Adolescents' Attitudes and Intention to Seek Psychological Help According to the Theory of Planned Behavior

Planlı Davranış Kuramına Göre Ergenlerin Psikolojik Yardım Alma Tutumu ve Niyeti

Ercan Aras[1], Adem Peker[2]

[1]Iğdır University, Iğdır
[2]Atatürk University, Erzurum

ABSTRACT

Theory of planned behavior explores the factors influencing behavior, with attitude being a primary determinant. Specifically, attitude plays a crucial role in shaping the decision to seek psychological assistance. According to the theory of planned behavior, behavior is determined by one's intentions, which are influenced by attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Various factors, including demographic, individual, and social elements such as age, gender, social stigma, self-stigmatization, self-efficacy perception, and self-disclosure, impact help-seeking behavior. Exploring these factors is vital for enhancing our understanding of psychological help-seeking behavior. Notably, attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control significantly influence adolescents' attitudes and intentions towards seeking psychological help. Negative attitudes towards seeking such help diminish the likelihood of adolescents seeking assistance, potentially leading to avoidance. Understanding the barriers to seeking psychological help is paramount for promoting adolescent mental health. Thus, this study investigates adolescents' attitudes and intentions regarding seeking psychological help through the lens of the theory of planned behavior.

Keywords: Theory of planned behavior, psychological help-seeking attitude, psychological help-seeking intention, adolescent

ÖZ

Planlı davranış kuramı, davranışı belirleyen faktörleri inceleyen bir kuramdır. Tutum, bir davranışı belirleyen en önemli faktördür. Tutum aynı zamanda psikolojik yardım alma davranışını da belirlemektedir. Planlı davranış kuramına göre niyet davranışı belirler. Planlı davranış kuramına göre tutum, öznel normlar ve algılanan davranışsal kontrol değişkenlerinin etkisiyle bireyin bir davranışla ilgili niyeti ortaya çıkar. Alanyazında psikolojik yardım alma davranışını etkileyen birçok faktör bulunmaktadır. Bu faktörler demografik, bireysel ve sosyal faktörler olarak ifade edilir. Bu faktörlerden bazıları yaş, cinsiyet, sosyal damgalanma, kendini damgalama, özyeterlik algısı ve kendini açmadır. Sözkonusu faktörlerin incelenmesinin psikolojik yardım alma davranışı ile ilgili çalışmalara katkı sunacağı düşünülmektedir. Planlı davranış kuramında yer alan davranışa ilişkin tutum, öznel norm ve algılanan davranışsal kontrol faktörleri ergenlerin psikolojik yardım alma tutum ve niyetini belirlemede etkili olmaktadır. Psikolojik yardım alma ile ilgili olumsuz tutum, bireyin psikolojik yardım alma niyetini azaltmaktadır. Bununla birlikte psikolojik yardım almaya ilişkin olumsuz tutum, ergenlerin psikolojik yardım almaktan kaçınmalarına neden olmaktadır. Bu açıdan psikolojik yardım almayı engelleyen faktörlerin bilinmesi ergenlerin ruh sağlığı açısından önemli görülmektedir. Bu yazıda ergenlerin psikolojik yardım alma tutum ve niyeti planlı davranış kuramı çerçevesinde ele alınmıştır.

Anahtar sözcükler: Planlı davranış kuramı, psikolojik yardım alma tutumu, psikolojik yardım alma niyeti, ergen

Introduction

Individuals may experience problems throughout their lives. While sometimes they can overcome the problems in their lives on their own, sometimes they may be inadequate in overcoming the problems. Individuals who are inadequate in the face of any problem may turn to different sources of help. Kalkan and Odacı (2005) define the sources from which an individual receives help as friends, family, teacher or an expert. In the literature, sources of psychological help are divided into two as professional and non-professional sources. Professional sources are psychological counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists; non-professional sources are family, friends and close

environment (Nicholas et al. 2004). However, although adolescents experience many problems, they rarely seek help. As a matter of fact, a study revealed that the rate of adolescents seeking psychological help is between 12-22% (Gökler 2003). Similar results are observed in other studies. It is stated that only one third of adolescents need help and many adolescents remain undecided about seeking help (Şen 2011, Çetin 2016, Kılıç 2020, Savi-Çakar et al. 2020). The low level of adolescents receiving psychological help shows that they do not apply to the sources of psychological help sufficiently.

When adolescents need psychological help, it is desirable for them to seek psychological help. They are especially expected to apply to the school guidance service for psychological help. However, it is seen that adolescents do not visit guidance services sufficiently and do not receive support. Instead, it has been revealed that they turn to non-professional sources of psychological help and prefer family and friends (Zachrisson et al. 2006, Baltacı and Karataş 2013, Savi-Çakar and Kılınç, 2020). Adolescents avoid telling their problems to a stranger. They share their problems more easily with family or friends. Therefore, it is stated that the rate of receiving professional psychological help is low (Erkan et al. 2012, Topkaya and Meydan 2013). However, adolescents seek psychological help when they are unable to solve their problems or when the problems they experience begin to negatively affect their lives. In the literature, it has been revealed that adolescents consider seeking help from an expert as the last option (Cramer 1999, Goodwin et al. 2013). This situation can be interpreted as adolescents' behavior of seeking psychological help is low and they are more likely to turn to non-professional sources of help.

It's crucial for individuals to access mental health support in a timely manner to address their issues. However, despite the need, there's often a lack of adequate psychological assistance available (Gökler 2003). This disparity is particularly evident among adolescents, a critical developmental stage marked by various social, physical, mental, and emotional challenges (Öztop 2012). Adolescence encompasses a range of issues including school difficulties, antisocial behaviors, depression, negative life events, family conflicts, suicidal ideation, insomnia, and academic struggles (Kulaksızoğlu 2019). Psychological issues are prevalent during this period, including substance abuse, eating disorders, social anxiety, academic underachievement, irritability, familial conflicts, and socioeconomic hardships (Ertem and Yazıcı 2006, Akdemir and Çuhadaroğlu 2008, Gençtanırım and Ergene 2014).

Despite facing numerous challenges, adolescents often do not seek professional psychological support, a trend that warrants examination (Savi-Çakar and Kılınç 2020, Clay 2012). Left unresolved, these issues can escalate in severity (Boonstra et al. 2012), impacting adolescents more profoundly. Seeking psychological help early on is more effective in promoting mental well-being than enduring issues without support (Kurt and Güçray 2016). Accessing psychological assistance fosters mental health, enhances life satisfaction, and equips individuals with coping strategies (Kermen et al. 2016). Positive experiences with psychological support can also encourage adolescents to seek help when faced with challenges.

Therefore, it's imperative for adolescents to receive psychological assistance, as it serves as a crucial protective factor for mental health. This study aims to explore why adolescents may avoid seeking psychological help within a theoretical framework, focusing on their attitudes and intentions towards seeking psychological assistance based on the theory of planned behavior.

Theory of Planned Behavior

Studies on the relationship between attitudes and behavior have become popular since the 1970s (Manstead 2001). In the literature, there are the theory of reasoned actionand the planned behavior theory, which are accepted in explaining behavior. Both theories focus on the variables that determine behavior (Ajzen 1991). Reasoned action theory was developed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975). The theory of reasoned action forms the basis of the theory of planned behavior. According to this theory, the factors that determine behavior are attitude, subjective norms and intention. Attitudes and subjective norms about behavior determine intention and intention determines behavior. Intention is determined by two factors. The first one is the attitude that expresses the positive or negative perception of the individual towards the behavior; the other is the social pressure that the individual feels when performing any behavior. According to the theory of reasoned action, when a behavior is perceived as positive and the behavior is supported by the environment, the intention to perform the behavior increases (Ajzen 1991).

The theory of planned behavior is an extension of the theory of reasoned action. The theory of planned behavior, which is widely used in the field of social psychology, was developed by Ajzen (1985). The theory of planned behavior is a theory created by adding a perceived behavioral control variable to the theory of reasoned action (Armitage and Conner 2001). The theory of planned behavior explains the behavior and the factors that are

effective in the emergence of behavior (Yazdanpanah and Forouzani 2015). According to the theory of planned behavior, attitude towards seeking psychological help, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control variables determine the intention to seek psychological help. Intention also determines behavior. The most important factor determining a behavior is intention. In other words, for a behavior to occur, an individual's intention regarding that behavior must be formed. The stronger the intention, the more likely the behavior is to occur. According to the theory of planned behavior, positive attitudes and subjective norms and high belief in performing the behavior increase the individual's intention to perform the behavior (Ajzen 2006, Shukri et al. 2015). Intention is defined as a person's effort to perform the behavior (Close et al. 2018). In the literature, it has been emphasized that the theory of planned behavior has been tested in more than a thousand studies and the results in the literature support this theory (Trafimow et al. 2002, Fishbein and Ajzen 2009, Ajzen 2011). The relationship between intention and behavior according to the theory of planned behavior is shown in Figure 1.
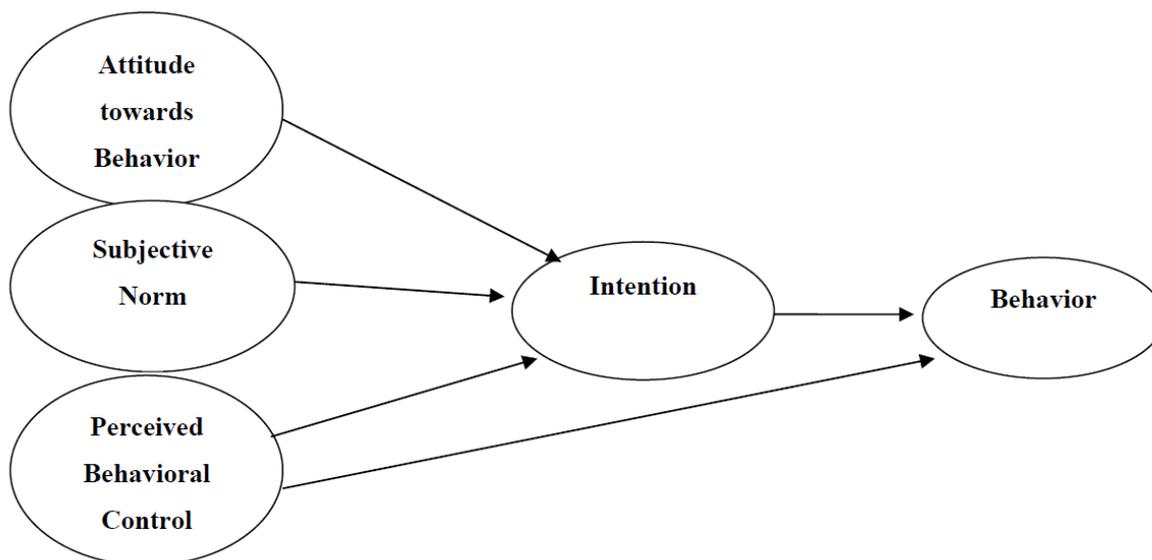
Figure 1. Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen 2005).

In order to perform a behavior, there must first be an intention regarding the behavior. The theory of planned behavior explains the relationship between attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control variables with intention and behavior. The theory of planned behavior considers intention as an important antecedent of behavior. Accordingly, it can be said that the intention factor is effective on behavior. Below, the concepts of attitude towards seeking psychological help and intention to seek psychological help are discussed in the context of attitude towards behavior, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control factors.

Attitude towards Behavior

According to the theory of planned behavior, attitude is an important factor affecting the intention to seek psychological help. Attitude towards a behavior is effective in the emergence of that behavior (Cheng et al. 2012). Attitude towards the behavior represents an individual's positive or negative evaluations of the behavior. Beliefs play an important role in the formation of a behavior. It also determines how important that behavior is for the individual. Ajzen (1985) expresses behavioral beliefs as a factor that determines the attitude towards the behavior. Accordingly, it can be said that an individual's belief or thought about any behavior determines the individual's attitude towards the behavior. For example, if an individual who wants to seek psychological help thinks that seeking psychological help will be beneficial for him, is expected to have a positive attitude. The opposite may also be the case. If an individual thinks that seeking psychological help will not be beneficial for him, it may cause to have a negative attitude towards the behavior of seeking psychological help.

Attitudes towards Seeking Psychological Help

Seeking psychological help is the tendency to seek psychological support from a mental health professional (Arslantaş et al. 2019). The attitude towards seeking psychological help is an individual's positive or negative reaction to any mental problem (Özbay et al. 2011). Attitude towards seeking psychological help determines the

intention to seek psychological help. Psychological help-seeking behavior is a multidimensional process affected by many factors. The most important factor affecting psychological help-seeking behavior is the attitude towards seeking psychological help (Özbay et al. 2011). Positive or negative attitudes towards seeking psychological help affect an individual's intention to seek psychological help. The most important factor affecting adolescents' intention to seek psychological help is negative attitude towards seeking psychological help (Ajzen 2006, Hackney and Cormier 2008). Why adolescents avoid seeking psychological help is an important problem. Avoiding seeking psychological help even though they should seek psychological help has been a topic emphasized in the literature. Factors such as negative attitudes, embarrassment, shame, stigmatization, not wanting to remember old experiences, the expected benefit of seeking help, etc. are effective (Corrigan 2004). Knowing the barriers to receiving psychological help is important in determining the attitude towards receiving psychological help (Li et al. 2018). Many studies have been conducted to determine the factors that prevent receiving psychological help. Lack of information, money, distrust in the expert, and the cultural structure of the expert are some of these factors (Sanders-Thompson et al. 2004). In another study, the factors that prevented receiving psychological help were determined as stigmatization, embarrassment, awareness of mental health, and hopelessness (Gulliver et al. 2010). In the literature, demographic factors are at the top of the factors affecting the attitude of seeking psychological help. When the studies are examined, gender is effective in the attitude of seeking psychological help (Cheng et al. 2018). Studies have shown that women exhibit more positive attitudes than men (Atik and Yalçın 2011, Özbay et al. 2011, Heath et al. 2016, Rayan and Jaradat 2016, Li et al. 2018, Çebi and Demir 2020, Topkaya 2021).

There are also studies with different results. As a matter of fact, Metin (2017) states that there is no difference between men and women in his study. In another study, it was found that the attitude towards seeking psychological help did not change according to gender (Temiz et al. 2021). In addition, age (Aydın 2017, Maiuolo et al. 2019) and ing help before (Çebi and Demir 2020) variables also affect the attitude towards seeking psychological help. Studies have revealed that negative attitudes towards seeking psychological help decrease with increasing age (Mendoza et al. 2015, Rayan and Jaradat 2016, Yelpaze 2016, Topkaya 2021). However, it has been stated that adolescents with experience of receiving help adopt positive attitudes (Mendoza et al. 2015, Chandrasekara 2016, Sezer and Gülleroğlu 2016, Crowe and Kim 2020, Topkaya 2021). Demographic variables are also effective on the attitude of seeking psychological help. Accordingly, it can be said that women's better self-expression and openness to sharing are effective in the attitude of seeking psychological help compared to men. Another factor affecting the attitude towards seeking psychological help is individual factors. Self-stigmatization is the most important individual factor. Stigmatization delays the individual from seeking help. Self-stigmatization is seeing oneself as a weak, problematic or inadequate person (Vogel et al. 2006). Self-stigmatization negatively affects receiving psychological help (Yee et al. 2020, Topkaya 2021). In the literature, many studies have been conducted to reveal the effect of self-stigmatization (Topkaya et al. 2017, Li et al. 2018, Crowe and Kim 2020). As a matter of fact, (Topkaya 2021) stated that self-stigmatization is an important factor that prevents receiving psychological help. Stigmatization distances the individual from receiving psychological help (Barney et al. 2006; Mivilli and Constantine 2006, Vogel et al. 2007). This situation may cause the individual to develop negative thoughts about and to evaluate as weak and worthless. The individual who makes negative evaluations may avoid seeking psychological help.

There are also other factors affecting the attitude towards seeking psychological help. Social stigmatization is another important factor that negatively affects the attitude of seeking psychological help (Vogel et al. 2007, Gürsoy 2014). Social stigmatization is the perception of others about the individual when receives psychological help (Clement et al. 2015). Individuals who think that they will be perceived negatively by others avoid receiving psychological help (Komiya et al. 2000, Topkaya 2011). What others think about the adolescent is very important for the adolescent. Therefore, an adolescent receiving psychological help is curious about what other people think about him. He especially does not want his friends to call him crazy. For this reason, they avoidseeking psychological help. Because many adolescents consider seeking psychological help as a weakness (Freake et al. 2007, Prior 2012). Adolescents are weak in determining the level of difficulty of the psychological problems they experience and do not realize whether they can seek psychological help or not. Generally, instead of seeking psychological help from an expert, they try to solve their problems themselves or turn to their friends. In addition, adolescents may perceive seeking psychological help as an inadequacy.

Trust in the expert providing psychological help is another factor that affects an adolescent's willingness to receive help. If the adolescent trusts the expert, they are more likely to continue receiving help. Trust in the expert gives hope to the adolescent in increasing psychological help and solving problems (Chandrasekara 2016). In addition, indecision, reluctance, time and cost factors also affect receiving psychological help (Mohr et al. 2006). In addition, stigmatization of the close environment is also an important factor affecting psychological

help seeking. Being shamed and ridiculed by one's close environment prevents the individual from receiving psychological help (Vogel et al. 2009, Koydemir-Özden and Erel 2010). In collectivist cultures, individuals are influenced by family and social environment. The fact that men in collectivist cultures express their feelings very little and consider seeking help as a weakness may lead to negative attitudes towards seeking psychological help. There are even studies indicating that both genders experience social stigmatization in receiving psychological help (Wahto and Swift 2014). Another social factor that affects receiving psychological help is perceived social support. Individuals with high levels of perceived social support tend to seek psychological help (Cotterell 1996, Mivilli and Constantine 2006, Çebi 2009, Dilek 2010, Koydemir-Özden and Erel 2010).

When the studies conducted are evaluated, it can be said that individual and social factors affect seeking psychological help. Practical barriers also affect the attitude of seeking psychological help. Time, transportation, cost of seeking help are expressed as practical barriers (Kung 2004). Practical barriers negatively affect the attitude towards seeking psychological help (Walsh et al. 2011, Zinzow et al. 2013). As the negative perception towards practical barriers increases, the behavior of seeking psychological help decreases (Bicil 2012). Apart from this, lack of information about the process of receiving psychological help also affects receiving help (Topkaya et al. 2017, Li et al. 2018). We can say that if the individual does not have information about the problem he is experiencing, it becomes difficult to seek psychological help. This situation reveals the importance of informing adolescents about the process of receiving psychological help.

Subjective Norms

Subjective norms are an important factor affecting the intention to seek psychological help. Subjective norm expresses the individual's relationship with environment. It is the environmental pressure that an individual perceives in performing a behavior. Important people around the individual have a great influence on the behaviors of the individual. In other words, the expectations of the environment from the individual is an important factor determining the behavior of the individual (Mistry et al. 2015). The opinions of the environment about the behaviour of the individual are important for the individual (Payne et al. 2004). This is called normative belief. If the social environment has high expectations from the individual, the probability of performing the behavior increases. In a study, the way the social environment perceives a behavior is effective in determining the behavior of the individual (Cheng et al. 2012). In another study, it was stated that the environment's support for the individual's behavior increases the individual's tendency to do that behavior (Nunkoo and Ramkissoon 2010). Individuals are generally influenced by the people they consider important and value in the social environment they live in. When family, friends or other people approve an individual's behavior, the individual develops positive perceptions about that behavior (Ajzen 2006). Accordingly, it can be said that the evaluations and expectations of the individual's social environment regarding the behavior of seeking psychological help are effective in determining the individual's behavior of seeking psychological help. When evaluated in terms of the theory of planned behavior, it shows that if the social environment of the individual supports the individual to seek psychological help, there will be an increase in the behavior of seeking psychological help and the intention to seek psychological help will increase. According to the theory of planned behaviour, adolescents are expected to prefer to get psychological help when they are told by the environment that they should get psychological help.

Perceived Behavioral Control

According to the theory of planned behavior, another factor affecting the intention to seek psychological help is perceived behavioral control. Perceived behavioral control is related to self-efficacy. An individual's low level of self-efficacy leads to a negative attitude towards receiving psychological help (Cellucci et al. 2006, Bicil 2012). Perceived behavioral control explains whether the behavior of the individual is under his/her control or not. In this process, the individual's perceptions about own performance and ability are very important. Perceived behavioral control is an important variable in the theory of planned behavior. Of the two individuals who want to do an activity, the individual who is confident about doing the activity is more likely to be successful than the individual who is not confident (Ajzen 1991). According to the theory of planned behavior, perceived behavioral control refers to the belief that an individual will perform a behavior. An individual's confidence in performing a behaviour increases the intention regarding the behaviour (Song and Park 2015). The individual's control of behaviour depends on self-confidence and less obstacles. According to the theory of planned behavior, the individual's influence on behavior is related to self-efficacy. Therefore, perceiving a behavior as easy increases the possibility of doing that behavior (Ajzen 2006). Accordingly, an individual's self-confidence in receiving psychological help and high self-efficacy positively affect attitude towards receiving psychological help. The individual may think that the process of receiving psychological help is not difficult. At the same time, the

individual's hope for coping with problems may increase. It can be said that as the individual's perception of control over the process of seeking psychological help increases, the tendency to seek psychological help will increase. According to the theory of planned behavior, the control belief towards the behavior of seeking psychological help determines the attitude and intention to seek psychological help. Control belief is defined as the ease or difficulty that an individual perceives in performing a behavior (Ajzen and Sheikh 2013). According to the theory of planned behavior, when a behavior is perceived as easy, the probability of that behavior increases. Similarly, when a behavior is perceived as difficult, the probability of that behavior decreases (Nunkoo and Ramkissoon 2010). Control beliefs about a behaviour may cause an individual to have a positive attitude about the behaviour. If the behavior is difficult to control, the individual may give up doing that behavior.

Intention to Seek Psychological Help

The intention to seek psychological help is the individual's desire to receive psychological support in solving mental problems (Topkaya 2011). According to the theory of planned behavior, intention is one of the most important factors determining behavior. Attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control variables determine the intention to seek psychological help, and the intention to seek psychological help determines the behavior of seeking psychological help (Li et al. 2018). A positive attitude towards seeking psychological help indicates that the intention to seek psychological help will increase (Ajzen 2006, Topkaya 2014). Intention to seek psychological help is affected by many factors. In the literature, it has been reported that attitude towards seeking psychological help, gender, age, self-concealment, and stigmatization factors affect the intention to seek psychological help (Metin 2017, Maiuolo et al. 2019, Seidler et al. 2020, Liddle 2021).

Various factors influence the intention to seek psychological help, including gender (Ülken and Odacı 2021), grade level (Çankaya and Çetinkaya-Duman 2010), problem-solving skills (Esentürk-Ercan 2010), level of self-concealment (Serim and Cihangir-Çankaya 2015), and past experience seeking help (Arslantaş et al. 2019). Additionally, literature highlights other determinants. For instance, individuals struggling to express their emotions exhibit lower intentions to seek psychological help (Vogel et al. 2007). Lack of knowledge about mental health issues (Abuhammad et al. 2018) and insufficient family support (Liddle 2021) also diminish the intention to seek help. Moreover, self-stigmatization, social stigmatization, and social support influence help-seeking intentions. Increased stigmatization correlates with reduced intentions to seek help (Vogel et al. 2007, Ludwikowski et al. 2009, Topkaya and Büyükgöze-Kavas 2015, Savi-Çakar et al., 2020), underscoring the significance of addressing stigma in promoting help-seeking behaviors.

Family members' prior experiences with psychological help impact intentions to seek help. Positive experiences increase individuals' intentions to seek help (Goh et al. 2007, Topkaya and Meydan 2013), highlighting the role of shared positive information in shaping help-seeking intentions (Atik and Yalçın 2011, Kakhnovets 2011, Topkaya 2011). Conversely, students' reluctance to discuss psychological issues, attributed to low self-disclosure levels (Koçyiğit and Pamukçu 2018), and students with low self-efficacy seek less psychological help (Bicil 2012, Yelpaze,, 2016) are additional factors affecting help-seeking intentions. The plethora of factors negatively impacting adolescents' intentions to seek psychological help underscores the importance of mitigating these barriers and providing timely psychological support. Seeking help from professional sources is crucial for safeguarding adolescents' mental health, emphasizing the need for interventions targeting stigma reduction and support from appropriate sources.

Conclusion

This study explored adolescents' attitudes towards and intentions to seek psychological help through the lens of the fundamental principles of the theory of planned behavior. Seeking psychological assistance from professional sources holds potential in safeguarding mental well-being and managing challenges (Kızıldağ et al. 2012). However, adolescents often turn to family or friends rather than seeking professional support (Vergili and Tagay 2016, Savi-Çakar and Kılınç 2020). Encouraging adolescents to seek help from professional sources can ensure access to quality mental health services.

Existing literature highlights how demographic, individual, and social factors influence adolescents' attitudes and intentions regarding seeking psychological help. Although studies predominantly focus on identifying these factors, attention should also be given to minimizing barriers to seeking help, ensuring adolescents have positive experiences with psychological assistance. While survey-type studies dominate the literature on adolescents' help-seeking behavior, there is a notable scarcity of experimental research. Conducting experimental studies

could help mitigate factors hindering adolescents' attitudes and intentions towards seeking psychological help, ultimately increasing their willingness to seek assistance.

Evidence suggests that psycho-educational programs enhance awareness and reduce negative attitudes towards seeking help (Jorm et al. 2003, MacInnes and Lewis 2008, Yanos et al. 2015). In Türkiye, educational initiatives grounded in the theory of planned behavior could be developed to address adolescents' negative attitudes and boost their intention to seek psychological help. Introducing adolescents to information about seeking psychological help, anti-stigma campaigns, mental health literacy, short-term online training, and psycho-educational programs have all been shown to bolster the intention to seek help (Brown and Bradley 2002, Giroux and Geiss 2019, Pinto-Foltz et al. 2011, Taylor-Rodgers and Batterham 2014, Vergili and Tagay 2016).

Implementing training programs based on the theory of planned behavior is recommended for future studies. This approach has the potential to cultivate positive attitudes towards seeking psychological help among adolescents, thereby contributing methodological innovation to the existing literature.

The theory of planned behavior finds application across various disciplines (Özer and Yılmaz 2017, Yoldaş and Dilek 2020). It holds significance in fields like economics, politics, marketing, advertising, and psychology, particularly in discerning factors related to attitudes and intentions towards seeking psychological assistance. While approaches such as cognitive behavioral therapy, person-centered therapy, and gestalt therapy are prevalent in addressing psychological issues, the theory of planned behavior specifically targets the determinants of help-seeking behavior. Despite the limited number of experimental studies employing this theory, there's potential for its expansion within the literature, particularly in mental health research. Utilizing the theory of planned behavior in mental health studies could prove beneficial, offering insights for practitioners, field experts, and researchers. Therefore, it is suggested that further exploration and application of this theory in the realm of mental health could enhance our understanding and practice in the field.

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