

## Evaluation of the Relationship between Social Skill Levels of 60 Month-Children and over with Preschool Education and Child Rearing Attitudes of Their Mothers

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### ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this study was to evaluate the relationship between social skill levels of 60 month-children and over with preschool education and child rearing attitudes of their mothers. The population of the research was comprised of 60 month-children and over studying at nursery schools in central districts of Kırıkkale and official independent preschools during 2011-2012 school year, and their mothers. By using the random sampling method, it is found that the number of subjects should be at least 780. Thus, 800 children and their mothers formed the sample of the research. General Information Questionnaire, Social Skill Scale and Parent Attitude Research Instrument - PARI Scala was used in the study. The data collected in the research are analysed with SPSS 20.0 by using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient. In the statistics, 0,05 is chosen as the significance level. The results of the study show that; a positive, meaningful and low relationship ( $p < 0,05$ ) is found between democratic attitude and equality protection dimension of the family's child rearing attitude scale and social cooperation, social independence - social acceptance and social interaction of social skills of the children. In addition, a positive, meaningful and low relationship ( $p < 0,05$ ) is found between over-monitoring motherhood dimension of the child rearing attitude scale of the mothers and social independence - social acceptance and social interaction of social skills of the children. Also, a negative, meaningful and low relationship ( $p < 0,01$ ) is found between denial of the housewife role and over discipline dimensions of the child rearing attitude scale of the mothers and social interaction of social skills of the children.*

**Keywords:** Parental attitudes, social skill, preschool education

### INTRODUCTION

Children start to develop basic knowledge and skills to support their learning from the moment they are born. They learn how to express themselves and communicate with other individuals. They develop social skills which set the foundations of their adjustment to society and school. In order for children to acquire above mentioned skills, their pre-school needs should be fulfilled, which is very important for their life in the future. Socialization is a process which starts at the moment of birth and children learn many skills from their parents till they come to the age of pre-school. It is significant for individuals to acquire social skills which has an important role in their adjustment to society at early ages when most of the personality development is completed (Gültekin, 2008: 4-1).

Children start to learn about social skills while they communicate with their parents or nanny; then this core social group is extended with the inclusion of sisters, brothers, peers and other grown-ups. Thus, social skills are developed. Child rearing attitude of parents is the most important factor that supports social and emotional development of children. Child rearing perspective of parents is affected by many variables such as their own personality, behavioral patterns they learned from their own parents, the environment they live in and their level of education etc. Therefore it is possible to say that child rearing attitude of parents is reflected

in children’s personality and social skills. Child rearing attitude of parents can have a positive or negative impact on children’s personality and social skills. It is seen that mothers have a direct impact on children’s social development. Mothers are the biggest source of stimulus and the first role models that children may accept. Children learn how to deal with life from their parents. Attitude of their mother is very effective in children’s mental health and social skill development. Methods used by mothers for making their children socialize, carrot or stick approach they choose, the way they teach, the values they transfer make children develop different relationships between their interests and social skills (Cartledge and Milburn, 1980: 51; Ceyhan, 2000: 210; Güngör, 2002: 95; Maccoby, 1984: 328; Sarı, 2007: 2).

Every mother can have different attitudes towards their children, whether knowingly or unknowingly. Some children are brought up with more love, some with more discipline, some are seen as unwanted child of the family, some are treated with more tolerance. All of these various attitudes lead to different personalities and social skill development in children (Yavuzer, 1998: 137). Based on this idea, the relationship between social skill levels of children of 60 months of age and above with preschool education and child rearing attitudes of their mothers was planned to be examined.

## METHOD

This study was carried out with 800 children who were of 60 months of age and above studying at nursery schools under the Ministry of National Education in central districts of Kırıkkale province and with the participation of mothers. In this study where social skill levels of at least 60-month-old pre-school children and child rearing attitude of their mothers were comparatively examined, descriptive model was used. As data was collected among pre-determined samples at the same time, this study was a cross-sectional description. Besides descriptive methods, the study necessitated comparisons between groups and correlational analysis when data analysis is considered. Therefore, both general screening models and relational screening model were utilized (Karasar, 2012: 77). Demographic information about the research sample, that is, 800 children and their mothers is listed in Table 1. and Table 2.

**Table 1(Part-I). Demographic information about children**

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Age</i>	60 months-old and above	800	100,0
	<i>Total</i>	<i>800</i>	<i>100</i>
<i>Gender</i>	Girl	385	48,1
	Boy	415	51,9
	<i>Total</i>	<i>800</i>	<i>100</i>
<i>Number of siblings</i>	Only Child	144	18
	2 siblings	394	49,2
	3 or more siblings	262	32,8
	<i>Total</i>	<i>800</i>	<i>100</i>

**Table 1 (Part-II). Demographic information about children**

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Birth order</i>	First Child	356	44,5
	Twins	22	2,8
	Middle Child	69	8,6
	Last child	353	44,1
	<i>Total</i>	<i>800</i>	<i>100</i>
<i>Her/his year at the current pre-school institution</i>	First Year	703	87,9
	Second Year	90	11,2
	Third Year	7	0,9
	<i>Total</i>	<i>800</i>	<i>100</i>
<i>Whether benefited from pre-school education before</i>	Yes	97	12,1
	No	703	87,9
	<i>Total</i>	<i>800</i>	<i>100</i>
<i>Type of pre-school institution he/she went before</i>	Nursery school at the primary school	48	49
	Independent nursery school	49	51
	<i>Total</i>	<i>97</i>	<i>100</i>
<i>How many years the child attended the pre-school institution before</i>	1 year	84	86,6
	2 years	13	13,4
	<i>Total</i>	<i>97</i>	<i>100</i>
<i>Type of pre-school institution the child is currently attending</i>	Nursery school at the primary school	578	72,2
	Independent nursery school	222	27,8
	<i>Total</i>	<i>800</i>	<i>100</i>
<i>Parents</i>	Living together	756	94,5
	Divorced	40	5,0
	Mother, alive-father, deceased	3	0,4
	Father is out of town	1	0,1
	<i>Total</i>	<i>800</i>	<i>100</i>

When Table 1 is examined, it is possible to see that all of the children (N: 800) who participated in this research were 60-months-old and above and while 51,9% of them were male (N: 415), 48,1% (N: 385) were female. 18% of children (N: 144) were only child; 49,2% (N: 394) had a sibling; 25,6% (N: 205) had 2 siblings; 7,1% (N: 57) had 3 and more siblings. 44,5% of children (N: 356) were first child; 2,8% (N: 22) were twins, 8,8% (N: 69) were middle child or one of the middle children; 44,1% (N: 353) were last child. 87,9% of children (N: 703) were at the 1<sup>st</sup> year of their pre-school education; while 11,2% (N: 90) were at their 2<sup>nd</sup> year; 0,9% (N: 7) were still at their 3<sup>rd</sup> year. 72,2% of children (N: 578) were attending a nursery school under a primary school of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE); 27,8% (N: 222) were attending an independent MoNE nursery school. 87,9% of

children (N: 703) had not attended a pre-school before; 10,5% (N: 84) were attending a pre-school for 1 year; 1,6%(N: 13) for 2 years. 12,1% of children (N: 97) had attended a pre-school institution while 87,9% (N: 703) had not. Among children who attended a pre-school institution before (12,1%), 49% (N: 48) attended MoNE primary school nursery school while 51% (N: 49) attended MoNE independent nursery school. As for their families 94,5% (N: 756) were living together; 5%(N: 40) were divorced; 0,4%(N: 3) had their mother but their fathers were deceased; 0,1%(N: 1) have fathers working at another city.

**Table 2. Demographic information about mothers**

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Age of the mother</i>	21-25 years old	105	13,1
	26-30 years old	294	36,8
	31-35 years old	230	28,8
	36-40 years old	112	14,0
	40 years old	59	7,4
	<i>Total</i>	<i>800</i>	<i>100</i>
<i>Education</i>	Literate-graduated from primary school	299	37,4
	Graduated from secondary school	179	22,4
	Graduated from high school	224	28,0
	Graduated from university	98	12,2
	<i>Total</i>	<i>800</i>	<i>100</i>
<i>Work status</i>	Housewife	698	87,2
	Teacher	37	4,2
	Midwife-Nurse	18	2,2
	Other	47	6,4
	<i>Total</i>	<i>800</i>	<i>100</i>
<i>Income per month</i>	1-500 TL	151	18,9
	501-1000 TL	248	31,0
	1001-1500 TL	130	1,0
	1501-2000 TL	142	17,8
	2001 TL and more	129	16,1
	<i>Total</i>	<i>800</i>	<i>100</i>
<i>Marital status</i>	Single	40	5,0
	Married	760	95,0
	<i>Total</i>	<i>800</i>	<i>100</i>
<i>Family type</i>	Nuclear family	620	77,0
	Extended family	140	18,0
	Separated	40	5,0
	<i>Total</i>	<i>800</i>	<i>100</i>

Table 2 shows that: 13,1% of mothers(N: 105) were under 25 years old; 36,8% (N: 294) were between 26-30 years old; 28,8% (N: 230) were between 31-35 years old; 14% (N: 112) were between 36-40 years old and 7,4% (N: 59) were 41 years old and above.37,4% of mothers(N: 299) were literate-graduated from primary school; 22,4%(N: 179) graduated from secondary school; 28%(N: 224) graduated from high school; 12,2%(N: 98) graduated from university. 87,2% of mothers(N: 698) were housewife; 4,2%(N: 37) were teacher, 2,2%(N: 18) were midwife-nurse and less than 1% is comprised of retired people, tradesman, artisan, accountant, optician, child developer, engineer, security officer, tailor, worker, self-employed, architect, psychologist, beautician, civil servant, secretary, financial advisor, emergency medical technician, technician, sociologist, sales representative, lawyer, pharmacist, and teller. 5,05% of mothers who participated in this research(N: 40) were single while 95,0%(N: 760) were married.77,0% of the families of children contributed in the research(N: 620) were nuclear family; while 18,0% (N: 140) were extended family; 5,0%(N: 40) were separated. 18,9% of families(N: 151) had a total monthly income of 1-500tl; while the same amount was 501-1000 tl for 31% (N: 248); 1001-1500 tl for 16,2%(N: 130); 1501-2000 tl for 17,8% (N: 142); 2001 tl and above for 16,1%(N: 129).

“General information form for children” and “General information form for mothers” which were prepared in an effort to collect demographic data about children and mother, “Social skills scale” to assess children’s social skills and “PARI- parental attitude research instrument” were used to measure the impact of maternal attitude in child rearing and to gather general data.

General information form for children includes questions to be replied by mothers who constitute sampling of the research and information about the age of children (expressed as months), gender, number of siblings, birth order, the number of years in pre-school education, the type of institution that the child is attending as a pre-school, whether they went to any pre-school before, if yes, its type and parental situation (whether parents are still together etc.). As for the general information form for mothers, information about age, education, profession, monthly income, family type and marital status of mothers who constitute sampling of the research can be found.

Social skills scale was developed by Kenneth W.Merril in order to assess social skills of children between 36-72 months old. Adaptation to Turkey, validity and trustworthiness efforts were carried out by Alisinanoğlu and Özbey. Social skill scale is composed of three sub categories titled “Social Cooperation, Social Interaction and Social Independence” and 23 items in total. When it comes to the scores given in this tool, ‘never’ equals to ‘1’ point, ‘seldom’ equals to ‘2’ points, ‘sometimes’ equals to ‘3’ points and ‘frequently’ equals to ‘4’ points. Maximum point that one can have in this tool is 92, while the minimum is 23. High total score mean that the child has good social skills (Alisinanoğlu and Özbey, 2009: 173).

#### *Social Cooperation*

There are 11 items in this sub category (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11). Items are related to parent instructions and child’s attitude towards them, cooperation, being in harmony with peers and skills to control oneself.

#### *Social Interaction*

There are 8 items in this sub category (12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19). These items measure the skills that would make a child accepted by his/her peers and continue peer relations. Items mentioned under social interaction sub category are mostly related to the child’s interaction with his/her peers. Very few items are related to adult-children interactions.

### *Social Independence*

There are 4 items in this sub category (20, 21, 22, 23). These items evaluate social independence skills of children under the impact area of peers. Some of these items include social skills related to child's separation without any difficulty from people responsible for their care or from their families and their self-confident interaction with peers (Alisinanoğlu and Özbey, 2009: 181-188; Özbey, 2009: 113).

PARI was developed by Schaefer and Bell in 1958 in the USA in order to dwell on parent-child relations and parent's attitude towards them. It was adapted to Turkish by Güney Le Compte, Ayhan Le Compte and Serap Özer in 1978. The scoring is as follows: the answer "I don't find it appropriate" gets '1' point while other answers respectively mean '2', '3' and '4' points.

However, the reversal items in the scale (22, 44) are given reversed scores, that is, for a 1 point answer '4' points, for a 2 points answer '3' points, for a 3 points answer '3' points and for a 4 points answer '1' point are given. Points are collected separately for each sub-dimensions. While the points are interpreted, the higher the total score for a sub-dimension, the more the attitude reflected in that sub-dimension is approved (Le Compte, Le Compte and Özer, 1978: 5-8). The 60-item-scale is composed of five sub-dimensions. These sub dimensions are listed below;

#### *Overprotective mothering (AKA)*

There are 16 items (1, 3, 4, 7, 11, 12, 14, 26, 27, 28, 32, 34, 36, 46, 51, 57) in this sub-dimension. Over monitoring, intervening, expecting children to be hard-working and dependant, self-devotion of mother and her belief to the necessity that child should understand her self-devotion are among the topics of this sub-dimension.

#### *Democratic treatment and granting equality*

This sub-dimension is comprised of 9 items (2, 13, 18, 22, 29, 37, 44, 45, 59). Topics such as granting children equal rights, supporting them to express their ideas clearly, being friends with them and sharing more are related to this sub-dimension.

#### *Rejecting housewifery role*

This sub-dimension is comprised of 13 items (6, 9, 16, 17, 21, 23, 31, 38, 41, 42, 49, 52, 55). Topics such as not being satisfied with staying with children for a long time, being aggressive, to be afraid from caring for a new-born child are related to this sub-dimension.

#### *Incompatibility*

This sub-dimension is comprised of 6 items (8, 19, 33, 40, 48, 54). Topics such as the role of incompatibility between mother and father in child rearing, husbands who are not thoughtful and how they do not help mothers are related to this sub-dimension.

#### *Rigid discipline*

This sub-dimension is comprised of 16 items (5, 10, 15, 20, 24, 25, 30, 35, 39, 43, 47, 50, 53, 56, 58, 60). The belief in rigid discipline, forcing the child, belief in the exact sovereignty of parents are related to this sub-dimension (Dinçer, 1993: 30-31).

In this study, the relationships between 5 sub-dimensions and total score related to child rearing attitudes of parents and 3 sub-dimensions and total score related to children's social skills are examined through Pearson Correlation Coefficient and SPSS 20.

**FINDINGS**

Data collected through research were analyzed and findings are presented as tables in this section. The relationships between scores of all sub-dimensions in the Parental Attitude Research Instrument and Social Skills Scale were examined through Pearson Correlation Coefficient. Findings can be found in Table 3.

**Table 3. Results of Pearson Correlation Test Regarding The Relationship Between Child Rearing Attitude of Mothers and Children’s Social Skills**

<i>Variables</i>		<i>Social Cooperation Skills</i>	<i>Social Independence and Social Acceptance Skills</i>	<i>Social Interaction Skills</i>	<i>Total Score</i>
<i>Overprotective Mothering</i>	<i>r</i>	-,036	,091*	,086*	,036
	<i>p</i>	,305	,010	,015	,313
	<i>N</i>	800	800	800	800
	<i>r</i> <sup>2</sup>	0,001	0,008	0,007	0,001
<i>Democratic Treatment and Granting Equality</i>	<i>r</i>	,193**	,177**	,108**	,209**
	<i>p</i>	,000	,000	,002	,000
	<i>N</i>	800	800	800	800
	<i>r</i> <sup>2</sup>	0,037	0,031	0,012	0,044
<i>Rejecting Housewifery Role</i>	<i>r</i>	-,112**	-,034	-,019	-,077*
	<i>p</i>	,001	,333	,584	,030
	<i>N</i>	800	800	800	800
	<i>r</i> <sup>2</sup>	0,013	0,001	0,000	0,006
<i>Incompatibility</i>	<i>r</i>	-,065	-,036	,004	-,046
	<i>p</i>	,068	,304	,912	,190
	<i>N</i>	800	800	800	800
	<i>r</i> <sup>2</sup>	0,004	0,001	0,000	0,002
<i>Rigid Discipline</i>	<i>r</i>	-,092**	,015	,009	-,040
	<i>p</i>	,009	,678	,796	,253
	<i>N</i>	800	800	800	800
	<i>r</i> <sup>2</sup>	0,008	0,000	0,000	0,002
<i>Total Score</i>	<i>r</i>	-,064	,041	,042	-,006
	<i>p</i>	,073	,242	,237	,868
	<i>N</i>	800	800	800	800
	<i>r</i> <sup>2</sup>	0,004	0,002	0,002	0,000

\**p*<0,05    \*\**p*<0,01

A meaningful, low level and positive relationship of .01 level (*r* = 0,193) was found between social cooperation skills within the scope of Social Skills Scale and democratic treatment and granting equality sub-dimensions within the scope of Parental Attitude Research Instrument; a meaningful, low level and negative relationship of .01 level between rejecting housewifery

role ( $r = -0,112$ ) and rigid discipline ( $r = -0,092$ ) sub- dimensions; and a statistically meaningless, low level and negative relationship was found between over monitoring motherhood ( $r = -0,036$ ), incompatibility ( $r = -0,065$ ) and total score ( $r = -0,064$ ) in Table 3.

A meaningful, low level and positive relationship of .01 level ( $r = 0,177$ ) was found between social independence and social acceptance skills within the scope of Social Skills Scale and democratic treatment and granting equality sub-dimensions within the scope of Parental Attitude Research Instrument; a meaningful, low level and positive relationship ( $r=0,91$ ) with over monitoring motherhood was found. No relationship was found between other sub-dimensions and total scores ( $p>0,05$ ).

A meaningful, low level and positive relationship of .01 level ( $r = 0,108$ ) was found between social interaction skills within the scope of Social Skills Scale and democratic treatment and granting equality sub-dimensions within the scope of Parental Attitude Research Instrument; a meaningful, low level and positive relationship of .05 ( $r = 0,086$ ) with over monitoring motherhood was found. No relationship was found between other sub-dimensions and total scores ( $p>0,05$ ).

A meaningful, low level and positive relationship of .01 level ( $r = 0,209$ ) was found between social total score within the scope of Social Skills Scale and democratic treatment and granting equality sub-dimensions within the scope of Parental Attitude Research Instrument. A meaningful, low level and negative relationship of .05 level ( $r = -0,077$ ) with the rejecting housewifery role sub-dimension was found. No relationship was found between other sub-dimensions and total scores ( $p>0,05$ ).

It is observed that positive child rearing attitudes (such as democratic treatment and granting equality) have a role in enhancing social skills level of children. On the contrary, negative attitudes (such as over monitoring, rejecting housewifery role, incompatibility and rigid discipline) lead to a decrease in social skills level. Negative mother attitudes such as over-monitoring, intervening, expecting child to be dependant, not being satisfied with staying with children for a long period of time, disagreements between husband and wife, forcing children and the belief in the exact sovereignty of parents are thought to result in low social skills of children. On the other hand, mothers who adopt attitudes such as granting equal rights to children, supporting them in expressing their opinion, sharing many things with them, being friends with them have children who feel that they are valued and thus children are thought to show the expected skills and social harmony in their social environment. It is foreseen that this kind of a positive attitude of mothers has an impact on children in terms of acquiring positive social behavior. It is considered that explaining results of a positive behavior can both make the child adopt this behavior and increase the frequency of showing that behavior at the same time. It is also estimated that mothers who value positive social behavior and who act as a model for their children may affect the child in that the child can internalize the behavior in question.

When we examine similar studies in the literature the results are as follows; Altay and Güre (2012) findings show that children whose mother has a democratic parenthood style have higher social behavior scores compared to children whose mother has a permissive style. Schultz (2004) points out that there is a meaningful relationship between negative attitude of mother and child's social lack of harmony with peers. In addition a meaningful relationship is established between children's internalization of child-mother relationship and mother incompatibilities and children's more incompatible behavior compared to peers. Öğretir (1999) has mentioned that cooperation scores of children whose mother has democratic style are higher than children whose mother has repressive-rigid discipline style. Sarı (2007) has



also showed a meaningful relationship between child rearing attitudes of mother and child's social compatibility level. Coplan, Hastings, Lagace-Seguin and Moulton (2002) has mentioned in their study that democratic parental attitude has a positive impact on child's social development in general. Gülay and Önder (2011) have stated that child's social-emotional compatibility levels differ depending on the attitudes of their mother. Sönmez (2013) has found a positive and meaningful relationship between democratic treatment and equality sub-dimensions and Social Skills Scores within the scope of PARI sub-dimensions and Social Skills Scale. It has been observed that children whose mother has a democratic attitude show higher social skills compared to children whose mother adopt other attitudes.

## RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study shows that child's social skill levels are higher thanks to mothers who have democratic and equal behavior. This is an important study as it shows that children whose mother adopts the democratic attitude which includes granting equal rights, supporting them to expressing themselves clearly, becoming friends and sharing many things have a higher level of social cooperation, social independence and social interaction skills. Therefore, there is a need to raise awareness of parents in adopting skills that would make them control their negative attitudes by means such as personal development books and periodicals, seminars, events, meetings organized at schools in this topic and trainings for families on social skills

The basic restriction of this study was the fact that it was limited to Kırıkkale province. The relationship between mother's child rearing attitudes and social skills level of children living in other provinces of Turkey may be compared in similar studies. Moreover, these results can be strengthened by a comparison between data obtained from children and mothers through social skill scales developed by various researchers.

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