Relationship between perceived social support and academic well-being based on the mediating role of developmental assets in first-year high school students

Hadis Saeedi [1] [ID], Alireza Manzari Tavakoli [1*] [ID], Mitra Kamyabi [1] [ID],
Zahra Zeinaddiny Meymand [1] [ID], Mahshid Tajrobehkar [2] [ID]

1 Department of Educational Science and Psychology, Kerman Branch, Islamic Azad University, Kerman, Iran.
2 Department of Psychology, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman, Kerman, Iran.
*Corresponding author and reprints: Alireza Manzari Tavakoli, Associate Professor, Department of Educational Science and Psychology, Kerman Branch, Islamic Azad University, Kerman, Iran.
Email: a.manzari@iauk.ac.ir

Abstract

Background: The present study aimed to investigate the relationship between perceived social support and academic well-being considering the mediating role of developmental assets in students.

Methods: The present study was applied in terms of aim, descriptive-correlational in term of nature. It was conducted using path analysis approach. The statistical population of the study included the students of the first-year high school in Kerman city in the academic year of 2021-2022. A sample of 300 people (girls and boys) was selected using multi-stage cluster sampling method. The tools of the study were the developmental assets questionnaire, Tuominen-Soini et al., academic well-being questionnaire, and the perceived social support scale. Path analysis was used in Amos Software to analyze the data.

Results: The influence of social support on the transformation of academic capital is 0.37 and it is significant at 0.001 level. When people receive support from their families, friends, and other groups that include comfort, respect, love, and interest, it affects their psychological well-being, so all these benefits are actually capital transformations that lead to their well-being. Therefore, the research hypothesis about the relationship between perceived social support and academic well-being through the mediating role of developmental assets in first-year high school students is confirmed.

Conclusion: With social support including consolation, affection and care from family, friends and other groups, it is possible to develop and strengthen the developmental assets and finally the academic well-being of students.

Introduction

In the academic setting, students succeed at a high level despite social, cultural and economic problems. Academic well-being is a construct that arose from positive psychology and it can enable students to successfully cope with educational challenges such as poor grades, exam pressure, difficult tasks and assignments that occur during education (3). People need to maintain active family

relationships and the continuation of social support to be satisfied with life and well-being. Hence, it can be argued that people perception of the social support of others can play a role in academic well-being (4).

Perceived social support means the level of access and perception of the availability of support from others, if help is needed. One of the most well-known models of perceived social support is the multidimensional type proposed by Zimet et al., It includes perceived support from family, friends and important people (such as teachers and classmates) (2). In the conditions of school closures and social distancing, changes have been made in the way students interact with relatives, peer groups and teachers, which increases the importance of examining this variable in predicting academic well-being. In this regard, Malta et al., state that people cognitive and behavioral responses in disease pandemic conditions depend on their perceived social support (5). Developmental assets is another effective factor that should be considered in academic well-being. It has been designed considering the positive growth potentials that young people need for successful growth and emphasizing the role that contextual factors play in the lives of adolescents.

Another effective factor that should be considered in academic well-being is developmental capital, and considering the positive growth potentials that young people need for successful growth and emphasizing the role that contextual factors play in the lives of teenagers, It is designed. This framework focuses on the positive points of adolescents and young people. It provides a set of developmental experiences and supports that are important throughout a person life (6). Paying attention to the framework of developmental assets that is in the field of positive psychology has been proposed and emphasizes the internal strengths and external support of adolescents (7). Given

what was stated, the main question of the present study was whether there is a relationship between perceived social support and academic well-being considering the mediating role of developmental assets in first-year high school students.

Methods

The present study was applied in terms of aim, descriptive-correlational in terms of nature, and survey in terms of method. The statistical population of the study included all first-year high school students in Kerman city in the academic year of 2021-2022. There is no exact strategy to determine the sample size in using the structural equation model. Kline (8) and Hoe (9) have estimated the minimum sample size required in structural models at 200 people (10). Thus, in the present study, considering the possibility of dropout in sample size and distorted questionnaires, 300 students (girls and boys) were selected as sample members. Multi-stage cluster random sampling method was used in the present study. Accordingly, after obtaining permission from Education Department to conduct the research, among two districts (1 and 2), one district was randomly selected, and among all schools, 10 schools were selected, and then 5 classes from each school were randomly selected. To collect data, standard questionnaires were used as follows.

The academic well-being questionnaire was developed by Tuominen-Soini et al., in 2012. It includes four dimensions of school value, school burnout, academic satisfaction, and engagement with the assignment. This scale measures 31 items in the Likert scale. The high score of this scale indicates the high academic well-being of the students. Tuominen-Soini et al., investigated the validity of this scale through confirmatory factor analysis and confirmed its four constructs (1). Cronbach's alpha was also calculated for the four dimensions of this scale at 0.91, 0.77, 0.64, and 0.94, respectively. In the

study conducted by Behroozi et al., the Cronbach's alpha coefficients of this scale was obtained at 0.87 and it was obtained at 0.88, 0.73, 0.73, and 0.75 (11).

The Perceived Social Support Scale (2) measures the perception of social support in three important sources: family, friends, and important others. It includes 12 items; each item is scored on a seven-point Likert scale from strongly disagree [1] to strongly agree [7]. In the study conducted by Behroozi et al., Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the general factor of perceived social support and the three dimensions of important others, family, and friends were obtained at 0.92, 0.86, 0.85 and 0.89, respectively. Correlation method was used for its validity and the coefficients were obtained between 0.52 and 0.70 (11).

Developmental Assets Questionnaire (Minnesota Search Institute) in 2012. Includes two components of internal and external developmental assets. This tool contains 58 items (23 external items) and (35 internal items) and its items are scored on a four-point Likert scale from 1 (never) to 4 (always). By conducting an exploratory factor analysis on this tool Dehghan Hisar, identified two factors of external and internal developmental assets and the value of alpha coefficient for developmental assets was obtained at 0.92. It was also reported at 0.84 and 0.89, respectively, for each of the components of internal and external developmental assets (12). Sharif

Mousavi, also confirmed the construct validity of this scale by using exploratory factor analysis and reported the reliability coefficient of the subscale of external developmental assets of family, school, and important others, respectively, at 0.79, 0.89, and 0.82 (13).

Data were analyzed by structural equation modeling in AMOS software.

Results

In investigating the demographic information, it was found that the number of boys was 142 and the number of girls was 158. In investigating the educational grade, the highest frequency belonged to 7th grade with a frequency of 11 (37%) in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic information of the participants

Variable		Number	Percentage of frequency
Gender	Girl	158	53 %
	Boy	142	47 %
Education Grade	Grade 7	112	37 %
	Grade 8	104	35 %
	Grade 9	84	28 %

Table 2 presents the mean and standard deviation of the sample group's scores in the studied variables.

Pearson correlation analysis was used to examine the correlation between research variables. Table 3 shows the correlation of variables investigated in the research.

Table 2. Mean and standard deviation of the sample group's scores in the variables investigated in the research

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max
social support	16.84	4.97	12	26
Family	5.14	2.80	4	9
Friends	6.29	2.19	4	10
Others	5.37	2.56	4	9
Academic well-being	96.75	11.87	47	124
School value	28.47	6.04	14	36
School burnout	24.74	5.67	12	34
Academic satisfaction	22.07	7.85	11	35
Engagement with assignments	21.68	5.17	12	35
developmental assets	151.17	14.62	92	184
internal	97.52	12.18	62	117
external	52.64	9.44	34	80

Table 3. Correlation of the investigated variables in the research

Variables	Family	Friends	Others	school value	School burnout	Academic satisfaction	Engagement with assignments	Internal
Family	1							
Friends	**0.46	1						
Others	*0.58	**0.47	1					
school value	*0.34	**0.37	**0.22	1				
School burnout	**0.25	**0.27	*0.21	*0.19	1			
Academic satisfaction	**0.29	**0.34	**0.27	**0.27	**0.29	1		
Engagement with assignments	*0.19	**0.36	**0.26	**0.36	**0.30	**0.30	1	
Internal	**0.24	**0.29	**0.26	*0.19	**0.35	*0.18	**0.29	1
External	**0.26	**0.25	**0.46	**0.33	**0.34	**0.28	**0.27	0.59

*$P \leq 0.05$ **$P \leq 0.01$

The results of Table 3 show that the hypothesis of relationships between variables is consistent with the expected paths. It means that there is a positive and significant relationship between all research variables with a confidence level of 99%.

Testing the research hypothesis: There is a relationship between perceived social support and academic well-being considering the mediating role of developmental assets in first-year high school students.
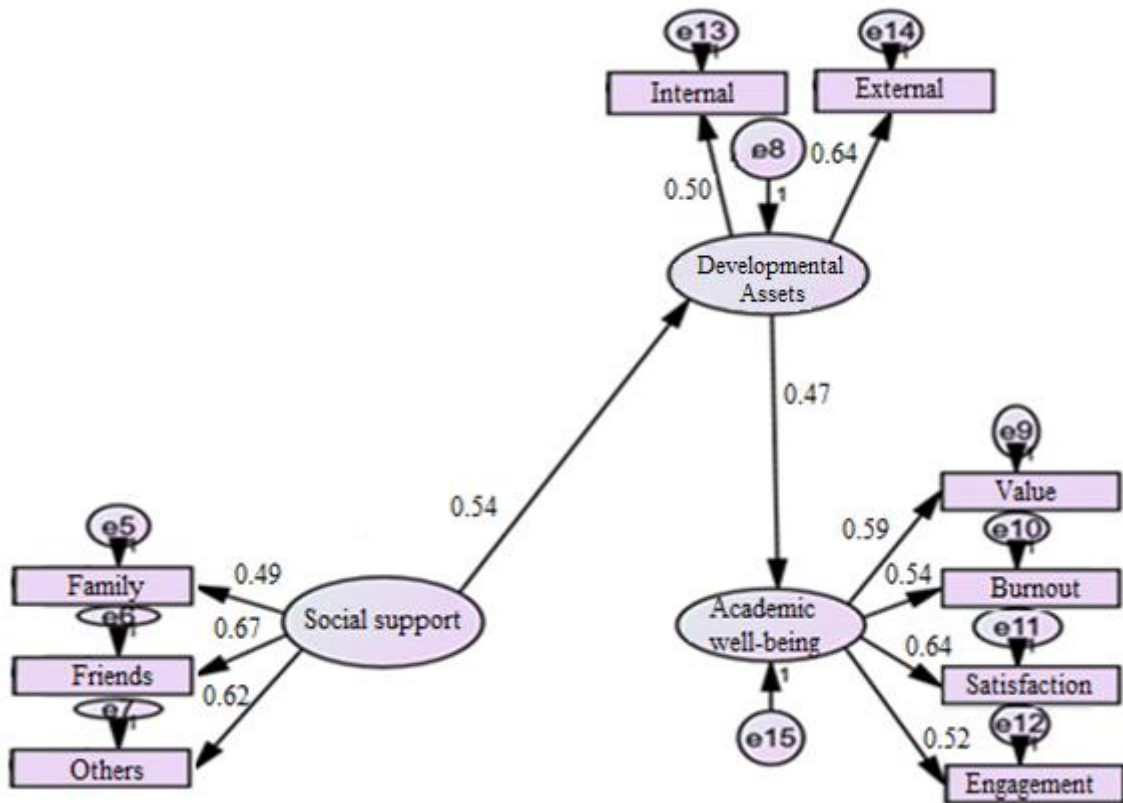

Figure 1. Standard coefficients of the causal model

Table 4. Results of the bootstrap test to investigate the mediating role of mentioned variable

path	β	Standardized error	upper bound	Lower bound	sig
Social support ➡ Developmental Assets ➡ academic well-being	0.37	0.114	0.59	0.15	0.001

Table 4 shows the results of the bootstrap test to investigate the mediating role of the mentioned variable.

As shown in Table 4, the indirect effect of social support on academic well-being through developmental assets is 0.37. Since the upper bound is 0.59 and the lower bound is 0.15, it is significant at the 0.001 level. Since the desired range does not include zero, it can be stated that the research hypothesis on the relationship between perceived social support and academic well-being through the mediating role of developmental assets in first-year high school students is confirmed.

Discussion

The results of the present study indicate that there is a relationship between perceived social support and academic well-being with the mediating role of developmental assets in first-year high school students. The indirect effect of social support on academic well-being through developmental assets is 0.37. Since the upper bound is 0.59 and the lower bound is 0.15, it is significant at the 0.001 level. Academic well-being should be examined in the form of individual and environmental patterns in order to have a better understanding of it. This is despite the fact that in most research, only individual patterns in academic well-being have been mentioned (14), therefore, the present study, considering this point and considering the variables that some of them enter the field of Psychology is almost new, it has addressed the issue (through academic persistence as individual factors and perceived social support as environmental factors and the role of developmental assets as a mediating variable). Since the desired range does not include zero, it can be stated that the research hypothesis on the relationship between perceived social support and academic well-being through the mediating role of developmental assets in first-year high school students is confirmed. In explaining this result, it can be stated that when people receive support, which includes consolation, respect, affection and care, from family, friends and other groups, it affects their psychological well-being (15). The above studies confirm the importance and results of the present research, in other words, it can be said that all the outputs that people receive from family, friends and other important people in life are actually their growth assets that lead to well-being. For example, when family life provides high levels of affection and support when the adolescent's relationship with his family is positive and the adolescent is willing to receive advice and counsel from his family when the adolescent perceives those adults in Society value. When the family has clear principles and rules and has enough supervision over the youth's movements, all this is the support that the individual receives. It creates a set of growth capital in him and leads to his happiness. Academic well-being is obtained through the interaction of important environmental and individual characteristics.

The effect of social support on academic well-being is indirect rather than direct. Social support, which strongly affects developmental assets, leads to the formation of resources and a system of strengths called developmental assets, and these capitals are the source of students' academic well-being. The results obtained in this regard are consistent with the results of previous studies such as Behroozi et al., (11). Family and friends play a major role in encouraging a person to achieve health goals. Their help is the most important component of social support. Social support

is defined as any stimulus that helps to advance the goals of the supported person. Social support refers to the care, affection, respect, consolation and help that other people or groups give to a person (16). Among the resources that a person has when facing a stressful event, personal resources (control, perceived self-efficacy, competence, etc.) can be distinguished from social resources (help provided by others) (17).

This research outcome indicated that the relationship between perceived social support and academic well-being through the mediating role of developmental assets in first-year high school students is confirmed. There are two general types of social support: tangible support including material facilities that are beneficial to the person in some way, and psychological support which helps people to improve their emotional states. Tangible social support helps a person from the outside, and psychological social support helps a person feel better (18). Students' well-being has been discussed as an important output variable in the educational process and has often been studied as a component of educational quality. The importance of students' well-being as an indicator of educational quality reflects the interest of educational professionals in them (19). Developmental assets are a set of connections, opportunities, values and skills that help adolescents and young people to increase the probability of success in school, stay away from risky behaviors, increase their resilience and cause well-being (20).David, has defined academic well-being as a positive emotional state that is the result of coordination between individual needs and expectations in relation to the educational setting (21). The existence or quality of social relations is the amount of help that people think is important for them and the amount of help that people receive (22).

About the importance of family and social support in this research can refer to the study Heydari-Lakeh et al., they found that family support plays an essential role in the academic adaptation of students during the Corona pandemic (23). Rezaei Varmazyar found that strong social support with an effect on developmental assets increases the psychological well-being of students (24). Korhonen et al., investigated learning problems, academic well-being and dropping out of Finnish students with a person-centred approach. The results showed that students who have low academic well-being and low academic performance are more exposed to dropping out (25). Their results are consistent with those of the present study. Due to the fact that in the present study only questionnaires were used to collect information and data that were completed by the students themselves, it seems that more reliable results will be obtained if other methods of data collection such as reports from parents and teachers are used. Also, it will be useful to examine the model developed in the current research on other groups and statistical communities such as students of other educational levels and with regard to gender differences to reach more reliable causal relationships.

Recommendations

According to the results of the current research and the fact that transformational capital has an important mediating role. Therefore, it is suggested to develop educational protocols with the aim of increasing and strengthening the transformative capital for students to improve their academic well-being during teaching.

Conclusion

Based on the results, developmental assets have a significant mediating role in the relationship between social support and

academic well-being, and there is a relationship between perceived social support and academic well-being with the mediating role of developmental assets in first-year high school students. It indicates the importance of paying attention to role of developmental assets and social support of students that needs by policymakers and planners of the country to strengthen the academic well-being of students. Based on the model adopted in the current research that transformative capitals have a significant mediating role, it is necessary to develop educational protocols with the aim of increasing and strengthening transformative capitals for students in order to promote health and reduce students' stress, so that while teaching Improve their academic well-being.

Author's contribution

Hadis Saeedi and Alireza Manzari Tavakoli developed the study concept and design. Mitra Kamyabi acquired the data. Zahra Zeinaddiny Meymand and Mahshid Tajrobehkar analyzed and interpreted the data, and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. All authors contributed to the intellectual content, manuscript editing and read and approved the final manuscript.

Informed consent

Questionnaires were filled with the participants' satisfaction and written consent was obtained from the participants in this study.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interests.

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