

A Correlation Study on Perceived Social Support and Fear of Negative Evaluation among Young Adults.

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ABSTRACT

Perceived social support refers to the perception of individuals being cared for valued and supported by others, while fear of negative evaluation is fear of being judged by others. Young adulthood is a developmental period marked by social interactions and evaluative concerns. The main objective of the study is to identify the relationship between perceived social support and fear of negative evaluation among young adults. The samples of the study were 170 young adults aged between 18 – 26 years were chosen through a simple random sampling technique. The tools used in the study were by Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MPSS) developed by Zimet et.al., (1988) and The Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale (BFNE) by Leary in 1983. The data were collected through survey method. The Findings of the study shows that there is a positive correlation ($r= 0.38$) between perceived social support and fear of negative evaluation. The study highlights the importance of strengthening social support systems and implementing psychological interventions to help young adults manage negative evaluative fears and enhance emotional resilience.

Keywords: Perceived social support, Fear of negative evaluation, Young adults

I. INTRODUCTION

Young adulthood is a developmental stage that usually lasts from the ages of 18 to 26. As they strive for financial independence, take on adult duties and foster their relationships and personal growth, young people with strong support networks are able to be emotionally stable and resilient. During this period, people start to make their own identities, make important life decisions and lay the groundwork for their futures. Young adulthood is influenced by both external and internal factors. External factors include societal expectations and opportunities for advancement in education and employment, while internal factors include emotional and cognitive development. A successful transition into maturity requires control of these factors. According to American Psychological Association, Social Support is the provision of assistance or comfort to others, typically to help them cope with biological, psychological and social stressors. Support may arise from any

interpersonal relationship in an individual's social network, involving family members, friends, neighbors, religious institutions, colleagues, caregivers, or support groups. It may take the form of practical help (e.g., doing chores, offering advice), that involves giving money or other direct material assistance and emotional support that allows the individual to feel valued, accepted and understood. "Perceived social support is defined as one's overall impressions on whether social network is supportive enough or not" (Sorias 1988b). According to American Psychological Association, fear is a basic, intense emotion aroused by the detection of imminent threat. The fear of negative evaluation (FNE) is considered to be a hallmark of social anxiety. Cognitive theories posit that this fear may result from biased information processing, particularly when anticipating a fearful event (Clark and McManus, 2002). Fear of negative evaluation (FNE), or fear of failure, also known as atychiphobia, is a psychological construct reflecting "apprehension about others' evaluations, distress over negative evaluations by others, and the expectation that others would evaluate one negatively". Watson and Friend (1969) defined fear of negative evaluation as "apprehension about others. In addition to a continual expectation of disapproval, it describes the worry and discomfort people experience when they fear being negatively regarded or assessed by others. Personality qualities including anxiety, submissiveness and social avoidance are frequently linked to Fear of Negative Evaluation. Individuals with high Fear of Negative Evaluation may steer clear of evaluation settings to avoid possible criticism because they are frequently very concerned with winning social approval. The early years of adulthood are crucial for self-reliance and personal development. The idea that young adults can have easily accessible emotional and practical support to improve their resilience, emotional stability and stress management was referred to as perceived social support. Negative evaluation anxiety is the dread of receiving a poor evaluation from others. Negative evaluation-related anxiety may be lessened by the perceived social support. The relationship between social support and fear of negative evaluation is still largely unexplored, as this study shows, underscoring the need for targeted research to better comprehend and deal with these issues.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Most of the studies were reviewed related to perceived social support and fear of negative evaluation. Majority of the studies were found using perceived social support correlated with other variable and also fear of negative evaluation correlated with another variable. Here some studies are mentioned to understand the correlation between perceived social support and fear of negative evaluation.

Masoomeh Azimi et.al., (2018) conducted a study on the relationship between perceived social support in the first pregnancy and fear of childbirth. The study aims to determine the relationship between perceived social support and fear of childbirth. The sample size of the study was 270 nulliparous pregnant. The present study used descriptive correlational study. The sample technique used in this study is convenience sampling method. The tools used in the study were Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support by Zimet et al., and the Wijma Delivery Expectancy/Experience Questionnaire. The Finding of the study shows that there is a significant correlation between perceived social support and fear of child birth.

Fikret Gulacto (2010) conducted the study on the effect of perceived social support on subjective well-being. The study aims to determine whether perceived social support is a meaningful predictor of subjective well-being. The data were collected via survey method. The study involved the 84 senior students studying at Erzincan University. The tools used in the study are subjective Well-Being Scale by Tuzgol-Dost and Multidimensional Perceived Social Support Scale by Zimet et al., The Finding of the study shows that perceived family support predicted subjective well-being, and on the other hand the support which was perceived towards a special person and perceived friend support did not predicted subjective well-being.

Akhtar Zaman and Dr. Bushra Khan (2025) conducted a study on Relationship between Perceived Social Support and Psychological Distress among Adolescent in Chitral. The study aims to examine the relationship between perceived social support and psychological distress among adolescents in Chitral. The Study used a cross-sectional survey research design. The study involved 400 participants aged 16 to 19 from various colleges in Chitral. The tools used in the study are Depression Anxiety and Stress Scale by Aslam et.al., and Multidimensional Perceived Social Support Scale by Zimet et al., The Finding of the study shows that there is a negative correlation ($r=-0.116^*$) between psychological distress and perceived social support.

Xin yi et.al., (2020) conducted a study on the roles of fear of negative evaluation and social anxiety in the relationship between self-compassion and loneliness: a serial mediation model. The study aims to investigate the relationship between self-compassion and adolescents' loneliness, as well as the mediating roles of fear of negative evaluation and social anxiety. The sample size of the study was 871 Chinese adolescents. The sampling technique used in this study were a convenience sampling method. The tools used in the study were self-report scale by Asher and Wheeler's, Self-Compassion Scale by Neff and Social Anxiety Scale by La Greca and Lopez. Finding of the study shows that mediating effects of fear of negative evaluation and social anxiety in the relationship between self-compassion and loneliness.

Radhika and Vigraanth Bapu (2023) conducted a study on Fear of Negative Evaluation and Perfectionism among Young adults in Kerala. The study aims to determine the relationship between fear of negative evaluation and perfectionism among young adults. The sample sizes of the study were 200 young adults. The research design used in this study is descriptive research design. The tools used in the study were The Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale (BFNE) is developed by Leary and The Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (FMPS) is developed by Frost, Martin, Lahart and Rosenblat. The Finding of the study shows that there is a positive correlation between fear of negative evaluation and perfectionism among young adults.

Aleena Susan Varughese (2022) conducted a study on Procrastination, Fear of Negative Evaluation and Perceived Stress among Emerging Adults. The study aims to analyze the relationship between the procrastination, fear of negative evaluation and perceived stress among the emerging adults. The research design used in the study was descriptive research design. The study involved 118 participants whose age ranged from 18 - 25. The tools used in the study are Brief fear of negative evaluation scale by leary, Perceived

Stress Scale by Cohen et al., and Procrastination scale by lay. According to the study results, that the procrastination is highly correlated to fear of negative evaluation and perceived Stress.

By analyzing the previous studies, the majority of the studies used the Multidimensional perceived social support scale developed by Zimet et al., 1988 for measuring perceived social support and the Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale developed by Leary 1983 for measuring Fear of Negative Evaluation. Studies reviewed above haven't explore relationship between perceived social support and fear of negative evaluation and the present study was undertaken to explore this research gap.

III. OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT

Perceived Social Support is defined as degree of perceived satisfaction with social relationships, a robust predictor of health outcomes (Cohen & Wills, 1985)

Perceived Social Support is operationally defined as a person's sense of belonging and support from others and it plays a significant role in determining their mental and physical health of young adults.

FEAR OF NEGATIVE EVALUATION

Fear of negative Evaluation is a psychological construct characterized by apprehension about other's Evaluations, distress over potential negative evaluations, and the anticipation of being judged unfavorably (Watson & Friend, 1969).

In this study the Fear of Negative Evaluation is operationally defined as Fear of being observed and evaluated by others is a severe and ongoing symptom of social anxiety disorder. Daily activities like going to school and working can be impacted by this phobia. Even making and maintaining friends may become difficult as a result.

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify the level of Perceived social support among young adults.
2. To identify the level of Fear of Negative Evaluation among young adults.
3. To identify the relationship between perceived social support and Fear of Negative Evaluation among young adults
4. To identify the significant difference in the mean score of Perceived Social Support and Fear of Negative Evaluation among young adults based on the gender.

5. To identify the significant difference in the mean score of Perceived Social Support and Fear of Negative Evaluation among young adults based on the birth order.

V. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

1. There is no significant difference in the level of Perceived Social Support among young adults.
2. There is no significant difference in the level of Fear of Negative Evaluation among young adults.
3. There is no significant relationship between Perceived Social Support and Fear of Negative Evaluation among young adults.
4. There is no significant difference in the mean score of Perceived Social Support and Fear of Negative Evaluation among young adults based on the gender.
5. There is no significant difference in the mean score of Perceived Social Support and Fear of Negative Evaluation among young adults based on the birth order.

VI. METHODOLOGY

Descriptive Research design was undertaken. The survey method was used in this study. To choose the participants, a simple random sampling technique was used. 170 young adults between the ages of 18 and 26 were selected as samples for this study.

VII. TOOLS USED IN THIS STUDY

Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support

Perceived Social Support is assessed by Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MPSS). This scale was developed by Zimet et.al., (1988). Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) is used to measure people's perceptions of three different types of social support: support from friends, family, and a significant other and consist with 12 items. Higher scores indicate higher levels of perceived social support. The MSPSS scale's components were scored on a 7-point Likert-type scale, with 1 denoting "Very Strongly Disagree" and 7 denoting "Very Strongly Agree". Cronbach's alpha for the Brief MPSS is mid .80s to the .90, indicates good construct validity.

Fear of Negative Evaluation

Fear of Negative Evaluation is assessed by The Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale (BFNE). It is created by Leary in 1983. This scale, initially created by Watson and Friend, was first shortened to the Brief of Negative Evaluation Scale. Thirteen reverse-worded (reverse scored) and seventeen straightforwardly-worded (directly scored) items make up the FNE's thirty true-false items. Eleven of the twelve items in the BFNE are identical to those in the FNE. Four of these items are reverse-worded (reverse scored), and eight of them are plainly worded (directly scored). A five-point rating system is used to assess how characteristic each item on the Brief FNE is of the respondent. Total scores, which vary from 12 to 60, represent the sum of the item responses indicating strong internal consistency.

VIII. PROCEDURE

The multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (12 items) and the Brief Fear Negative Evaluation Scale (12 items) are used in this study because they provide useful and trustworthy information on publications and research studies. 170 young individuals between the ages of 18 and 26 are the subjects of this study. First, participants should fill out the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, which measures how much support a person feels from three important sources: friends, family and a significant other. The purpose of this survey is to measure how much people believe they receive from these three groups. Next, the Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation measure to determine the degree of anxiety a person has about being disapproved of or criticized by others. Additionally, they were requested to fill out the required demographic information. Utilizing the survey method, the responses were gathered. In order to establish the strength of the association between young people's perceived social support and their fear of negative evaluation; descriptive statistics were used to score the data. After the data was gathered, the total scores were computed through SPSS 2.0 software and tabulated.

IX. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics – Mean, Median, Mode, SD, Skewness & Kurtosis of Perceived Social Support and Fear of Negative Evaluation among Young Adults.

Variables	No of Samples	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Perceived Social Support	170	58.8	61	61	14.3	-0.62	0.09
Fear of Negative Evaluation	170	34.3	35	37	5.87	0.37	0.79

Table 1 provides the data of descriptive statistics on Perceived Social Support and Fear of Negative Evaluation among young adults. The descriptive analysis revealed in Perceived Social Support, the Mean is 58.8, the Median is 61, the Mode is 61, the SD is 14.3, the skewness is -0.637 which represents the distribution is negatively skewed and the kurtosis is 0.0944 indicates the platykurtic. In Fear of Negative Evaluation, the Mean is 34.3, the Median is 35, the Mode is 37.0, the SD is 5.87, the skewness is 0.373 which represents the distribution is positively skewed and the kurtosis is 0.799 indicates the leptokurtic. The descriptive statistics is adherence to the normal distribution allows the study to continue.

Test for normality of perceived social support among young adults

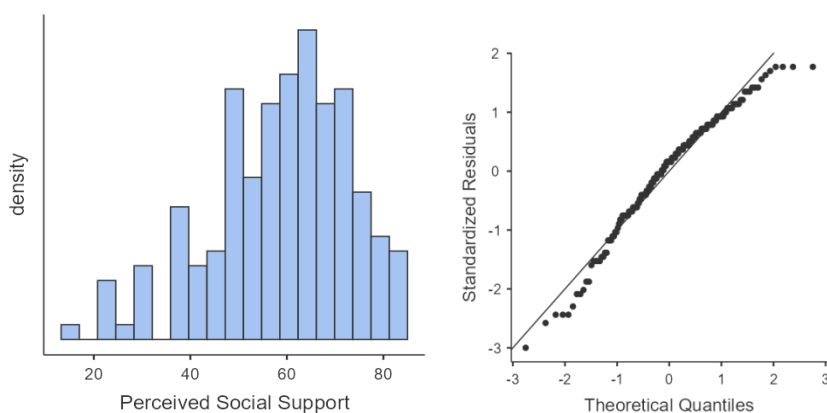


Figure.1 shows the Test for normality of perceived social support among young adults

Table 1.1 Shows the Test for Normality of Perceived social support among young adults.

Perceived Social Support	Kolmogorov-Smirnova	Shapiro-Wilk
	0.858	0.968

To determine the normality of perceived social support scores, The Shapiro-Wilk value represents 0.968 and Kolmogorov-Smirnova value represent 0.858. It shows that the data is normally distributed.

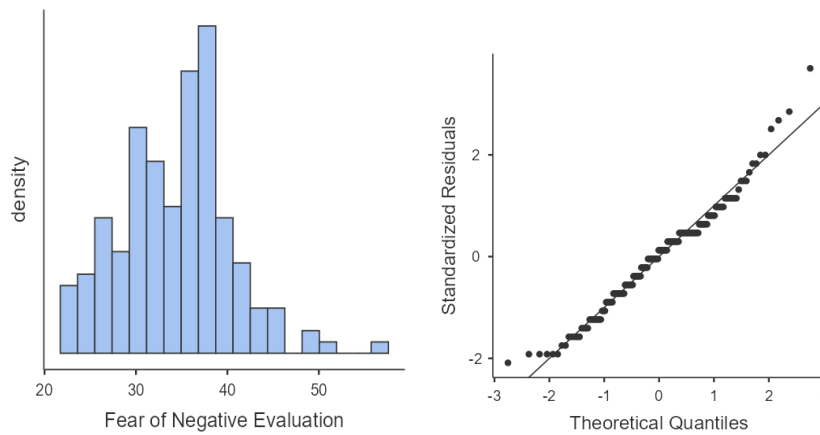
Test for normality of fear of negative evaluation among young adults

Figure 2 shows the Test for normality of fear of negative evaluation among young adults

Table 1.2 Shows the Test for Normality of fear of negative evaluation among young adults.

Variables	No. of. Samples	High	Moderate	Low
Perceived Social Support	170	25	118	27
Fear of Negative Evaluation	170	26	116	28
Fear of Negative Evaluation	Kolmogorov-Smirnova		Shapiro-Wilk	
	0.849		0.977	

To determine the normality of fear of negative evaluation scores, The Shapiro-Wilk value represents 0.977 and Kolmogorov-Smirnova value represent 0.849. It shows that the data is normally distributed.

Table 2: Level of Perceived Social Support and Fear of Negative Evaluation among Young Adults.

Table 2 provides the data on the level of Perceived Social Support and Fear of Negative Evaluation among Young Adults. The levels were calculated using Mean $\pm$ SD of Perceived Social Support and Fear of Negative Evaluation. In Perceived Social Support, the participants who scored 73 and above denote a high level of Perceived Social Support. In Fear of Negative Evaluation, the participants who scored 40 and above denote a high level of Fear of Negative Evaluation.

In Perceived Social Support, the participants who scored 45 and below denotes a low level of Perceived Social Support. In Fear of Negative Evaluation, the participants who scored 28 and below denotes a low level of Fear of Negative Evaluation.

In Perceived Social Support, the participants who scored between 45 to 73 denote a moderate level of Perceived Social Support. In Fear of Negative Evaluation, the participants who scored between 28 to 40 denotes a moderate level of Fear of Negative Evaluation.

According to Table 2, in Perceived Social Support 25 participants falls under the high level of self-efficacy, 118 participants fall under the moderate level and 27 participants falls under the low level. Hence the stated hypothesis "There is no difference in the level of Perceived Social Support among young adults" is rejected. To sum up there is difference in the level of Perceived Social Support among young adults among young adults is accepted.

In Fear of Negative Evaluation 26 participants falls under the high level Fear of Negative Evaluation, 116 participants fall under the moderate level and 28 participant falls under the low level of Fear of Negative Evaluation. Hence the stated hypothesis "There is no difference in the level of Fear of Negative Evaluation among young adults" is rejected. To sum up there is difference in the level of Fear of Negative Evaluation among young adults is accepted.

Table 3: Mean difference ‘t’ test analysis of Perceived Social Support among Young Adults Based on gender

Variables	Gender	No of Samples	Mean	SD	t value
Perceived Social Support	Male	47	54.8	14.8	2.254 [@]
	Female	123	60.2	13.7	

Note: @Not significant at 0.05 level, *significant level at 0.05 level, **significant level at 0.01 level

From analyzing the data this table shows the t-value of Perceived Social Support among young adults based on gender is 2.254 higher than the table value. It denotes there is significant difference at the level of 0.05. Hence the stated hypothesis "There is no significant difference in the mean score of Perceived Social Support among young adults based on gender" is rejected. To sum up there is significant difference in the mean score of Perceived Social Support among young adults based on gender among young adults is accepted.

Table 4: Mean difference 't' test analysis of Fear of Negative Evaluation among Young Adults Based on gender

Variables	Gender	No of Samples	Mean	SD	t value
Fear of Negative Evaluation	Male	47	34.4	5.9	0.191 [@]
	Female	123	34.2	5.8	

Note: @Not significant at 0.05 level, *significant level at 0.05 level, **significant level at 0.01 level

From analyzing the data this table shows the mean score of Fear of Negative Evaluation among young adults based on gender is 0.191. It denotes there is no significant difference at the level of 0.05. Hence the stated hypothesis "There is no significant difference in the mean score of Fear of Negative Evaluation among young adults based on gender" is accepted.

Table 5: Correlation between Perceived Social Support and Fear of Negative Evaluation among Young Adults.

Variables	r value
Perceived Social Support	(r= 0.38)
Fear of Negative Evaluation	

Table 5 represents the Pearson correlation between Perceived Social Support and Fear of Negative Evaluation among a sample of 170 young adults. The correlation coefficient was $r = 0.38$, indicating a positive relationship between the two variables. This result suggests that, in this sample, levels of perceived social support have a positive relationship with fear of negative evaluation. It may be that other psychological or situational factors play a more prominent role in shaping evaluative concerns and that perceived social support alone does not significantly buffer against such fears in this particular population. Hence the stated hypothesis "There is no significant relationship between perceived social support and fear of negative evaluation among young adults" is rejected. To sum up there is significant relationship between of perceived social support and fear of negative evaluation among young adults is accepted.

Table 6: Mean difference ‘f’ test analysis of Perceived Social Support among Young Adults Based on birth order

Variables	Gender	No of Samples	Mean	SD	f value
Perceived Social Support	First Born	57	33.70	6.35	0.192 [@]
	Second Born	63	34.03	5.86	
	Last Born	31	34.83	5.65	
	Single child	19	35.78	4.74	

Note: @Not significant at 0.05 level, *significant level at 0.05 level, **significant level at 0.01 level

From analyzing the data this table shows the t -value of perceived social support among young adults based on gender is 0.192. It denotes there is no significant difference at the level of 0.05. Hence the stated hypothesis "There is no significant difference in the mean score of Perceived Social Support among young adults based on birth order among young adults" is accepted. To sum up there is no significant difference in the mean score of Perceived Social Support among young adults based on birth order among young adults is accepted.

Table 7: Mean difference ‘f’ test analysis of Fear of Negative Evaluation among Young Adults Based on birth order

Variables	Gender	No of Samples	Mean	SD	f value
Fear of Negative Evaluation	First Born	57	61.43	14.85	0.902 [@]
	Second Born	63	58.41	14.11	
	Last Born	31	55.38	14.80	
	Single child	19	57.47	11.24	

Note: @Not significant at 0.05 level, *significant level at 0.05 level, **significant level at 0.01 level

From analyzing the data this table shows the t-value of Fear of Negative Evaluation among young adults based on gender is 0.902. It denotes there is no significant difference at the level of 0.05. Hence the stated hypothesis "There is no significant difference in the mean score of fear of negative evaluation among young adults based on birth order based on young adults" is accepted. To sum up there is significant difference in the

mean score of fear of negative evaluation among young adults based on birth order among young adults is accepted.

X. CONCLUSION

The relationship between perceived social support and fear of negative evaluation among young adults were investigated in this study, the null hypotheses were rejected. According to the findings it is concluded that there is a positive correlation between perceived social support and fear of negative evaluation among young adults. Research revealed that for young adults who have a higher level of perceived social support in contrast, the fear of negative evaluation is also high. This contradictory result state that eventhough they have a support from their family, friends and others fear of negative evauation by others is also high. Perceived social support plays a significant role in shaping young adult's social sensitivity, influencing how they manage negative evaluation while striving to maintain social approval and psychological well-being in a competitive social environment. But this findings emphasize the need for targeted psychological interventions and counseling programs aimed at enhancing social support and addressing fear of negative evaluation among young adults. Mental health professionals can play a vital role in helping young adults develop coping strategies, improve self-confidence and reduce anxiety related to social judgment. Early identification and intervention may promote emotional stability, resilience and long-term psychological well-being during this developmental stage of young adulthood. Thus, this study imply the need for training and attitudinal programmes to improve their percieved social support and reduce the fear of negative evauation.

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