

Research Paper

A Study on Multidimensional Social Support for Secondary Level Students: Insights from an Educational Community in Agra

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated multidimensional social support provided to secondary-level students by an educational community in Agra, India. The study focuses on four dimensions of social support—health, hygiene, and medical care; educational assistance; informational and recreational opportunities; and vocational training. The community assists individuals in numerous ways by providing opportunities for holistic growth. A descriptive survey method was employed, targeting 200 students from selected schools within the community. Data was collected using a self-developed *Multidimensional Social Support Scale*. Results revealed that more than 80% of students acknowledged receiving significant support across all dimensions. The researcher discovered that students receive food at nominal costs, engage in games and sports, engage in agricultural activities, participate in initiatives for fresh and clean surroundings, and receive free medical checkups and treatment. In addition, they receive placement and career services. By providing health, educational, informational, recreational, and vocational support for their students, this community strives for the students' well-being and holistic development.

Keywords: *Multidimensional Social Support, Secondary Students, Educational Community*

Humans are the only species that live in a society and build social relationships by interacting with each other. A person can be born alone, but it is not possible for a person to survive. The person needs society for his existence and survival. The human child depends on its parents and other individuals for their growth and development. The only place, in which a child's innate abilities can grow, is society. The ultimate purpose of a society is to promote a pleasant and happy life for its people. The society helps individuals in many ways by providing opportunities for all round development. Individuals cannot survive without society, and societies cannot exist without individuals. For developing social and emotional bonds and building healthy relationships, the society works as a support system. Societies are essential because they are an important source of social connections.

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A Study on Multidimensional Social Support for Secondary Level Students: Insights from an Educational Community in Agra

Coleman (1988) developed a social capital theory which states that individuals build social network of relationship for gaining benefit from each other and to function effectively in a particular society. The theory laid emphasis on importance of social support and valuing social connections because these connections help individuals in advancing themselves by providing them access to educational and vocational resources and recreational opportunities.

Whenever people talk about relationships and partnerships, the phrase "social support" is often used. Social support plays a significant role for meaningful interaction within the society, and it comes from various source, including family, friends, neighbourhood, coworkers, and community ties.

Support might come from informal networks like family and friends or more official ones like community organizations or mental health professionals. The source of support is an essential aspect of determining how effective it is as a coping mechanism. Early life experiences are very important for developing social competencies, and positive family ties have also been beneficial for adolescent learners. It has been seen that social support from family, friends, and others is positively associated with life satisfaction and enhances the quality of life. (Bi, S., et al., 2021; Alshammari, A. S., et al., 2021). Support from teachers and other school employees has been found to be more powerful than support from other connections. This is thought to be because social interactions with family and friends are more prone to conflict than relationships at school, which tend to be more stable. There has been much research conducted on the importance of social support in human life. One of the studies discovered a positive relationship between social support and learning and development. (Baria and Gomez, 2022). Several studies have been done showing significant impact of social support on students' academic achievement, academic performance, well-being, and motivation. (Saeed et al., 2023; Chen, C., et al., 2023; McLean, L., et al., 2022). Social support provided by schools has a stronger association with learner engagement and academic involvement. (Dickinson, H., et al., 2021; Vargas-Madriz, et al., 2021; Rautanen, P., et al., 2020).

Camara, M., et al. (2014) conducted research and found the dual function of social connections as social support and stress. Mental health problems and stress are closely associated with social support. Students with higher levels of social support reported lower levels of stress. (McLean, L., et al. 2022).

The Stress and Coping Theory (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984) highlighted the role of social support in managing stress and mental health. The theory states that social support acts as a buffer against the negative effects of stress by providing various forms of assistance, including emotional, informational, and instrumental help, which allows individuals to better manage challenging situations.

Social support received by the educational community plays a significant role in students' academic and personal well-being. Mendonça, G., et al. (2014) systematically reviewed some original studies and found that the amount of physical activity was higher in those who reported receiving more parental, friend, and family support as well as general community support.

A Study on Multidimensional Social Support for Secondary Level Students: Insights from an Educational Community in Agra

Chaturvedi and Lajwanti (2015) discussed the community campus and its way of life. It is the combination of progressive Western thinking and Indian spiritual values that helps in the holistic development of individuals.

Sources of Social Support

- **Emotional** (non-tangible) support is defined as the steps that people take to help another person feel loved. Empathy, care, affection, love, trust, embracing oneself, intimacy, and caring are a few examples. It is the comfort and nurturing offered by social support systems. Giving the person emotional support might help them feel loved.
- **Instrumental** support includes things that are tangible, like money and housekeeping also known as material assistance. It also includes personal and medical care facilities.
- **Informational** support includes giving advice, direction, and guidance or provide useful information which help individuals in decision making, idea generation and solving problems.
- **Companionship** support is a type of support that gives the individual a feeling of social belongingness. This could be interpreted as the presence of the company for joint social activities.

Multidimensional Social Support model used in a study

The present study was conducted within the educational community in schools of Agra, based on multi-dimensional social support services extended by the community to the students for the holistic development of individuals. Community works as a support system for its people by giving them opportunities for developing every aspect of personality.

Different forms of multidimensional social support provided to students:

- **Health, hygiene, and medical support:** Healthy food in campus canteens, supplements like milk and chyawanprash, yoga and gym facilities, sports activities, routine medical checkups, and affordable healthcare services. The environment emphasizes cleanliness, with fumigation, sanitation, and use of protective equipment like helmets and gloves.
- **Educational support:** Facilities such as music and language schools, fee concessions, access to a book bank, uniforms at low cost, day boarding services, remedial teaching, and scholarships for competitive exams.
- **Informational and recreational support:** Students benefit from libraries, information centres, educational exhibitions, cultural programs, workshops, seminars, and both indoor and outdoor recreational spaces.
- **Vocational support:** Vocational training programs, hobby classes, craft activities, textile designing workshops, and creative reuse of waste materials are provided to help students build practical and entrepreneurial skills.

Objectives

- To study the health, hygiene, and medical support extended to the secondary students.
- To study the educational support extended to the secondary students.
- To study the informational and recreational support extended to the secondary students.
- To study the vocational support extended to the secondary students.

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive survey method was employed in the present study to explore various forms of social support provided to students. The selection of schools was done purposively, as it was most appropriate for the objectives of the study.

Sample: The sample of the study included 200 secondary-level students from Agra City, chosen through random sampling.

Tool: To collect the data, the researcher developed a self-constructed tool titled the “*Multidimensional Social Support Scale*.” The scale included the following dimensions of social support, namely: health, hygiene, and medical support; educational support; informational and recreational support; and vocational support.

For standardizing a scale, validity and reliability were calculated by the researcher. For calculating reliability, pilot testing was conducted. Split-half reliability coefficients were calculated for each dimension: 1. Health, hygiene, and medical support, $r = 0.80$, 2. Educational support, $r = 0.88$, 3. Informational and recreational support, $r = 0.95$, 4. Vocational support, $r = 0.91$. For validating a scale, the content validity index (CVI) was calculated on the basis of the experts’ opinions, who were requested to examine the questionnaire. The value of CVI is 0.78.

Data Collection and Analysis: Data were collected through direct administration of the survey in classroom settings. The responses were analysed quantitatively using descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage analysis) to interpret the level of support experienced by students in each dimension.

RESULTS

1. To achieve the objective of assessing the health hygiene and medical support of secondary level students, descriptive analysis was carried out. The percentage of students divided in to yes and no categories. The analysis of data revealed that the percentage of respondents significantly higher in yes category than the no category. 82.9% students confirmed the activities promoting health, hygiene and medical facilities where as 17.1% students reported the absence of these supports as shown in table 1.
2. To achieve the objective of assessing the educational support of secondary level students, the data was analysed. The data revealed that 84.7% students reported that they received educational support services where as 15.3 % students reported the absence of these services.
3. To achieve the objective related to informational and recreation support services extended to students, the data was analysed. 83.7% students reported about receiving these services while 16.3% students reported the absence of supports services related to informational and recreational domain.
4. To achieve the objective related to vocational support, the data was analysed and it was found that 83.3% students reported that they receive training programs for vocational development, hobby classes, training programs for utilizing waste material, craft activities and training programs for textile designing and 16.7% students reported the absence of these activities for vocational development as shown in table 1.

A Study on Multidimensional Social Support for Secondary Level Students: Insights from an Educational Community in Agra

Table: 1 Percentage of students on different dimensions

Dimension	Yes (%)	No (%)
Health, Hygiene and Medical support	82.9	17.1
Educational support	84.7	15.3
Informational and recreational, support	83.7	16.3
Vocational support	83.3	16.7

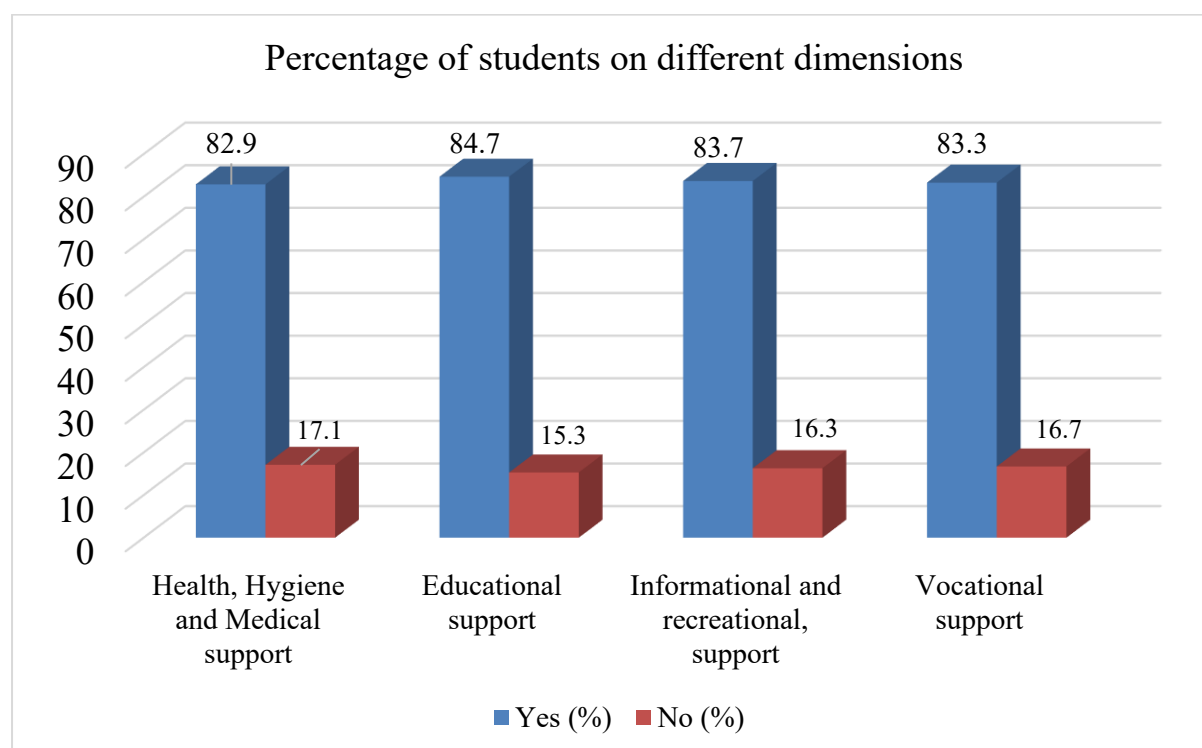


Figure 1: Showing the percentage of students on different dimensions

DISCUSSIONS

The study aimed to evaluate the extent to which secondary level students receive support services in four key areas: health, hygiene and medical support; educational support; informational and recreational support; and vocational support. The results show the percentage of secondary students in all dimensions of the study. For each objective, simple descriptive analysis was performed and students' responses were categorized as "Yes" or "No". The findings are interpreted below:

The findings reveal that over 83% students reported receiving diverse types of social support in all four domains of the study as shown in figure 1. The findings of the present study are closely aligning with social capital theory (Coleman, 1988) which shows the importance of social networks of individuals and enable them to access the opportunities and resources. The high levels of social support in all four dimensions- health and hygiene, educational, informational/ recreational, vocational support reflect the effectiveness of community's holistic framework in fostering students' development.

Results indicate the highest percentage of student responses among dimensions was in educational support (84.7%), while the lowest was in health, hygiene, and medical support

A Study on Multidimensional Social Support for Secondary Level Students: Insights from an Educational Community in Agra

(82.9%). This shows that students are more satisfied with the educational support services (fee concession, scholarship facilities, and study material for the students) and less satisfied with health, hygiene, and medical support facilities. Therefore, this area needs more improvement for students' holistic development and well-being, as empirical evidence in existing literature links social support with student well-being and stress reduction. (McLean 2022).

Findings revealed 83.7% of students indicated access to informational and recreational support such as library facilities, computer labs, sports, games, and other co-curricular activities. This reflects positively on efforts to provide holistic development beyond academics. Fourth dimension of social support that is vocational support, includes skill-based training such as craft activities, hobby classes, and textile design, was reported by 83.3% of students. This suggests that most schools are recognizing the importance of career-oriented education and preparing students for diverse future paths. However the findings reveal that the percentage of students who reported "yes", is almost similar in both the domains which shows that students have the equal opportunities for recreational activities and vocational development opportunities.

Results revealed that more than 83% of students acknowledged receiving significant support across all dimensions. It shows that students received strong multi-dimensional support from the community in diverse forms.

Table: 2 The Overall Percentage of students on multidimensional Social Support provided to Secondary Students

Dimension	Yes (%)	No (%)
Overall percentage of students on social support	83.65	16.35

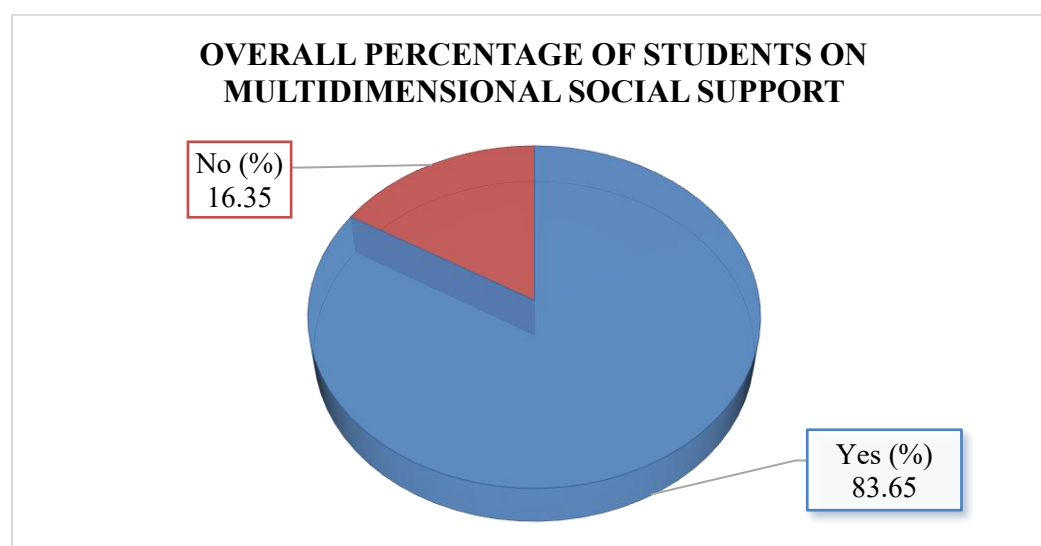


Figure 2: Showing the overall percentage of students on multidimensional social support

CONCLUSION

The findings provide clear evidence of widespread social support across four critical domains within the community, with each support type experienced by over 83% of secondary students. Educational support is high among all the dimensions, whereas health and hygiene support significantly lag behind other dimensions. Comprehensive and

A Study on Multidimensional Social Support for Secondary Level Students: Insights from an Educational Community in Agra

coordinated student social support is critically important for the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of the students. The study is useful for various communities to extend support services in schools and bring awareness to develop an integrated support system for their student welfare. The research also helps the school authorities and policymakers to learn from the mixed model approach of diverse social support to integrate academic, health/hygiene, and vocational support that fosters educational engagement and student holistic development. The study is based on self-reported responses of the participants with a sample size of 200 students, which is not generalizable to other schools and educational communities. However, future research with similar models, especially with qualitative and longitudinal methods, will deepen our understanding of how social support converts into academic and psychological outcomes.

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A Study on Multidimensional Social Support for Secondary Level Students: Insights from an Educational Community in Agra

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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