF INTERACTION BETWEEN SOCIAL SUPPORT AND GENDER

From table 1 above it is also evident that the F-value of interaction between Social Support and Gender i.e. 1.050,  $df=1/96$ , was not found to be significant. This reveals that there do not exist any significant effect of interaction between Social Support and Gender on the Mental Health of the students.

### CONCLUSION:

- The Mental Health of the students having higher level of Social Support was better than the Mental Health of the students having low Social Support.
- Male and female students were having similar level of Mental Health.
- There do not exist any significant effect of interaction between Social Support and Gender on the Mental Health of the students.

### SUGGESTIONS BASED ON FINDINGS

1. **Strengthen Social Support Systems:** Implement peer mentoring, group activities, and parental engagement programmes to enhance students' sense of belonging and emotional well-being.
2. **Provide Gender-Neutral Mental Health Resources:** Develop inclusive mental health initiatives accessible to all students, ensuring equal opportunities for counselling and support.
3. **Organise Awareness and Wellness Programmes:** Conduct workshops and seminars that highlight the importance of mental health and the role of social connections in fostering resilience.
4. **Enhance Institutional Support:** Offer accessible counselling services and train teachers to identify and assist students needing social and emotional support.
5. **Customise Interventions Based on Feedback:** Regularly assess the effectiveness of social support initiatives and ensure they are inclusive of diverse student needs without focusing on gender-specific differences.
6. **Build a Culture of Empathy:** Promote empathy and active listening skills among students and staff to create a supportive and understanding environment.
7. **Leverage Technology for Support:** Use apps and platforms to connect students with mental health resources, peer groups, and professional counsellors.
8. **Encourage Extracurricular Engagement:** Facilitate participation in clubs, sports, and community service to build relationships and reduce feelings of isolation among students.

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