

The Relations Between the Acceptance and Child-Rearing Attitudes of Parents Of Children With Mental Disabilities

Aydan AYDIN*
Ali YAMAÇ**

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Abstract

Problem Statement: The relationship between parent and child plays a fundamental role in the social and emotional development of the child. Parental acceptance-rejection behavior may be critical in shaping the quality of the affective bond between parent and child and is established within the specific contexts of the parent-child environment. Psychological, socioeconomic, and other difficulties introduced into family life by having a child with mental disability may affect parental acceptance-rejection levels. Difficulties resulting from the disability and related social pressures and expectations might also influence child-rearing attitudes.

Purpose of Study: To investigate the correlation between parents' acceptance-rejection of their children with mental disability (7-12 years of age) and their child-rearing attitudes in relation to sociodemographic variables.

Method: A total of 234 fathers and 129 mothers of children with mental disability (7-12 years of age) were included via a random sampling method in this relational screening modeled study. Data were collected via the Parental Acceptance-Rejection/Control Questionnaire (PARQ/C) and the Parental Attitude Research Instrument (PARI) to assess parental acceptance-rejection behavior and parents' attitudes towards their children, respectively.

Findings and Results: A positive correlation was found between the PARI dependency subscale and the PARQ/C subscales of warmth/affection and undifferentiated rejection and control. The PARI subscale of rejection of

*Corresponding author: Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Department of Special Education, Ataturk Faculty of Education, Marmara University, e-mail: aydanaydin@marmara.edu.tr.

**Specialist on Special Education, US Education Consultancy, Istanbul, e-mail: ali_yamac@hotmail.com.

the homemaking role was positively correlated to the PARQ/C subscales of hostility, indifference/neglect, undifferentiated rejection and control, and to the PARQ/C total score. The PARI marital conflict subscale was significantly correlated to the PARQ/C subscales of hostility, indifference/neglect, undifferentiated rejection and control and to the PARQ/C total score. The PARI strictness and authoritarianism subscale was significantly correlated to the PARQ/C subscales of hostility/aggression, indifference/neglect, undifferentiated rejection and control and to the PARQ/C total score.

In conclusion, our findings indicate a positive association between acceptance-rejection behaviors and child-rearing attitudes of parents of children with mental disabilities and highlight the impact of the gender and the educational status of the parents, but not the gender of the child, on parental acceptance-rejection behavior and child-rearing attitudes.

Recommendations: Future studies may include children with varying disabilities from different age groups and socioeconomic backgrounds, which may provide data on the likelihood of change in parental behaviors in relation to the age of the child, type of disability, and family's socioeconomic status. Comparisons between parents of children with normal development and with disability in relation to parental acceptance-rejection behavior and child-rearing attitudes would contribute to improvement of services provided for parents of children with disability.

Keywords: children with mental disability, acceptance- rejection, child-rearing attitudes, mother, father

Children interact with their parents the moment they are born. The behaviors and attitudes of the parents towards the children may be effective in shaping this interaction as well as the children's developmental traits. A newborn starts life with quite a few emotional reactions, while at the end of age one, the relationship the baby establishes with the mother or caregiver lays the foundation for the reactions he/she structures with other individuals (Ahmetoğlu, 2004). In the early years of life, parents bear particular importance and the caregiving styles of parents leave permanent and immediate effects on a wide range of social developmental domains, including the moral development of the child, peer games, and academic burgeoning (Bornstein & Bornstein, 2007). Parent-child relationships have an impact on the future psychological health of the child (Turner, Sarason, & Sarason, 2001).

The establishment of an affirmative connection between parent and child may be bound to the parental acceptance-rejection of the child. Accepting parents are capable of demonstrating their reactions verbally or physically whereas increased aggressiveness and negligence towards the child are considered among the parental rejection behaviors (Kitahara, 1987). Parental acceptance-rejection theory (PARTheory), an evidence-based theory of socialization and lifespan development that attempts to explain and predict the antecedents, correlations, and consequences

of parental acceptance-rejection (Rohner, Khaleque, & Cournoyer, 2009), has provided a broader point of view and made significant and sustained contributions to parent-child interaction research (Kasuto, 2005).

PARTheory focuses on the quality of the affectional bond between parents and their children, and the physical, verbal, and symbolic behaviors parents use to express these feelings as well as the mental design of this social interaction by the child. The warmth/affection is a continuum from a great deal to none, one end denoting parental acceptance and the other rejection (Rohner, 1986). Parental acceptance refers to the warmth, affection, care, comfort, concern, nurturance, support, or simply the love that the child can experience from their parents and other caregivers. At the other end of the continuum, parental rejection is marked by the absence or withdrawal of these feelings and behaviors significantly and by the presence of a variety of physically and psychologically hurtful behaviors and effects. A child's feeling of being neglected and not loved while his/her parents are not observed to have a cold and unaffectionate attitude is known as the undifferentiated rejection, while parent control represents the two dimensions including overpermissiveness and authoritarianism (Rohner, 1986; Rohner, 1998; Eryavuz, 2006). The theory asserts that the cultural variability in parental behaviors leads to acceptance-rejection patterns with specific consequences of perceived rejection and self-value in different societies (Rohner, 1986). A child born after an unplanned pregnancy and the mother's feelings of loneliness or of overburden at having multiple children, or the presence of negative physical circumstances and the overresponsibility of mother for home and the child, are considered among the determinants of parental rejection (Rohner & Rohner, 1980).

Yavuzer (2010) stated that the acceptance of the child by the mother is one of the primary determinants of a positive connection between the mother and child. Psychological, socioeconomic, and other difficulties introduced into family life by having a child with mental disability may affect parental acceptance-rejection levels. Regardless of the kind or severity of disability, the birth of a child with disability or the discovery of a disability in a child is an event that changes the whole system in the family (Eripek, 1996). Families face a wide range of negative outcomes on account of having a child with disability, which can drive them into a depressive mood (Küçükler & Kanik-Richter, 1994). The failure to satisfy the expectation of having a healthy baby and related future dreams may also have a significant impact on acceptance-rejection behaviors of parents of children with disability. According to Onder and Gulay (2010), higher rejection levels were determined among the parents of children with mental disability compared to parents of children with normal development. The developmental disability of a child can act as a prominent factor in affecting parental acceptance-rejection behaviors. The failure of a child with mental disability to meet the expectations of the parents and the difficulties he/she encounters in learning and social adaptation may have equal effect on parental behaviors as well as attitudes. Attitudes are strictly organized, long-term emotions, beliefs, and behavioral tendencies (Cüceloğlu, 2010), organizing an individual's thoughts, emotions, and conducts related to a psychological object (Kağıtçıbaşı,

2010). Difficulties resulting from the disability and related social pressures and expectations might also influence child-rearing attitudes. Kermanshahi et al. (2008) reported that the Iranian mothers having a child with mental disability identified themselves as socially, physically, and emotionally affected. Anjel and Erkman (1993) evaluated the relationship of parental acceptance-rejection to family environment, anxiety, and child-rearing attitudes in 129 mothers and reported that higher scores in rejection were associated with lower scores in unity-solidarity and democracy and higher scores in strictness and rejection of the homemaking role. Keskin, Bilge, Engin, and Dülgerler (2010) reported the predominance of pressure, discipline, and overprotection in the child-rearing attitudes of parents of children with mental disability in relation to the effort to cope with the disability. Given the sociodemographic differences in child-rearing attitudes and parental acceptance-rejection behaviors and the specific importance of the schooling age in terms of challenges facing the child in a new social environment, the present study was designed to investigate the relationship between acceptance-rejection behaviors and child-rearing attitudes of the parents of children between 7 and 12 years of age with mental disability in relation to gender and educational status.

Method

Research Design

This is a relational screening modeled study probing into the relationship between acceptance-rejection behaviors and child-rearing attitudes of parents having a child with mental disability in relation to sociodemographic variables. A Relational Screening Model is a research model aiming to detect the existence and/or level of covariance between two or more variables (Karasar, 2009).

Study sample

A total of 15 special education schools, special classrooms, and special education centers serving children with mental disability in Istanbul, Turkey, were selected via a random sampling method between 2010 and 2011. Children between 7 and 12 years of age with mental disability were identified in collaboration with the school administrations. Parents were informed about the study in detail, and they participated on a voluntary basis. A total of 650 parents agreed to participate and were asked to fill out the questionnaires. However, only 465 parents returned the questionnaires. Of these 465 parents, 363 (234 fathers and 129 mothers) who returned completed forms, were included in the study.

Research Instruments

Demographical Information Form. Data on the educational level of the parents and the gender of the parents and children were collected.

Parental Acceptance-Rejection/Control Questionnaire (PARQ/C). The Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ) has been developed by Rohner, Saavedra, and Granum (1978) for measuring parents' self-perception of their acceptance-rejection behaviors towards the child. The questionnaire consists of 60

items with four subscales of *warmth/affection* (20 items), *hostility/aggression* (15 items), *indifference/neglect* (15 items) and *undifferentiated rejection* (10 items). The PARQ was first adapted to Turkish by Anjel (1993) under the supervision of Erkman and with an internal consistency of .90. The construct validity was obtained with respect to the comparisons made via the Family Environment Questionnaire and the Parental Attitude Research Instrument (Anjel & Erkman, 1993). Later, a final 73-item form of the questionnaire (Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire/Control, PARQ/C Parent form) was developed by Khaleque and Rohner (2002) via the addition of 13 items related to parental control. Reliability analyses of the PARQ/C have been repeated by Erkman (2004) with an overall internal consistency of .74. Its subscales internal consistency coefficients ranged from .59 to .79, with an internal consistency of .69 for the control subscale. In this study, the 73-item adaptation of PARQ/C was used.

The responses are given on a four-point Likert type scale including the following options: "4: true almost all the time", "3: true at times", "2: rarely true" and "1: almost never true". For the total score of rejection, all items in the warmth/affection subscale are first reversely scored and then are added to the scores of the hostility, indifference/neglect, and undifferentiated rejection subscales. The total scores vary between 60 (minimum score) and 240 (maximum score), a higher score indicating a higher level of rejection.

Parental Attitude Research Instrument (PARI). This questionnaire was developed by Schaefer and Bell (1958) to evaluate mothers' feelings towards family life and their children. The PARI was first adapted to Turkish in a shortened form by Le Compte, Le Compte, and Özer (1978). Reliability coefficients were reported to be .58 and .88, and the alpha reliability coefficient was .64. The questionnaire was divided into five factors for conceptual validity, revealing a correlation coefficient of .59 in factor II, .90 in factor V, while in the five subscales a defined median of r was detected as .81. The second adaptation has been performed by Küçük (1990). The adapted form consists of 60 items with five subscales: *dependency* (16 items measuring the overprotective and overcontrolling attitudes towards the child); *egalitarianism and democratic attitudes* (9 items measuring the ability to have a cooperating and friendly attitude towards the child), *rejection of the homemaking role* (13 items measuring negative attitudes, the feelings of incompetency, and dissatisfaction with parenting), *marital conflict* (6 items measuring tension between parents), and *strictness and authoritarianism* (16 items measuring the expectations of obedience from the child) (Yurdusen, Erol, & Gencoz, 2013). The responses are given on a four-point scale, ranging from 'I find it not appropriate at all' to 'I find it quite appropriate', and the total score equals the sum of the 60-items. The higher scores on a subscale correspond to the approval of the attitude measured in this subscale (Öner, 1997).

Data Analysis

Arithmetic means, standard deviation, and standard error values of the PARI subscale scores and the PARQ/C total and subscale scores were calculated. For the analysis of the PARQ/C total and subscale scores and the PARI subscale scores in

relation to demographic variables, independent group t-test and, for not normally distributed variables, the Kruskal Wallis-H test were performed. In order to determine the origin of differentiation among groups, the Mann Whitney-U test was performed after the Kruskal Wallies-H test. A Pearson analysis was used to determine the relationships between the PARQ/C and the PARI scores.

Results

According to the sociodemographic data on parents, 179 (49.3%) were of 36-45 years old, 187 (51.5%) were married for 6-15 years, 274 (75.5%) were primary school graduates, 219 (60.3%) were unemployed, while 267 (73.6%) had low-income levels (≤ 1000 TL). External support for childcare was available only in 45 (12.4%) cases, while 62 parents (17.1%) confirmed the presence of another family member attending special education schools or classes. Out of the 363 (60.6% males) children with mental disability, 117 (32.2%) were born from an unplanned pregnancy, 61(16.8%) had another disability, 318 (87.6%) attended school on a regular basis, while 129 (35.5%) had been attending special education schools for 4-5 years (Table 1).

Table 1

Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participants

Parents (N= 363)		Children with mental disability (N= 363)	
Age	<i>n</i> (%)	Age	<i>n</i> (%)
20-35 years	124 (34.2)	7 years	49 (13.5)
36-45 years	179 (49.3)	8 years	44 (12.1)
≥ 45 years	60 (16.5)	9 years	62 (17.1)
Gender	<i>n</i> (%)	10 years	53 (14.6)
Female	234 (64.5)	11 years	66 (18.2)
Male	129 (35.5)	12 years	89 (24.5)
Marital status	<i>n</i> (%)	Gender	<i>n</i> (%)
Married	346 (95.3)	Female	143 (39.4)
For 1-5 years	6 (1.7)	Male	220 (60.6)
For 6-15 years	187 (51.5)	Born from a planned pregnancy	<i>n</i> (%)
For 16-25 years	142 (39.1)	Yes	246 (67.8)
Other	28 (7.7)	No	117 (32.2)
Divorced	13 (3.6)	Years in special education	<i>n</i> (%)
Widow/widower	3 (0.8)	1 year	54 (14.9)

Table 1 continue...

Parents (N= 363)		Children with mental disability (N= 363)	
Other	1 (0.3)	2-3 years	102 (28.1)
Educational status	<i>n (%)</i>	4-5 years	129 (35.5)
Illiterate	25 (6.9)	Other	78 (21.5)
Primary school	274 (75.5)	Regular attendance to school	<i>n (%)</i>
High school	49 (13.5)	Yes	318 (87.6)
University/postgraduate	15 (4.1)	No	45 (12.4)
Occupational status	<i>n (%)</i>	Presence of another disability	<i>n (%)</i>
Employed	129 (35.5)	Yes	61 (16.8)
Unemployed	219 (60.3)	No	302 (83.2)
Other	15 (4.1)		
Number of children	<i>n (%)</i>		
1	40 (11.0)		
2	148 (40.8)		
3	98 (27.0)		
≥4	77 (21.2)		
Monthly income (TL)	<i>n (%)</i>		
≤1000	267 (73.6)		
1001-2000	76 (20.9)		
2001-3000	15 (4.1)		
≥3001	5 (1.4)		
Another family member in special education	<i>n (%)</i>		
Present	62 (17.1)		
Absent	301 (82.9)		
External support for childcare	<i>n (%)</i>		
Yes	45 (12.4)		
No	318 (87.6)		

Mean (SD) value for the total PARQ/C score was 129.88 (18.26), while the subscale mean (SD) scores included 68.44 (5.69) for warmth/affection, 23.80 (6.77) for hostility/aggression, 21.25 (5.06) indifference/neglect, 15.38 (4.97) for undifferentiated rejection, and 37.89 (4.46) for control (Table 2). Mean (SD) scores for the PARI subscales were 51.28 (5.69) for dependency, 25.80 (2.84) for egalitarianism and democratic attitudes, 31.48 (7.61) for rejection of the homemaking role, 15.83 (4.18) for marital conflict, and 44.31 (8.51) for strictness and authoritarianism (Table 2).

Table 2

The PARQ/C and the PARI Total and Subscale Scores (N=363)

PARQ/C Scores	Mean (SD)	PARI Scores	Mean (SD)
Warmth/affection	68.44 (5.69)	Dependency	51.28 (7.36)
Hostility/aggression	23.80 (6.77)	Egalitarianism and democratic attitudes	25.80 (2.84)
Indifference/neglect	21.25 (5.06)	Rejection of the homemaking role	31.48 (7.61)
Undifferentiated rejection	15.38 (4.97)	Marital conflict	15.83 (4.18)
Control	37.89 (4.46)	Strictness and authoritarianism	44.31 (8.51)
Total Score	129.88 (18.26)		

The analysis of the relations between the PARI and the PARQ/C scores revealed significant positive correlations of the PARI subscales to most of the PARQ/C subscales and to the total PARQ/C score, except for the PARI egalitarianism and democratic attitudes subscale. The PARI dependency subscale was significantly correlated to the PARQ/C subscales of warmth/affection ($r=.195$; $p<.001$), undifferentiated rejection ($r=.115$; $p<.05$), and control ($r=.439$; $p<.001$) (Table 3).

Table 3

The Relations Between the PARI and the PARQ/C Scores (N=363)

PARI	PARQ/C	Warmth/ affection	Hostility/ aggression	Indifference/ neglect	Undifferentiated rejection	Control	Total Score
Dependency		.195**	.059	.007	.115*	.439**	.101
Egalitarianism and democratic attitudes		.084	.065	-.093	.073	.073	.010
Rejection of the homemaking role		-.029	.353**	.290**	.361**	.262**	.382**
Marital conflict		.079	.216**	.125*	.195**	.223**	.198**
Strictness and authoritarianism		.106*	.213**	.131*	.268**	.479**	.272**

* $p < .05$ and ** $p < .001$ (Pearson analysis)

Compared to fathers, mothers had significantly higher scores on the warmth/affection ($p < .05$) and lower scores on the indifference/neglect ($p < .05$) subscales of the PARQ/C and higher scores on the egalitarianism and democratic attitude ($p < .05$) and the marital conflict ($p < .001$) subscales of the PARI. There was no significant gender influence on the other subscales of the PARI and the PARQ/C or on the total PARQ/C score (Table 4).

Table 4

The PARQ/C and the PARI Subscale Scores in Relation to the Parent's Gender (N=363)

PARQ/C Scores	Gender	n	Mean (SD)	t^1	p^1
Warmth/affection	Female	234	68.94 (5.40)	2.244	.025
	Male	129	67.54 (6.11)		
Hostility/aggression	Female	234	23.91 (6.84)	.432	.666
	Male	129	23.59 (6.68)		
Indifference/neglect	Female	234	20.75 (4.87)	-2.545	.011
	Male	129	22.16 (5.31)		

Table 4 continue...

<i>PARQ/C Scores</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean (SD)</i>	<i>t1</i>	<i>p1</i>
Undifferentiated rejection	Female	234	15.35 (5.02)	-.117	.907
	Male	129	15.42 (4.90)		
Control	Female	234	37.91 (4.49)	.077	.939
	Male	129	37.87 (4.42)		
Total score	Female	234	128.99 (18.34)	-1.250	.212
	Male	129	131.49 (18.07)		
PARI Scores					
Dependency	Female	234	51.24 (7.70)	-.170	.865
	Male	129	51.37 (6.73)		
Egalitarianism and democratic attitude	Female	234	26.03 (3.05)	2.070	.039
	Male	129	25.39 (2.39)		
Rejection of the homemaking role	Female	234	31.73 (7.35)	.857	.392
	Male	129	31.02 (8.07)		
Marital conflict	Female	234	16.50 (4.07)	4.216	.000
	Male	129	14.61 (4.11)		
Strictness and authoritarianism	Female	234	44.31 (8.57)	-.011	.991
	Male	129	44.32 (8.44)		

¹Independent t-test

Parents with a university degree or higher qualification had significantly lower scores for the PARQ/C subscales of undifferentiated rejection (112.30 vs. 221.22, $p < .05$) and control (119.40 vs. 238.02, $p < .05$) and the PARQ/C total (109.10 vs. 212.16, $p < .05$) as well as for the PARI subscales of dependency (111.8 vs. 236.84, $p < .001$), rejection of the homemaking role (122.30 vs. 249.98, $p < .001$), marital conflict (141.83 vs. 238.74, $p < .01$), and strictness and authoritarianism (109.13 vs. 243.54, $p < .001$). The egalitarianism and democratic attitudes subscale score of the PARI was also significantly higher in this group, compared to high school graduates (209.63 vs. 142.60, $p < .05$). Educational status had no significant influence on the PARQ/C warmth/affection, hostility/aggression, and indifference/neglect subscale scores (Table 5).

Table 5

Average Scores for the PARQ/C and the PARI in Relation to the Educational Status of Parents (N=363)

	Educational status				X^{2a}	p^a
	Illiterate ($n=25$)	Primary education ($n=274$)	High school ($n=49$)	$\geq$ University ($n=15$)		
PARQ/C scores						
Warmth/affection	198.38	179.39	178.07	215.23	2.363	.500
Hostility/aggression	212.36	183.58	173.38	130.70	6.093	.107
Indifference/neglect	196.32	183.56	179.50	137.73	3.243	.356
Undifferentiated rejection	221.22	186.51	158.11	112.30*	13.274	.004
Control	238.02	185.98	150.35	119.40*	17.413	.001
Total	212.16	186.14	165.77	109.10*	10.911	.012
PARI Scores						
Dependency	236.84	189.45	133.86	111.80***	25.289	.000
Egalitarianism and democratic attitude	188.90	186.90	142.60	209.63+	8.786	.032
Rejection of the homemaking role	249.98	188.47	129.40	122.30***	28.752	.000
Marital conflict	238.74	184.99	148.62	141.83**	14.771	.002
Strictness and authoritarianism	243.54	188.97	133.91	109.13***	27.385	.000

^aKruskal Wallis-H Test

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ and *** $p < .001$; compared to illiterate parents (Mann-Whitney U test)

⁺ $p < .05$ compared to high school graduates (Mann-Whitney U test)

Discussion and Conclusion

Our findings indicate a positive correlation between the dependency fostering attitude of parents and their behaviors of parental control, warmth/affection, and undifferentiated rejection. This finding is parallel to past research (Glidden & Schoolcraft, 2003; Macias, Saylor, Rowe, & Bell, 2003). The anxiety levels of parents with a mentally or physically disabled child are higher compared to parents without a disabled child (Macias et al., 2003). As a consequence of this experienced anxiety, parents' child-rearing attitudes may tend towards pressure and discipline as a solution developed for the faced disability (Macias et al., 2003).

Parents of children with mental disabilities might exhibit overprotective attitudes also due to the social and psychological difficulties faced by the child. Parental acceptance-rejection theory defines parents who incessantly control their children's behaviors as highly controlling parents. The positive correlation between dependency and control behavior in this study is therefore meaningful. The dependency fostering attitudes of the parent may be attributed to the inclination to protect the child from potential threats, yet such attitudes might induce in the child feelings of being rejected, pitied, and distrusted.

Our findings indicate a positive correlation between the PARI subscales of rejection of the homemaking role, marital conflict, strictness and authoritarianism and the PARQ/C subscales of hostility/aggression, indifference/neglect, control, undifferentiated rejection, and parental rejection (total score). Sarisoy (2000) has pointed out that the joy parents feel at the start of marriage and the birth of their child leaves its place to bitter memoirs that eventually lead, by blocking emotional contact with the partner, towards matrimonial problems. The mother, in particular, might go through greater stress because of the restrictions on her free time and social activities and due to her increased role as a housewife (Sarisoy, 2000). The fact that a mother with a disabled child spends most of her time dealing with the child's problems, which further limits her free time and social activities, might be the catalyst in her rejection of the homemaking role.

Parents of children with special needs are further obliged in a constant struggle to create a better future with minimum risks for the child. This never-ending fight is likely to adversely affect the matrimonial relations as well. If the experienced problem is solved, there is a possibility that the matrimonial relations may improve. Parents with higher problem-solving skills are less likely to experience rejection of the homemaking role and marital conflict (Ravindranadan & Raju, 2007).

A parent negatively affected by marital conflict might be negative towards the child, and the child might perceive this behavior as more rejecting. One of the most influential factors in maternal parenthood is the mother's relationship with her spouse (Rogers & White, 1998; Krishnakumar & Buehler, 2000; Koerner, Wallace, Lehman, & Raymond, 2002; Hipke, Wolchik, Sandler, & Braver, 2002). Some parents might be convinced that the child's disability and the associated problems are at the root of the marital conflict and the rejection of the homemaking role. In such cases, parents may neglect or even reject the child as they identify him/her with their problems. Other parents might respond with controlling and overmothering attitudes. Compared to parents with a normal child, parents of children with disability are far more anxious, and they might develop pressure, discipline, and overmothering attitudes to cope with the experienced problems (Macias et al., 2003).

In our study, mothers scored higher on the PARQ/C subscale of warmth/affection, and the fathers scored higher on the indifference/neglect subscale. The differences between the mothers and fathers on the hostility/aggression, the undifferentiated rejection, and the control subscales and the total score were statistically insignificant. Parental perceived rejection might change according to the parent's gender (Rohner, 1998). Fathers with a disabled child might

be more accepting than mothers, whereas the mother could be comparatively more rejecting (Ansari, 2002). Or, due to a perceived biological bond, mother and children might also feel closer. Dwairy (2010) has reported fathers who were more rejecting and less accepting than mothers. Higher warmth/affection scores of the mothers might be related to the fact that they spend more time caring for the child as fathers are employed out of the house and fail to spend time with the child when at home. The conflicting total score for the parental acceptance-rejection of a child with disability might have stemmed from the nonmatching numbers of mothers and fathers in the sample group.

Mothers also scored higher on the PARI subscale of marital conflict. Influence of gender on the subscales of dependency, egalitarianism and democratic attitude, rejection of the homemaking role, and strictness and authoritarianism were statistically insignificant. In Turkey, in line with the overresponsibility attributed to the mother as a partner, parent, and housewife by the society, it is reasonable to argue that mothers who spend more time with a disabled child have little time left for themselves, and they become even more anxious. Anxiety in any of the partners might be a factor in the emergence of marital conflict. Owing to their emotionality and restricted social activities, this conflict might have deeper outcomes for mothers such as rejection of the homemaking role, feeling overloaded, feelings of rage against the child with disability, and a consequently rising sense of guilt with probable negative feelings and rejection behaviors towards the child.

Analysis of the parents' educational status showed that illiterate parents had significantly higher points in the PARQ/C subscales of undifferentiated rejection and control, and the PARQ/C total score, compared to parents with university education or higher qualification. The influence of educational status on the subscales of warmth/affection, hostility/aggression, and indifference/neglect was statistically insignificant. This finding is similar to past research (Dwairy, 2010; Roskam, 2005; Erkan & Toran, 2004). According to Erkan and Toran (2004), mothers' attitudes towards children become more accepting with the increase in their educational level, and the mothers' accepting positive attitudes towards the children decrease and rejecting-negative behaviors rise with the decrease in their educational levels. Bond and Burns (2006) likewise have asserted that mothers with extensive knowledge on child development possess a less categorical and multidimensional attitude on child development and employ less authoritarian and more cognitively supportive parental styles for their children.

Parents with a higher educational level may also have easier access to resources with information about ways to attend to the needs of their disabled child and to the institutions that provide assistance. They might further be able to use such information more effectively than other parents. Consequently, they can find quicker solutions to problems arising from the traits of the child. This advantage might be effective in the positive bond of higher educated parents and their higher degrees of acceptance.

In our study, illiterate parents had significantly higher scores on the PARI subscales of dependency, rejection of the homemaking role, marital conflict, and strictness and authoritarianism compared to parents with a university degree or higher qualification. These findings might point to the added impact of adverse socioeconomic living conditions on the family dynamics and relations of the illiterate parents, who most likely have a low-income status. Compared to parents with a high school diploma, parents with a university degree or higher qualification had significantly higher scores on the subscales of egalitarianism and democratic attitude, parallel to past research (Kazemi, Ardabili, & Solokian 2010; Ravindranodan & Raju, 2007; Tabak, 2007; Sarı, 2007; Ayyıldız, 2005; Baran & İçöz, 2001:). The increase in the educational level of mothers might be associated with an increase in the interest and awareness about the written and visual sources related to the disability of the child (Baran & İçöz, 2001). Furthermore, mothers with higher educational levels avoid discriminating their child from normally developing children and try to provide the same rights insofar as possible. Demiriz and Öğretir (2007) have also marked parents' educational level as a salient factor in their child-rearing attitudes.

Inclusion of children aged 7-12 years and the lack of a comparison group composed of children with normal development are the two important limitations of the present study. Additionally, while likely to influence study results, lack of data on the socioeconomic status of the parents and the past history of the family education is another limitation. Future studies may include children with varying disabilities from different age groups and socioeconomic backgrounds and thus may provide data on the likelihood of change in parental behaviors in relation to the age of the child, the type of disability, and the family's socioeconomic status. Comparisons between parents of children with normal development and with disability in relation to parental acceptance-rejection behavior and child-rearing attitudes would also contribute to the improvement of services provided for parents of children with disability.

In conclusion, our findings indicate a positive association between acceptance-rejection behavior and child-rearing attitudes of parents of children with disabilities and highlight the impact of gender and educational status of the parents, but not the gender of the child with the mental disability, on the parental acceptance-rejection behavior and child-rearing attitudes.

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Zihinsel engelli çocukların ebeveynlerinin çocuklarını kabul ve çocuk yetiştirme tutumları arasındaki ilişki

Özet

Atıf:

- Aydın, A. & Yamaç, A. (2014). The relations between the acceptance and child-rearing attitudes of parents of children with mental disabilities. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 54, 79-98.

Problem Durumu: Ebeveyn ve çocuk arasındaki ilişki çocuğun sosyal ve duygusal gelişimi açısından önemli bir yere sahiptir. Ebeveynin çocuğuna yönelik kabul veya ret davranışı spesifik ebeveyn-çocuk bağlamı içerisinde şekillenir ve ebeveyn ile çocuk arasındaki duygusal bağın niteliği açısından kritik bir rol oynar. Zihinsel engelli bir çocuğun dünyaya gelmesiyle beraber ailenin hayatında gelişen psikolojik, sosyo-ekonomik ve diğer zorlukların ebeveynlerin çocuğunu kabul-ret düzeyini etkileyebileceği alanyazında vurgulanmaktadır. Ayrıca, zihinsel engel bağlamında yaşanan zorluklar ve ilgili sosyal baskı ve beklentilerin ebeveynlerin çocuk yetiştirme tutumlarını etkileyebildiği de saptanmıştır.

Çocuğun zihin engelli olması durumunda, ebeveynlerin çocuklarına yönelik kabul veya ret davranışlarının çocuk yetiştirme tutumlarını etkileyebileceği varsayımından hareketle, ebeveynlerin 7-12 yaş arası zihinsel engeli olan çocuklarını kabul-reddi ile çocuk yetiştirme tutumları arasındaki ilişki bu araştırmanın problemini oluşturmaktadır.

Araştırmanın Amacı: Bu araştırmanın amacı, 7-12 yaşları arasında zihinsel engelli çocuğu olan ebeveynlerin, çocuklarını kabul-ret düzeyi ile çocuk yetiştirme tutumları arasında bir ilişki olup olmadığını çeşitli sosyodemografik faktörler açısından incelemektir.

Araştırmanın Yöntemi: 7-12 yaşları arasında zihinsel engelli çocuğu olan ebeveynlerin, çocuklarını kabul-ret düzeyi ile çocuk yetiştirme tutumları arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesine yönelik bu ilişkisel tarama modelli araştırmaya, zihinsel engelli çocuğu olan toplam 234 baba ve 129 anne rastgele örnekleme yöntemi kullanılarak dahil edilmiştir. Demografik bilgi formu ile ebeveynlerin eğitim düzeyleri ve ebeveyn ve çocukların cinsiyetine dair bilgi toplanmıştır. Araştırmada ebeveynlerin çocuğu kabullenme ve reddetme davranışlarını ve algılanan ebeveyn kontrolünü belirlemek amacıyla kullanılan Ebeveyn Kabul-Ret/Kontrol Ölçeği (EKRÖ/K), 73 maddeden oluşmakta ve *sıcaklık/sevgi, düşmanlık/saldırganlık, kayıtsızlık/ihmal, ayrılmamış reddetme ve kontrol* olmak üzere beş alt ölçek içermektedir. Ebeveynlerin çocuklarına karşı tutumlarını belirlemek amacıyla kullanılan Aile Hayatı ve Çocuk Yetiştirme Tutumu Ölçeği (PARI), 60 maddeden oluşmakta ve *aşırı koruyuculuk, demokratik tutum ve eşitlik tanıma, ev kadınlığı rolünü reddetme, evlilik çatışması ve sıkı disiplin* olmak üzere beş alt ölçek içermektedir.

Araştırmanın Bulguları ve Sonuçları: Zihinsel engelli çocukların ebeveynlerinin, çocuk yetiştirme tutumları ile çocuklarını kabul-ret düzeyleri arasında bir ilişki olup olmadığının karşılaştırıldığı araştırma sonucunda, PARI aşırı koruyuculuk alt ölçeği ile EKRÖ/K sıcaklık/sevgi, ayrılmamış reddetme ve kontrol alt ölçekleri arasında pozitif yönde ilişki saptanmıştır. Bu durum alanyazındaki benzer çalışmalarla örtüşmektedir. Çocukları zihin engelli olan ebeveynler, çocuklarının deneyimlediği sosyal ve psikolojik zorluklardan ötürü onlara yönelik aşırı koruyucu bir tutum sergileyebilmektedir.

PARI ev kadınlığı rolünün reddedilmesi alt ölçeği ile EKRÖ/K düşmanlık/saldırganlık, kayıtsızlık/ihmal, ayrılmamış reddetme ve kontrol alt ölçekleri ve EKRÖ/K toplam puanı arasında pozitif yönde ilişki saptanmıştır. Annenin zamanın çoğunu zihinsel engelli çocuğunun ihtiyaçlarını karşılamaya ayırması nedeniyle sosyal aktivitelerine ayırabileceği boş zamanının iyice daralması ev kadınlığı rolünün reddedilmesinde katalizör etkisi görebilir.

PARI evlilik çatışması alt ölçeği ile EKRÖ/K düşmanlık/saldırganlık, kayıtsızlık/ihmal, ayrılmamış reddetme, kontrol alt ölçekleri ve EKRÖ/K toplam puanı arasında pozitif yönde ilişki saptanmıştır. Özel ihtiyaçları olan çocuklara sahip ebeveynlerin çocukları için en az tehdit içerecek şekilde bir gelecek hazırlamak için sürekli bir yaşam kavgası içinde olmaları evlilik ilişkilerini zorlayabilir. Kendilerini aşırı yüklenmiş olarak hissetmelerine ve evlilikteki rollerini sorgulamalarına neden olabilir.

PARI sıkı disiplin alt ölçeği ile EKRÖ/K düşmanlık/saldırganlık, kayıtsızlık/ihmal, ayrılmamış reddetme, kontrol alt ölçekleri ve EKRÖ/K toplam puanı arasında pozitif yönde anlamlı ilişkiler olduğu gösterilmiştir. Ebeveynler yaşamlarındaki

güçlüklerinin bir parçası olduğuna inandıkları zihin engelli çocuğuna ya da engeline karşı olumsuz duygular ve ret davranışlarını sergileyebilirler.

Çalışmamızda annelerin EKRÖ/K sıcaklık/sevgi alt ölçeği, babaların ise kayıtsızlık/ihmal alt ölçeğinde yüksek skor almaları ebeveyn kabul-ret davranışının cinsiyet ekseninde değişebileceğini göstermektedir. Annelerin çocuğun bakımına daha fazla zaman ayırmaları, babaların ise hem işleri nedeniyle çoğunlukla evde olmamaları hem de evdeyken çocuk ile ilgilenmeye vakit ayırmamaları bu sonuçta etken olabilir. Annelerin PARI evlilik çatışması alt ölçeğinden de daha yüksek skor almış olmaları önemlidir. Bu durum, Türkiye’de eş, ebeveyn ve ev kadını olarak anneye atfedilen aşırı sorumluluk düzeyine bağlı olarak, engelli çocuğuna babadan daha fazla zaman ayıran ve bunun sonucunda zaten kısıtlı olan zamanı daha da daralan annenin endişe düzeyinin de arttığını düşündürmektedir.

Ebeveynlerin eğitim düzeyine dair bulgular, üniversite mezunu ve üstü bir dereceye sahip ebeveynlerle karşılaştırıldığında, okuryazar olmayan ebeveynlerin hem EKRÖ/K ayrışmamış reddetme ve kontrol alt ölçeklerinde, hem de PARI aşırı koruyuculuk, ev kadınlığını/işlerini reddetme, evlilik çatışması ve sıkı disiplin alt ölçeklerinde daha yüksek skor almış olduğunu göstermektedir. Ayrıca, üniversite mezunu ve üstü bir dereceye sahip ebeveynler, lise mezunu ebeveynlerle karşılaştırıldığında, PARI demokratik tutum ve eşitlik tanıma alt ölçeğinde daha yüksek skor elde etmiştir. Alanyazınla örtüşen bu bulgular, genellikle düşük gelir statü sahibi olan okuryazar olmayan ebeveynlerin ağır sosyo-ekonomik yaşam koşullarının aile içi dinamik ve ilişkiler üzerindeki baskıyı ağırlaştırabildiğini; eğitim düzeyinin artmasının ise, zihinsel engel ile ilgili bilgi ve kaynaklara erişimde görülen artışa paralel olarak, çocuk yetiştirme tutumuna olumlu etki yapabildiğini düşündürmektedir.

Sonuç olarak, bulgularımız zihinsel engelli çocukların ebeveynlerinin çocuklarını kabul-ret davranışı ve çocuk yetiştirme tutumları arasında pozitif yönde bir ilişki olduğuna ve kabul-ret davranışı ve çocuk yetiştirme tutumunun ebeveyn cinsiyeti ve eğitim düzeyine göre değişebileceği ancak zihinsel engelli çocuğun cinsiyetinden bağımsız olduğuna işaret etmektedir.

Araştırmanın Önerileri: Farklı yaş gruplarından ve farklı sosyo-ekonomik düzeylerden farklı tipte engelleri olan çocuklarla yapılacak araştırmalar, ebeveynlerin çocuklarını kabul-ret düzeyi ile çocuk yetiştirme tutumları arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesine yönelik daha kapsamlı veriler elde edilmesi ve bu sayede gerek yaş ve sosyo-ekonomik koşullar gerekse engel tipinin ebeveyn davranışı üzerine olası etkisinin anlaşılması bakımından önemlidir. Ayrıca normal çocuklarla çeşitli engel gruplarının ebeveyn kabul reddi ve ebeveynlerinin çocuklarını yetiştirme tutumları açısından karşılaştırılarak incelenmesi, engelli çocukların ebeveynlerine sunulacak hizmetlerin iyileştirilmesi açısından değerlendirilebilir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: zihinsel engelli çocuk, kabul- ret, çocuk yetiştirme tutumu, anne, baba