



Adolescent Quality of Life: Unraveling the Impact of Social Skills and Perceived Social Support

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received: November 25, 2023

Revised: January 24, 2024

Accepted: January 28, 2024

Available Online: January 29, 2024

Keywords:

Social Skills

Perceived Social Support

Quality of Life

Funding:

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

ABSTRACT

Adolescence is a critical developmental phase, where social interactions profoundly influence well-being. Understanding how social skills and perceived support shape adolescent quality of life is vital for comprehensive mental health initiatives. Current research aims to elucidate the intricate interplay between these factors to enhance support strategies and improve overall adolescent well-being. Involving 500 adolescents of both genders, this cross-sectional study utilized purposive sampling. Data collection employed a self-designed demographic sheet and standardized scales (MPSS, Social Skills scales by Ronaldo Rigii, WHO-QOL). Employing descriptive and inferential statistics, including normality tests, correlation coefficients, T-tests, and regression analysis, the study uncovered a strong positive correlation ($r = .513$, $p < 0.01$) between perceived social support and Quality of Life. Additionally, a robust positive correlation ($r = .61$, $p < 0.01$) was found between perceived social support and social skills, indicating their interconnectedness in enhancing life satisfaction. The study reveals that perceived social support (PSS) significantly predicts both quality of life and social skills among participants. It emphasizes that higher perceived social support levels strongly relate to better quality of life. Additionally, gender doesn't appear to impact perceived social support levels in the studied population. In light of these findings, it is recommended that future studies focus on developing and implementing strategies that leverage the identified mechanisms, offering practical pathways to enhance individuals' lives. Moreover, current research is a call to action for researchers to prioritize investigations into the specific mediating factors that link perceived social support, quality of life, and social skills, providing a foundation for targeted interventions aimed at improving overall well-being.

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1. Introduction

Adolescence is a critical developmental phase, where social interactions profoundly influence well-being. Understanding how social skills and perceived support shape adolescent quality of life is vital for comprehensive mental health initiatives. Social skills encompass positive approaches to connecting with others and fostering productive interactions, encompassing verbal and nonverbal cues in social contexts. They aim to enhance an individual's capacity to engage within their community. These skills foster improved communication, nurturing stronger interpersonal connections. Proficiency in social skills enhances both social interactions and overall functioning, enabling individuals to navigate diverse social settings and behaviors effectively. Understanding appropriate social conduct across situations is a fundamental aspect of these skills (Dowd & Green, 2022). According to

the definition, there are three types of social support: informational, instrumental, and emotional. > Being able to rely on and trust someone when necessary is what is meant by emotional support. > Material, objective, and genuine support that an individual receives from others is referred to as instrumental support. > Informational support refers to obtaining crucial knowledge via social engagement with other people. Study conducted by Sarafino (2011), social support refers to the assistance that people receive from other people or groups in their environment to help them feel comfortable, cared for, loved, and appreciated. Positive expressions from friends, empathy, care, and attention are examples of forms of support that help someone feel valued and at ease. These feelings of worthiness eventually result in a positive self-perception and attitude toward oneself and his surroundings. According to Cole, Bendezú, Ram, and Chow (2017); Goldstein et al. (2020), among others, social support can be acquired from peers, spouses, family, coworkers, and even social media.

A "general well-being," which is synonymous with total life satisfaction, happiness, contentment, or success, is what we characterize as quality of life. This overall state of well-being, which can be expressed as $QOL = f(IC + "O" QOL + "S" QOL)$, is described as the product of an individual's environmental supports (i.e., parents, siblings, friends, etc.) and individual characteristics (i.e., age, sex, social/cultural background, level of cognitive, adaptive functioning, educational status, health conditions). Objective quality of life (QOL) dimensions, which comprise the seven life domains of health, living environment, family, social and emotional relationships, education, employment, and leisure, have an impact on these individual traits. Measurements of satisfaction in each of these categories and observations can be used to examine the objective QOL indicators. Adolescents' quality of life (QoL) has been found to be influenced by perceived social support and social relationships (Helgeson, 2003). Research has indicated that having a high number of social resources available to them helps ensure that vulnerable adolescents maintain good QoL (Ferrans, Zerwic, Wilbur, & Larson, 2005).

Mendonça and Simões (2019) discovered that among youth from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, QoL was positively correlated with the availability of social support from multiple sources. However, they only recognized three social support categories, with weak distinctions between significant sources. Social skills are crucial for students to have when pursuing further education as well as when applying for jobs in the future. Peers and family support are two factors in the surrounding environment that affect the development of social skills (Rahmi, 2021). Peers are crucial for kids with special needs because they can provide a setting for social learning. Social skills that are hard to acquire in a non-authoritarian setting can be developed by people with special needs through interaction with peers (Mendonça & Simões, 2019). Among the variables mentioned in the literature as either directly or indirectly influencing the well-being of adolescents from various household types are social skills and social support assessments. Numerous research has discovered strong correlations between teenagers' wellbeing from various household types and a strong set of social skills. Del Prette and Del Prette (2010) define social skills as a person's varied range of behaviors that can support social competence, which leads to positive, healthy relationships.

2. Literature Review

Abaci, N. investigated how social support and emotional intelligence impact adolescents' life satisfaction, aiming to compare structural models involving these variables within a sample of 1397 middle school students aged 12 to 16 (52% female, 48% male). Findings underscore the vital role of emotional clarity, repair, and familial support in nurturing adolescent well-being, emphasizing the significance of supportive family and school environments. The study advocates for educational initiatives promoting emotional competence to aid students in managing emotions and highlights the pivotal role of support staff in this process. A study revealed that Adolescent Social Skills, Motivation to Learn, and Perception of Social Support significantly impact school performance, particularly in students with regular progression, emphasizing the potential for targeted interventions to enhance academic competences and social skills for improved educational outcomes (Medeiros, Soares, & Monteiro, 2021). A study's findings underscore that perceived social support during adolescence, notably from friends, serves as a catalyst for fostering positive mental health outcomes in early adulthood, paving the way for enhanced well-being and resilience (Jakobsen, Hansen, & Andersen, 2022). Jabeen et al. (2020) study explored the link between

social support and mental health in university students, involving 150 individuals aged 18 to 30 from various Rawalpindi and Islamabad universities. Utilizing the Translated Provisions of Social Relations Scale (assessing peer and family support) and the Translated Mental Health Inventory (evaluating psychological well-being and distress), results revealed a negative correlation between peer support and psychological distress, while family support showed a positive association. Overall, social support emerged as a robust predictor of mental health in college students, with females displaying higher levels of peer, fami Burke, O'Malley, Folb, Hagen, and Rabinovich (2019) study, the use of the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) revealed non-zero confidence intervals and discriminant validity scores below 0.85. Based on the researcher's understanding of existing literature, an association between social support and quality of life is evident. This study, however, seeks to uncover how social support contributes to enhancing both quality of life and social skills among students.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1. Theories of social support, social skills and quality of life

3.1.1. Social Support Theory

This theory delves into the ways social ties and interactions offer psychological, emotional, and practical aid during challenging situations. It emphasizes how supportive relationships and networks contribute to well-being (Sarason, 2013).

3.1.2. Stress Buffering Theory

This theory highlights how social support functions as a buffer against stress. It posits that supportive relationships alleviate the impact of stressors, reducing their negative effects on an individual's mental and physical health (Cohen & Wills, 1985).

3.1.3. Social Integration Theory

Focused on the broader societal context, this theory emphasizes the significance of an individual's integration into society and community networks. It suggests that greater social integration leads to improved well-being and reduced likelihood of negative outcomes (Blau, 1960)

3.1.4. Transactional Model of Stress and Coping

This model examines how individuals manage stress through interactions with their social environment. It emphasizes the dynamic relationship between stressors, coping strategies, and the support received from social networks (Goh, Sawang, & Oei, 2010).

3.1.5. Crisis Support Theory

Specifically addressing crises or acute stressors, this theory explores how social support plays a crucial role during times of emergency or trauma, offering aid and resources to individuals in need (Ell, 1996).

3.2. Social Skills

3.2.1. Social Learning Theory

This theory, proposed by Albert Bandura, suggests that social skills are acquired through observation, imitation, and reinforcement. Individuals learn behaviors by observing others and the consequences of their actions, shaping their social skills accordingly (Akers & Jennings, 2015).

3.2.2. Social Information Processing Theory

This theory focuses on cognitive processes involved in social interactions. It suggests that individuals interpret social cues, process information, and generate responses based on learned social scripts, influencing their social skills and behavior (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978).

3.2.3. Socio-ecological Theory

This theory considers the influence of various environmental factors on social skill development. It emphasizes the impact of family, peers, schools, and societal norms in shaping and reinforcing social behaviors (Costanza, 2014).

3.3. Quality of Life

3.3.1. Biopsychosocial Model

This model considers biological, psychological, and social factors in determining an individual's quality of life. It emphasizes the interconnectedness of physical health, mental well-being, and social interactions in shaping overall life satisfaction (Wade & Halligan, 2017).

3.3.2. Subjective Well-being Theory

This theory focuses on individuals' subjective experiences and perceptions of life satisfaction, happiness, and fulfillment. It considers factors like positive emotions, life satisfaction, and a sense of purpose as components of overall well-being (Veenhoven, 2008).

3.3.3. Capability Approach

Proposed by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum, this approach evaluates quality of life based on an individual's capabilities and opportunities to achieve functioning and fulfill their potential. It emphasizes enhancing people's freedoms and abilities rather than solely focusing on material wealth or happiness (Robeyns, 2006).

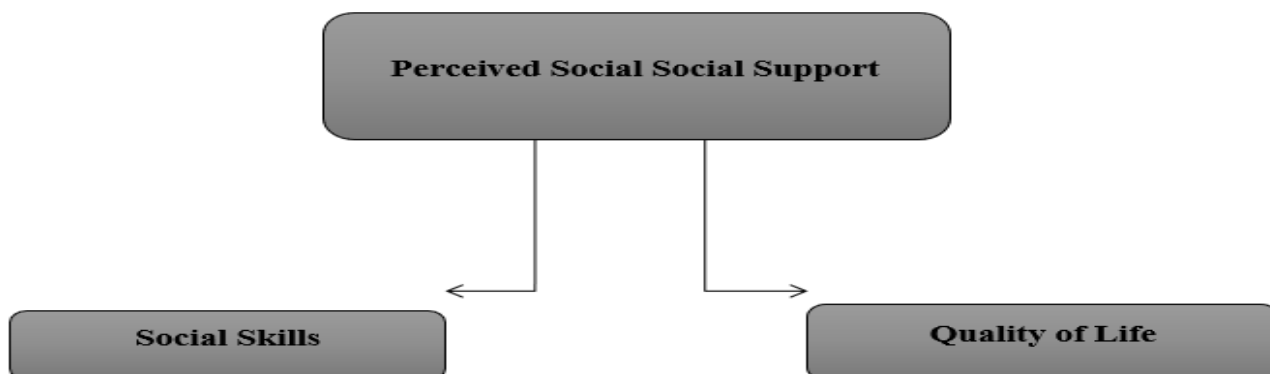
3.3.4. Eudemonic Well-being Theory

This theory, associated with Aristotle, centers on the concept of eudemonia, or flourishing. It emphasizes personal growth, self-realization, and the pursuit of meaning and purpose as essential components of a high-quality life (Strelhow, Sarriera, & Casas, 2020).

3.3.5. Sociological Perspectives

Sociological theories examine how social structures, inequalities, and societal norms influence an individual's quality of life. These perspectives consider the impact of social relationships, social support, and access to resources on overall well-being (Doing, 2001).

Figure 1: Theoretical Model in Current Research



The ongoing research is built upon the Social Learning Theory, indicating that strong social skills positively impact how individuals perceive social support. Additionally, it draws from the Social Support Theory, emphasizing how perceived support significantly affects different aspects of individuals' quality of life, encompassing mental and social well-being.

4. Methodology

4.1. Research Design

The ongoing study utilized a quantitative research methodology within a cross-sectional research design. It employed a methodical approach to examine variables at a single point in time, offering a snapshot of the studied factors.

4.2. Population

The researcher selected a sample of 500 students, equally comprising both male and female participants, using purposive sampling. The sample size was determined through G-power analysis to ensure its appropriateness for the study.

4.3. Measures

4.3.1. Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support

Pushkarev, Zimet, Kuznetsov, and Yaroslavskaya (2020) developed the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, comprising 12 items that assess the perceived adequacy of social support from family, friends, and significant others. Respondents use a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from 0 for strongly disagree to 5 for strongly agree). To derive mean scores: for the Significant Other Subscale, sum items 1, 2, 5, and 10, then divide by 4; for the Family Subscale, sum items 3, 4, 8, and 11, then divide by 4; for the Friends Subscale, sum items 6, 7, 9, and 12, then divide by 4. Finally, to obtain the Total Scale score, sum all 12 items and divide by 12.

4.3.2. Social skills scales

The social skills scale was developed by Ronald Riggio in 1986. It is a 12-item measure of the nonverbal (emotional skills) and verbal (social skills); using a 5-point Likert scale (1=true, 2=mostly true, 3=about halfway true, 4=slightly true, 5=not true at all).

4.3.3. Quality of life scale

The quality-of-life scale was developed by the World Health Organization (WHO). It consists of 26 items. It is a 5-point Likert scale that ranges from very poor to very good.

4.3.4. Procedure

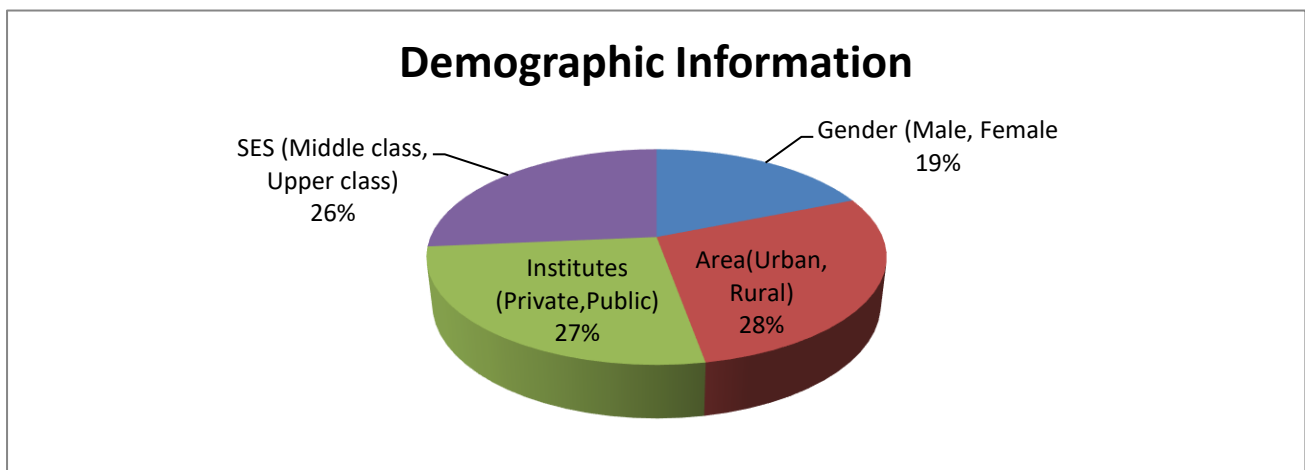
The empirical findings were in line with our primary variables: social skills, perceived social support, and quality of life. Prior to data collection, we obtained permissions from scale authors via email and sought approvals from institutions such as Govt. Murray College Sialkot, University of Management and Technology Sialkot, and University of Sialkot for response collection. Both male and female adolescents participated, with thorough verbal and written informed consent obtained. Detailed instructions were provided to guide participants in providing responses, ensuring adherence to ethical guidelines throughout the research process. The collected data underwent analysis using SPSS and AMOS for comprehensive evaluation.

5. Results

5.1. Descriptives

The pie chart illustrates the distribution of various demographic information percentages obtained

Figure 2



5.2. Correlation Analysis

Table 1 explains the findings of Pearson correlation ($r = .51$, $P < 0.01$) indicating that there was a statistically significant relationship between Social skills ($M = 2.37$, $SD = .79$) and Social support ($M = 2.38$, $SD = .78$), and the relationship was positive. The strength of the relationship is high rated ($.51 < r$). Results indicate if there is higher Social support in the population their Social skills will also be improve. A Pearson correlation coefficient was evaluated to assess the linear relationship between Social-support and quality of life. There was a positive correlation between the two variables ($r = .61$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 1: Correlation analysis between Social Skills, Perceived social-support and Quality of life

| | N | M | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---------------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|
| social skills | 500 | 2.37 | .79 | 1 | .612 | .510 |
| QoL | 500 | 1.90 | .69 | .510 | 1 | .513 |
| MPPS | 500 | 2.38 | .78 | .612 | .513 | 1 |

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

5.3. Overall summary

In essence, the study unveils the pivotal role of social support as a mediating force in shaping an individual's lifestyle for the better.

5.3.1. Linear Regression

The analysis in Table 2 revealed a significant linear regression predicting quality of life from the sample's social support and social skills. With a statistically significant F-value ($F(1,498) = 1479.87, p < 0.05$) and an R^2 of .74 and $F(1458) = 1475.70, P < 0.05$ R^2 of .73 in our sample, the findings suggest that adolescents with greater social support tend to develop stronger social skills, thereby experiencing an enhanced quality of life.

Table 2: Linear Regression Analysis for Social Skills, Perceived Social support, Quality of Life

| Measures | B | SE | B | t | p | 95%CI |
|--------------------------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|--------------|
| Constant | .31 | .09 | | 2.41 | .01* | (.03,.31) |
| Social skills | .74 | .01 | .88 | 38.47 | .00* | (.67,.76) |
| Perceived Social support | .73 | .01 | .87 | 39.42 | .00* | (.68,.79) |

Note. *Significance at 0.05, N= 500

6. Discussion

The intricate interplay between social dynamics, individual capabilities, and overall well-being is a compelling facet illuminated by numerous studies. Social skills stand as a linchpin in this narrative, showcasing their profound impact on enriching the quality of life, transcending limitations and resource constraints. Notably, research published in the Applied Research in Quality of Life journal shed light on a positive association between social class and life quality, emphasizing the role of perceived social status in shaping well-being. This link isn't merely a matter of perception; it extends to tangible benefits, aiding stress recovery, fostering healthy behaviors, and even curbing risks such as violent tendencies, echoing the sentiments echoed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Wingen, English, Estal-Muñoz, Mareva, and Kassianos (2021) study further fortifies the pivotal role of social skills, affirming a positive correlation with the quality of life among adolescents. Their findings echo the broader impact showcased by Wahyuni and Mangunsong (2022), who underscored the correlation between parental involvement and the development of social skills in children with special needs, emphasizing the vital role of familial support structures. Perceived social support emerges as a linchpin in determining overall well-being across diverse demographics, as illuminated by Jalali-Farahani et al. (2018). Their research revealed its far-reaching positive impacts on well-being, self-esteem, and emotional health, irrespective of gender, albeit with nuanced domain-specific influences.

The pioneering work of Cohen and Wills (1985) reinforces the transformative potential of social support, showcasing its substantial influence on various facets of well-being, from combatting depression to enhancing life satisfaction. Moreover, exploration into the role of perceived social support among students underscores its multifaceted impact. It not only shapes general self-efficacy but also operates through mediating factors like stress perception and psychological resilience, significantly impacting overall quality of life across genders. Within households, the depth of connections and the breadth of social skills have consistently emerged as strong determinants of adolescent well-being, as evidenced by (Del Prette & Del Prette, 2010). These studies collectively highlight the pivotal role of social skills in fostering positive relationships, which, in turn, significantly contribute to an individual's overall quality of life. In conclusion, the comprehensive understanding underscores perceived social support's predictive power in influencing both quality of life and social skills among individuals. Elevated levels of perceived social support consistently correlate with improved quality of life, transcending gender disparities in their impact. These findings reflect the complex interplay of

social dynamics woven intricately into the fabric of human well-being. Importantly, all hypotheses were validated except for the role of gender.

7. Conclusion

This insightful study unveils a compelling correlation, illuminating the profound impact of perceived social support (PSS) on the dual dimensions of quality of life and social skills within the participant cohort. The findings resoundingly affirm that elevated levels of perceived social support are robustly associated with an enhanced quality of life, offering a poignant testament to the intricate interplay between interpersonal connections and individual well-being. Notably, the research transcends conventional gender norms, revealing a noteworthy revelation that gender does not wield a discernible influence on perceived social support levels within the studied population. This egalitarian observation adds a nuanced layer to our understanding, underscoring the universal nature of perceived social support as a pivotal determinant in shaping the fabric of well-lived lives. In essence, this study not only expands the empirical landscape but also beckons researchers and practitioners to reflect on the profound implications. It beckons us to recognize the transformative potential of cultivating and fortifying perceived social support networks, transcending gender boundaries, and fostering a collective journey toward enriched quality of life and refined social adeptness.

7.1. Recommendations

The study's revelations pave the way for future research avenues that could enrich our understanding of the interconnections between perceived social support, quality of life, and social skills. Investigating the underlying mediating factors between these variables would unravel the intricate mechanisms driving their interplay, shedding light on the pathways through which perceived social support impacts overall well-being and social competence. Longitudinal studies could offer valuable insights into the dynamic nature of these relationships, tracking changes over time and providing a deeper understanding of their evolution. Expanding the research scope to encompass diverse cultural contexts will help ascertain the universality of perceived social support's impact on quality of life and social skills, providing valuable cross-cultural insights. Additionally, further exploration into potential gender-related influences on these dynamics in different populations can offer nuanced perspectives. Moreover, designing and assessing intervention strategies tailored to enhance perceived social support could significantly contribute to improving overall well-being and social skills, warranting detailed evaluation of their efficacy in fostering positive outcomes.

7.2. Study Implications

The study's findings offer pivotal insights into how perceived social support significantly influences individuals' well-being and social skills, sparking several implications across diverse domains. Primarily, the emphasis on enhancing quality of life through strengthened perceived social support highlights the potential for interventions aimed at nurturing support networks. Tailored strategies focusing on boosting perceived social support hold promise for improving not just well-being but also social competencies. A notable discovery indicating gender neutrality in perceived support suggests that interventions enhancing social support could universally benefit individuals regardless of gender. Amplifying support systems within communities and institutional settings emerges as a key avenue to enhance overall well-being and foster better social skills. The interdisciplinary collaboration between psychology, sociology, and public health is crucial in further exploring and implementing interventions aimed at fortifying perceived social support. These findings also hold substantial implications for policy and program development, steering initiatives to bolster social support structures across various settings. Lastly, the study sets the stage for future research, advocating for a deeper exploration of the intricate factors that influence perceived social support, especially within diverse cultural, contextual, and socio-economic landscapes, shaping the well-being of different populations.

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