

Influence of Self-Efficacy, Perceived Parental Autonomy Support, Perceived Social Support on Subjective Well-Being of Adolescents through Flow Experiences

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Abstract: Current trends suggest that the emphasis on academic success is high. Adolescents are coaxed to pursue their academic interests seriously by parents and significant others while their extra-curricular interests take a back seat. This study aims to examine the subjective well-being of adolescents and understand the influence of self-efficacy, parental autonomy support and perceived social support on their well-being through flow experiences. Do adolescents receive optimal autonomy to pursue their interests? Do adolescents experience flow moments in pursuing their academic and extracurricular interests? The study also investigates the relationship of subjective well-being to flow experience of adolescents. Responses from 280 samples consisting of 148 females and 132 males between the age group 17-19 were statistically analyzed using multiple linear regression and path analysis. The tools used in the study were General self-efficacy scale, Perception of parents scale, Multidimensional scale of perceived social support, modified work related flow inventory, PANAS and Life satisfaction scale. The results of the path analysis indicated that subjective well-being of adolescents were positively influenced by flow experience, self-efficacy, perceived parental autonomy support and perceived social support.

Keywords: Subjective well-being, parental autonomy support, flow experience, self-efficacy, social support, extra-curricular activities

I. INTRODUCTION

Advancement in science and technology has brought in both challenges and opportunities to mankind. Global economy has opened several opportunities that the aspirations of the youth are constantly changing. It has become increasingly hard to find one's true calling, experience happiness at work and create quality products. A happy society is one in which its individuals are pursuing activities that render joy and fulfillment. A recent Lancet study in 2012 has shown that the number of suicides in the 15-29 years age group has increased in India indicating that there is a considerable demand being placed on the younger generation. On another hand, it is noted that India's contribution to the global research output has been a mere 3.5%. These two facts raise two pertinent questions; "Do adolescents in India engage in activities that render inner satisfaction? Do adolescents experience a healthy subjective well-being?" Tasks that are intrinsically motivating keep individuals absorbed and render intense joy; experiences as such offered by such activities are known as flow experiences. In studying the subjective well-being of adolescents, the individual self, parenting and the support from society play important factors. Hence, the main aim of the study was to study the influence of self-efficacy, perceived parental autonomy support and perceived social support on the subjective well-being of adolescents through flow activities.

Historical sources have clearly indicated that when individuals are engaged in activities of their choice and consider the activity as intrinsically motivating, the outcome of such an activity is beyond comparison and is truly marvelous. Csikszentmihalyi (1990), pioneer in the study of Happiness, "The best moments in our lives are not the

passive, receptive, relaxing times... The best moments usually occur if a person's body or mind is stretched to its limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile." Flow is the mental state of operation in which a person performing an activity is fully immersed, is in a feeling of energized focus with full involvement, and enjoys process of the activity. Nakamura and Csikszentmihályi (2002) identify the following six factors as encompassing an experience of flow

- Intense and focused concentration on the present moment
- Merging of action and awareness
- A loss of reflective self-consciousness
- A sense of personal control or agency over the situation or activity
- A distortion of temporal experience, one's subjective experience of time is altered
- Experience of the activity as intrinsically rewarding, also referred to as autotelic experience

Subjective well-being (SWB) is defined as 'a person's cognitive and affective evaluations of his or her life' (Diener, Lucas & Oishi, 2002). The cognitive element refers to what one thinks about his or her life satisfaction in global terms (life as a whole) and in domain terms (in specific areas of life such as work, relationships, etc.) The affective element refers to emotions, moods and feelings. Affect is considered positive when the emotions, moods and feelings experienced are pleasant (e.g. joy, elation, affection etc.)

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Self Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 2008), identifies three basic psychological needs competence, autonomy, and psychological relatedness, which are innate, motivate the self to initiate behaviors that are essential for psychological well-being of an individual. Perceived autonomy is defined as the beliefs of students or learners that significant others such as teachers, coaches, parents and friends support self-initiation, opportunities of choice, independent problem-solving, and involvement in decision making as well acknowledging the feelings and avoid making pressurizing demands (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003).

Self-efficacy is "the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations" (Bandura, 1994). It is the measure of one's own ability to complete tasks and reach goals. One's sense of self-efficacy can play a major role in how one approaches goals, tasks, and challenges. Individuals with a strong self-efficacy develop deeper interest in activities, view challenging problems as tasks that needs mastery, have stronger sense of commitment and recover quickly from setbacks.

Social support is the perception and actuality that one is cared for, has assistance available from other people. Social support is usually defined as the existence of people on whom we can rely, people who let us know that they care about, value, and love us. A broad definition of social support is the "resources provided by others" (Cohen & Syme, 1985).

II. METHODOLOGY

Research Problem

The main research problem of the study was to examine the influence of perceived parental autonomy support, self-efficacy, perceived social support on flow experience and subjective well-being among adolescent college students.

Objectives of the study

- 1) To elucidate the relationship of socio-economic factor, perceived health, academic interest, engagement in extra-curricular activity and monthly income with self-efficacy, perceived parental autonomy support and perceived social support.
- 2) To ascertain the influence of perceived parental autonomy support, self-efficacy, perceived social support on subjective well-being through flow experience of adolescent college students.

Hypotheses

Past academic performance, grade point average, optimism and self-efficacy were an indicator of individual's classroom performance, self-efficacy and personal adjustment. (Chemers, Hu & Garcia, 2001; Loo & Choy, 2013). Many studies have corroborated the bi-directional relationship between self-efficacy and health behavior (Brekke, Hjortdahl & Kvien 2003). High levels of strains were associated with low levels of income, and this association was an indicator of poor health status, low levels of self-efficacy, autonomy support and social support. (Conroy, Sandel & Zuckerman, 2010; Leyva, Reese, Grolnick & Price 2009). Based on the above research studies the following hypotheses were framed.

Socio-economic status, perceived health status, academic performance, academic interest and engagement in activities would significantly contribute to self-efficacy.

(Hypothesis 1)

Socio-economic status, perceived health status, academic performance, academic interest and engagement in activities would significantly contribute to perceived parental autonomy support. (Hypothesis 2)

Socio-economic status, perceived health status, academic performance, academic interest and engagement in activities would significantly contribute to perceived social support. (Hypothesis 3)

Individuals who experienced peak moments of involvement in activity characterized by enjoyment and complete control, experienced better well-being (Carpentier, Mageau & Vallerand, 2011; Fullagar & Kelloway, 2009; Fritz & Avsec, 2007). Parents and teachers rendering autonomy support led to enhanced self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation and absorption for adolescents that provided optimal flow experiences (Niehaus, Rudasill & Adelson, 2012; Vance, 2013)

Self efficacy, perceived parental autonomy support and perceived social support would exercise significant influence on subjective well-being through flow experience. (Hypothesis 4)

Research Design

A multivariate ex-post facto research design was used to investigate the influence of self-efficacy, perceived parental autonomy support, perceived social support on subjective well-being through flow experience of adolescent college students. Purposive sampling method with the following inclusion and exclusion criteria was employed. Sample consisted of 148 females and 132 males belonging to the late adolescents group of 17-19 years from various city colleges in Chennai. The mean age of the sample was 19 years. The average monthly income of the sample was 23000 INR which belongs to lower middle socioeconomic group according to Prasad's socio-economic status classification for 2013.

Tools Used in the Present Study

An interview schedule was prepared to obtain the personal and demographic details from the sample which included; Age and Gender, Branch and year of study, Academic performance in class X and XII, Academic interest in U.G, Interest in Extra-curricular activity, Perceived health status, Educational qualification of parents and Average monthly income.

General Self-Efficacy Scale was developed by Schwarzer and Jerusalem in 1995, used to measure the self-efficacy of adolescent college students. It consisted of 10 items with a 4 point likert scale. A score of 10 indicated low self-efficacy while a score of 40 indicated high self-efficacy. Higher value obtained in the scale indicates that the individual has a better self-efficacy. In samples from 23 nations, Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from .76 to .90, with the majority in the high .80s. The scale is one-dimensional.

Perception of parents scale (POPS), college student scale was developed by Robbins in 1994 as a part of doctoral dissertation.

The scale measures the adolescents' perceptions of their parents' autonomy support and involvement, but in addition it assessed the degree to which the children perceive their parents to provide warmth. The scale had 42 items: 21 for mothers and 21 for fathers. From these items, 6 subscale scores were calculated: Mother Autonomy Support, Mother Involvement, and Mother Warmth, as well as Father Autonomy Support, Father Involvement, and Father Warmth. It uses a 7-point likert scale. For the present study, the dimensions of Mother Autonomy Support and Father Autonomy Support were used. Both the dimensions have 9 items each. The maximum possible score was 63. High score indicated better parental autonomy support.

Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet & Farley, 1988) measured the social support factors perceived by the individuals. It consisted of 12 items and was comprised of 3 groups depending on the source of support, each group consisting of 4 items. These were family (3, 4, 8, 11), friends (6, 7, 9, 12) and a special person (1, 2, 5, 10). Each item was rated using a 7 range scale. The lowest overall scale score was 12, and the highest was 84. Lower scores indicated lesser social support while high scores indicated better social support in that dimension. In terms of reliability, the internal consistencies of the total scale and the sub-scales were high, ranging from .79 to .98 in various samples.

Work related Flow Inventory (WOLF) was developed by Bakker in 2007. The scale measures flow at work, defined as a short-term peak experiences characterized by absorption, enjoyment and intrinsic work motivation (Bakker, 2008). In the present study, 13 item scale was adopted to measure flow – the state of intense focus where the individual experiences enjoyment - in any activity among adolescent college students. The scale measured three most prominent elements of flow namely Absorption, Activity enjoyment, and intrinsic motivation. Each item was rated on 7-point scale ranging from 1-Never to 7-Always. Cronbach's alpha was high for work enjoyment (on average around .90), acceptable for absorption (around .80), and satisfactory for intrinsic work motivation (around .75).

The items in the scale were rephrased from 'work' to 'activity' and a pilot study with sample size of 30 was done to check the reliability of the items. Test-retest reliability measure was done on existing and adopted scale. The reliability coefficient was 0.94 between the two tests for individuals who believed work and activity were the same. The reliability coefficient of those samples who believed work was more enjoyable was 0.99 and for 0.04 for samples with activity as enjoyable. A careful examination of individual scores showed these samples have scored high on activity and less on work which explained the no correlation and there by the reliability and validity of the tool as it measured exactly what the scale was intended to measure.

The positive and negative affect schedule (PANAS) developed by Watson, Clark, and Tellegen (1988). It measured the two broadest dimensions of emotional state (positive and negative affect) of a person's mood. Each item was rated on a 5 point scale ranging from 1 – very slightly or not at all to 5 – Extremely to indicate the extent to which respondent has felt that way in a specific time frame.

The cronbach's alpha coefficients for various time frames range from 0.86 to 0.90 for positive affect scale and 0.84 to 0.87 for the negative affect scale (Crawford & Henry, 2004). High scores in positive affect items indicate good positive emotions while high scores in negative affect items indicate the person experiences negative emotions.

Satisfaction With Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985). It was a short 5-item instrument designed to measure global cognitive judgments of satisfaction with one's life. It was a 7 point likert scale ranging from 1 – strongly disagree to 5 – strongly agree. The maximum possible score was 35 and the minimum score was 5. Higher score indicated greater life satisfaction. The Cronbach alphas for the scales were found to be in the .80's (Diener, Inglehart, Diener & Street, 2012), or even higher between .90 and .96 (Eid & Diener, 2004).

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Multivariate statistics namely multiple regression analysis and path analysis were used for statistically analyzing the data.

It was found that the level of interest in extra-curricular activity was a significant indicator of self-efficacy among adolescent college students. Academic performance, academic interest, perceived health status and monthly income were not significant contributors of self-efficacy of adolescents. Previous studies have indicated that academic self-efficacy were significantly higher in youths who engaged in extra-curricular activities (Hibert, 2000; Perry-Burney & Takyi, 2002; Samuels, 2005).

Table 1 Details of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis on Self-Efficacy among Adolescents

Predictors	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t-value	Other Important Details				
	B	Std. Err	Beta		Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F
Constant	19.710	2.733		7.212	R = 0.231 R ² = 0.053 Adjusted R ² = 0.036				
Academic Performance	.036	.025	0.087	1.457	Regression	298.71	5	59.743	3.083**
Academic Interest	0.137	.136	0.060	1.003	Residual	5289.67	273	19.376	
Extra-curricular Interest	0.366	.152	0.144	2.402*	Total	5588.38	278		
Perceived Health Status	0.316	.166	0.115	1.904					
Monthly Income	2.27 e ⁻⁶	.000	0.019	0.321					

** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

Academic interest and extra-curricular interest were significant predictors of perceived parental autonomy support. It was observed that perceived parental autonomy support increases as the level of academic interest shown by the adolescent increases while the autonomy support decreases if the adolescent shows more interest in extra-curricular activities. The results of this analysis implied that Indian parents render autonomy support and encourage adolescents to indulge in self-initiating activities related to academics.

Table 2 Details of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis on Perceived Parental Autonomy Support

Predictors	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t-value	Other Important Details				
	B	Std. Err	Beta		Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	F
Constant	63.87	10.778		5.926	R = 0.242 R ² = 0.059 Adjusted R ² = 0.042				
Academic Performance	0.126	.098	0.076	1.278	Regression	5138.19	5	1027.64	3.410**
Academic Interest	1.374	.537	0.152	2.557**	Residual	82269.52	273	301.354	
Extra-curricular Interest	-1.213	.600	-.120	2.022*	Total	87407.71	278		
Perceived Health Status	1.043	.656	0.096	1.590					
Monthly Income	3.568e ⁻⁵	.000	0.075	1.275					

***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05

The perceived social support received by adolescent college students was significantly contributed by academic performance, academic interest, extra-curricular interest and perceived health status. Adolescents who show higher interest in extra-curricular activities received less social support emphasizing on the need for parents and significant others to extend support to adolescents who engage in extra-curricular activities. It is essential to understand that engaging in extra-curricular activity is not a deterrent for academic success (Mahoney, Cairns & Farmer; 2003)

Table 3 Details of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis on Perceived Social Support among Adolescents

Predictors	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t-value	Other Important Details				
	B	Std. Err	Beta		Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	F
Constant	40.121	6.702		5.987	R = 0.242 R ² = 0.059 Adjusted R ² = 0.042				
Academic Performance	.206	.061	0.194	3.374**	Regression	4367.39	5	873.48	7.497***
Academic Interest	1.082	.334	0.187	3.238**	Residual	31809.03	273	116.52	
Extra-curricular Interest	0.902	.373	-.139	2.416*	Total	36176.42	278		
Perceived Health Status	1.140	.408	.163	2.797**					
Monthly Income	1.331e ⁻⁵	.000	0.044	0.765					

The path model indicated a significant contribution $X^2(5, N = 280) = 35.62, p < .001$. Self-efficacy, perceived parental autonomy support and perceived social support significantly contributed to the flow experience of adolescent students. Flow experience of adolescents was a significant contributor of both cognitive and emotional aspect of subjective well-being. The subjective well-being was also a significant predictor of flow experiences.

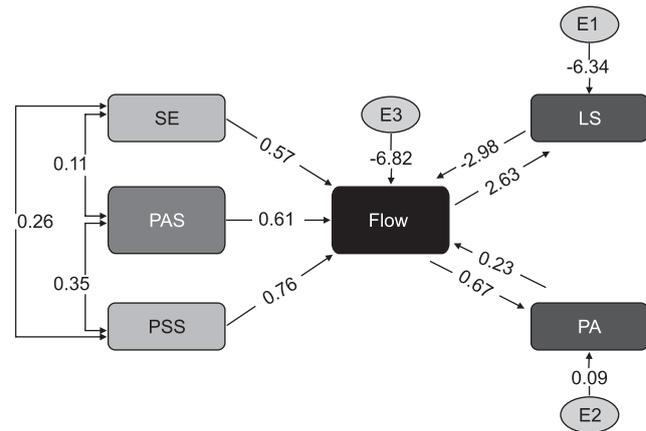


Figure 1 -- Path Diagram indicating the Interrelationships among Variables of the Study. SE – Self-Efficacy, PAS – Perceived parental autonomy support, PSS – Perceived Social Support, PA-Positive affect, LS- Life satisfaction

Table 4 Details of Path Analysis

	Unstandardized Estimate	Standardized Estimate	Std. Error	Critical Ratio	P-value
Flow ← SE	1.780	0.567	.863	2.062	.039
Flow ← PAS	.480	0.606	.230	2.092	.036
Flow ← PSS	.934	0.757	.418	2.232	.026
LS ← Flow	1.192	2.629	.464	2.571	.010
PA ← Flow	.107	0.233	.031	3.489	***
Flow ← LS	-6.563	-2.98	2.777	-2.363	.018
Flow ← PA	1.470	0.673	.602	2.442	.015

SE – Self-Efficacy; PAS – Parental autonomy support; PSS – Perceived social support; LS- Life satisfaction; PA- Positive affect

IV. CONCLUSIONS

1. Engaging in extra-curricular activities improved the self-efficacy of adolescent college students.
2. Engaging in extra-curricular activities negatively contributed to perceived autonomy support and perceived social support. The autonomy support and social support decreased with the increase in involvement in extra-curricular activity.
3. Self-Efficacy, perceived social support and perceived parental autonomy support contributed to the subjective well-being and flow experience of adolescent college students.

Self-efficacy, perceived parental autonomy support and perceived social support influenced subjective well-being and flow experience of adolescents. Flow experiences had a positive contribution on positive affect and emotional well-being of the students. The results lays emphasis on the fact that we should encourage adolescents to participate in activities which require a sense of control, complete involvement and enable youngsters to derive pleasure in the tasks undertaken. Extra-curricular activities influenced the self-efficacy of students which had an influence on flow experience and well-being.

The study throws light on the fact that engaging in activities outside academics by itself improves the self-efficacy of the students and parents should render autonomy support to encourage self-initiating activities (academic and extra-curricular). The subjective well-being of adolescents significantly improves when they have high self-efficacy and autonomy to engage in activities that render flow experience. Perceived social support also plays an important role as a predictor of positive affect among adolescent college students.

On the other hand, the present study has revealed that adolescents received parental autonomy support and social support when they showed interest in academic pursuits. The support from parents and significant others decreased as the level of interest in extra-curricular activities increased. Hence, the subjective well-being of adolescents can be enhanced by rendering optimal parental autonomy support. Even academic activities can render absorption with proper parental guidance. Student's participation in activities that render flow experience which was a predictor of subjective well-being needs encouragement.

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