A STUDY ON SOCIAL SUPPORT PERCEPTION
OF PARENTS WHO HAVE CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

Dr. Bekir Fatih MERAL
Sakarya University
Faculty of Education
Department of Special Education
54300 Hendek/Sakarya, TURKEY

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Atilla CAVKAYTAR
Anadolu University
Faculty of Education
Department of Special Education
26100 Eskisehir/ TURKEY

ABSTRACT

The Purpose of this study is to examine the social support perception of parents who have children with autism. Data was collected from 672 parents who have children with autism in Turkey. In the study, it was researched whether the social support resources, household income per month, household socioeconomic status(SES) group, gender of children with autism, labor status of mother and living area parameters are important predictor of social support perception of parents or not. For that purpose, firstly, descriptive statistics and correlation values of the related variables and then, the predictor analysis results are given. During the study, the predictor variables, gender of children, labor status of mother and living area, were counted in analysis by converting them to dummy variable, because of that they are categorical variables. Significance level is accepted as .05 for the study. Data of 26 people were omitted from the analysis because, their data was considered as extreme values due to their Mahalanobis distance values are higher than criteria value [$x^2(6)$= 16.81, according to p=.01] in total 672 data sets thus, research group number are defined as 646. Predictor identification of social support perception of parents was done through 'Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis'. According to the findings of study it was found that family social support and sub field perception of parents who have children with autism is on the average; while the highest perception is in emotional support sub field, and the lowest perception is in care support sub field. According to the predictor analysis findings of the study, it was found that the most important predictors of the social support perception were the social support resources formed by family, friends or significant other of. It was stated that the densest support resources amongst all is family. In study, it was found that household income per month is the secondary predictor of social support perceptions of parents; however, household SES group, gender of child with autism, labor status of mother and living area are not important predictors of social support perceptions of parents.

Key Words: Parents who have children with autism, social support resources, social support types.