

## **Level of Social Sources of Support among Adolescents in Public Schools of Al-Nassera City**

**Dr. LailaKhaled Badarna**

*Psychologist in Awarat Comprehensive School, Bedouin Sector, Green Line, Palestine*

**Abstract:** The purpose of this study is to identify the social sources of support and the significant differences among adolescents according to the variables of gender and age. The sample consisted of (441) students, randomly selected public schools in the city of Al-Nassera. Social support scale used and developed by the author after verifying its validity and reliability. The results showed that the mean of participants' rates for the total instrument was (1.98) and medium level, the results showed that there were no statistically significant differences in the total social support sources and all domains due to the variables of gender and age. The study recommended the need to draw the attention of officials, educators and family to the importance of social support in developing the personality aspects among adolescents, and to provide guidance to adolescents to the importance of social support in reducing the emotional and social problems.

**Keywords:** social support, adolescents, public schools, Al-Nassera.

---

### **I. Introduction**

Adolescence is an important and critical stage in human life, where the seriousness of this stage lies in the changes that occur in the different growth forms: personal, physical, motor, mental, emotional and psychological aspects of the adolescent, the character, its composition, and its circumstances in the future, and in identifying social behavior aspects, and these changes involve multi-faced conflicts affecting the adolescents internally and externally.

The social environment surrounding the adolescent plays an important and active role in the preparation of his/her social life by providing the adolescent with the attitudes and values of society as well as the necessary knowledge and skills in order to continue and familiarity with social life and norms (Zahran, 2000); so the family is the mediator and the main school for education and socialization and key component for all aspects of the personality of the individual. Through the family, the individual learns behavior patterns that followed in their life and by which they learn compatibility with the family and the community and how to be committed with standards, principles and rules and stick to the laws and regulations (Jonnes and Meier, 2011).

The process of socialization of the adolescent conducted by the family through control, reward, retribution and punishment, where the child builds his/her view of himself and of others, social attitudes formed due to the relationship with parents and their methods of care for the child. The individual responses to the community, how to cope with problems and difficulties that hinder his commitment and lead to psychological and behavioral disorder, based on the relationship of warmth, satisfaction or negligence and rejection and deprivation with parents (Bandura, 1997). The concept Social Support has received great attention by guiding, clinical and social psychologists. The idea of the impact of the Group on attitudes and behaviors was well known, for example, in the forties and fifties of the twentieth century, the theory of Reference Group disseminated, whose objective was to determine how the individual adopts values of individuals and groups and their criteria as a comparative reference through which the attitudes and behaviors are formed (Malkoush, 2000).

Anyway, the nature, quality, timing and degree of these reactions can vary from one relationship to another. The presence of these relations and the occurrence of these interactions also make the individual feel supported, for example, he/she enjoys the love, care and respect by others, and the participation and the ability to give opinions and take decisions (Haddad and Zeitawi, 2002).

In the seventies of the last century both Cassel, Caplan, and Cobb in (Ali, 2005) set up the working principle in the field of social support, and proposed a concept of the types of social relations and the various activities involved in social support process, and indicated the value and importance of social support in mitigating the harmful negative effects of stressful life on the physical aspects. Green, Furrer and Mcalister (2011) confirmed that the social support received by the individual, through family, friends and colleagues at work, plays a major role in reducing the negative effects of events, mental and behavioral disorders, and stressful attitudes to which the individual is vulnerable in daily life. Vaux stated in (Ali, 2005) that social support is not a fixed property for the individual or the environment, but it is a complex dynamic process that involves the joint positive interaction between the individual and the network of social relations stemming from the social support that is always looking for the behavior of satisfying different needs, which is perceived as a

dynamic process that enables him/her to mitigate the negative psychological effects caused by everyday stressful events, and that contributes to his sense of compatibility with his life style.

Social support received great attention of researchers including Hadad&Zeitawi (2002) who showed that there was a high level social support perceived by family members, while it showed a medium level of social support perceived by friends. The results showed no differences in social support due to the variable of gender. The results of Hurre, Eerola, Rohlconen, and Aro (2007) pointed that students who are not provided with sufficient social support in adolescence were more likely to develop symptoms of depression at the age of 32 years. Al-Khaldi (2008) showed that the social support level was high, with statistically significant differences in favor of females in social support level, the existence of differences in mental health due to social support. Siyez (2008) indicated that family conflicts adversely affect the level of perceived social support provided by family and friends. Yeh, Okubo, Martea, Shea and Pituc (2008) demonstrated that the social support provided by family and friends is an important factor in the level of social interaction among students. Esen (2009) assured that the social support perceived from friends is a protective factor against peers' tendency towards addiction in general. Sharaf, Thompson, and Walsh (2009) proved that the social support of family leads mediating role in the effect of self-esteem on risky behaviors and thoughts of suicide among adolescents. Kimhi, Eshel, Zysberg, and Hantman (2010) confirmed that family cohesion among family members plays an important role in the level of the impact of social support provided to the student who suffers from mental disorders, and that there were statistically significant differences due to the variables of gender and age in favor of females and the age of (15-16) years. Hall (2010) revealed that the social support of the family contributes to reducing the level of addiction among students and recovering from it. Henry, Plunkett and Sands (2011) and Zhao (2011) stressed that the family is the main source of social support received by children and adolescents and providing academic support. Hagan and Perker (2011) pointed to the importance of social support from friends as an important predictive factor for academic success and the development of emotional intelligence. The study showed that there were statistically significant differences in social support sources in favor of females. Liern, Cavell and Lustig (2011) also confirmed that social support provided by friends contributes to the development of self-perceived value among adolescents.

## **II. Statement of the problem**

The purpose of this study is to identify the social support sources among adolescents. This study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of social sources of support among adolescents in public schools in the city of Al-Nassera?
2. Are there any statistically significant differences at the level of ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in the sources of social support due to the variables of gender and age among adolescents in public schools in Al-Nassera?

## **III. Significance**

- The current study adds new information to human knowledge and the Arabian library about social support sources to adolescents through an access to literature review and theories related to the study variables and highlighting them to take advantage of them in explaining the results of the study.
- This study may contribute to utilizing the results of the current variables in local and regional environment.
- The results of the current study may benefit the officials and educators through addressing the level of social support sources to help adolescents develop the positive side of it and modify its disadvantages.
- The study may benefit parents in their search for the sources of social support for their adolescent son to achieve him mental health, harmony and satisfaction in life.
- The results of the current study may benefit the adolescent himself in modifying his behaviors with his colleagues and with the surroundings towards adjustment and achieving his self-positive concept.

## **IV. Theoretical framework**

The terms of the current study are defined as follows:

**Social Support:** Ali (2005: 15) defined it as "a complex dynamic process that involves the joint positive interaction between the individual and the network of social relations, the individual is always looking for this positive interaction in his behavior towards satisfying different needs." It is procedurally identified in this study as the total score obtained by the student on the scale, which was prepared by the researcher of this study.

**Adolescence:** Adolescents in this study are the students who are in public schools in the city of Al-Nassera for the academic year 2011/2012 year, the adolescents participants have been distributed to two categories, namely: early adolescence (12-15 years) and middle adolescence (15-18 years).

## **V. Methodology**

The descriptive method was utilized in this study in order to achieve the objectives of the study, and answer its questions.

### **5.1 Population and sampling**

The study population consisted of all students (5600 students) in prep stage and the secondary stage in public schools in Al-NasseraCity for the first semester of the academic year 2011/2012. The study sample was randomly selected from the study population in the first semester of the academic year 2011/2012, numbered (441) students who were distributed according to the variables of the study:gender and age, as shown in Table (1).

**Table 1:** Distribution of study sample according to gender and age

Variable	Category	No.	Percentage
Gender	Male	208	47.2
	Female	233	52.8
	Total	441	100.0
Age	Earl adolescence (12 to less than 15) years	236	53.5
	Middle adolescence (15 to less than 18) years	205	46.5
	Total	441	100.0

### **5.2 Instrument: Scale of Social Support Sources**

The educational literature review on the sources of social support (family, school, and friends) has been accessed by the author to form the scale of social support. First draft scale of sources of social support consisted of (45) paragraphs/items distributed to three dimensions:

1. Family social support: it refers to the support provided by the family to the adolescent in the physical, cognitive, and guiding, emotional aspects and informatics, paragraphs (1-15).
2. Social support from friends: it refers to the support of the Friends to the adolescent in the physical, cognitive, and guiding, emotional aspects and informatics, paragraphs (16-30).
3. School social support: it refers to the support provided by the school employees to the adolescentthe physical, cognitive, and guiding, emotional aspects and informatics, paragraphs (31-45).

Three-Likert scale utilized, where (always) for the value (3), (sometimes) for (2)and rarely for the value (1).

### **5.3 Validity**

To verify the validity of the social support scale, it was reviewed and evaluated by ten evaluators who are more experienced in psychology and measurement and evaluation at Jordan Universities; where they were asked to check the appropriateness of the paragraphs (items) of the dimensions and the total scale, and to make sure of the language and the appropriateness of the scale to achieve the study objectives. In light of the views and suggestions of the evaluators, the required modifications were made with agreement percentage (80%), and the final draft consisted of (45) paragraphs.

### **5.4 Reliability**

The reliability of the scale was verified by two methods: First, the method of (test-retest) applied to pilot sample (56) students, two-weeks interval between the two tests, where Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated between the scores of respondents, and the total reliability coefficient of the scale is (0.85). The second method conducted by calculating of the internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) of the scale = (0.94). These are considered appropriate values for achieving the objectives of the study as shown in table (2).

**Table (2):** Cronbach's alpha and (test-retest) to scale of social support

Scale	Cronbach's alpha	Pearson correlation coefficient
Family social support	0.92	0.82
Social support from friends	0.85	0.86
School social support	0.91	0.81

These values were considered appropriate for the purposes of this study.

### **5.5 Correction to scale response**

The scale of sources of social support consisted of (45) paragraphs distributed to three dimensions:

Family social support: (1-15) paragraphs.

Social support from friends: (16-30) paragraphs.

School social support: (31-45) paragraphs.

The highest score obtained by the responder (135) and the lowest one is (45). To explain the rates of the respondents on the total scale and dimensions of the paragraphs, the following equation was used:

$$\frac{3-1}{3} = 0.67$$

Accordingly, the paragraph level or dimension is as follows:

- $(1 + 0.67) = 1.67$ , thus means between (1-1.67) are low.
- $(1.67 + 0.67) = 2.34$ , thus means between (1.68- 2.34) are medium.
- $(2.34) + 0.67 = 3$ , thus means between (2.34 -3) are high.

## VI. Results

**Results of the first question:** "What is the level of social support sources among adolescents in public schools in the city of Al-Nassera?"

To answer this question, the arithmetic means and standard deviations of the rates of the respondents calculated for each domain and the total instrument, as shown in Table (3).

**Table (3):** Means and standard deviations, and the degree to the rates of the respondents for all domains and the total instrument

No.	Domains	No. of paragraphs	Maximum	Mean by significance of paragraph(*)	St. D	Degree	Rank
1	Family social support	15	28.36	1.89	.420	Medium	2
2	Social support from friends	15	32.81	2.18	.390	Medium	1
3	School social support	15	28.13	1.87	.330	Medium	3
4	Total	45	89.31	1.98	.190	Medium	

(\*) The arithmetic mean in terms of paragraph = the maximum of mean ÷ number of paragraphs

Table (3) indicated that the mean of the ratings of respondents on the total instrument for social support among adolescents = (1.98) with a standard deviation (0.19) and medium level. The second domain (support from friends) ranked the first with a mean (2.18), a standard deviation (0.39) and medium level. Followed by the first domain (family social support) in second place with a mean of (1.89) and a standard deviation (0.420) and medium level, while the third domain (School social support) ranked the third and last place with a mean (1.87) and a standard deviation (.330) and medium level.

**Results for the answer to the second question:** Are there any statistically significant differences at the level of ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in the sources of social support due to the variables of gender and age among adolescents in public schools in Al-Nassera?

### A) With respect to gender:

T-test calculated for the significance of differences between males and females on the total Social Support Scale and all its domains on the one hand and their ratings on the paragraphs of the total Social Support Scale on the other, as shown in Table (4).

**Table (4):** T-test results for the significance of differences between males and females in the social sources of support

Domains	Gender	No.	Mean	St. D	Freedom degrees	T-value	Sig. level
Family social support	Males	208	28.4231	6.17411	439	1.185	0.277
	Females	233	28.3047	6.47387			
Social support from friends	M.	208	32.6010	6.01121	439	1.603	0.206
	F.	233	33.0129	5.86080			
School social support	M.	208	28.0529	4.89721	439	.600	0.439
	F.	233	28.2146	5.09279			
Total	M.	208	89.0769	9.14794	439	.814	0.368
	F.	233	89.5322	8.73163			

Table (4) showed that there were no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) between males and females in the total social support and all its domains.

B) With respect to age of adolescents: Early adolescence: (12 to less than 15 years) and Middle adolescence: (15 to less than 18 years):

T-test calculated for the significance of differences between the age groups of adolescents in social support as indicated in Table (5):

**Table (5):** T-test results for the significance of differences between the age groups of adolescents in social support sources

Domains	Level	No.	Mean	St. D	Freedom degrees	T-value	Sig. level
Family social support	Early adolescence	236	28.3051	6.36748	439	0.150	0.698
	Middle adolescence	205	28.4244	6.29584			
Social support from friends	Early adolescence	236	32.6059	5.83108	439	0.010	0.921
	Middle adolescence	205	33.0634	6.04484			
School social support	Early adolescence	236	27.9153	4.93804	439	0.420	0.517
	Middle adolescence	205	28.3951	5.06284			
Total	Early adolescence	236	88.8263	9.43553	439	2.002	0.158
	Middle adolescence	205	89.8829	8.28097			

Table (5) demonstrated that there were no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) among early adolescence and middle adolescence on the total scale of social sources of support and all of its domains.

## VII. Discussion

- The results showed that the mean of ratings of adolescents in the city of Al-Nassera on the total instrument of social support was (1.98) with medium level. The author believes that the network of social sources of support from family, friends and the school in the city of Al-Nassera is leading a good role, maybe due to the events, crises and issues experienced by the region under Israel occupation, which made individuals in the Palestinian community unite in solidarity to overcome adversities, difficulties, challenges and obstacles that can be overcome only if there is physical, moral, cognitive, and emotional support provided by family, friends and school. The result of this question differed from the results of Al-Khaldi (2008), which showed that the level of social support was high.
- In terms of the domains, the domain of (social support from friends) ranked the first place with a mean (2.19) and medium level. This can be attributed to the type of respondents, i.e. the adolescents. Sherbini (2006) saw that confirmation of personal freedom, independence and self-assertion is one of the most important aspects of social growth in adolescence, and influenced by the extent of liberation from family constraints, where the behavior of the adolescent marked with his desire of power, and therefore dominated by strong social ties. Hence, the adolescents make up social network to identify their problems, addressing them, and challenge the difficulties and obstacles that block their goals, objectives and desires. So, social support from friends is the most prominent for them than other sources; followed by the domain of (family support) in the second place with a mean (1.89) and medium level. This result can be justified in the light of the effective role played by the family in the preparation of social life for adolescents by providing them with the values and attitudes of society as well as the necessary knowledge and skills for continue and compatibility with social life and norms and commitment, so the family is considered the primary mediator based on education and socialization and the basic component of the personality of the individual to comply with its standards, principles and rules (Zahran, 2000).
- The domain of (school social support) ranked the third place with a mean (1.88) and medium level because the school greatly contributes to the process of learning, teaching and education, which is based on social interaction and aims to give the individual the behaviors, standards and attitudes appropriate for social roles, such as keeping pace and compatibility with his group, and in turn this group facilitate the integration of the individual into social life, and this requires providing a great deal of social support for the adolescent in terms of the cognitive, emotional and physical support which makes him able to cope with life, and behave well according to the social support network.
- The results showed no statistically significant differences in the total social sources of support all its domains due to the variable of gender. This can be attributed to the fact that man is a social human being that cannot live in isolation from the others, hence he/she is permanently looking for sources to meet his/her psychological and emotional needs, through provide him with physical, moral and informatics support, by the family, friends, and the school; therefore, the author finds that adolescents are well aware of the importance of social sources of support in their lives and hence no significant differences due to gender. The results of this study agreed with the results of Haddad and Zeitawi (2002), which showed no differences due to gender in social support sources. While the current results of this study are inconsistent with the results of Al-Khaldi (2008), which revealed the existence of significant differences in the level of social support in favor of females. Kimhi, et al (2010) also showed that there were statistically significant differences in the level of social support due to gender in favor of females.
- The results of the current study showed that there were no statistically significant differences between early adolescence and middle adolescence on the total scale of social sources of support and all of its domains. This is due to the similarity in the social and cultural environment lived by adolescents who are of different

age groups. They are well aware of the importance of social sources of support in their lives; therefore they find them a profit through which they achieve all their requirements, needs and desires.

### **VIII. Recommendations**

In light of the findings of the study, the following recommendations have been made by the author:

1. The need to draw the attention of educators and officials to the importance of family and social support in the development of personality aspects of adolescents.
2. Providing guidance to adolescents about the importance of social sources of support in reducing the emotional and social problems.
3. Conducting studies similar to the current study through larger and different population, such as universities, and the use of other instruments such as monitor and interview, and though other variables such as the socio-economic level of the family, nature of family relations, parental methods of treatment, locus of control, intelligence, anxiety level and academic achievement level.

### **References**

- [1]. Haddad, Afaf and Zeitawi, Abdullah (2002). The relationship between social support and depression among Yarmouk University students in light of some variables. *Al-Manara*, 8 (3): 9-35.
- [2]. Al-Khalidi, Jajan. (2008). The role of social support in reinforcing the mental health of adolescents. *Journal of Arts*, University of Mosul, 10 (1): 15-30.
- [3]. Zahran, Hamid (2000). Social Psychology. Amman: Al-Maseera House.
- [4]. Ali, Abdel-Salam. (2005). Social support and its practical applications in our daily lives. Cairo: Egyptian Renaissance Library.
- [5]. Malcoush, Riyadh (2000). Social support and the student adaptation among the University of Jordan students. *Educational Science Studies*, 17 (1). 161-172.
- [6]. Bandura, A. (1997). **Self-efficacy: The Exercise of Control**. Stanford University. New York, W. H. Free Man and Company.
- [7]. Esen, B. (2009). Adolescence Addiction is Predicted by Peer Pressure and Perceived Friends' Social Support. *E- Journal of New World Sciences Academy*, 4(4): 1331-1340.
- [8]. Green, B., Furrer, C., McAlister, C. (2011). Does Attachment Style Influence Social Support or the other Way Around? A Longitudinal Study of Early Head Start Mothers. *Attachment and Human Development*, 13(1): 27-47.
- [9]. Hagan, M and Perker, J. (2011). Academic Success in Adolescence: Relationships among Verbal IQ, Social Support and Emotional Intelligence. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 62(1): 30-41.
- [10]. Hall, J. (2010). Childhood Perceptions of Family, Social Support, Parental Alcoholism, and Later Alcohol use. *Journal of Substance Use*, 15(3): 157-165.
- [11]. Henry, C., Plunkett, S and Sands, T (2011). Family Structure, Parental Involvement, and Academic Motivation in Latino Adolescents. *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage*, 52(6): 370-390.
- [12]. Hurre, T; Eerola, M; Rohlconen, O and Aro, H (2007). Does Social Support Affect the Relationship Between Socio economic Status and Depression? A Longitudinal Study from Adolescence to Adulthood. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 199(1/3): 55-64.
- [13]. Jonnes, A & Meier, A (2011). A Case Study of Online Support Community Social Work with Groups, 34(2), 101-120.
- [14]. Kimhi, S; Eshel, Y; Zysberg, L; and Hantman, S. (2010). Sense of Danger and Family Support as Mediators of Adolescents' Distress and Recovery. *Journal of Loss and Trauma*, 15: 351-369.
- [15]. Liern, J; Cavell, E and Lustig, K (2011). The Influence of Authoritative Parenting during Adolescence on Depressive Symptoms in Young Adulthood: Examining the Mediating Roles of Self-Development and Peer Support. *Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 171(1): 73-92.
- [16]. Sharaf, A., Thompson, E.; Walsh, E. (2009). Protective Effects of Self-Esteem and Family Support on Suicide Risk Behaviors among at Risk Adolescents. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing*, 22(3): 160-168.
- [17]. Siyez, D. (2008). Adolescents' Self-Esteem, Problem Behaviors and Perceived Social Support in Turkey. *Social Behavior and Personality*, 36(7): 973-984.
- [18]. Yeh, C., Okubo, Y.; Martea, P. Shea, M., Pituc S. (2008). Chinese Immigrant High School Students Cultural Interactions, Acculturation, Family Obligations, Language use and Social Support. *Adolescence*, 43(172): 775-790.
- [19]. Zhao, G (2011). Functions and Sources of Perceived Social /Support among Children with HIV-AIDS in China. *AIDS Care*, 23(6): 671-679.