

The Relationship between Perceived Social Support and Adolescent Stress among Grade 12 Students

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the impact of perceived social support on adolescent stress among Grade 12 students at Lorenzo S. Sarmiento Sr. National High School. Its primary objective was to assess the levels of perceived social support and adolescent stress, discern significant relationship between these variables, and identify which domains of perceived social support most strongly influenced adolescent stress. Employing a quantitative-correlational design, 221 Grade 12 students participated in the study, utilizing statistical tools such as average weighted mean, Pearson R, and multiple regression analysis. Findings indicated a high level of perceived social support among Grade 12 students, particularly in terms of support from friends, significant others, and family. However, students reported a very low level of adolescent stress across various domains, including home life, school performance, peer pressure, and future uncertainty. Importantly, the study revealed a significant relationship between perceived social support and adolescent stress, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Furthermore, all domains of perceived social support received high ratings from students, suggesting a strong sense of belongingness and an enhancement of internal positive self-image. This underscores the importance of social support in helping adolescents cope with life's challenges. It implies that fostering supportive relationships can aid adolescents in navigating the complexities of adolescence, contributing to their overall well-being and resilience.

Keywords: GAS, Perceived Social Support, Adolescent Stress, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

In past decade, it was found out by American researchers and clinicians that seven out of ten teens were experiencing significant mental stress, including anxiety and depression (DeSilver, 2019). Furthermore, in China, adolescents faced stress from school life, family issues, and peer relationships, along with long homework hours and difficult materials (Bai et al., 2023). A study conducted by Nagabharana et al. (2021) ascertained that adolescent in India often experienced stress in their daily lives, with family conflicts and academic pressure. It was found out by Murphy and Archer (2020) that some of the major academic stress included examinations, time demands, competition and class environment while personal stressors had been intimate relationships, finance and parental conflicts. In addition, South Korea suicide ideation of multicultural adolescents was positively associated with stress (Kim, 2019).

In Taguig, Philippines, a survey by the Philippine Council for Health Research and Development (2022) revealed that 80–90% of teenagers had positive relationships with their parents, teachers, and peers, which

contributed to their solid support system. Moreover, Liew (2018) expressed that social support had a high correlation with ego-resiliency and successful stress management techniques. Its importance was shown by the study's validation of the hierarchical model of perceived social support. Stephen (2023) reported that understanding and providing teenagers with social support could have a significant impact on their psychological growth and general well-being. Nailes (2018) emphasized the importance of social support and how teens were able to handle stress because they had supporting friends and family in their lives. The study of Mai (2020) study also emphasized how important family support was in assisting students in overcoming obstacles, reducing stress problems particularly anxiety and developing a good self-image, all of which contributed to the maintenance of their mental health.

In Region XI, particularly in Davao City, a study conducted by Salviron (2023) found out that students faced a number of unique challenges, such as poverty, conflict, and displacement which could lead to high levels of stressed and anxiety. Several researchers, such as Pascoe et al. (2020), studied stress and depression elements from a performance perspective and reported that stress and depression negatively affected the academic performance of students. In addition, it was reported that some students in the municipality of Mawab were seeking treatment for severe anxiety and stressed. Tragically, there had also been incidents of students committing grave misconduct, and a spike in suicides associated with high levels of stressed. This alarming situation had instilled fear in the community, prompting deep concern among parents, teachers, and local authorities. With this, the researchers were interested to know if perceived social support could lessen the stressed that an adolescent may feel.

However, the researchers did not come across any study conducted on the relationship between perceived social support and adolescents stressed among Grade 12 students. This situation called for immediate and effective action. It was clear that there's a need to create a more supportive environment for these young individuals. The researchers aimed to investigate factors influencing the relationship between perceived social support and stressed among Grade 12 students, highlighting the necessity of the study.

Research Objectives

This study was conducted to determine the relationship between perceived social support and adolescent stress of Grade 12 Students Specifically, the study sought answers to the following objectives:

1. To find out the level of perceived social support of Grade 12 students in terms of:
 - 1.1 friend support;
 - 1.2 significant other; and
 - 1.3 family support.
2. To assess the level of adolescent stress among Grade 12 students in terms of:
 - 2.1 stress of home life;
 - 2.2 stress of school performance;
 - 2.3 stress of peer pressure; and
 - 2.4 stress of future uncertainty.
3. To determine the significant relationship between perceived social support and adolescent stress among Grade 12 students.
4. To determine which of the domains in perceived social support significantly influence adolescents stress among Grade 12 students.

METHODOLOGY

This study used a quantitative, non- experimental research design, employing a correlational technique. This method was employed when the objective was to describe the status of the situation as it existed at the time of the study to explore the causes of a particular phenomenon. In correlational research, it involved collecting data to determine whether the degree of a relationship existed between two or more quantifiable variables (Gay, 2006).

Population and Sample

Simple random sampling was used in the selection of respondents. The subject of the study was the 221 Grade 12 students who were officially enrolled in Lorenzo S. Sarmiento Sr. National High School for the school year 2023-2024. They were considered ideal respondents because, compared to younger students, they exhibited a higher level of maturity and development. This enhanced maturity enabled them to better comprehend their own stress levels and the assistance they received from their social networks.

Statistical Tool

The following statistical tools were utilized for the data analysis and interpretation.

Mean. This statistical tool will be used to determine the level of perceived social support and adolescent stress among Grade 12 students.

Pearson (r). This statistical tool will be used to determine the significance of the relationship between perceived social support and adolescent stress among Grade 12 students.

Multiple Regression Analysis. This statistical tool will be used to determine the influence of perceived social support on adolescent stress among Grade 12 students.

RESULTS

Level of Perceived Social Support

Shown in Table 1 were the mean scores for the indicators of perceived social support of Grade 12 students with an overall mean 4.07 and described as high with a standard deviation of 0.77. The high level could be attributed to the high rating given by the respondents in all indicators. This entailed that the respondent's responses to the level of perceive social support were very much positive in terms of friend support, significant other, and family support.

The cited overall mean score was the result obtained from the following computed mean scores from highest to lowest: 4.15 or high for family support with standard deviation of 0.81; 4.04 or high for significant other with standard deviation of 0.75; 4.03 or high for friend support with standard deviation of 0.75.

Table 1. Level of Perceived Social Support

Indicator	Mean	SD	Descriptive level
Friends support	4.03	0.75	High
Significant Other	4.04	0.75	High

Family Support	4.35	0.81	Very high
Overall	4.07	0.77	High

Level of Adolescent Stress

Shown in Table 2 were the mean scores for the indicators of adolescent stress among grade 12 students, with an overall mean of 1.67 and described as very low with a standard deviation of 0.80. The very low level could be attributed to the very low rating given by the respondents in all indicators. This entailed that the respondent’s responses to the level of adolescent stress had negative effects in terms of stress of home life, stress of school performance, stress of peer pressure, and stress of future uncertainty.

The cited overall mean score was the result obtained from the following computed mean scores from highest to lowest: 1.77, or very low, for stress of peer home life with a standard deviation of 0.90; 1.67, or very low, for stress of school performance with a standard deviation of 0.78; 1.63, or very low, for stress of peer pressure with a standard deviation of 0.76; and 1.63, for stress of the future with a standard deviation of 0.76.

Table 2. Level of Adolescent Stress

Indicator	Mean	SD	Descriptive level
Stress of Home life	1.77	0.90	Very Low
Stress of school performance	1.67	0.78	Very Low
Stress of peer pressure	1.63	0.76	Very Low
Stress of future uncertainty	1.63	0.76	Very Low
Overall	1.67	0.80	Very Low

Significance on the Relationship between Perceived Social Support and Adolescent Stress

The results revealed that perceived social support versus adolescent stress had a significant relationship. This result was due to an R-value of -0.439, which was greater than the p-value <.001. Hence, this led to the decision that the null hypothesis, which stated that there was a significant relationship between perceived social support and adolescent stress among grade 12 students, was rejected. This further meant that there was a high correlation, and there was a significant relationship between perceived social support and adolescent stress.

Multiple Regression Analysis of the Influence of Perceived Social Support on Adolescent Stress

Using the Multiple Regression Analysis, the data revealed that the influence of perceived social support towards adolescent stress among grade 12 students had an F-value of 17.298 and a corresponding significance p-value of <0.01, which was significant. This enabled the researcher to reject the null hypothesis, which stated that there was no domain of perceived social support that significantly predicted adolescent stress.

This meant that the usage of perceived social support influenced adolescent stress among grade 12 students in Lorenzo S. Sarmiento Sr. National High School since the probability was less than 0.05. The R squared of 0.193 implied that 19.30% of the adolescent stress among grade 12 students at Lorenzo S. Sarmiento Sr.

National High School was influenced by the usage of perceived social support, while the remaining 80.70% were not covered by the study and were influenced by other factors.

DISCUSSIONS

Level of Perceived Social Support

The respondents' level of perceived social support in Lorenzo S. Sarmiento Sr. National High School was high. This meant that the different perceived social support among senior high students in Lorenzo S. Sarmiento Sr. National High School was positive. This further meant that the students manifested all the perceived social support in which the students were required to play an active role, especially in the relationship for adolescence, which meant the friend support was a critical aspect of individuals' emotional well-being and resilience; significant other, which meant that it was significant other was commonly understood as an individual who held substantial importance in one's life, and family support, which meant it was connected with the perceived social support in terms of growing significance in every individuals.

This result is in line with the proposition of Drennon-Gala and Cullen's Social Support Theory, which suggests that perceived social support plays a crucial role in reducing the likelihood of experiencing stress, delinquency, and crime. This aligns with the statement by Yang et al. (2021) that higher levels of social support correlate with lower levels of perceived stress and distress, ultimately contributing to better overall health. Moreover, perceived social support in adolescence is essential for various developmental processes, such as coping with stress (Finkenauer et al., 2019). The findings further corroborate Oscar's (2022) assertion that perceived social support among adolescents struggling with stress varies depending on the sources of support and specific context.

Level of Adolescent Stress

The respondents' level of perceived social support at Lorenzo S. Sarmiento Sr. National High School was high. This indicated the availability of people who made one feel cared about, valued, and loved (Sarason, 2019). It was also evident that social support played a crucial role in mitigating stress among students. This emphasized that support from family, friends, neighbors, pets, organizations, co-workers, among others, was essential (Rivas et al., 2020). As Towey (2019) suggested, social support was integral to one's connectedness with others, providing someone to lean on during various crises, boosting a sense of belongingness, enhancing internal positive self-image, and influencing overall quality of life while offering protection against diverse life events.

The very low level of adolescent stress due to peer pressure among senior high students was notably negative. It had been widely recognized as a significant source of stress among adolescents, significantly impacting their overall well-being (Smith and Johnson, 2019). This indicated that adolescents often grappled with the fear of social exclusion and pressure to conform to peer norms, leading to heightened stress levels. Notably, this stress could manifest as symptoms of anxiety and depression (Brown et al., 2018).

Similarly, the respondents had a very low rating on adolescent stress regarding the stress of future uncertainty, including that the items were very low at Lorenzo S. Sarmiento Sr. National High School. This indicated that individuals with strong social networks were better equipped to cope with the stress associated with an uncertain future (Wilson, 2018). The viewpoint of Chang and Sung (2019) stated that students' test anxiety was caused by high levels of uncertainty and went further by indicating that students with medium achievement had greater test anxiety. For adolescents, uncertainty was strongly related to facing the unknown, including one's future school and aspirations for a future career (Celovek, 2023).

Moreover, students with decision-making difficulty or who did not know what academic courses suited them may also have perceived more possibilities (Chao and Sung, 2019).

The same manner, the data showed that respondents had a favorable attitude towards the stress of school performance, which they described as moderate. This indicated that the stress associated with school performance had been a topic of increasing concern in recent years (Smith, 2018). High academic expectations set by schools and parents could lead to performance anxiety and pressure to excel, contributing to students' stress, which was why this domain resulted as moderate (Brown, 2019). Additionally, the competitive nature of academics and peer pressure further exacerbated this stress (Miller, 2020).

Comparably, the respondents also displayed stress regarding home life as part of adolescent stress. The moderate rating suggested that stress related to home life, as one of the indicators of adolescent stress among senior high students at Lorenzo S. Sarmiento Sr. National High School, was moderately observed. This further indicated that the stress experienced in home life was a subject of growing significance within the field of psychology and wellbeing (Smith et al., 2019). It was a complex issue influenced by various factors such as marital conflict, which had been recognized as a substantial source of stress within households (Johnson and Anderson, 2019). Furthermore, stress related to home life for adolescents had a profound impact on their ability to find success in school. Students who came from families consisting of a single parent, divorced parents, experienced homelessness, or other non-traditional family configurations were more likely to face challenges in school and develop undesirable psychological adjustments.

Significance on the Relationship between Perceived Social Support and Adolescent Stress

The present study revealed a significant relationship between perceived social support and adolescent stress among senior high school students at Lorenzo S. Sarmiento Sr. National High School. This implied that perceived social support influenced adolescent stress among senior high school students, as evidenced by the data. This confirmed the main anchor of this study, the proposition of McLean et al. (2021), which emphasized that perceived social support was consistently associated with positive outcomes for students in terms of wellbeing and academic achievement.

The relationship between overall perceived social support and adolescence was significant among senior high students at Lorenzo S. Sarmiento Sr. National High School. This implied that perceived social support depended on adolescent stress among senior high students at Lorenzo S. Sarmiento Sr. National High School. These findings affirmed the Social Support Theory of Drennon-Gala and Cullen (1998), which posited that emotional support reduced the likelihood of feeling stress and delinquency. There was a strong correlation noted between elevated stress levels in adolescents and their perceived social support (Miller et al., 2020). Furthermore, this aligned with the proposition of generalized exchange, a system in which the rewards that an individual received from others did not depend on the resources provided by that individual (Strauss, 1969).

Multiple Regression Analysis of the Influence of Perceived Social Support on Adolescent Stress

Using Multiple Regression in JASP Software, the data revealed that the influence of perceived social support on adolescence among senior high students had a significant effect. Only 19.38% of the perceived social support among senior high students at Lorenzo S. Sarmiento Sr. National High School was influenced by the usage of perceived social support. The overall results of the perceived social support predicted adolescent stress in senior high students. Therefore, the significance level of the hypothesis of perceived social support and adolescent stress in students was rejected.

This result supported the analysis of Robinson and Weiss (2020), emphasizing that providing social support was crucial for vulnerable teenagers, as it had been shown to lower stress levels and aid in successful situational adaptation. Additionally, social support had been demonstrated to mitigate the impact of stress and ethnic prejudice on subjective well-being and physical symptoms in immigrant communities. Moreover, Johnson and Smith (2018) noted that the impact of perceived social support may have varied based on age, gender, and socioeconomic factors, suggesting the need for targeted interventions to improve well-being and mental health outcomes in specific populations in future research.

In connection with friend support, also known as social support from friends, it was recognized as a critical aspect of individuals' emotional well-being and resilience (Cohen, 2019). The availability of supportive friends played a significant role in managing stress and promoting mental health (Smith and Jones, 2018). Research has demonstrated that friend support could mitigate the negative impact of stressors and contribute to increased overall life satisfaction (Brown, 2018). Friends could provide encouragement and motivation for individuals to adopt healthier lifestyle choices, such as exercise and a balanced diet (Lee, 2018).

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that the level of influence of perceived social support among Grade 12 students in Lorenzo S. Sarmiento Sr. National High School was high, as well as its indicators, namely friend support, significant other, and family support. Additionally, the overall level of adolescent stress among Grade 12 students in Lorenzo S. Sarmiento Sr. National High School was very low, as well as all four domains namely stress of home life, stress of school performance, stress of peer pressure, and stress of future uncertainty.

Furthermore, the findings opposed the theoretical assumption of having a significant relationship between the influence of perceived social support and adolescent stress among Grade 12 students. Contrary to the assumption, the study concluded that the influence of perceived social support and adolescent stress were positively related. That is, a change in the level of influence of perceived social support affected the level of adolescent stress.

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