

THE REVIEW OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHILDREN'S ATTACHMENT STYLES AND MORAL RULE PERCEPTION

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ABSTRACT

This study has been conducted to investigate the relationship between the attachment styles of children, who are aged 60 months and above and receive pre-school education, and moral rule perception. Within this scope; 47 children who are aged 60 months and above and attend the pre-school education in the Private Teyfik Fikret Kindergarten located in the city center of Ankara and affiliated to the Ministry of National Education has constituted a sample group. In this study, "General Information Form for Children", "Incomplete Toy Baby Stories Scale" and "Moral Rule Perception Scale" has been used. The obtained data has been analyzed by SPSS 20 packet program. As a result of the study, it has been proved that there is no significant difference between the attachment levels of children to their mothers and their ages and genders. A statistically significant difference has been found among the age groups of the children in terms of the moral authority score. There is no significant relationship between attachment score and moral rule perception scores.

Keywords: attachment, moral rule perception, pre-school education

INTRODUCTION

Bowlby has reflected his initial views on sense of attachment in his book 'The Nature of the Child's Attachment to His / Her Mother. According to this work, the baby's attachment process starts at birth and continues as long as the baby grows by changing and varying. For example, firstly the baby shows crying behavior. It then initiates the attachment process by showing suction, laugh and follow-up behaviors. Bowlby has claimed that the mourning and sadness feelings in the absence of the person to whom baby has attached emotionally were similar to the emotions of adults (Bretherton, 1992). According to Bowlby and Ainsworth, sense of attachment is an innate behavior style and every individual needs to this feeling in order to survive. As long as individual needs, he/she establishes intimacy with the important persons who are important for him/her and this intimacy makes him/her happy. The person with whom the child creates a rapport protects him/her and meets his /her basic needs. This is a very important situation for the child's safety. The individual maintains the sense of attachment in order to provide his/her safety (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2002).

If a child is not wanted by his/her parents, he/she thinks that no one wants him/her. Because if the people in the center of feeling of confidence do not want him/her, nobody will want him/her. The bases of attachment behavior in the first years of individual's life affect the attachment behaviors to be built in the future life. If the individual is exposed to neglect and abuse actions during his/her childhood, he/she may experience the attachment disorders in his/her adulthood age. For emotional and cognitive development of children, the first person to whom child attaches is very important. If the relationship between the first person to whom child attaches and the child is negatively interrupted, the development of the children is adversely affected according to the various researches (Tanış, 2014).

The secured attachment formed in the family affects the perception of rules within the family by child. The child who knows the rules established in the family begins to realize the social rules as well. The child knows that he/she and others have some rights and there are many rules for protecting those rights. The moral rule perception of the child evolves by means of internalizing these rules and thus he/she completes his/her moral development.

In Kohlberg's moral understanding, there is a species-specific cognitive structure that includes concepts such as the justness and injustice, right and wrong, good-bad, discrimination skill, decision-making skill and the ability to performance of appropriate behavior. Morality is a cognitive aptitude. The individual behaves in accordance with the judgments and decisions he/she determines, obeying the universal rules (Krebs, Denton & Wark 1997). The consciousness aspect of personality is morality. Thanks to consciousness, people make reasonable evaluations and reasonable judgments. Morals is concerned with the attitudes exhibited and decisions taken in consequence of relationships among people as well as consequences that appear as a result of these actions. Every man creates his own morals and acts accordingly. Morals is not something taught from the outside. It is a structure that develops parallel to other development areas of the individual like development of intelligence (Başalan İz, 2009).

Children have evaluation awareness his/her own or others' behaviors as right or wrong together with moral development. They learn the necessary principles to manage their own behaviors. The moral development of each child is different from each other and knowing the moral developments of children is very important for moral education. Teachers who know children's moral development can organize their education accordingly. If not only trainers but also parents have knowledge about moral development, this situation will strengthen the communication between trainers and parents (Sözer Çapan, 2005).

This study has been planned to investigate the relationship between the attachment styles of children, who are aged 60 months and above and receive pre-school education, and moral rule perception. It is believed that the study will provide an opportunity to debate the effects of pre-school children's attachment styles to their mothers on moral rule perception and also it is assumed that the study is important as it shows the effect of attachment between mother and child on child's moral rule perception.

METHOD

Model of This Study

The model of this study, in which the relationship between attachment styles of children who are aged 60 months and above and moral rule perception is examined, is a descriptive model. Descriptive researches are defined as researches that contain the characteristics of an event and condition. The current situation or problems from the past are examined. It is usually intended to reveal the possible relationships between events. By means of descriptive studies, opportunity to understand the events better and to group are provided and thus the relations among them are revealed. Natural conditions do not deteriorate in descriptive studies and no changes are made in the environment (Baştürk, 2013).

Working Group

Target population of this study constitutes 47 children who are aged 60 months and above and attend the pre-school education in the Private Tevfik Fikret Kindergarten located in the city center of Ankara and affiliated to the Ministry of National Education in 2014-2015 academic year.

Data Collection Tools

In this study, "General Information Form for Children" has been used in order to obtain the demographic data related to children and "Incomplete Toy Baby Stories Scale" has been used in order to determine children's attachment levels and "Moral Rule Perception Scale" has been used in order to determine children's moral rule perceptions.

General Information Form for Children

The general information form for children, which will be completed by the families, includes information such as the age of the children (in months), their sex, the number of their siblings, the order of birth, the number of years received in the pre-school education, whether they received pre-school education before, family togetherness, parent's learning status and the family type of the child.

Incomplete Toy Baby Family Stories Scale (TOBAH)

The Incomplete Toy Baby Family Stories Scale (TOBAH) has been developed by Cassidy (1988). This scale has been adapted to Turkish by Seven (2006). It is a scale type where the child completes 6 stories, each of which lasts about 3 minutes, with respect to infant family. Through these stories, the child is expected to express his/her the mental representations related to his/her attachment condition. By means of using this scale, the trust relationship between the child and himself/herself and his mother can be discovered. As a result of the validity and reliability study conducted by Seven (2006), the Alfa Reliability coefficient (α) has been found as .83. The results of the AFA carried out on scores obtained from the TOBAH scale indicate that this is a single factorial scale. This structure accounts for 56% of the total variance. The common variance explained by the factor in the articles varies between approximately 39-73%. It has been found that factor load values of the scale vary between .60 and .85. In this study, the Alfa Reliability coefficient (α) of the TOBAH attachment scale has been defined as .88. Applications for the TOBAH scale have been recorded on a camera and it has been coded by two coders by giving scores ranging from 1 to 5 and by taking the children's answers into consideration. The highest score that can be obtained from the scale is 30 and the lowest score is 6. A high score indicates a high level of attachment safety and a low score indicates a low level of attachment safety. In this study, for reliability of the scores obtained from coding made by researcher, the correlation of these scores with scores given by a second independent coder has been considered. The correlation coefficient between the total scores of the two coders has been calculated as .94 (Seven, 2006).

Moral Rule Perception Scale (AKAÖ)

This scale used to detect the moral rule perceptions of children participating in this study has been developed by Smetana (1981). The validity and reliability studies of this scale have been carried out abroad. Therefore, this scale has been presented by Seçer, Sarı and Olcay (2006) to the view of three specialists who took doctorate in the field of Child Development and Education, Guidance and Psychological Counseling and Special Education. The AKA scale consists of 5 pictures showing violations of ethical rules. These 5 pictures also constitute 5 sub-dimensions of the scale. These sub-dimensions consist of Moral Seriousness, Lack of Moral Authority, Lack of Moral Rule, Moral Generalization and Moral Punishment. The internal consistency reliability of AKAÖ has been investigated by using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. In order to calculate the Alpha coefficient, data has been collected from 300 children who are in 5 and 6-year-old group and attend pre-school education institutions affiliated to Erzurum Provincial National Education Directorate. As a result of the statistical evaluations performed, Alpha (α) has been found as .74. This coefficient indicates that this

scale is relievable and that the results can be used in safe (Giren, 2008).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the relationship between the scores obtained from the Incomplete Toy Baby Family Stories Scale and Moral Rule Perception Scale and age and sex variables of the child has been reviewed and presented in tabular form. In addition, the correlation relationship between the scores of Incomplete Toy Baby Family Stories Scale and Moral Rule Perception Scale has been examined.

Table 1. *Conclusions Regarding the Difference Between Children's Age Groups in Terms of Scores Obtained From TOBAH Scale*

		Age					Mann Whitney U Testi			
		n	Mean	Median	Min	Max	Ss	Mean Rank	z	P
	60-66 months	13	21,15	21	10	29	4,83	25,88		
Attachment	67-72 months	34	20,53	21	9	25	3,68	23,28	-0,586	0,558
	Total	47	20,7	21	9	29	3,98			

When Table 1 is examined, it has been determined that the attachment levels of children between 60-66 months (X = 21,15) is higher than the attachment levels of children between 67-72 months (X = 20,53). However, when the table is viewed, it has been found that the attachment styles of children did not create a significant difference according to their age groups (p> 0,05).

When the attachment levels of children between 60-66 months and 67-72 months are examined, it is understood that both age groups have an avoidant style of attachment. Avoidant attachment is a despised relationship considered to be unimportant between the child and person who looks after him/her (Seven, 2006). Being close to each other of the attachment levels of both groups may be linked to being close to each other of maternal attitudes. Being close to each other of maternal attitudes can result from social childrearing attitude. Although there is no significant difference, exhibiting a higher attachment safety of children, who are aged 60-66 months, than those of children, who are aged 67-72 months, may be due to their orientation towards their mothers when they are a small child and their increased awareness of the environment as long as they grow.

In the literature, there are studies that show that there is no significant relationship between age and attachment styles as in this research [Tanış (2014), Yıldız (2005), Turan Cebeci (2009)]. These studies support research data.

Table 2. *Conclusions Regarding the Difference Between Children's Genders in Terms of Scores Obtained From TOBAH Scale*

		Gender					Mann Whitney U Testi			
		n	Mean	Median	Min	Max	ss	Mean Rank	z	P
	Female Child	24	21,92	22,5	17	29	2,8	27,17		
Attachment	Male Child	23	19,43	21	9	25	4,66	20,7	-1,628	0,104
	Total	47	20,7	21	9	29	3,98			

When Table 2 is examined, it has been found that the attachment levels of female children ($X = 21,92$) are higher than the attachment levels of male children ($X = 19,43$). However, there is no statistically significant difference between the sexes of the children in terms of scale scores of incomplete toy baby family stories ($p > 0,05$).

Although there is no significant difference between the attachment levels of female children and male children, it has been proved that female children show a higher attachment safety to their mothers than those of male children. This situation may lead female children to take more their mothers as a model, to strengthen the mother-daughter relationship and to have a positive impact on attachment. Moreover, it is believed that the reason of the absence of any significant difference may be the fact that mothers give love and confidence towards their children without discrimination of gender.

According to the findings of research conducted by Seven (2007), it has been understood that there is no significant difference between attachment and sex and that female children's scores are higher than male children's scores in terms of average scores. In the same way, the studies of Taniş (2014) and Turan Cebeci (2009) showed that attachment scores did not change according to sex scores. This supports the findings of this study.

Table 3. *Conclusions Regarding the Difference Between Children's Age Groups in Terms of Scores Obtained From AKA Scale*

		Age					Mann Whitney U Testi			
		n	Mean	Median	Min	Max	ss	Mean Rank.	z	P
Moral Seriousness	60-66 months	13	17,23	17	13	21	2,45	23,96		
	67-72 months	34	17,26	17	13	21	1,96	24,01	-0,012	0,99
	Total	47	17,26	17	13	21	2,08			
Moral Authority	60-66 months	13	4,46	5	0	5	1,45	21,38		
	67-72 months	34	5	5	5	5	0	25	-2,312	0,021*
	Total	47	4,85	5	0	5	0,78			
Moral Rule	60-66 months	13	4,31	5	2	5	1,32	20,69		
	67-72 months	34	4,85	5	0	5	0,86	25,26	-2,114	0,035*
	Total	47	4,7	5	0	5	1,02			
Moral Generalization	60-66 months	13	4,92	5	4	5	0,28	22,69		
	67-72 months	34	5	5	5	5	0	24,5	-1,617	0,106
	Total	47	4,98	5	4	5	0,15			
Moral Punishment	60-66 months	13	12,31	13	5	15	2,9	26,15		
	67-72 months	34	11,29	12	5	15	3,65	23,18	-0,678	0,498
	Total	47	11,57	12	5	15	3,46			

* $p < 0,05$

When Table 3 is examined, it has been determined that sense of children's moral authority ($p = 0,021$) and moral rule ($p = 0,035$) shows significantly different according to age groups ($p < 0,05$). The moral authority score ($X = 21,38$) of children whose age changes between 60-66 months is significantly lower than that of children whose age changes between 67-72 months ($X = 25$). The moral rule score ($X = 20,69$) of children whose age changes between 60-66 months is significantly lower than that of children whose age changes between 67-72 months ($X = 25,26$). There is no statistically significant difference between the age groups of the children in terms of moral seriousness ($p = 0,99$), moral generalization ($p = 0,106$) and moral punishment ($p = 0,498$) ($p > 0,05$).

According to findings of this study, it has been determined that senses of moral authority and moral rule of children increase in parallel with the increase in their age. The fact that children, who are aged 67-72 months, have more school experience and the fact that they are closer to primary school experience may lead them to receive higher moral authority and moral rule scores. A child encountered many rules and authorities in school life obtains information about why the rules are set up and about what may happen if these rules are not obeyed. The children have the opportunity to further internalize the rules with which they face in school life.

Sözer Çapan (2005) has performed a research where he examines the children's moral development according to Piaget's moral development theory and in this research, he has pointed out that the scores received from the total of the Moral Judicial Scale create a meaningful difference according to children's age. The results support this study's data.

Table 4. *Conclusions Regarding the Difference Between Children's Genders in Terms of Scores Obtained From AKA Scale*

		Gender						Mann Whitney U Testi		
		n	Mean	Median	Min	Max	ss	Mean Rank	z	P
Moral Seriousness	Female Child	24	17,63	18	13	21	2,1	26,52		
	Male Child	23	16,87	17	13	21	2,03	21,37	-1,302	0,193
	Total	47	17,26	17	13	21	2,08			
Moral Authority	Female Child	24	5	5	5	5	0	25		
	Male Child	23	4,7	5	0	5	1,11	22,96	-1,46	0,144
	Total	47	4,85	5	0	5	0,78			
Moral Rule	Female Child	24	4,67	5	0	5	1,17	24		
	Male Child	23	4,74	5	2	5	0,86	24	0	1
	Total	47	4,7	5	0	5	1,02			
Moral Generalization	Female Child	24	5	5	5	5	0	24,5		
	Male Child	23	4,96	5	4	5	0,21	23,48	-1,022	0,307
	Total	47	4,98	5	4	5	0,15			
Moral Punishment	Female Child	24	11,25	12	5	15	3,7	23,02		
	Male Child	23	11,91	13	5	15	3,23	25,02	-0,509	0,611
	Total	47	11,57	12	5	15	3,46			

When Table 4 is examined, it has been found that there is statistically no significant difference ($p > 0,05$) between the sexes of the children in terms of moral seriousness ($p = 0,193$), moral authority ($p = 0,144$), moral rule ($p = 1$), moral generalization ($p = 0,307$) and moral punishment ($p=0,611$).

Growing up of all children in the same community and culture can cause the moral levels of girls and boys to be close together. Since society's ethical values are common, it is believed that teaching the same moral values in the values education program provided in the schools by means of equally treating each child without discrimination between girls and boys does not cause to any differences between genders.

Abanoz (2008) has emphasized that the sex of the children does not affect their moral development. That is, in the age of basic education, gender is not a distinctive factor in moral development. Sözer Çapan (2005) also has confirmed that gender is not an effective factor on the sense of moral judgment. These results support data of this study.

Table 5. Correlation Test Results Regarding Relationship Between Scores Obtained From Incomplete Toy Baby Family Stories Scale and Scores Obtained From Moral Rule Perception Scale

		Attachment
Moral Seriousness	R	0,165
	P	0,267
	N	47
Moral Authority	R	0,14
	P	0,347
	N	47
Moral Rule	R	0,177
	P	0,234
	N	47
Moral Generalization	R	0,241
	P	0,103
	N	47
Moral Punishment	R	-0,037
	P	0,806
	N	47

When Table 5 is examined, the relationship between children's incomplete toy family stories scale scores and moral seriousness dimension as $r = 0,165$; relationship between moral authority dimension as $r = 0,14$; relationship between the moral rule dimension as $r = 0,177$; relationship between moral generalization dimension as $r = 0,241$ and relationship between

moral punishment dimension as $r = -0,037$ has been determined. Although these coefficients are not significant, they are quite close to zero. It can be said that there is no relation between these variables ($p > 0,05$).

According to findings of this study, there is no significant relationship between children's attachment levels and moral rule perceptions. Children's attachment levels to their mothers do not affect their moral rule perceptions. Apart from parents' education, the influence of the close environment, school environment and peers on child also increases with the introduction of moral rules into the child's life. As long as a child grows and finds himself/herself in different environments, his/her awareness of moral rules increases. In order to learn and adapt to the rules in different environments, he/she analyzes his/her knowledge-experience and examples he/she obtains and transforms them into behavior. If the characteristics of the applied sample group are taken into consideration; because of the fact that children, who have a high socio-economic level and whose mother works, go to the school in the early ages, they get to know the moral rules and environments where these rules are applied in early ages. In addition, the child attaches to the mother in accordance with the interest and need of the mother. The child establishes his/her own moral rules based on knowledge and experiences that he/she obtains from his/her parent, immediate environment and peer groups. Hence, because many factors, not only mother, influence on moral rule perception, it is thought that children's attachment levels to their mothers do not affect their moral rule perceptions.

Seçer, Sarı and Olcay (2006) stated in their studies that the nature of the relationships of the mothers with their children affects positively children's knowledge levels about the ethical rules. This study does not support the findings of the research. It is thought that this difference results from sample group.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of this study, it has been determined that there is no statistically significant difference between the age groups and sexes of the children in terms of attachment scores and it has been seen that girls show higher attachment safety than those of boys. When the moral sense scores are examined, there is a statistically significant difference between the age groups of children only in terms of moral authority score. Moreover, it is seen that there is no significant relationship between children's attachment levels and moral rule perceptions.

In order to enable the child to develop a positive attachment to the parents, the parents should exhibit love for their children regardless of gender and meet the needs of their children. Pre-school education received in early ages is very important to ensure that the child learns the rules required for his/her moral development. The child strengthens his/her moral development by encountering different situations and rules. The earlier the child encounters problem-solving methods, the sooner he/she internalizes and applies them. The child learns through pre-school education the sharing, problem solving and being a team player.

In this study, the effects of children's attachment levels to mother on their moral rule perceptions have been examined. However, this study has been carried out in a small sample group showing characteristics similar to each other. A study to be performed in larger sample groups having different socioeconomic and cultural characteristics may contribute significantly to educational programs and parent education studies that can be prepared in concern with this subject.

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