

# The relationship between quality of life and social support among adolescents

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**Abstract.** Social support plays an important role in quality of life. The social support given to adolescents is thought to positively affect identity development and life quality as well as physical and psychosocial health. In this context, this study aims to examine the relationship between adolescents' quality of life and social support levels. Designed as a relational screening model, the study was conducted at 5 secondary schools with 436 voluntarily participating students in Dulkadiroğlu, Kahraman Maraş during the 2016-2017 academic year. Within the study, the "Life Quality Scale for Children" and the "Social Relationship Principles Scale for Adolescents" was implemented. In the data analysis process, descriptive statistics, multiple regression analysis and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation analysis tests were used. According to the study results, a positive relationship was found between friends and family support and physical health, psychosocial health and quality of life.  
**Keywords:** Social support, quality of life, adolescent.

## 1 Introduction

Adolescence is one of the critical stages in human's developmental process. Especially in adolescence, unhealthy behaviors such as substance abuse, sexually risky behaviors and anti-social attitudes or life styles are observed [1], which negatively affect the life quality of adolescents.

Quality of life is described by the World Health Organization as an individual's expectations, anxieties and standards s/he possess for both the past and future within the context of his/her values and culture [2]. In recent years, the number of researches for improving the life quality of adolescences through providing them with guidance has increased [3]. In the related literature, there are specific studies examining the effects of life

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quality on health during adolescence [4, 5, 6]. Life quality is thought to be associated with social support.

Social support refers to support systems in which an individual receives emotional, financial, social and cognitive help from his surroundings [7]. Social support systems play an important role in an individual's well-being being high. Social support systems are especially of significance during adolescence. Social support possesses a intervention role in both preventing risky situations and plays a facilitating role in attaining targets [8]. In the related literature, studies show that family support enhances the well-being of adolescents [9, 10].

Inadequacies in social support among adolescents can result in specific problems such as loneliness, low self-respect etc. [11]. Quality of life is one of the basic goals of humankind. It is pointed out that adolescents who have a high quality of life experience less physical and psychological problems [12]. Covering many sides of an individual's life, quality of life is defined as an individual's self-perceptions concerning his own life. Certain indicators such as physical and psycho-social well-being, participation in social life, and satisfactory relationships with family and friends are among the essential factors of life quality [13]. An adolescent of which physical and emotional needs are met by his parents can adapt to the changes in his surrounding environment more easily [14]. In this study, the relationships between quality of life and social support among adolescents were examined. The study findings are significant in terms of revealing the effects of social support on life quality.

## **2 Method**

### **2.1 Research design**

This is a descriptive study. The study makes use of a relational screening model so as to examine the relationships between life quality and social relations of adolescents.

### **2.2 Study sample**

The study was conducted at 5 different secondary grade schools in Dulkadiroğlu, Kahraman Maraş during the 2016-2017 education year. The study sample consists of 436 voluntarily participating students. Among the participant students, 242 were girls (55.5%) and 194 were boys (44.5%); 148 were in 6th grade (33.9%), 146 were in 7th grade (33.5%), 142 were in 8th grade (32.6%). In terms of the participants' mothers' educational backgrounds, it was revealed that 55 mothers (12.6%) were illiterate; 257 had graduated from primary school (58.6%); 85 had graduated from secondary school (19.5%); 24 from high school (5.5%) and 15 from university (3.4%). Regarding their fathers' educational background, it was seen that 16 fathers were illiterate (3.7%); 216 had graduated from primary school (49.5%); 55 from high school (12.6%) and 29 from university (6.7%). Upon reviewing the mothers' occupations, the results indicated that 381 were housewives (87.4%); 36 were workers (8.3%); 9 were officers (2.1%); 9 were self-employed (2.1%) and 1 was retired (2%). As for the fathers, 18 were unemployed (4.1%); 174 were workers (39.9%); 54 were officers (12.4%); 165 were self-employed (37.8%) and 25 were retired (5.7%).

## 2.3 Data collection instruments

The study data was collected using the “Life Quality Scale for Children (LQSFC)” and the “Social Relationship Principles Scale for Adolescents.”

The Life Quality Scale for Children (LQSFC) – The LQSFC was developed by Varni et al. (1999) to measure the life quality of children ages 2-18 and adolescents in terms of health, and adapted into Turkish by Memik et al. (2008) [15, 16]. The LQSFC consists of 23 items questioning the physical functioning, emotional functioning, social functioning and school functioning domains of children. The scoring is applied on three domains. The Psycho-Social Health Total Score (PSHTS) is measured by calculating firstly the total scale score, secondly the physical health total score (PHTS), and thirdly calculating the items assessing the emotional, social and educational/school functioning. The instrument indicates that the higher the total score is, the better the participants’ perceptions are towards what a healthy life quality entails [16].

Social Relationship Principles Scale: The Social Relationship Principle Scale was developed by Turner, Frankel and Levin (1983) in order to measure individuals’ social support perceptions, and the instrument was adapted into Turkish by Duyan et al. (2013) [17, 18]. It has two sub-dimensions labelled Family support and Friends support. The Cronbach Alpha value was measured as .81 and the test-retest reliability was found to be .85. Regarding the sub dimensions of the scale, the Cronbach Alpha was measured as .74 for Family support and .75 for Friend support. There are 15 items in the scale measuring the social relationship principles of individuals. The scores that can be obtained from the scale ranges between 15 and 75. High scores from the scale indicates that an individual thinks that s/he receives high social support from his/her environment [18].

## 2.4 Data analysis

In the data analysis process, descriptive statistics, multiple regression analysis and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation analysis tests were used, all of which were parametric tests, and the significance level was accepted as .05.

## 3 Findings

The findings obtained from this study are listed below:

*1. Do the sub dimensions of the Social Relationship Principles Scale for Adolescents’ Family and Friend Support predict the physical and psycho-social health and life satisfaction levels of the children, which are the components of the Life Quality Scale for Children?*

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine whether the sub dimensions of the Social Relationship Principles Scale for Adolescents’ Family and Friend Support predict the physical and psycho-social health and life satisfaction levels of the children, which were obtained from the Life Quality Scale for Children. The analysis results are presented in Table 1 below.

**Table 1.** Multiple regression analysis results related to predicting adolescents' physical and psycho-social health, and life satisfaction

Multiple Regression Analysis Results In Predicting Adolescents' Physical Health					
Variable	B	Std Error	Beta	T	p
Constant	393.790	45.796	-	8.713	.000
Friend support	2.210	1.237	.095	1.787	.075
Family support	5.700	1.750	.173	3.257	.001
R=0.233      R <sup>2</sup> = 0.054,    F(2,433)=12.470    p= .000					
Multiple Regression Analysis Results In Predicting Adolescents' Psycho-social Health					
Variable	B	Std Error	Beta	T	p
Constant	545.771	74.966		7.280	.000
Friend support	7.404	2.051	.185	3.610	.000
Family support	11.726	2.903	.208	4.040	.000
R= 0.338,      R <sup>2</sup> = 0.114,    F(2,433)=27.863    p= .000					
Multiple Regression Analysis Results In Predicting Adolescents' Life Satisfaction					
Variable	B	Std Error	Beta	T	p
Constant	939,562	104,743		8,970	,000
Friend support	9,614	2,866	,172	3,355	,001
Family support	17,426	4,056	,221	4,297	,000
R= 0.338,      R <sup>2</sup> = 0.115,    F(2,433)=27.997    p= .001					

Table 1 displays a meaningful relationship between the scores of friend and family support, and physical health ( $R = .233$ ,  $R^2 = .054$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and that friend and family support scores explained the .05% of the total variance of physical health values. Similarly, a statistically significant relationship was seen between the scores of friend and family support, and psycho-social health ( $R = .338$ ;  $R^2 = .114$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Family and friends support scores explained the .11% of the total variance of psycho-social health values. Additionally, there was a meaningful relationship between the scores of friends and family support, and life quality ( $R = .338$ ;  $R^2 = .115$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and family and friends support scores explained about .11% of the total variance of life quality values.

*2. Is there a meaningful relationship between the sub dimensions of the Social Relationship Principles Scale for Adolescents' Family and Friend Support and the components of the Life Quality Scale for Children -physical and psycho-social health scores, and life satisfaction?*

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation analysis was applied to determine the relationships between the sub dimensions of the Social Relationship Principles Scale for Adolescents-Family and Friend support- and the components of the Life Quality Scale for Children -physical and psycho-social health scores, and life satisfaction. The analysis results are given in Table 2 below.

**Table 2.** Pearson product-moment correlation analysis results fostering the relationships among the scores obtained from “social relationship principles scale for adolescents” and “life quality scale for children”

Correlation coefficients related to the relationship between family and friend supports, and physical health				
		n	r	p
Social Relationship Principles	Family support	436	.218	.000**
	Friend support	436	.177	.000**
Correlation coefficients related to the relationship between family and friend supports, and psycho-social health				
		n	r	p
Social Relationship Principles	Family support	436	.296	.000**
	Friend support	436	.284	.000**
Correlation coefficients related to the relationship between family and friend supports, and life quality				
		n	r	p
Social Relationship Principles	Family support	436	.302	.000**
	Friend support	436	.277	.000**

\*\*p<0.01

Table 2 demonstrates that there is statistically weak but positive relations between family support and physical health ( $r=.218$ ;  $p<.01$ ), friend support and physical health ( $r=.177$ ;  $p<.01$ ), family support and psycho-social health ( $r=.296$ ;  $p<.01$ ), friend support and psycho-social health ( $r=.284$ ;  $p<.01$ ), family support and life quality ( $r=.302$ ;  $p<.01$ ), and friend support and life quality ( $r=.277$ ;  $p<.01$ ).

## 4 Discussion

The study results found meaningful relationships between family and friends support, and physical and psycho-social health and life quality. To the multiple regression analysis results, friends and family support explained .05% of the physical health, and .11% of the life quality and psycho-social health. In this sense, family and friends support can be said to predict the life quality of adolescents.

Another finding of the study is that there was a positive relationship between family and friends support and physical and psycho-social health and life quality. Thus, the adolescents who receive high family and friend support can also be said to possess high levels of psycho-social and physical health, and life quality.

In the related literature there are studies showing that students who do not receive support from their friends and families tend to experience specific problems such as anxiety, introversion, identity confusion etc. [19, 20, 21]. Similarly, research findings indicate low levels of life quality among those adolescents who receive insufficient social support [22]. In this sense, the study findings can be claimed to be supported by the findings in the literature. It can be inferred that receiving support from family and friends is influential on adolescents' physical, psycho-social health and life quality. The reason for this might be that adolescents who receive sufficient support from family and friends tend to develop positive attitudes and behaviors, and to improve social skills, which in turn have a positive effect on their life quality.

The study findings suggest that organizing seminars for families and students and

psycho-educational group guidance programs for students with low life quality will be helpful in raising awareness about the importance of social support.

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