The contribution of Perceived Social Support and psychological well-being in anticipating students’ self-sufficiency

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Abstract

This study is a descriptive and correlation research in terms of aim, applied research and data collection. Current study population is students of Islamic Azad University of Uromia in the academic year of 2014-2015 which included 8270 students (1,652 BS, 6476 bachelors and 142 Associate). The sample size of the study, which was selected by multistage cluster sampling, was calculated according to plant formula (N> 50 + 8M). By considering the possible loss, finally, 188 students were selected as sample group. Data were analyzed using multiple linear regressions. The results showed that self-sufficiency cannot be predicted by the Perceived Social Support. But there is a significant relationship between psychological well-being and self-sufficiency at 5% level. Positive psychological well-being index actually represents that by increasing this factor, self-sufficiency increases.

Keywords: perceived social support, psychological well-being, self-sufficiency.
Introduction

Self-sufficiency is a personality trait and arises in behavioral pretentions. These properties in everybody show satisfaction, positive judgment of capabilities and ensuring to succeed in performing defined tasks (Naji Nia, 2010). Self-sufficiency is a standalone and non-reliance activity and people insist to be successful in their tasks without asking help from others, and self confidence relates to abilities, expectation, positive feedback of self, positive judgment and not asking help from others. While in succeeding in self-efficacy, not only we don’t insist on the independence of the help from others and doing tasks by self, but also it is greatly based on doing tasks by guiding others and directing collective efforts (Jalali, 2000). In other words, self-sufficiency is judgments set of one's self, and there is no doubt that this judgment is not affected by others. Maybe we can correlate self-sufficiency with self-confidence, because self-confidence is the result of inner judgments. It seems that one of the factors that have been associated with self-efficacy is individuals’ perceived social support. Family and friends play an important role in encouraging people to achieve health goals. Their help is the most important component of social support. Social support is defined as below:

Any stimulus that will help to the development of goals of supported individual (Kaplan, 1979, quoted by Di Matteo, 1991, translation by Kaviani et al., 2009). Beside it, the perceived social support impacts on the mental health (Riahi et al., 2010).

Winnub et al (1988) consider received social support as operational aspect of support that includes the type of accepted opposition to help others. The hypothesis of a direct effect on social support suggests that regardless of stress, social support is beneficial to the health, because people that have more social support have a greater sense of belonging and self-esteem. Positive attitude that arises in such a situation can be useful.

Kilpatrick (2010) conducted a longitudinal study to investigate the relationship between perceived social support and social adjustment of students. This study includes the relationship between perceived social support and adult behavioral adjustment at any time. The results showed that there is a relationship between social behavioral adjustment and students’ social support. In particular, parental support was associated with inconvenience and emotional symptoms at other times. Another variable that was assessed in this study is psychological well-being. Psychological well-being includes what one has gained from coordination between outlined and specific objectives or functional outcomes that is obtained in the process of continuous assessment and leads to a relatively stable inner satisfaction in life sequences (Cole, 2002). In the past decades, Reef and colleagues (1989) offered model of psychological well-being and stressed that the positive health is more than the absence of disease; in this view, well-being means attempts to transcend and develop that is manifested in the realization of individual talents and abilities, psychological well-being is derived from positive psychology. The goal of positive psychology is accelerating a big change in psychology to improve worthwhile things in life to make positive features. In this approach, it is emphasized more than before to study positive human characteristics and strategies to use maximum natural and environmental talents and to benefit from healthy mental states and productive lives. Accelerating in performance improvement and correcting mistakes of the past, in order to build positive characteristics
includes the well-being, satisfaction and happiness in the past and hope and optimism in the future (Seligman and Csikszent, 2000). Arrindell et al (2009) in a study about the relationship between psychological well-being and social adjustment concluded that social adjustment is affected and increased by increasing psychological well-being. According to the above and study vacuum in the field of self-sufficiency, the main question in this research is that can students’ self-sufficiency be predicted on the basis of perceived social support and psychological well-being variables?

**Research Methodology**

This study is a descriptive and correlation research in terms of aim, applied research and data collection.

Current study population is students of Islamic Azad University of Uromia in the academic year of 2014-2015 which included 8270 students (1,652 BS, 6476 bachelors and 142 Associate). The sample size of the study, which was selected by multistage cluster sampling, was calculated according to plant formula (N> 50 + 8M) by considering the possible loss; finally, 188 students were selected as sample group.

**Research Tools**

**Scale of Perceived Social Support**

Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support is a tool with 12 phrases that evaluates perceived social support from three sources of family, friends and Significant other in life and has been prepared by Zimet et al (1988). Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support measures perceived social support by the subjects in each of the three mentioned areas and has three subscales that includes family (3-4-8-11 phrases) Friends (12 6-7-9- phrases) Significant other (String 1-2-5-10). In this test, completely disagree options gets 1 point; disagree, gets 2 points; almost disagree, gets 3 points; no idea, gets 4 points; almost agree, gets 5 points; Agree, gets 6 points and Strongly Disagree gets 7 points. This scale is a short and simple tool that is affected by time and for this reason, it has been used in many studies. Psychometric properties of multidimensional perceived social support is studied on different samples. The sample, in the last study included 154 college students (122 females and 32 males) with a mean age of 26.5 years. The total scores mean 5.58 (sd= 1.07) for the family subscale was, 5.31 (sd=1.46), for the friends subscales was 5.50 (sd=1.25) and for subscale of Significant others was 5 . 94 (sd=1.34).

Reliability: Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support has good internal consistency. Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of total test was 0.91 and alpha coefficient of its subscales ranged from 0.90 to 0.95, because it has reverse correlation with depression and coronary heart disease in type A. In addition, the authors of this scale have stated that the validity of this test is desirable, because it has no correlation with Social Desirability Scale of Marlowe crown. In this study, Cronbach’s alpha value was 0.85.

Psychological well-being scale of Reef

In recent decades the tendency toward considering positive aspects of health has increased. In the last decades, Reef and Keyes introduced psychological well-being model that was studied
extensively by researchers. Psychological well-being is a multi-component concept and includes the following:
1. Self-acceptance: positive attitude towards self and acceptance of different aspects such as good and bad characteristics and positive feeling about former life.
2. Positive relation with others: sense of satisfaction and intimacy with people and understanding the importance of these dependencies.
3. Autonomy: Sense of independence and effecting on life events and having an active role in behaviors.
4. Environmental Mastery: sense of environmental mastery, controlling outdoor activities and effective use of the surrounding opportunities.
5. Purpose in Life: Having a purpose in life and believing that past and present life is meaningful.
6. Personal growth: a sense of steady growth and access to new experiences as a potential talent.

Reef designed scales of psychological well-being as questionnaires with 20, 14, 9 and 3 phrases to measure these instruments. After initial investigations, the original version of scales of Psychological well-being that has 84 phrases was prepared (1989). Then versions with 54 phrases and short-form versions with 18 phrases were designed. Short version of this questionnaire assesses six main components of psychological well-being pattern and has 6 subscales (each subscale contains 3 phrases). The questionnaire has been developed for adults. Participants must be at a 6-degree Likert scale (1 = totally disagree, 6 = strongly agree) determine the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the phrases. In this questionnaire that has been developed for adults, Participant must determines the extent to which he/she agrees or disagrees with each of the phrases at a 6-degree Likert scale (1 = totally disagree, 6 = strongly agree). Reliability: The internal consistency coefficient of Short Form subscales with 18-items for psychological well-being as well as the internal consistency of total test was reported 0.70. In this study, Cronbach’s alpha is 0.71. Validity: Evidence of convergent validity of psychological well-being tests show that six factors of psychological well-being has positive relationship with life satisfaction, self-esteem and creativity and has negative relationship with depression, chances and source of external control. External locus of control.

Khanjani and others (2014) have examined the factor structure and psychometric properties of the short form (18 questions) of Reef scale of Psychological well-being in male and female students. They reported that the result of single group Confirmatory factor analysis showed that in total sample and in both sexes, six-factor pattern of this scale (self-acceptance, environmental mastery, positive relation with others, having a purpose in life, personal growth and independence) has a good fit. Internal consistency of this scale using Cronbach's alpha in 6 factor of Self-acceptance, environmental mastery, positive relation with others, having a purpose in life, personal growth and independence was respectively 0.51, 0.76, 0.75, 0.52, 0.73, 0.72 and for total scale was 0.71. Overall, the results indicate that 18-question form of Reef psychological well-being scale is a useful tool for measuring psychological well-being of girls and boys in the Iranian sample.

Self-sufficiency scale:

Self-sufficiency test is made by Jalali, Naji Nia and Ghafoori (2010) and its aim is to develop a tool for measuring the self-sufficiency and trying to explain the conceptual and practical
difference between concept of self-sufficiency and similar concepts such as self-efficacy and self-esteem. This tool has 31 questions and has binary scoring based on the positive and negative sides for every question. The way to respond to questionnaire is that between the positive and negative sides of each question, participant chooses the case that he/she is more agreement with it. The factors that self-sufficiency questionnaire measures are as follows:
The first factor: Independence: 31-23-21-18-13-12-7-3-1
The second factor: Domination: 30-24-16-2
The third factor: self-confidence: 28-20-8-6-4
The fourth factor: assertiveness: 22-15-11-10-9-5
The fifth factor: self-esteem: 27-26-25-17
The overall score of self-sufficiency in this exam is obtained by total score of six factors. Reliability indicators of Self-sufficiency questionnaire has been calculated by internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) and Split-half method. The reliability of the test was calculated by those who offered it and was 0.84 in Cronbach's alpha and was 0.83 in split-half method that confirms high and remarkable reliability of the questionnaire. In this study, Cronbach’s alpha is 0.72. To calculate instrument validity by exploratory factor analysis and principal component analysis, as well as to identify factors and to determine the structure, Varimax rotation method was used.

**Findings**

The descriptive findings of research variables are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive findings of research subscales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>standard deviation</th>
<th>standard error</th>
<th>average</th>
<th>Statistical Indicators of scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14.67</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>55.97</td>
<td>Perceived Social Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.21</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>69.55</td>
<td>psychological well-being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>19.33</td>
<td>self-sufficiency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the application of statistical methods, at first, normality of the data was examined by using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, to determine the statistical method (parametric, non-parametric) that should be used and in the case of normality of data, one of the most important assumptions of parametric tests is established.

Table 2: One-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significant level</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>z</th>
<th>Statistical Indicators of scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>Perceived Social Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>psychological well-being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>self-sufficiency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to the table results and obtained significant levels, each variable in research that is larger than 0.50, the data for all variables is normal. To test this hypothesis that which dimension of psychological well-being and perceived social support can play an important role in predicting the self-sufficiency, multiple linear regressions was used. Thus, after confirming regression defaults, this method was used to answer this question that whether the components of psychological well-being and perceived social support can predict self-sufficiency or not. The first sample is the test of overall model. In fact, if at least one of the research predictor variables has a significant impact on criterion variable, the researcher’s model will be confirmed.

The null and alternative hypothesis is as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
H_0 & : \beta_1 = \beta_2 = \ldots = \beta_s = 0 \\
H_1 & : \beta_i \neq 0 \quad \forall \text{ one } i \text{ for } i = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
\end{align*}
\]

Table 3: The regression results of psychological well-being and perceived social support factors on self-sufficiency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sig</th>
<th>( R^2 )</th>
<th>( R^2 ) adj</th>
<th>( R^2 )</th>
<th>Mean squares</th>
<th>Degrees of freedom</th>
<th>Sum of squares</th>
<th>Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>136.69</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>273.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21.71</td>
<td></td>
<td>185</td>
<td>4015.69</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The remaining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>187</td>
<td>4289.08</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table, sig amount is less than 0.50 and this is an indication of the significance of the regression model, this means that at least one of the predictor variables has significant effect on criterion variable.

R2 index: (multiple determination Coefficients): this index indicates that what percentage of changes in variability criterion is explained by the predictor variables. In another words, how many percentage is the ability of predictive variables to fit the dependent variable. In this study, the value of R2 is equal to 0.07, and this means that psychological well-being and perceived social support factors can predict self sufficiency by 7 percent and the other remained 93 percent is related to other factors.

R2adj index (corrected determination coefficient): The index considers the ability of predicting the dependent variable by predictor variables in society and in fact, with a little modification, it extends the sample to the whole community. The value of this ratio in research is 0.07. In other words, the components of psychological well-being and perceived social support can predict self-sufficiency by 7 percent. According to the significance of model, now we have to consider that which one of the coefficients is not zero, or in other words, which variable or variables have a significant impact on the model. For this purpose, the t-test is used.
Table 4: Standard and nonstandard Coefficients and t variables that are entered into the regression equation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significance level</th>
<th>sig</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>standard</th>
<th>non-standard</th>
<th>Predictor variable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>9.83</td>
<td></td>
<td>constant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>Psychological well-being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>perceived social support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the results table shows, the scale of psychological well-being has a significant relationship with self-sufficiency at 5% and positive coefficients of psychological well-being and perceived social support actually shows that by increasing this factor, self-sufficiency rate increases too. These results showed that perceived social support scale has no significant relationship with self-sufficiency at 5%.

Discussion and conclusion

The results of regression analysis showed that self-sufficiency cannot be predicted by perceived social support. In explaining this finding, it should be pointed that self-sufficiency is a personality trait and arises in behavioral pretentions. These properties in everybody show satisfaction, positive judgment of capabilities and ensuring to succeed in performing defined tasks (Jalali, Naji Nia, Ghaffori 2010). Self confidence and self-esteem seems to have a positive correlation with this concept. Making decision by alone, feeling no need to ask help from others and lack of dependence on others makes self-sufficiency apart from other similar concepts. Also this concept is contrasted with a sense of inferiority, more than any other concepts. Doing independent activity, despite the lack of attention and external confirmation, feeling self-control and having ability to work, responsibility, lack of a sense of inferiority and having positive thoughts and expectations about self is seen more in people with these features (Jalali, 1985). As self-sufficient person emphasizes on doing tasks without any help and assistance, and cooperation of others to accomplish common goals causes loss of this belief in this person, therefore it seems that for this reason, there is no significant relationship between perceived social support and self-sufficiency, i.e. it seems that for self-sufficiency, there is no need to perceived social support. The results also show that self-sufficiency is predicted by the psychological well-being. In explaining these findings, we can point to the definition of self-sufficiency by Weiss Diamond Alvald (2003). Weiss and colleagues (2003) introduced self-sufficiency with two dimensions of personal and social self-sufficiency. In their view, personal self-sufficiency refers to person's attention to daily life and includes components like the ability to take care of the family, providing basic needs of self and family and being effective and dynamic in the society. In the meanwhile, Social self-sufficiency refers to the ability of individuals to be involved and active in society by trying to apply its resources. On the other hand, psychological well-being is individual effort for perfection.
in order to realize its true potential. So it seems that people who have a good level of psychological well-being, have greater self-sufficiency rate too.

One of the limitations of this study was that there were a lot of questions in the questionnaire that caused lack of cooperation of a number of students in sample group and resulted in prolonging the process of study. According to the research findings that showed that perceived social support variable plays an important role in predicting self-sufficiency of students, efforts to promote students’ self-sufficiency requires different types of social support in students, because if a student does not receive social support from important people in his/her life, he/she can obtain support from the university and friends. It is suggested that researchers in this field, study the role of moderator variables such as economic status and social class in the relationship between psychological well-being and self-sufficiency. It is also suggested that researchers use other tools and methods such as interviews or clinical observation to study research sample in terms of psychological well-being and self-sufficiency variables.
References


