



## La relación entre el apoyo percibido del cónyuge y los niveles de resiliencia psicológica en individuos casados

## The relationship between perceived spouse support and levels of psychological resilience in married individuals

**Buğracan Acibal.**

Sakarya University, Turkey.  
[bugracan.acibal@sakarya.edu.tr](mailto:bugracan.acibal@sakarya.edu.tr)

**Mehmet Kaya.**

Sakarya University, Turkey.  
[mehmetkaya@sakarya.edu.tr](mailto:mehmetkaya@sakarya.edu.tr)

**José María Fernández-Batanero.**

University of Seville, Spain.  
[batanero@us.es](mailto:batanero@us.es)

**Nesrin Akinci Çötök.**

Sakarya University, Turkey.  
[nakinci@sakarya.edu.tr](mailto:nakinci@sakarya.edu.tr)

### RESUMEN.

La resiliencia psicológica es la capacidad de una persona para hacer frente a las dificultades que enfrenta. Es importante en términos de ser un predictor positivo de la salud mental de una persona. Dado que la resiliencia se asocia con el apoyo social del medio ambiente, este estudio tuvo como objetivo examinar la relación entre el apoyo percibido por los individuos casados de sus cónyuges y sus niveles de resiliencia. El grupo de trabajo está formado por 294 personas casadas, 73 (24,8%) hombres y 221 mujeres (72,2%) que participan en la investigación. Para obtener los datos se utilizaron la "Escala de apoyo conyugal", la "Escala corta de resiliencia psicológica" y el "Formulario de información personal" desarrollado por los investigadores para examinar las características sociodemográficas. Los datos se probaron con correlación lineal simple, regresión lineal simple, prueba t de muestra independiente y prueba ANOVA. Según los hallazgos del estudio, existe una relación significativa entre el apoyo conyugal percibido y la resiliencia, y el apoyo conyugal es un predictor significativo de la resiliencia. Sin embargo, si bien el nivel de resiliencia no difiere según el género, la manutención conyugal difiere según el género. Si bien el apoyo conyugal no difiere según el nivel de ingresos y el estado educativo, la resiliencia psicológica difiere según el nivel de ingresos, pero no difiere según el estado educativo. Como resultado, el apoyo conyugal percibido de las personas casadas predice sus niveles de resiliencia psicológica.

### PALABRAS CLAVE.

Apoyo percibido al cónyuge, Resiliencia psicológica, Individuos casados.



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## ABSTRACT.

Psychological resilience is a person's ability to cope with difficulties he/she faces. It is essential in terms of being a positive predictor of a person's mental health. Since resilience is associated with social support from the environment, this study aimed to examine the relationship between the support perceived by married individuals from their spouses and their levels of resilience. The Working group comprises 294 married individuals, 73 (24.8%) men and 221 women (72.2%) participating in the research. "Spousal Support Scale," "Short Psychological Resilience Scale," and "Personal Information Form" developed by the researchers to examine socio-demographic characteristics were used to obtain the data. Data were tested with simple linear correlation, simple linear regression, independent sample t-test, and ANOVA test. According to the findings of the study, there is a significant relationship between perceived spousal support and resilience, and spousal support is an important predictor of resilience. However, while the level of resilience does not differ according to gender, spousal support varies according to gender. While spousal support does not differ according to income level and educational status, psychological resilience differs according to income level but not according to educational quality. As a result, the perceived spousal support of married individuals predicts their psychological resilience levels.

## KEY WORDS.

Perceived spouse support, Psychological resilience, Married individuals.

## 1. Introduction.

In recent studies, the frequency of studies aimed at discovering the positive and functional aspects of personality with the influence of protective mental health and, in parallel, positive psychology stands out. In this direction, it is examined what factors are effective in individuals' ability to protect their mental structure in the face of and after negative experiences (Işık, 2016). Another frequently used concept in these studies is "*psychological resilience*." In the 1970s, with the studies conducted with children at risk of psychopathology due to environmental or hereditary reasons, psychological resilience began to be considered (Masten, 2001). Although it is a concept that has been studied in various fields, a common definition has not been emphasised (Earvalino-Ramirez, 2007; Hermann, Stewart, Diaz-Granados, Berder, Jackson & Yuen, 2011). Psychological resilience, in its most general form, can be defined as the ability to get positive results in the face of threats (Masten, 2001) or negative experiences (Doğan, 2015; as cited in Walsh, Işık, 2016) against one's adaptation and development and to adapt positively (Luthar, Cicchetti, et al. Becker, 2000) when necessary. In short, it can be defined as protecting mental health in the face of difficulties or regaining it afterwards. Psychological resilience can be related to personal characteristics as well as to other environmental conditions (Hermann et al., 2011; Bektaş, 2018). Psychological resilience plays an important role not only when faced with individual difficulties but also against relational difficulties (Bektaş, 2018) and increases as these difficulties are overcome (as cited in Higgins, 1994).



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Another concept that has an effect on supporting positive personality aspects, as well as reducing depression, stress, and anxiety levels of individuals, is social support (Kaya, 2012; Navaie-Waliser, Martin, Tessaro, Campbell & Cross, 2000). Studies have shown that social support from the social environment, such as family members (Greef & Humon, 2004; McCubbin, Balling, Possin, Frierdich & Bryne, 2002) or colleagues (Karakuş & Ünsal, 2017, as cited in Bektaş, 2018) is one of the factors that increase psychological resilience. While defining social support, researchers have discussed this concept from different points and put forward various definitions. In this respect, social support is the support that an individual perceives in both social and psychological dimensions (Yıldırım, 1997), which includes supportive behaviours (Kerres Maleckli & Kilpatrick Demary, 2002) from important people in his social environment (Cassel, 1974). Individuals can receive support and support from their environment in many different ways. However, as a result of marriage, spouses assume the role of mutually important sources of support (Çağ, 2011). The social support that spouses perceive mutually in marriage is called spousal support (Yıldırım, 2004). Spousal support is evaluated not only depending on the support shown by a spouse but also based on the support perceived by the other spouse (Çağ, 2011; Çağ & Yıldırım, 2013). For individuals, the support they receive from their spouses has an important place. Individuals prefer that the support they perceive from their spouses is sufficient compared to normal social support (Dehle, Larsen & Landers, 2001). Perceived spousal support and the belief that this support will continue in the future (Ross & Mirowsky, 2002) affect their marital satisfaction and personal well-being (Çağ & Yıldırım, 2013; Dehle et al., 2001). In addition, perceived spousal support has an effect on low depression and stress levels (Dehle et al., 2001; Kaya, 2012), and this effect is greater than that provided by other types of support (Navaie-Waliser et al., 2000). This study aims to shed light on the effect of spousal support, an effective type of social support, on the psychological resilience of individuals. In the literature, psychological resilience is related to social support, satisfaction, etc., in many different romantic or professional relationships. There are studies on its relationship with various dimensions. However, the relationship between spousal support and psychological resilience is not specifically addressed. This study is original and essential in terms of filling this gap in the literature.

## 2. Method.

A total of 294 married individuals, 221 women and 73 men, living in Turkey participated in the study. Data were collected online from married persons via "Google Forms." The study group was formed with the non-random purposive sampling method. The Spousal Support Scale, the Short Psychological Resilience Scale, and the Personal Information Form created by the researchers to describe some socio-demographic characteristics were used to collect the data.

### The Spousal Support Scale.

The Spousal Support Scale was developed by Yıldırım (2004). The 27-item scale is a 3-point Likert-type scale, and the total score that can be obtained is between 27-81. Factor analysis and convergent and discriminant validity were used in the validity analyses of the scale. The KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) coefficient was calculated as .952, and as a result of the study, the



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scale was found to have a 4-factor structure. In addition, it was found that there was a significant negative correlation between the Beck Depression Inventory. In the reliability analysis of the scale, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was found to be .95, while the test-retest reliability coefficient was found to be .89 (Yıldırım, 2004). A high score on the scale indicates a high level of perceived spousal support.

### The Short Psychological Resilience Scale.

The Brief Resilience Scale, developed by Smith, Dalen, Wiggins, Tooley, Christopher & Bernard (2008), is a 5-point Likert-type scale consisting of 6 items. The validity and reliability studies of the scale were conducted with four different groups. As a result of the Factor Analysis performed for the scale's construct validity, it was seen that it had a single factor structure in all groups. The factor loading values of the items were found between .68 and .91. Internal consistency and test-retest methods were used to calculate the scale's reliability. While the Cronbach's alpha coefficient measured from the groups was in the range of .80 - .91, the test-retest reliability coefficient was found in the range of .62 - .69 (Smith et al., 2008). The Turkish validity and reliability study of the scale was carried out by Doğan (2015). As a result of the Factor Analysis, it was found that the scale has a single factor structure. The item's factor loads are between .63 and .79. In the analysis performed for the scale's reliability, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was found to be .83 (Doğan, 2015). A high score on the scale indicates a high level of psychological resilience.

### 3. Findings.

**Table 1:**

*Descriptive statistics of socio-demographic characteristics used in the study*

		N	%
<b>Gender</b>	Male	73	24,8
	Female	221	75,2
<b>Income Rate</b>	2500₺ and below	21	7,1
	Between 2500₺-7000₺	159	54,1
	7000₺ and above	114	38,8
<b>Educational Status</b>	Primary school graduate	23	7,8
	Secondary school graduate	15	5,1
	High school graduate	68	23,1
	Undergraduate	171	58,2
	Graduate	17	5,8
<b>Total</b>		294	100

The distribution of the variables of gender and income level of the participants in the study is shown in Table 1. While 24.8% of the participants in the study were male (N=73), 75.2% were female (N=221). The distribution of the participants by income level is 7.1% (N=21) for the 2500 and below group, 54.1% (N=159) for the 2500-7000 group, and 38.8% (N=114) for the 7000 and above group. The distribution of the participants according to their educational status is 7.8% primary school graduates (N=23), 5.1% secondary school graduates (N=15), 23.1% high school graduates (N=68), 58% .2 of them are graduates (N=171), and 5.8% are





postgraduates (N=17). The scatterplot diagrams of the variables to be analysed in the study were examined, and it was determined that they showed normal distribution. Therefore, hypotheses were tested using parametric tests.

**Table 2:**

Correlation scores between psychological resilience and perceived spousal support

Variables	$\bar{X}$	SS	1	2
(1) Psychological Resilience	18,59	3,891	-	,124*
(2) Spousal Support	43,72	13,441	,124*	-

\* $p < .05$

As a result of the simple linear correlation procedure (Table 2) performed to reveal whether there is a relationship between the perceived spousal support of married individuals and their psychological resilience levels, it was observed that there is a positive, low-level, and significant relationship between the perceived spousal support and psychological resilience ( $r = .124, p < .05$ ).

**Table 3:**

Simple regression analysis results to measure the prediction level of spousal support on psychological resilience

Variables	B	Standard Error $\beta$	$\beta$	t	F	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>
Constant	17,014	0,769		22,132**				
Spousal Support	,036	,017	0,124	2,138*	4,570*	,124	,015	,015

\*\* $p < 0,01$

\* $p < 0,05$

As a result of the simple linear regression analysis (Table 3) performed to examine whether spousal support is a significant predictor of resilience, it was found that perceived spousal support was a significant predictor of resilience ( $F_{1-292} = 4.570, p < .05$ ). Spousal support explains 1.5% of the change in resilience ( $r^2 = .015, p < .05$ ). The significance test of the coefficient of the predictor variable ( $B = 0.036$ ) based on the regression equation also shows that spousal support is a significant predictor ( $p < .05$ ).

**Table 4:**

t-test results to measure whether psychological resilience and spousal support differ according to gender

Variables	Group	N	$\bar{X}$	SS	Sd	t	p
Psychological Resilience	Male	73	19,30	3,192	292	1,822	,070
	Female	221	18,35	4,074			
Spousal Support	Male	73	38,82	10,681	158,576	-4,177	,000
	Female	221	45,34	13,880			



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A difference was observed between the average perceived spousal support levels of men in the study ( $X= 38.82$ ) and the average perceived spousal support levels of women ( $X=45.34$ ) (Table 4). As a result of the analysis, it was determined that the difference between the perceived spouse levels of the men and women in the study was statistically significant ( $t_{158,576}= -4,177, p<.01$ ). In this case, it can be said that the level of perceived spousal support differs significantly in terms of gender. When the difference between the average psychological resilience of men ( $X=19.30$ ) and the average psychological resilience of women ( $X=18.35$ ) in the study was examined, it was found that there was no statistically significant difference ( $t_{292}=1.822, p>.05$ ).

**Table 5:** Table showing the averages of psychological resilience and spousal support according to income levels

Variables	Group	N	$\bar{X}$	SS
Psychological Resilience	(1) 2500€ and below	21	17,10	3,434
	(2) Between 2500€ - 7000€	159	18,32	4,021
	(3) 7000€ and above	114	19,23	3,891
Spousal Support	(1) 2500€ and below	21	44,71	14,897
	(2) Between 2500€ - 7000€	159	43,57	13,456
	(3) 7000€ and above	114	43,75	13,258

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine whether the participants' psychological resilience and perceived spousal support levels differed significantly according to their income levels.

*Table 6: ANOVA results of psychological resilience and perceived spousal support by income level variable*

	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Sd	Mean of Squares	F	p	Significant Difference
Psychological Resilience	Between Groups	104,853	2	52,426	3,523	,031	1-3
	Within Groups	4330,521	291	14,882			
	Total	4435,374	293				
Spousal Support	Between Groups	24,302	2	12,151	,067	,935	
	Within Groups	52906,827	291	181,810			
	Total	52931,129	293				



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- 1: 2500€ and below
- 2: Between 2500€-7000€
- 3: 7000€ and above

As can be seen in Table 5 and Table 6, a statistically significant difference was observed between at least two of the variables when psychological resilience levels were analysed according to income levels ( $F_{2-291} = 3,523, p < .05$ ). The effect level calculated as a result of the test ( $\eta^2 = .02$ ) shows that this difference is low. As a result of the multiple comparison test, it was seen that a significant difference was between the "2500 and below" and "7000 and above" groups. Tables 5 and 6 show that when the perceived spousal support levels according to income levels are examined, no statistically significant difference was observed between at least two variables ( $F_{2-291} = 0.067, p > .05$ ).

**Table 7:** Table showing the averages of psychological resilience and spousal support by educational status

Variables	Group	N	$\bar{X}$	SS
Psychological Resilience	(1) Primary school graduate	23	18,74	4,298
	(2) Secondary school graduate	15	18,00	3,162
	(3) High school graduate	68	18,43	3,841
	(4) Undergraduate	171	18,64	3,703
	(5) Graduate	17	19,00	5,906
Spousal Support	(1) Primary school graduate	23	46,35	13,117
	(2) Secondary school graduate	15	47,87	18,161
	(3) High school graduate	68	43,46	11,497
	(4) Undergraduate	171	43,33	13,900
	(5) Graduate	17	41,47	11,969

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine whether the participants' psychological resilience and perceived spousal support levels differed significantly according to their education levels.

**Table 8:** ANOVA results of psychological resilience and spousal support by income level variable

Variables	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Sd	Mean of Squares	F	p	Significant Difference
Psychological Resilience	Between Groups	10,787	4	2,697	,176	,951	
	Within Groups	4424,588	289	15,310			





	<b>Total</b>	4435,374	293			
<b>Spousal Support</b>	<b>Between Groups</b>	533,076	4	133,269	,735	,569
	<b>Within Groups</b>	52398,054	289	181,308		
	<b>Total</b>	52931,129	293			

As can be seen in Table 7 and Table 8, when psychological resilience levels were analysed according to education levels, no statistically significant difference was observed between at least two of the variables ( $F_{4-289}=0.176, p>.05$ ). When the perceived spousal support levels according to education levels were analysed, no statistically significant difference was observed between at least two of the variables ( $F_{4-289}= 0.735, p>.05$ ).

In summary, according to the findings, a positive, low-level significant relationship was found between perceived spousal support and psychological resilience. Perceived spousal support was found to predict resilience by 1.5%. While perceived spousal support differed according to gender, it did not differ according to income level and educational status. It has been determined that while psychological resilience differs according to income level, it does not vary according to gender and educational status.

#### 4. Discussion

This study investigated whether there is a significant relationship between the level of perceived spousal support of married individuals and their level of psychological resilience. The study also tested whether the perceived spousal support and psychological resilience levels differ regarding socio-demographic variables such as gender, income level, and educational status.

The findings obtained from the study show that the relationship between the level of perceived spousal support and psychological resilience levels of married individuals is statistically significant and that spousal support is a predictor of psychological resilience. When the studies in the literature are examined, the findings are compatible with the results of the studies (Bektaş, 2018; Greef and Human, 2004; McCubbin et al., 2002; Terzi, 2008). Similarly, in his research with married individuals in Turkey, Bektaş (2018) revealed that perceived social support in married individuals was positively related to psychological resilience. Terzi's (2008) study examining the relationship between university students' psychological resilience and their perceived social support levels is similar. It can be said that the support that individuals receive from their environment is effective in the level of overcoming the difficulties they encounter, as well as the difficulties experienced by married couples in their relationships and the support they perceive from each other in the face of conflicts, which are effective in their individual higher psychological resilience. On the other hand, individuals with high psychological resilience show these skills in the face of problems in their relationships, as they are more effective in solving the problems they encounter (Bektaş, 2018).

According to the research results, while it is seen that the psychological resilience levels of married individuals show a significant difference according to their income levels, it does not



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show a significant difference according to their educational status. When the literature is examined, studies showing that the level of resilience is related to the economic situation predominate (Campbell-Sills et al., 2009; Güngörmüş et al., 2015; Tekin, 2011; Yağmur & Türkmen, 2017). According to Gizir (2007), a good income level affects psychological resilience, as one is more fortunate in reaching the necessary resources for possible solutions to problems. On the other hand, although it is compatible with studies showing that resilience does not differ according to educational status (Boell et al., 2016; Karabulut & Balcı, 2017), studies in the literature show that resilience increases with education level (Bektaş, 2018; Bonano, Galea, Bucciarelli Vlahov, 2007; Campbell -Sills et al., 2009; Cengiz, 2017; Tekin 2011) are also available. These study findings are not compatible with typical results in the literature. This difference may be due to the unbalanced distribution of income and educational status of the study participants and the fact that the impact of small changes in income levels on life may be limited due to the country's economic conditions.

Another research finding is that perceived spousal support differs significantly by gender. According to the findings, the perceived spousal support of women is higher than that of men. When the studies in the literature are examined, the research findings are consistent with those that found that perceived spousal support differs according to gender. Studies reveal that perceived spousal support differs according to gender, showing that men's perceived support is higher (Acitelli & Antonucci, 1994; Çağ, 2011; Günsel, 2013) are more dominant. But similar to the findings of the study, there are also studies showing that women's perceived spousal support level is higher than that of men (Franks, 2004, as cited in Çağ, 2011). Cultural factors may cause differences in spouses' perceptions of the support they receive from each other, their support experiences, and the way they express their support needs. For this reason, there may be differences in the findings according to gender and in the results of studies from different cultures in the literature.

The findings of the study are in line with studies showing that there is no significant relationship between the level of resilience of married individuals and gender (Akyüz, 2016; Bektaş, 2018; Cengiz, 2017; Karabulut & Balcı, 2017; Karataş, 2016; Kelle & Irak, 2018; Kılınç, 2013; Yağmur et al. Turkmen, 2017) are similar. The research findings are identical to Çağ (2011) and Zeytinoğlu (2013) in that the perceived spousal support level does not differ according to educational status. It is similar to Özcan's (2014) study in that the perceived marital support level does not vary according to the income level.

## 5. Conclusions

Psychological resilience, which is a predictor of the well-being of individuals, is a structure related not only to internal but also to environmental motivations. Spouses are the most common source that married individuals refer to meet their social support needs. Considering this reality, the question of whether the effect of perceived spousal support on psychological resilience has a role becomes essential. As a result, the findings show that the perceived spousal support of married individuals predicts their psychological resilience levels. Thus, it has become necessary for both the experts working on the marital relationship and the experts working on the environmental factors on the well-being of individuals to consider this finding. In addition, this finding will help experts in this period when attention is paid to strengthening



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the psychological structures that predict the well-being of individuals along with protective mental health.

The findings obtained can be used in programs frequently applied to increase psychological resilience today and in professional services such as family counselling and couple therapy. In the literature, there is a need for more studies that illuminate the relationship between spousal support and situations that predict the subjective well-being of married individuals. In this context, researchers can contribute to understanding the effects of spousal support on the individual by examining the relationships between similar psychological structures, which are predictors of individual well-being, and perceived spousal support.

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