



Self-Concealment and Emotional Intelligence as Predictors of Seeking Psychological Help among Undergraduate Students

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Abstract

In this study we investigate self-concealment, emotional intelligence and seeking psychological help among undergraduate students in Turkey. The attitudes toward seeking professional psychological help—short form (SPH), Self-concealment scale (SC) and Emotional Intelligence Scale (EI) were used and data were collected from a total of 785 university students studying in various faculties. As a result of the analysis, it was found that the psychological levels of the participants differed according to gender for seeking of psychological help, self-concealment and emotional intelligence. Moreover, self-concealment levels differed only according to perceived parental attitudes and the levels of seeking psychological help differed only according to whether or not they had previously received psychological help. However, the levels of seeking psychological help, self-concealment and emotional intelligence did not differ depending on whether the participants received a scholarship, were members of the community or were studying in the department of their choice. The results of Pearson's correlation showed a positive significant relationship between seeking psychological help and emotional intelligence ($r=0.124$), self-concealment and emotional intelligence ($r=0.118$). Beside, negative significant relationship between seeking psychological help and self-concealment ($r = -0.133$). The results of the regression analysis showed that self-concealment, emotional intelligence, who prior receiving psychological help and gender (male) are predictive of the seeking psychological help among students and explain 8.6% of the total variation of student's attitude toward seeking psychological help.

Keywords: Seeking psychological help, Self-concealment, Emotional intelligence, Undergraduate students, Turkey, Regression model.

Citation | Ramazan Demir; Mehmet Murat; Recep Bindak (2020). Self-Concealment and Emotional Intelligence as Predictors of Seeking Psychological Help among Undergraduate Students. Asian Journal of Education and Training, 6(3): 448-455.

History:

Received: 17 April 2020

Revised: 20 May 2020

Accepted: 25 June 2020

Published: 1 July 2020

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Publisher: Asian Online Journal Publishing Group

Acknowledgement: All authors contributed to the conception and design of the study.

Funding: This study received no specific financial support.

Competing Interests: The authors declare that they have no conflict of interests.

Transparency: The authors confirm that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study was reported; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained.

Ethical: This study follows all ethical practices during writing.

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Contribution of this paper to the literature

This study contributes to the existing literature by investigating self-concealment, emotional intelligence and seeking psychological help among undergraduate students in Turkey.

1. Introduction

Most university students are individuals in the first years of young adulthood. As in every developmental stage, these years of university education serve as an important period involving serious developmental tasks and the first steps towards adulthood. By stepping into the university, students enter an environment in which they experience changes in every aspect of their lives. Students can experience academic problems in the university environment, where academic work is more intense, special fields of study are chosen, and the final goal is to gain a profession. In addition, university students are leaving the family, finding housing, stepping into independence, becoming able to live alone as individuals, and making their own decisions and bearing the consequences. In addition, in this period there are also changes in the social environment. Moreover, during this period, individuals may have concerns for the future and how they will spend the rest of their lives. In this period, they begin to think about important developments such as finding a job and finding a partner. Because of the many difficulties experienced during the university years, individuals may need psychological help from time to time in order to overcome all these problems in their lives and adapt to their environment in a healthy way. This help can be from professional or non-professional sources. There are many factors that affect the orientation of individuals in need of psychological help to a professional resource. According to some research conducted on university students, the attitudes and intentions to seek help were related to self-stigma (Shechtman, Vogel, & Maman, 2010) rumination have a relationship to women's help-seeking attitudes whereas the self-model has a relationship to men's help-seeking attitudes (Turan & Erdur-Baker, 2014).

This study aimed to reveal the extent to which the levels of self-concealment and emotional intelligence, which are thought to be among these factors, affect the individual in seeking psychological help. In addition, the study investigated whether the levels of seeking psychological help, self-concealment and emotional intelligence differed according to demographic variables (gender, scholarship status, parental attitudes, belonging to the student community, studying in their chosen department, and previously having sought psychological help).

1.1. Seeking Psychological Help

In case of facing a problem, the individual, first tries to solve this problem alone, and when this fails, help is sought from external sources. Seeking psychological help is seen as an effort to seek professional help regarding the current problems of the individual (Vogel & Wei, 2005).

This effort to seek help begins when the individual becomes aware of the existing problem and continues to search for support in solving it. The individual alone will decide what help is needed, when, under what conditions, and so on. Finally, when individuals find the appropriate support, they agree to receive help and share their current problems with the source of help (Rickwood, Deane, Wilson, & Ciarrochi, 2005). Pshenishny (2012) stated that 57% of university students seek social support without going to a mental health specialist, 37% follow the order of first, social support, then doctor, and finally, mental health specialist, with only one-third of them going directly to a mental health specialist first.

1.2. Self-Concealment

Some people are more prone to secrecy than others. The decision to keep certain information secret often depends on situational demands, personality, cultural and socioeconomic factors may be relevant. Part of secret keeping can be explained in terms of personality traits (Wisemeijer, Sijtsma, Van Assen, & Vingerhoets, 2008). Self-concealment is defined as "the general and continuous tendency of the individual to conceal his / her thoughts, emotions, behaviours and experiences from other individuals that he / she perceives specifically about him / herself".

Self-concealment has been the subject of many researches. Larson, Chastain, Hoyt, and Ayzenberg (2015) utilizing a meta-analysis of more than 137 studies, found that self-concealment is one of the factors affecting receipt of help. Studies have shown that self-concealment may have many negative consequences. Results showed that self-concealment was negatively related to life satisfaction (Celik, 2016). Cramer (1999) emphasized that individuals who prefer self-concealment have more psychological problems and less social support than individuals who do not practice self-concealment. Serim (2011) draws attention to a similar point and emphasizes the negative effects of self-concealment in relationships. High and low self-concealers shows distinct model of motives, perceived consequences, and attitudes about facilitating exposure in psychotherapy (Love & Farber, 2019). Although drawing attention to the necessity of self-disclosure in terms of psychological health, self-concealment has negative consequences in terms of dealing with one's own problems and in terms of wearing out interpersonal relations.

1.3. Emotional Intelligence

Another variable thought to be related to seeking psychological help is Emotional intelligence. Goleman (2005) defined emotional Intelligence as "the ability of the individual to act, to progress against obstacles, to postpone satisfaction, to design his mental state, to prevent himself from thinking of himself, to have the ability to empathize and hope". Those who use their emotional intelligence in a qualified way become self-aware and live in peace with themselves. Therefore, healthy relations are established with other individuals and they participate in activities that are beneficial for society. Thus, emotional intelligence plays an important role for both the individual and the society (Maboçoğlu, 2006).

There are many models dealing with emotional intelligence. One of the most important is the model described by Mayer and Salovey (1997) who stated that emotional intelligence has four dimensions: "perceiving and expressing emotions, using emotions, thinking and understanding with emotions, and managing emotions". Goleman (2005) on the other hand, emphasized five dimensions of emotional intelligence, namely, "self-awareness, and the ability to manage, to act, to understand other people's emotions, and to maintain relationships effectively".

However, Bar-On (1997) also proposed five dimensions of emotional intelligence: “personal skills, interpersonal skills, adaptability, stress management, and general mental health”. Finally, Cooper and Sawaf (1997) declared emotional intelligence to be the four dimensions of “learning emotions, emotional fitness, emotional depth, and emotional alchemy”. Goleman (2005) while revealing the characteristics of people with high emotional intelligence, makes a gender-based classification and examines the characteristics of men and women separately. In this context, he reported the characteristics of men with high emotional intelligence as being cheerful, extroverted, relevant, balanced, not prone to deep thoughts, responsible, caring about ethical values and making peace with themselves. Women with a high level of emotional intelligence can express their feelings easily, are cheerful, easily adapt themselves, and express themselves as people who are at peace and reconciled with others. These individuals are more resistant to distress, have high motivation, can control their impulses and emotions, and possess high empathic skills so they are happier and more productive (Karabulutlu, Yılmaz, & Yurttaş, 2011).

2. Materials and Method

2.1. Participants

Participants were 785 undergraduate students (54% female, 46% male) from a public university in Gaziantep, a southern province of Turkey. Age of the participants were mean \pm SD = 21.55 ± 2.16 , and range = 39–17. Data were collected during 2017-018 academic semester.

2.2. Instruments

Attitudes Toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help–Short Form (SPH): Scale is a 10-item questionnaire used to measure personal attitudes. Originally developed by Fischer and Farina (1995). In this study Turkish form of scale were used which adapted by Topkaya (2011). Respondents rate each item on a four-point Likert scale (1 = disagree, 4 = agree), scores range 10-40, with higher scores indicating more positive attitudes toward treatment seeking.

Self-concealment Scale (SC): Scale is a 10-item questionnaire used to measure self-concealment level. Originally developed by Larson and Chastain (1990). In this study Turkish form of scale were used which adapted by Terzi, Güngör, and Erdayı (2010). Respondents rate each item on a five-point Likert scale. Scores range 10-50, with higher scores indicating more concealment.

Emotional Intelligence Scale (EI): Scale is a 33-item, developed by Ergin, İşmen, and Ozabacı (1999). EI was used to measure emotional intelligence. The EI scale in Turkish and respondents rate each item on a 4-point Likert scale. Scores range 33-132, with higher scores indicating having relatively upper emotional intelligence.

Besides the three scale, the data collection tool contained a sheet assessing demographic information such as age, gender, etc.. In the current study, Cronbach's reliability coefficients for the scores on all measures were adequate. The Cronbach alpha for SPH, SC and EI were 0.70, 0.87 and 0.75, respectively.

2.3. Statistical Analyses

Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS 22.0; $p < .05$ were considered for statistical significant. The independent samples t-test, one way analysis of variance (ANOVA), Person correlation and regression analysis were conducted for relationships among variables.

3. Results

The relationship between the mean scores for seeking of psychological help and the categorical variables is given in Table 1, in addition to the relationship between self-concealment and emotional intelligence averages with categorical variables. The independent-groups t-test was applied for those with two categories and one-way ANOVA was applied for those with more than two categories.

From Table 1 it is understood that the candidate predictors for SPH were gender and previous psychological help. The independent samples t-test results show that participants' levels of SPH, SC and EI differed according to gender. The women's levels of SPH were significantly higher than those of the men. The SC levels of the men were significantly higher than those of the women. The women's EI levels were significantly higher than those of the men.

The level of SPH, SC and EI did not differ according to whether or not they received scholarships, were members of the community, or were studying in their chosen field. The levels of SPH and EI did not differ according to perceived parental attitudes, whereas SC levels did differ according to this. The levels of SC of individuals reporting authoritarian parental attitudes were significantly higher than those who reported protective and democratic parental attitudes.

SC and EI levels did not differ according to whether or not they had received psychological help before, while the level of SPH did vary according to this. The level of SPH was significantly higher in individuals who had previously received psychological help compared to individuals who had not Table 1.

3.1. Correlations

The relationship between SPH, SC and EI levels were examined by Person correlation Table 2. Statistical significant correlations were found among all variables; SPH was found to have a negative correlation with SC ($r = -.133$; $p < .01$) and a positive correlation with EI ($r = .124$; $p < .01$).

3.2. Multiple Linear Regression Model

A regression model was established with the variables of gender, whether prior psychological help, SC and EI. The results summarized in Table 3. The whole model was significant ($F_{4,776} = 18.172$, $p < .01$). The coefficient of determination was calculated as $R^2 = .086$.

All variables included in the model significantly predicted SPH. According to this, the male gender was found to negatively predict SPH ($B = -1.643$, $p < .01$), previously received psychological help to positively predict SPH ($B = 1.864$; $p < .01$), SC to negatively predict SPH ($B = -0.068$; $p < .01$), and EI to positively predict SPH ($B =$

0.052; $p < 0.01$).

The relative importance of independent variables in predicting SPH is as follows: Gender > SC > Previous psychological help > EI. As a result, the following equation can be written to show the relationship between seeking of psychological help and the other variables:

$$\text{SPH} = 24.32 - 1.64 * (\text{Male}) + 1.86 * (\text{Previous Yes}) - 0.068 * \text{SC} + 0.052 * \text{EI}.$$

Table-1. Comparison of means of seeking psychological help, self-concealment and emotional intelligence according to demographic variables.

Variable categories	N	SPH	SC	EI
Gender				
Female	424	27.73 ± 4.44	24.64 ± 8.57	93.61 ± 9.61
Male	360	25.73 ± 4.63	27.34 ± 8.90	90.69 ± 10.23
<i>p</i> -value		<.001	<.001	<.001
Scholarship recipient?				
No	446	26.58 ± 4.75	25.78 ± 8.59	92.69 ± 10.37
Yes	333	27.15 ± 4.46	25.95 ± 9.13	91.65 ± 9.96
<i>p</i> -value		.093	.786	.162
Perceived parental attitudes				
Authoritarian	104	26.01 ± 4.45	28.33 ± 9.11	93.41 ± 10.79
Protective	437	27.12 ± 4.53	25.48 ± 8.84	92.42 ± 9.93
Democratic	224	26.65 ± 4.91	25.63 ± 8.51	92.00 ± 10.47
<i>p</i> -value		.071	.010 *	.506
Community member?				
No	526	26.68 ± 4.54	25.53 ± 8.76	92.28 ± 10.34
Yes	255	27.11 ± 4.83	26.66 ± 8.91	92.26 ± 10.19
<i>p</i> -value		.234	.092	.981
Studying in chosen department?				
No	321	26.66 ± 4.60	26.50 ± 8.77	92.22 ± 10.63
Yes	460	26.89 ± 4.65	25.52 ± 8.81	92.32 ± 10.05
<i>p</i> -value		.487	.122	.901
Received previous psychological help?				
No	695	26.61 ± 4.58	25.72 ± 8.65	92.20 ± 10.40
Yes	87	28.41 ± 4.77	27.61 ± 9.92	92.68 ± 9.21
<i>p</i> -value		<.001	.059	.682

Note *: $p < .05$ SPH: seeking of psychological help, SC: self-concealment, EI: emotional intelligence.

Table-2. Bilateral correlations between participants' levels of seeking psychological help, self-concealment and emotional intelligence (n=785).

Numerical Variables	$\bar{X} \pm S$	SPH	SC	EI
SPH	26.91 ± 4.63	1	-.133 **	.124 **
SC	25.89 ± 8.82		1	.118 **
EI	92.26 ± 10.28			1

Note: ** $p < 0.01$.

Table-3. Multiple linear regression analysis results for predicting seeking of psychological help.

Explanatory Variables	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	<i>p</i>
Constant	24.32	1.50			
Male gender	-1.64	0.33	-0.18	5.02	<.001
Prior receiving PH (1=Yes)	1.86	0.51	0.13	3.68	<.001
Self-concealment	-0.07	0.02	-0.13	3.69	<.001
Emotional intelligence	0.05	0.02	0.12	3.30	.001

Note: Dependent variable: Seeking psychological help, $R^2 = .086$ Adj- $R^2 = .081$; $SEE = 4.444$; $F = 18.172$; $p < .001$.

4. Conclusion, Discussion and Recommendations

In the analysis, the levels of SPH, SC and EI differed according to gender. The women's levels of seeking psychological help were significantly higher than those of the men. The SC levels of the men were significantly higher than those of the women. The women's EI levels were significantly higher than in the men.

According to the research, the level of SPH varies according to gender. The level of SPH of the women was found to be significantly higher than that of the men. In support of these research findings, there are many studies suggesting that women have higher levels of SPH compared to men (Cebi, 2009; Chang, 2007; Deane & Chamberlain, 1994; Deane & Todd, 1996; Demirdöğen, 2013; Dilek, 2010; Erkan, Ozbay, Cihangir-Çankaya, & Terzi, 2012b; Fischer & Turner, 1970; Irkörüçü, 2012; Kessler, Brown, & Boman, 1981; Nebizade, 2004; Ozbay, Terzi, Erkan, & Cankaya, 2011; Ozdemir, 2012; Padesky & Hammen, 1981; Reynders, Kerkhof, Molenberghs, & Van Audenhove, 2014; Rickwood & Braithwaite, 1994; Sanchez & Atkinson, 1983; Sezer & Gulleroglu, 2016; Solberg, Ritsma, & Davis, 1994; Topkaya & Meydan, 2013; Yıldırım, Atlı, & Cıtil, 2014; Yılmaz-Gözü, 2013). In contrast, there are also studies that found that the level of SPH of men was higher than that of women (Karalp, 2009). The number of studies reporting that the levels of SPH did not differ according to gender is also considerable (Annaberdiyev, 2006; Atkinson & Gim, 1989; Kaya, 2015).

The results of this study indicate that women accept the problems they face and are more willing to share their problems and solve them by getting support from external sources, whereas men do not accept the problems they are experiencing and are not as willing to share their problems, preferring to solve them themselves rather than to

transfer them to external sources. In addition, the women perceived more of the events in their daily life routine as problems. Thus, it can be said that men see their experiences as problems to a lesser degree than do women. On the other hand, in terms of gender roles, women can express their feelings comfortably, while men behave reticently in terms of experiencing and expressing their feelings. Moreover, Demir and Murat (2017) reported that women are more likely to overburden themselves with the responsibilities related to their lives (work, children, home, friendship, activities, etc.) than men, and that this is one of the reasons for the higher satisfaction with life among women. Because of this, they may exceed their responsibilities. From the same perspective, women, who are more involved in life situations than men, can experience more problems when they cannot cope with the burden and may seek psychological help more frequently than men.

According to the research, the levels of SC of the participants varied according to their gender. Accordingly, the level of SC of men was higher than that of women. Although there are few studies in support of these research findings suggesting that the level of SC of men is higher (Cramer & Barry, 1999) many studies report that there is no significant difference between men and women in terms of SC (Deniz & Bakioglu, 2017; Kelly & Achter, 1995; Larson & Chastain, 1990; Ritz & Dahme, 1996).

This result of the research can be interpreted as demonstrating that women are more willing to share their problems, while men are more closed to sharing. Although men tend to keep their experiences to themselves, women may tend to be open about them. Moreover, in terms of gender roles, within the society, it is more acceptable for women to express their feelings than for men to do so. Men may even prefer SC because it is perceived by the society as an indicator of weakness for men to express and share their feelings.

The emotional intelligence levels of the participants differed according to their gender. Accordingly, the EI levels of the women were significantly higher than in the men. There are many studies indicating a higher EI level in women than in men, thus supporting these research findings (Brackett, Mayer, & Warner, 2004; Constantine & Gainor, 2001; Cooper & Petrides, 2010; Erdoğan, 2008; Pau & Croucher, 2003; Schutte et al., 1998; Schutte, Malouff, Simunek, McKenley, & Hollander, 2002; Yılmaz, 2007). On the other hand, there are also studies indicating that men's EI levels are higher than women's (Shi & Wang, 2007). Furthermore, a large number of studies have determined that there is no difference between men and women in terms of EI (Amitay & Mongrain, 2007; Cingisiz & Murat, 2009; Halilbeyoğlu, 2015; Karademir, Döşyılmaz, Çoban, & Kafkas, 2010; Kong, Zhao, & You, 2012; Ozden, 2015; Spahi, 2010).

Considering that EI is both innate and acquired later, it is plausible that the high level of EI of women and men can be influenced by environmental factors as well as by genetic factors. In this respect, the skills of women in the dimensions of social relations, recognition of emotions, more comfortably experiencing of emotions, expressing of emotions, managing of emotions, understanding the feelings of others and so on may be advantages acquired at birth. However, advantages in this dimension may also be gained via the influence of many factors such as their upbringing, education, living environment and gender roles.

In the analysis, the SPH and EI levels of the participants did not differ, whereas their SC levels differed according to perceived parental attitudes. Furthermore, the levels of SC of individuals reporting authoritarian parental attitudes were significantly higher than those of individuals who reported protective and democratic parental attitudes. In the literature review, no studies were found that explored the seeking of psychological help and SC levels according to parental attitudes. However, there are studies suggesting that individuals reporting democratic parental attitudes have higher EI levels (Erdoğan, 2008; Karademir et al., 2010; Sahin, 2018). Individuals whose parents have authoritarian attitudes may be in a more environmentally closed position than those whose families display democratic or protective attitudes toward self-expression and problem sharing. Because they are raised in a repressive family environment, they may withdraw from external support and live in their own inner worlds. It is surprising that their levels of SPH and EI do not vary according to the parental attitudes. Further studies that re-examine these results and investigate the reasons for this situation may contribute to a clearer interpretation.

In the analysis, the SC and EI levels did not differ according to whether or not they had previously received psychological help. However, the level of SPH varied according to receipt of prior psychological help. The level of SPH was significantly higher in individuals who had previously received psychological help compared to individuals who had not. No study has yet been conducted on SC and EI levels in terms of SPH. In addition, studies in the literature mostly support the findings that previous receipt of psychological help increases the level of SPH (Al-Rowaie, 2001; Atkinson, Lowe, & Matthews, 1995; Bowen & Richman, 1991; Cebi, 2009; Kırımlı, 2007; Li, Wong, & Toth, 2013; Ozdemir, 2012; Sezer & Gulleroglu, 2016; Solberg et al., 1994). In contrast to these studies, Karalp (2009) found that the level of SPH was higher in individuals who had not previously received psychological help compared to individuals who had. Some studies have also determined that there was no effect from prior seeking of psychological help (Kırımlı, 2007; Yıldırım et al., 2014). In addition to the problems caused when an individual is not willing to get help, some difficulties may arise regarding the process of getting help. The person who has already received assistance is familiar with the process and the specialists providing assistance and thus, may be less concerned about what will happen and more willing to receive psychological help than those who have never been involved in this process. Particularly, individuals who have previously benefited from the process will have a greater willingness to seek psychological help. In addition, individuals with prior counseling experience enjoy a major benefit in the solving of problems of self-awareness, environmental awareness, effective communication, empathy, and so on, as well as other side benefits. One of these side benefits is enabling individuals to be aware of their problems. In this respect, individuals who have already received help may be more aware of their existing problems. It is also surprising that the level of SC and EI did not vary according to the receipt of previous psychological help. Further studies that re-examine these results and investigate the reasons for this situation may contribute to a clearer interpretation.

In the analysis, the levels of SPH, SC and EI did not differ according to their status as scholarship recipients or members of the community. As a result of the literature review, no study was found on whether the levels of SPH, SC and EI differed according to whether or not they had received scholarships, were members of the community or were studying in their chosen department. Considering that the research was conducted on university students, it

is not surprising that the study included determining if scholarship status had any effect on SPH. Such help is provided to students free of charge by the university regardless of their financial situation. Moreover, the variables of SPH, SC and EI may be related to their personality characteristics and inner world rather than to factors related to their financial situation. In addition, being a member of the community and studying in their chosen department may be seen as external factors that might have environmental impacts on the individual, while the variables of SPH, SC and EI might be affected by internal factors.

Bilateral correlations were examined to determine the relationship between SPH, SC and EI levels. As a result of the analysis, a significant negative relationship was found between SPH and SC, while a significant positive relationship was seen with EI. In the study, a regression model was established with the variables that were found to be related to SPH (gender, previous receipt of psychological help, SC and EI). All variables included in the model significantly predicted SPH. According to this, the male gender was found to negatively predict SPH, previously receiving psychological help to positively predict SPH, SC to negatively predict SPH, and EI to positively predict SPH. The relative importance of the independent variables in predicting seeking of psychological help can be expressed as: Gender > SC > Previous psych help > EI.

As a result of the literature review, no study was found to include the variables (gender, previous psychological help, SC, EI) of the model in this study. At the same time, the results of the study dealing with the relationship between SPH and SC and EI did not match. In this respect, similar studies have been emphasized because no studies have dealt with all of the variables in this study. As the results of the variables related to gender and previous psychological help status are discussed above, they will not be interpreted again here.

Although there are studies in the literature on the relationship between SPH and SC, there are no studies dealing with the relationship between SPH and EI. Kelly and Achter (1995) conducted a study on university students and found that those who had high levels of SC had negative attitudes towards SPH, although they were more willing to seek psychological help. Cepeda-Benito and Short (1998) found that university students with SC behavior sought psychological help at a rate of three times less compared to other students. Cramer (1999) also found a negative relationship between SC and SPH. Rochlen, Mohr, and Hargrove (1999) reported that those displaying SC are less willing to seek professional help. Vogel and Wester (2003) found that the tendency to SC predicted psychological help-seeking behavior. Liao, Rounds, and Klein (2005) found a negative relationship between SC and help-seeking attitudes. Erdayı (2009) stated that SC behavior predicted the willingness to seek psychological help in adolescents. Ozbay et al. (2011) reported that students with high levels of SC had negative attitudes towards seeking help. The study of Serim (2011) observed that the SC variable was the best predictor of a psychological help-seeking attitude, by explaining 11.2% of its total variance. In addition, the results of the research showed that the increase in the level of SC negatively affected the attitude towards SPH. Ozdemir (2012) in his study of university students, found that SC predicted a positive attitude towards getting psychological help. Serim and Cihangir-Cankaya (2015) determined that the SC variable was the most powerful predictor of a psychological help-seeking attitude. Contrary to the results of this research, Erkan, Ozbay, Cihangir-Cankaya, and Terzi (2012a) found that the SC variable did not diminish the willingness to seek help.

The SC levels of university students negatively predicted the level of SPH. University students experience problems with adaptation, academic status, single living, friendship relations, housing, future anxiety and so on. They want to keep their problems more to themselves and try to solve them on their own. They prefer to ignore their problems instead of expressing them. Individuals with SC may choose not to share their experiences with others, even a professional expert. When these individuals share their information, they may be concerned that the negative situations which they present may be evaluated negatively by other people or even by experts. The fact that individuals who exhibit SC in their routine social relationships are less willing to share information about their private lives with other people may prevent them from turning to professional-help specialists and sharing private information. However, these individuals may be more willing to share their problems with and get support from their friends rather than getting help from a professional source. They may also tend to receive support from external sources such as family and relatives.

The EI levels of the university students positively predicted psychological help-seeking levels. Individuals with high EI levels recognize their feelings, share their feelings with others, and have the emotional skills to manage their feelings. They may tend to share their feelings more with other people than those with low EI. As a result, when these individuals encounter a problem, they can easily get help from external sources. They may also turn to professional resources when assistance from non-professional sources is not sufficient. Because the social relationships of individuals with high EI are strong, they are able to share their problems and communicate more easily with an expert in a positive light within the counselling environment, which is a micro-type of social life.

In order to eliminate the disadvantageous situation of men compared to women, as revealed within the framework of the results of this study, studies should be conducted, in particular, on psycho-education activities for men, counselling services, seminar activities, course contents, promotion of counselling centres and activities and so on. Similar studies should be performed on the parents' role in order to eliminate the effects of negative parental attitudes on students. Activities should be carried out that will enable individuals to experience psychological counselling, and, as individuals receive help, the rate of prior receipt of psychological help will increase. In light of the negative relationship between SC and SPH, studies should be conducted on creating awareness, through course contents, seminars, etc. that enable individuals to open up more easily. EI is seen as having a positive impact on the seeking of psychological help. Especially considering that EI can be developed later on, the arrangement of course contents, seminars, social skills, activities, etc. that can improve the EI of the individual is recommended. The results showed that the students' SC and EI levels did not vary according to the status of their prior receipt of psychological help, nor did their seeking of psychological help or EI levels differ according to perceived parental attitudes. These findings should be examined again in further studies in order to determine the reasons for this situation. In this study, a limited number of variables thought to affect the seeking of psychological help were discussed. It is felt that investigating other variables that may affect the seeking of psychological help will contribute to the literature.

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