Perceived Social Support and Loneliness among Young Adults

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ABSTRACT
The research aims to investigate the relationship and differences among male and female in Perceived Social Support and Loneliness in young adults. 210 young adults aged between 2040 years were selected using purposive sampling method from various areas in and around

Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. The tools used were Personal data sheet, Multidimensional Scale of

Perceived Social Support by Zimet et al, (1988) and The Social and Emotional Loneliness Scale for Adults by Di Tommaso, Brannen and Best (2004). The analysis using independent sample-test and Pearson correlation shows that there is a significant moderate positive relationship between perceived social support and loneliness. There are no differences among male and female young adults in Perceived Social support and Loneliness.

Key Words: Perceived Social Support, Loneliness, Young Adults**.**

I.   INTRODUCTION

Perceived Social Support   refers to how much an individual perceives his/her social system as supportive in terms of emotional, companionship and tangible resources. Perceived Social Support refers to perceptions of the extent to which people from one's social network are available to provide social support. (**Demaray and Malecki, 2002**)

A feeling of isolation that can be objective or subjective, metaphysical or communicative, existential, social which is always present and forms a core part of personal, non-transferable

experience is known as **"Loneliness". (Stein and Tuval Mashiah, 2015)**

Emotional loneliness is a state of emotional deprivation where there is a feeling of being unseen, lack of confidence and avoid social intimacy. In simple words, Emotional Loneliness is where a person lacks emotional connection.

Social loneliness is lack of social relationship which include friends, family, neighbours and colleagues.

Studies have found that social support would lead to lower loneliness (Bernardon et al.2011) Perceived friendship support was the best predictor of lower loneliness (Pierce et al. 1991)

Perceived Social Support from friends and family were found to be a buffer against loneliness (Schmitt and Kurdek, 1985)

II.   REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Katarzyna (2015) investigated the Loneliness and Perceived Social Support among Single and Partnered Young adults in the domains of emotional and social loneliness and of perceived social support from family, friends and significant others. 315 young adults were assessed using the social and Emotional Loneliness Scale for adults and Multidimensional scale of Perceived Social Support. The result shows that women reported a lower level of social loneliness and a higher level of perceived social support in comparison to men.

Xing Zhang & Shenghong Dong (2022) conducted a meta-analysis to determine the relation between social support and Loneliness. The current results support robust links between social support and Loneliness, emphasizing the importance of social support in reducing levels of Loneliness.

Majid Sadoughi & Fatemeh Hesampour (2017) explored the relationship between Perceived Social support and Loneliness among 327 University students. The tools used were Perceived

Social Support and UCLA loneliness Scale. The findings showed that social support from

others, friends and family can predict loneliness in students. Students with higher social support scores are less likely to feel lonely.

Siti Haslina Hussain, Awang Ideris Awang Daud, Malai Taibi and Siti Rahayu Hussin (2021) conducted research on "Loneliness, coping strategies and Perceived Social Support among students of

Public Universities". 243 students from public universities participated in this research. The results show that the availability of support from friends and Significant others may minimize loneliness.

NEED FOR THE STUDY
In recent times, young adults feel lonely very frequently, almost every day. Such young adults may seek some social support from their friends, families and others. Based on the above literature review, it is noted that there is a strong relationship between perceived social support and loneliness. Hence, an attempt was made by the researchers to know how well the perceived social support help the young adults to lower their loneliness.

METHOD

OBJECTIVES
• To assess the level of Perceived Social Support and its dimensions among young adults. ☐ To assess the level of loneliness and its dimensions among young adults.
• To assess the relationship between Perceived Social Support and loneliness among young adults.
• To measure the differences in Perceived Social Support and Loneliness among the male and female young adults.

HYPOTHESES
• There is a significant correlation between Perceived Social Support and Loneliness among young adults.
• There is a significant difference in Perceived Social Support and Loneliness among the male and female young adults.

SAMPLE
210 young adults between the age group of 20 to 40 years were selected using purposive sampling method from various areas in and around Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu.

TOOLS
Personal Data Sheet includes details such as name, age, gender and domicile. Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) is a 12-item measure of perceived adequacy of social support from three sources: friends, family and significant others using a 5-point Likert scale (0 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) (Zimet et al, 1988). The internal consistency and test-retest reliability ranges from 0.81 to 0.98.

The Social and Emotional Loneliness Scale for Adults (SELSA) is a 15-item measure of loneliness from three sources: social, family and romantic using a 7- point Likert scale (0 =strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) (Di Tommaso, Brannen and Best, 2004). Internal consistency of this scale ranges from 0.84 to 0.92; [social (α = 0.90), family (α = 0.89), romantic (α = 0.87)

PROCEDURE
A brief description about the purpose of the research was explained to the entire sample before conducting the research. The consenting sample were asked to fill their personal details like name, gender, age, domicile and occupation. The Multi-dimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support and The Social and Emotional Loneliness Scale for Adults were given to the entire sample individually. The sample were informed that the responses will be kept confidential and the data will be used for academic purposes. The data were collected and statistically analysed using SPSS.

DATA ANALYSIS
In order to investigate the gender difference in Perceived Social Support and Loneliness among male and female young adults, independent sampling t-test was performed. To investigate the correlation between Perceived Social Support and Loneliness among young adults, Pearson correlation was performed.

III.   RESULT AND DISCUSSION

TABLE 1
OVERALL SCORE OF PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT

(N=210)

OVERALL PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE

HIGH	140	67
MODERATE	55	26
LOW	15	7

Table 1 shows the overall score of Perceived social support of the entire sample. 67% of sample have high level of perceived social support, 26% of sample have moderate level of perceived social support and 7% of sample have low level of perceived social support.

TABLE 2 DIMENSIONS OF PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT
(N=210)

DIMENSIONS	LEVELS	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
SIGNIFICANT OTHERS	HIGH	140	67
	MODERATE	44	21
	LOW	26	12
FRIENDS	HIGH	138	66
	MODERATE	54	26
	LOW	18	8
FAMILY	HIGH	140	67
	MODERATE	50	24
	LOW	20	9

Table 2 shows the score of dimensions of perceived social support of the entire sample. 67% of sample have high level of significant others support, 21% of sample have moderate level of significant others support and 12% of sample have scored low level of significant others support. 66% of sample have high level of friends' support, 26% of sample have moderate level of friends support and 8% of sample have low level of friends' support. 67% of sample have high level of family support, 24% of sample have moderate level of family support and 9% of sample have low level of family support.

TABLE 3 OVERALL SCORE OF LONELINESS
(N=210)

OVERALL LONELINESS	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
HIGH	80	38
MODERATE	124	59
LOW	6	3

Table 3 shows the overall score of loneliness of the entire sample. 38% of sample have high level of loneliness, 59% of sample have moderate level of loneliness and 3% of sample have low level of loneliness.

TABLE 4 DIMENSIONS OF LONELINESS
(N=210)

DIMENSIONS	LEVELS	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
SOCIAL	HIGH	43	20
	MODERATE	158	76
	LOW	9	4
FAMILY	HIGH	77	37
	MODERATE	129	61
	LOW	4	2
ROMANTIC	HIGH	100	48
	MODERATE	87	41
	LOW	23	11

Table 4 shows the score of dimensions of loneliness of the entire sample. 20% of sample have high level of social loneliness, 76% of sample have moderate level of social loneliness and 4% of sample have low level of social loneliness. 37% of sample have high level of family loneliness, 61% of sample have moderate level of family loneliness and 2% of sample have low level of family loneliness. 48% of sample have high level of romantic loneliness, 41% of sample have moderate level of romantic loneliness and 11% of sample have low level of romantic loneliness.

TABLE 5 MEAN DIFFERENCE IN PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT OF MALE AND FEMALE SAMPLE
(N=210)

GENDER	MEAN SCORE	S.D	t-value	SIGNIFICANCE
MALES	5.02	1.422	0.03	N.S
FEMALES	5.21	1.24		

Table 5 shows the difference among males and females in Perceived Social Support. The mean perceived social support score of males is 5.02 and females is 5.21 and t value is 0.030 which shows that there is no statistically significant difference among males and females in perceived social support.

TABLE 6   MEAN DIFFERENCE IN THE DIMENSIONS OF PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT OF MALE AND FEMALE SAMPLE
(N=210)

Dimensions	Gender	Mean Score	S.D	t value	Significance
Significant others	Males	4.90	1.39	0.07	N.S
	Females	5.29	1.46		
Friends	Males	5.01	1.55	0.02	N.S
	Females	5.18	1.47		
Family	Males	5.08	1.45	0.07	N.S
	Females	5.13	1.41		

Table 6 shows the difference among males and females in the dimension of Perceived Social Support. The mean score of significant others support of males is 4.90 and females is 5.29 and t value is 0.07 which shows that there is no statistically significant difference among males and females in significant others support. The mean score of friends support of males is 5.01 and females is 5.18 and t-value is 0.02 which shows that there is no statistically significant difference among males and females in friends' support. The mean score of family support of males is 5.08 and females is 5.13 and t-value is 0.007 which shows that there is no statistically significant difference among males and females in family support.

TABLE 7 MEAN DIFFERENCE IN LONELINESS OF MALE AND FEMALE SAMPLE

(N= 210)

GENDER	MEAN SCORE	S.D	t-value	SIGNIFICANCE
MALES	70.8	12.43	0.022	N.S
FEMALES	67.78	11.39		

Table 7 shows the difference among males and females in loneliness. The mean value of social and emotional loneliness variable of males is 70.8 and females is 67.7 and t value is 0.022 which shows that there is no statistically difference among males and females in loneliness.

TABLE 8 MEAN DIFFERENCE IN THE DIMENSIONS OF LONELINESS OF MALE AND FEMALE

(N=210)

Dimensions	Gender	Mean Score	S.D	t value	Significance
Social	**Males**	22.54	4.23	0.03	N.S
	Females	21.36	5.03		
Family	**Males**	24.39	3.67	0.01	N.S
	Females	23.84	3.91		
Romantic	**Males**	22.6	7.05	0.015	N.S
	Females	23.23	6.89		

Table 8 shows the difference among males and females in the dimension of Loneliness. The mean score of social loneliness of males is 22.54 and females is 21.36 and t value is 0.03 which shows that there is no statistically significant difference among males and females in social loneliness. The mean score of family loneliness of males is 24.29 and females is 23.84 and tvalue is 0.01 which shows that there is no statistically significant difference among males and females in family loneliness. The mean score of romantic loneliness of males is 22.6 and females is 23.3 and t-value is 0.015 which shows that there is no statistically significant difference among males and females in romantic loneliness support.

TABLE 9 CORRELATION BETWEEN PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT AND LONELINESS

(N=210)

VARIABLES	MEAN	S.D	r value	p value
PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT	5.47	1.23	0.03	0.658
LONELINESS	68.9	11.84		

Table 9 shows the correlation between perceived social support and loneliness. The overall mean score of perceived social support and loneliness is 5.47 and 68.9 and r value is 0.03. This shows that there is moderate positive correlation between perceived social support and loneliness.

IV.   DISCUSSION

This research involved a sample of young adults and aimed at examining the difference among males and females of overall perceived social support and Loneliness. The result shows that overall sample have high perceived social support and also there is no difference among males and females in perceived social support and its dimensions. Coventry et al (2004) investigated on gender differences in social support and found that there is no gender difference. The result shows that overall sample have moderate level of Loneliness and also there is no difference among males and females in loneliness and its dimensions. This research also aimed at examining the relationship between Perceived Social support and Loneliness. The result shows that there is a significant moderate positive relationship between Perceived Social Support and Loneliness.

LIMITATIONS
• Descriptive nature of the research
• Size of the sample
• Interventions for both the variables were not administered.
• Only one demographic variable is included.

SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH
• It would be beneficial to compare the young adults with middle and older adults.
• Other variables like marital status, domicile, and occupation can be included in the future research.
• Further research may focus on providing interventions for both perceived social support and loneliness.
• Further research may focus on other dimensions in perceived social support and loneliness.

IMPLICATIONS
• This research may make some contributions to the literature by additionally acknowledging the relationship between Perceived Social Support and Loneliness.

• Counsellor may establish a clear view among the young adults regarding the effect of social support which causes a great impact on loneliness.

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