

The Self-Esteem, Perceived Social Support and Hopelessness in Adolescents: The Structural Equation Modeling

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Abstract

In this study, a developed model to explain a causal relationship between adolescent's self-esteem, perceived social support and hopelessness is tested. The purpose of the study is to explore the relationship between self-esteem, perceived social support and hopelessness in adolescents. A total of 257 adolescents, including 143 female and 114 male, participated in attending different high schools in the Burdur city center. The Beck Hopelessness Scale, The Social Support Appraisals Scale for Children and Adolescents and The Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory were used to gather data. The Structural Equation Model/Lisrel/Path Diagram/Windows and SPSS were used to analyze the data. First, measurement models for each of the variables were explored. Then, computed variables were used in structural equation modeling that examined relationships among latent variables. The results of a Structural Equation Model Test was showed that fit compatibility indices of the model, produced a good compatibility and the coefficients obtained were significant. According to the result the structural model, the findings indicated that a causal relationship was between adolescent self-esteem, perceived social support and hopelessness. In this study, it was seen that the results obtained are of explanatory equation because the study is intended for establishing a new model rather than testing a previously existing model

Key Words

Adolescence, Self-Esteem, Perceived Social Support, Hopelessness, Structural Equation Model.

Structure of our self determines how we see and perceive the world, the others and ourselves. It affects every kind of emotion, thought and behavior that forms the basis of our existence (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1999) and allows us to perceive our lives realisti-

cally and to be open to experience (Altıntaş, & Gültekin, 2005). Self includes the individual's self-perception, his perceptions related to relationships with the other individuals and the value given to these perceptions as a whole (Rogers, 1961). Self-esteem expresses personal and holistic emotions of self-value, self-reliance or self-acceptance (Leary, 1996). This situation is a psychological, social and partially physical phenomenon that starts by birth and keeps its development until adolescence, is affected by events of life in the other processes (Erikson, 1959). It is accepted as a phenomenon that is resistant to change when it is formed once at the end of the normal development process (Fertman, & Chubb, 1992).

Adolescence is a process in which previous development periods are experienced again, some fea-

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tures change and it shifts to a new structuring (Gür, 1996). While self esteem as an important protective factor in adolescents in terms of psychological health (Masten, 2001); it is often dealt in researches because it is positively related with person's goals, hopes and coping mechanism and it has preventive function of anti-social behaviours, substance use, psychological and physical health problems in individuals (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, & Vohs, 2003; Donnellan, Trzesniewski, Robins, Moffitt, & Caspi, 2005; Flory, Lynam, Milich, Leukefeld, & Clayton, 2004).

While self-esteem is described as value is given to relationship by person (Leary, & Baumeister, 2000), high self-esteem and low self-esteem is effect relationship with others (Yörükoğlu, 1988). In adolescence, evaluations about how individuals are perceived by the others form their self esteem and feedbacks received from the others affect the self-esteem, too (Greenier et al., 1999; Scott & Murray, 1996 cited in Korkut, 2004).

Positive emotional and social connection life crisis is an important protective factor in coping with periods of transition in life and environmental stress factors (Crosnoe, & Needham, 2004). A significant relationship has been found between low family support and general psychological stress and emotional problems (Demaray, Malecki, Davidson, Hodgson, & Rebus, 2005); anxiety, fear and sense of loneliness (Kulaksızoğlu, 2002); depression (Colarossi, & Eccles, 2003); taking high risk and behaviors intended for violence (DuRant, Cadenhead, Pendergrast, Slavens, & Linder, 1994) and drug abuse (Holt & Espelage, 2005).

On the other hand, it has been determined that individuals with high self-esteem oriented to take more social support (Nolen-Hoeksema & Davis, 1999); they took more social support (Lakey, Tardiff, & Drew, 1994) and negative self-esteem causes to shyness, vulnerability and negative reactions (Taylor, Peplau, & Sears, 2000). Coleman and Hendry (1990) suggested that the people who have high self esteem show tendency to be happy, healthy, and productive and be successful, they spend more time to outdo difficulties, they accept the others and they show less tendency towards their fellows' pressures. They suggested that the people who have low self esteem are individuals who are anxious, pessimistic and who have negative thoughts about future and failure tendencies. According to this, the people who have high self esteem prefer more difficult activities, seem to be sure that their tries will be resulted successfully, become less sensitive towards

emotional fluctuation, are affected from depression, are closer to accepting feedbacks from active people and receiving social support and they do not experience problem when they realize the others are superior (Yelsma, & Yelsma, 1998). Also it is suggested that the people who have high self esteem evaluate themselves positively (Pope, & McHale, 1988); they perceive themselves as people who are worth of respect and being accepted, important and useful (Temel & Aksoy, 2001). Kassin (1998) suggested that people who have low self esteem demonstrate features such as waiting for failure, being nervous, showing less try, they ignore important things in life and also they may blame themselves as worthless and untalented when they are unsuccessful.

While social support in high degree is handled with its role of protecting adolescents' health in important life events and crisis situations, hopelessness is accepted as a significant predictor of the psychopathology in adolescents (Kashani, Stoys, Dandoy, Viadya, & Reid, 1991). Hopelessness expresses life patterns in the past that are transferred to the future by generalizing (Collins, & Cutcliffe, 2003); people developing negative expectations about future (Abbey, 2006); negative perception frame as a belief system and negative expectations about life (Carson, Butcher, & Mineka, 2000).

The aim of the research is to test the theoretic model which has been developed to explain whether there is a causal relationship between self esteem, perceived social support and hopelessness degree in adolescents. Testing operation of this model that is on the basis of causal relationship has been carried out with Structural Equality Model / Lisrel / Path Diagram.

Method

Model

Quantitative and relational model intended for studying the relations between the variables is used in this study. The findings of the research have been collected by using three self-report measurement tools and process of testing the set model has been actualized with Structural Equation Model.

Research Group

55.6 % of Adolescents in the research group were female, 44.4 % of them were male, 34.2 % of them were 9th grade, 35.8 % of them were 10th grade, 21 % of them were 11th grade and 8.9 % of them were 12th grade. Age average was 16.8.

Collecting Finding Tools

Beck Hopelessness Scale (BHS): It was developed by Beck and companions (1974) (cited in Savaşır & Şahin, 1997). It was adapted into Turkish by Seber, Dilbaz, Kaptanoğlu and Tekin (1993) and after Durak (1994).

Social Support Evaluation Scale for Children and Adolescents: it was developed by Dubow and Ullman (1989) and adapted into Turkish by Gökler (2007).

Coopersmith Self Esteem Scale Short Form: the scale was developed by Coopersmith (1967). It was adapted into Turkish by Pişkin (1996).

Analysis of Findings

In the research, whether there is a casual relationship between self esteem, social support and hopelessness in adolescents has been examined by structural equation model. SPSS and Lisrel programs have been used in analyzing the gained findings.

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM): As a technique used in solving problems that are about formulating theoretical structures, in researches, it is a systematic tool used in evaluating relations between variables in social sciences and testing theoretical models (Yılmaz, 2004).

In SEM, explaining all the parameters about relationships between variables in model in detail means establishing model. There are two basic models in SEM; measure model and structure model. It is necessary to determine all the indicator variables in the model and fault variances (Eroğlu, 2003) for a good SEM analysis's starting with measure model (Kaplan, 2000; Sümer, 2000; Şimşek, 2007; Tezcan, 2008).

To test the model developed to examine whether there is a casual relationship between self esteem, perceived social support and hopelessness in adolescents, Structural Equation Model has been used in direction of this research's goal. In the research, a two-staged structural equation model allowing to firstly test measure model with confirmatory factor analysis method and then to test the reason-result relationships between mentioned variables with path analysis has been used.

Findings

Findings about Testing Measure Models

Measure models are verified by the results of received fit indexes. According to this, fit indexes in hopelessness scale have been found as $\chi^2=293,40$, $\chi^2/df=2.69$, NFI= 0.93, TLI= 0.95, CFI=0.96, GFI= 0.88, AGFI= 0.83, RMSEA= 0.08, RMR=0.07 fit indexes in social support scale have been found as $\chi^2=1432.94$, $\chi^2/df=1.90$, NFI= 0.88, TLI= 0.94, CFI=0.94, GFI= 0.79, AGFI= 0.76, RMSEA= 0.06, RMR=0.06. fit indexes in self esteem scale have been found as $\chi^2=288.98$, $\chi^2/df=1.6$, NFI= 0.80, TLI= 0.90, CFI=0.91, GFI= 0.90, AGFI= 0.88, RMSEA= 0.05, RMR=0.06. as a result, it has been seen that suggested measure model can be used in testing structural model by protecting variables', used to explain self esteem in adolescents, and latent structures' places in the model.

Findings about Testing Structural Equation Model

When the path amounts that have been standardized are examined, 0.65 and 0.72 has been obtained between social support implicit variable and observed variables; 0.73 and 0.87 standardized path amount has been obtained between hopelessness implicit variable and observed variables; 0.57 has been obtained between self esteem implicit variable and social support implicit variable, -0.38 has been obtained between self esteem implicit variable and hopelessness implicit variable and -0.22 standardized path amount has been obtained between hopelessness implicit variable and social support implicit variable. Standardized path value criterion in literatures accepted as low under 0.10, medium around 0.30 and good over 0.50 without considering its sign (Şimşek, 2007).

When the t values about testing the model in the research is examined, it is seen that its whole is over 1.96. fit indexes of the model tested in the research has been determined as ($\chi^2= 30.69$, $df=12$, $p=0,0022$, GFI=.97, AGFI = .92, NFI=0.96, CFI=0.98, RMSEA= 0.078, RMR=0.078) and they showed that fit of the structural model can be acceptable.

It has been observed that t values received from the relationships between implicit variances are meaningful. It can be said that basic structural model described in this frame has been confirmed.

Discussion

It has been determined that measure model suggested in the study can be used in structural model. Structural model suggested based on confirmed measure models has been tested and confirmed. According to the results, there is a causal relationship between self esteem, perceived social support and hopelessness in adolescents. In this direction, it can be said that while adolescents who have high self esteem perceive more social support, they experience less hopelessness. Past researches show that there are similar results to these findings (Baumeister et al., 2003; Campbell, Simpson, Boldry, & Kashy, 2005; Lakey et al., 1994; MacDonald, & Leary, 2005; Mann, Hosman, Schaalma, & DeVries, 2004; Murray, Rose, Bellavia, Holmes, & Kusche, 2002; Nolen-Hoeksema, & Davis, 1999; Taylor et al., 2000; Temel, & Aksoy, 2001).

It has been found that the people with low self esteem suspect of the worth they receive and they blame themselves for this, also they experience distrustful affiliation (Campbell et al., 2005; Murray et al., 2002), excessive sensitivity against being refused (Pietrzak, Downey, & Ayduk, 2005), participating less in social environment (Harter, 1993) and they establish weak peer relationships (Gür, 1996). It is emphasized that low self esteem causes the hope of being refused in relationships and suspecting of the worth given to their relationships (MacDonald, & Leary, 2005).

Self esteem is related to the support received from family and friends. The importance of support from friend rises in adolescence. While good friendship is related to high self esteem for the adolescent who try to form his own personality (Harter, 1993), friend support provides to receive social support from both friends and families by providing to develop effective coping strategies (Turner, 1999) and peer support (Seiffke-Krenke, 1990 cited in Korkut, 2004).

Another finding is the negative relationship between adolescents' self esteem and levels of hopelessness. In researches in which similar findings are found gained, it has been stated that low self esteem is an important variance (Baldwin, Bacus, & Fitzsimons, 2004) in proceduring hopelessness (Çelikel-Çam, & Erkorkmaz, 2008) and increases every kind of psychopathology probability (Rausmussen, Wrosh-Scheier, & Carver, 2006) and related to more frequent emotional problems

(Evans, 1994). Hopelessness expresses transferring the life patterns in the past to the future (Collins & Cutcliffe, 2003), individuals' developing negative expectations about future (Abbey, 2006), negative perception frame and negative expectations about life as a belief system (Carson et al., 2000).

The last finding about is that there is a negative relationship between adolescents' levels of hopelessness and social support they perceive and in studies in which there are similar findings it has been found that family support and family function, friend relationships and opposite sex friendship are the three basic fields (McLaughlin, Miller, & Warwick, 1996) contribute to hopelessness. As an important criterion in determining subjective well-being, hopelessness (Çelikel-Çam & Erkorkmaz, 2008) has a significant relationship with depression (Rutter & Behrendt, 2004) and suicide (MacLeod et al., 2005). It has been assigned that people who have high self esteem are more resistant to stress (Tuğrul, 2000), and they can make active plan in coping with stress (Avşaroğlu, 2007); they manage to protect themselves from the negative effects of the life (Kliewer & Sandler, 1992).

According to Turner (1999), self esteem develops related to social support and is among the predictors of psychological wellbeing (Harter, 1993), social and behavioural fit, psychological stability and fit in the adulthood process (Werner & Smith, 1992). The most of social support resources are families, friends and teachers for adolescents (McLaughlin et al., 1996) and there is a positive and significant relationship between adolescents' social support in high positive self-esteem (Hoffman, Ushpiz, & Levy-Shiff, 1988), psychological wellbeing (Rueger, Malecki, & Demaray, 2010), resilience (Savi Çakar & Karataş, 2011); perceiving and interpreting the world positively (Brisette, Scheier, & Carver, 2002). Accordingly, this is an important factor in continuity of being healthy behaviours as it is related to social support, many physical and psychological variables (Çelikel-Çam, & Erkorkmaz, 2008). It has been found that insufficient social and emotional support is predictive of adolescents' behavioral problems and unfit (Crosnoe & Needham, 2004).

All of these studies show that high self esteem is related to being healthy and low self-esteem is the risk factor (Korkut, 2004). In this direction, to increase low personality value produces desired changes in person behaviors by increasing psychological well

being (Leary, 1996). As a result, self esteem is a degree of value that the individual gives to perceived past, present and future relationships (Leary & Baumeister, 2000). The high self esteem reinforces the belief that he is considered valuable by the others and low self esteem reinforces the belief that he is evaluated negatively by the others (Yörükoğlu, 1988). Self-esteem is key through personal purposes in terms of health, to interact with others, mental and social well-being (Mann et al., 2004). High self-esteem is being considered a “vaccination” as social (Walz, 1992 cited in Korkut, 2004).

Some suggestions have been developed based on findings in this study for experts and other researchers. The first suggestion is that “the school-based mental health programs” may generalize in school for adolescents. The second suggestion is that the adolescents who have low self esteem can be applied Individual and Group Psychological Counseling.

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