

Research Paper

Relationship between Perceived Social Support, Trust, Fear of Expressing Compassion towards Others and Helping Attitude in the Indian Youth

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ABSTRACT

History has witnessed many instances of mankind being violent, cruel and greedy. However, it has also chronicled stories of heartwarming compassion and altruism. Yet, much is unknown about the internal factors that affect Helping attitude; even more so in the Indian context. The present study tries to bridge this gap by examining the relationship between Perceived social support, Trust, Fear of expressing Compassion towards Others and Helping Attitude. The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet et al., 1988), Trust Scale (Yamagishi, 1986), Fear of Expressing Compassion towards Others subscale (of Fear of Compassion scale) (Gilbert et al., 2010a, 2011) and Helping Attitudes scale ((Nickell et al., 1988) were administered to 128 individuals aged between 18-28 years (Indian Youth). Results indicated a significant positive relationship between Perceived social support and Helping attitude. A significant positive relationship was found between Fear of Expressing Compassion towards Others and each of the two factors of Trust (Dishonesty and Risky to Trust Others). Also, a statistically significant negative correlation was found between Perceived social support and Dishonesty factor of Trust. Regression models of Perceived social support predicting Helping attitude and Risky to Trust Others factor of Trust predicting Fear of Expressing Compassion towards Others were found to be an acceptable explanation for the results obtained.

Keywords: *Helping Attitude, Perceived Social Support, Trust, Fear of Expressing Compassion Towards Others, Indian Youth*

To extend help is a virtue so ancient that it is present in all civilisations, pervading across cultures and religions. People render help frequently; to strangers too; even when such interactions are not being witnessed (Raihani & Bshary, 2015).

Voluntary actions undertaken to help others with or without the expectation of rewards can be defined as helping behaviours (Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989). Helping behaviours take different forms depending on the situation. Activities like sharing personal resources,

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volunteering time, effort or expertise also fall under the purview of helping behaviours (Poepsel & Schroeder, 2021). Helping behaviours differ slightly from prosocial behaviours and altruistic behaviours. Prosocial behaviours are widespread and refer simply to positive behaviours; they are an antithesis to antisocial behaviours. Altruistic behaviours are induced by empathy and concern for the needs and welfare of others. They are generally performed without the expectation of receiving anything in return (Eisenberg and Fabes, 1998; Stukas & Clary, 2012). Altruistic and Helping behaviours; both, are types of prosocial behaviours.

Many have often wondered, ‘Why do people help others, even strangers?’. Evolutionary psychologists have explained helping behaviour using the Reciprocal altruism model (Trivers, 1971) which proposes that people are inclined to help others because they believe that it increases their own chances of receiving help later. Philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes, Jeremy Bentham have proposed the concept of ‘Psychological egoism’ which suggests that, deep down, humans are always motivated by self-interest. Thus, help is given; either to make oneself feel better (Cialdini et al., 1973; Cialdini & Kenrick, 1976) or when the cost of helping is low (Dovidio et al., 2006).

Most of the research on helping attitude has focussed on the role of personality factors which include empathy, altruism, agreeableness, hostility, neuroticism, introversion; and on the influence of environmental factors such as weather, noise, crowding. However, the above-mentioned theories and concepts fall short of including other internal aspects related to the helper such as their experiences with receiving-extending help, level of trust and comfort with offering help. This study aims to shed more light on the role of these internal factors.

Concepts used in the Study

Helping attitudes can be defined as “the beliefs, feelings and behaviours related to helping people”. (Nickell, 1988).

Perceived social support can be defined as ‘an exchange of resources between a provider and a recipient, the purpose of which, is perceived by either of them, as intending to enhance the recipient’s well being’. (Zimet et al., 1988; Shumaker & Brownell, 1984).

Fear of expressing compassion towards others refers to “the negative feelings, thoughts that individuals experience because of being compassionate towards others” (Gilbert et al., 2011); a mentality that may be rooted in the help giver’s own experiences of shame, trauma, weakness (Matos et al., 2017).

Generalized trust can be defined as an expectation of harmless, benign intentions from people in general (Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994). Thus, the present study aims to bridge the gaps in literature by studying the relationship between these variables.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The combination of perceived social support, generalised trust and fear of expressing compassion towards others with respect to helping attitude has not been studied much in research. Hence, in this section, past research regarding the above mentioned variables in the context of other factors has been reviewed.

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Prezza & Pacilli (2002) explored the relationship between perceived support from various sources and demographic characteristics in 1041 individuals aged between 18-77 years. Results indicated that family support was higher in males. Also, the young perceived more support by friends and significant persons while the elderly perceived less support. Ross et al., (1999) studied perceived support and attributions for failed support among 98 students aged 19 years and found that people low on perceived social support made more negative attributions for hypothetical situations involving failed support.

Ermisch & Gambetta (2010) investigated the influence of real-life experiences on trust towards strangers with respect to family ties in 256 individuals and found that about 43% of people were willing to trust strangers. Lower trust levels towards strangers were found in those with stronger family ties while those who interacted more with non-family members, or had weaker family ties were more likely to trust strangers. Stolle & Nishikawa (2011) investigated the influence of parents' child-rearing approaches, parents' trust levels, trusting styles and values on the generalised trust levels of over 1,400 children aged around 12-13 years. Results indicated that children scored lower on generalised trust than their parents; partly because parents often instil distrust towards strangers in their children due to fear of child related crimes. In their study, Zhao et al., (2013) found that trust and social identity positively influenced the development of empathy which in turn influenced willingness to contribute personal knowledge.

Catarino et al., (2014) studied the difference between submissive compassion and genuine compassion along with the association between submissive compassion, shame, submissive behaviour, depression, anxiety and stress in 157 individuals aged 17-52 years. Results indicated that submissive compassion had a strong positive correlation with caring shame, caring guilt, self-image goals, submissive behaviour, fear of expressing compassion for others, depression, anxiety, and stress. Submissive behaviour, compassion for others, self-image goals, depression, anxiety and stress were positively correlated with caring guilt. Caring shame was the strongest predictor of submissive compassion. Crimston et al., (2021) examined the role of compassion and fear of compassion in the development of moral boundaries in 749 individuals. They found that stronger compassion towards others was linked to enhanced moral expansiveness. The relationship between fear of compassion towards others and moral expansiveness was consistently mediated by compassion.

A study by Paciello et al., (2013) examined how 174 individuals aged between 16-22 years respond to an explicit request for assistance using a hypothetical situation. Results highlighted the role of moral disengagement and personal distress in the avoidance of moral responsibility towards others. Prosocial decision making was influenced by differences in emotional tendencies and moral-cognitive processes in high cost situations. Higher empathy levels promoted altruistic responses which fostered mature prosocial reasoning.

METHODOLOGY

Hypotheses

1. There will be a positive relationship between Perceived social support and Helping attitude in the Indian youth.
2. There will be a negative relationship between Fear of expressing Compassion towards Others and Helping attitude in the Indian Youth.
3. There will be a negative relationship between Risky to Trust Others factor of Trust and Helping attitude in the Indian Youth.

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4. There will be a negative relationship between Dishonesty factor of Trust and Helping attitude in the Indian Youth.
5. There will be a positive relationship between Risky to Trust Others factor of Trust and Fear of expressing Compassion towards Others in the Indian Youth.
6. There will be a positive relationship between Dishonesty factor of Trust and Fear of expressing Compassion towards Others in the Indian Youth.
7. There will be a negative relationship between Perceived social support and Fear of expressing Compassion towards Others in the Indian Youth.
8. There will be a negative relationship between Perceived social support and Dishonesty factor of Trust in the Indian Youth.
9. There will be a negative relationship between Perceived social support and Risky to Trust Others factor of Trust in the Indian Youth.

Sample

Using a combination of convenience sampling and snowball sampling, data was collected from 128 individuals of Indian nationality between the ages of 18-28 years.

The inclusion criteria required the participant to be familiar with Standard Xth level of English and live in urban areas. Participants working, volunteering in an NGO, company, institution etc of their own accord, as well as those pursuing a degree or working in caregiving, nursing social work, or any similar field were excluded.

Table No. 1 Sample Characteristics

N	128	
Standard Deviation (SD)	2.466	
Variance	6.081	
Age		
Age Range	18-28 years	
Mean Age	22.383	
Gender		
	Males	Females
Number of participants	52 (41%)	76 (59%)

As can be seen from Table No. 1, the sample includes individuals aged between 18-28 years of age. The mean age of the sample (N=128) is 22 years and the SD is 2.466. The sample contains 52 male participants (41%) and 76 female participants (59%).

Research Design

The study utilises a correlational design.

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Research Instrumentation

- 1. Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support:** Perceived Social Support is measured using the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, developed by Zimet et al., (1988). The scale is a 7-point Likert type scale and consists of 12 items and has three factors namely Family, Friends and Significant Other. The Total Scale score is obtained by calculating the average of the individual scores on the 12 items. The MSPSS has a test-retest reliability of .85 for the whole scale, and .85, .75, .72 for Family, Friends and Significant Other subscales respectively (Zimet et al., 1988). Cronbach alphas range from .77 to .92 (Zimet et al., 1988, 1990; Dahlem et al., 1991; Cecil et al., 1995).
- 2. Trust Scale:** Trust is measured using the Trust scale developed by Toshio Yamagishi in 1986. The 5-item scale has a 5-point Likert type scale with 1 being 'Strongly Disagree' and 5 being 'Strongly Agree'. The Trust scale measures two factors of general trust. The first factor is- a belief that other people are basically honest (henceforth labelled as Dishonesty factor in this study to aid understanding). Higher scores indicate that the individual believes that people are dishonest. The second factor is- a belief that trusting others is risky (henceforth labelled as Risky to Trust Others factor in this study to aid understanding). Higher scores indicate that the individual believes that it is risky to trust others. The scale has demonstrated good internal consistency with ($\alpha = 0.77-0.79$) (Cremer et al., 2001; Van Kleef et al., 2006).
- 3. Fear of Expressing Compassion towards Others subscale (of Fear of Compassion Scale):** The Fear of Expressing Compassion towards Others is a subscale of the Fear of Compassion Scale. The scale developed by Gilbert et al., (2010a, 2011) is a 5-point Likert type scale and consists of 10 items. The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .84-.92 for students and clinical samples while it was .76-.86 for therapists (Gilbert et al., 2011; Harris, 2017).
- 4. Helping Attitudes Scale:** The Helping Attitudes Scale (HAS) was developed by Nickell et al. The scale consists of 20 items and is a 5-point Likert type scale. The Cronbach's Alpha for this scale was found to be 0.86 (Nickell, 1998) and 0.80 (SME Corporation, 2018).

Data Collection Procedure

Before data collection, permissions for using the scales were acquired. Following the survey method of data collection through the use of Google forms, the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, Trust scale, Fear of Expressing Compassion towards Others subscale and the Helping Attitudes Scale were administered to 128 youth participants, aged between 18-28 years who met the inclusion and exclusion criteria. All participants were informed in brief about the study; doubts were answered and consent forms were signed by all the participants. They were assured that their data would be kept confidential and would be used for research purposes only.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The analysis of the data was done using Microsoft Excel and JASP software after the linearity of the relationships between the variables and the normality of the data was assessed.

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Table No. 2 Descriptive Statistics of Perceived Social Support, Dishonesty and Risky to Trust Others factors of Trust, Fear of Expressing Compassion towards Others and Helping Attitude

Variables	Statistics						
	N	Range	Mean	SD	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis
PSS	128	5.750	5.415	0.904	0.818	-1.267	3.223
FOEC(O)	128	37.000	26.219	7.235	52.345	-0.592	0.311
DH	128	6.000	7.117	1.302	1.695	0.040	-0.101
RTTO	128	9.000	10.711	1.712	2.932	-0.209	-0.194
HA	128	33.000	81.297	7.948	63.171	-0.116	-0.783

Note. PSS= Perceived Social Support, FOEC(O)= Fear of Expressing Compassion towards Others, DH= Dishonesty, RTTO= Risky to Trust Others (2 Factors of Trust), HA= Helping Attitude

Table No. 2 displays the descriptive statistics for the 4 variables; the variable of Trust is represented by its two factors- Dishonesty (DH) and Risky to Trust Others (RTTO).

Based on the descriptive statistics and correlations among the four variables were calculated using Pearson's Product Moment correlation method which are displayed below.

Table No. 3 Pearson's Correlation for Perceived Social Support, Dishonesty and Risky to Trust Others factors of Trust, Fear of Expressing Compassion towards Others and Helping Attitude

Variable	PSS	FOEC(O)	DH	RTTO	HA
PSS	-				
FOEC(O)	-0.057	-			
DH	-0.174*	0.264**	-		
RTTO	-0.100	0.371***	-	-	
HA	0.270**	-0.082	0.066	0.024	-

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

Note. PSS= Perceived Social Support, FOEC(O)= Fear of Expressing Compassion towards Others, DH= Dishonesty, RRTO= Risky to Trust Others (2 factors of Trust), HA= Helping Attitude

Table No. 3 indicates the correlation trends for the four variables under study. As is evident, four out of the nine correlations are statistically significant. In line with the first hypothesis, a statistically significant positive relationship was found between Perceived social support (PSS) and Helping Attitude (HA) ($r=0.270$; $p < .01$). According to the fifth and sixth hypotheses, Fear of Expressing Compassion towards Others [FOEC(O)] had a statistically significant positive correlation with the Dishonesty factor (DH) of Trust ($r=0.264$; $p < .01$); similarly, there was a statistically positive correlation between Risky to Trust Others factor

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(RTTO) of Trust and Fear of Expressing Compassion towards Others ($r=0.371$; $p<.001$). In line with the eighth hypothesis, a statistically significant negative relationship was found between Perceived social support (PSS) and Dishonesty factor (DH) of Trust ($r=-0.174$; $p<.05$).

Ancillary Analysis

Based on the results of the correlational analysis, Multiple Linear Regression was done to examine 2 models. As shown in the table below, the first model examined whether Helping Attitude is predicted by Perceived social support and Trust.

Table No. 4.1 Model Summary for Perceived Social Support and Trust Predicting Helping Attitude

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	0.293 ^b	0.086	0.064	691.041	3	230.347	3.896	0.011 ^b
Residual				7331.678	124	59.126		

Note. ^b= Predictors: Perceived Social Support (PSS), Dishonesty factor of Trust (DH), Risky to Trust Others factor of Trust (RTTO)

Table No. 4.1 shows that the R value for the correlation between Helping Attitude, Perceived social support and the 2 factors of Trust is 0.293. The F value is 3.896 and it was significant at 0.011 level ($F_{(3, 124)}=3.896$, $p < 0.011$). Thus, the data indicates that the regression model sufficiently predicts the outcome variable.

Table No. 4.2 Beta value for Regression Model predicting Helping Attitude

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients (β)	Standard Error	Standardised Coefficients (β)	t	p
Intercept	62.029	6.946	-	8.930	<.001
PSS	2.554	0.767	0.291	3.332	0.001
DH	0.684	0.572	0.112	1.197	0.234
RTTO	0.053	0.430	0.011	0.123	0.903

Note. Dependent variable: Helping Attitude; Predictors: Perceived Social Support (PSS), Dishonesty factor of Trust (DH), Risky to Trust Others factor of Trust (RTTO)

As is evident from the Table No 4.2; among the three predictors, the beta (β) value of Perceived social support (β=0.291) was the highest ($t=3.332$; $p < 0.001$). Thus, it can be inferred that Perceived social support is a more significant predictor of Helping Attitude than Dishonesty and Risky to Trust Others factors. Hence, the regression model for Helping Attitude was found to be as expected.

The second model examined whether Fear of Expressing Compassion towards Others is predicted by the two factors of Trust; namely, Dishonesty and Risky to Trust Others.

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Table No. 5.1 Model Summary for Trust Predicting Fear of Expressing Compassion towards Others

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	0.395 ^b	0.156	0.142	1036.277	2	518.139	11.542	<.001 ^b
Residual				5611.598	125	44.893		

Note. ^b= Predictors: Dishonesty factor of Trust (DH), Risky to Trust Others factor of Trust (RTTO)

Table No 5.1 shows an R value of 0.395 for the correlation between the variables of Fear of Expressing Compassion towards Others and the two factors of Trust; namely Dishonesty (DH) and Risky to Trust Others (RTTO). The F value is 11.542 and it was found to be statistically significant at <.001 level ($F_{(2, 125)} = 11.542, p <.001$). Thus, the data indicates that the regression model sufficiently predicts the outcome variable.

Table No 5.2 Beta value for Regression Model predicting Fear of Expressing Compassion towards Others

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients (β)	Standard Error	Standardised Coefficients (β)	T	p
Intercept	6.147	4.264	-	1.441	0.152
DH	0.805	0.493	0.145	1.634	0.105
RTTO	1.339	0.375	0.317	3.573	<.001

Note. Dependent variable: Fear of Expressing Compassion towards Others; Predictors: Dishonesty factor of Trust (DH), Risky to Trust Others factor of Trust (RTTO)

As can be seen in Table No. 5.2; the beta (β) value of the Risky to Trust Others factor was greater than that of the Dishonesty factor. The standardised beta value (β= 0.317) of Risky to Trust Others factor was statistically significant ($t=3.573; p <.001$). Thus, it can be inferred that Risky to Trust Others factor of Trust is a better predictor of Fear of Expressing Compassion towards Others than the Dishonesty factor of Trust. Hence, the regression model for Fear of Expressing Compassion towards Others was found to be in line with expectations.

Considering the statistically significant correlation between Perceived social support (PSS) and Helping Attitude (HA), further analysis was done. The descriptive statistics for the three Subscales of Perceived Social support were as follows.

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Table No. 6 Descriptive Statistics for Subscales of Perceived Social Support

Subscales of PSS	Statistics						
	N	Range	Mean	SD	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis
SO	128	6.000	5.318	1.311	1.718	-0.914	1.030
Family	128	5.500	5.498	1.178	1.387	-1.059	1.194
Friends	128	6.000	5.426	1.201	1.441	-1.227	2.036

Note. PSS= Perceived Social Support, SO= Significant Others

Table No. 6 enumerates the descriptive statistics for the three subscales of Perceived Social support; namely Significant others, Family and Friends.

Correlations were computed among the three subscales of Perceived social support and Helping Attitude to examine whether there were any differences among people’s helping attitudes based on their source of perceived support.

Table No. 7 Pearson's Correlations between Subscales of Perceived Social Support and Helping Attitude

Subscales / Factors	SO	Family	Friends	HA
SO	-			
Family	0.406	-		
Friends	0.348	0.164	-	
HA	0.224*	0.193*	0.175*	-

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

Note. SO= Significant Others, HA= Helping Attitude

Table No. 7 shows that all three subscales of Perceived Social Support had a significant positive correlation with Helping Attitude. The correlation between Helping Attitude and Significant Others (SO) is the strongest ($r=0.224$; $p < .05$), followed by Helping Attitude and Family ($r=0.193$; $p < .05$) and then Helping Attitude and Friends ($r=0.175$; $p < .05$).

To see if there was any difference in the level of Trust between individuals based on their sources of perceived support, correlations were computed between the three subscales of Perceived social support (Significant Others, Family, and Friends) and Helping Attitude.

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Table No. 8 Pearson's Correlation between Subscales of Perceived Social Support and Factors of Trust

Subscales/ Factors	SO	Family	Friends	DH	RTTO
SO	-				
Family	0.406	-			
Friends	0.348	0.164	-		
DH	-0.027	-0.081	-0.284**	-	
RTTO	-0.036	-0.058	-0.130	0.376	-

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

Note. SO= Significant Others, DH= Dishonesty factor of Trust, RTTO= Risky to Trust Others factor of Trust

As can be seen from Table No. 8, the Friends subscale of PSS had a statistically significant correlation with the Dishonesty factor of Trust and it had a negative direction ($r = -0.284$; $p < .01$). This result was in line with expectations.

DISCUSSION

Nine hypotheses were proposed in this study. In line with the first hypothesis, a statistically significant positive correlation was found between Perceived social support (PSS) and Helping Attitude (HA). India being a collectivist culture, individuals are likely to possess high levels of willingness to help. Similar results were observed by Ancy (2020) among emerging adults in Trivandrum wherein participants scored high on willingness to help others when an opportunity was present. With such a collectivistic culture, it is no surprise that Indian youth have high levels of perceived social support. Mikulincer et al., (2003b) examined the influence of secure attachment on helping behaviour in Israel, United States, the Netherlands and found that securely attached individuals were more empathetic, compassionate. They were engaged more in volunteering activities for altruistic reasons and spent more time helping others.

As per the second hypothesis, a negative relationship was found between Fear of expressing Compassion towards Others and Helping attitude; but, it was not statistically significant. Negative experiences in relationships can result in individuals viewing help-seeking as a weakness and they may thus respond with contempt. Some may view help giving as submissiveness (Çevik & Tanhan, 2020). Similarly, help may also be withheld if the receiver is perceived to be untrustworthy (Batson, 1995). Similar results were found by Qin et al., (2011) wherein the level of trust was found to have a positive correlation with voluntary cooperation, risk preferences and opinions of others' trusting behaviour.

As proposed in the third hypothesis, results showed a negative relationship between Risky to Trust Others factor of Trust and Helping attitude, though it was not statistically significant. Research findings show that individuals may provide or withhold help based on perceived trustworthiness and personal characteristics of the receiver. Wang et al., (2018) found that the help receivers' facial trustworthiness, helpers' attachment styles and the extent of familiarity of the environment all influenced helping behaviour. Other mediating factors that

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have been found to influence helping attitude include the size and nature of the help request (Miller & Sulls, 1977; Weyant & Smith, 1987), environmental variables (Page, 1977; Guéguen & Lamy, 2013; Belkin & Kouchaki, 2017; Guo, 2018; Kuttanda et al., 2018), cost and benefits that entail helping (Piliavin et al., 1981).

In line with the fourth hypothesis, a negative relationship was found between Dishonesty factor of Trust and Helping attitude but it was not statistically significant. The results can be explained by understanding the interplay between perceived authenticity, honesty and helping attitude. In a study by Rivera (2020) wherein participants were asked to judge the authenticity of a target; honesty was found to have a strong causal effect on perceptions of authenticity. Thus, it is possible that individuals would be less likely to help those that they perceive as dishonest and therefore less authentic.

In line with the fifth hypothesis, Fear of Expressing Compassion towards Others had a statistically significant positive correlation with Risky to Trust Others factor of Trust. Past research indicates that trust is a likely mediating factor in the relationship between the aforementioned variables. Factors such as the helper's personal experiences with respect to trusting and competence in judging trustworthiness play an important role. This indicates that trust may be partly dependent on attributes of the trustor, rather than the trustee (Barbalet, 2009; Frederiksen, 2019). In their study, Lee and Selart (2011) found that participants who had experienced betrayal reported more negative emotions and thoughts; experienced shame and significantly lowered their levels of trust towards strangers. Individuals with low levels of trust could be cautious, defensive and thus withholding compassion, helping so as to not be cheated (Çevik & Tanhan, 2020).

In line with the sixth hypothesis, a statistically significant positive correlation was found between the Dishonesty factor of Trust and Fear of expressing Compassion towards Others. Often, when individuals perceive someone as honest, they develop a positive attitude and are willing to interact, connect with the person. Paunonen (2006), found that when asked to rate someone; an honest target was rated as more fit, in better health and as having more kind, attractive facial attributes. When individuals perceive someone as dishonest, suspicious, it is possible that they develop an unfavourable view of the person and exercise caution. With such a perception, individuals are unlikely to help or act in a compassionate manner.

As per the seventh hypothesis, a negative relationship was found between Perceived social support and Fear of expressing Compassion towards Others. A possible explanation for why the correlation was in the expected direction but not statistically significant is that studies have found evidence of trust acting as mediating factor between perceptions of support and fear of expressing compassion. Securely attached people's positive experiences, interactions with others foster empathic compassion and trust (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Those who lack such positive connections, or who have had negative experiences may have less trust in others and may thus be afraid to express compassion.

In line with the eighth hypothesis, a statistically significant negative correlation was found between Perceived social support and Dishonesty factor of Trust. Deriving social support from any source would require individuals to trust those sources (individuals) and believe in the honesty of their words and actions. In individuals with high levels of perceived support, it is evident that perceiving the other person as honest and trustworthy did pay off. Also, individuals who have strong family ties, secure attachments, more positive socialisation

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experiences tend to have a stable worldview (Bowlby, 1969). They have less fear, anxiety about being abandoned and they view the world as a relatively safe space where they can rely on others for help when required (Howe, 2005). This could explain why individuals who score high on perceived social support view others as generally honest rather than dishonest.

As per the ninth hypothesis, a negative correlation was found between Perceived social support and Risky to Trust Others factor of Trust; but, it was not statistically significant. The mediating role of perceived trustworthiness could be a possible explanation for the obtained result. Bergman et al., (2010) found that individuals who believed that they have a high amount of social support, are emotionally stable, and have a positive worldview are more trusting of others; probably because it has worked for them in the past (Bowlby, 1969; Gillath et al., 2005). Also, trustors differed in the extent to which they perceived the same individuals as trustworthy.

Ancillary analysis indicated that Perceived social support was a more significant predictor of Helping attitude when compared to Trust. Although there are no studies which have focussed specifically on the relationship between the two variables; research findings indicate that securely attached individuals believe that they are adequately supported, have mental representations of others who care for them. This makes it easier for them to interpret a distressed individual as deserving of sympathy and compassion which may translate into helping behaviour (Batson, 1987; Mikulincer et al., 2003b; Gillath et al., 2005).

The second regression model indicated that Risky to Trust Others factor predicted Fear of Expressing Compassion towards others more significantly than the Dishonesty factor. This result can be explained by Paul Gilbert's theory regarding Fear of expressing compassion which proposes that individuals with negative childhood experiences, dysfunctional attachment styles, poor sense of social security are afraid to trust others (Harris 2017; Matos et al., 2017). They believe that if they act in a compassionate manner, others will view them as weak, submissive and will try to take advantage of them (Gilbert et al. 2011).

As a part of ancillary analysis, correlations were also computed between the subscales of Perceived social support and Helping attitude and they were significant. Research indicates reliable links between adult caregiving, helping behaviour and attachment orientations in both romantic partner relationships and parent-child relationships. Thus, Gillath et al., (2005) speculate that attachment security would be associated with compassion and empathy that spills beyond well-established close relationships (Batson, 1987; Mikulincer et al., 2003b).

The set of correlations computed between the three subscales of Perceived social support and the two factors of Trust indicated a statistically significant negative correlation between Dishonesty factor and Friends subscale. Individuals who derive support from friends are likely to have trusted others and experienced honesty, loyalty in return. Hence, they could have a general worldview wherein people in general are honest.

Summary

The present study examined the relationship between Perceived social support, Trust, Fear of Expressing Compassion towards Others and Helping Attitude. The results indicated that Perceived social support (PSS) has a significant positive relationship with Helping Attitude

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(HA). Fear of Expressing Compassion towards Others [FOEC(O)] correlated positively with the Dishonesty (DH) and Risky to Trust Others (RTTO) factors of Trust. Perceived social support had a significant negative relationship with Dishonesty factor of Trust. Ancillary analysis revealed that Perceived social support was a better predictor of Helping Attitude than the two factors of Trust. Also, the Risky to Trust Others factor of Trust predicted Fear of Expressing Compassion towards Others better than the Dishonesty factor of Trust. Significant Others, Family and Friends subscales of Perceived social support showed significant positive correlations with Helping attitude. The Friends subscale of Perceived social support had a significant negative correlation with the Dishonesty factor of Trust.

Limitations of the study

The age-wise distribution and the gender ratio of the sample were skewed. In the study, only the urban, English-speaking population could be studied which may lower the generalisability of the study findings. Since self-report measures were used the responses may have been affected by social desirability and self-report bias.

The study followed a correlational design; thus, answers pertaining to causal relationships between the four variables are beyond the scope of this study. Lastly, the study focussed on the relationship between the internal aspects of the helper; such as personality, beliefs. External aspects such as the situation, context were not taken into consideration.

Practical Implications and Scope for further research

The study examines the Indian Youth's perspective on helping and how it differs from their Western counterparts. A study examining the relationship between these four variables has not been done before to the best of my knowledge; in India at least. The study highlights the link between Perceived social support, attachment styles and trust. It adds to the knowledge base of the Fear of Expressing compassion for others variable. The findings could have important implications for therapy, interventions pertaining to trust, perceived support and the experience of positive affect.

Qualitative studies can be done to get more in-depth insights on the subject. Gender analysis, inclusion of different age ranges can be done to check whether demographic differences exist. Further research could focus on the attachment styles-perceived social support connection; understanding social safeness and the promotion of social connectedness.

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Conflict of Interest

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