




# The Effect of Stressful Life Events of Syrian Asylum Seekers on Attitudes Towards Seeking Psychological Help: The Mediation Effect of Multidimensional Perceived Social Support

Mustafa Selim ALTINIŞIK<sup>1</sup>, Esat ŞANLI<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Psych. Counseling and Guidance Department, Ondokuz Mayıs University, Samsun, Türkiye  0000-0003-1958-3421

<sup>2</sup> Psych. Counseling and Guidance Department, Ondokuz Mayıs University, Samsun, Türkiye  0000-0001-8227-8097

## ARTICLE INFO

### Article History

Received 18.05.2022

Received in revised form  
03.07.2022

Accepted 18.12.2022

Article Type: Research  
Article



## ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study aims to understand whether there is a significant relationship between the effects of stressful life events that Syrian refugees are exposed to and their attitudes toward seeking psychological help. The study also aimed to examine the multidimensional perceived social support by Syrian asylum seekers between the impacts of stressful life events they were exposed to and their attitudes towards seeking psychological help in terms of mediating role. Method: The study population of the research consists of Syrian refugees who migrated to Turkey because of the Syrian war. A total of 467 Syrian asylum seekers (187 women, 280 men) aged between 18-65 years participated in the study. The Impact of Life Events Scale, the Attitude Towards Seeking Psychological Help Scale, and the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support were used as data collection tools. This study analyzed the mediating effect of the multidimensional perceived social support factor between stressful life events and the attitude factor towards seeking professional psychological help using structural equation modeling. Results: It has been observed that social support significantly affects Syrian refugees' attitudes towards seeking psychological help. In addition, it is thought that the negative relationship between stressful life events and social support affects attitudes towards seeking psychological help and reveals self-hiding behavior in this population. In addition, it is believed that a positive attitude toward seeking psychological help may be beneficial if it is accompanied by qualified social support.

Keywords:

Seeking psychological help, stressful life events, Syrian asylum seekers, Syrian refugees

## 1. Introduction

Many people continue to be subject to forced migration due to war, conflict, and internal turmoil (Holmes, 2022). This situation causes people of various ethnic origins to evolve into refugee groups and to be on the world agenda (Bose, 2022). Thus, Afghan asylum seekers, the world's largest group of asylum seekers for more than 30 years, have been replaced by Syrian asylum seekers due to the crisis in Syria (UNHRC, 2015). As a result, Syrian asylum seekers have become the largest group of asylum seekers due to a single conflict in a generation (UNHRC, 2015). In terms of functionality, Turkey is a country that has a transitional position (Öztürk & Boyacı, 2022; Tekin, 2007).

For this reason, the circumstances in Syria have affected Turkey directly, and it is noted that the number of people applying to become asylum seekers has increased significantly. About half of Syria, which had a population of 22 million before the war, has left their country. About 4 million have taken refuge in Turkey (UNHRC, 2022; Fine, 2018). In this context, Syrian asylum seekers have become the most populous ethnic

<sup>1</sup>Corresponding author's address: Ondokuz Mayıs University, Kurupelit Campuss, Continuing Education Center, Samsun /Türkiye  
e-mail: [mustafaselim.altinisik@omu.edu.tr](mailto:mustafaselim.altinisik@omu.edu.tr)

**Citation:** Altınışık, M. S. & Şanlı, E. (2023). The effect of stressful life events of Syrian asylum seekers on attitudes towards seeking psychological help: The mediation effect of multidimensional perceived social support. *International Journal of Psychology and Educational Studies*, 10(2), 301-313. <https://dx.doi.org/10.52380/ijpes.2023.10.2.930>

minority in Turkey as well in the world (Sirkeci & Cohen, 2016). In addition, it should be taken into account that many Syrian refugees have personally experienced war and conflict (Schlaudt et al., 2020; Cameron et al., 2018). However, difficult experiences before migration (Delioğlu & Kalaycı, 2022), during migration (Fansa, 2021), and after the migration (Eren & Çavuşoğlu, 2021) are known to deeply affect Syrian refugees. The psychological problems experienced by Syrian asylum seekers caused by this position remain serious as an issue that needs to be addressed. The attitudes of asylum seekers towards getting psychological help are especially important in this context.

The concept of seeking psychological help is stated as; benefiting from various support ways in order to overcome the difficulties the individuals experience or encounter in life (Nicholas et al., 2004). Rogler (1994) expresses the process of seeking psychological help as the period between gaining awareness of the problem situations experienced by individuals and deciding to seek professional help. The time frame that signifies getting psychological help includes individuals' emotional, cognitive, behavioral tendencies, and attitudes towards professional help (Türküm, 2001). Various factors that affect this situation can be mentioned while examining the asylum seekers' processes of seeking psychological help.

The stress asylum seekers are exposed to can be one of the primal factors to reveal the need for psychological help in the case of migration. The reason for that is, the intense stress experienced by asylum seekers causes mental health problems (Ehnholt & Yule, 2006). It is observed that the perception towards the distress situation continues even when there is no direct threat. For example, The existence of various ambiguities, such as status conditions affects the psychological state of asylum seekers and can make them more vulnerable to stress (Tribe, 2002). This situation may lead to an increase in the mental distress of asylum seekers. Although it is stated that Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and depression (Başoğlu et al., 2005) are the leading psychological disorders observed in asylum seekers, the factors affecting the psychological help needs and attitudes of the asylum seekers are not limited to these. The course of the war that has taken place before immigration, mass exposure to violence, torture, and other potentially traumatic events affect psychological health in different ways (Steel et al., 2009). Apart from that, traveling under dangerous conditions, the asylum application process, and socioeconomic and sociopolitical variables also negatively influence the psychological wellness of the seekers (Li et al., 2017; Porter & Haslam, 2005). In the later stages of the process, asylum seekers complain about situations such as the end of the good days, longing for a life left behind or simply a regular life, leaving behind the days in which they had free will, leaving friendships behind, having no one to trust (Kömürcü et al., 2011). Additionally, there are also factors such as stigma anxiety, deportation anxiety, high risk expected from self-disclosure, and psychological and cultural differences (Altınışık et al., 2022; Bar, 2021). All these contribute to the formation and maintenance of various psychological problems such as post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and anxiety in Syrian refugees (Brooks et al., 2022). The asylum seekers staying in the detention center in Hatay stated they did not feel safe and were experiencing strong emotions such as anger, detainment, fear, and sadness (Collyer, 2012). Bir diğer örnekte ise; In another study conducted on 450 Syrian asylum seekers in Akçakale Temporary Shelter, severe anxiety was observed in 19% of the participants (Önen et al., 2014).

In addition to all these adverse conditions endured by asylum seekers, their lack of a social environment from which they can receive support may further increase their need for psychological assistance. Social support at this point, is generally defined as the social relationship between the recipient and the provider, and at least one of the parties must be a beneficiary (Brownell & Shumaker, 1984). The social support process includes informing, evaluation of assistance, social adaptation, and emotional aspects (Cutrona, 1990). Therefore, this process refers to providing an adequate level of social assistance in terms of meeting individual and social needs such as self-confidence, acceptance by society, and meeting their inner needs (Heitzmann & Kaplan, 1988). Social support, which is an important aspect for asylum seekers, is also easing the effects of stressful life events that they are exposed to (Cobb, 1976). It is a known fact that asylum seekers who do not receive social support have more depressive feelings than those who receive social support (King et al., 1998). Supporting this statement, in a study conducted by Simich et al. (2005), it was stated that asylum seekers who do not have social support experience have a high level of stress, and feeling of loneliness, and are more isolated by society. It is likely to see similar results in child asylum seekers. It is stated in a study that the levels of adverse mental health of child asylum seekers who receive social support are lower (Reed et al., 2012).

This group of individuals' family and close environment factors establish the key point during the social support process. It is known that asylum seekers commonly attach importance to family unity. It is also stated that family supports the asylum seekers positively; therefore, the problems experienced by the asylum seekers who do not have family support during the adaptation process are higher (Özbay et al., 2008). At this point, the most important factor is culture (Sundvall et al., 2021). Contrary to the western culture, where individualization is high, it is seen that there is a collective perspective in eastern cultures where the collective lifestyle is active (Pandır, 2021). This case is also similar to the Syrian asylum seekers in Turkey. It is revealed in a study conducted by Karaoğlu (2015) that asylum seekers participating in this research who have families, relatives, friends, or a circle in Turkey tend to follow news about Syria more and talk about it in their daily lives compared to the asylum seekers who do not. It is assumed in this context that bringing the topic up indicates the psychological problems related to the process have been overcome (Karaoğlu, 2015).

Social support processes also affect psychological help-seeking attitudes. In a study conducted by Fischer and Turner (1970), they demonstrated that individuals' attitudes might play an important role in helping psychological help-seeking processes, but that decision-making in this process can be affected by various interpersonal and social elements. To give an example, the social environment that allows and supports an individual's help-seeking behavior affects that individual's judgment to seek psychological help (Topkaya et al., 2019; Topkaya, 2015; Rickwood & Braithwaite, 1994). It was observed in other studies that individuals perceiving significant social support from their families, friends, and others discovered their attitudes towards seeking psychological help more than those who perceived low support (Çebi, 2009; Gourash, 1978; Koydemir-Özden, 2010; Miville & Constantine, 2006). The perceived social support emerges as a predictor of attitudes towards seeking help as a result (Vogel et al., 2005; Çebi, 2009).

All these considered, the effect of the relationship between stressful life events, perceived social support, and attitudes towards receiving psychological help on Syrian asylum seekers is an issue that needs to be investigated. Investigating this relationship pattern will lead to the discovery of the dark aspects of the migration processes of not only Syrian but all asylum seekers around the world. Also, it will provide a more extensive opportunity to examine the delicate matter of the asylum process. The study investigated whether there is a statistically significant relationship between the effects of stressful life events that Syrian asylum seekers are exposed to and their opinions towards seeking psychological help in this context. The study also aimed to explore the multidimensional perceived social support by Syrian asylum seekers between the effects of stressful life events they were exposed to and their attitudes towards receiving psychological help in terms of mediating role. The model created to test this relationship is displayed below (Figure 1).

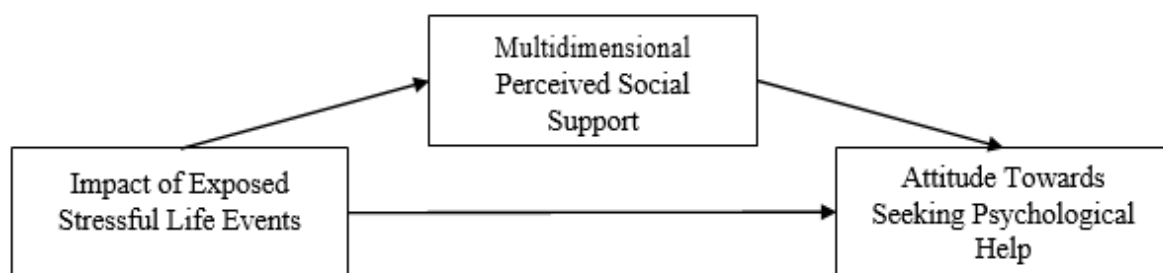


Figure 1. Hypothesis Model

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Research Model

The study aims to describe the effects of stressful life events on Syrian asylum seekers, their tendency to get psychological help, and their perceived social support levels in terms of different variables. A descriptive cross-sectional research model, which aims to explain the circumstances suitable for this purpose, was used in this study. According to the sampling method suitable for the purpose of the study (random sample), a survey was applied to the participants, and the participants were included in the study voluntarily.

## 2.2. Research Sample

The population of the study is formed by Syrian asylum seekers or refugees who migrated to Turkey after the war that broke out in 2011, which continues today. A total of 491 Syrian asylum seekers or refugees aged 18-65 participated in the study. The forms collected before the data analysis of the study were reviewed, and 24 incorrect or incomplete forms were not included in the study, and the results of a total of 467 participants, 187 women and 280 men, were included in the analysis phase. Details of the demographic characteristics of the participants are given in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Demographic Variables

	Demographic Variables	N
Gender	Male	280
	Female	187
Marriage Situation	Married	243
	Single	194
	Widrow	30
Education Situation	Uneducated	53
	Primary School	90
	Elementary School	86
	High School	74
	University	128
	Postgraduate	36

## 2.3. Data Collection Tools and Procedure

Sociodemographic Information Form, which was prepared for the purpose of the study, and the Impact of the Event Scale (IES), which was adapted in Arabic, the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), and the Attitudes Toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help Scale-Short Form (ATSPPH-SF) were used as data collection tools in the study.

*Sociodemographic Information Form:* The Personal Information Form used in the study is an informative form that includes information that enables Syrian asylum seekers or refugees to voluntarily express their current situation, demographic and occupational characteristics in the study.

*Attitudes Toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help Scale-Short Form (ATSPPH- SF):* Attitudes Toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help-Short Form (ATSPPH-SF) was developed by Fischer and Farina (1995). This form of the Attitudes Towards Seeking Professional Psychological Help Scale is the shortened version of the original 29-item scale (Fischer & Turner, 1970). The short form consists of 10 items. The items of the scale are answered in a 4-point Likert fashion ranging from (0) disagree to (3) agree. The lowest score that can be obtained from the scale is 0, while the highest score is 30. The high score the individual gets from the scale indicates that the person's attitude towards getting psychological help is positive, while the low score received indicates that the attitude towards getting psychological help is negative. The Arabic-translated version of ATSPPH-SF (Al-Darmaki, 2003) was used in this study. In the current study, Cronbach's Alpha for the scale was obtained as 0.72.

*Impact of Event Scale (IES):* The scale, established by Weiss & Marmar (1997), aims to examine possible post-traumatic stress disorders. The scale includes a 5-point Likert structure consisting of 22 items. The scale scored between 0 and 4 for the severity of symptoms in the last seven days consists of 22 items. Answers are given as (0) never, (1) little, (2) somewhat, (3) much, (4) a great deal. The total score of the scale varies from 0 to 88. A high score indicates that the person has a high level of post-traumatic stress disorder. The Australian Psychological Society carried out the Arabic translation of the scale in 2014. The reliability of the Arabic scale was calculated as 0.93 in the study. In the present study, Cronbach's Alpha for the scale was calculated as 0.93.

*Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support:* The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) is a 12-item scale developed by Zimet et al. (1988) (23). It includes questions about three groups of support, each consisting of 4 items. These groups are; family, friends, and significant others. Each item was assessed using a 7-point scale. The subscale score is obtained with the arithmetic mean of the scores of the 4

items in each subscale, and the scale's total score is obtained by adding the mean scores of all subscales. A score ranging from 1 to 2.9 can be considered low; a score of 3 to 5 can be considered moderate; a score from 5.1 to 7 can be considered high. Higher scores mean a higher level of perceived social support. This scale has been adapted to Arabic by Merhi et al (2012). The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the Family subscale was .83, the Friends subscale was .90, and the Significant Others Subscale was .86.

#### **2.4. Research Process**

In order to apply the scales used in the study, permission was received via e-mail from the researchers who adapted the scales to be used in the study into the Arabic language. Samsun Provincial Directorate of Migration Management granted permission to apply the scales to be used in the study. At the same time, the ethics committee approval was taken from [masked for the purpose of peer review]. The scales started to be applied in March 2019, and the data collection process ended in May 2019.

The written research information was provided orally to Syrian asylum seekers or refugees before the application process began. They were also provided in Arabic when the socio-demographic information form was introduced. After the voluntary participation of the attendees has been established, the participants have received the Sociodemographic Information Form in their language (Arabic) as well as receiving the Arabic adaptations of Impact of Event Scale (IES), Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), and the Attitudes Toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help Scale-Short Form (ATSPPH-SF). Confidentiality and voluntarism principle has been emphasized throughout the study process, and the study has been conducted accordingly. The surveys applied in the study took an average of 30 minutes to be filled out by the participants.

#### **2.5. Data Analysis**

This study investigated the mediating effect of the multidimensional perceived social support factor between stressful life events and the attitude factor towards seeking professional psychological help using structural equation modeling. The Lavaan package in "R" was used for structural equation modeling (Rosseel, 2012). A model without an intermediate variable (Model-1) and a model with an intermediate variable (Model-2) is established to evaluate the mediating effect. To have a mediating effect, it is expected that when the mediator variable is included in the model, the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable will decrease, and the mediator variable will continue to have a significant effect on the dependent variable (Avci & Turunç, 2012; Kanten, 2014). There should also be a significant relationship between the independent variable and the mediator variable and between the mediator variable and the dependent variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

*The Estimator of the Model and Assumptions:* Since the items belonging to the sub-dimensions are ordinal and therefore categorical, weighted least squares means and variance adjusted (WLSMV) estimation was used in this study during the stage of structural equation modeling. The multivariate normal distribution is not inquired with the used estimator since the data are categorical. The assumption of observations being independent of each other is also provided since each observation in the data set is collected by different participants. Besides, considering all the information in the data set are categorical, it does not contain outliers. Following the WLSMV estimator used in the study, the sample volume is also highly sufficient since the number of observations used in the analysis phase is more than five times the number of variables ( $n=468 > 290$ ) (Bandalos, 2014).

#### **2.5. Ethical**

The ethics committee approval of this research was obtained by the Social and Humanity Sciences Ethics Committee of Ondokuz Mayıs University with the decision numbered 2018/284 dated 02.11.2018. Ethical principles were adhered to throughout the research.

### **3. Findings**

First of all, the relationships between the variables considered in the study were examined and presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Correlations of Multidimensional Perceived Social Support, Impact of Exposed Stressful Life Events, Attitude Towards Seeking Psychological Help

	MSPSS	IES	ATSPPH
MSPSS	1		
IES	-.370**	1	
ATSPPH	.428**	-.253**	1

*MPSS: Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, IES: Impact of Exposed Stressful Life Events, ATSPPH: Attitude Towards Seeking Psychological Help*

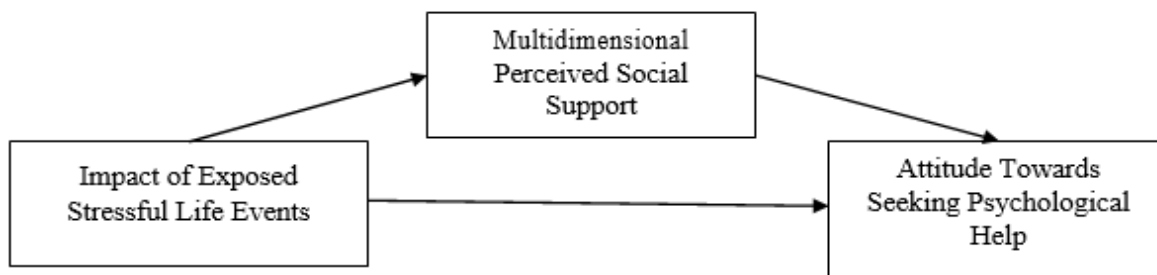
When the values in Table 2 are examined, it is seen that the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support has a moderate negative correlation with the Impact of Exposed Stressful Life Events ( $r = -.37, p < .001$ ), while having a positive correlation with Attitude Towards Seeking Psychological Help ( $r = .48, p < .001$ ). In addition, it is seen that there is a moderate negative ( $r = -.25, p < .001$ ) and significant relationship between Attitude Towards Seeking Psychological Help and the Impact of Exposed Stressful Life Events.

Subsequently, Model-1 was tested in order to understand the effect of stressful life events on Syrian asylum seekers and their attitudes towards seeking psychological help (Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** Structural Equation Model Graph for Model-1

At the next stage, the multidimensional perceived social support by Syrian asylum seekers was added to the model as a mediator variable. Model 2 shows the graph in which the mediator effect is tested (Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** Structural Equation Model Graph for Model-2

Data on structural model statistics related to direct effect (Model-1) and mediator effect (Model-2) are given below (Table 3) in the analysis carried out in this context.

**Table 3.** Structural Model Statistics for Direct Effect and Mediating Effect Models

MODEL	EQUITY	Coefficient	Coefficient(Z)	Sh	Z-Statistics	P
Direct Effect	IES > MSPSS	-0,360	-0,278	0,060	-5,970	<0.001
	IES > ATSPPH	0,498	-0,419	0,066	-7,576	<0.001
Mediating Effect	ATSPPH > MSPSS	0.522	0.429	0.060	8.729	<0.001
	IES > MSPSS	-0.152	-0.105	0.063	-2.429	<0.001

Table 3 shows the structural model statistics representing the impact factor of stressful life events experienced on the attitude factor related to getting psychological help. According to the path coefficient, the effect of stressful life events experienced by Syrian refugees has a statistically notable effect on their attitudes towards seeking psychological help. According to the path coefficient ( $\beta = -0.360$ ), the effects of stressful life events negatively affect their attitudes towards seeking psychological help.

Table 3 also presents the structural model statistics concerning the mediating effect between the multidimensional perceived social support factor, the effect of stressful life events, and the attitude factor towards getting psychological help. According to the path coefficients, the effects of stressful life events and attitudes towards getting psychological help and multidimensional perceived social support for the Syrian asylum seekers; the multidimensional perceived social support has a statistically significant effect on the attitude towards seeking psychological help. According to the path coefficients, stressful life events adversely affect the attitude towards seeking psychological help ( $\beta = -0.152$ ) and multidimensional perceived social support ( $\beta = -0.498$ ).

**Table 4.** Fit Indices for Direct Effect and Mediating Effect Models

MODEL	$\chi^2/df$	RFI	NFI	CFI	GFI	AGFI	TLI	RMSEA
Direct Effect	5.109	0.942	0.946	0.956	0.959	0.945	0.953	0.094
Mediating Effect	5.139	0.940	0.943	0.953	0.955	0.944	0.951	0.094

$P < 0.001$

Table 4 shows the fit indices and statistics of the structural model for the structural equation model describing the relationship between the effect of stressful life events and the factor attitude toward seeking psychological help. According to the fit indices, CFI, TLI, and GFI values are over 0.95; RFI, NFI, and AGFI values are above 0.90, and the RMSEA value is below 0.10. The CHISQ/DF value is also very close to 5. In light of these results, the first model is structurally valid. The structural equation model analysis was carried out as the second model to describe the mediation connections between the multidimensional perceived social support, the effect of stressful life events, and the attitude factor towards seeking psychological help. Besides, the structural equation model fit indices related to the mediating effect between the multidimensional perceived social support factor and the impact factor of stressful life events are shown in Table 3. According to the fit indices, CFI, TLI, and GFI values are over 0.95; RFI, NFI, and AGFI values are above 0.90, and the RMSEA value is below 0.10. The CHISQ/DF value is also below 5. In light of these results, the second model that forms the mediating effect is structurally valid.

#### 4. Conclusion and Discussion

The path coefficient of the simple relationship between stressful life events and attitudes towards seeking psychological help was examined as a priority to test the mediating effect of multidimensional perceived social support in the study. The study results indicate that the stressful life events perceived by Syrian asylum seekers negatively affect their tendency to seek psychological help.

In reviewing the literature, there is no study on this topic in the Syrian asylum seeker population. In studies conducted for similar purposes, some studies generally reveal that individuals' tendency to seek psychological help when stressful life events increase (Özbay, 1996; Leech, 2007). In addition, in a study conducted by Efe (2018), it was reported that stressful life events predicted psychological help-seeking. In this study, on the contrary, it was observed that Syrian asylum seekers' tendency to seek psychological help decreased as the level of the effects of stressful life events they were exposed to increased. This situation is thought to be related to self-concealment behavior in Syrian asylum seekers. It is known that self-concealment behavior is related to the effect caused by high stress (Cramer, 1999). It is also known that they do not want to talk to anyone outside the family about situations that remind them of traumatic situations. In addition, it was reported that they did not want to express their longing for their old life (Abi Zeid Daou, 2022). It is also known that because of the cultural significance of privacy, many immigrant groups are reluctant to talk about matters related to family problems or personal concerns (Chung & Bemak, 2007). It is also possible to mention the worry of being stigmatized as a common obstacle for individuals to get psychological help (Byrow et al., 2019; Shannon et al., 2015; Topkaya et al., 2017). Although this obstacle is a considerably common problem, it is known that it is highly influenced by cultural factors and conditions such as migration (Amri & Bemak 2012; Byrow et al., 2019; Nadeem et al., 2007; Topkaya, 2014; Yagan & Aksit, 2021; Zhang & Dixon, 2003). Some studies reveal that the self-disclosure behavior of eastern cultures is much less than western cultures and that the boundaries on sharing are quite clear (Bawadi et al., 2022; Üzar-Özçetin et al., 2022; Yee et al., 2020).

When the multidimensional perceived social support was added to the model as a mediator variable in the next stage, a decrease was observed in the path coefficient between the effect of stressful life events and the attitude towards receiving psychological help. The relationship between stressful life events and attitudes

towards seeking psychological help appears to be statistically significant in both models. When the multidimensional perceived social support is included as a mediator variable, it is observed that the path coefficient decreases, so it is seen that multidimensional perceived social support partially mediates between stressful life events and the attitude towards seeking psychological help. All coefficients between the stressful life events factor and the multidimensional perceived social support factor and the multidimensional perceived social support factor and the attitude towards seeking psychological help were found to be statistically significant in the second model in which the mediating effect exists. In this case, since the conditions suggested by Barry & Kenny (1986) were also met, it was determined that there was a mediating effect, but this effect caused a partial mediating effect due to the decrease in the path coefficient. In addition to that, when the fit indices of both models are observed, the fit indices values of the second model, which describes the mediating effect, are more successful than the first model. According to this, the performance of the model has increased when the partial mediating effect is added to the model. This result confirms the mediating role of multidimensional perceived social support (Şimşek, 2007; Demirel, 2013).

The results obtained as a conclusion of the analysis reveal the importance of the perceived social support variable in Syrian asylum seekers. A study carried out in Canada shows that perceived social support plays a significant role in the lives and health of immigrants (Simich et al., 2005). It is a fact that social support is crucial for asylum seekers (Pak et al., 2022). It has also been revealed that refugees and immigrants with social support experience less stress, empower themselves, and adjust to social life more easily than those who do not have social support (Yanardağ et al., 2022).

Similarly, a nationwide study conducted by Jasinskaja-Lahti, Liebkind, Jaakkola, and Reuter (2006) with 2360 adult immigrants revealed that social support had a direct positive effect on the well-being and adaptation process of refugees. The study revealed that active communication patterns with the host community, friends, families, and relatives of the refugees hold a protective effect on the psychological well-being of the refugees. This situation is similar in Syrian asylum seekers; a specific sample and a negative relationship were found between stressful life events and perceived social support. This situation is also thought to be related to self-concealment behavior. Self-concealment behavior is also known to be associated with low social support. People who tend to hide their personal information often have little to no social support. The reason for that is, these individuals tend to refuse the help of the people around them (Cramer, 1999; Topkaya et al., 2019). It is also known that the perceived social support sources in the conducted studies help individuals to overcome the social and psychological problems they encounter and prompt the individual to the solution (Yıldırım, 1997). Moreover, it was observed in other studies that individuals who perceive significant social support from their families, friends, and others have higher attitudes towards seeking psychological help (Çebi, 2009; Gourash, 1978; Koydemir-Özden, 2010; Miville & Constantine, 2006). The findings of this study conducted on Syrian asylum seekers also support the results of the mentioned research. The self-disclosure behavior will be beneficial if it meets with adequate social support. A benefit like this will be a motivating factor for individuals in self-disclosure. Such motivation is considered to help the individual increase their tendency to open themselves up to an expert and seek professional help.

## **5. Limitations**

One limitation of this research is that some Syrian asylum seekers resisted during the first interview and did not want to open themselves up with the fear of deportation for perceiving the researcher as a state official. The sampling was obtained with the reference of non-governmental organizations they trust and have received support from to eliminate this limitation. Also in this research, sub-dimensions were not taken into account in the impact of events, multidimensional perceived social support, and attitude towards getting psychological help scales. The study aims to make a general assessment of the subject.

## **6. Recommendations**

Regarding the effect of the social support obtained in the research on the Syrian asylum seekers' attitudes towards receiving psychological help, studies on which types of social support affect what level and how can be significant. Another study finding is that as the effect of stressful life events that Syrian asylum seekers are exposed to increases, their attitudes towards seeking psychological help decrease. It may be significant to examine the sources of this withdrawal and self-concealment tendency amongst Syrian asylum seekers.



## 7. References

- Abi Zeid Daou, K. R., Abi Zeid Daou, L. R., & Cousineau-Pérusse, M. (2022). The experiences of syrian mothers who are refugees in canada: an exploration of emotion work and coping. *Women & Therapy*, 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02703149.2021.2008520>
- Al-Darmaki, F. R. (2003). Attitudes towards seeking professional psychological help: What really counts for United Arab Emirates university students?. *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal*, 31(5), 497-508. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10508422.2022.2118122>
- Altınışik, M. S., Şahin, M., & Şanlı, E. (2022). Geçici koruma altındaki suriyelilerde psikolojik yardım almanın önündeki engeller. *Göç Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 8(1), 99-128.
- Avcı, U., & Turunç, Ö. (2012). Dönüşümcü liderlik ve örgüte güvenin kariyer memnuniyetine etkisi: lider-üye etkileşiminin aracılık rolü. *Uluslararası Alanya İşletme Fakültesi Dergisi*, 4(2), 45-55.
- Bär, J., Pabst, A., Röhr, S., Luppä, M., Renner, A., Nagl, M., & Riedel-Heller, S. G. (2021). Mental health self-stigma of Syrian refugees with posttraumatic stress symptoms: Investigating sociodemographic and psychopathological correlates. *Frontiers In Psychiatry*, 12(1), 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20008198.2022.2066458>
- Baron, R. M., & Kenny, D.A. (1986). The moderator mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51(6), 1173-1182.
- Başoğlu, M., Livanou, M., Crnobaric, C., Frančišković, T., Suljić, E., Đurić, D., & Vranešić, M. (2005). Psychiatric and cognitive effects of war in former Yugoslavia: association of lack of redress for trauma and posttraumatic stress reactions. *Jama*, 294(5), 580-590.
- Bawadi, H., Al-Hamdan, Z., Khader, Y., & Aldalaykeh, M. (2022). Barriers to the use of mental health services by Syrian refugees in Jordan: a qualitative study. *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal*, 28(3), 197-203. <https://doi.org/10.26719/emhj.22.030>
- Bayram, N. (2010). *Yapısal Eşitlik Modellemesine Giriş AMOS Uygulamaları*. Ezgi Kitabevi.
- Boldwin, L. A. (1967). *Theories of child development*. John Willey and Son.
- Bose, P. S. (2022). The shifting landscape of international resettlement: Canada, the US and Syrian refugees. *Geopolitics*, 27(2), 375-401. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2020.1781820>
- Brooks, M. A., Dasgupta, A., Taşğın, N. Ş., Meinhart, M., Tekin, U., Yüksek, D., & El-Bassel, N. (2022). Secondary traumatic stress, depression, and anxiety symptoms among service providers working with Syrian refugees in İstanbul, Turkey. *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*, 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10903-022-01344-6>
- Brownell, A., & Shumaker, S. A. (1984). Social support: An introduction to a complex phenomenon. *Journal of Social Issues*, 40(4), 1-9.
- Cameron, G., Frydenberg, E., & Jackson, A. (2018). How young refugees cope with conflict in culturally and linguistically diverse urban schools. *Australian Psychologist*, 53(2), 171-180.
- Cobb, S. (1976). Social support as a moderator of life stress. *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 38(5), 300-314.
- Collyer, M. (2012). Migrants as strategic actors in the European Union's global approach to migration and mobility. *Global Networks*, 12(4), 505-524.
- Cutrona, C. E. (1990). Stress and social support—In search of optimal matching. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 9(1), 3-14.
- Cramer, K. M., (1999). Psychological antecedents to help seeking behavior a reanalysis usinh path modeling structures. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 46(3), 381-387.

- Çebi, E. (2009). *University students attitudes toward seeking psychological help: Effects of perceived social support, psychological distress, prior help-seeking experience and gender* [Master thesis]. Middle East Technical University, Ankara.
- Davey, C., Heard, R., & Lennings, C. (2015). Development of the Arabic versions of the impact of events scale-revised and the posttraumatic growth inventory to assess trauma and growth in Middle Eastern refugees in Australia. *Clinical Psychologist*, 19(3), 131-139.
- Delioğlu, M., & Kalaycı, İ. (2022). Antakya'ya göç eden Suriye Türklerinin perspektifinden göç ve göçmenlik üzerine nitel bir araştırma. *Anasay*, (20), 239-270. <https://doi.org/10.33404/anasay.1099146>
- Demirel, E. T. (2013). Mesleki stresin iş tatminine etkisi: Örgütsel desteğin aracılık rolü. *Niğde Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi*, 6(1), 220-241.
- Efe, İ. A. (2018). Olumsuz yaşam olayları, psikolojik danışma hizmeti alma, ruminasyon ve stres arasındaki ilişki. *Ankara University Journal of Faculty of Educational Sciences (JFES)*, 51(2), 95-119.
- Ehnholt, K. A., & Yule, W. (2006). Practitioner Review: Assessment and treatment of refugee children and adolescents who have experienced war-related trauma. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 47(12), 1197-1210.
- Eren, A., & Çavuşoğlu, Ç. (2021). Stigmatisation and othering: the case of Syrian students in Turkish schools. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 1-20. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-4213-5\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-4213-5_2)
- Fansa, M. (2021). Kimim ben? Göçmen, sığınmacı, mülteci, yabancı, vatansız ve geçici koruma: Türkiye'deki Suriyeliler. *Antakiyat*, 4(2), 289-306.
- Fine, S. (2018). Liaisons, labelling and laws: International Organization for Migration bordercratic interventions in Turkey. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44(10), 1743-1755.
- Fischer, E. H., & Turner, J. L. (1970). Orientations to seeking professional help: development and research utility of an attitude scale. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 35(1), 79-90.
- Gourash, N. (1978). Help-seeking: A review of the literature. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 6(5), 413-423.
- Good, G. E., & Wood, P. K. (1995). Male gender role conflict, depression, and help seeking: Do college men face double jeopardy?. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 74(1), 70-75.
- Heitzmann, C. A., & Kaplan, R. M. (1988). Assessment of methods for measuring social support. *Health Psychology*, 7(1), 75-109.
- Holmes, C. (2022). *Historians and Immigration: In Migrants, emigrants, immigrants*. Routledge.
- Jasinskaja-Lahti, I., Liebkind, K., Jaakkola, M., & Reuter, A. (2006). Perceived discrimination, social support networks, and psychological well-being among three immigrant groups. *Journal of Cross-cultural Psychology*, 37(3), 293-311.
- Kanten, P. (2014). İşyeri nezaketsizliğinin sosyal kaytarma davranışı ve işten ayrılma niyeti üzerindeki etkisinde duygusal tükenmenin aracılık rolü. *Aksaray Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi*, 6(1), 11-26.
- Karaoğlu, E. (2015). *The role of social dominance orientation, empathy and perceived threat in predicting prejudice of Turkish citizens toward Syrian immigrants* [Master thesis]. Middle East Technical University, Ankara.
- King, L. A., King, D. W., & Fairbank, J. A. (1998). Resilience-recovery factors in post-traumatic stress disorder among female and male Vietnam veterans: hardiness, postwar social support, and additional stressful life events. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74(2), 420-434.
- Koydemir-Özden, S. (2010). Self-aspects, perceived social support, gender, and willingness to seek psychological help. *International Journal of Mental Health*, 39(3), 44-60.
- Kömürcü, Y., Özsoy, R., & Çobanoğlu, A. (2011). Kadın sığınmacılar: uluslararası göçün sessiz tanıkları. In *Onlar bizim hemşehrimiz uluslararası göç ve hizmetlerin kültürlerarası açılımı* (2nd ed., pp. 111-128). Nobel.

- Li, X. M., Yuan, X. Q., Wang, J. J., Zhang, W. Y., Zhou, Y., & Liu, G. N. (2017). Evaluation of impact of social support and care on HIV-positive and AIDS individuals' quality of life: a nonrandomised community trial. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 26(3-4), 369-378.
- Leech, N., L. (2007). Cramer's model of willingness to seek counseling: a structural equation model for counseling students. *The Journal of Psychology*, 141(4), 435-45.
- Merhi, R., & Kazarian, S. S. (2012). Validation of the Arabic translation of the multidimensional scale of perceived social support (Arabic-MSPSS) in a Lebanese community sample. *Arab Journal of Psychiatry*, 23(2), 159-168.
- Miville, M. L., & Constantine, M. G. (2006). Sociocultural predictors of psychological help-seeking attitudes and behavior among Mexican American college students. *Cultural Diversity Ve Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 12(3), 420-432.
- Nicholas, J., Oliver, K., Lee, K., & O'Brien, M. (2004). Help-seeking behaviour and the internet: An investigation among Australian adolescents. *Australian Journal For The Advancement Of Mental Health*, 3(1), 16-23.
- Önen, C., Güneş, G., Türeme, A., & Ağaç, P. (2014) Bir mülteci kampında yaşayan suriyelilerde depresyon ve anksiyete durumu. *Akademik Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 2(6), 223-230.
- Özbay, Y. (1996). Üniversite öğrencilerinin problem alanları ile yardım arama tutumları arasındaki ilişki. *Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınları*, 175-189.
- Özbay, F., Fitterling, H., Charney, D., & Southwick, S. (2008). Social support and resilience to stress across the life span: A neurobiologic framework. *Current Psychiatry Reports*, 10(4), 304-310.
- Öztürk, T., & Boyacı, E. (2022). Suriyeli mülteci krizinin türkiye ve avrupa birliği ilişkisine yansımaları: dünya sistemleri analizi üzerinden bir değerlendirme. *Alanya Akademik Bakış*, 6(1), 1809-1823.  
<https://doi.org/10.29023/alanyaakademik.1035028>
- Pak, Ş., Yurtbakan, T., & Acarturk, C. (2022). Social support and resilience among syrian refugees: the mediating role of self-efficacy. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, 1-17.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10926771.2022.2061882>
- Pandır, M. (2021). Mülteci temsillerinde kültürel farklılık inşası ve toplumsal kabule etkileri. *Afyon Kocatepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 23(2), 348-364.
- Porter, M., & Haslam, N. (2005). Predisplacement and postdisplacement factors associated with mental health of refugees and internally displaced persons: a meta-analysis. *Jama*, 294(5), 602-612.
- Reed, R. V., Fazel, M., Jones, L., Panter-Brick, C., & Stein, A. (2012). Mental health of displaced and refugee children resettled in low-income and middle-income countries: Risk and protective factors. *The Lancet*, 379(9812), 250-265.
- Rickwood, D. J., Deane, F. P., Wilson, C. J., & Ciarrochi, J. (2005). Young people's help-seeking for mental health problems. *Australian e-journal for the Advancement of Mental health*, 4(3), 218-251.
- Rickwood, D. J., & Braithwaite, V. A. (1994). Social-psychological factors affecting help-seeking for emotional problems. *Social Science and Medicine*, 39(4), 563-572.
- Rogler, R. S. (1994). The immigration experience and mental health. *Health and Behavior*, 8, 72-84.
- Rosseel, Y. (2012). Lavaan: An R package for structural equation modeling and more: Version 0.5–12 (BETA). *Journal of Statistical Software*, 48(2), 1-36.
- Schlaudt, V. A., Bosson, R., Williams, M. T., German, B., Hooper, L. M., Frazier, V., & Ramirez, J. (2020). Traumatic experiences and mental health risk for refugees. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(6), 1943-1954.
- Simich, L., Beiser, M., Stewart, M., & Mwakarimba, E. (2005). Providing social support for immigrants and refugees in Canada: Challenges and directions. *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*, 7(4), 259-268.

- Sirkeci, I., & Cohen, J. H. (2016). Cultures of migration and conflict in contemporary human mobility in Turkey. *European Review*, 24(3), 381-396.
- Steel, Z., Chey, T., Silove, D., Marnane, C., Bryant, R. A., & Van Ommeren, M. (2009). Association of torture and other potentially traumatic events with mental health outcomes among populations exposed to mass conflict and displacement: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Jama*, 302(5), 537-549.
- Sundvall, M., Titelman, D., DeMarinis, V., Borisova, L., & Çetrez, Ö. (2021). Safe but isolated—an interview study with Iraqi refugees in Sweden about social networks, social support, and mental health. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, 67(4), 351-359.
- Şimşek, Ö.F. (2007). *Yapısal eşitlik modellemesine giriş*. Ekinoks Yayınları
- Tata, S. P., & Leong, F. T. (1994). Individualism-collectivism, social-network orientation, and acculturation as predictors of attitudes toward seeking professional psychological help among Chinese Americans. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 41, 280-287.
- Tekin, U. (2007). Avrupa'ya göç ve Türkiye. *İstanbul Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Dergisi*, (37), 43-56.
- Tolsdorf, C. C. (1976). Social networks, support, and coping: An exploratory study. *Family Process*, 15(4), 407-417.
- Topkaya, N. (2014). Gender, self-stigma, and public stigma in predicting attitudes toward psychological help-seeking. *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice*, 14(2), 480-487.
- Topkaya, N. (2015). Willingness to seek psychological help among Turkish adults. *Revista de Cercetare Şi Intervenție Socială*, 48, 149-163.
- Topkaya N., Şahin E., & Gençoğlu C., (2019). Üniversite öğrencilerinde kendini saklamayla ilişkili değişkenler: Cinsiyet, psikolojik yardım alma deneyimi, benlik saygısı ve saygınlığını yitirme kaygısı. *Journal of Higher Education and Science*, 9(1), 192-204. <https://doi.org/10.5961/jhes.2019.32>
- Topkaya, N., Sahin, E., & Meydan, B. (2017). The development, validity, and reliability of the barriers to seeking psychological help scale for college students. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 6(1), 48-62.
- Topkaya, N., Şahin, E., & Gençoğlu, C. (2019). Üniversite öğrencilerinde saygınlığını yitirme kaygısı. *Adıyaman Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 32, 111-143.
- Tribe, R. (2002). Mental health of refugees and asylum-seekers. *Advances in Psychiatric Treatment*, 8(4), 240-247.
- Türküm, A. S. (2001). Stresle başa çıkma biçimi, iyimserlik, bilişsel çarpıtma düzeyleri ve psikolojik yardım almaya ilişkin tutumlar arasındaki ilişkiler: Ege üniversitesi öğrencileri üzerinde bir araştırma. *Anadolu Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 1(2), 1-16.
- United Nations Department of Public Information. (2005). *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2005*. United Nations Publications. <https://www.un.org/webcast/summit2005/MDGBook.pdf>
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2022). *Figures at a Glance*. Retrieved from October 10, 2022 from <https://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>.
- Üzar-Özçetin, Y. S., Çelik, S., & Özenç-Ira, G. (2022). The relationships among psychological resilience, intercultural sensitivity and empathetic tendency among teachers of Syrian refugee children in Turkey. *Health & Social Care in the Community*, 30(2), 410-419. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.13215>
- Vogel, D. L., & Wei, M. (2005). Adult attachment and help-seeking intent: The mediating roles of psychological distress and perceived social support. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52(3), 347-357.
- Vogel, D. L., Wester, S. R., Wei, M., & Boysen, G. A. (2005). The role of outcome expectations and attitudes on decisions to seek professional help. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52(4), 459-470.
- Weiss, D. (2007). The impact of event scale: Revised. *Cross-Cultural Assessment of Psychological Trauma and PTSD*, 219-238.

- Weiss, D. S., Marmar, C. R., Wilson, J. P., & Keane, T. M. (1997). Assessing psychological trauma and PTSD. *The Impact of Events Scale Revised*, 19, 399-411.
- Yagan, E., & Aksit, B. (2021). Can we live together? Discrimination in the context of education in Turkey: Amixed-methods research. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 94, 233-264. <http://dx.doi.org/10.14689/ejer.2021.94.11>
- Yanardağ, M. Z., Budak, F., & Özer, Ö. (2022). Psychological flourishing and social support in young Syrian adults: a study on psychosocial health. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 32(4), 501-518. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10911359.2021.1918601>
- Yıldırım, İ. (1997). Algılanan sosyal destek ölçeğinin geliştirilmesi, güvenirliği ve geçerliği. *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 13(13), 81-87.
- Zimmet, G. D., Dahlem, N. W., Zimmet, S. G., & Farley, GK (1988). The multidimensional scale of perceived social support. *Journal of personality assessment*, 52, 30-41.