

## Research of Social Skills of Children Who Attend to Kindergarten According to the Attitudes of Their Mothers\*

Eda Gürbüz<sup>1</sup>, Binnaz Kıran<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Expert Teacher, Turkey

<sup>2</sup>Assoc. Dr., Mersin University, Department of Educational Sciences, Psychological Counseling and Guidance Department, Yenisehir Campus, Mersin, Turkey

Correspondence: Binnaz Kıran, Mersin University, Department of Educational Sciences, Psychological Counseling and Guidance Department, Yenisehir Campus, Mersin, Turkey.

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### Abstract

In this study, 5-6-year-old children who attend to kindergarten were researched if there is a difference in their level of social skills according to their mothers' attitudes, their gender, mother's employment status, the number of the children in the family, and to the caretaker. The study group was formed of 354 children who attend to kindergarten in the city centre of Mersin, Turkey and their mothers. "Social skills evaluation scale on children" developed by Ataş, Efe- Cinar and Tatar (2016) was used to evaluate social skills of the children and "parents' attitude scale" developed by Karabulut, Demir and Sendil (2008) was used to evaluate mothers' child bringing-up attitudes. Dual variance analyse was used to understand if children's social skill level becomes different or not according to their mothers' attitudes, their gender, employment status, the number of the children in the family, and to the caretaker. The source of the meaningful difference among groups as a result of the variance analyse was examined via Tukey HSD test. Level of significance in the research was accepted as 0,05. According to research result, general social skills become different according to mothers' attitudes. The children whose mothers are democratic and permissive seem to have higher social skills than the children whose mothers are authoritative and protective.

**Keywords:** mother attitude, child, social skill, authoritative attitude, democratic attitude, permissive attitude and protective attitude

### 1. Introduction

Family has a decisive effect on individual's early childhood period as well as each growing period. Children express their emotion and behaviours without limits with the effect of the trust given by family environment. But through time, children develop organization skills by controlling themselves as they see that their parents don't accept their every behaviour. Actually, in the basis of the effect of the family on children growing and maturing, their first social experience is with the family and they gain their own socialness. The children learn the basic skills such as how to behave to others and how to behave when there is a problem by observing the behaviours in the family (Kol, 2016: 50).

Skill is defined as the possibility and the capacity of doing a desired thing or doing what is needed to gain it (Goodman, Joshi, Nasim and Tyler, 2015: 14). Ikesako and Miyamoto (2015: 12), who make various studies and researches on development of social skill programs, define skill as personal features which interests at least one part of person's welfare and social development, can be evaluated and developed by educating.

Parental styles affect children's social, emotional and personal development significantly. Especially it is indicated that a stressful relationship creates pressure, and raise the anxiety on children and rise of parents' care and warm relationship affect them positively. Similarly, it is seen that there is a strong relation between various parents' attitudes and a lot of social behaviours of children such as concerns of children, depression, anxiety, extroversion, aggression (Ajilchi and Kargar, 2013: 450-451). Kiliç, Var and Kumandas (2015: 933) point that authoriser and authoritative parents' attitudes affect emotional management skills significantly.

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Researches applied to different age groups show that parents' attitude affect social and emotional skills. Social skills which have complicated structures have important roles on forming peer relationships in their early childhood period. It is seen that weakness of these skills cause problems in starting and prolongation of relationships and make their peer relationships problematic. In the forming of lack of social skills and anti-social behaviours, educational factors, families, exposure of friends and peers, being in the biological transition period are effective (Brodski and Hembrough, 2007: 9). It is seen that from these factors, parents' related attitude and behaviour patterns and their personal features affect the children and their self-expression skills which become a part of their socialness process (Kale, Cagdas and Tepeli, 255-256, 260). Rosli (2014: 94-97) hasn't faced a statistically meaningful relation between parents' attitude and behaviours and children's social and emotional behaviour problems and development features in his study which researches the effects of parenthood styles on children's social and emotional development in Muslim families in The USA.

Especially mothers who have intense relationships with their children are thought to be more effective on their children's development. Ajilci and Kargar (2013: 454) say that stress management has importance for mothers' setting a healthier and powerful communication with their children, because mothers' stressful and angry attitudes and behaviours create anxiety on children. Ambrose (2013: 30, 139-140) indicates that mothers' negative reaction against children cause emotion adjustment difficulties on children and lack of basic social skills such as cooperation, self-control, being confident, taking responsibility which are also known as pro-social skills. Naturally, mothers' positive and promotive attitudes and behaviours provide the development of basic skills such as cooperation, self-control, confidence. It is uttered that children' gender is also effective, like the attitudes of their parents on their social development, boys are generally effected by their fathers and girls by mothers (Okumura and Usui, 2010: 4). That's why it can be thought that gender is a dominant factor for the parent's effect on children.

As it can be seen in the literature, children's first social environment, family relationships and parents' attitudes and behaviours affect children's development and social skills. So, it is thought that it would be suitable to research the effects of the differences of mother attitudes on children's social skills in terms of various variables. In this frame, the main problem of this study and sub problems are identified below;

### 1.1 Problem

Do the 5-6-year-old children's, who attend to kindergarten, social skill level become different according to their mothers' attitudes, their gender, their mothers' marital status, employment status, the number of the children in the family and the caretaker?

## 2. Method

### 2.1 Research Model

The study was conducted in a descriptive relational scanning model. Relational studies search non-causal relations. The impact in these studies may be reciprocal since there is no control or change (Erkus, 2011).

### 2.2 Study Group

The study group of the research consisted of 354 children who attended to the kindergarten of the official schools in Mersin provincial centres of Turkey in 2016-2017 educational year and their mothers. In this study, easy-to-find sampling technique was used. "Easy-to-find sampling" is an example applied on individuals who are easy-to-reach, available, and want to participate in the study (voluntary) (Erkus, 2013: 122).

Mother attitudes	Children's social skill points		
	$\bar{x}$	ss	n
Democratic	321,2500	38,48727	112
Authoritarian	232,4819	52,67719	83
Protective	258,3523	65,42628	88
Permissive	318,2254	41,36361	71
Total	284,1949	62,99601	354

### 2.3 Data Collection Tools

#### 2.3.1 Parent's Attitude Scale (PAS)

Parental attitude scale was developed by Karabulut, Demir, and Sendil (2008) to measure parenting attitudes of parents who have children between 2-6 years of age. The scale is in likert style. In the scoring of the items, "It always happens" gets 5, "It is never like this" gets 1 point. The scores obtained from each dimension are calculated

separately and one score is obtained for each dimension. Taking a high score means adopting the attitude that dimension represents.

### 2.3.2 Social Skills Assessment Scale (SSAS)

The Social Skill Assessment Scale (SSAS) was developed by Ataş, Efe, Cinar and Tatar (2016). Within the scope of the validity examination, since 7 sub-dimensions were defined as Relationship Initiation and Maintenance Skills (RIMS), Assertiveness Skills (AS), Feelings for Emotions (FE), Coping with Aggressive Behaviour and Instincts Skills (CABIS), Problem Solving Skills (PSS), Plan Making (PM) and Group Interaction and Ability to Do Work (GIADW) prior to the application, structural validity of SSAS was tested by Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) of the actual application data. When the total scores of SSAS and sub-dimension scores were examined, it was found that the scale was valid and reliable (Ataş, et al. 2016: 74-75).

### 2.4 Analysis of the Data

First of all, the attitudes of the mothers were classified as democratic, authoritarian, protective and permissive. At the same time, children's social skills were organized according to their teacher's views. Whether the children's level of social skills differed according to the attitudes of the mother and the gender of the child, the marital status of the mother, the working status of the mother, the number of children in the family, the caretaker of the child was tested by Analysis of Variance. As a result of the variance analysis, the Tukey HSD test was used to find the source of the significant difference between the groups. Level of significance in the research was accepted as 0,05.

## 3. Findings

Whether the children's level of social skills differed according to the attitudes of the mother and the gender of the child, the marital status of the mother, the working status of the mother, the number of children in the family, the caretaker of the child was examined and the findings were presented in Table1.

Table 1. Results of Variance Analysis on Children's Social Skill Scores According to the Attitudes of the Mothers and Various Variables

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Sd	Mean Square	F	p
<b>According to children's gender</b>					
Mother attitudes	503223,185	3	167741,062	66,376	,000
Children's gender	4338,092	1	4338,092	1,717	,191
Mother attitudes *					
Children's gender	6686,405	3	2228,802	,882	,451
Error	874388,063	346	2527,133		
Total	29992309,000	354			
<b>According to mother's marital status</b>					
Mother attitudes	96262,952	3	32087,651	12,653	,000
Mother's marital status	14233,188	3	4744,396	1,871	,134
Mother attitudes *	14714,980	8	1839,372	,725	,669
Mother's marital status					
Error	859698,041	339	2535,982		
Total	29992309,000	354			
<b>According to mother's employment status</b>					
Mother attitudes	471013,652	3	157004,551	61,733	,000
Mother's employment	1,254	1	1,254	,000	,982
Mother attitudes *					
Mother's employment	4101,968	3	1367,323	,538	,657
Error	879975,507	346	2543,282		
Total	29992309,000	354			
<b>According to the number of children in the family</b>					
Mother attitudes	128946,416	3	42982,139	17,564	,000
Children number	11982,728	6	1997,121	,816	,558
Mother attitudes *					
Children number	50730,875	12	4227,573	1,728	,060
Error	812440,973	332	2447,111		
Total	29992309,000	354			
<b>According to the child's caretaker</b>					
Mother attitudes	411982,165	3	137327,388	54,016	,000
Caretaker	7,322	1	7,322	,003	,957
Mother attitudes *	4364,817	3	1454,939	,572	,634
Caretaker					
Error	879654,597	346	2542,354		
Total	29992309,000	354			

According to the results of the analysis in Table 1, there is a statistically significant difference between democratic (Avg: 321.25, ss:38, n:112), authoritarian (Avg: 232.49, ss:53, n:83), protective (Avg:258.35, ss:65, n:88), permissive (Avg: 318.22, ss:41, n:71) mother attitudes [ $F_{(3, 354)}=503223,185$   $p<.05$ ]. In other words, according to mothers' attitudes, children's social skills score averages are different. When the gender of the children, the marital status of the mother, the mother's working and not working, the number of the children in the house and the person who takes care of the child are examined, it is seen that there is no difference between the general social skills scores of the children. Furthermore, when the mother's attitudes and variables were taken together, no significant difference was found between them. When the source of the difference is examined according to the mother's attitudes, it is seen that the children of the democratic and permissive mothers have higher social skills than the children of the other mothers.

#### 4. Discussion

According to the research result, 5-6 year old children's, who attend to kindergarten, social skills become different according to their mothers' attitudes. The children whose mothers are democratic and permissive have higher social skills than the children whose mothers have authoritative and protective attitudes. These results show that mothers' attitudes have an important role on children's social skills development which is an important development field. Parents' attitudes are one of the important variables which form the content of the relationship between parents and their children. Parents adjust their attitudes and behaviours according to their belief and values, their child-growing knowledge and many other factors (Abu-Rabia and Yaari, 2012: 171). Bierman and Furman (1984: 153-159) claim that social skills can be learnt. Learning by modelling is important for children's first experiences to become inside the family. Children's first development period occurs under the control and supervision of family which cause children to socialize by observing behaviours and roles in the family (Kol, 2016: 50). It is accepted that parents' positive and supportive attitudes have positive affect on children's social skills development in their social growing (Kilic, Var and Kumandas, 2015: 933). It is seen that especially oppressive and authoritative attitudes affect psycho-social development negatively and form a lot of social behaviour and emotions such as concern, depression, anxiety, extroversion and aggression (Ajilchi and Kargar, 2013: 450-451).

The problems because of the lack of social skills in children show themselves fairly in early periods. Moreover, these problems may cause permanent affect which will last for the whole life (Brodeski and Hembrough, 2007: 9). Although parents' effect on children is accepted as a result of role modelling, mothers' attitudes and behaviours has won a privileged place as children have interaction with the mother starting before the birth (Ambrose, 2013: 139-140). Mothers' negative attitudes towards children affect their social skills and emotional conditions negatively as child-mother relationships are mostly on emotional bases. But mothers' positive attitudes and behaviours towards children accelerate their basic skills development such as self-control and self-confidence (Ajilci and Kargar, 2013: 454).

According to Hasting and Rubin (1999: 736-736), Kandir and Alpan (2008: 37) and Ozkafaci (2012: 52-59) children whose parents are democratic and try to understand and listen to their children have higher social skills. Ambrose (2013: 127-128) who supports this idea indicates that mothers who have negative attitudes towards children cause their children's social skills weaken. According to Logan (2006: 50-53), warmth towards children at home affects their social skills development positively. Studies of Tösten, Han and Anik (2017: 172-173) and Kaya, Bozaslan and Genç (2011: 1400-1401) point that democratic attitudes have positive effects. According to them, democratic attitudes explain 20% of the problem solving skills. When it is taken into account that families who have supportive attitudes show balanced and warm attitude, it can be said that the findings of these studies show similarity with this study which gives positive results in terms of democratic parents' attitudes.

Democratic and permissive parents attitudes can sometimes be studied as single or two different attitudes in the literature. Vijila, Thomas and Ponnusamy (2013: 35) also studied the relationship between children's who are at puberty period social skills development and parents' attitudes and found that permissive parents attitudes affect children's social skills meaningfully positive. Scammell (2011: 54-55) indicates that mothers' attitudes and stress affect children's social skills. In another study which takes permissive and democratic attitudes separately, the effect of the parents' attitudes on mentally disabled children's social skills was studied. According to the mentioned study of Aydin and Sönmez (2014: 163), parents' democratic attitudes have positive affect on mentally disabled children's social skills.

In this study, there was no relationship between the other variables included in the survey and social skills. Especially, gender-related outcomes do not resemble the results of previous investigations. It is stated that the gender variable is influential; boys are more influenced by their fathers, and girls from their mothers. The main reason for this is that boys have a stronger relationship with their fathers than their mothers and girls have a stronger relationship with their mothers compared to their fathers (Okumura and Usui, 2010: 4). Therefore, gender matching in parental effects in children appears to be a dominant factor. According to Yilmaz (2014: 60-69), the age and gender of the students who go to the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> classes have an effect on the level of social skills. The study of Ozyürek and Ozkan (2015: 84) for

adolescents also indicates that there is a relationship between the age of adolescents and social skills. However, these results are also seen to be limited. When social development and mother attitudes of 5-6-year old children are mentioned, it can be said that previous researches support the result of this research.

## 5. Result

According to the results of the research, the social skills of the children differ according to the attitudes of the mothers. Mothers who have democratic and permissive attitudes seem to have children with higher social skills than mothers with authoritarian and protective attitudes. The social skills differ according to the gender of the child, the marital status of the mother, the employment status, the number of children in the family, and the person who cares about the child. Due to the influence of parental attitudes on child development, it is seen that parents are involved in development programs applied in many parts of the world nowadays, as well as awareness raising activities for parents about developing attitudes (Boyd et al., 2005: 5). For this reason, attention should be paid to the inclusion of trainings for mothers into programs for improving children's social skills. In pre-school education, it is necessary to increase the number of activities for parents, especially mothers, to identify their children and spend more time together. In addition, the influence of mother attitudes on other developmental areas of children can be examined.

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