

ISSN: 2584-0142

PSYCHOPEDIA
JOURNALSInternational Journal of
Interdisciplinary Approaches
in Psychology (IJIAP)**A study on Belongingness, Social Support and Personality among Young Adults**Harsimranpreet Kaur¹¹Psychology, Student, Panjab University, Chandigarh**Primary Contact:** harsimrankaur4798@gmail.com**Abstract**

A sense of belonging is a desire for humans to identify with another group of people and be accepted by them. Social support is the perception and reality that one feels cared for, that one may get help from others and above all, that one is part of a supportive or helpful social circle. Personality refers to a person's permanent features and behaviour that compose his or her different adjustment to life, including major traits, interests, desires, beliefs, self-concept, skills, and patterns of emotions. The research aimed to study the relationship between personality, belongingness and perceived social support among males and female young adults. Standardized tools were used to measure personality, belongingness, and perceived social support among young adults. A total sample of 30 young adults in the age of 18-25 years were administered the questionnaires. The results found out that perceived social support was significantly positively related to acceptance belongingness. Whereas personality dimension neuroticism has a significant negative correlation to acceptance belongingness and agreeableness had a significant relationship with acceptance belongingness. Positive personality traits such as self-esteem and emotional stability are more prevalent among young adults who experience a sense of belonging and receive social support. Young adults can develop a healthy sense of belonging and positive personality traits through the encouragement of a supportive and inclusive environment.

Keywords: Belongingness, Social support, Personality, Young adults.

Introduction

“If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.”

People have a natural desire to belong. The need to feel accepted by others, whether they are family, friends, or co-workers, is known as belongingness. Emotional, physiological, and psychological feelings are influenced by a sense of belonging. Having a feeling of belonging is crucial because it gives our lives meaning and purpose. Being accepted by co-workers, being a part of a sports team, or a member of a religious organisation are a few examples of this. Gaining acceptance, attention, and morale from the group while offering others the same attention is fundamental to belonging. The motivation behind long-lasting connections with other people is the need to belong.

Social support is the most important component in maintaining psychological well-being. It requires a support system of close companions with whom you can communicate your happiness and sadness. Giving advice to a friend or family member who is going through a difficult time in life, assisting someone with everyday duties when they are unable to do them themselves, and showing care, empathy, and concern for the people you care about are all examples of this. People who have supportive friends, family, and other members of the community are mentally strong, organised, and able to avoid the negative effects of early death. Social support and overall well-being go in tandem.

According to Allport (1961) “personality is the dynamic organisation within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his characteristics, behaviour and thought”. Although several theories explain the development and structure of personality in various ways, they all concur that personality affects behaviour. Every person has a unique set of long-term traits and a manner of relating to others and the environment around them. The term "personality" refers to the ingrained traits and tendencies that influence how people feel, think, and act. The distinctive way people perceive the environment, comprehend what is happening, and behave consistently under different conditions is what makes up personality. A person's personality defines how they differ from others by expressing unique patterns of thoughts, feelings, and actions.

Belongingness

According to Macmillan and Chavis (1986), “the sense of belonging and identification involves the feeling, belief and expectation that one fits in the group and has a place there, a feeling of acceptance by the group, and a willingness to sacrifice for the group”. This need to belong, which has profound evolutionary roots, is what led to the emergence of traits that aid

people in being accepted and prevent rejection. Because belongingness is an essential component of human functioning, social exclusion affects a range of mental, emotional, and behavioural consequences along with personality expression (DeWall et al. (2011).

Swee (2020) investigated the theory that inability to belong is a known indicator of suicidal ideation. A developing theory claims that a feeling of belonging may considerably mediate the effect of risk factors on suicide ideation. This study examined whether sentiments of belonging were a mediator in the link between suicidal thoughts and emotion regulation. The findings show that low belongingness significantly predisposes young people to suicidal thoughts and that emotional management strategies and belongingness are connected. These results are in line with accepted views regarding what leads people to consider suicide.

According to Hurtado and Carter (1997) “sense of belonging is the psychological feeling of belonging or connectedness to a social, spatial, cultural, professional, or other type of group or a community”. Individuals feel a part of something greater than themselves when they belong. It enhances both physical and mental wellness. Reduced sentiments of belonging have been linked to stress, despair, and other psychological issues, according to a lot of research. A feeling of belonging offers us a feeling of meaning, and one can lead a life of significance if they have or discover a mission. As a result, having a sense of belonging is a requirement for people to participate in a community of their choosing. It is one of the most fundamental emotional needs that influence both physical and mental well-being.

Winter-Collins and McDaniel (2000); asserts that “shared beliefs or ideals, a supportive environment, self-esteem, and opportunities for interaction can influence the development of a sense of belonging in an individual”. A hypothesised framework indicating the relationships between career decision-making problems and perceived belongingness, more specifically, peer and family belongingness, was investigated in a study. The researchers hypothesised that psychological pain and academic desire would function as a mediation factor between feelings like one belongs to one's peer group and family and having trouble making career decisions. Family belongingness was seen to be substantially connected with difficulties in making career decisions, while peer belonging did not significantly correlate with any of the variables in the proposed model (Slaten & Baskin, 2014).

Social Support

Pearlin et al. (1981) stated that “social support is the access to and use of individuals, groups, organisations in dealing with life's vicissitudes”. People who have intimate

relationships with others handle pressures like loss of employment and violence better. Partners, friends, relatives, co-workers, neighbours, and professionals like counsellors are just a few examples of the many various types of people who make up social support networks. Positive relationships make one feel more connected to loved ones and less alone. It positively affects a person's attitude towards life and behaviours.

There are two ways of measuring social support: structurally and functionally. Structural support (also known as social integration) refers to the degree to which the beneficiary is connected within a social network, such as different social connections or how connected a person feels within his or her social circle. The specific roles that members of this social circle may provide, such as emotional, instrumental, informational, and companionship support, are considered when discussing functional support.

A cross-sectional study sought to examine the mediating roles of psychological distress in the association between childhood psychological abuse and drug abuse as well as the moderating impacts of social support and belonging in a correlation among college students. Initial results of the study showed that psychological abuse was a significant predictor of peer support, belonging, emotional distress, and substance use. Later research revealed that the association between psychological abuse and substance abuse among college students was mediated by psychological discomfort. Additionally, this relationship was calmed by social support and a sense of belonging.

The links between social support and three measures of subjective well-being, depressive symptomatology, negative affect, and positive affect, were examined by Chou (1999). All facets of social support, including social network size, social contact frequency, satisfaction with social support, instrumental support, and helping others, were found to have strong bivariate relationships with positive outcomes. Depression symptoms and negative affect were inversely correlated with relationship satisfaction and assisting others. The findings of many regression models revealed that satisfaction with relationships with family and friends was consistently correlated with all measures of subjective well-being, and that positive affect was positively correlated with the number of close friends one felt close to.

According to House et al. (1988) “the emotionally or instrumentally sustaining quality of social relationships, refers to social support”. Rashid et al. (2016) investigated the relationships between burdensomeness, isolation, perceived social support, and a sense of not belonging. Data were gathered using the Perceived Social Support Questionnaire (PSSQ),

Interpersonal Needs Questionnaire (INQ), Suicidal Behaviour Questionnaire-Revised (SBQ-R), and Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale (UCLA). The findings revealed that while males performed better on the burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness criterion, females had higher degrees of loneliness and perceived social support than males. Married persons reported higher levels of loneliness and perceived social support, whereas single people reported greater hardship, despite the fact there was no statistically significant association between marital status and suicide.

Personality

According to Cattell (1950), “personality is that which permits a prediction of what a person will do in a given situation”. The Latin word "persona" (from which the English word "personality" is derived) describes a theatrical mask utilised by actors to play different parts or hide their identity. Genes, parenting methods, life experiences, and society all have an impact on personality. A characteristic that shapes our thoughts, feelings, and actions is said to be relatively permanent and enduring. It covers behavioural traits that can be either innate or learned. One of the many factors that significantly affect personality development is culture. A person's constant psychological characteristics that affect their ability to interact with other people and the experiences they experience are known as their personality.

To further understand the connections between personality, reinforcement sensitivity (which includes the behavioural inhibition system and the behavioural approach system), and mindfulness, Karl et al. (2021) undertook a study. The findings indicated that mindfulness had more pronounced long-term impacts on personality; in addition, there was a negative correlation between reinforced sensitivity and mindfulness characteristics. The study also found a link between conscientiousness and non-judgmental aspects of mindfulness.

Ni et al. (2021) conducted a study to comprehend how personality and the family environment affected young adults' life happiness. The sample was given the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ), the Family Environment Scale Chinese Version (FES-CV-SV), and the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS). Harmony among families and conflict have a beneficial and detrimental impact on life satisfaction. Family cohesion and conflict had a strong indirect impact on life happiness through the two personality qualities of extraversion and neuroticism. Therefore, it is possible to enhance family dynamics and structure to raise young people's life contentment and happiness.

Steptoe et al. (1994) investigated the relationship between personality and attitudinal traits and leading a healthy lifestyle. A health practices index that was normally distributed for both sexes was developed using the performance of sixteen behaviours, including cigarette smoking, alcohol consumption, physical activity, getting adequate rest, and a variety of nutritional and preventive practices. Consistently healthy behaviours were positively correlated with extraversion, optimism, and neuroticism while negatively correlated with psychoticism, neuroticism, and belief in chance locus of control. These effects maintained even after taking social desirability into account, even though they combined only accounted for a small portion of the variance in the health practices index.

Sample

A total sample of 30 young adults in the age of 18-25 years was collected from the Tricity (Chandigarh, Mohali & Panchkula).

Measures

The following standardized tests and tools were used:

- **The General Belongingness Scale (GBS):** The scale was developed by Malone et al. (2012). It has 12 items and 2 subdimensions i.e., Acceptance and Rejection. The responses are given on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 'Strongly disagree' to 'Strongly agree'. It includes questions such as "I feel accepted by others, I have a sense of belonging, I feel like an outsider". From a total 12 item scale items 1, 2, 5, 8, 10, 11 are included in acceptance/inclusion belongingness and are directly scored according to the 7-point Likert scale. On the other hand, items 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 12 are included in rejection/exclusion belongingness, so they are reverse scored and then added to 7-point Likert scale.
- **Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS):** The scale was developed by Zimet et al. (1988), and it has 12 items. The responses are given on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very strongly disagree) to 7 (very strongly agree). It includes questions such as (There is a special person in my life who cares about my feelings, who is around when I'm in need, with whom I can share joys and sorrows). In

scoring first sum of all 12 items according to 7-point Likert scale and then divided by 12.

- **A Brief Version of the Big Five Personality Inventory (BFI-10):** The Questionnaire was developed by Rammstedt and John (2007). The scale has 10 items and 5 subdimensions i.e., Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, Openness to Experience. The responses are given on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Disagree strongly) to 5 (Agree strongly). The scoring for some items were reversed. It includes questions such as (I see myself as someone who is reserved, is generally trusting, gets nervous easily). In scoring out of 10 items, 1 & 6 are under extraversion and 1 is reverse-scored; moving ahead, 2 & 7 are under agreeableness and 7 is reverse-scored, next 3 & 8 are under conscientiousness and 3 is reverse-scored, then 4 & 9 are under neuroticism and 4 is reverse-scored, and the last one is 5 & 10 are under openness to experience and 5 is reverse-scored. And then add them respectively.

Procedure

The participants were informed about the purpose of the research and the questionnaires were filled through Google forms. Each participant was thanked for their cooperation.

Standardized psychological tests were administered to the participants.

Analysis of Data

Results

Table 1

N, Mean and Standard Deviation of 30 young adults

	Acceptance belongingness	Rejection belongingness	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness	Neuroticism	Openness to experience	Perceived social support
N	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30

Mean	31.7	30.0	7.40	7.67	6.53	5.20	6.20	5.22
Standard deviation	6.23	5.77	2.08	1.47	1.61	2.33	1.13	1.23

Table 2

Correlation between Belongingness, Personality and Social Support

	Acceptance belongingness	Rejection belongingness	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness	Neuroticism	Openness experience	Perceived social support
Acceptance belongingness	—							
Rejection belongingness	0.193	—						
Extraversion	0.032	0.246	—					
Agreeableness	0.533 **	0.351	0.181	—				
Conscientiousness	0.306	0.469 **	0.222	0.296	—			
Neuroticism	-0.412 *	-0.386 *	-0.089	-0.293	-0.177	—		
Openness experience	0.196	0.015	-0.448 *	-0.187	-0.023	-0.108	—	
Perceived social support	0.685 ** *	0.267	0.170	0.329	0.341	-0.236	0.012	—

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

Discussion of Results

In Table 1, Descriptive statistics are shown i.e., N, Mean and Standard Deviation of 30 young adults with variables acceptance belongingness, rejection belongingness, dimensions of personality (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience) and perceived social support.

Table 2 showed the correlation among stated variables. The results showed that agreeableness was significantly positively correlated to acceptance belongingness ($r=0.533$, $p < .01$). Another dimension of personality, conscientiousness was significantly positively correlated with rejection belongingness. Neuroticism had a significant negative correlation with acceptance belongingness ($r=-0.412$, $p < .05$), with rejection belongingness ($r=-0.386$, $p < .05$) Openness to experience had a significant negative correlation with extroversion ($r=-0.448$, $p < .05$) Perceived social support was significantly positively correlated to acceptance belongingness ($r=0.685$, $p < .001$)

Conclusion

A sense of belonging was a desire for humans to identify with another group of people and be accepted by them. The ability to feel welcomed inside a social group was defined as belonging. When a person perceives inclusion and identity as a specific group member, he or she feels supported. Social support is the perception and reality that one feels cared for, that one may get help from others and above all, that one feels part of a supportive or helpful social circle. Personality refers to a person's permanent features and behaviors that compose his or her different adjustments to life; major traits included interests, desires, beliefs, self-concept, skills, and patterns of emotions. Our personalities are believed to be long-lasting, stable, and difficult to change. The research aimed to study the relationship of personality, belongingness and perceived social support among males and female young adults. Standardized tools were used to measure personality, belongingness, and perceived social support among young adults. A total sample of young adults in the age of 18-25 years from which a total 30 responses. The results found out that perceived social support was significantly positively related to acceptance belongingness. Whereas personality dimension neuroticism has a significant negative correlation to acceptance belongingness and agreeableness had a significant relationship with acceptance belongingness.

Suggestions

Belongingness is essential for emotional and physical wellbeing. Belongingness and social support can act as buffers in the wake of adversity. A sense of belongingness and perception of availability of social support can interact with an individual's personality to lead to positive or negative outcomes for people. If one pays attention to their life and feelings, their friends and family will be more willing to aid them.

Personality change takes more than desire or random behaviour modification. It needs people to intentionally change their ideas, goals, and behaviours often enough for the new ways of thinking and acting to become a habit that affects other areas of their lives. For extraverts, disciplining oneself to positively evaluate numerous social circumstances can help. One can become the best version of themselves. Meeting new individuals can open one's mind to other cultures, ideas, and viewpoints. One can work on enhancing one's interpersonal abilities. It is crucial for both professional and personal lives. A person's personality can be described as a regular pattern of actions and thoughts. With exceptional effort, one can change their thought patterns and routines.

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