

Impact of Perceived Social Support and Self Esteem of Management Graduates

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ABSTRACT

Management graduates in higher education institutions face crucial period of their career in developing themselves psychologically, professionally, physiologically and socially. This phase influences their personal well-being, adjustment to the academics and adaptation. Institutes at this stage help graduates do have overall development leading to employability and building career. Being at the threshold of life between academics and job, graduates require social support from teachers, peers, family and friends which impact their self-esteem to become employable. This study is an attempt to assess the perception of the management graduates on social support system and its impact on their self-esteem. Study included 200 management graduates from Andhra Pradesh management institutes. The results reveal that perceived social support and self-esteem significantly impact the overall development of the graduate and specifically employability. Results suggest that, if a graduate is having supportive family, peers and teachers, she/he is able to become more confident in handling themselves and becoming employable.

Keywords: Management graduates, employability, social support, self-esteem

INTRODUCTION

Perceived social support among management students refers to the degree to which they believe they have adequate support from their social network, including friends, family, and the broader university community. This belief in available support is crucial for student well-being, academic success, and overall adjustment to the university environment.

Key aspects of perceived social support in management students:

Sources of Support: Management students may perceive social support from various sources, including family, friends, classmates, teachers, mentors, and even the university community. All these support systems shall help the students to be self-reliant, confident and resilient.

Types of Support: Perceived social support can manifest in different forms, such as emotional support (feeling understood and cared for), informational support (receiving advice and guidance), esteem support (having one's sense of competence enhanced), and tangible support (receiving practical help).

Impact on Well-being: Perceived social support is linked to improved mental health, reduced stress, and increased academic achievement among management students.

Role in Academic Success: Support from various sources, including parents, teachers, and peers, can positively influence academic outcomes like course completion and academic performance, according to one study on college students.

Gender Differences: Some research suggests that female students may report higher levels of perceived social support from significant others compared to male students, potentially reflecting different support needs and preferences.

The Importance of Social Support

Social support encompasses emotional, informational, and practical assistance from family, friends, and communities. It serves as a protective factor against mental health challenges and enhances coping abilities. Key benefits include:

Stress Reduction: Having a reliable support network can alleviate stress and anxiety by providing a sense of security and trust.

Improved Self-Esteem: Validation and acceptance from others bolster self-worth and confidence.

Depression Prevention: Meaningful relationships can prevent feelings of isolation, a known risk factor for depression.

Support During Adversity: Social connections offer emotional support and practical assistance during challenging times.

Research indicates that social support not only directly protects mental health but also indirectly influences well-being by enhancing self-esteem.

Defining Self-esteem: Self-esteem, a student's sense of their own worth, is crucial for academic and personal success. For management students, it's particularly important as it influences their leadership potential and overall performance. High self-esteem is linked to better motivation, stronger relationships, and a more positive outlook, all of which are beneficial for aspiring managers.

The Role of Self-Esteem: Self-esteem refers to the value individuals place on themselves and their abilities. It is closely linked to mental health and interpersonal relationships. High self-esteem fosters resilience, optimism, and the ability to navigate life's challenges. Conversely, low self-esteem is associated with increased vulnerability to stress and mental health issues. Self-esteem also mediates the relationship between social support and well-being. For instance, individuals with physical disabilities who receive strong social support often experience higher self-esteem, leading to improved subjective well-being.

Impact of Perceived Social Support on Self-Esteem

Perceived social support has a positive impact on the self-esteem of management students. Studies suggest that higher perceived social support is associated with higher self-esteem. This positive relationship is thought to be due to the protective role of social support in mental health and the ability of social support to foster resilience and positive psychological outcomes

Positive Correlation: Research consistently shows a positive correlation between perceived social support and self-esteem. This means that as students perceive more social support, their self-esteem tends to increase, and vice versa.

Mediating Role: Self-esteem can act as a mediator between social support and other psychological well-being outcomes. For example, individuals with low social support are more likely to experience low self-esteem, which can further worsen their psychological well-being.

Impact on Psychological Well-being: Perceived social support is linked to better overall psychological well-being, including reduced levels of depression, anxiety, and stress.

Building Resilience: Social support can help students build resilience, allowing them to cope with academic challenges, stressful situations, and setbacks more effectively.

Sources of Social Support: Social support can come from various sources, including family, friends, peers, and even teachers or mentors. The type and strength of these relationships can significantly impact self-esteem.

The Interplay Between Social Support and Self-Esteem

The relationship between social support and self-esteem is reciprocal. Positive social interactions enhance self-esteem, which in turn encourages individuals to seek and maintain supportive relationships. This cycle reinforces mental health and emotional resilience

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Indian studies on perceived social support consistently demonstrate its positive influence on mental health, well-being, and resilience, particularly among young adults, pregnant women, and individuals with chronic conditions. High perceived social support is linked to lower levels of loneliness, depression, stress, and better coping abilities.

Sethi. A (2023) conducted research to know the Role of perceived social support in self-esteem and resilience among young adults and whether there is any gender difference in this case or not. The result analysed total of 100 (n=100) number of participants (50 females and 50 males), Indians by nationality and between the age range (18-26) years. For data collection, tools used were Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, Rosenberg self-esteem scale and Nicholson McBride Resilience Questionnaire (NMRQ). The quantitative analysis was done using t test and Pearson's product-moment correlation. The result postulated that Perceived Social support plays a positive role and have a positive relationship with Self-esteem and Resilience. The higher the perceived social support, more will be the self-esteem of a person and has much more abilities to cope with problems in faster pace, than in individuals with less perceived social support. There are no significant gender differences found among them. Also, Perceived Social support has a positive correlation with self-esteem and resilience among young adults

Das, D (2024) investigated the relationship between an individual's sense of well-being and various factors related to their social environment, including parental relationships, peer connections, and perception of support from friends, neighbors, and institutions in the community. The analysis was conducted using data from the Young Lives Study in India. The final analysis included a sample of 894 participants aged 21–22 years. The study's results, obtained through an ordinal logistic regression model, revealed significant positive associations between subjective well-being and perceived support from friends and government organizations. Findings suggest that social support groups for youth, which provide opportunities to connect with others in their community, can contribute to their overall well-being.

As per the study by McLean, J, et.al. (2022) social support is consistently associated with positive outcomes for students, in terms of wellbeing and academic achievement. For first year students, social support offers a way to deal with stressors associated with the challenge of transitioning to university. Both male and female students reported moderate levels of social support and perceived stress, while those with higher levels of social support reported lower levels of stress. Gender differences were apparent in both the levels and sources of social support that students perceived as available to them. Female students reported higher levels of social support and stress than males, suggesting that university initiatives for enhancing social support and dealing with stress may require a gender-specific focus. The results are discussed in terms of recommendations for developing students' social supports during first year, in order to mitigate for the experience of stress and to enhance student experience of their educational journey. Social support, derived from families, friends and the academic community, can directly impact student experiences during education, with positive impacts on both wellbeing and academic success (Brailovskaia et al., 2018; Maymon et al., 2019; McCoy et al., 2014; Scanlon et al., 2020; Maymon et al., 2019)

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To study the importance of self-esteem and its role in employability

To assess the impact of perceived social support and self-esteem of management graduates

To propose measures to enhance the self-esteem of management graduates

RESEARCH METHOD

280 management graduates were taken as sample from the rural regions of Andhra Pradesh. Questionnaire was circulated to fill their responses. 144 were female and 136 were boys. Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support developed by Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet & Farley, 1988 and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale are employed. Spearman correlation test is used to find the correlations between the perceived social support and self-esteem. Data is analysed to arrive at conclusions and propose recommendations to develop social support system and build good self-esteem.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Data analysis revealed that there is a positive relationship between the management graduates perceived social support and self-esteem. $R=0.041$, indicates the significant relationship. This implies that higher the social support higher the self-esteem of the management graduates.

The researchers found that there is a positive correlation between perceptions of social support and the self-esteem of university graduates. A positive correlation indicates that if the value of one variable increases, the value of the other variable will also increase. For this reason, it can be predicted that the higher the perception of social support an individual has, especially university graduates, the higher the self-esteem.

Individuals with high self-esteem fight for their lives persistently and are able to face all potential threats. A consequence model of self-esteem suggests that positive social support can result in higher self-esteem. In particular, higher self-esteem can lead individuals to develop positive social support networks because of their belief in their social value. Whereas individuals with lower self-esteem have difficulty building positive social support systems because they usually avoid social interactions due to fear of rejection by others. Then based on the results of the analysis, it was found that the three dimensions of the variable social support perception showed a significance to the self-esteem of university graduates. With the increasing need for knowledge in workers, the demand for competent new university graduates is the key to human capital that has grown substantially. High self-esteem is associated with feelings of certainty and resilience to stressful or uncertain states. Individuals with high self-esteem have relatively more self-confidence. Based on the results of the analysis of research data and the results of the discussion above, it can be concluded that good self-esteem comes from the perception of social support that an individual has, especially among university graduates, is important.

There are two factors that influence a person's self-esteem, first internal factors such as intrinsic factors which are characterized by qualities that early adulthood may have inherently, such as social competence or positive identity. Extrinsic factors are those characterized by environmental aspects of young adult life such as the support, boundaries and expectations of families and educational institutions. This is confirmed through the results of the score interval category on the three dimensions of perceptions of social support, namely friends, family, and significant others, which shows that in the category of significant others dimensions, university graduates who are in the high category are 83.3%. There are 85.8% of the family dimension category of university graduates who are in the high category, and the dimension category of friends of university graduates who are classified as high category is 73.3%. Various studies estimated the contribution of individual developmental factors, both internal and external, which is associated with the maintenance of high self-esteem in early adulthood.

Based on the results of the research and discussion above, it can be said that the perception of social support which consists of three dimensions, namely family, friends, and significant others has a positive correlation to one's self-esteem, especially in this study are university graduates. The perception that the individual has about how much support he feels from his immediate or social environment is able to influence the assessment of his self-esteem, so that the higher the perception of social support obtained by university graduates, more higher self-esteem too.

SUGGESTIONS

To the Institutes/Universities

Encourage Peer Support Networks: Institutions should foster environments that promote peer interactions and support networks among students.

Enriching curriculum framework: Redesigning curriculum framework in such a way that students work in diverse teams and overcome their stigmas

Faculty Mentorship: Establishing mentorship programs can provide students with guidance and emotional support, enhancing their self-esteem.

Counseling Services: Providing access to counseling services can help students manage stress and build resilience.

To the management graduates

Develop family relationships: Spending time with family, siblings, grand parents etc. shall be a great help and advice shall support to a great extent in personal and professional life

Cultivate Meaningful Relationships: Engage in team activities that foster genuine connections, such as joining clubs or volunteering.

Practice Self-Compassion: Acknowledge and accept imperfections, treating oneself with kindness and understanding.

Seek Professional Support: Therapy or counseling can provide tools to improve self-esteem and build supportive networks.

Engage in Social Activities: Participate in family gatherings, community events to expand your social circle.

Engage in Networking Opportunities: Participate in seminars, workshops, and alumni events to build a strong professional network.

Seek Mentorship: Establish relationships with faculty members, industry professionals, or senior students who can provide guidance and support.

Practice Self-Reflection: Regularly assess personal achievements and areas for improvement to foster a positive self-image.

Participate in Group Activities: Collaborate with peers on projects and extracurricular activities to strengthen social bonds and enhance teamwork skills.

In conclusion, perceived social support is a critical factor influencing self-esteem among management graduates. While direct studies are limited, existing research underscores its importance in academic and personal development.

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