

Examining Effectiveness of the Intervention Program on the Attitude and Intention of Seeking Psychological Help in Adolescents

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Abstract

This research examined the effectiveness of a planned behavior theory-oriented psycho-educational program on adolescents' attitudes and intentions to seek psychological help. The researchers used embedded designs, one of the mixed methods designs. Participants are students at a high school in Iğdır, Turkey, in the 2020-2021 academic year. The research study group consists of 26 people, 13 in the experimental group and 13 in the control group. We used a 2x3 ANOVA model for the effectiveness of the psycho-education program. We conducted content analysis on qualitative data. The study revealed that intervention program was effective in reducing adolescents' negative attitudes towards receiving psychological help and increasing their intention to seek psychological help. In this study, qualitative data supports the quantitative findings. The results show that the theory of planned behavior-oriented psycho-education program is an effective intervention program in reducing negative attitudes towards seeking psychological help and increasing intentions to seek psychological help.

Keywords: Attitude and intention to seek psychological help, adolescent, mixed method.

Introduction

Adolescence is one of the most important periods of human life. With this period, it is seen that a number of social, emotional and cognitive changes, especially physiological changes, are experienced. Adolescence is considered as a period in which the individual faces important problems (Savi-Çakar et al., 2020). In this period, emotional and mental problems are experienced more than in childhood (Koç, 2004). These problems appear as adaptation problems, problems in relationships with family and peers, and academic problems (Kulaksızoğlu, 2019). At the same time, problems such as identity problems, school and peer pressure, expectations, violence and independence from the family can also be experienced (Steinberg, 2013). In addition, depression, anxiety, anger (Rice et al., 2013); suicide (Sayıl & Devrimci-Özgüven, 2002) are among the important problems experienced. Considering the problems experienced during adolescence, it can be said that adolescents are at risk and it is imperative that they receive psychological help. When the literature was examined, it was revealed that adolescents do not have enough psychological help behaviours (Chen et al., 2014; Kılıç, 2020; Savi-Çakar et al., 2020). As a matter of fact, Çetin (2016) revealed that only 17% of adolescents received help from the guidance

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service. Similarly, Divin et al. (2018) revealed that students were not willing to receive psychological help. Şen (2011) stated that 73.1% of adolescents could not benefit sufficiently from the counselling service. Baltacı and Karataş (2013) stated that approximately 17% of the students went to the guidance service under the pressure of their parents, and (Babayev, 2016) stated that students evaluate the school psychologist as a person who deals with problematic people and therefore avoid getting psychological help.

When the findings in the literature are evaluated, it can be said that although adolescents experience many problems, they do not receive psychological help. When an adolescent individual encounters a problem, he/she sometimes solves it himself/herself and sometimes solves his/her problems by getting support from his/her environment (Fry et al., 2014). Adolescents are inadequate in solving some problems and this situation poses a threat to mental health (Geldard & Geldard, 2013). At this stage, getting psychological help from an expert can be effective in solving their problems. Getting psychological help is an important coping behaviour for adolescents to solve their problems. Especially receiving psychological help from a professional is effective in reducing the problems of the individual (Rickwood & Thomas, 2012). Receiving psychological help is defined as an individual's tendency to seek help from a mental health professional for mental problems (Özbay et al., 2011). It is desirable for adolescents to receive psychological help from a mental health professional. In this context, receiving professional psychological help can be considered as a protective factor in combating mental problems. However, adolescents avoid getting professional psychological help thinking that they will be stigmatised. When the literature is examined, it is not seen that adolescents' sources of help are mostly family and friends (Freake et al., 2007; Kızıldağ et al., 2012; Savi-Çakar et al., 2020; Rickwood & Thomas, 2012). In the literature, adolescents are more likely to seek help from non-professional sources instead of professional sources.

Psychological help-seeking behaviour is influenced by individual and social factors. It is very important to benefit from theoretical approaches to understand the behaviour of seeking psychological help. One of these theoretical approaches is the theory of planned behaviour. The theory of planned behaviour (PDK) focuses on the factors affecting psychological help-seeking behaviour. These factors are attitude towards behaviour, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control (Vogel et al., 2007). According to PDK, one of the factors affecting attitudes towards seeking psychological help is the self-stigmatisation factor. Self-stigmatisation is the individual's feeling that he/she is inadequate and weak when receiving help (Vogel et al., 2005). Self-stigmatisation decreases self-esteem and self-efficacy in individuals. High self-stigmatisation reduces the intention to get help. Larson and Corrigan (2010) found that as self-stigma increases, the individual's behaviour of seeking psychological help decreases. Another factor affecting attitudes towards seeking psychological help is social stigmatisation. Social stigmatisation is the perception that an individual who seeks psychological help is not socially accepted (Vogel et al., 2005). It has been stated that as the level of social stigmatisation increases, receiving psychological help decreases (Hobson, 2008). Other studies show similar results (Bicil, 2012; Topkaya, 2011). When the studies in the literature are evaluated, it is seen that adolescents' attitudes towards seeking psychological help are negative. In this respect, there is a need to determine the attitudes of adolescents towards psychological help-seeking behaviour and to make intervention programmes for this purpose. In this study, it is expected that adolescents' negative attitudes towards psychological help-seeking behaviour will be changed. Negative attitudes of adolescents towards seeking

psychological help negatively affect their intention to seek psychological help (Topkaya, 2011). As a matter of fact, according to Kapıkıran and Kapıkıran (2013), having negative perceptions about getting help reduces the individual's intention to get help. Intention to seek psychological help is defined as an individual's willingness to seek help in the face of a problem (Topkaya, 2011).

When the literature was examined, it was revealed that there are limited studies on adolescents' attitudes and intention to seek psychological help. These studies include raising awareness with a mental health literacy programme (Pinto-Foltz et al., 2011); increasing the intention to seek psychological help with an online short-term psycho-education programme (Taylor-Rodgers & Batterham, 2014); developing a positive attitude towards seeking psychological help with a psycho-education programme (Vergili & Tagay, 2016); reducing the stigma related to seeking help with campaigns (Giroux & Geiss, 2019); and increasing the self-efficacy of individuals with a school-based power resources programme (Calear et al., 2021). When the studies conducted are examined, it is noticeable that there is no theoretically oriented intervention study on the attitude and intention to seek psychological help. There is no study conducted in Turkey on this subject. In this study, the intervention based on the theory of planned behaviour in reducing adolescents' negative attitudes towards seeking psychological help and increasing their intentions to seek psychological help is seen as a distinctive feature from other studies. The theory of planned behaviour is an important theory used to explain human behaviour in the field of social psychology (Başbuğ, 2008). The theory of planned behaviour focuses on the factors that are effective in the emergence of behaviour. According to the theory of planned behaviour, the intention to seek psychological help is influenced by attitude towards seeking psychological help, subjective norms regarding behaviour and perceived behavioural control (Vogel et al., 2007). Attitude towards behaviour is based on the assumption that if a behaviour is perceived as positive, the probability of that behaviour increases. Subjective Norm is the expectations of people who can be considered important for the individual regarding the individual's performance of the behaviour (Mistry et al., 2015). Perceived behavioural control is defined as the belief about the ease or difficulty of performing a behaviour (Song & Park, 2015). Accordingly, the positive attitude of the individual about the behaviour, the support of the environment to the individual and the self-confidence of the individual contribute to the performance of the behaviour. According to this theory, if the barriers to seeking psychological help are low, the attitude towards seeking psychological help may be positive (Ajzen et al., 2007). The theory of planned behaviour is used to explain the individual's purchasing behaviour and consumer decision-making processes (Baltacı, 2021); economics, health, psychology (Onur & Kırıkçı, 2018); purchasing behaviour (Yolda & Dilek, 2020). It is planned to address the theory of planned behaviour, which is used in different disciplines, in the literature on attitudes and intention to seek psychological help. In this study, it is evaluated that a psycho-education programme based on the theory of planned behaviour, which is used in many fields such as social psychology, marketing, politics and economics, can be effective on adolescents' intention to seek psychological help. While the theory of planned behaviour focuses on behaviour and the factors underlying behaviour, theories such as cognitive-behavioural therapy, gestalt therapy, narrative therapy and person-centred therapy focus on how to treat problems. For example, cognitive behavioural therapy is frequently used in the treatment of problems such as anxiety, depression, anger, eating and personality disorders (Türkçapar & Sargın, 2012). In this context, it is thought that the theory of planned behaviour may be more effective than other theories in revealing the factors that are effective in individuals' decision to seek psychological help. The basic concepts of the theory of planned behaviour were taken into consideration

in the development of the psycho-education programme. These concepts were discussed in each session within the framework of the systematic of the theory of planned behaviour.

Although the mental problems experienced by adolescents are increasing, services for getting help are not increasing at the same rate. In order to effectively plan and support mental health services for adolescents, it is necessary to carry out studies to reduce the negative attitudes and intentions that prevent them from getting help. Therefore, the aim of this study is to examine the effectiveness of a planned behaviour theory-oriented psycho-education intervention programme on adolescents' attitudes and intentions to seek psychological help. Thus, we expect that adolescents' negative perceptions about receiving help from mental health professionals will change. In line with this general aim, the following sub-problems were determined:

1. The social stigma levels of adolescents who participated in the psycho-education programme for the theory of planned behaviour regarding the attitude of receiving psychological help will decrease significantly compared to the control group.
2. Self-stigmatisation levels of adolescents who participated in the psycho-education programme for the theory of planned behaviour regarding the attitude of receiving psychological help will decrease significantly compared to the control group.
3. The intention of adolescents participating in the psycho-education programme for the theory of planned behaviour to seek psychological help for problems related to negative emotions will increase significantly compared to the control group.
4. The intention of adolescents participating in the psycho-education programme for the theory of planned behaviour to seek psychological help for problems related to personal and social development will increase significantly compared to the control group.
5. The intention of adolescents who participated in the psycho-education programme for the theory of planned behaviour to seek psychological help for problems related to negative thoughts will increase significantly compared to the control group.

Method

Research model

For this research, we used the embedded design type of mixed research method (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). In a embedded design, one of the quantitative-qualitative methods is more dominant and the other is supportive (Creswell & Garret, 2008). In this study, qualitative data were embedded in the experimental design.

Sampling

The participants comprised 160 students (86 male, 74 female) studying in the 9th, 10th and 11th grades of a secondary school in Iğdır, Türkiye. The researchers received ethical approval from the X University Educational Sciences Ethics Committee before proceeding with the study (Date: 13.05.2020, meeting number: 2020, and decision number: 07). Then, they received permission from the official institutions in Iğdır province, where the program will be carried out (Date: 25.10.2020, number: E.15490342). The Scale

for Determining Adolescents' Attitudes towards Seeking Psychological Help and the Scale for Determining Adolescents' Intention to Seek Psychological Help were applied to the participants. While selecting the study group, students with high (negative) attitude scores of seeking psychological help and low scores of intention to seek psychological help were selected among the students. We determined the participants by calculating the arithmetic mean and standard deviation scores of the scales. As a result of this calculation, we decided to include 32 students above one standard deviation point of the arithmetic mean of the scales in the study. The principle of voluntariness was taken into consideration in determining the participants. The researchers interviewed all 32 students and gave information about the program. However, six students stated they did not want to participate, so we continued the study with 26 students. The sample represents the middle class in socio-economic terms and consists of Turkish students.

We asked the students to submit informed consent forms signed by their parents to participate in the study. We received signed informed consent forms from all participants. In the present study, we included individuals with high psychological help seeking scores and low intention to seek psychological help. We randomly assigned 26 students with high scores on the Adolescents' Attitudes Towards Seeking Psychological Help Scale and 26 students with low scores on the Intention to Seek Psychological Help Scale. The experimental and control groups consisted of 13 participants each. The average age of the participants in the experimental and control groups was 14.7 years. The experimental group consisted of 8 women (61.5%) and 5 men (38.5%); the control group consisted of 6 females (46.2%) and 7 males (53.8%). The experimental group has 3 students from 9th grade, 5 students from 10th and 11th grades. In the control group, there were 5 students from 9th grade, 7 from 10th grade and 1 from 11th grade.

The psycho-education program was implemented face-to-face in the autumn semester of the 2021-2022 academic year. The sessions were held on the same day and time every week between September and December. The sessions were held once a week in the multi-purpose training hall of the school. The psycho-education program consists of 10 sessions. The content of the psycho-education program includes activities such as information about the theory of planned behavior (PBTPE), problem areas, sources and attitudes towards seeking psychological help, social and self-stigma, self-efficacy development, and case study analysis.

Data Collection Tools

Personal Information Form

This form includes variables such as age, gender, grade level, school type, and whether the participants have received psychological help before or not.

Scale for Determining Adolescents' Attitude towards Seeking Psychological Help

We used the scale Aras and Peker (2021) developed to determine adolescents' attitudes towards seeking psychological help. The scale consists of 9 items and two sub-dimensions: social stigma and self-stigma. The overall Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient was calculated as .86, .85 for the social stigmatization sub-dimension and .73 for the self-stigma sub-dimension. The increase in scores on the scale sub-dimensions shows that stigma is important in receiving psychological help.

Scale for determining adolescents' intention to seek psychological help: We used the scale developed by Aras and Peker (2021) to determine adolescents' intention to seek psychological help. This scale consists of 22 items and sub-dimensions of problems with negative emotions, personal and social development, and problems with negative thoughts. Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient obtained from the scale was calculated as .94, .91 for problems related to negative emotions, .77 for problems related to negative thoughts, and .89 for personal and social development. The increase in the scores obtained from the sub-dimensions of the scale indicates the importance of that sub-dimension in the intention to seek help.

Semi-structured Interview Form

We used this form to determine adolescents' experiences and opinions about the psycho-education program.

Reflective Diaries

At the end of each experimental session, a diary was kept to determine the participants' feelings and thoughts about the session. These diaries played a supportive role in data analysis.

Data analyses

Quantitative Data Analyses

In the study, we used the Independent Sample t-test to examine whether the pretest scores of the experimental and control groups were equivalent to each other. In order to examine the normal distribution level of the data, we looked at the skewness and kurtosis values. We applied Levene's test for the homogeneity of variance distributions. For the effectiveness of the psycho-education programme, we used a 2x3 (experimental/control group X pretest/post-test/follow-up-test) ANOVA model. We used the SPSS 23.00 programme for all these procedures.

Qualitative Data Analyses

The researchers used semi-structured interview forms and reflective diaries to support the results of the experimental study. We obtained the participants' permission for reflective diaries and semi-structured interviews. The qualitative data were first organised into a written document. Then we recorded it in Word on the computer. When analyzing qualitative data, we assigned each person a letter code and numeric number. The procedures suggested by Creswell and Plano Clark (2015) were followed in data analysis. These processes are coding, the formation of themes and categories, the presentation of participants' views, and reporting, respectively. We used Nvivo 12 Programme for the analysis of qualitative data.

Findings

Preliminary Analyses

Before analysing the data in the study, we examined the level of meeting the assumptions about the experimental study. For a parametric test to be used, the pretest scores of the experimental and control groups must be equivalent, the variance distributions must be homogeneous, and the data must be

normally distributed. Whether the pretest scores of the experimental and control groups were equal to each other was analysed by independent sample t-test. The results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive Findings Related to the Pretest Scores of the Experimental and Control Groups

Scale	Group	N	\bar{X}	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	Levene (p)
Social Stigma	Experimental	13	20.76	2.52	.324	-.547	.96(.33*)
	Control	13	21.38	2.06	.295	-.429	
Self-Stigma	Experimental	13	15.15	2.44	.502	-.645	.08(.78*)
	Control	13	15.69	2.65	.571	-.708	
Negative Emotions	Experimental	13	17.38	4.57	-.418	-.766	1.49(.23*)
	Control	13	16.61	3.43	-.396	-.698	
Personal and Social Development	Experimental	13	18.00	4.72	.180	-1.23	1.78(.19*)
	Control	13	17.69	3.45	.197	-1.06	
Negative Thought	Experimental	13	7.23	2.12	-.256	-.876	.45(.51*)
	Control	13	6.38	1.61	-.212	-.753	

* $p > .05$

The results in Table 1 show that the arithmetic mean scores of the pretest scores of the scales applied to the experimental and control groups are equal. Levene's test examined the homogeneity of variance of the sub-dimensions of the Scales for Determining Attitude and Intention to Seek Psychological Help of the individuals in the experimental and control groups. The results show that the sub-dimensions of the scales have a homogeneous distribution ($p > .05$). The fact that the skewness and kurtosis values in Table 1 are between +2 and -2 indicates that the pretest scores of the experimental and control groups meet the normal distribution conditions (Finney & DiStefano, 2006).

Anova Analysis for Mixed Measures

The analysis results for the experimental study are shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Results of the two-factor anova analysis

Variable	Training Group		Control Group		Follow-up test		
Group	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest	Anova
Statistics	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	F
Social Stigma	20.76(2.5)	8.77(3.56)	21.38(2.0)	20.46(4.1)	6.69(1.65)	20.69(3.1)	45.56*
Self-Stigma	15.15(2.4)	6.23(2.08)	15.69(2.6)	15.15(1.2)	5.38(1.61)	15.77(2.4)	35.51*
Negative Emotions	17.38(4.5)	23.15(4.5)	16.61(3.4)	17.69(4.9)	27.23(2.3)	17.23(4.2)	10.99*
Personal and Social Development	18.00(4.7)	24.69(6.2)	17.69(3.4)	19.69(4.7)	30.84(3.6)	19.92(5.1)	17.45*
Negative Thoughts	7.23(2.12)	9.62(2.40)	6.38(1.61)	6.46(1.85)	11.31(1.0)	6.53(1.33)	9.88*

* $p < .05$

Results from the ANOVA for mixed measures showed that the group*measure effect was significant for social stigma ($F_{2-48} = 45.56$; $p < 0.05$), self-stigma ($F_{2-48} = 35.51$; $p < 0.05$), negative emotions ($F_{2-48} = 10.99$; $p < 0.05$), personal and social development ($F_{2-48} = 17.45$; $p < 0.05$), negative thoughts ($F_{2-48} = 9.88$; $p < 0.05$) are statistically significant. These findings show that the pretest, post-test and follow-up test scores of the sub-dimensions of the scales determining the attitude towards seeking psychological help and the intention to seek psychological help of the experimental group and the control group in the psycho-education program with the theory of planned behavior approach differed. These results confirm the hypotheses.

In between-group measurements, 65% of the change in the social stigma sub-dimension of the Scale for Determining Attitude towards Seeking Psychological Help and 60% of the change in the level of self-stigma were caused by the experimental application. We found that the change in the negative emotions, personal and social development and negative thoughts sub-dimensions of the Scale for Determining Intention to Seek Psychological Help was caused by the experimental application by 31%, 42% and 42%, respectively.

Results of the Bonferroni test (Table 3) Adolescents' Attitude to Seek Psychological Help (social and self-stigma) and Determining Adolescents' Intention to Seek Psychological Help (Problems with Negative Emotions and Thoughts, Personal and Social Development) It shows that there is a significant difference between the pretest scores and the posttest and follow-up tests of the sub-dimensions of the scales. The results reveal that the students who participated in the theory of planned behavior-oriented psycho-education program had a significant decrease in their negative attitudes towards seeking psychological

help, and a significant increase in their intention to seek psychological help, and this difference was relatively permanent, compared to the students in the control group.

Table 1

Bonferroni Test Results

	(I) Measurement	(J) Measurement	Mean Difference (I-J)
Social Stigma	EG-pretest	EPT	12.0*
		EFT	14.07*
	EG-posttest	COT	-12.61*
		CPT	-11.69*
	EG-follow up test	COT	-14.69*
		CPT	-13.76*
		CFT	-14.00*
Self-Stigmatisation	EG-pretest	EPT	8.92*
		EFT	9.76*
	EG-posttest	COT	-9.46*
		CPT	-8.92*
	EG-follow up test	COT	-10.30*
		CPT	-9.76*
		CFT	-10.38*
Negative Emotions	EG-pretest	EPT	-5.77*
		EFT	-9.85*
	EG-posttest	COT	6.53*
		CPT	5.46*
	EG-follow up test	COT	10.61*
		CPT	9.53*
		CFT	10.00*
Personal and Social	EG-pretest	EPT	-6.69*
		EFT	-12.84*
	EG-posttest	COT	7.0*
		CPT	5.00

Negative Thoughts	EG-follow up test	COT	13.15*
		CPT	11.15*
		CFT	12.92*
	EG-pretest	EPT	-2.38*
		EFT	-4.07*
	EG-posttest	COT	3.23*
		KST	3.15*
	EG-follow up test	COT	4.92*
		CPT	4.84*
		CFT	4.76*

* $p < .05$

**EG: Experimental group, EPT: Experimental group post-test, EFT: Experimental group follow-up test, COT: Control group pre-test, CPT: Control group post-test, CFT: Control group follow-up test

Findings Related to the Qualitative Dimension of the Research

In this part of the study, the evaluations of the participants regarding the psycho-education programme are presented. Participant views on the themes and categories obtained from the interviews are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Opinions on the Theme of Psycho-Education Programme Experience

Theme	Category	Opinions
Psycho-education Programme Experience	Negative Perspective	S1) The number of activities could have been more. I think 13 people are too few, more people could have been given this training.
	Positive Perspective	S3) This training was very good for me, I wish it to continue, I want to.
		S4) I met new people and learnt many good things in this training.
	Self-Disclosure	S4) It made me express myself better. I can speak easily now. I used to be embarrassed.
Adolescents' Thoughts About Themselves	Self Recognition	Ö6) It turned out that I was an emotional person, I started to look at life more positively.
Perspective on Life	Awareness Raising	S3) I realised that I should consult a specialist about my problem.
	Positive Perspective	S3) I used to be very pessimistic, now I have a positive outlook.

Changes in the lives of adolescents	Awareness of Stigma	S4) I don't judge people anymore. S1) It's not a bad thing to receiving help.
	Perspectives on People Receiving Psychological Help	S6) I realised that those who receive psychological help are not crazy, they are human beings too.
	Empathising	S8) I evaluate things by putting myself in someone else's shoes.
	Perceived Control	S7) I control myself now. I used to receiving angry easily.
	Contribution to Communication	S1) I can now communicate easily.
	Awareness of Receiving Help	S3) I realised it was necessary to get help.
	Awareness of the Problem	S5) I might have a problem too. When I have a problem, I need to get help.

Findings Related to Reflective Diaries

In this section, the findings in the reflective diaries taken from the participants at the end of each session are presented. Participant views on the themes and categories obtained from the interviews are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Opinions on Receiving Psychological Help

Theme	Category	Participants' Views
Receiving Psychological Help	Positive Attitude	S5) Getting psychological help is a good thing. It is useful.
	Stigma	S3) People don't get help because their environment thinks badly. When I get psychological help, no matter what anyone says, it doesn't concern me. People's criticisms do not affect me.
	Psychological Help Resources	S3) Now I know who to go to when I need something. S2) I should get psychological help from experts.
Personal	Self Recognition	S10) I saw that I was more courageous. S5) I learnt the truth about some things I knew wrong.
	Communicating	S5) I started to communicate better

Development	<i>with people.</i>	
	Awareness towards the Problem	S3) <i>Someone else has the same problem as me.</i> S4) <i>Everyone can have problems.</i>
	Positive Self Perception	S2) <i>I liked it very much when my opinions were valued.</i>
	Özgüven Kazanma	S1) <i>Gaining Self-Confidence</i>
Intention to Seek Psychological Help	Willingness to Receive Help	S2) <i>I should get help when I have psychological problems.</i>
	Expressing Emotions	S8) <i>I'm so relieved, so happy that I told you about my problem.</i>
	Expected Benefit in receiving help	S3) <i>I will add a lot to myself if I get help.</i> S6) <i>I can solve my problems if I get help.</i>
	Sharing	S2) <i>It felt good to share my thoughts.</i>

Discussion

The results of the study show that the psycho-education programme based on the theory of planned behaviour decreased adolescents' negative attitudes towards seeking psychological help and was effective in increasing their intention to seek psychological help. These scores were maintained after the follow-up test. The results of the study show that the social stigma levels of adolescents who participated in the psycho-education programme regarding their attitudes towards seeking psychological help decreased. There are similar studies in the literature that support the results of the research (Brown & Bradley, 2002; Giroux & Geiss, 2019). For example, Caelear et al. (2021) stated that the school-based programme increased adolescents' awareness of seeking psychological help and reduced stigma. Thus, the results of the study were similar to the results of the research in the literature. The findings in the reflective diaries are consistent with the results of the experimental study. For example; in the category of positive attitude in the theme of receiving psychological help, S7: 'I have seen that people affect our thoughts very badly. What people experience such as mental illness, insanity is not actually bad. It is good to get help' shows that social stigmatisation has decreased. The results of the interviews with the students regarding the evaluation of the psycho-education programme are related to the results of the experimental study. In the category of awareness of stigmatisation in the theme of view of life, S5 said 'Yes, I don't find people strange anymore, I used to condemn people in terms of appearance and temperament, but I don't do that anymore' and S10 in the category of view of those who receive psychological help said: 'I learnt not to despise people, not to call them crazy, before I received

the training, I thought that those who received help were crazy. This idea has changed now' support the experimental result of the research.

According to the theory of planned behaviour, social stigma is an important barrier to receiving psychological help (Vogel et al., 2007). People's attitudes towards receiving professional help may be affected by the value judgements of the society, fear of being labelled as mentally ill, the thought of being judged for their future lives, etc. (Arslantaş et al., 2011). Students may care less about the negative thoughts of their friends about benefiting from a mental health service. Likewise, they may ignore the negative judgements of others about themselves. As a result, they may feel less social pressure from other people. Not being afraid of being stigmatised for getting help and paying less attention to what others think can positively improve the attitude towards getting psychological help.

The results of the study show that the self-stigmatisation levels of adolescents who participated in PBTPE decreased in relation to the attitude of receiving psychological help. There are similar studies supporting this result in the literature (Costin et al., 2009; Çebi, 2009; Wilson & Deane, 2001). For example, Vergili (2017) states that psycho-education programme practices positively affect attitudes towards seeking psychological help and provide awareness of self-stigma. Taylor-Rodgers and Batterham (2014) found that individuals participating in a short-term online psycho-education intervention study positively increased their attitudes towards getting help. Similarly, MacInnes and Lewis (2008) found that a short-term programme was effective in reducing individuals' attitudes towards self-stigma related to the use of mental health services. The results in the reflective diaries are consistent with the results of the experimental study. In the stigmatisation category in the theme of receiving psychological help, S2's statement "When I receive psychological help, no matter what anyone says, it does not concern me" shows that self-stigmatisation has decreased. The results of the interviews with the students regarding the evaluation of the psycho-education programme are related to the results of the experimental study. In the category of awareness of stigmatisation in the theme of view of life, S5's thought: 'In the past, when I thought I was getting help, I didn't want it at all, I felt bad. Now I don't feel that way.' can be shown as an example. Similarly, S9 in the category of providing awareness: 'It increased my self-confidence. I realised that when I have a problem, I should go to an expert, go to the guidance service' supports the research result. The quantitative findings are supported by the results obtained from the interviews with the students at the end of the study. For example, students stated that they did not see themselves as inadequate while receiving psychological help as a result of psycho-education, that they stopped stigmatising themselves as crazy or sick, and that having psychological problems and receiving psychological help is a normal situation, which coincides with the result of the quantitative finding.

The results of the study show that adolescents who participated in PBTPE increased their intention to seek psychological help for negative emotions. There are similar studies supporting this result in the literature (Westerhof et al., 2008). Similarly, Han et al. (2006) emphasised that psycho-educational activities were effective in increasing the intention to seek psychological help. The results in the reflective diaries are consistent with the results of the experimental study. For example, in the category of expressing emotions in the theme of intention to seek psychological help, the statements of S8: 'I want my feelings that I share to change' and S11: 'I had a very big event, I was not telling anyone. But thanks to this activity, I told, I felt a little relieved' show that negative emotions decreased. These findings are supported in the literature (Grimmer & Tribe, 2001; Kakhnovets, 2011; Oteiza, 2010). As a matter of fact,

Erdem and Özdemir (2020) determined that individuals mostly wanted to receive psychological counselling services on issues such as problems in bilateral relationships, family problems, stress and anxiety. These results show that the participants developed awareness about the problems related to negative emotions and increased their behaviour of seeking psychological help. The results of the interviews with the students regarding the evaluation of the psycho-education programme confirm the findings. For example, S3: 'Now I can listen to and understand my friends, I can put myself in their shoes, I can't judge them' and S4: 'Yes, I learned to empathise, I learned to listen to others without criticising them. I started to make my own decisions' support the results of the research. The results of this study support the theory of planned behaviour's assumption of perceived behavioural control regarding the intention to seek psychological help. This programme may help individuals to cope with negative emotions such as anxiety, fear and anger that prevent individuals from self-disclosure. Controlling these negative emotions and increasing beliefs about coping with negative emotions may be effective in increasing individuals' self-efficacy beliefs about getting help. According to the theory of planned behaviour, an increase in individuals' self-efficacy beliefs may increase their intention to seek psychological help (Mo & Mak, 2009).

The results of the study show that the intention of adolescents participating in PBTPE to receive psychological help related to personal and social development increased. There are studies supporting this result in the literature (Chandrasekara, 2016; Chillemi et al., 2020; Erdem & Özdemir, 2020; Güneş-Çakmak, 2020). The results in the reflective diaries are consistent with the results of the experimental study. For example, in the self-knowledge category in the theme of personal development, the statements of S5: 'I realised that I was more courageous to speak' and S8: 'I realised some things about myself. I understood that some things I knew were wrong' are consistent with the research finding. Similarly, in the category of communicating, S1: 'For example, I would not be able to get up and speak in such an environment. Speaking here with people I do not know looking at me, I would never know what I would do. In other words, I realised that my self-confidence increased' points to an increase in personal and social development. Interviews with the students regarding the evaluation of the psycho-education programme confirm the results of the experimental study. For example, the statements of S2: 'I can communicate more easily with my teachers, my self-confidence has increased' in the category of contribution to communication in the theme of changes in the lives of adolescents and S3: 'I became aware of my problems' in the category of awareness of problems support this result. There are other studies supporting these results in the literature (Ciclitira et al., 2012; Tarsuslu, 2018). Von Haenisch (2011) emphasised that gaining awareness about the process of getting help is effective in increasing help-seeking behaviours. According to the theory of planned behaviour, personal and social factors are effective in an individual's intention to seek psychological help. For example, individuals' efforts to meet their personal and social development needs positively affect their intention to seek psychological help (Zhao & Hu, 2022). Likewise, the individual's efforts to get to know himself/herself, increase his/her desire to communicate with other people, and attempts to improve social relations can improve the intention to seek psychological help (Ajzen et al., 2007). According to the theory of planned behaviour, an individual's behaviours towards personal and social development positively affect the intention to seek psychological help. This situation may increase the individual's behaviours of seeking psychological help.

Research findings indicate that adolescents participating in PBTPE have an increased intention to seek psychological help regarding negative thoughts. There are studies in the literature supporting this result (Aho-Mustonen et al., 2011; Gould et al., 2007). Indeed, Alvidrez et al. (2009) stated that psycho-education programs enhance the intention to seek help for problems related to negative thoughts and raise awareness of mental health issues. Similarly, Shin et al. (2002) found that psycho-education programs increase participants' positive attitudes toward seeking help. In another study, Chillemi et al. (2020) reported that psycho-education programs enhance adolescents' positive thoughts regarding their intention to seek psychological help. The results from reflective journals are consistent with the findings of the experimental study. In the self-confidence gain category under the theme of intention to seek psychological help, S4's statement: *"In the past, I would withdraw when such an activity took place, but in this activity, I expressed my thoughts without hesitation. It was nice."* serves as an example. Similarly, in the help-seeking desire category, S3's statement: *"I realized this: In such a situation, I would go to a professional."* indicates a decrease in negative thoughts. The results of interviews conducted with students regarding the evaluation of the psycho-education program confirm the findings of the experimental study. In the positive perspective on stigma category under the theme of life perspective, S6's statement: *"Yes, instead of bottling up problems, it taught me to seek help and overcome them. I wish I had taken this training earlier."* and S1's statement: *"I can say that I have a generally positive outlook now. I'm not like I used to be. I used to be very pessimistic, but now I feel like if I want, I can improve things."* support the experimental findings of the study.

According to the Theory of Planned Behavior, issues related to negative thoughts influence an individual's intention to seek psychological help (Ajzen et al., 2007; Mo & Mak, 2009). Recognizing negative thoughts and seeking help for them may increase an individual's intention to seek psychological assistance. Consequently, when experiencing psychological problems, individuals may more easily turn to a mental health professional for help.

According to the Theory of Planned Behavior, an increase in perceived behavioral control enhances the intention to seek psychological help. Strengthening one's belief in coping with negative thoughts, having positive expectations about seeking psychological help, and developing self-efficacy in controlling negative thoughts can increase the intention to seek psychological help. This, in turn, may lead individuals to engage in help-seeking behaviors for issues related to negative thoughts.

Limitations and Recommendations

The small number of participants in the experimental process can be considered as the first limitation of the research. Researchers can study with a larger sample to determine the effectiveness of the program. We conducted this research in a high school in a province. Similar studies can be conducted with secondary school and university students in different provinces. People who had previously received a psychiatric diagnosis or received psychological support were not included in the study. In future studies, the effectiveness of PBTPE can be examined comparatively with participants who have received a psychiatric diagnosis or have previously received psychological support. In this study, the follow-up test regarding the effectiveness of the psycho-educational program was limited to 2-month measurements. Future studies could test with 6-12 month measurements. Emotions can influence attitudes and intentions to seek psychological help. Activities that will reduce negative emotions can be added to subsequent psycho-educational studies.

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