Social Support and Stress among Non-Residential Indians

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Abstract

Background: This study was conducted as the population of Non-residential Indians was found to be less likely researched in Psychology compared to other populations. Also, the increasing number of migrants from India to other countries has a constant elevation.

Aim: The present study was aimed at emphasizing the relationship between stress and social support among Non-residential Indians, and how much effect social support has on stress. It continues to highlight the importance of interpersonal support for migrated Indians, while managing with stressful living.

Method: By using Snowball Sampling method, data from 60 non-residential Indians was collected. Tools utilized in this research were Perceived Social Support Scale (Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet & Farley, 1988) and Perceived stress scale (Cohen et al., 1983). Quantitative Data analyzed by using Pearson Product moment correlation (r) and Linear Regression. Data analysis was performed on SPSS-26 software.

Result: . It was hypothesized that social support and stress would have a significant negative correlation, results unveil a significant negative correlation between Social Support and stress, $r = -.418$, $p < 0.01$. It was also hypothesized that Social Support would significantly predict stress, It was analyzed that social support actually predicted stress $R^2 = .175$, $F = 12.303$, $p < 0.01$.

Conclusion: It means that high social support predicted low stress (17%) among non-residential Indians. These results highlight the importance of social support for non-residential Indians.

*Keywords***:** Non-residential Indians, Social Support, Stress

Introduction

India comprises the world's largest overseas diaspora, including approx. 35.4 million NRIs (non-residential Indians NRIs and PIOs (people of Indian origin). The non-residential Indians mostly start as students and then later get employed in their respective living country. Indian diaspora developed gradually during 19th and 20th century. Non-residential Indians include students, the employed, unemployed, retired, people from various religious backgrounds, Genders, socio-economic backgrounds, and different regions of India. Staying away from family, leaving their native nation and settling in a foreign country can be challenging for any individual. Factors like stress, anxiety, worry come along with it and can have disturbing consequences in long term. Numerous studies have indicated that for maintaining physical and psychological health, social support is one of the leading factors (Ozbay F, 2007). Social support has beneficial effects in one's life including decreased risk of mortality (Reblin M., Uchino B. N., 2008). Having social support while being in stress, can have positive impact and can result in reduction of many risk-factors.Following the broad introduction to the topic, narrow your focus to the specific research problem.

Stress and social support have been linked together in many previous researches. In a study conducted in Ireland for 135 1st Year university students, reported moderate levels of perceived stress and social support, while students with lower levels of stress had high level of social support (Mclean L., Gaul D.,Penco R., 2022). Another study, conducted by Maggo V, and Dutt S, on 132 participants from the age group of 18-25, has resulted in high level of perceived social support and moderate stress levels(r=-.415). Onu and Onyedibe (2021) reported increase in social support resulting in decreased levels of stress, among 365 nursing students including 77 males and 288 females in Nigeria.

In Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, love and belonging is one of the five needs of humans which include the friendships, family, intimacy, sense of connection; Social support does mean having the same in our lives. In Cohen's stress buffering model it is proposed that social support reduces the impact of stressful life events (Cohen and Wills, 1985). This previous literature signifies the importance of social support while dealing with stress. Social support has been seen to be proved as a significant negative predictor of psychological problems. (Mueen A., Maryam R., Husain N., 2022). International students were seen having higher levels of stress than domestic students in Netherlands (Amanvermez Y., et al 2023). This showcases importance of invesgtigation among non-residential Indians population on these two variables.

The present study aims at finding out the stress levels of non-residential Indians,

and how impactful can social support prove to be balancing the stress in their life and Assessing the social support in non-residential Indians. This Study hypothesized that social support and stress would have a significant negative correlation that Social Support would significantly predict stress. The significance of this topic can be henceforth concluded.

Method

Sampling Method

60 participants were a part of the study. All participants resided out of India in various different countries around the world. Snowball sampling method was used to collect the data through online mode by using Google forms.

Participants

The data collection was completely done by online mode. The inclusion criteria included people who are Indian by origin, and are currently residing out of India within the age group of 18 to 35, who can read and understand English. The study is inclusive of students and working professionals. The study included people from two genders (30 male, 30 female). The study excluded people who resided outside India in the past, and currently living in India, people under psychiatric medication, and people with serious illnesses. By using snowball sampling the google from was circulated among the participants eligible according to the inclusion criteria.

Tools Used

Social Support

Social support among the Non-residential Indians was assessed through the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS; Zimet et al. 1988). This is a self-report measure which evaluates the subjective social support a person currently has in their life. Three domains with strong factorial Validity are included in the scale, namely: (a) Family, (b) Friends, (c) Significant other. The Internal Consistency reliability of the total scale is .88 and test-retest reliability is .85. The scale has a good construct validity, with all three subscales having a significant correlation with the convergent variables as well as a whole. This is a 7-point Likert-type scale having the options as 1=Strongly disagree, to 7=strongly agree.

Stress

Perceived stress scale (PSS-10; Cohen et al. 1983) was included in the data collection to examine the stress among Non-residential Indians. The PSS-10 has reported having a good internal consistency in both adults and university student populations (Lee, 2012). A good convergent and concurrent validity is noticed, as high positive significant correlation was seen among adults and university students on their depression and anxiety (Lee, 2012).

Procedure

Total 60 people aged from 18 to 35, who reside out of India, were asked to fill out a Google form including three sections. 1st section included the consent form where the participants were assured of confidentiality, anonymity and voluntary participation. The 2nd section included questions from the perceived stress scale and 3rd section included questions from the perceived social support scale. . The data collection was performed by using snowball

sampling method. Scoring was completed and the data was entered and analyzed in SPSS-26 software. Correlation among the Perceived social support and perceived stress was calculated. After getting a Moderate significant correlation score among social support and stress, Linear Regression was performed to know the predictive analysis score.

Ethical Considerations

In the circulated google form, the details about the purpose of this study were evidently mentioned. The from included information about the authors, inclusion criteria, informed consent section where ethical measures assurance was strictly provided. Ethics about confidentiality of responses, voluntary participation and withdrawal, Highlight any specific measures taken to protect participants' confidentiality and ensure voluntary participation. Mention any compensation provided to participants, if relevant, and outline how ethical standards were maintained throughout the study.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Data was analyzed by using Pearson Product moment correlation (r) and Linear Regression. Data analysis was performed on IBM SPSS-26 software, 24th version.

Results

Demographic Characteristics

Among the 60 participants, 50% are males, and 50% are females. 36.66% lie between the age group of 18-25, and 63.33% lie between the age group 25 to 35. Non-residential Indians who currently live in Asia are 35%, Europe

28.33%, North America 31.66%, and Australia are 5% of the total population. 46.66% non-residential Indians are students, 43.33% are Employed, and 10% people are unemployed. Hence, it is understood that data is collected from total 4 continents and various different countries, and is widespread. Total 90% of the sample has migrated due to reason of education, and later continued for the purpose of job. Rest 10% migrated for dependency and conflict reasons.

Statistical Results

Correlation Analysis

Table no. 1 Shows the descriptive statistics as well as the correlation value for Social Support and Stress among non-residential Indians

Factor	N	Mean	SD	df	r
Social Support	60	68.63	11.638	118	-.418*
Stress	60	18.53	5.87		

* p=<.001

Table 1 shows us the Mean and SD values for both Social support and Stress. The correlation value for social support and stress has been found statistically significant (r=-.418, p=<.001). The r Value -.418 denotes a negative correlation between the two variables. This can be interpreted as moderate negative correlation.

Regression Analyses

Factor	r	R^2	Adjusted R^2	df	p
Social Support Stress	-.418*	.175	.161	118	.001

* p=<.001

In regression analysis, the Independent Variable was Social support and the dependent variable was stress. Linear regression model was used to test if social support significantly predicted stress. The overall regression was statistically significant. Social support was a predictor of stress, which accounted approximately 16% of the variance ($R2=.175$, adjusted $R2=.161$, F=12.303, p=.001.) Social support significantly predicted stress among non-residential Indians

Interpretation of Findings (brief overview)

Social support and stress have been observed to have a moderate negative significant correlation. The regression analysis interprets that social support is significant predictor of stress.

Discussion

The purpose of the research was to assess the predictive role of social support on stress among non-residential Indians. Data analysis of 60 non-residential Indians from various different countries showed that social support and stress had a significant negative correlation. As found in previously conducted researches, Perceived Stress negatively correlates to all social support variables(r=-.415), which signifies that higher levels of perceived stress are related with lower levels of social support (Maggo V, Dutt S, 2023). The correlation finding is quite consistent is current, as well as past researches. Perceived social support has also been found negatively correlating to stress among Ghananian adolescents (Glozah F N., Pevalin D. J., 2014). Also in one study, the correlation between mental health and social support has been found significantly high, reflecting the need for high social support for women, the elderly, patients, workers and students (Harandi T. F., et al, 2017). Many studies assess the correlation between stress and mental health which has resulted in values of high significance. While perceived stress having a major impact on students wellbeing (Slimmen S, 2022), it is also negatively correlated with relationship status of adolescent students (Pinto A.A, 2017). This statement supports our hypothesis as we have the factor, "significant other" included in our Perceived social support scale.

This highlights the importance of social support in the life of non-residential Indians. The mean of social support of our sample is 68.63 which interpreted as High social support (Zimet G. D. et al, 1988), with mean of stress is 18.63 which is interpreted as moderate stress (Cohen et al. 1983). This supports that high levels of social support have significantly impacted the levels of stress which are moderate ($R2=.175$). Social support has been observed as

a significant predictor of stress in non-residential Indians.

Theoretical Implications

The obtained results show that social support and stress and correlated and social support can predict stress, this empowers the importance of application of theories such as Cohens's Stress buffering Model, and Maslow's Hierarchy of needs which show significant importance of social support in management of stress. Research based additions to theories could be made, or separate theories could bs established for non-residential Indians or Migrants where specific necessities could be identified subjectively to mentioned population.

Practical Implications

Interventions of Stress reduction methods for Indians aiming to migrate can be implemented in the process of foreign education consulting centres in India.

Importance of social support can be raised by showcasing the benefits of it.

Appointment of Counselors/Psychologists at the Foreign education consulting centres in India, for students needing emotional/psychological support.

Limitations

This study had a number of limitations. Firstly, snowball sampling which is a method of non-probability sampling was used which does not promise generalizability of the data. The number of participants in this study is limited to

60, which can be increased in further studies to gain a wider insight on the topic. There were a lot of cofounding variables which could not be controlled. More research on this topic needs to be done to be sure of the authenticity and generalizability of the results. Scales used to measure the two respective variables, are not indigenized, therefore using indigenized tests for assessing such psychological variables would result in more effective conclusions.

Future Research Directions

By using a probability sampling method to gain more generalizable results.

A larger sample could be taken, with more specific demographic details related to geographical area of residence of non-residential Indians, and potential subjective, geographic, and cultural factors could be identified to justify the obtained results.

Intervention studies for non-residential Indians for stress management could be conducted.

The obtained results showcase te significant negative correlation between social support and stress and shows that social support is a significant predictor of level of stress. These results showcase the importance of social support while dealing with stress for non-residential Indians. This study provides for relevant practical and theoretical implications

giving its contribution to this vast field of psychology.

Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between social support and stress among Non-Residential Indians (NRIs), revealing a significant negative correlation between the two variables. The findings demonstrated that higher levels of social support predict lower stress levels, accounting for approximately 17% of the variance in stress among NRIs. These results align with established researches, reinforcing the critical role of social support in mitigating stress, particularly for individuals navigating the challenges of living abroad. The study's use of validated tools, including the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support and the Perceived Stress Scale, further strengthens the reliability of these conclusions.

Despite its contributions, the research has limitations, such as the small sample size of 60 participants and the use of snowball sampling, which may limit generalizability. Additionally, the study did not account for confounding variables like cultural differences or individual coping mechanisms. Future research could expand the sample size, employ probability sampling methods, and incorporate indigenized scales to enhance validity. Intervention studies focusing on stress management for NRIs would also provide deeper insights.

The practical implications of this study are significant. Foreign education consulting centers in India could integrate stress reduction programs and social support initiatives to aid NRIs in their transition. Appointing counselors or psychologists at these centers could further address the emotional and psychological needs of migrants. By prioritizing social connections, NRIs can better manage stress and improve their overall well-being. This research contributes to the growing body of knowledge on the psychological challenges faced by diasporic communities and underscores the need for targeted interventions to support their mental health. The findings highlight the broader significance of social support as a protective factor against stress, offering valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and mental health professionals working with migrant populations.

Author contributions

Conceptualization,
 Author 1; Literature Review, Forming research Question, Data Collection, Data Formulation, Creating original Draft, Editing, Final Drafting Author 2.; Literature review, Forming research Question, software, Statistical Analysis, resources, Supervision.
All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

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