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Research Article

Predictive Relationships between Adolescents' Spiritual Well-Being and Perceived Social Support: The Role of Values

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to reveal predictive relationships between adolescents' values, spiritual well-being, and perceived social support, and to test a model that originated from these relationships. This research was conducted with the survey model. The sample of the research consisted of a total of 470 students (302 female and 98 male) studying at religious high schools in Konya in 2016-2017 academic year. Participants were between the ages of 14-17 and the mean age is 15.80. In the study, "Human Values Scale", "Spiritual Well-Being Scale" and "Perceived Social Support Scale" were used. Data were analyzed using structural equation model with AMOS 19 software. According to the findings obtained from the research; the values that adolescents owned directly predicted spiritual well-being. Additionally, the values directly predicted the level of perceived social support. Implications of these results were discussed within the context of literature.

Key Words

Values • Spiritual well-being • Perceived social support • Adolescents

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The person who sustains his life in a social network is always with social support and always needs social support. Puberty which many changes in social terms have emerged, the communication skills and the quality of the communication (Yalçın, 2010) that has been established have become a life period in which the needs of individuals are increasing in social support (Traş & Arslan, 2013; Ünüvar, 2003). Social support is the presence of individuals that want to help people at all times and getting help at all times throughout their life (Sorias, 1988). Eker and Arkar (1995) describe social support as the financial and spiritual help given by people like family members, spouses or friends who are under stress or face any difficulty. The sources of social support in the life of adolescents are parents, other family members, friends' neighborhoods, teachers, religious leaders, official guides, coaches or other adults (Malecki & Demaray 2006).

In the literature, there are two types of the concept of social support; received social support and perceived social support (Knoll & Schwarzer, 2002; Ünüvar, 2003). While received social support refers to the amount of support provided from social support resources, perceived social support refers to cognitive interpretation of support from others and self-evaluation (Kef, 1997). When we examine the literature, it is possible to say that the perceived social support is more functional than received social support. The support that individuals receive from social support resources can be in the form of instrumental, emotional and informational support. Instrumental support includes money, work and time, tangible help; emotional support includes love the people, the expression of compassion and empathy; informational support also includes feedback on the person's thoughts, feelings and behavior (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Cohen, 2004).

Social support has many functions in terms of physical health and mental health. In the case of stressful life events, social support reduces the negative effects of stress and reduces the occurrence of physical and psychological diseases and maintains mental health (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Pengilly & Dowd, 2000). Social support, which protects against the harmful effects of unwanted situations such as depression, stress and loneliness, has been the topic of many researches because of these positive effects (Kapııran & Özgüngör, 2009). For example, according to the results of research conducted by Dođan (2008) with the participation of 254 university students, perceived social support from family and friends positively predicts well-being (spirituality, self-management, free-time, friendship and love) while negatively predicts psychological symptoms (somatization, depression, anxiety, anger / aggression).

Well-being is a lifestyle which the body, the mind and the spirit are in unity, and the health is at an optimal level so that one can fully function in the social and natural environment (Myers, Sweeney, & Witmer, 2000). Spirituality, a dimension of well-being, is also in harmony with the inner and outer world of one (Van Dierendonck, 2004). Spiritual well-being is a concept that includes both wellness and spirituality. The concept of spiritual well-being, which is used to express human well-being in religious and existential terms, refers to the invisible, transcendent dimension of life (Hill et al., 2000). Spiritual well-being can be described as a reflection of the positive feelings, behaviors, and cognitions of one's relationship with himself, with other people, with nature and with transcendent. Spiritual well-being provides positive emotions such as identity, integrity, satisfaction, beauty, love, respect, positive attitudes, inner peace, harmony, life purpose and direction (Gomez & Fisher, 2003). Ellison (1983) stated that spiritual well-being involves psycho-social and religious elements. Religious well-being refers to the relationship with God, a superior power. Existential well-being, on the other hand, is a psycho-social element and points to emotions such as who one is, who he is, what he does, and what

he is. The study of spiritual well-being in puberty, the development of abstract thinking skills, the rise of certain inquiries (Ari, 2008), the adolescents may reflect both well-being and religious spiritual development.

Adolescence is the period when individuals try to create a new identity, sense of self, a sense of their own morality and a system of values. They reconstruct the moral values that they has built upon the moral achievements of the past by appropriately changing them in accordance with their needs (Başaran, 1998). Values are standards that guide the behavior of an individual, norms and basic beliefs about what is valuable and ideal, and basic beliefs and actions that are good or desirable (Halstead & Taylor, 2000). Values, which is a concept that is constantly attracting interest in the field of social sciences, are important for explaining human behavior (Kuşdil & Kağıtçıbaşı, 2000).

Value is a concept that has individual and social dimensions. The values that will be considered from an individual point of view, the beliefs about what is right and wrong in the life of the individual, the effect on the desired and unfulfilled judgments (Dilmaç, Deniz, & Deniz, 2009); it has the function of shaping the targets, choices, behaviors of the individuals (Kuşdil & Kağıtçıbaşı, 2000, as cited in Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987) and directing the lives of the people (Schwartz, 1992). The values that will be handled from the social point of view are the most important standards that give meaning to sociocultural elements of society (Özensel, 2003) and values constitutes common opinions on what is good, what is bad, what is desired or not, true or false in a society (Budak, 2000). Values having a social character are shaped and change according to social conditions (Schwartz 1992).

In the light of the literature, the aim of the research is to reveal how the values of the adolescents studying religious high school predict the level of perceived social support and the level of spiritual well-being. The research is important in terms of revealing the relationship between perceived social support by the Muslim community, which values and spiritual well-being. This study is going to fill the gap in the literature because it gives clues about the characteristics of the adolescent period in which the development of moral, religious and spiritual values accelerates, and there is limited number of studies that deal with the levels of social support perceived by adolescents and their values. In addition, the positive results of the emotional well-being scale for adolescents and factor analysis for adolescents will contribute to the widespread use of this scale.

Method

Research Model

The purpose of the present research is to reveal predictive relationships between adolescents' values, spiritual well-being, and, perceived social support and to test the model that originated from these relationships. A relational survey model has been used in the research. A relational survey is a research model conducted in order to define the relationships among two or more variables and in order to obtain clues concerning cause-and-effect relationships (Büyüköztürk, Kılıç-Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz, & Demirel, 2008).

Study Group

The study group consists of Religious High School students who were studying in Konya in the academic year of 2016-2017. The study group of the present study consisted of 470 Religious high school students (302 female and 98 male) selected by convenience sampling method. Participants are between the ages of 14-17 and the mean age is 15.80.

Measurement Tools

Human Values Scale. The Human Values Scale (HVS) was developed by [Dilmaç \(2007\)](#) for determining adolescents' values. The scale measures the human-values process through 42 items under the following six sub-dimensions: responsibility, friendship, peacefulness, respect, tolerance, and honesty. This scale is a 5-point Likert-type scale that can be conducted individually or on groups. Higher or lower scores indicate higher or lower human values, respectively. Alpha internal consistency coefficients have been calculated as .73 for responsibility, .69 for friendship, .65 for peacefulness, .67 for respect, .69 for honesty, .70 for tolerance, and .92 for the entire scale. Reliability factors have been calculated as .73 for responsibility, .91 for friendship, .80 for peacefulness, .88 for respect, .75 for honesty, .79 for tolerance, and .87 for the entire scale.

Perceived Social Support (PSSS-R). It was revised by [Yıldırım \(2004\)](#). Scale validity and reliability studies were applied to 660 students aged between 14 and 17 years. The scale consists of 50 items in triple likert type. It consists of three sub-dimensions, family support, peer support and teacher support. For the validity of the scale, the KMO coefficient was found to be .933. The KMO coefficient of the subscales range from .935 to .950. The subscales of the scale and general Cronbach Alpha values range from .85 to .94.

Spiritual Well-Being Scale. Spiritual Well-Being Scale was developed by [Ekşi and Kardaş \(2017\)](#). The scale consists of 29 items; transcendence, harmony with nature and anomie sub-dimensions. Construct validity and reliability were empirically ascertained and the goodness of fit was determined for the proposed model of spiritual well-being. (KMO: .951, when eigenvalue is 2; total item explanation variance: 58.337 %). The ensemble of the model's coefficients are $\chi^2/df = 4.11$, RMSEA = .06, SRMR = .50, NFI = .90, CFI = .92.

Confirmatory factor analysis was carried on the data obtained from 470 religious high school students in order to determine whether item scales were confirmed in the research sample; and the fit index values were as follows: $\chi^2/df = 2.28$, CFI = 0.92, GFI = 0.88, RMSEA = 0.06. Factor loadings of the scale varied between 0.44 and 0.85.

Data Analysis

This research analyzes the predictor relationship among adolescents' values and levels of spiritual well-being, and perceived social support using the program, AMOS 19, in accordance with structural equation modeling. Structural equation modeling is a statistical approach that reveals causal and reciprocal relationships between observed and latent variables ([Shumacker & Lomax, 2004](#)).

Findings

The model's final form ($\chi^2 = 204,731$, $df = 47$, $p < .001$) has six exogenous (responsibility, friendship, peacefulness, respect, honesty, and tolerance) and six endogenous (family support, peer support, teacher support, transcendence, harmony with nature, anomie) sets of data. Each path shown in the model is found to be statistically meaningful. The Bentler-Bonett normed-fit index (NFI), the Tucker-Lewis coefficient-fit index (TLI), and other fit indexes show that the model is rather well-fit (see Table 1). Each two-way correlation between the model's endogenous data sets has a high value and is statistically meaningful.

Table 1

Statistical Values Related to the Structural Equation Model's Fit Index

Measure	Good Fit	Acceptable Fit	Fit Index of the Model
(χ^2 /sd)	≤ 3	$\leq 4-5$	4.36
RMSEA	≤ 0.05	0.06-0.08	0.08
SRMR	≤ 0.05	0.06-0.08	0.05
NFI	≥ 0.95	0.94-0.90	0.90
CFI	≥ 0.97	≥ 0.95	0.95
GFI	≥ 0.90	0.89-0.85	0.93
AGFI	≥ 0.90	0.89-0.85	0.88
TLI	≥ 0.95	0.94-0.90	0.90

The following values are found when examining the fit values in Table 1; χ^2 /sd=4.36, RMSEA=0.08, SRMR=0.05, NFI=0.90, CFI=0.95, GFI=0.93, AGFI=0.88, and TLI=0.90. One can observe that the model generally has fit values at the desired level (Bollen, 1989; Browne & Cudeck, 1992; Byrne, 2010; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2011; Tanaka & Huba, 1985). The tested single-factor model is presented in Figure 1. All paths shown in the model are meaningful at $p < .001$.

Figure 1. The path diagram of the study's model

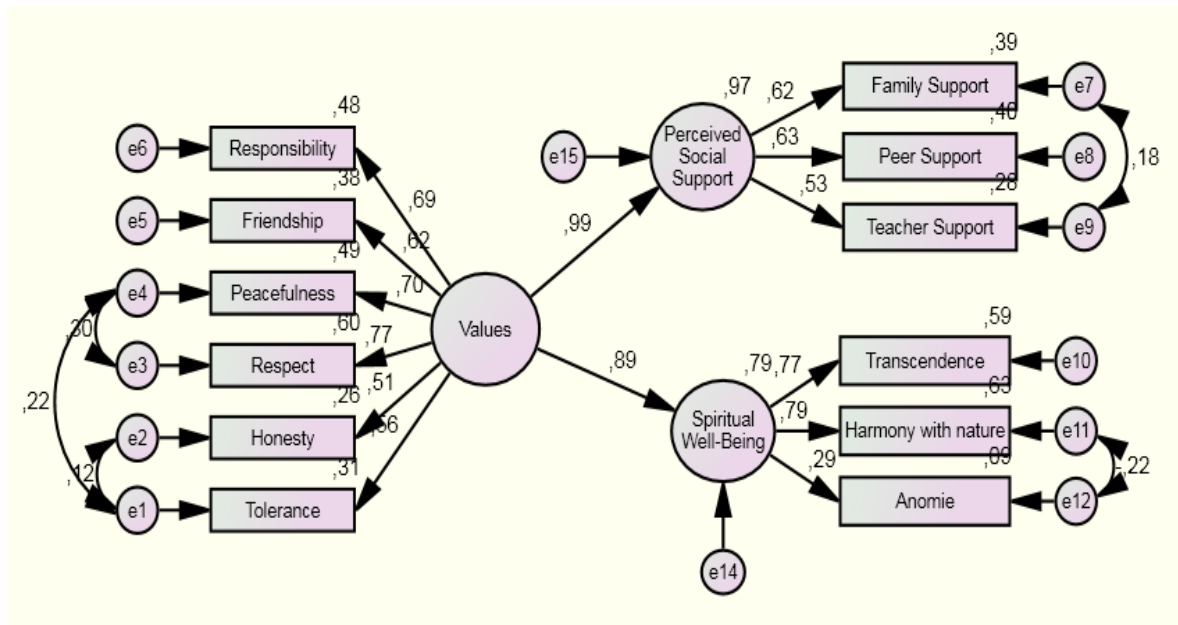


Table 2

Model on Predictor Relations between Values, Spiritual Well-Being, and Perceived Social Support for Adolescents

Predictor Variable	Dependent Variable	Total Effect ^a	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Standard Error	Critical Value
Values	Spiritual Well-Being	0.89	0.89	0	0.34	10.34*
Values	Perceived Social Support	0.99	0.99	0	0.27	9.62*

a Total Effect = Direct Effect + Indirect Effect, * $p < 0.01$.

As presented in the model above, the most important independent variable affecting spiritual well-being is values ($t = 10.34, p < .01$). The correlation coefficient related to this factor is calculated as $\beta = 0.89$. The predictive

correlation between adolescents' values and their perception of spiritual well-being is positive and linear. Namely, adolescents' spiritual well-being increase as their values increase according to the research findings.

It can be seen in the model that the most important independent variable affecting perceived social support ($t=9.62, p<0.01$) is values. Correlation coefficient value of this factor was determined as $\beta=0.99$. The predictor relationship between adolescents' values and their perceived social support levels is a positive linear relationship. In other words, findings indicated that as the adolescents' values increased, their levels of perceived social support increased as well.

Conclusion and Discussion

According to the results of the research, the values adolescents have directly related to the level of perceived social support. In other words, adolescents' perceived social support increases as their values increase. The concept of social support can be considered as one of the components of values (Deniz, Dilmaç, & Hamarta, 2016). There are studies in literature similar to the results of the research. Goodwin, Costa, and Adonu (2004) conducted a study of university students, revealing that there are significant correlations between values, received social support, and perceived social support. Furthermore, the regression analysis revealed that perceived social support of values has twice as much power as the received social support. There are some differences between receiving social support and perceived social support. While received social support represents a quantitative concept, perceived social support represents a qualitative concept. For individuals, it is more important that they are strong and of good quality, if not the quantity of social support (Çeçen, 2008, as cited in Stakes, 1985). The study by Helgeson (1993) revealed that perceived social support is different from received social support and perceived social support is more important.

According to the results of research conducted by Deniz and his colleagues (2016) with university students in order to show that the values predict the self-esteem and perceived social support, the subscales of the values scale predict the subscales of perceived social support and self-esteem scale. Goodwin and Giles (2003) found that social support is influenced by cultural values, and amount of social support in socialist cultures is higher than individualist cultures. It is possible to say that the result obtained is in parallel with the researches on the subject.

According to the results of the research, the values that the adolescents possess have directly predicted their level of spiritual well-being. Namely, the increase in the values of the adolescents will increase the level of spiritual well-being. There is widespread belief that some values in the West psychotherapy literature have positive effects on individuals' mental health (Sagiv & Schwartz, 2000). Bergin (1991) emphasized that value systems must be taken into account while evaluating the mental health of people, and in the therapy process.

Spiritual well-being, one of the components of mental health and well-being, expresses the process of understanding and experiencing life in terms of personal, social, environmental and transcendental aspects in the direction of human values and ultimate meanings (Ekşi & Kardaş, 2017). Spiritual well being is one of the components of perceived well-being (Ellison, 2006). Despite the fact that studies that deal with spiritual well-being and values are limited in the literature, there are studies showing that values are positive related to subjective well-being (Sagiv & Schwartz, 2000; Seki & Dilmaç, 2015), happiness (Özdemir & Koruklu, 2011); are negative related to psychopathological symptoms (Iosifyan, Arina, & Flahault, 2016), depression, anxiety

and stress levels (Uğurcu, 2015). Brooks and Matthews (2000) found that the wisdom and love values subscales of the Rokeach Value Scale were important predictors of spiritual well-being in a study that examined the relationship between spiritual well-being, values, and self realization characteristics of substance addictive individuals. The study of Lo, Zimmermann, Gagliese, Li, and Rodin (2011) with cancer patients revealed that religious values, one of the sources of spiritual well-being, are predictors of spiritual well-being.

There are some limitations of this research as well as studies that are parallel to the results of the research. It can be considered as a limitation in terms of generalizability that the research is carried out only on adolescents who were attending religious high school education in Konya and with the participation of a limited number of high school students. So, repeating the study over adolescents with different groups and other age groups can contribute to generalizing the limitations of this study's results. Considering that a large number of factors are effective in explaining spiritual well-being, it can be said that the variables studied in the research are inadequate. Therefore it is useful to consider several variables that may relate to spiritual well-being in future studies. It may also be beneficial to elucidate with qualitative and mixed researches that provide in-depth information for better understanding of spiritual well-being and value development, which has recently begun to be handled with positive psychology.

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