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Original Article

Emotional Lability and Perceived Social Support in Association with Psychological Well-Being Among University Students: An Exploratory Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The Current study examined correlation among emotional lability, perceived social support and psychological well-being of university students. **Methods:** Cross sectional study with quantitative method was used in the current study. Sample comprised of 300 university students from various backgrounds was recruited through random probability sampling technique. For assessment self-developed demographic sheet with standardized scales Affective Lability Scale, Multi-Dimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, and Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale 42-Items Version were administered. For analysis both descriptive and inferential statistics were used. **Results:** Results revealed that perceived social support had a positive relationship with psychological well-being ($r=0.49^{**}$), which means that with increase in social support, psychological well-being begun to improve. Moreover, PSS had negative relationship with emotional lability ($r= -0.52^{**}$), indicating that emotional instability decreases with the increase of PSS. Furthermore, results of regression analysis explored that PSS is significant predictor of EL and PWB among university students. Mean score test results indicates that EL and PWB are affected by PSS. Hence, a significant relationship exists between perceived social support and PWB and EL. **Conclusions:** To conclude it is stated that perceived social support presented role as a moderator in predicting the relationship between emotional lability and psychological well-being.

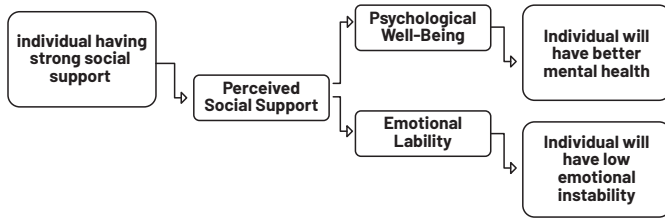
INTRODUCTION

In the chaotic environment of university life, the emotional storms with relentless waves of negativity, threaten to overwhelm the delicate mental equilibrium of students. University students often face various stressors, such as academic demands, social transitions and increased independence, which can contribute to emotional lability. Without the necessary support systems, students are left defenseless and find themselves vulnerable. Deprived of understanding, empathy, and acceptance, students are left adrift, desperately seeking comfort in a vast ocean of uncertainty. Without the anchor of support, they

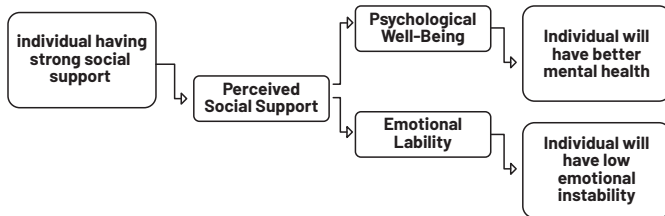
experience isolation, distress, and a sense of powerlessness when confronted with emotional challenges. In this tale, perceived social support emerges as a lifeline. Students yearn for the refuge of understanding, care, and encouragement that perceived social support promises. And psychological well-being stands as the ultimate quest for university students. By investigating the relationships between emotional lability, perceived social support, and psychological well-being among university students, we strive to shed light on the intense emotional struggles faced by this vulnerable

population and their dire need for supportive environment. Emotional Liability is characterized by unpredictable mood swings, often including inappropriate laughter, crying, or anger that are out of proportion to the situation. According to APA emotional liability is a tendency towards sudden, rapid, and exaggerated mood changes that can be triggered by various stimuli, whether internal or external [1]. Emotional liability is linked to impulsive behaviors, thoughts of self-harm, and aggressive acts [2-4]. As described by Gollan, emotional liability refers to the inclination to undergo recurrent and unpredictable shifts in emotional states which are typically triggered by relatively minor stimuli, and characterized by a lack of emotional regulation [5]. Perceived social support is how a person perceives friends, family, and others as sources of material, psychological, and general support available when needed. The question is whether social support is perceived to be consistently associated with well-being. This is because perceived levels of support, love, and compassion can convey positive experiences [6]. A review found that quality social support was also associated with improved physical and mental health [7]. Psychological well-being is a multidimensional concept that encompasses positive functioning, including eudaimonic and hedonic well-being, well-being related to society, psychological well-being, and subjective well-being [8-11]. These dimensions reflect diverse aspects of human experience, such as experiencing positive emotions, personal growth, forming positive relationships, and achieving life satisfaction [12]. Engaging in positive health behaviors and making lifestyle choices have a beneficial impact on both psychological well-being and physical health [13]. Fluctuations in emotions is critical for psychological wellbeing. Different previous researches have linked instability in emotions with psychological health. In 2015, Houben and his colleagues performed a meta-analysis to investigate the association between dynamics of short-term emotion and psychological well-being. Total 79 articles were considered in the meta-analysis. Conclusions of meta-analysis include that the psychological health and maladjustments of people are tied to how their emotions evolve over time. Less fluctuating and more stable emotions are sign of greater psychological well-being where as more fluctuating and unstable emotions are sign of psychological maladjustment or lower psychological well-being [14]. In a study published in 2022, it was observed that there exists a negative association between perceived social support and emotional difficulties. Research demonstrated that adolescents in the age range of 17-18 years who perceive higher levels of social support tend to experience fewer emotional difficulties [15]. D'Aurizio et al., conducted a

systematic review exploring the significance of emotional instability in borderline personality disorder and concluded that emotional instability serves as the central characteristic of this particular disorder. Research outcomes validated the involvement of emotional instability in the development of borderline personality disorder but also emphasize its ongoing significance in the maintenance of the disorder [16]. Contrary to that, studies focusing on Perceived social support in individuals diagnosed with emotionally unstable personality disorder indicate that elevated levels of social support perception have a beneficial impact on overall well-being [17]. Perceived social support and psychological stress were correlated to depression. It was extensively recognized that perceived social support beneficial impacts on overall health and well-being [18, 19]. Multiple researches have provided evidence suggesting perceived social support from parents, friends, and from school environment plays a significant role in mitigating depressive symptoms among children and adolescents [20]. During the corona virus situation in Turkey, a research study was carried out involving 378 participants aged 13 to 18 years. The research uncovered a strong and positive relationship between perceived social support and psychological well-being within this particular population. The findings suggested that with enhanced perception of social support, there was a corresponding increase in psychological well-being among the adolescents [21]. Review of literature shows the role of perceived social support in buffering the negative effects of emotional liability and fostering positive psychological outcomes. However, the existing literature on emotional liability among university students is limited, revealing a notable gap in our understanding of this critical aspect of their psychological well-being. This gap calls for further investigation to comprehensively explore the nature, causes, and consequences of emotional liability among university students. Future studies should focus on investigating effective interventions and programs that enhance emotional well-being and social support among university students. This review sets the stage for our research, we aim to pave the way for innovative interventions and practices that profoundly impact the emotional, social and psychological well-being of students. Theoretical Framework. Perceived social support has remarkable alliance with emotional liability and psychological well-being. If social support was well-fortified then students have high life expectations and positive life view, have healthier psychological well-being and low emotional fluctuations. Social support has negative relationship with emotional liability and has positive relationship with psychological well-being.



As, those students who have weak social support, they have to face more emotional disturbance and have poor mental health. They are usually stressed and have low capability of carrying out their tasks capability of carrying out their tasks.



METHODS

Current research sample was comprised of 300 university students from both male and female population belong to both rural and urban habitat with an age range of 18 to 26 years. Sample size was selected through G power. G Power is a statistical software widely used for power analysis and sample size determination in research studies. It allows researchers to calculate the required sample size based on various parameters. Sample was collected from different universities, both government and private from Sialkot, Pakistan. Random probability sampling technique was used which means that the sample was selected from the population using a method that gives each member of the population an equal and known chance of being included in the sample. This approach ensures that the sample is representative of the larger population. A cross-sectional study is a type of observational study design where data were collected from a population or sample at a specific point in time. It aims to provide a snapshot or a "cross-section" of the population at that particular moment, examining the prevalence of certain characteristics, behaviors, or outcomes. For the purpose of assessment self-developed demographic sheet with standardized scales Affective Lability Scale [22]. Multi-Dimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support [23] and Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale [8, 24], 42 Items Version were administered. For analysis both descriptive and inferential statistics were used. Correlation analysis among the variables of emotional lability, perceived social support and psychological well-being, Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation Analysis for Model variables among university students, Linear Regression Analysis and Mean Comparison and standard deviation and

T- test for the purpose of analysis.

RESULTS

Linear regression analysis and interpretive correlations were applied. (SPSS, version-26). Mean percentages and standard deviations for were calculated using descriptive statistics.

Table 1: Correlation analysis among the variables of emotional lability, perceived social support and psychological well-being

Variables	N	Mean ± SD	1	2	3
Perceived social support	300	57.89±22.85	-	-0.52**	0.49**
Emotional Lability	300	95.34±13.89	-	-	-0.32**
Psychological well-being	300	148.26±11.42	-	-	-

**Significance level at the 0.01

Table revealed that perceived social support had a positive relation significant, where as there is also significant relationship between emotional lability and psychological well-being. Emotional lability had a negative relationship with the perceived social support that means emotional reduced with the increase of the social support.

Table 2: Linear Regression Analysis of Affective Lability Scale (ALS) Multi-Dimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support and Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWB), 42 Items version among university students

Variables	B	R	R2	ΔR	F
Emotional Lability	0.52	0.52	.002	-.001	0.716
Psychological well-being	0.49	0.49	.029	0.26	8.865

Linear regression analysis was basically applied to check the effect of perceived social support psychological well-being and emotional lability. Results explored that perceived social support predict significantly the emotional lability among university students and psychological well-being among university students. Hence, a significant relationship exists between perceived social support and psychological well-being and emotional lability(Figure 1).

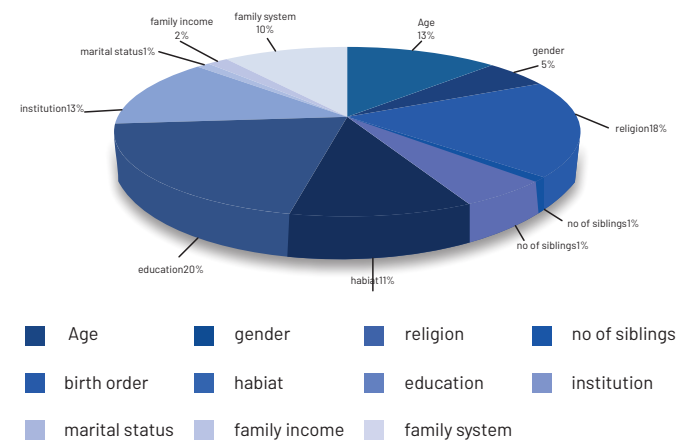


Figure 1: Pie chart of frequencies of demographic sheet

DISCUSSION

The present research study investigated the relationship between emotional liability, perceived social support, and psychological well-being among university students. The results of the study provide valuable insights regarding the importance of presence of perceived social support among university students. Study findings demonstrated significant negative relationship between perceived social support and emotional liability. When university students feel more supported by others, their emotional instability decreases. This means that having stronger social support acts as a shield against turbulent emotions, promoting a sense of calm and balance. Previous research has shown that social support helps people become more resilient in handling stress and responding to challenges in healthier ways. It's also consistent with previous studies. A study showed a negative relationship between perceived social support and emotional liability. Key findings of the study revealed that 17-18-year-olds who had higher levels of social support had fewer emotional liability [25]. It means that effect of perceived social support would be inversely proportional to the emotional liability. The study found a positive correlation between perceived social support and psychological well-being among university students. This means that when students perceive greater support from their social networks, their overall psychological well-being tends to be higher. In simpler terms, having stronger social support systems in place is associated with better mental and emotional well-being for university students. Social support theory highlights the significance of social relationships and networks in promoting psychological well-being and propose that individuals who have a strong social support system were better able to manage effectually with stress and anxiety [26]. In table 1, results indicated significant relationship between perceived social support and psychological well-being. This significant relationship was found in a study of 90 epilepsy patients. Which shown that strong social support and psychological well-being improved overall mental health [27]. Social support is crucial during difficult times. A person who is suffering from any disease can find comfort only by sharing his problems with family, friends or others. In our cultural context, it has been observed that individuals with healthy relationships and the support of family friends and relatives leads a healthier life and better managing with problems. Hence, there were the positive and significant relationship between perceived social support and psychological well-being. Furthermore, findings have shown a significant relationship between perceived social support, emotional ability and psychological well-being among university students. Previous researches have not studied this unique

combination together. However according to previous research enhanced perception of social support, there was a corresponding increase in psychological well-being among the adolescents [28]. Tables reveals that there was a significant relationship between perceived social support, emotional liability and psychological well-being. Findings also suggests that managing and reducing emotional liability is important for promoting positive mental health outcomes among students. Emotional instability is involved in the development of borderline personality disorder but also emphasize its ongoing significance in the maintenance of the disorder and affects individual mental health [29]. Contrary to that, individuals diagnosed with emotionally unstable personality disorder with elevated levels of social support perception have a beneficial impact on overall well-being [30]. Tables result reveal that Emotional liability had a significant negative relationship with the psychological well-being that means emotion liability reduced with the increase of the psychological well-being. Moreover, findings of the study provide compelling evidence that the level of perceived social support has a transformative effect on the link between emotional liability and psychological well-being. The presence of strong social support can act as a protective factor, mitigating the impact of emotional liability and fostering enhanced psychological well-being. Conversely, a lack of perceived social support may exacerbate the negative effects of emotional liability, leading to poorer psychological well-being. It can be concluded that, higher social support is fundamentally connected with less emotional liability and enhanced the psychological well-being.

CONCLUSIONS

In sum, it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between emotional liability, perceived social support and psychological well-being among university students. Perceived social support acts as a moderator in predicting the relationship between emotional liability and psychological well-being.

Authors Contribution

Conceptualization: SA

Methodology: TD, TZ, NM, KS

Formal analysis: SA

Writing-review and editing: TD, NA

All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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