

## A Study on the Peer Relationships, Social Support Perceptions and Perfectionism of Working and Non-Working Children according to Gender

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### *Abstract*

This study was conducted to examine peer relations, social support perceptions and perfectionism of working and non-working children as per their gender. The population of the research was composed of working children attending 1st to 6th grades of vocational education centers and non-working children attending 1st to 3rd grades of general high schools and representing lower socio-economic levels who are between the age of 15-17. One thousand six hundred and twenty children, 652 of whom were from vocational education centers and 968 of whom were from lower socio-economic levels, were selected by random sampling method. However, some forms were invalid due to various reasons so the analyses were made using data from 1390 children – 551 working and 839 non-working. The data collecting instruments were General Information Form, Peer Relationship Scale (PRS), Social Support Appraisal Scale for Children and Adolescents (SSESCA), and Multi-Dimensional Perfectionism Scale (MDPS). The data were analyzed by applying the Mann Whitney U-Test. The results of the research revealed that the gender of children caused a meaningfully significant difference in the following: regarding PRS, the gender of working children had an impact on the Commitment, Self-Disclosure and Loyalty sub-dimensions and the gender of non-working children had an impact on Commitment and Self-Disclosure sub-dimensions as well as the total score; regarding SSESCA, the gender of working children had an impact on the Teacher's Support sub-dimension and the gender of non-working children had an impact on Peer Support, Teacher's Support and the total score; regarding MDPS, the gender of working children had an impact on the Order sub-dimension and the gender of non-working children had an impact on Order and Family Criticism sub-dimensions ( $p < 0.01$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

*Key Words:* Working children, peer relationships, social support perception, perfectionism

### **Introduction**

As working children are at school age or adolescents, working has adverse effects on their development and mental health; therefore, it is important to emphasize the case of working children (Hawamdeh, Spencer, and Waterston, 2001: 311; Kouvonon and Lintonen, 2002: 312). Children should play games, go to school, have leisure time engagements that help their improvement and establish social communication with their own age group for their psycho-social development. Yet, when children work, they cannot achieve such a life style (Köksal, 1992: 9; Mangır, Aral - Çağatay, and Köksal, 1992: 163; Patroğlu, Gür, and Tarhan, 2001: 125). According to Fidan (2004: 31), environments that are not appropriate for their development periods may have negative influences on children's physical, mental and emotional maturation. Thus, the combination of work and child concepts presents an important social, psychological and developmental problem. Making children work under conditions that are harmful for their honor, morals, health and education not only weakens the economic capacity and solidarity of society but also conflicts with the long term development goals. It is

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necessary for a society that children live a healthy development period to become healthy individuals and grow as adults who have completed their developmental functions (Bakırcı, 2004: 56).

Working children cannot often see peers from their own age group. However, communication and peer relationships with one's own age group are accepted as important social needs at every period of life. Peer relationships are crucial for socialization and development of personality, as well as for acquiring sexual identity and feelings of belongingness, sharing and responsibility. Being called, liked and adopted by peers is deemed important for the development of personality. Children prove themselves through peer relationships and establish friendship bonds by helping each other, sharing and exchanging emotions. They gain the capability of anticipating others' thoughts, expectations, emotions and desires; in other words, they acquire perspective taking skills. Thanks to these acquisitions, they are supported more by their friends (Yıldırım, 1997: 81).

Social support is very important for maintaining psychological and physical integrity of human life, and thus, particularly working children should be socially supported by their peers, families or teachers. According to Yıldırım, the social support sources of individuals are composed of their families, peers, neighbors and teachers, ideological, religious and ethnic groups in their environments and the society they live in (Yıldırım, 1997: 81). Peer support helps children to feel adequate and successful, helps to develop their skills and high self-respect, and enables them to develop efficient ways of coping with stress and thus getting social support from their families, friends and teachers (Temel and Aksoy, 2001: 102; Turner, 1999: 567). Although the influence of peers is great, the impact of family is evident in all periods of life. Family is the institution that has a privileged influence on an individual's getting satisfaction from life, fulfilling his functions and growing as a person in harmony with the society. When problems are encountered, children usually get socially supported by their families (Baybuğa, 2000: 39; Gökler, 2000: 92; Terzi-Ünsal and Kapçı, 2005: 594). Perceiving that the level of social support is high has a supporting role in maintaining health (Furukawa, Sarason ve Sarason, 1998: 56; Procidano and Heler, 1983: 1), and it is particularly stressed that there is an inverse relationship between increased family support and psychological problems (Barrere and Jones, 1992: 1, 11). The lack of social support, which is an important enriching component of self-respect, may cause physical and emotional problems in children. When families care more about the money working children bring home –rather than their working conditions or threats that they may face at the workplace – children may feel anger for their families (Baybuğa, 2000: 39; Gökler, 2000: 92; Terzi-Ünsal and Kapçı, 2005: 594). In addition to the lack of social support from families, the deficiency of social support from peers also negatively affect the feeling of belongingness, and as these feelings are related with isolation and alienation, they may lead to the risk of leaving or not attending school, as well as internal or external behavioral problems; on the other hand, peer support affects the mental health of children positively (Gökler, 2000: 92; Malecki and Elliott, 1999 474; Richman, Rosenfeld and Bowen, 1998: 309; Terzi-Ünsal and Kapçı, 2005: 594). Furthermore, getting or not getting social support from teachers may have various influences on children (Gökler, 2000: 92; Terzi-Ünsal and Kapçı, 2005: 594).

In the perception of peer relationships and social support, the personality traits can be effective. One of these traits is perfectionism. To a great extent, the tendency for perfectionism starts with the need for love, to be accepted/not to be rejected and approval (Adderholt-Elliott and Golberg, 1987: 8; Ashby and Rice, 2002: 197; Horney, 1996; Lakein, 1996). Perfectionists expect their peers, families and other people they interact with to be also perfect. Therefore, perfectionists cannot tolerate the wrongs of other people around them, continuously criticize them and thus others always worry about making a mistake and finally nothing can be done just for fun (Adderholt-Elliott and Golberg, 1987: 44). As a personal trait, perfectionism may harm imagination, dull liveliness and creativity, prevent the individual from using his capabilities and reinforce the feeling of failure (Burns, 1980: 522; Pacht, 1984: 386). Yet, despite all these, it is also advocated that perfectionism is not a trait that has only negative impacts, but it has an important role in motivating the energy that paves the way for great success, and also affects learning and success positively (Ashby and Kottman, 1996: 237; Parker

and Mills, 1996: 144; Rice, Ashby and Slaney, 1998: 304; Slaney, Rice, Mobley, Trippi and Ashby, 2001: 130).

There is remarkable research on peer relationships, social support perception and perfectionism. In their study, Davies and Brember (1999: 15) emphasized that females did not have difficulty in establishing peer relationships, they did not have problems with starting and maintaining communication and they were more committed and closer to their peers compared to males. Fisher (1981: 6) studied peer relationships among adolescents and found that integrated and close relationships were more common among females compared to males and that females were more committed to their friends. Döğücü (2004: 152) conducted research on adolescents from different high schools to study peer relationships, and concluded that the difference between female and male students about peer relationships was significant.

In their study on social support perception of children, Wall, Covell and Macintyre, (1999: 63) concluded that girls perceived peer group support, as well as family and teacher support, more than males did. Similarly, in other studies, the level of social support perceived by females is higher than that perceived by males (Banaz, 1992; Elbir, 2000; Erdeğer, 2001; Kahriman, 2002; Kim, 2001; Şencan, 2009).

Mısırlı-Taşdemir (2003) established that males have a higher tendency for perfectionism than females. In another study, the relationship between the perfectionism scores of students and the authority styles of parents was assessed and it was found that the scores of male students on perfectionism for social order was related to the level of their parents' being authoritarian (Flett, Hewitt and Singer, 1995). In a study conducted by Steitz and Owen (1992), it was concluded that having worked for long periods caused low self-esteem especially in girls.

In other studies conducted on working children, it was concluded that: long working hours affected the mental health of young people negatively and caused low self-respect (Benvegnu, Fasa, Facchini, Wegman, and Dall'Agnol, 2005; Razi, Kuzu, Yıldız, Ocakçı and Arifoğlu Çamkuşu, 2009; Weller, Cooper, Tortolero, Kelder, and Hassan, 2003); long work hours increased anxiety and depression levels of working girls (Canbaz, Sünter and Pekşen, 2005; Metin, Özkoç, Gök Özer and Beydağ (Taşçı), 2008; Tokuç, Evren and Ekuklu, 2009); the level of depression of those who witnessed violence employed to others at work place was higher (Sütoluk, Nazlıcan, Azizoğlu and Akbaba, 2005); the older the working children, the better the communication skills (Razi et al., 2009); and aggressiveness increased with age among working children (Erdoğdu and Oto, 2004). In their research, Bildik, Büküşoğlu and Kesikçi, (2004) found that the rate of adolescent-parent conflict is higher among working girls. In view of these studies, it has been noted that some research was conducted about the impacts of gender on peer relationships, social support perception and perfectionism; yet, there are no studies on peer relationships, social support perception and perfectionism of working children.

Working children do not have adequate time to spend with their families or friends due to long working hours or tiredness. Children who often have to work under poor conditions to economically support their families cannot receive the support they need from their families, peers or other adults around, who usually encounter many social and economic problems. Failure or making a mistake at the workplace may mean loss of job or rejection by employer for working children. Factors such as expectations of higher performance than they can physically give, being punished when they fail or spending extraordinary efforts to be able to stay at job may cause children to develop negative personality characteristics related with perfectionism. Thus, this research aims to study the impact of the gender of working and non-working children on peer relationships, social support perceptions and perfectionism.

## Method

### *The Population of the Research and Sampling*

The population of the research was composed of working children attending 1st to 6th grades of vocational education centers and non-working children attending 1st to 3rd grades of general high schools and representing lower socio-economic levels. One thousand six hundred and twenty children, 652 of whom were from vocational education centers and 968 of whom were from lower socio-economic levels, were selected by random sampling method. However, some forms were invalid due to various reasons so the analyses were made using data from 1390 children – 551 working and 839 non-working children.

### *Data Collecting Instruments*

General Information Form: The General Information Form prepared by the researchers was used to obtain demographic information.

Peer Relationship Scale: It was developed by Kaner (2000: 79) to study the peer relationships of adolescents. When developing the Peer Relationship Scale, Kaner (2000: 79) worked with 1648 adolescents at 14-18 ages from lower, middle and higher socio-economic levels. In order to determine the sub-dimensions and the factor structure of the scale, four factors and nineteen items were established. The test-retest analysis concluded that the reliability level of the Peer Relationship Scale was high. According to Kaner, another proof that the reliability of the scale was satisfactory could be based on the finding that the correlations of item sub tests and items were significant at .000 level. The Peer Relationship Scale is a Likert-type 5-grade scale composed of sub dimensions of Commitment, Confidence and Identification, Self-Disclosure and Loyalty. The highest score indicates positive relationships with peers (Kaner, 2000: 79-83).

Social Support Appraisal Scale for Children and Adolescents: This scale was developed by Dubow and Ullman in 1989 to evaluate children's perception of the social support they received from their families, peers and teachers (Gökler, 2007: 93). The scale was adapted to Turkish by Gökler (2007: 93). For adaptation, Gökler first translated the items in the scale. Then, these items were compared with the original form by three clinical psychologists and necessary changes were made. Three hundred and fifty eight students participated in the adaptation studies. They were students at the age of 9 to 17, attending 3rd to 8th grades, and who have applied to the Adolescent Unit of the Children's Hospital at Hacettepe University, Faculty of Medicine, Department of Child Psychiatry (Gökler, 2007: 93). To determine the level of criterion validity of the Social Support Appraisal Scale for Children, a significant relation in negative direction was found between the total scores obtained from the scale and the total scores obtained from the Depression Scale for Children. This finding was accepted as an important proof of validity. Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient was found to be .93. The internal consistency coefficients obtained for the sub-dimensions of the scale were .89, .86 and .88. The test-retest reliability coefficient was calculated as .49 ( $p < 0.01$ ) for the entire scale. The two-half reliability (Guttman) of the scale was determined as .82. As a result of the correlation of each item of the scale with the total score, it was found that their relations ranged between .34 and .64. The 41-item scale, which consists of Peer Support, Family Support and Teacher Support sub-dimensions, is a 5-grade scale. High scores indicate that the individual receives more social support (Gökler, 2007: 93-94).

Multi-Dimensional Perfectionism Scale: The scale, which was developed by Frost et al. in 1990 to determine the perfectionism tendencies of students, was adapted to Turkish by Mısırlı-Taşdemir and Özbay (2004: 19), based on their study on 489 students studying in science high schools. As a result of the factor analysis they made, Mısırlı-Taşdemir and Özbay (2004: 19) introduced a structure with six factors (Order, Excessive Concern for Mistakes, Doubt for Behavior, Family Expectations, Family Criticism and Personal Standards) which accounted for 47.8% of the total variance. Regarding the internal consistency between the factors, they found similar correlational links with the original scale as expected theoretically. In addition to the factor structure, they examined similar sub-scales and checked the Pearson's Product-Moment correlations between them. Similar to the original scale, except for Order, they found meaningful correlations between Excessive Concern for Mistakes, Doubt for Behavior, Family Expectations, Family Criticism and Personal Standards. They observed that the

Order dimension was not related to Doubt for Behavior or Family Expectations. Mısırlı-Taşdemir and Özbay performed the reliability study of the Multi-Dimensional Perfectionism Scale by using the methods of Cronbach Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) internal consistency and dividing the test into halves. The reliability coefficients they determined for general and sub-scales were calculated between .63 and .87. The general reliability coefficient of the test ( $\alpha$ ) was calculated as .83, and the  $\alpha$  values were .87, .77, .61, .71, .65 and .63 for Order, Excessive Concern for Mistakes, Doubt for Behavior, Family Expectations, Family Criticism and Personal Standards, respectively. The reliability coefficient calculated by dividing into halves was .80 (Mısırlı-Taşdemir and Özbay, 2004: 19). The Multi-Dimensional Perfectionism Scale, which consists of Order, Excessive Concern for Mistakes, Doubt for Behavior, Family Expectations, Family Criticism and Personal Standards sub-tests, is a 5-grade Likert type scale. High scores indicate tendency to perfectionist personality traits (Mısırlı-Taşdemir and Özbay (2004: 19).

#### Analysis of Data

After applying the data collecting instruments, the data were reviewed, classified, arranged and coded in compliance with the entry format and finally entered as data. In analyzing the data, SPSS 13.5 (Statistical Packet of Social Science) program was used. First, normality distribution was examined. The normality tests of the scale and sub-dimension scores showed that all score types were not distributed normally ( $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, non-parametric tests were used in comparisons. Mann Whitney U-Test was performed to determine whether the gender of working and non-working children produced any differences on the scores obtained from the scales. All results at the level of ( $p < 0.05$ ) were accepted as statistically significant.

#### Results

The results of this study, which aimed to determine whether the gender of working and non-working children produced any differences in peer relationships, social support perceptions and perfectionism, are presented below:

Table 1.

*Mann-Whitney U Test Results on Peer Relationships of Working and Non-working Children by Their Gender*

PEER RELATIONSHIPS		WORKING CHILDREN							Mann-Whitney U	
Gender	n	$\bar{X}$	Middle	Min.	Max.	ss	Mean Rank	z	p	
Commitment	Female	85	34.7	36.0	13.0	40.0	5.6	317.1	-2.599	0.009**
	Male	466	32.8	34.0	8.0	40.0	6.5	268.5		
Confidence and Identification	Female	85	15.4	16.0	4.0	20.0	4.0	262.8	-0.835	0.404
	Male	466	15.8	16.0	4.0	20.0	3.8	278.4		
Self-Disclosure	Female	85	10.1	10.0	3.0	15.0	3.5	320.6	-2.821	0.005**
	Male	466	8.9	9.0	3.0	15.0	3.3	267.9		
Loyalty	Female	85	7.3	7.0	3.0	15.0	3.0	242.0	-2.150	0.032*
	Male	466	8.2	8.0	3.0	15.0	3.4	282.2		
Total	Female	85	67.5	68.0	39.0	90.0	11.6	294.1	-1.139	0.255
	Male	466	65.6	67.0	24.0	90.0	13.0	272.7		
PEER RELATIONSHIPS		NON-WORKING CHILDREN							Mann-Whitney U	
Gender	n	$\bar{X}$	Middle	Min.	Max.	ss	Mean Rank	z	p	
Commitment	Female	449	34.6	36.0	15.0	40.0	5.1	461.0	-5.276	0.000**
	Male	390	32.6	33.0	9.0	40.0	6.1	372.8		
Confidence and Identification	Female	449	15.5	16.0	4.0	20.0	3.4	412.5	-0.969	0.333
	Male	390	15.7	16.0	4.0	20.0	3.5	428.7		
Self-Disclosure	Female	449	10.4	11.0	3.0	15.0	3.4	474.1	-6.961	0.000**
	Male	390	8.8	9.0	3.0	15.0	3.2	357.7		
Loyalty	Female	449	6.9	6.0	3.0	15.0	3.1	369.6	-6.499	0.000**
	Male	390	8.3	8.0	3.0	15.0	3.3	478.0		
Total	Female	449	67.5	69.0	31.0	89.0	11.1	441.1	-2.710	0.007**
	Male	390	65.3	66.0	19.0	90.0	12.6	395.7		

\*\*p<0.01, \*p<0.05

Table 1 shows that the mean rank of working male children is lower than that of working female children in the Commitment and Self-Disclosure sub-dimensions of Peer Relationships Scale. In the Loyalty sub-dimension, the mean rank of working female children (242.0) is lower than that of male children (282.2). The Mann-Whitney U Test results show that the gender of working children indicates a statistically significant difference on the scores received from the Commitment, Self-Disclosure and Loyalty sub-dimensions of PRS ( $p < 0.01$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) but no difference has been found on the Confidence and Identification sub-dimensions or the total score ( $p > 0.05$ ).

It is observed that the mean rank of non-working male children is lower than that of female children in the Commitment and Self-Disclosure sub-dimensions and the total score of PRS. In the Loyalty sub-dimension, the mean rank of non-working female children (369.6) is lower than that of male children (478.0). The Mann-Whitney U Test shows that the gender of non-working children generates a statistically significant difference on the scores received from the Commitment, Self-Disclosure and Loyalty sub-dimensions and the total score of PRS ( $p < 0.01$ ) but there are no significant differences in the scores received from the Confidence and Identification sub-dimensions ( $p > 0.05$ ).

Table 2.

*Mann-Whitney U Test Results on Social Support Appraisals of Working and Non-working Children by Their Gender*

				WORKING CHILDREN				Mann-Whitney U		
SOCIAL SUPPORT	Gender	n	$\bar{X}$	Middle	Min.	Max.	ss	Mean Rank	z	p
Peer Support	Female	85	76.9	79.0	45.0	92.0	9.2	303.3	-1.718	0.086
	Male	466	74.6	76.0	24.0	95.0	11.0	271.0		
Family Support	Female	85	48.9	51.0	19.0	60.0	9.1	250.7	-1.595	0.111
	Male	466	50.8	53.0	23.0	60.0	7.5	280.6		
Teacher's Support	Female	85	38.3	39.0	20.0	49.0	6.2	332.2	-3.544	<b>0.000**</b>
	Male	466	35.7	35.0	10.0	50.0	6.6	265.7		
Total	Female	85	164.0	167.0	111.0	196.0	18.9	298.4	-1.413	0.158
	Male	466	161.1	163.5	78.0	204.0	19.7	271.9		
				NON-WORKING CHILDREN				Mann-Whitney U		
SOCIAL SUPPORT	Gender	n	$\bar{X}$	Middle	Min.	Max.	ss	Mean Rank	z	p
Peer Support	Female	449	78.2	80.0	37.0	95.0	10.0	441.8	-2.801	<b>0.005**</b>
	Male	390	76.4	78.0	25.0	94.0	10.7	394.9		
Family Support	Female	449	50.3	53.0	13.0	60.0	8.7	423.4	-0.433	0.665
	Male	390	50.8	52.0	28.0	60.0	7.1	416.1		
Teacher's Support	Female	449	37.2	38.0	13.0	50.0	6.9	461.1	-5.278	<b>0.000**</b>
	Male	390	34.6	35.0	10.0	50.0	6.9	372.7		
Total	Female	449	165.7	169.0	102.0	205.0	18.9	444.6	-3.155	<b>0.002**</b>
	Male	390	161.8	164.0	79.0	204.0	19.5	391.7		

\*\* $p < 0.01$

Table 2 shows that the mean rank of working male children (265.7) is lower than that of working female children (332.2) in the Teacher's Support sub-dimension. The Mann-Whitney U Test results show that the gender of working children indicates a statistically significant difference on the scores received from the Teacher's Support sub-dimension ( $p < 0.01$ ) but no difference has been found on the Peer Support and Teacher's Support sub-dimensions or the total score ( $p > 0.05$ ).

It is observed that the mean rank of non-working male children is lower than that of female children in the Peer Support and Teacher's Support sub-dimensions and the total score. The Mann-Whitney U Test shows that the gender of non-working children indicates a statistically significant difference on the scores received from the Peer Support and Teacher's Support sub-dimensions or the total score of SSES (  $p < 0.01$ ) but there are no significant differences in the scores received from the Family Support sub-dimension ( $p > 0.05$ ).

Table 3.

*Mann-Whitney U Test Results on Perfectionism of Working and Non-working Children by Their Gender*

		WORKING CHILDREN							Mann-Whitney U	
PERFECTIONISM	Gender	N	$\bar{X}$	Middle	Min.	Max.	ss	Mean Rank	z	p
Order	Female	85	25.3	27.0	8.0	30.0	4.9	318.6	-2.690	<b>0.007**</b>
	Male	466	23.7	25.0	6.0	30.0	5.7	268.2		
Excessive Concern for Mistakes	Female	85	28.2	28.0	12.0	41.0	6.3	292.4	-1.037	0.300
	Male	466	27.5	27.0	9.0	45.0	6.4	273.0		
Doubt for Behavior	Female	85	15.6	16.0	6.0	25.0	3.9	269.8	-0.391	0.696
	Male	466	15.8	16.0	5.0	25.0	3.7	277.1		
Family Expectations	Female	85	17.9	18.0	8.0	25.0	3.9	280.9	-0.307	0.759
	Male	466	17.6	18.0	5.0	25.0	4.2	275.1		
Family Criticism	Female	85	10.8	11.0	4.0	18.0	2.9	273.1	-0.183	0.854
	Male	466	10.9	11.0	4.0	20.0	3.2	276.5		
Personal Standards	Female	85	21.1	22.0	10.0	30.0	4.1	285.6	-0.607	0.544
	Male	466	20.9	21.0	6.0	30.0	4.2	274.2		
Total	Female	85	119.0	118.0	65.0	158.0	17.4	290.8	-0.930	0.352
	Male	466	116.5	117.0	45.0	164.0	18.1	273.3		
		NON-WORKING CHILDREN							Mann-Whitney U	
PERFECTIONISM	Gender	N	$\bar{X}$	Middle	Min.	Max.	ss	Mean Rank	z	p
Order	Female	449	26.5	27.0	6.0	30.0	4.0	467.6	-6.143	<b>0.000**</b>
	Male	390	24.8	26.0	6.0	30.0	4.7	365.2		
Excessive Concern for Mistakes	Female	449	26.6	26.0	9.0	44.0	6.9	419.5	-0.059	0.953
	Male	390	26.6	27.0	11.0	45.0	5.9	420.5		
Doubt for Behavior	Female	449	14.8	15.0	5.0	25.0	3.8	414.4	-0.724	0.469
	Male	390	15.0	15.0	7.0	24.0	3.3	426.5		
Family Expectations	Female	449	18.5	19.0	5.0	25.0	3.8	420.7	-0.096	0.923
	Male	390	18.5	19.0	5.0	25.0	3.8	419.1		
Family Criticism	Female	449	9.3	9.0	4.0	20.0	3.3	395.6	-3.143	<b>0.002**</b>
	Male	390	9.9	10.0	4.0	18.0	3.0	448.1		
Personal Standards	Female	449	21.1	21.0	6.0	30.0	3.6	430.5	-1.352	0.176
	Male	390	20.6	21.0	7.0	30.0	3.9	407.9		
Total	Female	449	116.9	118.0	58.0	160.0	15.6	430.4	-1.335	0.182
	Male	390	115.4	116.0	53.0	159.0	15.3	408.0		

\*\*p<0.01

Table 3 shows that the mean rank of working male children (268.2) is lower than that of working female children (318.6) in the Order sub-dimension of MDPS. The Mann-Whitney U Test results show that the gender of working children indicates a statistically significant difference on the scores received from the Order sub-dimension ( $p<0.01$ ) but no difference has been found on other sub-dimensions or the total score ( $p>0.05$ ).

It is observed that the mean rank of non-working male children (365.2) is lower than that of female children (467.6) in the Order sub-dimension, and non-working female children's mean rank (395.6) is lower than non-working male children's mean rank (448.1) in the Family Criticism sub-dimension. The Mann-Whitney U Test conducted shows that the gender of non-working children indicates a statistically significant difference on the scores received from the Order and Family Criticism sub-dimensions of MDPS ( $p<0.01$ ) but there are no significant differences in the scores received from other sub-dimensions or the total score ( $p>0.05$ ).

## Discussion

The results of the research indicate that among both working and non-working children, girls are more committed to their peers and have more tendency to disclose themselves than boys, whereas boys are more loyal than girls. Furthermore, non-working girls have higher friendship scores.

It is generally known that girls tend to share their problems with others and disclose themselves more than boys would do which strengthens commitment between peers and maintains continuity in relationships. It can be asserted that the tendency of males taking risks for others is more evident than females. In their research, Davies and Brember (1999: 15) stressed that females did not have difficulty in establishing and maintaining relations with their friends, did not have problems with starting and continuing communication, and that they were more committed and closer to their peers than males. Fisher (1981: 6) studied the peer relationships of adolescents and found that close relationships are more common among females than males and that girls are more committed to their friends. Döğücü (2004: 152) conducted research on adolescents who were attending high school. The results of the study proved that the difference between males and females regarding commitment in peer relationships and self-disclosure is significant and that there is not significant difference between girls and boys in confidence, identification and loyalty. Moreover, the study indicates that females are generally better at peer relationships than males.

When the findings of the research about social support are examined, it is seen that females perceive more teacher's support than males in the working children group. This can be explained through the fact that female students are more concerned about their lessons and they are more organized compared to males. Among non-working children, females perceive more peer support and teacher's support and have higher social support scores. Girls experience behaviors such as establishing warm, sincere and close relationships with peers, sharing secrets and helping friends to work out their problems more intensely. Girls' having a higher perception of social support than boys may be because the quality of their peer relationships is different in terms of emotional sharing and intensity, as well as they are more supportive in peer relationships. The finding that teacher's support perception is higher among female children can be explained by the fact that they are more concerned for their lessons than male children. In addition, girls can express themselves more easily, disclose themselves to the teacher and explain their problems. Sorias (1989) established that males may not benefit from social support during the socialization process due to reasons such as autonomy, self-confidence and independence, and females may benefit from social support resources more because they are warm, sensitive and they can share their problems with others. Some studies reported that females' perception of the level of social support from peers was higher than that of males (Banaz, 1992; Elbir, 2000; Erdeğer, 2001; Kahriman, 2002; Kim, 2001: 521; Şencan, 2009). Wall et al. (1999: 63) found that girls perceived more peer group support and teacher's support.

Findings about perfectionism show that the score of working and non-working females from the Order sub-dimension and the score of non-working males from Family Criticism sub-dimension are significantly high. In other sub-dimensions of perfectionism, there is not a meaningful difference between genders. It is observed that generally females tend to be more organized in working and non-working children, and males perceive of more family criticism in working males.

It can be stated that in the Turkish family culture, parents have different expectations from male and female children. Girls' expected roles usually involve factors in the direction of orderliness such as cleanliness and fussiness, which may account for their being more organized than males. On the other hand, male children are expected to take care of the home, and in consequence, they are forced more to have a place in society through their education, success and job, being motivated more to be perfect compared to female children. That's why they may perceive more family criticism. Siegel and Schuler (2000: 39) concluded in their research that male students are more influenced by parent expectations than female students are. Mısırlı-Taşdemir (2003) found that males tend to perceive more family criticism compared to females. In society, the roles of females and males can be separated by general lines. While families expect their daughters to be more organized and tidy, sons are expected to take on more responsibilities, to be more productive and independent.



## Conclusion

In this research, it has been determined that among working and non-working children, females are more committed to their friends and have a higher tendency to self-disclosure than males; males are more loyal than females; and in non-working children, peer relationships of females are better. Furthermore, in working children, females perceive more teachers' support than males; and in non-working children, females perceive a higher level of peer support and teacher's support and they have a higher social support score. The findings about perfectionism indicate that working and non-working females are more organized than males and non-working males perceive more family criticism than males. In light of these findings, some recommendations can be made:

- Studies to develop peer relationships of working and non-working children, particularly male children, can be conducted. Out of school and work life, social environments where children can be with their peers should be developed. Moreover, arrangements need to be made in children's school and working life so that they can spend more time with their friends. School administrators, educationists and employers should do whatever is required in this respect.
- It has been observed that females are better at social support perception than males. Still, studies for more social support from peers, families and teachers for both genders can be conducted. Children can benefit from more social support from parents, educationists at school, as well as foremen and employers at workplace. For this, seminars can be arranged to raise awareness among families, teachers and employers.
- The formation of positive perfectionist personality traits can be supported for working and non-working children. Children can be trained to support their development of positive perfectionist personality traits.
- The knowledge and sensibility of educationists about peer relationships, social support perception and perfectionism can be increased. Students can be made aware of the importance of peer relationships and social support resources. Furthermore, information about how perfectionism can affect school environment and teacher-student relationships can be provided. In-service training can be provided for teachers on these topics.
- It is important for the development of adolescents that parents develop a positive approach towards peer relationships at adolescence. Social support, which is needed at every stage of life, is especially important at adolescence; therefore, a child who believes that he is not adequately supported by his family can start to seek for it outside the family. It is also known that family is effective in the formation of perfectionist personality structures in children. Accordingly, teachers can arrange training workshops for parents about peer relationships, social support and perfectionism.

This research has studied the influence of gender on working and non-working children's peer relationships, social support perceptions and perfectionism. Some recommendations can be made for further research:

- Studies to examine other personality traits of working and non-working children can be conducted.
- Studies to compare the personality traits of children working at different branches can be planned.
- Experimental studies that will support the personal development of working or non-working children through training can be planned.
- The peer relationships, social support perceptions and perfectionism of children and parents can be compared and examined.

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