



THE FUTURE METAPHORS OF SEXUALLY ABUSED ADOLESCENT GIRLS

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Abstract:

Child sexual abuse is drawing more and more attention nowadays because it has become more visible than in previous years. Being visible in this way, it has also brought forward strategies for prevention and treatment by various institutions and researchers. Child abuse is a very complex phenomenon and needs to be addressed by different disciplines. It seems evident that having strong resources available for the child in order to re-adapt the child to the everyday life is a necessity. Therefore, it is essential that studies involving the prevention of child abuse, the reporting of child abuse and recovery after abuse are carried out. While all these experiences create negative effects on both intellectual and emotional world as a child and future expectations as an adult. While negative effects of the child's exposure to sexual abuse are evident, it seems extremely important that they can cope with these effects in the best way and continue to their lives. In this study, the perceptions of adolescent girls exposed to sexual abuse regarding the future were tried to be revealed. The study carried out with a qualitative research design; participants were asked their metaphors for the future. The future metaphors of the sexually abused girls were found to contain positive attributions. These findings indicate that they have positive expectations and hopes for their future.

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1. Introduction

Child sexual abuse as defined by The Council of Europe the activity with a child who has not reached the legal age for sexual activities which are made by coercion, force or threats; or abuse is made of a recognized position of trust, authority or influence over the child; or by using physical or mental disability or dependence (Lalor & McElvaney, 2010). The term “power” above indicates that the perpetrator has more power over the child in terms of physical strength and size or influence and authority. Having this information draws attention to the difference between the child and the perpetrator in terms of age, level of development, intelligence, social status, and/or the differentiation of other elements in terms of understanding the illegality and inappropriateness of sexual abuse. For this reason, existing definitions of sexual abuse refer to both adults and peers (Deblinger, Mannarino, Cohen, Runyon & Heflin, 2015).

Sexual abuse behaviours against the child includes a wide range of attitudes and behaviours which may not include touch such as sexual speech, exposition and voyeurism, having watched pornography, taking sexually explicit photographs of child, masturbating in front of the child, or may include touch such as touching to special areas, forcing child to touch to exploiter oneself, interfemoral intercourse, penetration, pornography, prompting child to prostitution, oral sex and anal sex (Polat, 2001).

Sexually abused children can show some symptoms. Some changes can be seen in behaviours such as changes in behaviour, extreme emotional changes, isolation and withdrawal, unusual anger, fear and excessive crying, excessive masturbation, inappropriate sexual knowledge according to age, constant conversation about sexuality, inappropriate sexual activity or unusual sexual interest in other children, rebellious or angry behaviours, school or behavioural problems, regression in toilet training, bedwetting, nightmares, fear of going to bed, fear of places like bathroom, too little or too much sleeping, wearing clothes one on the other (Deb & Mukherjee, 2009).

On the other hand, sometimes the abuse cannot be understood by the child's behaviours that are observed in an open manner. Being exposed to sexual abuse of the child by a person whom he/she knows and likes creates a sense of betrayal and frustration. Even if the child is exposed to abuse by someone else, they do not know, s/he can experience the sense of betrayal because him/her loved ones cannot protect him/her. For this reason, he/she can become getting an accusing attitude (Finkelhor & Brown, 1985). At the same time, this feeling seems to be related to feelings of sadness, fear, loss of confidence and depression. Abused children may show extreme dependent attitudes, yet they may isolate themselves from other people by acting with anger and hostility towards people and themselves (Maniglio 2009; Wohab & Akhter, 2010; Gupta, Bonanno, Noll, Putnam, Keltner, & Trickett, 2011; Choudhary, Satapathy & Sagar, 2019; Norton-Baker and et. al., 2019; Suh & Luthar, 2020). In this case, abused child usually lives in himself especially in the cognitive world and tries to cope with this situation on his own.

Therefore, it is necessary to observe the reflections and clues about the child's world of emotions and thoughts.

Sexual abuse negatively impacts the mental health and the personality development of the child. The most important factors in this impact are the negative consequences of abusing the child's trust, feeling helpless, being isolated from his family and environment as a result of keeping secrets. These lead to getting to developing negative burdens on him and the world (Akço et al., 2004; Browne & Finkelhor, 1986; Robinson, 2017). Similarly, Finkelhor and Browne (1985) described the dynamics of traumas in children as a result of sexual abuse of the child. The dynamics of trauma include four important effects that are experienced at the same time. These are traumatic sexualisation, betrayal, helplessness and stigmatization.

Sexual abuse in childhood has both short and long term effects on the victim. In the short term, dissociative and hysterical symptoms, depression and low self-esteem value, conflict with adults, escape from home, confusion regarding their relationships with other people, premature ending of education, anomalous behaviour, detachment from activities, learning difficulties, guilt and shame may occur (Deb & Mukherjee, 2009). In the long term, negative effects in social life can be seen such as post-traumatic stress, anxiety and fear, isolation and stigmatization feelings, difficulty in establishing close relationships with others, feeling of helplessness, eating and body image disorders, behaviour disorders, tendency to be re-abused, conflict with partner, suicide and self-harm, using alcohol and substance abuse, problems in their relationships with the opposite sex and marriage (Browne & Finkelhor, 1986; Deb & Mukherjee, 2009; Topçu, 1997). The most important psychiatric diagnoses related to abuse are post-traumatic disorders and depression (Yüce et al., 2015). Both males and females exposed to childhood sexual abuse resort to more psychiatric treatment than the general population. These individuals reported more childhood mental disorder, personality disorder, anxiety and major emotional disorder (Spataro, Mullen, Burgess, Wells & Moss, 2004).

Just as the personality of an adult, which has already formed, when exposed to a traumatic condition deforms the personality of the adult; whereas the trauma or recurrent trauma experienced in childhood shapes and deforms the personality of the child. The child, surrounded by an abusive environment, has to try to trust distrusted people, to have these people provide them security in an unsafe environment, to control an unpredictable world, and to keep guard over the helpless. In this case, the child is in need of developing both a creative and a destructive capacity (Herman, 2015). Such traumatic experiences in childhood are constantly processed and carried to adulthood while remaining on the agenda of the child (Sar & Öztürk, 2007). So, this processing process may be valid about future expectation of the individuals.

While all these experiences create negative effects on the child's intellectual and emotional world, they can also negatively affect his/her future expectations. Future expectations are defined as hopes for development in areas such as job and education, marriage and family, religion and society, health and life (Tuncer, 2011). Positive future expectation contributes to an individual's feeling of happiness and satisfaction from life. According to Tuncer (2011), the future can affect the current happiness of the individual;

the current happiness of individuals can affect their present expectations about the future and the realization of an expectation that is expected to happen in the future may also affect the future happiness. On the other hand, positive expectations contribute to life satisfaction which focuses on positive things like happiness (De Juan, Mochón & Rojas, 2014). Expectations are seen as a strong determinant for life satisfaction (Senik, 2008). Moreover, it is seen that there is a high level of relation between planning for the future and life and the idea of affecting it with daily life for life satisfaction (Azizli, Atkinson, Baughman & Giammarco, 2015).

In many studies (Ehtiyar, Ersoy, Akgun & Karapinar, 2017; Eryılmaz, 2011; Karaca, Karakoc, Bingol, Eren & Andsoy, 2016), the relationships between wellbeing and positive future expectation have been revealed with the findings. One of them, Nurmi (1993)'s indicated that having positive future expectations contribute to positive development among youth. Moreover, positive future expectation protects individuals from psychopathological problems (Verdugo, & Sánchez-Sandoval, 2018).

As we look at the research regarding life satisfaction and future expectation among children who were sexually abused, it can be seen that Haffejee and Theron (2017) reviewed literature about resilience processes in sexually abused adolescence girls. They found both internal and contextual factors function interdependently to empower resilience in sexually abused adolescent girls. While internal factors are defined as meaningfulness, optimistic future orientation, agency and mastery, contextual factors are defined as the supporting family and the social and educational environment. Similarly, Edmond et al. (2006) revealed that the sexually abused girls who have more certain educational plans, who have an optimistic attitude about their future, and positive peer relationships are more resilient than other sexually abused girls. Although these studies inform about sexually abused girls who have a positive future expectation, they don't give any clues about what their future expectations actually were. However, considering the relationship between life satisfaction and future expectation, it can be considered that positive future expectation will provide a marker for post abuse growth. On the other hand, considering the relationship between life satisfaction and future expectation, it can be considered that positive future expectation will provide a marker for post-abuse growth. In the light of the related literature, the aim of the study is to investigate the future metaphors of sexually abused adolescents' girls.

2. Methods

2.1. Research Design

The study is a qualitative study. Qualitative research reveals a numbers of heterogeneous parts of information, which include consisting of many different and connected parts meaningful structures. Metaphors used to diminish this complexity to apparently structured patterns. Metaphors give data presentation orientation (Schmitt, 2005). Metaphors in nominal sentences are consist on two items. One of them is target; other part is a base which gives information about target (Jamrozik, McQuire, Cardillo & Chatterjee, 2016). Metaphors serve qualitative data collection and analysis. They are

function as a sense-making instrument. Metaphor analysis has become a popular tool for comprehension social phenomena (Redden, 2017).

2.2. Study Group

The study group consisted of 19 adolescent girls who had been sexually abused. Their age ranges were between 14 and 22 with a mean age of 17.83. Within the scope of this research, adolescent girls who had been exposed to sexual abuse were contacted. For purposes of confidentiality, the names of individuals were changed or withheld. First off, the participants were informed about the purpose of the research, the use of data for scientific purposes and the keeping of their personal information confidential. Informed consent forms were obtained from both participants and their families regarding the voluntary participation of the study.

2.3. Instrument

The metaphor list prepared by the researchers included concepts such as future, education, marriage, job, life, and the coming years. Participants were asked to write explanations of the concepts considering what they meant to them, what they likened to and the reason for this analogy. According to Patton (2014), metaphors can be used as one of the ways in which qualitative studies communicate with readers and convey the findings in a strong way.

2.4. Data Analysis

Metaphor analysis was used to examine the effects on future expectations and related perceptions of being exposed to sexual abuse. The obtained data were subjected to content analysis. The metaphors were listed and then listed metaphors were classified. During the examination and interpretation of the metaphors, the steps of naming, sorting, rearrangement-compilation, category development, validity and reliability were followed. We make coding to data ((Redden, 2017; Ignatow & Mihalcea, 2018).

Percentages and frequencies for metaphors were calculated and direct citations were also used. Metaphor analysis relies on researcher interpretation and coding. The coding process affected by fatigue, bias, and problems of coder interrater reliabilities (Ignatow & Mihalcea, 2018). On the other hand; intersubjective credibility of metaphor analysis contained that group interpretation, process documentation and procedure standardization (Armstrong, Gosling & Weinman, 1997; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004; Schmitt, 2005). For this reason, in the analysis process, each researcher administered and categorized the metaphors separately. Following the coding of all researchers, the researches came together to determine which code would be the most appropriate and both agreed on the latest themes. In addition to the researchers, the obtained metaphors were also examined by a field psychologist. Thus, reliability was conducted with consensus on metaphors. The whole process was documented by the researchers.

3. Results

The metaphor list related to the future expectations was applied. The metaphors used by the participants for the concepts such as future, education, marriage, job, life, and coming years were analysed and both the categories and special statements are presented below.

3.1. Concept of "Future"

Table 1: Categorical Distribution of the Metaphors

Category	f	Metaphors	f
Hope	19 (73%)	Happiness, being with family, importance, indispensable, life, dreams, good (2), hope to have everything, peace, starting a family (2), water, need, wealth, happiness, career, education	16 (72,72%)
Endeavour	7 (26,9%)	Tree, growing roots and staying strong, incomplete construction, completing by working on, strive (2), job	6 (27,27%)

- **Category 1- Hope:**

19 participants and 16 categories in total represent this section. They are collected under the 33categories of *happiness, being with family, importance, indispensable, life, dreams, good (2), hope to have everything, peace, start a family (2), water, need, wealth, happiness, career, education (2)*. When the main features of the metaphors that form this category are examined, it is seen that sexually abused girls have hopes and positive expectations for the future. Some of the metaphors expressed by the different participants are presented as follows:

"It is similar to wealth and happiness. Because I have a career and a marriage in my future, on the one hand I'll earn, on the other hand I'll take care of my house" (13F).

- **Category 2- Endeavor:**

Seven participants and six categories in total represent this section. They are collected under the categories as *tree, growing roots and staying strong, incomplete construction, completing by working on, job, strive (2)*. When the main features of the metaphors that form this category are examined, it is seen that the metaphors are made up of perceptions that it is necessary to strive for the future by sexually abused girls. Some of the metaphors and statements of the participants that formed this category are presented as follows:

"It will be a difficult life, but I will eventually be happy. Life is not easy. So, the future may be a little difficult for me, I need to endeavour a bit, my future will be good at last" (15F).

3.2. Concept of "Education"

Table 2: Categorical Distribution of the Metaphors

Category	f	Metaphors	f
Fulfilling dreams	4 (40%)	Future, novel, having a profitable skill, getting a profession	4 (40%)
Benefit	6 (60%)	Tree, choosing choice, a clean sheet, key, right, saving one's life	6 (60%)

- **Category 1- Fulfilling Dreams**

Four participants and four categories in total represent this category. They are entitled as *future, novel, having a profitable skill and getting a profession*. When the main features of the metaphors that make up this category are examined, it can be seen that sexually abused girls evaluate education as an instrument for fulfilling their dreams, and they have developed perceptions in this sense. Some of the metaphors and statements of participants that formed this category are presented as follows:

"Education is similar to future. Without education, there may not be a strong life in the future" (1F)

- **Category 2- Benefit**

Four sexually abused girls and four categories in total. They are gathered under the categories of *choosing choice, a clean sheet, key, right, saving one's life*. When the main features of the metaphors that make up this category are examined, it is seen that abused girls have a perception that they can benefit from education. Some of the metaphors and statements of participants that formed this category are presented as follows:

"Education is similar to a tree. As I give something from myself, it gives fruit and finally it is a fruitful thing" (3F).

3.3. Concept of "Marriage"

Table 3: Categorical Distribution of the Metaphors

Category	f	Metaphors	f
Happiness expectation	15 (83,33%)	Peace (5), life partner, supporter, strawberry, changing the future, being a parent (2), happiness (3), life	9 (75%)
Spouse relations	3 (16,67%)	Curtain, trade, responsibility	3 (25%)

- **Category 1- Happiness Expectation**

15 participants and nine categories in total are represented. They are gathered under the categories of *peace, life partner, supporter, strawberry, changing the future, being a parent, happiness and life*. When the main features of the metaphors that make up this category are examined, it is seen that abused girls have perceptions with a more positive feeling

towards marriage. Some of the metaphors and statements of participants that formed this category are presented as follows:

"Marriage is similar to a strawberry. I want a sweet and beautiful marriage like a strawberry" (4F).

- **Category 2- Spouse Relations**

Three participants and three categories in total are involved here. They are gathered under the categories of *curtain, trade and responsibility*. When the main features of the metaphors that make up this category are examined, it is seen that metaphors are made up of expectations about marriage by abused girls. Some of the metaphors and statements of participants that formed this category are presented as follows:

"Marriage is similar to a curtain, because it is snow-white. Each spot makes it washed. It turns white again. But if it is burnt, it cannot be used again." (2F)

3.4. Concept of "Job"

Table 4: Categorical Distribution of the Metaphors

Category	f	Metaphors	f
Value	5 (45,45%)	Life (3), need, a new life, land	4 (44,44%)
Success	6 (54,54%)	Stairs, success (2), career, achieve the goals (2)	5 (55,56%)

- **Category 1- Value:**

Five participants and four categories in total make up this category. They are gathered under the categories of *life, need, a new life and land*. When the main characteristics of metaphors forming this category are examined, it is seen that metaphors are made up of perceptions about value of a job that is equivalent to life itself by the abused girls. Some of the metaphors and statements of participants that formed this category are presented as follows:

"If I have a good job, a good profession, I may have a good life" (1F), *"A Job is like a life for me. It contributes to life"* (19F).

- **Category 2- Success:**

Six participants and five categories in total are designated. They are gathered under the categories of *stairs, success, career, achieving the goals*. When the main characteristics of the metaphors forming this category are examined, it is seen that the metaphors are made up of perceptions that having a job means being successful. Some of the metaphors and statements of participants that formed this category are presented as follows:

"Business is like stairs for me, because you get more successful in every step. After all, no one reaches immediately the success that they want. You will be more successful in every step you take." (2F)

3.5. Concept of "Life"

Table 5: Categorical Distribution of the Metaphors

Category	f	Metaphors	f
Positive	11 (78,57%)	Future, long and ease, peace (3), a blank page, love (3), health, peach	7 (70%)
Build	2 (14,28%)	Building materials, book	2 (20%)
Negative	1 (7,15%)	Insignificant	1 (10%)

- **Category 1- Positive:**

There were 11 participants and seven categories in total. They are gathered under the categories of *future, long and ease, peace, a blank page, love, health, peach*. When the basic features of the metaphors forming this category are examined, it is seen that the abused girls have positive perceptions for life. Some of the metaphors and statements of participants that formed this category are presented as follows:

"Life is like a blank page for me. I can erase the bad things in my life." (8F).

- **Category 2- Building:**

This category is represented by two participants and two. They are collected under the categories of *building materials and book*. When the main features of the metaphors forming this category are examined, it is seen that abused girls have perceptions of life as something that can be built. Some of the metaphors and statements of participants that formed this category are presented as follows:

"Life is the building materials for me. Because I shape my future with them." (3F).

- **Category 3- Negative:**

This category is represented by one participant and one category in total. It is gathered under the heading of *insignificant*. When the basic features of the metaphors that make up this category are examined, it is seen that the abused girls have negative perceptions for life. Some of the metaphors and statements of participants that formed this category are presented as follows: '

'Life is not important to me. It is because I do not like myself'' (6F).

3.5. Concept of "Coming Years"

Table 6: Categorical Distribution of the Metaphors

Category	f	Metaphors	f
Emotional expectation	5 (31,25%)	Beautiful, sky (2), peace, remarkable	4 (40%)
Professional expectation	10 (62,5%)	Businesswoman (2), successful person, to be employed (3), goals (2), marriage	5 (50%)
Expectation of not to change	1 (6,25%)	My old life	1 (10%)

- **Category 1- Emotional Expectation**

Five participants and four categories in total are represented in this category. They are collected under the categories of *beautiful, sky, peaceful, remarkable*. When the main features of the metaphors that make up this category are examined, it can be seen that the emotional expectations of the abused girls are already formulated for the coming years. Some of the metaphors and statements of participants that formed this category are presented as follows:

"In the coming years, my life will look like the sky. Because there will be no place for wrong things in my life. My family will be with me. They will support me. My life will be like a sky and it brings peace to me. I learnt lessons from my experiences." (2F)

- **Category 2- Professional Expectations**

This category is represented by ten participants and five categories in total. They are gathered under the categories of *business woman, successful person, being employed, goals, and marriage*. When the main features of the metaphors forming this category are examined, it is seen that professional expectations of the abused girls for the coming years are formed. Some of the metaphors and statements of participants that formed this category are presented as follows:

"A beautiful life, because I will have achieved my goals." (16F).

- **Category 3- Expectation of Not to Change**

This category is represented by one participant and one category in total. It is entitled *my old life*. When the main characteristics of the metaphors forming this category are examined, it is seen that the abused girls have a perception that the coming years will not change. The metaphor and statement of the participant that formed this category are presented as follows:

"In the coming years, my life will look like the old one. That is because my old life did not go well." (6F)

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of this study is to investigate the metaphors of the future of adolescents who have been exposed to sexual abuse in order to determine their perceptions and expectations about life and future. In the metaphor analysis, it was seen that the participants conceptualized the “future” as hope and endeavour. Participants defined the future by different metaphors under the concepts of hope and endeavour. They reflected their “hopes” for future with the metaphors as happiness, being with the family, importance, indispensable, life, dreams, hope to have everything, peace, starting a family, need, wealth, happiness, career and education. The second concept is “endeavour”. Our participants, who thought that future would be built with “endeavour”, used metaphors such as tree, growing roots and staying strong, incomplete construction, completing by working on, job and strive. All these positive references indicate that despite the participants' negative experiences; they keep their positive expectations about their future.

When examined the related literature, it is emphasized that the more hope increases, the more life satisfaction increases. This was supported by the similar findings of many studies conducted by quantitative research design (Bailey, Eng, Frisch & Snyder, 2007; Merkaš & Brajša-Žganec, 2011; Wong & Lim, 2009). At the same time, it was added that hope functions as an intermediary effect between purpose and life satisfaction (Bronk, Hill, Lapsley, Talib & Finch, 2009). Moreover the result of many qualified research indicated that there is a significant positive relationship between subjective well-being and positive future expectation (Doğan, 2006; Tuzgöl Dost, 2007; Eryılmaz, 2011; Schmid, Phelps, & Lerner, 2011; Packer, Chasteen & Kang, 2011; Karakoç, Bingöl and Akça, 2013; Karaca et al., 2016; Mayano-Diaz & Palomo -Vales, 2018).

“Education” was conceptualized as “fulfilling dreams” and “benefit”. In “fulfilling dreams” category, they refer that education is future, having a profitable skill, novel, getting a profession. These metaphors show that participants have positive attitudes about education and see the concept as a tool for the future and happy end. Education was also defined as “benefit”. The concept expressed some metaphors such as choosing choice, a clean sheet, key, right, saving one’s life. In other means, sexually abused girls see education as a way to make their lives easier, to give them the opportunity, to live what they deserve and to save their lives.

Similarly, in a study conducted with sexually abused adolescents, it was found that psychological strength was predicted by variables such as school attendance, perceived social support from parents, hope and expectation and parental education (Williams & Nelson-Gardell, 2012). Otherwise, another study revealed that participant who experienced more adverse experiences expressed more pessimistic expectation going to college (Brumley, Jaffee, & Brumley, 2016). Also, sexually abused females have less classroom social competence, competent learner, and overall academic performance and more school avoidant behaviour (Trickett McBride-Chang & Putnam, 1994). When the main features of the metaphors related to education and studies are examined, it can

be said that education as a means of fulfilling dreams, a useful variable for life, and they want to gain benefit from it.

"Marriage" is considered as an opportunity to expect happiness and good partner relations in the future. Happiness Expectation reflects with the metaphors such as "peace, life partner, supporter, strawberry, changing the future, being a parent, happiness and life". These indicated that the abused girls have positive attribution to the marriage. The second category related to marriage is spouse relations. They express their ideas and feelings as used by curtain, trade and responsibility metaphors. With the metaphors they emphasized reconstruction, trust, and sharing responsibilities. As a result, any participant did not use a metaphor that contained negative content related to marriage. Nevertheless, looking at some metaphors and expressions containing reasons, it is seen that marriage is a way for them to get rid of the past, to reach better conditions and to be happy. Based on the metaphor, even if they had a negative experience, it can be considered that their beliefs, which are an institutional structure such as living and marriage with one, still persist. However, Cherlin, Burton, Hurt and Purvin (2004) found that women who have experienced abuse beginning in childhood, especially sexual abuse, are more multiple short-term marriage and relationship with men. Moreover, it was also reported that partners with a history of child abuse were also less marital satisfaction (Nguyen, Karney & Bradbury, 2017).

Another concept is *"job"*. Job was seen as gaining value and success in the future. Their metaphors related to job are life, need, a new life and land. It can be assumed that the concept of job is used almost in equivalent with life. We can see that they have expectations such as saving their future, gaining room for themselves and recreating their lives owing to a good job. The second category is success. They express their ideas as the stairs, success, career, achieving the goals. In this context, job is associated with achieving success and thus building a good future. Sansone, Leung & Wiederman (2012) emphasize that childhood sexual abuse can affect the employment status. On the other hand, childhood sexual abuse, coupled with another factor such as partner violence, can also even affect job search behaviour (Alexander, 2011).

The concept of *"life"* has been seen as creating future things in addition to positive and negative expectations. In the positive category, life was liked as future, long - easy, peace, a blank page, love, health, peach. In a negative category, life is evaluated as insignificant. Besides these, for some participants, life was seen as a building like building materials and book. All of them indicated that life represents the future as a whole with its negative and positive aspects for sexually abused girls.

And finally *"coming years"* were asked and wanted to consider what they meant to them, what they likened to and the reason of this analogy. Coming years includes many expectations for participant. In the expectations from the coming years section, emotional and professional positive expectations were listed, while they were reflected with negative expectations as their old experiences/lives would go on. The first category, emotional expectation, includes beautiful, sky, peaceful, remarkable. The second one is professional expectations represented by business woman, successful person, being employed, goals, and marriage. And lastly, expectation of not to change with the "my old

life” statement. Related to this concept, most of the girls believe and expected that future years will bring peace, work, success, positive and beautiful things.

When examining the literature, Thompson et al. (2012) found in their study that abused adolescents had expected low academic achievement and high level of job instability in the future. Children who have been victims of sexual abuse have reported that they have a lower chance for a happier marriage, and they have had a lower level of chance to turn into the person that they wanted. Moreover, results were irrelevant in terms of having less joy of life, having a bad chance for their own future, having a low chance of being a parent and having a low chance of a long life among children who were victims of sexual abuse. Lack of purpose in life was found irrelevant with having a bad future, not having a chance for a good job and having a lower chance of being a parent (Ney, Fung & Wickett, 1994).

Contrary to findings obtained in our study about the positive expectations of abused adolescents and their future, researches show that the expectations of adults such as parents, teachers and specialists about sexually abused adolescents are negative. Teachers and specialists seemed to have lower expectation that those children would less likely be successful, and that they would be more vulnerable to academic stress (Bromfield, Bromfield, & Weiss, 1988). They would be more likely to show more psychopathology in the future (O’Donohue & O’Hare, 1997). Parents seemed to expect those children to be less successful, to have fewer friends, and expect more aggression and internalization behaviour problems (Briggs, Hubbs-Tait, Culp, & Blankemeyer, 1995; Briggs, Hubbs-Tait, Culp, & Morse, 1994). However, when the parents' perceptions of the effects of sexual abuse and children’s’ future expectations were approached separately, sexual abuse was found as the predictor of both general and external problems. Moreover, their future expectations related to the child did not predict the behaviour problem (Kouyoumdjian, Perry & Hansen, 2009).

Family has an important place in the life of the child. In order to conduct interventions and to conduct abuse prevention one should focus on improvements in family and family functions (Toth & Manly, 2018; Walsh, Joyce, Maloney & Vaithianathan, 2020). This is so that childhood abuse can be reduced. When it is considered that the experiences of abuse, especially sexual abuse experiences, are mostly confidential, it is important to identify and prevent the children / adolescents at risk from family functions.

In this context, training families by the counsellors and professionals on issues such as family relations, family functionality, reassurance of the family environment, and development of positive discipline method would be a good way as a preventive and protective. It is thought that parents, psychological counsellors, and teachers play an important role in shaping future goals for sexually abused female adolescents.

This study can be repeated with different samples by increasing the number of such samples. In addition, by conducting studies comparing samples of those who are abused and not abused, detailed and descriptive information about the subject can be obtained. Moreover, it may also be important to determine the level of expectation of the abused adolescents in different areas of life. Their life satisfactions may be higher,

because they keep their expectations lower. Thus, it seems important to examine their unrealistic expectations as to whether or not they may affect their life satisfaction in the future.

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Seval Erden Çınar, correspondent author, is an associate professor doctor in Marmara University, department of Guidance and Psychological counselling. The author has been teaching developmental psychology, psychological tests, group counselling, case analysis and supervision, cognitive behavioural theory and practices at the undergraduate, graduate and doctoral levels. Her interests are related to developmental psychology, abuse, adolescents and families, family counselling, emotional and social development, the impact of early childhood on adulthood life.

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