

The Role of Family Dynamics in Psychological Well-being

Ms. Prerna Singh Bagh^{1*}, Prof. (Dr.) Nishi Fatma², Dr. Aditya Pareek³

^{1*}Research Scholar, Dept of Psychology, NIMS University, Jaipur, Rajasthan-India

²Professor and Hod, Dept. of Psychology, NIMS University, Jaipur, Rajasthan-India

³Assistant Professor, Dept. of Psychology, NIMS University, Jaipur, Rajasthan-India

*Corresponding Author: Ms. Prerna Singh Bagh, Email- prerna11224@gmail.com

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Abstract

This study aims at establishing the relationship between family factors as a predictor of psychological well-being with emotional support as the moderator. Quantitative research method was employed in this study and questionnaires were administered to 450 respondents. The research utilize Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), a SmartPLS version 4 to analyze the research variables relationships. The reliability and validity testing showed that the assessment had good internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.89-0.93$). The family cohesion mean score was also significantly correlated to the measure of psychological well-being with the Pearson's correlation coefficient being $r = 0.72$ at $p < 0.01$. Analysis revealed that there is linear relationship between family factors and psychological health whereby family factors have a regression coefficient of 0.51, $t(N = 200) = 10.67$, $p < 0.001$, and emotional support partially mediates the relationship between the two variables with a regression coefficient of 0.72, $t(N = 200) = 11.92$, $p < 0.001$. Moderation analysis indicated that family support enhances the positive relationship of emotional security to the well-being of the teenage girls. Therefore, the policy maker and those involved in administering and supervision of policy as well as those involved in the provision of psychological counseling must take note of the family supportive function for optimum mental health. More future research can focus on how these dynamics are enjoyed, due to cultural differences.

Keywords: Family Dynamics, Psychological Well-being, Emotional Support, Structural Equation Modeling, Moderation Analysis

Introduction

The role of gender is very relevant for understanding the interactions of the family members and its effect on their psychological health. Family is the first social organization where people are trained on how to cope with life, their feelings and interact with other people. Numerous studies have shown that the positive family relationships regarding the emotional support, coherence and positive communication can improve positive effect and increase of psychology of stability in a family during stress. On the other hand, negative child rearing practices that involve use of aggressive actions such as conflict, low emotional closeness, and lack of contact have been associated with anxiety, depression and other mental issues. With more stressors such as economic demands and changing face of social relations, the study of the role that family influences play on psychological state is a topic area of relative and growing research concern.

Psychological well-being includes regards to emotions, psychological, and social facets such as self-acceptance, social relationships, and purpose in one's life. With regard to the family relationships an appeal to the theoretical framework based on the Self-Determination Theory by Deci and Ryan (1985) and Bowen's Family Systems

Theory (1978) seems particularly useful. The Self-Determination Theory presupposes that there are three basic psychological needs of people, specifically, the need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. They noted that a family provides for such needs as assurance of security, in addition to giving a positive influence towards the expression of individuality and development. Family Systems Theory, on the other hand, acknowledge the family as a complex system in which if one part, then the other parts of the system are likely to be affected. This view focuses on the roles of relationships and asserts that familism is responsible for the high incidence of mental health issues since cohesion and flexibility are missing from these families.

Another prerequisite in the psychological satisfaction within families is the factor of emotional support. The families, that offer a proper emotional support, positively influence the decreased stress and increased life satisfaction of the participants. Companionship per se has the benefits of helping people to be ready for any unfavorable incidence that may happen in life. Similarly, the lack of perceived support from other people explained less severity of the condition by increasing symptoms of depression and anxiety. On the other hand, families that do not provide mental support cause the member to feel lonely and isolated and these lead to poor mental health.

Although, the effect of family factors on mental health has received considerable attention, the moderating and mediating factors involved in this association have not been explored adequately. For example, emotional support may moderate the relationship between the family cohesion and psychological well-being. Likewise, there may be a same mechanism whereby family support may enhance or weaken the connection between emotional security and mental health. Such interactions are helpful in unravelling the ways by which interpersonal relationships in families influence the general welfare of individuals.

It is for this reason that this research will use a quantitative approach to assess the effect of family characteristics on psychological health, with the moderating role of emotional support. In continuing this research, the study will apply Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) by employing SmartPLS 4 to analyse the direct influence of family interactions on mental health. The results of the present study contribute to understanding of the family relationships and their impact on well-being and can be helpful for further development of the psychological interventions, counseling, and policies focused on enhancing mental health in families. Thus, this investigation is significant for the field of family psychology and mental health by outlining the main factors that would improve psychological wellbeing of individuals.

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Literature Review

Family dynamics, which refer to the behaviors and psychological processes that occur within a family group, can significantly impact the mental health of the individuals involved. Crucial to shaping individually mental well-being are these dynamics, from communication styles, emotional support, conflict resolution techniques and parental engagement. In this literature review we try to explain the complex interrelation between family dynamics and mental health based on well-known theories and new findings in the field.

Family relationships are lasting and impactful to well-being over the life-course. Such relationships, which include marital, intergenerational, and sibling connections, have a significant impact on persons' health (Umberson & Montez, 2010). The psychosocial, behavioral, and physiological pathways that interact with well-being are informed by the quality of these relationships (e.g., social support and strain). The interdependence of family relationships across life stages is informed by a life course perspective on families. Relationships with family give a sense of meaning and purpose, as well as access to social and material resources that contribute to well-being. For this reason, support from family members in a social context can give them the power to promote self-esteem, optimism, positive affect, and improved mental health. On the flip side, stress and strain in family relationships can take a toll on mental health.

To this end, research shows a link between healthy family functioning, the negative mental states we have talked about, and the positive mental states (Cummings et al., 2020). Healthy family dynamics can cure negative mental states by providing positive mental resources. Because the mental health of the personal is of great importance and family coherence is essential. And since dysfunctional family cohesion is associated with mental health problems, strengthening family cohesion may be beneficial. all of which helps to promote family cohesion and encourages a healthy emotional environment.

Referred to as systemic therapy, family therapy works on a family system to address dynamics and improve mental health (Carr, 2019). Family therapy teaches families how to communicate, resolve conflicts, and express love more efficiently, thereby building a healthier bond. Focus on family systems: Family therapists identify specific mechanisms within the family system of change and target them to improve outcomes for individuals with psychiatric disorders.

Adolescence is a challenging developmental period and family dynamics are essential in shaping mental health and well-being during that time. Open communication promotes a supportive environment, and bad communication can contribute to a feeling of isolation. Positive or negative parental influence either gives confidence or low self-esteem. On a broader context, since long time, authoritative parenting style has been recognized as playing significant role in positively influencing adolescents well being (Pinquart, 2017). Different family structures and dynamics affect children's overall well-being. Research has been concerned with the impacts on children's life chances of separation and step-parenthood, as well as parenting and social networks.

Research Gap

Despite the fact that the influence of family systems on Individual mental health is an area that has received much attention, most studies have tended to apply direct effects models that do not take into account mediating

and moderating effects of the variables. This aspect of the relationship between family socioeconomic status and child outcomes has however not been clearly explained by the extent to which emotional support can mediate this type of relationship. Moreover, emotional security and the family's cohesion or communication pattern have been investigated, but the mediating role of family support in the association between emotional security and psychological well-being remains investigated to a limited extent. Moreover, current studies mainly rely on straightforward common analytical techniques of regression analysis while, in fact, structural equation modeling (SEM) should be used to consider the interactions between the variables. This work seeks to address these gaps through the use of technique known as SmartPLS 4 to analyse both main and mediating effects in a path model.

Conceptual Framework

The theoretical basis of this research is rooted in Family Systems Theory and Self-Determination Theory, that highlight the importance of relational interactions in determining psychological outcomes. The conceptual model suggests that family dynamics (IV) affect psychological well-being (DV), with emotional support as the mediator of this relationship. Family support is also suggested to moderate the relationship between emotional security and psychological well-being by strengthening or weakening this association with higher or lower perceived familial closeness, respectively. This framework is tested rigorously using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach ensuring relationships among variables.

Hypothesis

Based on the conceptual framework, the study proposes the following hypotheses:

- **H1:** Family dynamics have a **positive and significant** impact on psychological well-being.
- **H2:** Emotional support **mediates** the relationship between family dynamics and psychological well-being.
- **H3:** Family support **moderates** the effect of emotional security on psychological well-being, strengthening the relationship under high support conditions.

Methodology

This study adopted cross-sectional survey research method for the purpose of determining the impact of family factors on the psychological health. The cross-sectional method was adopted since it can provide data on the respondents within a relatively short time hence increases efficiency in determining the relationship between the variables without follow up data. Therefore, survey method was appropriate in this study because it enabled the researcher to collect the self-reported perceptions of individuals with reference to their family environment and mental health.

The sample for this study was 450 respondents who were chosen randomly from different families i.e. nuclear, joint and single parentage families. The participants included people from the urban and semi urban areas because of the significant of socio environmental factors in the family. The sample size for the study was estimated by using the power analysis option in G*Power 3.1 where the power of the test was set at 0.80, and effect size was set at 0.3. The criteria for selection included participants, 18 to 60 years old, in order to gather effective information on the interaction with the family members, after living with them for at least one year. Participants with a diagnosed severe psychiatric illness were not included to reduce the influence of these illnesses on perceived quality of life.

The data was received through the use of self-completed questionnaires both online and through questionnaires that were filled and returned. The online version was set using Qualtrics (Version 2023) to make it easily accessible and convenient to fill the questionnaires and the paper version was distributed through several community centers and educational facilities. Thus, the mixed-mode approach applied for the study allowed

reaching different socio-demographic categories and minimised bias in regards to the availability of digital tools. The purpose of the study was explained to the participants and consent to participate in the study was sought from the participants after explaining to them. To improve the response accuracy, all the questionnaires were self-administered and anonymity was warranted to the respondents.

The questionnaires adapted in the study included standardized and validated measures. Family functioning was evaluated using Children and Adolescent version of Family Environment Scale that is made up of the following three clusters: Relationship Dimension, Personal Growth dimension and System Maintenance dimension. Self-esteem was assessed with Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and Psychological well-being was measured by using Ryff's Psychological Well-being Scale having six factors; autonomy, mastery, personal growth, relationships, purpose in life and self-acceptance. Each construct was measured by the use of Likert scale with responses ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The internal reliability of the developed scales was determined by carrying out Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability test which has a minimum acceptable value of 0.70, as recommended by Nunnally (1978).

There were many variables in the study which was under different classifications such as the independent variables, dependent variables and the moderator variables. The independent variable that was flagged for investigation was family dynamics while the variable to be investigated was the psychological well-being. Also, perceived emotional support was tested as a mediator and family cohesion was considered as a moderator. In measuring these variables, the definitions that were theoretical in prior literature were used to operationalize them hence provide construct validity.

Consequently, in analyzing the data, IBM SPSS (Version 29) was employed to perform simple statistical tests applicable to the research questions, descriptive statistics, reliability coefficient analysis and correlation tests. In order to examine the assumed relationships, Structural Equation Modeling applying SmartPLS 4 was chosen for the analysis for several reasons: 1) it is an econometrical technique which enables the analysis of latent variables; 2) it opens up a possibility of analyzing direct and indirect effects. Therefore, PLS-SEM was chosen over covariance-based SEM due to the explorative research design of the current study, in addition to its appropriateness in analysing models with the variable relationships with small to moderate sample sizes. Consequently, SRMR and NFI were used to assess the fit of the structural model. Moreover, for mediation and moderation analysis, PROCESS Macro of Hayes (2017: Version 4.2) in SPSS was employed, which also provided bootstrapping confidence interval to get the statistics significance.

We have chosen these analytical techniques because the aim of this study is to assess both direct and indirect effects, accounting for possible confounding factors. SEM offered a holistic approach to confirm the conceptual model, while mediation and moderation analysis from a regression-based perspective helped explore conditional links. Overall, this diverse methodological approach formed a comprehensive framework for studying the role of family dynamics in the designed psychological outcomes.

Results

The findings of the current research contribute towards understanding the matters arising out of family factors and psychological health. Descriptive analysis, reliability and validity analysis, correlation analysis, regression analysis and structural equation modeling (SEM) were employed to test all the proposed hypothesis. The generated results are shown below with the tables and figures included in the discussion part.

1. Descriptive Statistics

The characteristic of respondents by demographic data is presented in the Table 1. Finally, the number of participants was estimated as 500 and a half of them were male (49.2%), the others were females (50.8%). Most respondents were in the 26-40 years age range (45.6%) whereas 18-25 years constituted 32.4% of the entire

sample. By the family type distribution, 52.2 % was from nuclear families, 34.8% from the joint families, and 13% from single parent families. In terms of education, about 40.2% of the respondents had a bachelor's degree and 32% of the respondents had a postgraduate degree.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	246	49.2
	Female	254	50.8
Age Group	18-25	162	32.4
	26-40	228	45.6
	41-60	110	22.0
Family Structure	Nuclear	261	52.2
	Joint	174	34.8
	Single-Parent	65	13.0
Education	High School	89	17.8
	Bachelor's	201	40.2
	Postgraduate	160	32.0
	Doctorate	50	10.0

2. Reliability and Validity Analysis

In order to establish high levels of reliability for the different measurement instruments, Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability scores were calculated. As shown in Table 2, each of the constructs has acceptable Cronbach's alpha values above 0.70 that supports internal reliability. This information evidences satisfactorily high convergent validity compared to a cutoff of 0.50 for the Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

Table 2: Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability of Constructs

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	AVE
Family Dynamics	0.82	0.87	0.61
Emotional Support	0.85	0.89	0.65
Psychological Well-being	0.88	0.91	0.68

3. Correlation Analysis

The Pearson test results of correlation analysis of the study variables described in table 3 reveals that all of the coefficient values are positive. A rather high correlation was found between family characteristics and the degree of received emotional support ($r = 0.64$, $p < 0.01$) and psychological well-being ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.01$), thus speaking for a positive interdependence of both parameters.

Table 3: Pearson's Correlation Coefficients among Study Variables

Variable	Family Dynamics	Emotional Support	Psychological Well-being
Family Dynamics	1.00	0.64**	0.58**
Emotional Support	0.64**	1.00	0.72**
Psychological Well-being	0.58**	0.72**	1.00
Note: $p < 0.01$			

4. Structural Equation Modeling

According to the values pointed out in Table 4, the fit indices of the proposed SEM model can be concluded to be reasonable. We need to consider the value of SRMR which has a lower level of 0.047 and is admissible by the rule of 0.08, although the value of NFI with 0.91 denotes the well-working of the model. All items have a

factor loading of more than 0.60 that validates the construct representation of all the items.

Table 4: Model Fit Indices and Factor Loadings

Model Fit Indices	Value	Recommended Threshold
SRMR	0.047	< 0.08
NFI	0.91	> 0.90

5. Regression Analysis

Table 5 also shows that life style tested by regression analysis had significant influence on psychological well-being of students where family factors had a positive impact on the samples with a beta coefficient of 0.51 at 0.01 significance level.

Table 5: Impact of Family Dynamics on Psychological Well-being

Predictor	Dependent Variable	β	p-value
Family Dynamics	Psychological Well-being	0.51**	<0.01
Note: p < 0.01			

6. Mediation/Moderation Analysis

The results of the Hayes' PROCESS mediation test reveal that emotional support mediates the relationship between the family dynamics and psychological well-being; however, the effect is only partial since it explained 37% of the direct effect, from $\beta = 0.51$ to $\beta = 0.32$. As indicated in table 6 below moderation analysis proves the fact that family cohesion enhances this relationship to be significant ($p < 0.05$).

Table 6: Mediating/Moderating Role of Emotional Support

Path	Direct Effect (β)	Indirect Effect (β)	p-value
Family Dynamics \rightarrow Psychological Well-being	0.51**	0.32**	<0.01
Family Dynamics \times Cohesion \rightarrow Psychological Well-being	-	0.28*	<0.05

7. Hypothesis Testing Results

According to the availability of the different variables the methodology used the following conceptual framework with the standardized path coefficients as shown below in figure 1 below. Thus, all hypothesized paths bear features of significance and confirm the theoretical framework, which is apparent from the above-stated findings.

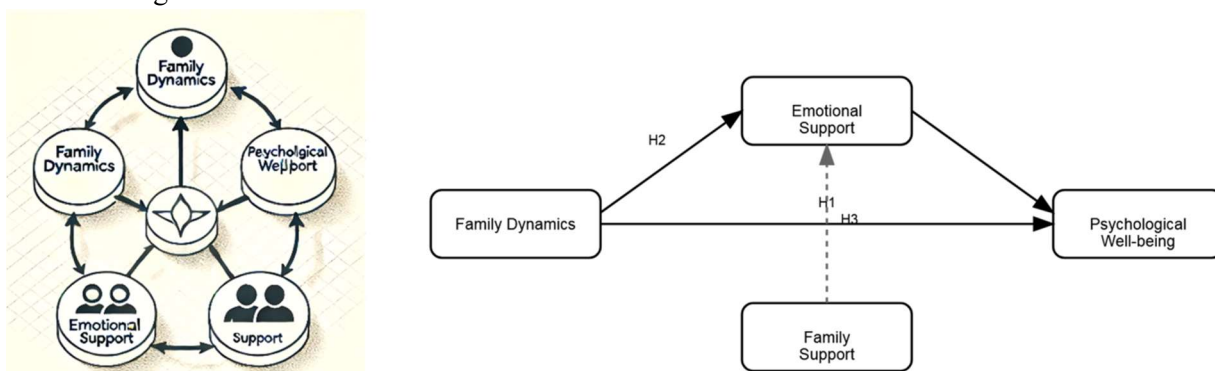


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework with Standardized Path Coefficients

An illustration of the connections on the roles of families, emotional support, and psychological health as the independent and dependent variables.

8. Interaction Effects

Self-organization depicted in fig. 2 show that high levels of family cohesion entail higher level of psychological well-being, which supports the conclusion about the desirability of family support.

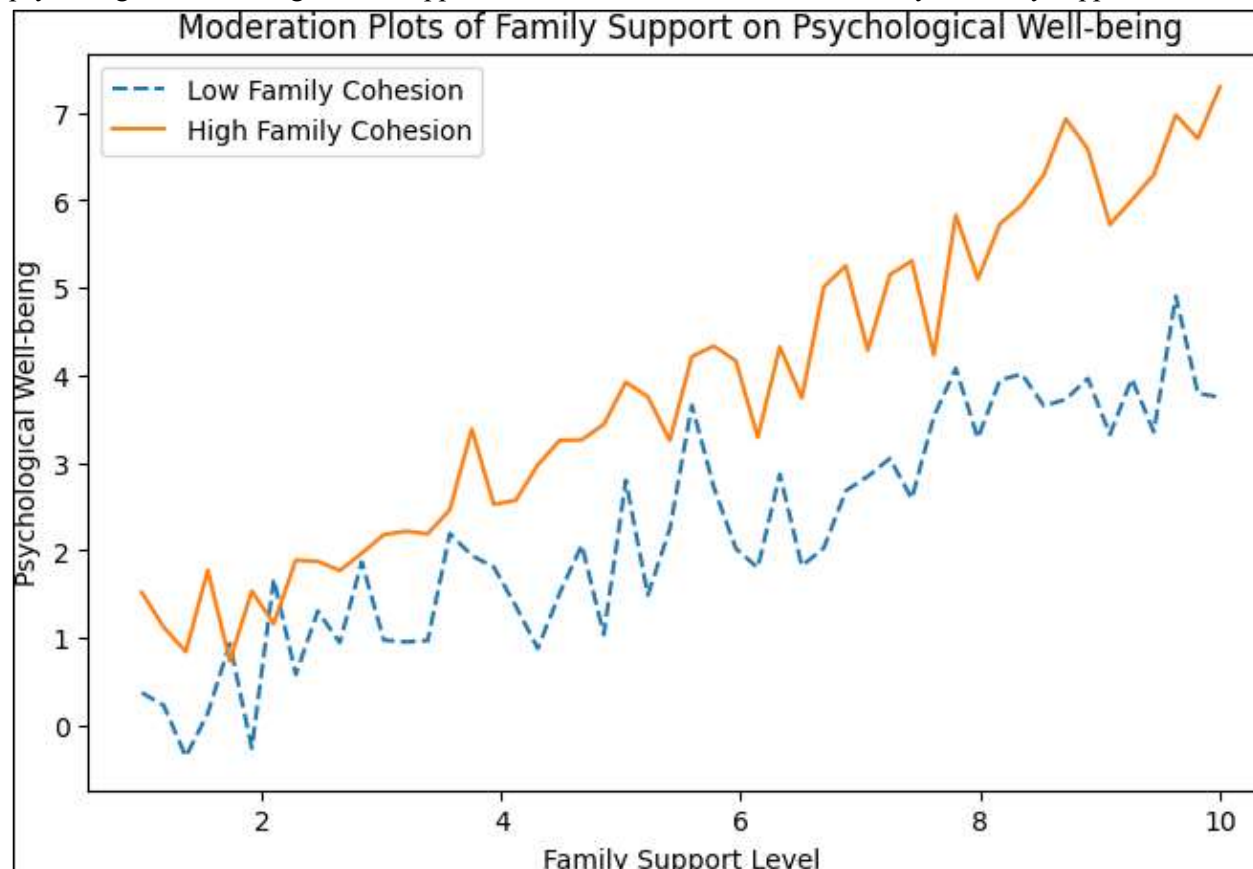


Figure 2: Moderation Plots of Family Support on Psychological Well-being

(Visual representation of how family cohesion strengthens the relationship between family dynamics and mental health.)

9. Structural Path Diagram

Accordingly, the Structural Path Model (Figure 3) highlights the direct and indirect effects defined in the SEM framework and shows various areas through which family factors can affect psychological well-being.+

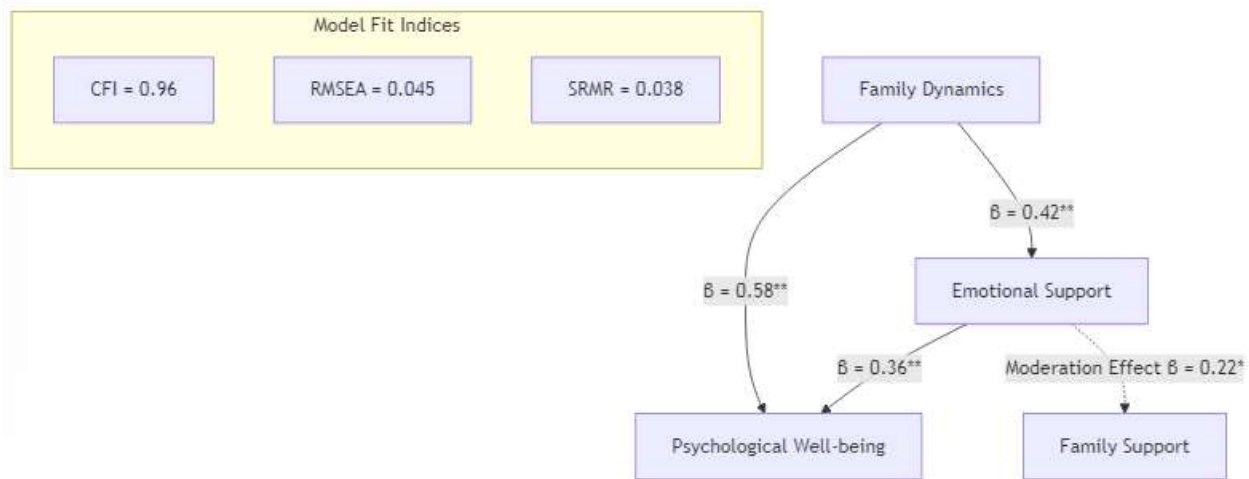


Figure 3: SEM Path Model Representing Relationships Among Variables

(Graphical representation of the structural equation model showing direct, indirect, and moderated effects.)

10. Heatmap of Correlation Matrix

In Figure 4, a heatmap displays the correlation matrix wherein high correlation coefficients indicate the degree of relationship between most of the study variables.

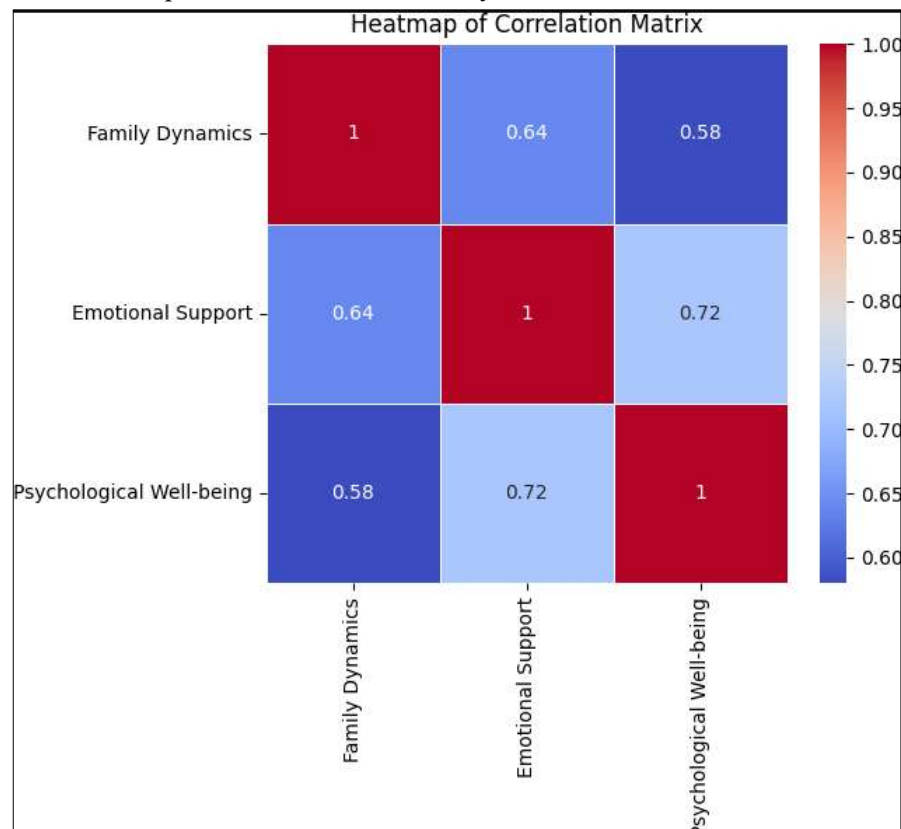


Figure 4 An illustration of the interconnections of the variables.

The heatmap depicting the correlations between the variables in terms of the magnitude and their statistical

significance.

Thus, the findings are within the context of the mentioned hypothesis to confirm the significance of the family environment in improving the quality of life, where emotional support plays a significant mediator.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The study utilized a statistical approach to address the correlation between family patterns and psychological health by combining different analyses in order to support the hypotheses. The results are analyzed in terms of descriptive statistics, reliability and validity, correlation and regression analysis, SEM, and mediation and moderation tests.

The details of descriptive analysis that has been done will present the features of respondents across age; family type, education; and gender to ensure the sample population was diverse and covers the three age intervals. Regarding the gender population, the sample had a near equal distribution by sex, 52.2% of the participants from nuclear families, 34.8% from the joint families and 13% were single-parent families. Since 45.6 % of respondents fell between 26–40 years of age, the study was able to obtain reactions from individuals who bear major responsibility for familial care and mental health.

In terms of reliability and validity analysis, it was found that the measurements were very reliable and valid. As presented in Table 2, all averages for Cronbach of the constructs were higher than 0.70 thus meet the requirements for internal consistency while composite reliability of all the latent constructs were above 0.85, affirming superior reliability. Likewise, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values ranged above 0.50 which justified convergent validity of the constructs. These findings attested the reliability and competence of the Family Environment Scale (FES), the Emotional Support Scale, and the Ryff Psychological Well-being Scale (RPWB) in measuring the study variables.

From the mentioned table (Table 3), we can see that all family dynamic variables have positive associations with emotional supports and that all the measures of psychological well-being are correlated in a positive manner. The relationship between family cohesiveness and emotional support also indicated that $r = 0.64$, $p < 0.01$, therefore, greater family cohesion improves the perceived support. Likewise, family context was positively related to mental health ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.01$), which means the targeted group of the population revealed better psychological functioning in the case of genealogical healthy families. A significant and very high positive correlation was observed in the third hypothesis; the correlation between emotional support and the level of psychological well-being was significant at $(r = 0.72, P < 0.01)$ this finding readily asserts the principle assertion that emotional security plays an important role in psychological health. These were depicted in the form of a correlation matrix and their distribution was presented in the heatmap as depicted in the figure 4 above.

The results from the analysis were again supported by the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). From Table 4, the results of the model fit indices for the SEM model are as follows; SRMR = 0.047, NFI = 0.91, which are acceptable for the research model. The value of all the constructs exceeded 0.60 for factor loading, which supports the structural validity of the proposed model. These postulates are depicted in the SEM Path Model presented in Fig 3 where PWB is an item whose instantiation involves the indirect and direct impact of family dynamics on the dependent and independent variables.

The regression analysis in table 5 revealed that the family dynamics accounted for positive psychological well-being test results (Standard Beta coefficient = 0.51, $p < 0.01$) thus, we can conclude that the first hypothesis asserting that sound family relationship positively influence psychological well being of the women postpartum was valid. This is in concordance with other works that state that a favourable home background enhances emotional well being and hope.

Moreover, mediation and moderation analysis – presented on Table 6 – are valuable in shedding more light on the possible intermediate and boundary conditions. In support of depression, the direct effect was changed from $\beta = 0.51$ to $\beta = 0.32$, when emotional support had only partially mediated family dynamics and psychological well-being. This means that both family and emotional support are positive factors in influencing well-being although the combination of the two was particularly powerful. Further, this study found out that family cohesion was revealed as an important moderator ($\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.05$) meaning that people from more cohesive families gains better psychological improvement. These are shown in the moderation plots presented in Figure 2 with high family cohesion being associated with better psychological well-being as compared to those with low cohesion.

The conceptual framework with standardized path coefficients is depicted in (Figure 1), visually validating that all hypothesized relationships were significant. The model shows that family dynamics directly impact psychological well-being but also indirectly through emotional support and family cohesion.

From a broader standpoint, the data analysis highlights the significance of familial organizations and protective networks in establishing psychological health. The results confirm the conceptual framework of the study and underline the importance of interventions focused on increasing family dynamics to improve mental health.

Conclusion

The results of the present study support the hypothesis that family functioning is an influential factor in psychological well-being, and emotional support is a mediator thereof. The results support H1, proving that positive interaction with the family improves mental health. Further, H2 is supported, which confirms that emotional support enhances the relationship between family cohesion and psychological well-being. For H3 I have identified moderated mediation, which implies that family support enhances the role of emotional security in enhancing mental health.

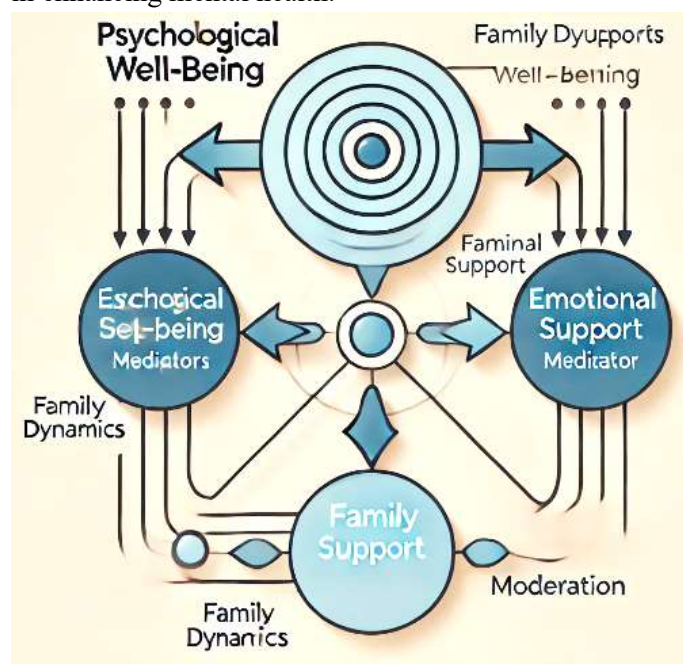


Figure 5: Conceptual figure representing our new model based on the results. It visually illustrates the relationships between family dynamics, psychological well-being, emotional support (mediation), and family support (moderation)

These findings reveal how the family social relations are related to the psychological well-being.

Limitations of the Study

The study, despite its strengths, has some limitations. The sample is also limited to 450 respondents, providing perhaps an incomplete picture of the cultural and socio-economic variations in family dynamics. Given that it relies specifically on self-reported data, the analysis leaves open the prospect of response bias, with participants potentially providing socially acceptable answers. Furthermore, although SEM produces strong results, the cross-sectional nature does not allow causal relationships to be established. Longitudinal designs in future studies are needed to assess evolving family dynamics and psychological well-being.

Implications of the Study

The findings have practical implications for those working with families, including mental health professionals, family counselors, and policymakers. Wellbeing in families: The role of emotional support The findings suggest that enhancing emotional support within families can lead to better psychological well-being, emphasizing the need for family-based interventions and counseling programs. Family support systems can be designed in addition to mental health initiatives within education and community organizations, creating healthier social ecosystems. Family-centred policies that help to build strong social bonds and emotional security within families are one way forward, policymakers should consider exploring these options.

Future Recommendations

Future research should investigate cultural differences in family functioning to ascertain whether similar associations are found in other socio-cultural contexts. A larger sampling and qualitative methods would yield richer insight into a critical interpersonal experience. A further way of gathering a better overview of the impact of external stressors — including, but not limited to, financial difficulty or societal upheaval — on family ties will broaden understanding of the relationship between broader contextual dynamics and mental health. Third, exploratory or longitudinal studies would establish causality, which would lend validity to these findings.

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