



INFLUENCE OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS ON SOCIAL SUPPORT AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

Ashokakumara¹ and Sampathkumar²

¹Research Scholar, Department of Studies in Psychology, University of Mysore,
Mysuru. Karnataka, India.

²Assistant Professor and Chairman, Department of Studies in Psychology,
University of Mysore, Mysuru. Karnataka, India.

ABSTRACT :

The global level of social support of individuals is varied in the community and is determined and influenced by different socio-cultural factors. This study, hence, examined the socioeconomic status and domicile as a determinant factor of social support among college students. The present study has the aim of studying the influence of socioeconomic status on social support. The data was collected from 682 students, comprised of 281 urban and 401 rural backgrounds, studying in different colleges of Mysore and the age range of college students was between 16 to 23 years. Standardized scales such as the social support appraisal scale (SSAS) and Kuppuswamy's socioeconomic status scale along with socio-demographic data sheet were utilized to elicit the relevant data. One- way ANOVA and t-test were performed to analyze the data. The results reveal that socioeconomic status as a determinant factor on social support and it has been found that socioeconomic statuses alone have a significant influence on college student's social support. However, domicile has no statistically significant difference was found in social support.

KEYWORDS : Social Support, Socioeconomic Status, Domicile, College Students.

INTRODUCTION:

Socioeconomic status is generally conceptualized as the social standing or class of an individual or group. It is often measured as a combination of education, occupation and income of the person. Chu & colleagues (2015) explained that socioeconomic status (SES) a measurement of family member's social & economic status is a kind of hierarchy made according to the amount of social resources an individual can obtain. Importantly SES was defined as the position that the individual or group occupies in society. It is a multidimensional construct generally measured as a combination of education, occupation and income (APA report on SES, 2007; National Centre for Education & Statistics, 2012). Specifically, SES has three components mainly education, income and employment status. As a measure of education on years of schooling, a measure of income using individual disposable income, which is the summation of pre-tax income & credited rent minus interest expenses, tax and paid allowances also employment on current occupation (Seid, Bloomfield & Hesse, 2018).



The Hollingshead's (1975) four-factor index of SES is the most important and frequently used measures of SES in research (Edwards-Hewitt & Gray, 1995) since more than four decades and also Cirino (2002) have explained Hollingshead's SES index and considered the fact that social status is a multidimensional concept. And has three basic assumptions: (a) a differentiated and

unequal status structure exists in our society. (b) The primary factors indicative of status are the occupation an individual engages in and the years of schooling a person has completed; other significant factors are sex and marital status. (c) These factors may be combined so that a researcher can quickly, reliably and meaningfully estimate the status positions, persons and members of nuclear families occupy in our society. Socioeconomic status basically refers to the hierarchical classification of a family in education, property, social status and other valuable resources (Lancee, 2010; Lease & Dahlbeck, 2009) and it's more difficult to define in the complex world of the 21st Century than the early 19th century or earlier. In the pre-modern time, socioeconomic status may have been based on physical strength, intelligence & choice of parents. In the contemporary period, the income, wealth, educational attainment and occupational status have been defensible indicators of SES. But in our current post-industrial period, it is not altogether clear what indicators signal access to what resources and whether there is an appropriate social consensus on the required resources themselves.

In this line, a study by Umukoro, Simon, Akinade & Abisola (2018) reports that the socioeconomic status is a complex concept that has been adapted by medical researchers, often without due regard to its sociological inheritance. In epidemiology, the concept is measured indirectly with the help of different measures with different implications for economic and social policy. Income, material possessions (standard of living), education factors and professional prestige are the domains most frequently studied. Though these measures are not equivalent, might have different meanings and represent different concepts of social position in different cultures. For example, incomes of individuals will change throughout life while education remains comparatively unmoving after early adulthood and educational attainments can have a different meaning in different places of the society.

However, most of the world's population lives in developing countries facing the largest degree of socioeconomic inequality. Many studies focused on SES related factors and how those factors determine the SES, interestingly social support also one of the important factor and research studies also explained the role of SES and how this factor determines the social support. In this regard, some researchers are given a different definition of social support.

Importantly most of the researchers were used the Cobb's (1976) definition which is social support is information that leads an individual to believe that he/she is cared, loved and valued as a member of a network of mutual obligation. Recently, social support definition more emphasizes on the importance of perception. For example, Demaray & colleagues (2005) opined that social support as an individual's perception that the person is loved and valued by people in their social network. Meadows (2007) identify social support as beliefs and perceptions that indicate an individual is part of an interpersonal relationship that includes parents and peers. However, Davison et al., (2000) believe that a social support talk about the person requires support with others and provide it when others experience distress. In addition, social support might provide a person with an opportunity to share and deal a wide range of issues.

It is evident that social support is an expansive concept that offers emotional comfort to individuals at the time of difficult situations and adversity, the support may obtainable by family, friends and other significant persons in society and groups in an individual's life (Dollete, Steese, & Mathews, 2004).

The study by Vangelisti (2009) stated that most research focuses on the positive aspects of social support and negative aspects are minimized. Therefore, the notion of social support has been defined in different ways. Various studies on social support conceptualized it as the presence of interpersonal relationships (structural support) and the functions helped by such interpersonal relationships (functional support). On the other hand, social support defined as an individual's perceptions of specific or general support (emotional, informational, appraisal, instrumental) from people in their society.

Humans, by nature, are widely known to be societal animals. As an outcome, a significant part of society is having connections with other people. Interacting with people and maintaining those relationships is what a society does to sustain the culture, environment and economic stability. Social support plays a role in having relationships and connections with others.

There are many studies have focused on socioeconomic status and social support in that important, a study by Thoits (1995) has reported that lower socioeconomic status is allied with reduced social network size and lower social integration. Similarly, Chaurasia (2017) also mentioned in his study a low socioeconomic status is also associated with low social support and decreased support explains some of the social gradients in psychological health.

An important study by Huurre et al., (2007) explained that there are different ways through which social support may perform a vital role in the relationship between socioeconomic position, either as a moderator or as a mediator. In this regard, social support may positively influence well-being and may inequitably distribute among social classes, which leads to unequal exposure to the protective effect of social support against poor health among social classes. It indicates that levels of social support are indeed higher among adolescents with higher socioeconomic position (Geckova et al., 2003; Weyers et al., 2010). Lower income adolescents tend to have poorer social networks in their surroundings (Weyers et al., 2008), fewer organizational participation and less social support from both the community and family members (Schoon & Parsons, 2002; Weyers et al., 2010). Though this applies to both the genders, the differences seem to be slightly greater for males compared to females (Marmot et al., 1997).

However, evidence among adults also suggests that important moderating effects of social support on the relationship between socioeconomic position and wellbeing (Ryff et al., 2004), as well as between socioeconomic status and physical functioning (Unger et al., 1999). And the regarding moderation, the differences in the influence of social support on health through social class may be due to the differences in vulnerability (Gruenewald & Seeman, 2010). Henceforward social support could work as a moderator as well as a mediator in the association between socioeconomic statuses. A study by Geyer et al., (2006) shows that the role of social support in the association between socioeconomic positions varies from the type of socioeconomic indicator. This is in line, which shows that education, income and occupational level/class cannot be used interchangeably as indicators of one theoretical social dimension.

A study by Geckova et al., (2003) adolescents from higher socioeconomic positions reported greater social support. Males and adolescents from lower socioeconomic positions more often reported low social support in comparison to females & adolescents from higher socioeconomic positions. Although, the ability to perceive the social support and the actual requires of specific types of social support tend to change in every individual's life (Uchino, 2009).

Socioeconomic status indicates that an individual's status within a hierarchical social structure in the society, which is one of the significant contributing factors of health status (Gururaj & colleagues, 2015).

In relation to the social support, there are few studies have focused on how other socio-cultural factors are related and how they contribute to increasing the social support an individual's separate. In this regard domicile also one of the main socio-cultural factors which will help to increase the social support, generally, the region of residence is the broad concept which is having different categories mainly urban, rural, semi-urban, city area, etc. In that person belongs to the particular region/area will receive social support in a different level in association with the socioeconomic status. Recently there is a study by Thirumoorthy & colleagues (2016) reported that rural people are less likely to be engaged in a job than compared to urban counterparts, hence they are having poor socioeconomic status and trying to meet the basic necessities, it is challenging for them to build a social relationship with another societal member and that leads to lesser accessibility of social support from community.

The rationality to include the domicile along with the socioeconomic status is that how domicile alone will contribute to increasing the social support of individuals in their everyday life.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

The present study attempted to find the role of socioeconomic status on social support among college students. There was a lack of clarity, and therefore the need for further research to validate whether socioeconomic status significantly predicts social support and how other socio-cultural factors like domicile (region of residence) may stimulate and enhance social support. Findings of the study have implication to

the role of social support which can help to improve the efficacy of college students to manage difficulties in life circumstances. The ideology behind the selection of these factors like socioeconomic status and region of residence (domicile) is that, in a developing country like India, the vast populace, therefore, left lower in the socioeconomic position and also receiving less social support. Finding the influence of the SES on social support and how individuals can get the support from on different sources in society. In this I have chosen these factors for the study and also the results could shed more light on how identifying with an SES promotes social support.

METHOD

Objectives

1. To study the influence of socioeconomic status on social support.
2. To know the domicile (region of residence) differences in social support.
3. To know the interaction effect of socioeconomic status and domicile (region of residence) on social support.

Participants

Data were randomly collected from 682 students studying in pre-university, graduation and postgraduate colleges in Mysore, Karnataka. Participants were from different religious backgrounds, domicile, socioeconomic status and age range of 16 to 23 years. Rapport was established and explained the importance and relevance of the research. Participants were administered with a demographic data sheet, the social support appraisal scale and Kuppaswamy's socioeconomic status scale in a classroom setting each class consists of 30 to 35 students to complete questionnaire it takes 30 minutes approximately, whereas students from different religious background has been considered. After the completion, each questionnaire was checked to make sure that the participants responded to all the items.

Measures

1. Socio-demographic data sheet

A Socio-demographic data sheet was prepared by the researcher to draw basic information about the participants. It includes age, gender, religion and domicile.

2. Social support appraisal scale (Vaux, Phillips, Holly, Thomson, Williams & Stewart, 1986)

The social support appraisal scale is a self report measures that consists of 23 items with 4 points Likert type rating scale for each item, the participants rank their response as the following key, strongly agree-1, agree- 2, disagree- 3, and strongly disagree-4. A score is obtained by reversing the negatively stated items and summing the total. The lesser score indicates a greater level of social support. As reported by the author of the scale the SSAS has strong internal consistency of .81, and good concurrent, predictive and construct validity (Cochoran & Fischer, 2013) which is satisfactory.

3. Kuppaswamy's socioeconomic status scale-revised (Gururaj, Shilpa & Maheshwaran, 2015).

The Kuppaswamy's socioeconomic status scale originally developed in 1981, it measures the socioeconomic status of an individual based on three variables that are education occupation of the household and income of the family. Scale classified into three categories as high middle and low SES. As reported by the author of the scale the reliability coefficient is .83, which is satisfactory and revised by Gururaj, Shilpa & Maheshwaran, in 2015.

Results

Table 1.a: Results of descriptive statistics for socio-economic status on the social support

Descriptive Statistics

SES	N	Mean	SD
Low (SES)	121	58.02	15.48
Middle (SES)	474	65.09	12.81
High (SES)	87	66.91	11.83
Total	682	64.07	13.49

Note: (SES) Socioeconomic status

A descriptive statistics has been performed to categorize the participant based on the total scores obtained by an individual, which are divided into three categories. The above table indicates that the N, Mean and SD of the participants, however low SES (n (121), M= 58.02, SD=15.48), average SES (n (474), M=65.09, SD=12.81), and high SES (n (87), M=66.07, SD=13.49).

Table 1.b: Results of F-test (ANOVA) for socio-economic status on social support

ANOVA

Social Support	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p - Value
Between Groups	5630.33	2	2815.16	16.139	.001
Within Groups	118437.70	679	174.43		
Total	124068.03	681			

A one - Way between subjects ANOVA was performed to reveal the effect of socio-economic status on social support. Results of the above table indicate that there is a significant effect of socioeconomic status on social support (F (2, 679) =16.139, p=0.001<0.05). Scheffe’s post hoc test was performed to check whether there is a significant difference between each group and statistically significant results were emerged (see table 1c for post-hoc results).

Table 1.c: Results of multiple comparisons for socioeconomic status on social support

Multiple Comparison

	I (SES Levels)	J (SES Levels)	Mean Difference I-J	Std .Error	p - Value
Scheffe	Low (SES)	Middle (SES)	-7.07436*	1.34	.000
		High (SES)	-8.89475*	1.85	.000
	Middle (SES)	Low (SES)	7.07436*	1.34	.000
		High (SES)	-1.82038	1.54	.498
	High (SES)	Low (SES)	8.89475*	1.85	.000
		Middle (SES)	1.82038	1.54	.498

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level ;Note: (SES)Socioeconomic status

Table 2: Results of independent sample t-test for domicile in social support

Domicile	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p-Value
Urban	281	63.09	14.69	680	-1.583	0.114
Rural	401	64.76	12.56			

An independent sample t-test was performed to find out the domicile differences in social support. The results of the above table indicate the mean, SD, t-value and significance value of urban (M=63.09, SD=14.69) and rural (M=64.76, SD=12.56), whereas it revealed that there is no statistically significant

difference was found in social support ($t(680) = -1.583, p=0.114 > 0.05$). However, rural students perceive slightly more social support than urban students.

Table 3: Results of F-test (two-way ANOVA) for the interaction effect of socioeconomic status and domicile on social support

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects							
Dependent Variable :SS							
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Squared	Eta
Corrected Model	6265.039 ^a	5	1253.008	7.190	.000	.050	
Intercept	1632884.615	1	1632884.61	9370.13	.000	.933	
SES	5746.361	2	2873.180	16.487	.000	.047	
Domicile	542.214	1	542.214	3.111	.078	.005	
SES *Domicile	244.489	2	122.244	.701	.496	.002	
Error	117802.996	676	174.265				
Total	2924200.000	682					
Corrected Total	124068.035	681					

a. R Squared = .050) Adjusted R Squared = .043 :(

A two-way ANOVA was performed on social support, whether, the socioeconomic status and domicile has an any interaction in affecting social support and it found that there is no interaction of socioeconomic status and domicile on social support, ($F(2, 676) = 0.701, p = .496 > 0.05$, partial $\eta^2 = .002$), however, socioeconomic status alone did influence on social support ($F(2, 676) = 16.487, p = 0.001 < 0.05$, partial $\eta^2 = .047$). On the other hand, domicile has not shown any influence on the dependent variable (social support) ($F(1, 676) = 3.111, p = 0.078 > 0.05$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.005$).

DISCUSSION

In this study, attempts were made to know the influence of socioeconomic status and domicile on social support. The finding shows that socioeconomic status has a significant relationship with social support. As well recent literature also shows that socioeconomic position is the most predicting factor of increasing social support also explains lower the SES have lesser the social support and it may lead to risks an individual's life. There are limited numbers of studies on how socioeconomic position plays on vital role on individuals social support network. The current study clearly shows that SES has a significant influence on social support. However, researchers revealed that (Geyer et al., 2006) the role of socioeconomic positions in the association between social supports varies from the type of socioeconomic indicator like education, occupation and income of on individuals. The results in the line with these findings it can be inferred that as socioeconomic status increases social support will also increase. However, results specify SES has emerged as a significant predictor on social support. But the interaction effects between the subjects of SES and domicile on social support shows that as a whole all there is no significant influence on social support, whereas SES has influence alone. On the other hand, domicile has no significant effect on social support. The SES as a frame of reference with the factors of education level, occupation and income of an individual, it determines the role of SES how it plays a vital role on social support throughout the life of on individuals. And the person affiliated with the lower SES will perceive lesser social support and having higher SES will also obtain a greater level of social support it indicates that the SES plays on a greater role on social support.

A possible explanation can be though the developing countries like India; the majority of the overall population belongs to the average range of socioeconomic level which leads the individual life turn into problematic. However, individuals will perceive social support on the basis of his/her socioeconomic position.

CONCLUSIONS

1. There is a significant influence of socioeconomic status on the level of social support, in which domicile has no significant influence on social support
2. Domicile has no significant influence on social support.

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Ashokakumara

**Research Scholar, Department of Studies in Psychology, University of Mysore.
Mysuru. Karnataka, India.**