

## Perceived Social Support, Self-Regulation & Self Esteem among Adolescent School Goers

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### Abstract

The present study examined the relationship between perceived social support, self-esteem, and self-regulation in Indian adolescents, with a particular focus on gender differences. A sample of 100 adolescents (aged 15-18 years) in Government schools was used, and they completed the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet et al., 1988), and the Shorter Self-Regulation Questionnaire (Carey, Neal, & Collins, 2004). Descriptive statistics revealed generally high scores in social support, self-esteem, and self-regulation. Correlational analysis revealed that higher perceived social support was significantly correlated with better self-regulation, and there were strong positive correlations among the various sources of social support. Interestingly, a small but significant negative correlation was found between self-esteem and family support, suggesting the presence of subtle cultural or contextual factors. Gender comparisons revealed a significant difference only in friend support, with girls reporting greater support from friends; the other variables did not show any significant gender difference. Surzykiewicz, J., Skalski, S. B., Sołbut, A., Rutkowski, S., & Konaszewski, K. (2022). Adolescents who feel stronger inside, value themselves, and feel supported by others are better at managing their emotions. The results underscore the significance of positive relationships, particularly friendships, in promoting self-regulation among adolescents, as well as the intricacy of family dynamics in influencing self-esteem. The findings confirm the necessity of school-based and family-based interventions to enhance social support networks, thereby improving the psychological well-being of adolescents.

**Keywords:** Adolescents, Perceived Social Support, Self-Esteem, Self-Regulation

Perceived social support has been understood as feeling or belief that one has about people whom one can rely upon for help, care, and understanding, whenever needed (Zimet et al., 1988). For many adolescents, knowing that they have this kind of support gives them the feeling of a safety net, this makes them confident for taking on challenges and recovering from setbacks (Lakey & Cohen, 2000).

Furthermore, such support, whether from family, friends, or teachers, can be essential as the individual navigates the challenges of growing up (Butler et al., 2022). When young people feel supported, they are more likely to develop a healthy sense of self-esteem and the belief in their own worth (Yu et al., 2025; Orth et al., 2022).

Validation from others can make them feel valued and accepted, which in turn would strengthen their confidence in their abilities and decisions (Kuo et al., 2022; Ballara, 2023). Self-esteem and self-validation seem to positively affect self-regulation of adolescents, thus helping them manage their emotions as well as control impulses. This affects their thoughtful choices.

In contrast, those with low perceived social support may struggle with managing their emotions and behavior, leaving them more prone to stress and risky decision-making (Zimmer-Gembeck & Skinner, 2011), as well as making the individuals more vulnerable to stress and engaging in risky behavior.

Self-esteem refers to a person's overall evaluation of their worthiness and competence (Muris et al., 2023). Self-esteem is also linked to better academic

results, adaptive social behavior, and good mental health.

Self-regulation refers to the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral mechanisms that enable individuals to plan, track their progress, overcome temptations, and recover from setbacks. Self-regulation ability foretells success in school, social competence, and future well-being (Orth & Robins, 2022).

Perceived Social support can be understood in terms of four interrelated dimensions of social support: emotional (empathy, warmth), instrumental (tangible assistance), informational (advice, guidance), and appraisal (feedback) dimension provided by family members, peers, teachers, and significant others (House, J. S., 1981). Altogether, these factors seem to support the individual's development against moderate stressors (Chen et al., 2025).

### Perceived Social Support and Self-Esteem

Self-esteem can act as a bridge between social support and its effects on a person's self-esteem. When individuals feel supported, their self-esteem seems to improve, and this helps them achieve better outcomes in various areas (Haddad et al., 2024).

According to Sociometer Theory (Leary, 1999), Self-esteem works like a gauge that monitors our sense of social acceptance and belongingness. When people feel supported and accepted by others, their self-esteem rises because they feel valued within their own social group. This theory explains that self-esteem is an internal processing unit that tracks how socially accepted and valued a person perceives themselves. Just like a

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thermometer measures temperature, the sociometer measures the level of belongingness. Self-esteem is not just a personal judgment that a person has about himself or herself, but also can be a reflection of one's social understanding of relationships.

### **Perceived Social Support and Self-Regulation**

Self-regulation and Perceived Social Support seem to play a vital role in shaping an individual's overall well-being and success as per the research reports (Zhang et al., 2024; Rahmawati & Sari, 2024). When people possess good self-regulatory skills, they seem to maintain healthy relationships and feel more comfortable, when they need to reach out for social support. The supportive relationships provide not only emotional reassurance but also resources that can help individuals manage stress and overcome daily life problems (Acoba, 2024).

Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) had also highlighted the relationship between Self-Regulation and Perceived Social Support. According to Self-Determination Theory, people have three primary needs: autonomy (feeling in control of their choices), competence (feeling capable), and relatedness (feeling connected to others). The need for connection is fulfilled when people feel that others support them. It perhaps amplifies intrinsic motivation which is a fundamental component of self-regulation.

Focusing on various sources of Perceived Social Support, Ikiz and Cakar (2010) demonstrated that in the case of Turkish adolescents, support from family ( $r = 0.51$ ), peers ( $r = 0.40$ ), and teachers ( $r = 0.44$ ) was perceived as an independent contributor to self-esteem. A similar association ( $r = .46$ ) was reported by al Lu et al. (2015) in parents of children with ASD, with support mediating the connection between self-esteem and life satisfaction, to some extent. In special situations related to the COVID-19 pandemic, (Permatasari et al., 2021) found that overall support was the best predictor of resilience among Indonesian cadets, accounting for more than 70% of the variance in resilience, while family support alone explained 42.4%. Again, they indicated a positive correlation between overall support, persistence, and self-efficacy, which was found to be directly related to self-esteem.

Agrahari and Srivastava (2025) investigated the relationships between perceived social support, self-esteem, and psychological well-being in a sample of 100 young adults in India. The authors discovered that the participants with high ratings of perceived social support had considerably higher levels of self-esteem and psychological health indicating the centrality of positive social support networks in the development of self-esteem and psychological well-being.

In another complementary study, (Koteswari, 2025) 280 management students in rural areas of Andhra Pradesh found a statistically significant positive relationship between perceived social support and self-esteem.

Szkody and McKinney (2019) studied support from friends as an intervention in the context of emerging-adults, research has also revealed that friendship support seems to decrease the symptoms of internalizing and externalizing factors i.e., by enhancing self-esteem in young adults.

Further, Pandey (2025) has emphasized the importance of well-organized support systems and school-based programs in promoting self-regulation abilities among adolescents, and it has been found that peer endorsement and family relationships configured in societal support perception. Cherewick et al. (2024) and found that the emotional self-efficacy and familial support were found to be relevant buffers against psychological distress, while social self-efficacy and friend support were found linked to improved well-being. The regression analysis explained more variance in wellbeing indices ( $R^2 = 0.37-0.64$ ) than in symptomatology ( $R^2 = 0.19-0.22$ ), indicating that social support and self-efficacy operate more as a promoter factor than a protective factor. These findings serve as a call for action to implement multi-layered intervention strategies that simultaneously focus on both family and peer support systems.

The Relational Regulation Theory defines assistance as a continuous interpersonal interaction that supports emotional and behavioural regulation as opposed to the aid given in times of crisis (Lakey & Orehek, 2011). This quantitative model suggests that these daily experiences account for approximately 62 percent of the variance in perceptions of support.

Further, the theory is supported by empirical research: (Zhao et al., 2022) 1,997 Chinese undergraduates that support predicted self-control ( $\beta = .36$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and has an indirect effect on decreasing anxiety, depression, and insomnia, which explains up to 37.7 percent of the total impact of support on sleep disturbances. Hence, studies show that positive interactions are not only stress-protective but also replenish self-regulatory resources as mentioned.

Aydoğan (2014) showed that self-esteem promotes metacognitive strategies and autonomous motivation, and this improves overall achievement. (Di Paula & Campbell, 2002) Self-esteem in adolescents seem to make adaptive changes in their persistence in the event of failure but those with lower self-esteem seem to persist blindly.

From the perspective of emotional and developmental research. (Gul et al., 2014), the researchers discovered a relationship between stronger emotion regulation and increased self-esteem and life satisfaction in Pakistani students. Furthermore, Stinson (2010) hypothesized that self-esteem inconsistent feedback temporarily drains self-control, whereas (Baumeister and Vohs, 2007) focused on motivational issues that can override resource constraints when self-relevant. The literature has broadly referred to self-esteem as both a cause and a predictor of self-regulatory ability, and the outcomes of

self-esteem depend on factors such as age, location, and motivational situation.

Adolescent students in the tri-city have access to supportive resources by way of academics, sports and social avenues. At the same time, it seems that they need to perceive social support as a usable resource for configuring their self-esteem and for self-regulation. It was seen that this aspect has not been yet majorly researched upon. Hence, this study is needed.

### Need of the Study

In view of the above:

- Understanding the role of perceived social support seems crucial as it can play a role with regard to adverse effects on Self-Regulation and Self Esteem. This study is needed as it examines perceived social support, self-esteem and self-regulation.
- The insights gained from this study are expected to guide policymakers and educational leaders in integrating digital exposure and mental health support in school programs. Such integration seems to be essential to fostering new educational environments which look forward to healthy adolescents, especially in the context of new education policy (NEP 2020), India.

### Objective

1. To examine the relationship among Self-esteem, Self-Regulation, and Social Support among adolescents.

### Hypothesis

1. There is no significant correlation between Self-Esteem, Self-Regulation and Perceived Social Support.

### Design

The study comprises of variables Self-Regulation, Self-Esteem, and Perceived Social Support. Correlation analysis was conducted.

### Method

#### Sample

The present study shall comprise a sample of 100 adolescents in the age range 15 to 18 years (with average age 16.5 years), 100 adolescents were drawn randomly from the Government schools of Tricity, Chandigarh for this purpose.

#### Inclusion criteria

1. Adolescents currently studying in Government educational institutions.
2. Adolescents residing with their families.

3. Adolescents within the age range of 15 to 19 years.

#### Exclusion criteria

1. Psychopathological cases were not taken.
2. Adolescents not studying in Government institutions.
3. Adolescents not residing with their families.
4. Adolescents under the age of 15 years or over the age of 19 years.

### Tools

1. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE), (Rosenberg, 1965). It is designed to assess overall self-worth through both positive and negative self-assessments. This scale is considered unidimensional, focusing on a single aspect of self-esteem. It is a widely used measure of global self-esteem, demonstrating strong reliability (Cronbach's  $\alpha \approx .77-.88$ ; test-retest  $r \approx .82-.88$ ) and validity across diverse populations and cultural contexts.
2. The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), (Zimet et al. in 1988), is a widely utilized self-report tool to measure perceived social support. Comprising 12 items, the scale assesses support from three sources: family, friends, and a significant other. It is known for its strong reliability (Cronbach's  $\alpha \approx .85-.95$ ; test-retest  $r \approx .72-.85$ ) and validity (0.60 to 0.80) across diverse populations and settings, making it a valuable instrument.
3. The Shorter Self-Regulation Questionnaire (Carey et al., 2004). The original SRQ was a comprehensive tool designed to assess individual regulatory styles based on Self-Determination Theory (SDT). SSRQ consists of 31 items; only the length of the questionnaire was reduced, but psychometric integrity was maintained. The SSRQ demonstrates robust reliability with Cronbach's alpha coefficients typically ranging from 0.80 or higher, suggesting good internal consistency and validity. This makes the SSRQ a valuable instrument.

### Results

The obtained data were analyzed using descriptive (Mean and SD) and inferential statistics (Correlation).

With reference to table 1, the distribution of scores for variables under this study are within the range of normality.

With reference to Table 2, using Pearson Product Moment Correlation, significant correlations between the PSS and its subscales have been indicated significantly. There was a positive correlation between the Perceived Social Support and PSS Fri with  $r = .797$  and  $p < .001$ , PSS Fam with  $r = .600$  and  $p < .001$ , and PSS

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics

Variables	N	Mean Scores	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
PSS	100	5.13	1.15	-.95	.54
Self-esteem	100	21.9	3.355	.05	-.38
Self-Regulation	100	107	9.35	.362	-.03
PSS Fam	100	5.29	1.47	-.87	-.019
PSS Fri	100	5.15	1.47	-.75	-.18
PSS SO	100	4.94	1.67	-.60	-.57

**Table 2.** Correlations among Self-Esteem, Self-Regulation, and Social Support Measures

	PSS	Self-Esteem	Self-Regulation	PSS Fam	PSS Fri	PSS SO
PSS	-	-	-	-	-	-
Self-Esteem	.11	-	-	-	-	-
Self-Regulation	.29*	-.13	-	-	-	-
PSS Fam	.60***	-.21*	.18	-	-	-
PSS Fri	.80***	-.01	.15.	.17	-	-
PSS SO	.84***	-.05	.20	.21*	.62***	-

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

\*PSS Fam - Perceived Social Support (family), PSS Fri - Perceived Social Support (friends), PSS SO - Perceived Social Support (significant others)\*

SO with  $r = .837$  and  $p < .001$ . Additionally, there was a positive correlation between PSS Fam and self-regulation i.e.,  $r = .184$  at  $p < .05$ , and between PSS Fam and PSS SO i.e.,  $r = .208$  at  $p < .05$  were seen.

### Discussion

The findings demonstrate the relationship between perceived social support and participant's psychological well-being. Perhaps, the participants who perceive high levels of support from family are also likely to feel supported by friends and significant others, (see Table no. 2). It seems that the PSS has multiple dimensions which are interconnected. It is interesting that social support and self-esteem did not yield strong positive correlations, instead, a deeper connection is suggested by the negative correlation with PSS fam. This implies that several factors like environment, family and personal factors may directly influence self-esteem rather than just perceived support.

Likewise, in a study by Acoba, 2024, Participants who reported higher levels of social support tend to exhibit a better ability to regulate their behaviors and emotions. This supports the view that supportive relationships provide not only emotional reassurance but also resources that can help individuals manage stress and encounter daily life problems.

As per a study Krauss et al., 2020; Schiffrin et al., 2014, may indicate contextual or cultural dynamics

where family interactions, although intended as supportive, are sometimes experienced as controlling or critical, thereby negatively influencing self-esteem, highlighting the negative correlation as seen in results (refer Table 2) between self-esteem and family support.

Overall, in reference to the results indicate the interconnectedness of Perceived Social Support, Self-Regulation, and Self-Esteem.

### Conclusion

This study was conducted to explore the connection between Perceived Social Support, Self-Esteem, and Self-Regulation. The findings demonstrate that social support plays a significant role in enhancing Self-Regulation, underscoring the importance of strong and supportive relationships in helping individuals manage their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors more effectively. At the same time, the unexpected negative link between self-esteem and family support opens up space for further research, as it points to the complexity of family dynamics and their influence on perception towards self. While future research with larger samples may uncover more refined patterns.

The results underscore the significance of social connections in personal growth and development. Strengthening networks of family, friends, and significant others can positively influence how people

regulate themselves and, ultimately, how they view themselves. Future studies should continue to explore these relationships across diverse groups to gain a deeper understanding of the social foundations of psychological well-being.

### Implications

Since friend support proved to be the strongest factor in overall support, interventions that enhance peer support in schools, such as mentoring circles or collaborative learning communities, can also support Self Esteem as well as Self-Regulation. These gains may also be further strengthened through family-based psycho-educational programs that assist parents in maintaining supportive roles as their offspring gain greater independence. Counsellors are advised to remember that partner support may be an unstable proxy for global support in this age group.

### Future Directions

However, the findings of this study are valuable and should be considered alongside its limitations.

1. The cross-sectional design does not allow making causal conclusions. Longitudinal research can indicate the influence of Perceived Social Support, Self Esteem, and Self-Regulation.
2. Self-report scales can create bias. Therefore, multi-informant or behavioural indices might be a more valid approach.
3. The sample from areas besides urban areas can also be studied.

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