



RESEARCH PAPER

Family Support as Predictor of life Satisfaction and Happiness in Pakistani Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

Family support appears to be one of the most important factors influencing subjective well-being in terms of life satisfaction and happiness. Notwithstanding the generally accepted value of the family, the relationship between family support and individual well-being outcomes has not been thoroughly studied. Considering bonding with one's family is linked to well-being across life, the goal of our study was to investigate the relationship between family support, life satisfaction, and happiness among Pakistani teenagers. A total of 250 adolescents (49% male and 51% females) took part in the study with age ranged 12 to 19 years. Family support, life satisfaction, and happiness were measured by Multidimensional Scale for Perceived Social Support, the Satisfaction with Life Scale, and Subjective Happiness Scale respectively. The findings demonstrated that family support significantly positively correlated with both life satisfaction and happiness. Family support positively predicted life satisfaction and happiness. Furthermore, results indicated that boys perceived their families as more supportive than girls. However non-significant gender difference was found at the level of life satisfaction and happiness. Our findings revealed a significant positive association between family support, life satisfaction and happiness, which suggested that people who assess their families as helpful are more likely to have higher levels of life satisfaction and happiness.

KEYWORDS Adolescents, Family Support, Happiness, Life Satisfaction, Pakistan

Introduction

Families are important to society and to the people who are part of them. It is also generally recognized that family plays a crucial role in fostering individual growth in adolescents (Botha & Booysen, 2014; Bogenschneider et al. 2012). As adolescence is considered a time of transition from childhood to adulthood, rapid physical and psychological changes are defining features of this period. Adolescents undergo more stressful circumstances than younger children do, as well as potentially challenging or difficult social situations (Erath & Pettit, 2021). Interpersonal conflicts (such as those with parents, siblings, and classmates), economic strain and educational outcomes (such as poor achievement or school problems) are major stressors (Bieda et al., 2019). The way they connect with their family and peers alters during this time for adolescents. Individual variations are therefore observed in how people view the support from each source. Adolescents start to desire more independence and a different kind of interaction with their families (Awang et al., 2014). Nevertheless, families continue to be important socializers over the course of the term, and this wholesome relationship helps teenagers feel more satisfied with their life and happiness (Azpiazu et al., 2021). Life satisfaction is defined as a cognitive and comprehensive assessment of the overall quality of one's life (Lachman et al. 2018). It also functions as a life quality indicator and a crucial factor in determining how well people are living (Liang et al., 2022) while happiness is viewed as a good-feeling

internal experience resulting from people's cognitive and emotional judgments of their life (Moeini et al., 2018).

Literature Review

The link between family support and subjective well-being has been strongly supported by numerous studies (Huang & Zhang, 2022; Kareem et al., 2022; Leung et al. 2020). Alshammari et al. (2021) found that the perception of family support acts as a safeguarding component and is crucial in promoting subjective well-being in terms of satisfaction with life and perceived happiness in adolescents. Family support enables a person's ability to lessen their level of stress and increase subjective happiness (Bukhari & Afzal, 2017). Perceived parental support (PS), by Coventry et al. (2004) is marginally more important than genuine parental support. Moreover, adolescents who receive more parental support have better-perceived life satisfaction than adolescents who receive less (Castella et al., 2015). Life satisfaction and happiness, as well as the influences these characteristics have on people's lives and compatibility, have recently received more attention than in the past primarily to the development of positive psychology. Though many studies are being undertaken on these topics yet, there is a paucity of studies on the factors that can promote life satisfaction and happiness. Therefore, the purpose of our study is to see the predictive role of family support for life satisfaction and happiness in adolescents in Pakistan.

Material and Methods

Research Design

A cross-sectional research design was used in this study

Sample and Procedure

After receiving approval from the university's Advanced Studies and Research Council, this study was carried out at Government College University Faisalabad from January to August 2022. The sample of the study consisted of 250 school and college students (49% male and 51% female) with ages ranged 12 to 19 years ($M = 14.3$, $SD = 2.12$). Teenagers were chosen through purposive sampling from private schools and educational academies in Faisalabad after receiving approval from the principals and administrative staff of the academies. Participants' levels of education ranged from sixth grade to F.A., FSC. After receiving the necessary information, all study participants gave their informed consent.

Measures

Multidimensional Scale for Perceived Social Support (MSPSS; Zimet et al., 1988).

Family support was measured by MSPSS. This scale has a total of 12 items that can be measured on 7 points Likert scale. Responses ranged from 1 (very strongly agree) to 7 (very strongly disagree). MSPSS is intended to evaluate an individual's perspective by evaluating his environment from three basic aspects like family, friends, and significant others. Four items make up the family support subscale employed in the current investigation. A high rating on the scale denotes strong familial support.

Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985).

The overall cognitive evaluation of a person's level of satisfaction with life is measured using a short five-item questionnaire. It is a brief scale. A respondent can complete quickly in only one minute. Participants provide their responses on a 7-point

Likert-style scale. Higher scores on the scale indicate a person's high level of life satisfaction. This scale only has one factor. Its subject matter is suitable for a variety of age groups.

Subjective Happiness Scale (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999).

The subjective happiness scale was developed to evaluate persons perceive happiness

It is a short scale consisting of only four self-report items. The replies were scored using a 7-point Likert scale. One item has reverse scoring, while the other three have forward scoring. The score is added together to produce the final score. High scores on the test indicate greater happiness.

Results and Discussion

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 24 (IBM, 2016) was used to analyze the data. The current study included 258 teenagers as participants. The data contained eight missing values. In accordance with the generally acknowledged standard of 10 participants per parameter, the sample size was sufficient to achieve the goals of the study. Since the values were randomly missing, we had to eliminate the participants whose responses were missing since there was no significant reduction in the data's statistical strength. Thus Final sample was consisted on 250 teenagers, 12 to 19 years ($M = 14.3$, $SD = 2.12$).

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of the Study Sample 1

Variables	Groups	f(%)	Mean(SD)
Age			14.3(2.12)
Education			8.25(1.92)
Family size			6.4 (1.48)
Family income			30231.9(1643.76)
Gender	Boys	123(49.2)	
	Girls	127 (50.8)	
	Total	250(100)	
Family System	Joint	45 (18)	
	Nuclear	105 (82)	
	Total	250 (100)	

Table 1 indicated the demographic characteristics of the study sample like age, education, family size, family income, gender, and family system.

Reliability of the Scales

Reliability of Multidimensional Scale for Perceived Social Support, Satisfaction with Life Scale and Subjective Happiness Scale was ($\alpha=.79$), ($\alpha=.82$), and ($\alpha=.85$) respectively.

Table 2
Pearson Correlation-Coefficients among Family Support, Life Satisfaction and Happiness

Variables	1	2	3
Family support	1		
Life satisfaction	.60***	1	
Happiness	.37***	.47***	1

Note. *** $p < .001$

Correlation coefficients among family support, life satisfaction, and happiness is shown in table 2 which indicated that variables are significantly positively correlated with each other.

Table 3
Linear Regression Analysis for Family Support Predicting Life Satisfaction and Happiness

Predictor	Outcomes	B	SE	β	R ²
Family Support	Life satisfaction	2.29	.192	.60***	.36
	Happiness	2.56	.140	.37***	.14

Note. *** $p < .001$

Table 3 demonstrated that family support significantly positively contributed to subjective life satisfaction and happiness.

Table 4
Gender Differences on Family Support, Life satisfaction and Subjective Happiness

Variables	Gender		T	95% C.I		Cohen's d
	Boys (250) M(SD)	Girls (250) M(SD)		UL	LL	
Family Support	5.20 (1.95)	4.14 (2.21)	4.04**	1.6	.55	0.50
Life Satisfaction	21.04 (7.53)	21.59 (7.64)	-.556	1.5	-2.7	-0.06
Subjective happiness	17.18 (.52)	17.72 (19.4)	-.229	3.3	-7.2	-0.03

Note. ** $p < .01$.

Table 4 showed mean difference between male and female adolescents on the level of family support, life satisfaction and happiness. Results demonstrated the significant gender difference on perceived family support *mean (SD)* score 5.20 (1.95) for boys and 4.14(2.21) for girls. However non-significant gender differences were found on the level of life satisfaction and happiness among boys and girls.

Discussion

Adolescence is a time of growth when significant corporeal, intellectual, psychological, as well as societal modifications take place. Despite the fact that throughout this transitional stage adolescents broaden their social networks and acquire independence or distance from their families, they constantly require a deep and nurturing interaction with them. In this regard our study primarily had following goals that needed to be met. The first goal was to ascertain that social support from family, life satisfaction and happiness were related. The second goal was to evaluate if family support predicted life satisfaction and happiness. The third goal was to analyze the gender differences on the level of study variables among adolescents of Pakistan. In relation to the first goal the study's findings indicated that scores on family support, life satisfaction and happiness significantly positively correlated with each other. It showed that persons who feel that their families provide them with adequate support are more satisfied with their lives and experience happiness more frequently and sadness less frequently than those who feel that their families provide inadequate support. Our result are consisted with other findings which showed that family support is positively correlated with life satisfaction (Ma, 2020) and happiness (Moeini et al., 2018).

Findings of study revealed that family support found to be positive predictor of life satisfaction and subjective happiness of Pakistani adolescents. Adolescents have to face many challenges like physical changes, academic achievements, socio-economic problems, and alienation from loved ones, and relocation to large cities for education (Yaacob, 2006)

in this regard, research evidence shows that by giving reassurance that help is accessible if needed, perceived family support might improve one's ability to cope (Salgado et al., 2021). Our findings are line with previous literature that supported our results (Benner et al., 2016; Wu et al., 2016; Li et al., 2014).

Prior research emphasized the value of variable family support by indicating that family support is linked to life satisfaction and person's subjective happiness (Szcześniak & Tułeczka., 2020; Hair et al., 2009). Finally, our findings showed that boys perceived their families as being more supportive than girls. Yet, there were no appreciable variations between boys and girls in terms of life satisfaction and happiness. Literature indicated that many studies are conducted to see gender differences on the level of family support and its impact on adolescent's well-being but findings are not conclusive for example Tam et al (2011) reported that compared to male adolescents, females expect and receive more familial support. According to their culture, different societies have diverse family support systems for males and females. It is generally believed that in Pakistani culture the family is more supportive and favorable to boys as compare to girls. Parents often provide lesser support and appreciation to their daughters. Our results are in line with another Pakistani research that showed that male received more family support than females (Siddiqui et al., 2019).

Our results did not reveal any variations in life satisfaction and happiness between male and female adolescents, despite the fact that several research have reported substantial disparities (Conti et al., 2018; Inchley & Young, 2016; Michel et al., 2009). Our findings were more in line with those of writers who have noted that subjective well-being is not influenced by gender (Esteban et al., 2020). Whilst the study excluded assessments of masculinity and femininity, particular assessments associated with these dimensions might have helped determine the anticipated gender variations in wellbeing, as other research has shown (Moor et al., 2014).

Conclusion

Our study revealed that perceived family support was found to be significant positive contributor to subjective life satisfaction and happiness among adolescents of Pakistan. Boys reported more perceived support from their families as compare to young girls. Non-significant gender differences were found on the level of life satisfaction and happiness among boys and girls.

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