

The Effectiveness of Social Support Program on Spouse Support and Perceived Parental Support: An Experimental Study

Mehmet Kaya

Department of Psychological Counseling and Guidance Hendek,
Faculty of Education, Sakarya University, Sakarya, Turkey

Abstract: This research is an experimental research which aims to investigate the effectiveness of social support program which was applied to the parents of college applicants, on social support levels of spouses and the perceived social support level of the applicant from his/her parents. An eight session “Social Support Program” which was developed by the researcher was applied to the experimental group which was formed according to the subject’s scores of Spouse Support Scale and Perceived Social Support Scale. Spouse Support Scale was applied to determine either the subject couples or the levels of spouse support which has been the dependent variable of the research. Perceived Social Support Scale was given to the children of the spouses who were chosen to the experimental and control group. Only spouses were taken to the experimental group. Although the college applicants were in experimental group there was no intervention to them. A “Social Support Program” was applied to the spouses in the experimental group twice a week for four weeks. Any intervention was applied neither to the spouses nor to the college applicant children of them in the control group. After Social Support Program which was given to the experimental group, post tests were given to the spouses and their college applicant children both in the experimental group and control group. The effectiveness of the Social Support Program was ascertained by determining the difference between pre-test and post-test perceived support level and spouse support level scores of experimental and control group. Follow-up tests were given to the subjects of experimental group and control group either a month or 4 months after post-test. The permanent effect of the program was evaluated by determining the difference of post-test and follow-up test scores. As a result of the study, it was found that Social Support Program which was prepared for the parents of the college applicants was effective in enhancing social support levels of spouses and the perceived social support level of the applicants from his/her parents. The effectiveness of the program lasted during the follow-up tests. The findings of the research were discussed in the light of the literature. The last part of the study, some recommendations and suggestions were presented for the counseling practitioners and researchers in the light of findings.

Key words: Social support • Perceived social support • Spouse support • Social support program

INTRODUCTION

The concept of social support has been defined by several researchers in different ways so far. Hobfoll and Stokes [1] defined the concept as help, contribution and feeling of adherence obtained by individuals from interactions and relations with others. According to Yıldırım [2], social support is the social and psychological basis that an individual obtains from

Corresponding Author: Dr. Mehmet Kaya, Department of Psychological Counseling and Guidance Hendek, Sakarya University, Faculty of Education, Sakarya, Turkey

his environment. Perrine [3] suggests that social support is composed of two important elements. The first is the objective existence of other individuals whom an individual may ask for help when under stress. And the second is social support perception. To a great extent, support perception is independent of real support and this explains why some people are not aware of the support that they can receive from their social environment. According to Branje *et al.* [4], the support perceived in family includes four basic determinants. Namely, the individual who perceives the support, the individual whose support is perceived, communication between the two and the family as a whole. Although an individual thinks of his psychological environment when he talks about social support, even pets inside and outside home can be the vital sources of social support particularly for the old people [5].

Theoretically social support is based on Kurt Lewin's Field Theory and his definition of behaviour. Field theory occupies a place in social sciences, science and in family-related approaches. It dates back to 18th century, when Fluid Mechanics was developed. It is based on physical sciences, Newton's law of gravity and Einstein's theory of relativity [6]. It was used in the field of social sciences when Kurt Lewin was affected by Einstein [7].

Social support is an important variable for an individual to feel well depending on the properties of the person perceiving the support and giving the support. Support relations are firstly formed in family [8]. The answer to the question "why are some children more resistant than others when they encounter similar stress creating situations or risk factors?" is hidden in the concept of social support. Social support which is provided by the family, peers, school and society is said to be the most important property of psychologically strong children. Due to its ties with psychological strength, social support tends to encourage positive educational outcomes and academic strength in children carrying risks of failure. An academic failure risk carrying student's feeling that he is supported socially by his environment means that he is surrounded by academic strength and that he has an environment in which positive educational consequences are encouraged [9]. Research has shown that social support plays an important role in students' academic success, their school attendance and adjustment into school [10, 11].

Social support provided by the members of family plays an important role in reducing stress factors and solving the psycho-social problems, in handling the problems before arising, in protecting family members' psychological health and thus ensuring the continuation of family unity. In addition to that, research findings showing that increase in spouse support leads to an increase in the level of social support perceived by children and adolescents [12-16] and that social support perception is related with students' academic success [17, 18, 10, 11, 8] are available.

On examining pieces of research concerning social support, we find that a great many descriptive studies are available although the number of experimental studies testing social support programs is not many. When studies on spouse support are examined, we find that the level of perceived social support differs according to gender, there are differences between cultures in spouse support [19], men look for less social support and that in both genders social support reduces emotional symptoms [20, 21]. Moreover, it becomes evident that married individuals perceive more social support than single ones but insufficient support weakens marriage ties and that the physical and emotional support married couples receive from the spouse is more important than the support they receive from their mother. Social support perception can be said to be important for spouses' health. It is revealed by various researchers that failing to receive social support triggers behaviour disorders such as depression and raises the level of anxiety in diseased individuals and the level of perceived social support predicts depression [22-27].

When studies concerning social support adolescents receive from their parents are examined, it is found that girls receive higher levels of social support, there is a significant relation between the level of social support received from parents and self-acceptance and that depressive symptoms predict the perceived social support at a significant level. Some other research findings demonstrate that adolescents perceiving academic success well have higher levels of social support perception; symptoms of adjustment into school are related with parent, teacher and school support; in parallel to the increase in the level of students' perceived social support their levels of coping with stress also increase; and an increase in social support received from parents or from friends leads to an increase in problem-solving skills [28-39 17, 18, 10, 15, 11].

Research concerning the effectiveness of programs for increasing social support demonstrates that such programs are usually effective and that they have permanent effects. However, it is found out through close inspection that studies examining the effectiveness of social support programs are mostly concerned with groups suffering from various psychological problems. And in Turkey, a psycho-educational social support program directed to university students is not available in the form that is developed by the researcher.

Balk, Rawson and Wetzel [40] applied an intervention program for the purpose of providing university students who had lost somebody important in their life with social support. Consequently, it was found that students participating in the group intervention program targeting social support became more competent in coping with crisis situations in their life.

Beardslee *et al.*, [12], who investigated the long term effects of two intervention programs aiming to intervene children under risk, observed that both intervention programs brought about positive changes in family members' behaviours and attitudes. Three follow-up was performed in the research: 3-6 months after the application of the programs, 9-12 months after the application and 2 years after the application. Follow-up showed that counselor-assisted program was more effective.

Research conducted in the USA studied the effects of a social support program entitled "Communities in Schools" and applied in 30 states on secondary school and high school students bearing the risk of school failure. The research found that parents and adult babysitters were the most basic sources of social support for both the secondary school and the high school students who had taken part in the research. Besides, it was found in the research that, contrary to the known, peers were not the most important supporters of students bearing the risk of failure at this age and that parents and teachers were the primary sources of social support for such students [9].

Yıldırım [16], who studied the effects of social support program on the parents of primary school students receiving insufficient support from their family, conducted the research with 6th and 7th graders. The researcher applied a 15 hour program called "How can Parents Support Their Children?" to the experimentgroup parents. The findings showed that the program applied was effective.

Gartstein and Sheeber [13], who examined the effects of children's behavioural problems on their mothers' depression, applied two programs; namely, "temperament focussed parent education" and "parents' support". In consequence, it was pointed out that even offering only parent education program was an important attempt in terms of children's protection.

In the research conducted by Hatton [41], the effectiveness of a combining guidance program which supports students having school failure risk was studied. It was found that future-oriented, solution-focussed, long-term support program was effective in students' acquiring a problem solving identity and in focussing on hope rather than impotence feelings.

Gökçe [14] studied the effects of support program strengthening the family and targeting mothers who were diagnosed for depression and their families and consequently observed that children's emotional and behavioural problems diminished as parents' level of proficiency increased.

Social support has significant effects on psychological and physical health. Studies examining the relations between "social support" and "stress", in particular, occupy considerable space in literature. Social support diminishes the effects of stress factors and thus helps to diminish and remove the emotional tension suffered by the individual. Thus, social support may be said to diminish and prevent the effects of stress.

Family members are the most important lifelong sources of relational support for the individual. When the relations in the family are made more specific- that is to say, when only marriage relations are considered, spouses are mostly more important than other sources of social support as providers of support [42]. Therefore, assistance should be offered to increase spouses' mutual support.

This research was conducted for three purposes. Firstly, on examining earlier research concerning social support it was found that they studied social support and several variables and were mostly "descriptive" and that the number of experimental studies was smaller. Secondly, although much research was conducted on social support and those studies displayed the role of social support in psychological health, several aspects of ensuring social support between spouses

and of support that students who will take the university entrance exam perceive from their parents are still waiting to be illuminated. Thirdly, it was observed that studies focussing on the support spouses receive from one another and the support adolescents preparing for the university entrance exam receive from their parents are insufficient. This case makes it clear that it is necessary to develop social support programs for increasing the support perceived by adolescents preparing for the university entrance exam from parents and the support perceived by spouses from one another.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Selection of Subjects: The research subjects were composed of the students attending private courses and preparing for the university entrance exam (ÖSS) in 2008-2009 academic year. For this purpose, several private schools offering courses for university entrance exam were contacted in Ankara and the research was conducted in one which volunteered to join the research. In order to determine the research group, 55 ÖSS preparation students were given Perceived Social Support Scale (PSSS) and their parents were given 'Spouse Support Scale' (SSS) as well as Personal Information Forms. 12 students receiving low scores in perceived social support scale and in spouse support scale and volunteering to join the research and their parents were chosen. Those were 12th graders who were graduates and were attending the ÖSS preparation courses on weekdays. Following the application, scores received from the family support subscale of perceived social support scale and from spouse support scale were ordered from the highest to the lowest. Accordingly, the 27% group with the highest scores and the 27% group with the lowest scores were excluded from the research. Because the high score group students' social support perception was high, the effects of the program on prospective university students and on their parents will not be observed. Therefore, this group was not included in the research. Since the bottom 27% group students might have various behaviour disorders accompanying their low social support perception and they were more likely to have more abnormal behaviours than the chosen 46% group students, they were excluded from the research. The ordering made for the selection of subjects is shown in Table 1.

Data Collection Instruments: As the data collection instruments, the family support subscale of 'Perceived Social Support' which was developed by Yıldırım [43] was employed so as to determine the level of support perceived from family, the dependent variable of the research; and Spouse Support Scale developed by Yıldırım [43] was employed in order to determine the level of spouse support. The subjects' personal, family and social information was obtained through the Personal Information Form developed by the researcher. An eight-session social support program which was developed by the researcher was applied to the experiment group that was formed according to the scores received from Spouse Support Scale and family support subscale of Perceived Social Support Scale.

Personal Information Form: This was developed by the researcher to match the students to be selected for experimental and control groups with such properties as gender, whether or not parents are in life and average monthly income. Two separate forms were designed: one for parents (spouse personal information form) and one for prospective university students (personal information form).

Table 1: Table Concerning the Determination of Research Subjects

Scale scores	Perceived social support scores		Spouse support (mother) scores		Spouse support (father) scores	
	Selection group	Work group	Selection group	Work group	Selection group	Work group
Lowest	32	34	29	52	39	49
Highest	60	44	81	56	80	56
Selection interval	%27	37,56	37,56	52,89	52,89	49,89
	%73	42,22	42,22	56	56	54,22
n	55	12	55	12	55	12

Spouse Support Scale (SSS): The scale contains 27 items. Three reverse items are available in the scale. This is a triple grading scale (suits me=3, partly suits me=2, does not suit me= 1). The lowest score receivable is 27 whereas the highest score is 81 in the scale. Higher score means higher spouse social support.

Perceived Social Support Scale (PSSS): This is a scale developed by Yıldırım [39] so as to determine the level of social support that the individual receives from family, friends and teachers. It is composed of 50 situation sentences, which are shared by three subscales. The family support subscale was used so as to determine the level of support students receive from their family. 20 items in family support subscale, 13 items in friend support subscale and 17 items in teacher support subscale are available. Each subscale includes one reverse item. This is a triple grading scale (suits me=3, partly suits me=2, does not suit me= 1). Straight items are scored as they are whereas reverse items are scored reversely. The score intervals of the scale are: family support: 20-60, friend support: 13-39, teacher support: 17-51. Total PSSS: 50-150. Higher scores mean receiving more social support.

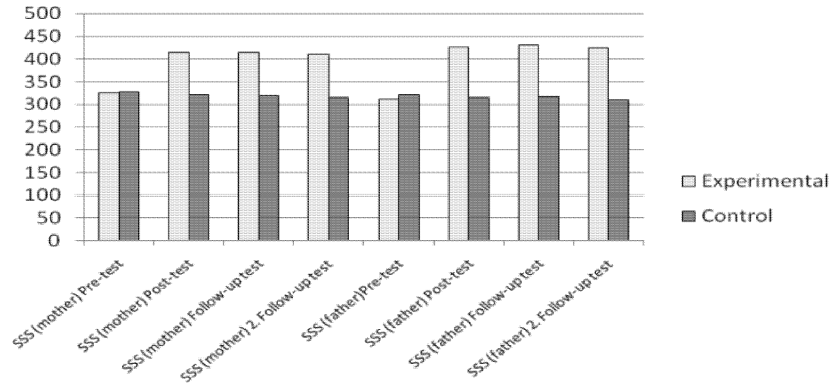
Social Support Program: Social support program, which is designed for prospective university students' parents, is an eight-session intervention program which is applied in two sessions a week and each session lasts 90 minutes. Activities in issues such as "determining social support system and the needs of social support", "spouses' mutual appreciating and encouraging", "high quality time", "the properties of adolescence period and communication with the adolescent", "establishing the rules in the family" and "factors affecting academic success" were conducted. Presentation, role playing, homework and discussion techniques were used in the activities.

Application: Various private schools offering university entrance exam courses were contacted in Ankara for social support program to be applied and after applying the scales in two schools data were obtained. A pilot study of the social support program was performed in line with the data. Six of the 82 students filling in the scales appropriately and receiving low scores and their parents were chosen. Then the pilot study was done in five sessions with parents agreeing to join the research in April and May in the spring semester of 2007-2008 academic year. Because two of the couples could not attend two sessions due to personal reasons, the pilot study was not done in 8 sessions. Pilot application aims to determine the strengths and weaknesses of social support program and to increase the researcher's experience. Following the pilot study, the final shape was given to the social support program.

The research was conducted only in one school after summer. Having applied the scales to the students, the data were recorded and experimental as well as control groups were formed. Experimental group included only prospective university students' parents. The students were not intervened although they were in the experimental group. "Social support program" was applied to the parents in the experimental group twice a week for four weeks. No intervention was applied to the parents and the students in the control group. Three days after completing the social support program which was applied to the experimental group, post-tests were applied to the parents and their children in both groups; then the differences between pre-test and post-test scores of spouse support and perceived social support between the experimental group and the control group were found and the effectiveness of the program was evaluated. A month after the application of the post-test, follow-up tests were given to the subjects composing the experimental and the control groups. Four months after the experiment, a second follow-up study was performed. Considering the difference between follow-up tests and post-test score distributions, the permanence of the program was evaluated.

RESULTS

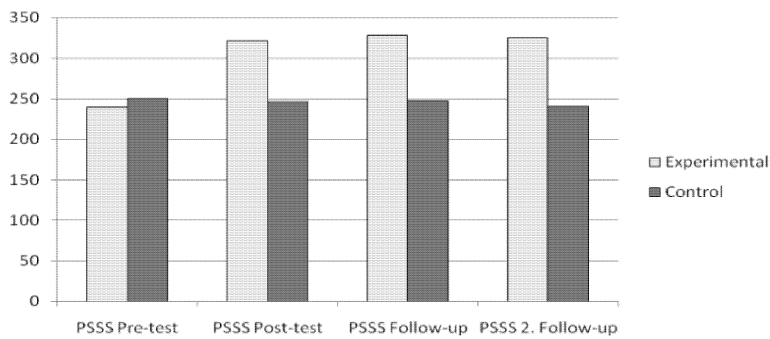
On examining as to whether or not a significant difference in favour of the experimental group between the post-test total spouse support score distribution of the parents in the experimental group and the post-test total spouse support score distribution of the parents in the control group was available, it is found that prior to the program (pre-test) the scores received by the groups from spouse support scale are quite similar (Graph 1).



Graph 1: The Effects of Social Support Program on Spouse Support

Table 2: A comparison of Spouse Support Score Distributions of the Parents in the Experimental Group and the Control Group

	Groups	n	Orders average.	Orders total	U	z	p
MOTHER	Experimental	6	9,25	55,50	1,5	-2,66	,00
POSTTEST	Control	6	3,75	22,50			
FATHER	Experimental	6	9,50	57,00	,00	-2,89	,00
POSTTEST	Control	6	3,50	21,00			



Graph 2: A Comparison of the Social Support Perceptions of Students Whose Parents Participate in Social Support Program and the Social Support Perceptions of Students Whose Parents Do not Join the Program

However, it is noteworthy that the scores received by the experimental group who were given the social support program (post-test) from spouse support scale were higher than those of control group. On examining the follow-up test scores it was found that the spouse support scores of the experimental group were close to the post-test scores and for some parents this is higher. In this case it is thought that social support program has a positive effect on spouses' mutual support and that this case is permanent. In order to determine whether or not the positive development in relation to spouse support was statistically significant, the spouse support score distributions of the parents in the control group and the experimental group were compared with Mann Whitney U test.

Table 2 shows the statistical data for the groups and the Mann Whitney U test results. When p values are examined ($p < .05$), it is evident that the effects of the program on parents are significant. This research finding shows that the program will increase the support spouses give mutually. Accordingly, it can be said that the parents participating in the social support program give more support to each other than those who do not join the program.

Table 3: A Comparison of Social Support Perceptions of Students Whose Parents Participate in the Program and the Social Support Perceptions of Students Whose Parents Do not Participate in the Program (Mann Whitney U Test)

	Groups	n	Orders Average	Orders Total.	U	z	p
PSS	Experimental	6	8,92	53,50	3,50	-2,33	,02
POSTTEST	Control	6	4,08	24,50			

Table 4: Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test for the Permanence of the Effect of social Support Program on Parents' Spouse Support They Give to Each Other

		n	Orders Average	Order total.	z	p
MOTHER POSTTEST	Negative orders	2(a)	4,5	9	-,31 ^a	,75
MOTHER 2 FOLLOW-UP	Positive orders	4(b)	3	12		
	Equal	0(c)				
	Total	6				
MOTHER POSTTEST	Negative orders	3(d)	3,67	11	-,105	,916
MOTHER 2 FOLLOW-UP	Positive orders	3(e)	3,33	10		
	Equal	0(f)				
	Total	6				
		n	Orders Average	Order total.	z	p
FATHER POSTTEST	Negative orders	2(d)	1,5	3	-,00 ^b	1
FATHER FOLLOW-UP	Positive orders	1(e)	3	3		
	Equal	3(f)				
	Total	6				
FATHER POSTTEST	Negative orders	4(g)	2,50	10	-,68	,49
FATHER2 FOLLOW-UP	Positive orders	1(h)	5	5		
	Equal	1(i)				
	Total	6				

A close study of whether or not there was a significant difference in favour of the experimental group between the social support that experimental group parents' children perceive from their parents and the social support that control group parents' children perceive from their parents showed that, prior to the program (pretest), the social support perception of the students whose parents joined social support program were very similar; moreover, the students in the control group received slightly higher scores. Yet, this case was reversed after the program (Graph 2).

The follow-up scores of the experimental group obtained a month later were very close to the post-test scores. In this case students whose parents participate in social support program can be said to receive positive social support from their parents and the case can be said to be permanent. The social support perceptions of students whose parents participate in the program and the social support perceptions of students whose parents do not participate in the program were compared via Mann Whitney U Test so as to determine whether or not the increase in the perception of students whose parents join the program was statistically significant.

The significance of what is shown in Graph 2 is demonstrated with the test in Table 3. On examining the p value in the table ($p < .05$), it is found out that students whose parents join the social support program (experimental group) perceive more social support from their parents than those whose parents do not (control group). This research finding shows that the social support perception of the students whose parents join the social support program has increased.

The posttest scores of the parents in the experimental group and the follow-up test scores were compared with Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test as to determine whether or not mutual spouse support given by the parents joining the social support program was permanent.

Table 4 shows that no significant difference is available between the post-test and follow-up tests. This finding of the research shows that the effects of social support program on spouse support continue also after the program. In this case, the effects of the social support program on the individuals joining the program may be said to be permanent.

Table 5: Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test for the Permanence of the Social Support Effects that Students Whose Parents Joined the Social Support Program

		n	Order average	Order total	z	P
PSS POSTTEST	Negative Orders	1 ^a	2,5	2,5	-1,41 ^a	,15
PSS FOLLOW-UP	Positive orders	4 ^b	3,13	12,5		
	Equal	1 ^c				
	Total	6				
PSS POSTTEST	Negative orders	2(a)	2,50	5	-,707(a)	,480
PSS2 FOLLOW-UP	Positive orders	3(b)	3,33	10		
	Equal	1(c)				
	Total	6				

Table 6: Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test Results on whether or not a Significant Difference Occurred in Parents Who did not join the Social Support Program after the Program

		n	Order average	Order total	z	p
MOTHER POSTTEST	Negative orders	3(d)	2,00	6,00	-,36(b)	,71
MOTHER FOLLOW-UP	Positive orders	1(e)	4,00	4,00		
	Equal	2(f)				
	Total	6				
MOTHER POSTTEST	Negative orders	5(d)	3,70	18,50	-1,73	,08
MOTHER2 FOLLOW-UP	Positive orders	1(e)	2,50	2,50		
	Equal	0(f)				
	Total	6				
		n	Order average	Order total	z	p
FATHER POSTTEST	Negative orders	3(g)	3,17	9,50	-,21(a)	,83
FATHER FOLLOW-UP	Positive orders	3(h)	3,83	11,50		
	Equal	0(i)				
	Total	6				
FATHER POSTTEST	Negative orders	4(g)	4,25	17	-1,38	,16
FATHER2 FOLLOW-UP	Positive orders	2(h)	2	4		
	Equal	0(i)				
	Total	6				

Table 7: Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test Results on whether or not there Was a Statistically Significant Difference in the Level of Social Support that Students Whose Parents did not Join the Social Support program Perceived after the Program

		n	Order average	Order total	z	p
PSS POSTTEST	Negative orders	1(a)	4,00	4,00	37(a)	,70
PSS FOLLOW-UP	Positive orders	3(b)	2,00	6,00		
	Equal	2(c)				
	Total	6				
PSS POSTTEST	Negative orders	3(a)	2	6	-1,60(a)	,10
PSS2 FOLLOW-UP	Positive orders	0(b)	0	0		
	Equal	3(c)				
	Total	6				

In order to determine whether or not the social support effects that prospective university students joining the social support program perceived continued after the program or not, those students' post-test scores and follow-up test scores were compared through Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test.

According to Table 5, that the positive social support perception of the students whose parents joined the social support program continues after the program ends is understood from the fact that no significant difference is available between the post-test and the follow-up test. This finding shows that the effects of the social support program on the social support that the students perceived from their parents continues also after the program ended. In this case, it can be said that the children of parents joining the social support program perceive continuous support.

In order to determine whether or not a statistically significant change occurred after the program in the spouse support of parents who did not join the social support program, the post-test scores and follow-up test scores of the control group parents were compared using the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test.

Table 6 shows the comparison of spouse support scores of parents who did not join the social support program. A close examination of the p value in the table ($p < .05$) makes it clear that there is no significant difference between the scores. This finding demonstrates that statistically significant difference is not available for parents who did not join the social support program in terms of spouse support after the program ends. The fact that the parents' pretest-posttest and follow-up test scores were very similar means that parents cannot support their spouse spontaneously if they do not receive assistance.

The post-test and follow-up test scores of the students in the control group were compared through Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test so as to find whether or not there was a statistically significant difference in the level of social support that students whose parents did not join the social support program perceived after the program.

According to Table 7, the parents give neither mutual support nor support to their children. This conclusion was reached by studying the pre-test, post-test, follow-up test and perceived social support scores- which were very close. Besides, this research finding revealed that there was no significant difference in the level of social support that students whose parents did not join the social support program perceived after the program ended.

DISCUSSION

It was found that the effects of social support program on the level of spouse support of the students' parents were significant. Accordingly, it can be claimed that parents who joined the social support program supported each other more than those who did not join the program. Because spouses do not ask for professional help or no service is offered them on how to make marriage relations more qualified in Turkish culture, spouses may have to learn to support each other from their parents or from close environment. Most of the parents treat their children and their husband/wife in the way they learnt from their parents. This case results in transferring the unsupportive behaviours of parents and of the environment down to new generations without any modifications. One way to overcome this vicious circle is to apply new programs to instill in spouses new behaviours to support each other in their relations.

The fact that the social support program increased the support spouses give to each other can mean that conflicts between the couples may be diminished, spouses may be more harmonious and more supportive and that peace in the family may be increased through the program. With the increase in the support that spouses give to each other, social support may create a buffer effect and the couple may stand more strongly against stressful situations. Application of such programs might raise the harmony in the family and thus contribution is made also to other members of the family. Joining such programs parents can improve mutual spouse relations and can set good models for both their children preparing for the university entrance exam and for other children. Therefore, it can be said that such programs affect both parents joining the program and their close environment in a positive way.

The research findings showed that students whose parents joined the social support program (experimental group) perceived more social support from their parents than those whose parents did not (control group). Parents occupy an important place in the social support system of prospective university students. Besides, the quality of parents' mutual relations is also important in those students' psychological health and development. The existence of a relation based on love and respect between parents will enable parents to behave their children preparing for university in a more supportive

way. Thanks to the social support that students whose parents join the social support program receive from their parents, the students can overcome hurdles more easily, can adjust better and they can have higher level of self respect. The increase that the program brings about in the support students' receive from their parents can function as a buffer against probable crisis situations. Besides, research results revealing the existence of relations between students' level of social support perceived from parents and their academic success are also available. Based on those research findings, it can be supposed that the academic success of the students whose parents join these programs will rise.

The permanence of the effects of social support program may mean that couples learn to support each other, after learning this they can put this into practice and in the rest of their lives they can support each other for the solution of problems and carry on living in harmony. It is believed that couples joining the program together and their motivating each other in sustaining the behavioural changes will increase the permanence of the program effects.

It was observed that the increase in the level of social support that students whose parents joined the social support program perceived continued after the ending of the program. This may mean that parents joining the program are likely to carry on providing their children with positive social support in later periods also and that their children will always feel this support. This research finding is important for active use of social support program in protective psychological health services. The permanence of the effects of the program on the social support students perceive from their parents mean that parents will continue supporting their children both in the process of preparation for university and during their university education. Psychological counselors' application of social support program in schools and in private course offering schools in the period of preparation for university will create a preventive effect against problematic situations which may arise in family. Apart from that, the permanence of the program and parents' learning to behave in a supportive way will affect the support perceptions of not only their children preparing for university but also their other children. When seen from this perspective, it can be said that through this intervention against parents, other children in the family will also take the advantage of the program- perhaps indirectly.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It can be stated that the social support program enables parents to be more supportive mutually and that the program raises the social support that the prospective university students perceive from parents and thus contributes to improvement in those students' problem-solving skills and in their communication with family members.

A great many students cannot be placed in a university due to the fact that the number of students applying for university education is too high and the quota of universities is limited. As long as this case continues, it seems that the only way for students to go to university is to take a selection exam; as is the case currently. In other words, it can be predicted that the ÖSS (university entrance exam) or a similar exam will keep existing a few years more in the future. The stress families and students preparing for university entrance exam suffer is emphasised in this research. In addition to that, research findings stating that social support is predictive of academic success are also reported. Considering all these facts, it is necessary to develop policies for protective psychological health services to reduce the stress that families and their children preparing for university suffer and to increase the students' academic success. The social support program can be considered as an activity which may be included in protective psychological health services. The social support program may be included in guidance programs which may be used for increasing academic success and the Ministry of Education may ensure its application in all the schools in Turkey.

Social Support Program is believed to improve school-parents cooperation. It may be used in all high schools along with educational activities such as "parents' school" for the purposes of instilling in parents responsibility for their children's education and developing cooperation with parents.

Besides, Social Support Program is permanent. It may be said that the program teaches parents to support each other and their children and thus they won't be dependent on help. Another significant finding of the research is that the research demonstrates that social support perception is not a case which develops in a way so as to create a significant difference;

it is rather inclined to remain as it is. However, activities directed to parents are performed to increase only the level of perceived social support in this research. Apart from that, the effects of social support programs to be developed for peers and teachers can also be studied.

REFERENCES

1. Hobfoll, S.E. and J.P. Stokes, 1988. The process and mechanism of social support. In: S.W. Duck, (Ed.), The Handbook of Research in Personal Relationships. London: Wiley.
2. Yıldırım, İ., 1997. Algılanan Sosyal Destek Ölçeğinin Geliştirilmesi, Güvenirliliği ve Geçerliliği. Hacettepe Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi, 13: 81-87.
3. Perrine, R.M., 1999. Please See Me: Students' Reactions to Professor's Request as a Function of Attachment and Perceived Support. Journal of Experimental Education, 68: 60-73.
4. Branje, S.J., *et al.*, 2002. Relational Support in Families with Adolescents. Journal of Family Psychol., 16: 351-362.
5. Pachana, N., 2007. Pets as Social Support. Nursing Older People, 19: 3.
6. Martin, J.L., 2003. What is Field Theory? American Journal of Sociology, 109: 1-49.
7. Kadar, E. and R. Shaw, 2000. Toward an Ecological Field Theory of Perceptual Control of Locomotion. Ecological Psychology, 12: 141-180.
8. Yıldırım, İ., 2006. Anne Baba Desteği ve Başarı; Anne Babalar Çocuklarına Nasıl Destek Olabilirler. Ankara: Anı Yayıncılık.
9. Richman, J.M., *et al.*, 1998. Social Support for Adolescents at Risk of School Failure. Social Work, 43: 309-323.
10. Malecki, C.K. and S. Elliot, 1999. Adolescents' Rating of Perceived Social Support and Its Importance: Validation of the Student Social Support Scale. Psychology in Schools, 36: 473-483.
11. Yıldırım, İ., 1998. Akademik Başarı Düzeyleri Farklı Olan Lise Öğrencilerinin Sosyal Destek Düzeyleri. Psikolojik Danışma ve Rehberlik Dergisi, 9: 33-39.
12. Beardslee, W.R., *et al.*, 1996. Response of Two Preventive Intervention Strategies: Long Term Differences in Behavior and Attitude change. Journal of American Academy Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 35: 774-782.
13. Gartstein, M.A. and L. Sheeber, 2004. Child Behavior Problems And Maternal Symptoms of Depression: A Mediation Model. Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing, 17: 141-150.
14. Gökçe, F.S., 2007. Depresyon Tanısı Alan Annelerin Çocukları ve Ailelerine Yönelik Aileyi Güçlendirici Destek Programı. Yayımlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara Üniversitesi, Ankara.
15. Sim, H., 2000. Relationship of Daily Hassles and Social Support to Depression and Antisocial Behavior Among Early Adolescents. Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 29: 647-659.
16. Yıldırım, İ., 1999. Sosyal Destek Programının Etkiliği: Deneysel Bir Çalışma. Eğitim ve Bilim, 23: 66-73.
17. Demirtaş, A.S., 2007. İlköğretim 8. Sınıf Öğrencilerinin Algılanan Sosyal Destek ve Yalnızlık Düzeyleri ile Stresle Başa Çıkma Düzeyleri Arasındaki İlişki. Yayımlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Gazi Üniversitesi, Ankara.
18. Gillock, K.L. and O. Reyes, 1999. Stres, Support and Academic Performance of Urban, Low-Income Mexican-American Adolescents. Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 28: 259-282.
19. Kadmon, I., *et al.*, 1994. Social Support as Experienced by Chinese and Israeli Husbands of Women with Breast Cancer: A Comparative Study. European Journal of Oncology Nursing, 8: 131-137.
20. Prezza, M. and M.G. Pacilli, 2002. Perceived Social Support From Significant Others, Family Friends and Several Socio-Demographic Characteristics. Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology, 12: 422-429.
21. Reevy, G.M., 2001. Use of Social Support: Gender and Personality Differences. Sex Roles, 44: 437-459.
22. Annak, B.B., 2005. Sosyal Destek, Sosyal Ağ, Yaşam Kalitesi Ve Yaşam Doyumu: Duygu-Durum ve Anksiyete Bozukluğu Tanısı Alan Kişiler ve Düzenli Hemodiyaliz Tedavisi Gören Hastalar Açısından Bir Karşılaştırma. Yayımlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Mersin Üniversitesi, Mersin.

23. Dehle, C., 2001. Social Support in Marriage. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 29: 307-324.
24. Gibson, D.M. and J.E. Myers, 2002. The Effects of Social Coping Resources and Growth-Fostering Relationships on Infertility Stres in Women. *Journal of Mental Health and Counseling*, 24: 68-70.
25. Görgü, E., 2005. 3-7 Yaş Arası Otistik Çocuğa Sahip Olan Annelerin Algıladıkları Sosyal Destek Düzeyleri İle Depresyon Düzeyleri Arasındaki İlişki. *Yayımlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi*, Marmara Üniversitesi, İstanbul.
26. Karlıdere, T., *et al.*, 2007. Psikiyatrik Birinci Eksen Tanısı Almayan İnfertil Çiftlerde Emosyonel Semptomlar, Sosyal Destek ve Cinsel İşlev Bağlamında Cinsiyet Farkı Var Mı?. *Türk Psikiyatri Dergisi*, 18: 311-322.
27. Üner, R., 1994. Spousal Social Support for the Pregnant Women: Recipients' and Providers' Perspectives on Perceived and Desired Social Support. *Yayımlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi*, Ortadoğu Teknik Üniversitesi, Ankara.
28. Banaz, M., 1992. Lise Öğrencilerinde Sosyal Destek Kaynakları ve Stres ile Ruh Sağlığı Arasındaki İlişki. *Yayımlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi*, Ege Üniversitesi, İzmir.
29. Başer, Z., 2006. Aileden Algılanan Sosyal Destek ile Kendini Kabul Düzeyi Arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi. *Yayımlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi*, Atatürk Üniversitesi, Erzurum.
30. Budak, B., 1999. Lise Öğrencilerinde Algılanan Sosyal Destek Düzeyi ile Problem Çözme Becerileri Arasındaki İlişki. *Yayımlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi*, Ondokuzmayıs Üniversitesi, Samsun.
31. Demaray, M.K. and C.K. Malecki, 2002. The Relationship Between Perceived Social Support and Maladjustment for Students at Risk. *Psychology in the Schools*, 39: 305-316.
32. Elbir, N., 2000. Lise 1. Sınıf Öğrencilerinin Sosyal Destek Düzeylerinin Bazı Değişkenler Açısından İncelenmesi. *Yayımlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi*, Hacettepe Üniversitesi, Ankara.
33. Erim, B., 2001. Yetiştirme Yurtlarında ve Aileleri Yanında Yaşayan Ergenlerin, Benlik Saygısı, Depresyon ve Yalnızlık Düzeyleri İle Sosyal Destek Sistemleri Açısından Karşılaştırılması. *Yayımlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi*, Ankara Üniversitesi, Ankara.
34. Kozaklı, H., 2006. Üniversite Öğrencilerinde Yalnızlık ve Sosyal Destek Düzeyleri Arasındaki İlişkilerin Karşılaştırılması. *Yayımlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi*, Mersin Üniversitesi, Mersin.
35. Sağlam, S., 2007. Lise Öğrencilerinin Ana-Baba İletişimi Sosyal Destek ve Ana-Baba Tutumu Arasındaki İlişkilerin İncelenmesi. *Yayımlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi*, Atatürk Üniversitesi, Erzurum.
36. Sayar, M., 2006. A Longitudinal Study of the Relationship Between Perceived social Support and Psychological Well-Being of Adolescents from Low Socio-Economic Status. *Yayımlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi*, Boğaziçi Üniversitesi, İstanbul.
37. Ünlü, H., 2001. Lise Öğrencilerinin Algıladıkları Sosyal Desteğin ve Ego Kimlik Statülerinin Sosyoekonomik Düzey ve Cinsiyete Göre İncelenmesi. *Yayımlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi*, Gazi Üniversitesi, Ankara.
38. Ünüvar, A., 2003. Çok Yönlü Algılanan Sosyal Desteğin 15-18 Yaş Arası Lise Öğrencilerinin Problem Çözme Becerisine ve Benlik Saygısına Etkisi. *Yayımlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi*, Selçuk Üniversitesi, Konya.
39. Yıldırım, İ., 2004. Algılanan Sosyal Destek Ölçeğinin Revizyonu. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Res.*, 17: 221-236.
40. Balk, D.E., K. Rawson and J. Wetzel, 1993. Social Support as Intervention With Bereaved College Students. *Death Studies*, 17: 427-450.
41. Hatton, S.G., 2007. Integrative Guidance Programming and At-Risk Student Perception of Social Support The Transitional Journey into High School. *Doctoral Dissertation*, Capella University.
42. Broström, A., *et al.*, 2003. Congestive Heart Failure, Spouses' Support and the Couple's Sleep Situation: A Critical Incident Technique Analysis. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 12: 223-233.
43. Yıldırım, İ., 2005. Eş Destek Ölçeğinin Geliştirilmesi. *Türk Psikolojik Danışma ve Rehberlik Dergisi*, 3: 19-26.