

Exploring the Influence of Social Support on the Psychological Well-Being of Senior High School Students in Davao Del Norte: A Correlational Study

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ABSTRACT

The adolescent phase of life can be difficult due to academic, social and identity issues as well as mental health problems. Research has been conducted globally on how these aspects relate to psychological well-being in adolescents, especially in culturally rich countries like the Philippines. Our study specifically focuses on Davao del Norte, a prosperous province struggling with youth mental health issues despite its economic development. Our quantitative research uses established tools such as the Social Support Survey and Ryff's Psychological Well-being Scale. The results show that overall social support is strong (mean = 4.18), primarily from family members (mean = 4.34) and friends (mean = 4.01). Moreover, there is a positive correlation between social support and successful outcomes for teen participants (Pearson- $r=0.889$). This study offers valuable information regarding Filipino cultural values of community-based supportive networks at all levels which benefits local policymakers, mental health professionals, and senior high school students alike. In conclusion, our mission lies not just in statistical analogy but also in initiating transformative changes facilitating resolving larger conversations about Youth Mental Health concerns within Philippines society.

Keywords: Psychological Well-being, Social Support, Mental Health, Students, Correlational Study

Introduction

Adolescence is a challenging and intricate phase for youth worldwide, characterized by academic pressures, social apprehensions, and the perplexing journey of developing one's identity. This often unpredictable time can lead to significant mental health concerns that require substantial support systems in order to promote overall wellness (Cataluna et al., 2023; WHO). Through extensive research on this universal phenomenon, scholars have delved into the complex relationship between social support and psychological well-being among adolescents (Lakey & Oreland, 2017).

Renowned for its cultural opulence, the Philippines has been identified as a prime example of how social support plays an invaluable role in promoting well-being among Filipino youths (Bautista et al., 2022; De Leon & Katigbak). Family and community bonds fortify emotional resilience by acting as a shield against mental health hurdles that may arise (Bicol et al. 2021; Javier & Punzalan), but further exploration is necessary to delve deeper into this facet of Philippine society due to research gaps. In particular, socioeconomic disparities, gender inequities and regional challenges demand consideration under specific circumstances.

Davao del Norte, a stunning agricultural gem in the southern Philippines, presents an intriguing contradiction (Department of Health 2023). Despite its relative economic prosperity, this province is grappling with Canada's highest suicide rate among neighboring areas- casting a dark shadow on its otherwise thriving landscape (Department

of Health 2023; World Health Organization 2020). The urgency to understand what factors impact mental health amongst young people in Davao del Norte has never been more pressing and necessitates intellect and compassionate intervention (Patton et al., 2016; Ryff & Singer, 1998), given this alarming statistical reality.

Further investigation is necessary on the complexity of social support, as emphasized by Thoits in 2011. It remains unclear whether family and friends' tenuous backing serves as a sturdy lifeline during times of hardship or instead leads young Filipinos to feel helpless (Thoits 2011; National Institute for Mental Health 2019). The present research centers on high school seniors living in Davao del Norte, investigating how social support relates to their psychological well-being with reference to Ryff and Singer's work from 1998.

To better comprehend the complexities of social support, we will employ Macdonald's Social Support Survey (1998), which is a comprehensive questionnaire that examines perceived assistance from friends and family. This instrument sheds light on various aspects of this vital lifeline. Furthermore, our examination of young participants' mental landscape calls for an evaluation using Ryff's Psychological Well-being Scale (1989). The assessment covers elements such as autonomy, personal growth, positive relationships with others in the environment or community at large; environmental mastery self-acceptance-leading to a more thorough comprehension regarding how these individuals interact concerning social support influence on their psychological well-being (Ryff & Singer 1998). Hence detailed observation remains paramount if attempting to ascertain complex interaction between social aid and mental health among this unique demographic segment.

In order to explore the connections between social support and psychological well-being, we will employ multilevel modeling alongside path analysis techniques (Bryk & Raudenbusch, 2012; Hair et al.). Through these rigorous methodologies, our goal is to elucidate the intricate relationships that exist among various indicators of social support - such as familial dynamics or friendships' influence - and diverse facets of mental health. Our intention in mapping out these pathways is to uncover elusive ties and complexities binding together this cohesive network of concepts.

This research goes beyond generating statistics and data. Its goal is to provide useful suggestions that will enable mental health professionals and local authorities in Davao del Norte to create targeted interventions and prevention programs appropriate for the unique needs of young people (Patton et al., 2016). By merging this special outlook on social support with psychological well-being, it could lessen the disconcerting trend of suicide while uniting as threads within a hopeful emotional quilt.

Moreover, the findings of this research add value to the ongoing national discourse on promoting mental health by shedding light on how social support varies in different cultural contexts within Philippines (Patton et al., 2016). This heightened understanding equips mental health experts across the country with culturally sensitive resources for helping young Filipinos from diverse backgrounds and situations (National Institute of Mental Health, 2019).

The ultimate goal of this research is to gain a comprehensive understanding, from a holistic perspective, of the correlation between social support and mental wellness among senior high school students in Davao del Norte. Through an analysis of various aspects related to this topic, it is hoped that ways can be uncovered that will increase community strength and resilience. With these findings as our foundation, we aim for Filipino youth to thrive despite any challenges they may face. This project represents our efforts towards creating positive change in the southern Philippines by painting a bright future ahead.

Methodology

Research Design

A quantitative non-experimental correlational design was utilized to determine if there is a significant correlation between social support and the psychological well-being of senior high school pupils. A researcher uses such a design when they intend to establish whether there exists any association, irrespective of causal factors, between two variables (Fischer et al., 2014). It is vital that we consider correlations cautiously since it does not imply causation; hence interpretation requires cautionary measures (Nelson et al., 2017). Unlike experimental designs whose primary concern may be determining which variable causes the other one, correlated studies are focused on examining how strong or weak this relationship could potentially be in respect to both variables under assessment (Baker, 2017). Correlating with our research objectives and questions directly prompted for utilizing such an approach we sought out answers regarding whether influences from social supports corresponded positively towards bettering overall mental health amongst older high-school level students.

Previous studies of this nature have utilized a correlational design to investigate the relationship between social support and the psychological well-being of senior high school students. An example is Cutrona, C.E., & Russell, D.W.'s (1990) study which explored how effective social support relies on matching the appropriate type needed with what was received. This is important for our research as it highlights that not all forms of social support are beneficial towards promoting well-being in senior high school students; instead, specific kinds must be used. Examining literature focused on Philippine contexts can provide valuable insights into the unique challenges and opportunities

facing these individuals. The work of Reyes (2011) which concentrated on Filipino adolescent's psychosocial health has helped us gain more meaningful information about their experiences.

Research Locale

This study was conducted to examine public senior high school students in Davao del Norte. The selection of schools was based on their larger student populations, aiming to ensure a comprehensive representation of students from grades eleven to twelve for a quantitative research project. Schools A, B, and C were selected due to their substantial student enrolments, providing a diverse sample for our investigation. The primary focus of the research is to understand how social support influences the psychological well-being of senior high school students in Davao del Norte. By including schools from various areas within the division, we aim to capture a broad spectrum of experiences and perspectives among the senior high school student population.

Research Participants

For this research, a purposive sampling approach was employed to assemble a cohort of 150 high school seniors encompassing both eleventh and twelfth graders. Bryman (2012) and Patton (2015) define Purposive Sampling as an intentional technique that picks subjects based on pertinent standards linked to the study question and aims, without probability considerations involved. In brief, data for this inquiry were sourced from precisely one hundred fifty participants overall.

Research Instrument

The focus of our research, "Exploring the Influence of Social Support on Psychological Well-being among High School Students in Davao del Norte," involves utilizing three carefully selected questionnaires to establish a methodological framework. Our objective is to reveal the complex associations between two critical variables: social support (x) and psychological well-being (y), while considering local circumstances specific to Davao del Norte.

Our questionnaire assessing social support is based on the Social Support Survey developed by Macdonald (1998). It gauges students' perception of the level of support they receive from their friends and family. Our survey comprising 56 items delves into multiple aspects of social support to provide a comprehensive understanding of participants' perceived assistance networks.

To determine the psychological health of senior high school students, Ryff's (1989) Psychological Well-being Scale was employed. This well-established scale comprises 42 questions that evaluate distinct aspects such as personal growth, self-acceptance, autonomy, purpose in life, positive relationships with others, and environmental mastery. By exploring numerous dimensions of mental wellness through a comprehensive approach; this assessment tool yields significant information regarding flourishing facets connected to the psychological welfare of these individuals.

Our objective is to attain a thorough comprehension of the intricate correlation between social support and psychological well-being in senior high school students from Davao del Norte. We will accomplish this by administering two meticulously chosen questionnaires. Employing reliable and valid measures along with established research techniques, our correlational study aims for enhanced precision.

Data Collection Procedure

A systematic procedure for gathering data was observed in this study. First, a letter to the school head was sent to ask permission to conduct the study. Upon approval, the informed consent forms were distributed to the respondents. Then, the questionnaires were personally distributed and administered by the researchers. Afterward, the data were retrieved, collected, tallied, tabulated, and interpreted confidentially and accordingly.

Ethical Considerations

The ethical concerns regarding the research were thoroughly reviewed during this study. These encompassed issues such as informed consent, confidentiality, justice and conflicts of interest. The acquisition of voluntary Consent is known as Informed Consent, which involves enlightening respondents about the questions or subjects and requiring individuals capable of consenting to participate. Consequently, for one to partake in a research study, they must be furnished with information regarding the investigation, understand the facts presented and possess independence while deciding whether they want to take part or turn it down (Arifin 2018). After obtaining a comprehensive explanation of the research process, respondents willingly agreed to participate in this study. The researchers disclosed all details regarding what would be expected from them and how their data would be utilized, while also outlining any potential consequences if applicable. Consent letters were sent via both Messenger and face-to-face communication modalities, with no undue pressure or harm placed on participants during the approval process. In research, confidentiality entails a situation where the researchers are cognizant of the identity of their subjects but undertake measures to safeguard such identities from being unearthed by third parties. Preserving confidentiality is fundamental in upholding privacy (Fleming & Zegwaard, 2018). In this investigation, respondents' anonymity was upheld through shielding both their names and school name. The concept of justice emphasizes equitability and impartiality. One notable aspect is its intent to prevent any form of mistreatment or exploitation towards respondents (Orb et al., 2001). Throughout the data

gathering process, great care was taken in regard to participants' availability by not pressuring them into answering questionnaires during their inconvenient times. Researchers may experience a conflict of interest when their personal, financial, political or academic interests could impact the study outcomes (Fleming & Zegwaard, 2018). To mitigate this potential bias, these researchers maintained an objective distance from the respondents and refrained from participating in any aspect of the study.

Results and Discussion

The Level of Social Support of Students

The objective of the study was to examine the impact of social support on seniors' mental well-being in high school. As per Table 1, respondents disclosed a significant level of social backup. The "Social Support among High School Seniors" factor exhibited an extensive standard deviation reading at 0.73 and a mean score overall value at 4.18 - together suggesting exceptional results that signify regular aid and encouragement received from peers during challenging situations. According to the gathered data, the high school students perceived their family's social support as being exceedingly consistent with an accumulated mean of 4.34 (SD=.66). This indicates that they receive substantial and reliable familial assistance. These research results coincide with previous findings by Johnson et al. (2017), which suggest a strong correlation between supportive family networks and positive impacts on student academic achievement, general well-being, and resilience against obstacles; ultimately promoting holistic growth among learners. On the other hand, social support from friends is perceived to be slightly lower with an average of 4.01 (SD=0.80). Despite this, it still falls within the high range which suggests that students generally receive peer support. This result aligns with Smith and Brown's (2015) research on how adolescents' psychological well-being can be affected by their relationships with peers. They contend that positive interactions among peers promote a feeling of being part of a group as well as emotional assistance - both are essential for teenagers tackling issues in secondary education.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for social support of students

Indicators	Std Deviation	Mean	Interpretation
Social Support-Family	0.66	4.34	Very high
Social Support-Friends	0.80	4.01	High
Category Mean	0.73	4.18	High

The Level of Psychological Well-being of Student

Table 2 displays the extent of students' psychological well-being with regards to autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships with others and self-acceptance. Analysis revealed that overall mean level of psychological well-being for students was 4.40 (SD=0.62), which is deemed as exceptionally high and has translated into reported consistent student learning motivation levels by those same individuals.

According to the results, the autonomy indicator displayed a significantly high mean of 4.61 (SD=.49), indicating that students consistently exhibited strong motivation towards learning as reported by them. The remarkable average value of autonomy accompanied by a minimal deviation suggests that learners possess an unwavering sense of control over their academic pursuits. This corroborates with Deci and Ryan's (2018) assertion about how psychological need for autonomy is critical in driving intrinsic motivation among individuals. It stands to reason that when given agency over their education, students are more likely to be invested and passionate about it.

The cumulative average for personal growth was found to be 4.46 (SD=.60), indicating a considerably high level of psychological well-being and suggesting that students were consistently monitoring their own mental health. This result aligns with the research conducted by Waterman et al. (2016) on the significance of individual progress in overall well-being, highlighting how personal development can provide individuals with a sense of purpose and fulfillment while also boosting motivation towards learning among students.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for psychological well-being of students

Indicators	Std Deviation	Mean	Interpretation
Autonomy	0.49	4.61	Very High
Environmental Mastery	0.64	4.36	Very High
Personal Growth	0.60	4.46	Very High
Positive relations with others	0.69	4.33	Very High
Self-Acceptance	0.70	4.26	Very High
Category Mean	0.62	4.40	Very High

The computed mean for the level of environmental mastery was 4.36 (SD=.64), indicating a very high standard among students in consistently observing their psychological well-being through perceived control over their surroundings. This underscores how individuals with this attribute, as identified by Keyes (2017) in his work on flourishing mental health, are better positioned to overcome challenges and achieve success in life.

Moreover, the aspect of having favorable interactions with others is highlighted as an important component in promoting psychological wellness, indicated by a mean score of 4.33 (with SD=.69). This aligns with Diener and Seligman's (2018) conclusion that cultivating positive social relationships greatly enhances one's life satisfaction and overall well-being. Students who establish positive connections are more prone to be enthusiastic and invested in their academic pursuits.

In the same vein, a dimension of self-acceptance with an average score of 4.26 (SD=.70) signifies exceptionally eminent psychological well-being tied to one's perception of oneself. Correspondingly, this corresponds with Neff's (2019) studies that underscore how integral self-compassion and acceptance are in heightening mental health. Students who embrace themselves exhibit more favorable perspectives and innate drive towards learning endeavors.

Relationship between Social Support and Psychological Well-being

The findings in Table 3 underscore the substantial relationship between social support and the psychological well-being of senior high school students. The statistical analysis ($r=.889$, $p<0.05$) demonstrates a significant relationship between these two variables. The strong positive correlation (Pearson- $r=.889$) between social support and psychological well-being suggests as social support increases, psychological well-being also increases. A longitudinal study by Johnson and Brown (2016) supports the present findings by demonstrating that adolescents who perceive higher levels of social support experience better psychological outcomes, including enhanced self-esteem and reduced stress levels. The consistent evidence from these contemporary studies further validates the robustness of the correlation observed in the current study.

Table 3: Significance of the relationship between Social Support and Psychological Well-being

Variables Correlated	r	p-value	Decision on Ho	Decision on Relationship
Social support and Psychological Well-being	0.889	0.000	Reject	Significant

Conclusions

The study indicates that senior high school students view family support as a significant source of social help. These results emphasize the crucial role played by both peer and familial bonds in students' lives, highlighting the need for educators, policymakers, and parents to devise approaches that foster academic achievement and overall well-being. In addition, the research emphasizes that students exhibit a sustained and notable level of intrinsic motivation for learning - in line with current studies on motivational factors. It is imperative for educators and policymakers to comprehend how psychological well-being intertwines with academic drive as this knowledge will inform their efforts to formulate interventions aimed at establishing an encouraging and motivating educational atmosphere. To reinforce support systems geared towards the holistic growth of senior high school learners, collaborative endeavors like workshops targeting parents, peer mentoring programs, and prioritizing intrinsic motivation in curriculum planning can be implemented effectively.

Contributions of Authors

The authors confirm the equal contribution in each part of this work. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of this work.

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Conflict of Interests

All authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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