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## Relationship between Perceived Social Support Psychological Well-being and Guilt among Adolescences and Adults.

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**Abstract:** *Current study intended to investigate the relationship between Perceived Social Support Psychological Well-being and Guilt among Adolescences and Adults. This study included 304 participants aged between 13 to 80 years, with Adolescences (n= 76; n=38men, n=38women), Early adults (n= 76; n=38men, n=38women), Middle adults (n= 76; n=38men, n=38women) and Late adults (n=76; n=38men, n=38women), who were selected through convenient sampling from different cities of Pakistan. In the present study we have demonstrated the three Scales, Warwick-Edinburg Mental Well-Being Scale, Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) and Personal feeling questionnaire-2 to test the hypotheses. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was estimated for both scales, it demonstrated reliable estimates for both scales. From the study through Pearson Correlation analyses it was observed significant positive relationship between Perceived Social Support and Psychological well-being, positive relationship between Perceived Social Support and Guilt, and also positive relationship between Psychological well-being and guilt. Through Independent Sample T Test it was observed that level of Perceived Social Support, Psychological well-being and Guilt was higher in women as compared to men. One Way Analysis of Anova demonstrated; level of Perceived Social Support was higher in adolescences, level of Psychological Well-being was higher in early adults and level of Guilt was higher in Late Adults. Counsellors, practitioners, parents, researchers and students can take benefit from these findings by keeping it under consideration while planning.*

**Keywords:** *Perceived Social Support; Psychological Well-Being; Guilt; Adolescences; Adults.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The perception of being taken care by others and having a stable support system to turn to when needed in daily settings or specific moments of crisis, is known as perceived social support (Taylor, 2011). It can be perceived from different sources. Additionally, the type of support can be emotional, evaluative, instrumental and informative (Sarason et al., 1990). Psychological well-being is defined from six dimensions: self-acceptance, positive relationships, autonomy, mastery of the environment, personal growth and persistence (Ryff, 1989). Guilt is a self-conscious emotion which is related to psychological positive outcomes.

**A. Perceived social support.** Perceived social support describes how people consider their friends, family members, and other people as sources of practical, emotional, and all-around help when they are in need. Research suggested that perceived social support is predictor of better mental and physical health outcomes (Uchino et al., 2013). Social-cognitive perspective stated that perceived social support relates to high self-esteem, which as a result leads towards positive mental health outcomes (Lakey and Cohen, 2000). Perceived social support is considered to have associations with positive thoughts about self and subsequently the direct and indirect impact on mental health outcomes through self-esteem. Perceived social support can produce positive experiences and it has been found repeatedly linked to wellbeing. The link between social support and psychological well-being has been strongly supported by various studies. It aids a person in dwindling their level of stress and serves as a support system for those going through hard times in life. Social support could serve as a protective factor.

**B. Psychological well-being.** Psychological well-being is used to refer to a person's general functioning and emotional stability. Psychological well-being is defined Health and Wellbeing as a combination of working efficiently and feeling well. Researchers have discovered that a person's psychological well-being is not always observed by the absence of suffering. High psychological well-being is characterised by contentment and success. High psychologically functioning individuals describe feeling content, supported, capable and satisfied with their lives. Research also shows significant relationship between psychological well-being and happiness (Heizomi et al., 2015). Two key aspects to psychological wellbeing; the first of these is how much happiness and pleasant sentiments are felt by individuals. This component of psychological health is sometimes referred to as subjective wellbeing (Diener, 2000). Psychological wellbeing consists of positive experiences and characteristics and it has also association with guilt.

**C. Guilt.** Guilt is characterised as a self-conscious feeling that involves self-reflection. People may experience guilt for a number of reasons, such as deeds they have committed, or assume they have committed), morally dubious thoughts or failures to take actions they should have taken. Most of the researches supporting the idea that guilt is functional for mental health, it is considered important social regulator as it encourages a balance between the individual's own urges and needs and rights of others (Bastin et al., 2016). Ultimately,

guilt and shame are social feelings designed to prevent individuals from behaving solely in their own best interests. Guilt-proneness is also positively related to perceived social support (Gabriela et al., 2016) and with lower levels of criminal behavior (Martinez et al., 2014).

## **2. Method**

### **D. Objectives**

Following objectives were being planned to be achieved by current study:

1. To examine the relationship between perceived social support, psychological well-being and guilt among adolescences and adults.
2. To investigate mean differences on level of psychological well- being, perceived social support and guilt across demographic variables of gender and age.

### **E. Hypotheses**

1. To gain the objectives of the study, following hypotheses were formulated:
2. There would be positive relationship between Perceived Social Support and Psychological Wellbeing among adolescences and adults.
3. There would be positive relationship between Psychological wellbeing and guilt among adolescences and adults.
4. There would be positive relationship between perceived social support and guilt among adolescences and adults.
5. There would be significant gender and age differences on level of psychological well-being, perceived social support and guilt.

### **F. Sample**

Sample of main study consisted of 308 people of age ranging from 13 to 80 years. The sample was further divided into equal number of Adolescences ( $n= 76$ ;  $n=38$ men,  $n=38$ women), Early adults ( $n= 76$ ;  $n=38$ men,  $n=38$ women), Middle adults ( $n= 76$ ;  $n=38$ men,  $n=38$ women) and Late adults ( $n=76$ ;  $n=38$ men,  $n=38$ women). The overall sample was convened from different areas of Punjab, Pakistan.

### **G. Research Tools**

To commence study a booklet of scales was compiled. Following scales were used.

Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet & Farelly, 1988) is a 12-item scale with three subscales of Family, Friends and Significant Others. Family Subscale has item number. 3, 4, 8 and 11, while items 6, 7, 9 and 12 is for Friends and the items 1, 2, 5 and 10 are related to Significant Others. MSPSS is graded on 7 Point Likert Scale from 1 strongly disagree to 7 strongly agree. MSPSS has maximum score of 84. MSPSS has indicated good internal test-retest reliability and construct validity with different samples (Zimet, Powell, Parley, Werkman & Berkoff, 1990). Warwick-Edinburg Mental Well-being Scale (Tannant et al., 2007) is consisted of 14 items. It is graded on 5 point Likert scale ranging from (1 = none of the time to 5= all of the time). The score ranges from 14 to 70. Items are scored positively. Higher score indicates a higher level of mental well-being. Tannant et al. (2007) given cronbach's alpha coefficients for Warwick-Edinburg

Mental Well-being Scale .91 and test retest reliability was .85. Personal feeling questionnaire-2 (Harder and Lewis, 1987) is consisted of 22 items. Its response format is graded on 5 point Likert scale. Item number 2, 4, 8, 11, 17, 22, measuring guilt proneness and items no 1, 3, 6, 7, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 21 are scored for shame proneness, while item number 5, 9, 13, 15, 19, 20 are fillers and remained unscored. PFQ-2 guilt subscale have Cronbach's alpha of .85 (Harder & Lewis, 1987).

### H. Procedure

Data was collected from both private and public sector universities, schools, training centres and colleges of different cities. Dual informed consent was obtained, from concerned authorities in the targeted institutes and from participants as well. Then, all the participants were informed about the purpose and nature of the study. Informed consent was taken in written and proper instructions were given to the participants of study. They were requested to give their true responses and were taken in confidence about the confidentiality of the data. Gratitude was payed after completion of data.

### 3. RESULTS

Table 1 Psychometric Properties for Scales

Scale	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range	Cronbach's $\alpha$
Perceived Social Support	70.31	7.01	23-70	.701
Psychological Well Being	71.23	8.49	22-74	.713
Guilt	73.41	8.76	26-80	.728

Table 1 indicate psychometric properties of the scales used in current study. The Cronbach's a value for Perceived Social Support, Psychological Well Being and Guilt scale was sequentially .701(>.70), .713 (>.70), .728(>.70) which shows high internal consistency.

Table 2 Correlations for Study Variables

Variables	<i>N</i>	1	2	3
Perceived Social Support	308	-	.376*	.454**
Psychological Well. Being	308	-	-	.684**
Guilt	308	-	-	-

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$

Table 2 revealed that perceived social support has significant positive correlation with psychological wellbeing ( $r = .376$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and significant positive correlation with guilt ( $r = .454$ ,  $p < .01$ ), while psychological wellbeing have also significant positive correlation with guilt ( $r = .684$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

Table 3 Mean, Standard Deviation and One-Way Analysis of Variance in Perceived Social Support, Psychological wellbeing and Guilt

	Adolescence	Early Adulthood	Middle Adulthood	Late Adulthood			
Variables	<i>M</i> <i>SD</i>	<i>M</i> <i>SD</i>	<i>M</i> <i>SD</i>	<i>M</i> <i>SD</i>	<i>F</i> (3,305)	$\eta$	Post-Hoc
Perceived Social Support	64.00 13.16	59.00 6.35	56.00 12.72	51.37 6.88	3.102*	.21	1>2>3>4
Psychological wellbeing	50.57 12.97	52.62 9.78	50.28 15.51	44.40 14.15	3.111*	.22	1<2>3<4
Guilt	51.37 6.88	56.85 14.25	59.00 6.35	67.00 15.88	3.292*	.24	1<2<3<4

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$

Table 3 shows mean, standard deviation and *F*-values for Perceived Social Support, Psychological wellbeing and Guilt across different age groups. Results indicated significant mean differences across age groups on Perceived Social Support with  $F(3,305) = 3.102$ ,  $p < .05$ . Findings revealed that adolescences scored higher on Perceived Social Support as compared to early, middle and late adults. There were also significant mean differences across age groups on Psychological Wellbeing with  $F(3,305) = 3.111$ ,  $p < .05$ . Early adults scored higher on Psychological Wellbeing as compared to adolescences, middle and late adults. Significant mean differences across age groups on Guilt with  $F(3,305) = 3.29$ ,  $p < .05$  were also revealed. Late adults scored higher on Guilt as compared to adolescences, middle and late adults. The value of  $\eta$  and post hoc comparisons also indicated significant mean differences of each group with other Three Groups.

Table 4 Mean Comparisons of Men and Women on Perceived Social Support, Psychological wellbeing and Guilt

	Men	Women			
Variables	<i>M</i> <i>SD</i>	<i>M</i> <i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i> (306)	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Perceived Social Support	54.26 9.32	42.00 14.27	2.55	0.11	0.55
Psychological Wellbeing	54.80 10.64	60.40 10.71	2.52	0.20	0.52
Guilt	55.20 11.49	62.00 13.00	2.58	0.12	0.54

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$

Table 4 revealed significant mean differences on Perceived Social Support, Psychological wellbeing and Guilt with  $t(306) = 2.55$ ,  $p < .05$ . Findings showed women score higher on Perceived Social Support ( $M=42.00$ ,  $SD=14.27$ ), Psychological Wellbeing ( $M=60.40$ ,  $SD=10.71$ ) and Guilt ( $M=62.00$ ,  $SD=13.00$ ) as compared to men which score lower on Perceived



Social Support ( $M=54.26$ ,  $SD=9.32$ ), Psychological Wellbeing ( $M=54.80$ ,  $SD=10.64$ ) and Guilt ( $M=55.20$ ,  $SD=11.49$ ). For all variables the value of Cohen's  $d$  demonstrated medium size effect.

#### **4. DISCUSSIONS**

Perceived Social Support, Psychological wellbeing were both found positively related among adolescences and adults. It has been proposed in a previous research that the perception of social support is important for well-being (Diener and Oishi, 2005). Psychological wellbeing and Guilt were also positively related among all taken ages. Psychological wellbeing involves optimal functioning and growth while guilt involves self-consciousness or self-reflection feeling over things that have done or should have done. Research indicated that guilt was associated with positive psychological outcomes, the findings are evident to prove theory of guilt being adaptive (Tabik et al., 2016). Perceived Social Support and guilt were also positively related among adolescences and adults. Current research was centric to find relationship between Perceived Social Support and guilt, guilt is considered important to maintain balance between others and self-interests, hence is it is playing functional role in mental health. Perceived social support and social bonds are positively related to mental and physical health (Cohen and Janicki-Deverts, 2009; Umberson and Karas Montez, 2010). Significant age differences on level of, Psychological wellbeing and Guilt were found among adolescences and adults. Level of Perceived Social Support was found higher in adolescences. The reasons for these results could be in terms of having more connections to pursuit the sense of affiliation, the core sources for adolescences are family, college, staff and peers, sports, social, cultural groups and organizations and online social networks. In adolescents' studies, social support is considered as a demonstration of community social capital (Ellonen, Kääriäinen, & Autio, 2008). Late adults were lower on level of perceived social support as compared to other age groups. Research also indicated older people have smaller networks than younger people (Lang & Baltes, 1997) Level of Psychological wellbeing was higher in early adults. Literature shows that the age group of 18–21 obtained higher score in all dimensions on Psychological Well-Being Scale (De-Juanas et al., 2020). García-Moya et al. (2015) imply that the creation of pleasant experiences in young people's environments, which support their perception of their life's purpose and direction and the setting of their own objectives, can increase psychological well-being. Late adults were lower on psychological wellbeing level. In older age, self-growth is not contributing much and that could be reason of their Psychological Wellbeing lower level. Research indicated that decline in PWB was significant in oldest age group (Snowden et al., 2010). On level of Guilt, Late Adults score higher than other age groups. As time grew, people have more time to reflect on different things but there is no way back, this higher level of guilt could also be in terms of burden on other family members. A study revealed that all the mothers spoke of feeling grateful for the care received by their family but at the same time they felt guilty for being a burden to their daughters. Overall, the mothers hoped they could be less burden for their family (Ward-Griffin et al., 2006) Significant gender differences on level of Perceived Social Support, Psychological wellbeing and Guilt were also observed. Research also indicated that compared to men, women have more extensive and diverse social networks, more social

support and more friends (Caetano et al., 2013). Level of Psychological Wellbeing and guilt was also higher in women. In previous research it is stated that women scored higher than men in personal growth and positive relations with others (Matud et al., 2019). In another study it is also stated that women have feelings of guilt then men (Women Guilty of Feeling Too Guilty, Study Shows, n.d.).

## 5. CONCLUSION

The present study observed relationship between Perceived Social Support, Psychological wellbeing and Guilt. The strong positive correlation between all three variables is supported. On the basis of our findings, we could suggest, an emphasis should be placed on improving Psychological Wellbeing as it positively associated with many adaptive functions of life. Perceived Social Support and Guilt are also contributing towards psychological positive outcome.

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