

The Relationship between Maternal Acceptance-Rejection Levels and Preschoolers' Social Competence and Emotion Regulation Skills

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to examine the relationship between maternal acceptance-rejection levels and preschool children's social competence and emotion regulation skills. The study group of the research, which was designed in survey method, consisted of 303 voluntary mother-child dyad. The participant children were attending a preschool in 2014-2015 academic year, in Istanbul and they were selected by random cluster sampling method. The "Personal Information Form", the "Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire-Mother Form (PARQ)", the "Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation-30 (SCBE-30)" and the "Emotion Regulation Checklist" were used as data collection tools.

As a result of the study, it has been found that there is a positive significant relationship between maternal acceptance level and children's "Social Competence" subscale of SCBE-30 and their emotional regulation skills. In addition to this result, it has been found that maternal acceptance level didn't differentiated according to age and gender of the child; however the average scores of PARQ's "Warmth/Affection" subscale have been differentiated in favor of the girls. It has been found that "Social Competence" and "Anger-Aggression" subscales of SCBE-30 were significantly differentiated according to gender; "Anger-Aggression" scores of the boys were higher than the girls, whereas "Social Competence" scores of the girls were higher than the boys. Moreover, it has been found that "Lability-Negativity" subscale scores of Emotion Regulation Checklist have been differentiated according to gender; girls showing less labile/negative emotional reactions. Finally, it has been found that child's social competence and emotional regulation skills increase as the age increases.

Keywords: maternal acceptance-rejection, social competence, emotion regulation, preschool period

1. Introduction

There are many studies showing that parenting characteristics are related to the child's social development (Bigras & Dessen, 2002; Bohlin, Hagekull, & Anderson, 2005; Ladd, 1999; Tepeli & Yılmaz, 2013) and emotion regulation skills (Altan, 2006; Gilliom, Shaw, Beck, Schonberg, & Lukon, 2002; Hardy, Power, & Jaedicke, 1993; Kliewer, Fearnow, & Miller 1996; Metin, 2010; Tepeli, Yılmaz, & Kuyucu, 2014). One of the focus of the parenting studies is parental acceptance. Parental Acceptance-Rejection Theory (Rohner, 1984) provides a framework for studies investigate the effects of the parental acceptance for child's well being. Parental Acceptance-Rejection Theory (PARTheory) argues that people need to get positive responses from the individuals who are important to them. Accordingly, the most basic needs of children are the care, comfort, support and love that will be provided by their parents. The whole humanity has this need, regardless of culture, race, physical characteristics, social status, language, geography and the other similar restrictive conditions

(Khaleque & Rohner, 2002). Rohner's (2004) definition of parental acceptance and rejection form the warmth dimension of parenting. Researches in 1990 have indicated the effects of parental warmth on the psychological, social and educational development of the child (Lamb, 1997; cited in Veneziano, 2000). In Turkey, researches conducted with children have showed that parental acceptance is correlated with high social competence (Kasuto, 2005; Gülay, 2011), acceptance among peers (Gülay-Ogelman & Uçar-Çabuk, 2013), problem solving skills (Tepeli & Yılmaz, 2013), and emotion comprehension skills (Tepeli et al., 2014).

During the preschool period, the social aim that children are expected to achieve is acquiring social competence. Cavell, Meehan and Fiala (2003) define social competence as a construct consisting of social harmony, social performance and social skills (cited in Arslan-Yalçın, 2009). The child's social skills are expected to increase as the age increases (Çorapçı, Aksan, Arslan-Yalçın, & Yağmurlu, 2010; Rose-Krasnor, 1997; Yılmaz & Tepeli, 2013). In addition, the results of the researches addressing gender variable revealed that girls' social competence levels are higher than boys, they show more prosocial behaviors compared to the boys (Arslan-Yalçın, 2009; Çorapçı et al., 2010; Diener & Kim, 2004; LaFreniere et al., 2002). The attitudes and behaviors of the family is one of the important variables on the development of social behavior. Children's social competency behavior is positively correlated with the maternal sensitivity, consistency, tendency to speak about her feelings, whereas it is negatively correlated with negative and rigid parental behaviors (Bigras & Dessen, 2002; Bohlin et al., 2005; Ladd, 1999; Whiteside-Mansell, Bradley, & McKelvey, 2009). The families' social values and aims that shape the child rearing practices could be changed among cultures and by time (Papps, Walker, & Trimboli, 1995).

There are many studies stressing the strong link between social skills and emotional skills (Lemerise & Arsenio, 2000; Ashiabi, 2000). Eisenberg, Pidada and Liew (2001) found that high emotion regulation skills led to high social competency and less behavioral problem. Emotion regulation skill includes the adaptation of emotional reactions according to the environment (Thompson, 1994; cited in Çorapçı et al., 2010). It has been found that the shortcomings of emotion regulation skill are related to externalization and internalization problems (Eisenberg et al., 2001; Eisenberg et al., 2004; Rydell, Berlin, & Bohlin, 2003), lack to acting empathetically (Eisenberg et al., 2004) and low prosocial behavior (Rydell et al., 2003).

The studies conducted in the development field underline that emotional regulation exists even in the first years of the life (Kopp, 1989) and it is developed through family-child interaction (Fox & Calkins, 2003). According to Morris, Silk, Steinberg, Myers and Robinson (2007), children develop their own skills by observing their parents' emotion regulation behaviors and modeling them. Children, whose mothers showed higher acceptance and approval, use very different strategies to handle emotional problems (Hardy et al., 1993). Similarly, studies done with Turkish samples figured out that the maternal care is a predictor of children's emotion regulation skills (Altan, 2006; Metin, 2010). Literature shows that emotional regulation skills of the girls are higher than the boys (Cole, Zahn-Waxler, & Smith, 1994). These results might have been emerged due to the social gender roles (Dion & Yee, 1987; Cole et al., 1994). This fact is also pointing the role of cultural differences on emotion regulation skills. In collectivist cultures, the disclosure of negative emotions is not considered to be appropriate; whereas it is considered to be worthy in individualistic cultures (Matsumoto, Hee-Yoo, & Chung, 2007; cited in Metin, 2010). The findings of Zahn-Waxler, Friedman, Cole, Mizute and Hiruma (1996) support this view; they have found that in case of conflict and difficulty, American preschool children showed more anger and less emotion regulation compared to Japanese children.

As the relevant literature, which has been outlined above, indicates that although there are studies were conducted about parental acceptance-rejection, social competence and emotional regulation, the relation between these variables needs to be tested in different cultural contexts. So, this research aims to examine the relationship between maternal acceptance-rejection levels and preschool children's social competence and emotion regulation skills and provide a holistic data between these variables that are known to be associated with each other. In this context, the current study investigated the following research questions: (1) Is there a significant difference between girls' and boys' level of maternal acceptance-rejection, their social competence and emotion regulation skills? (2) Is there a difference between 5 year and 6 year olds' level of maternal acceptance-rejection, their social competence and emotion regulation skills? (3) Is there a significant relationship between maternal acceptance-rejection levels and children's social competence? (4) Is there a significant relationship between maternal acceptance-rejection levels and children's emotion regulation skills?

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Model

The research which investigates the relationship between maternal acceptance-rejection levels and children's social competence and emotional regulation skills was introduced in survey model.

2.2 Study Group

The study group of this research consisted of 303 mother-child dyad. The participant children were attending a preschool in 2014-2015 academic year, in Istanbul. 52.6% of the children are girls, whereas 47.4% are boys and 37.6% of the children are 5 years old whereas 62.4% are 6 years old.

The age distribution of the mothers is as follows: 1.3% are 18-28 years old, 40.4% are 26-33 years old, 50.7% are 34-41 years old and 7.6% are 42 and above. The distributions of their educational levels is as follows: 5.2% are primary school, 6.9% are secondary school, 30.3% are high school graduates and 13.8% have associate degrees, 36.6% have bachelor degrees and 7.2% have masters degrees. 44% of the mothers have one child, 48.7% have two children and 7.3% have three or more children.

2.3 Data Collection Tools

Within the scope of the research, the tools used for data collection were Personal Information Form, Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire-Mother Form (PARQ), Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation-30 (SCBE-30) and Emotion Regulation Checklist.

2.3.1 Personal Information Form

This form was developed by the researchers who participated in this study and it has been used to obtain demographic information (age, gender, mother's education, income) about the mothers and children in the study group.

2.3.2 Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (Mother Form)

Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire-Mother Form was developed by Rohner, Saavedra and Granum in 1980 and adapted into Turkish by Anjel and Erkman in 1993. This questionnaire, which can be filled out by the mothers with children 3 year old or older, measures maternal acceptance and rejection as perceived by the mother; it consists of 56 likert-type items and four subscales, namely "Warmth/Affection" (20 items), "Hostility/Aggression" (16 items), "Indifference/Neglect" (12 items) and "Undifferentiated Rejection" (8 items). High scores achieved from the subscales and high overall score indicate high level of rejection. As the level of rejection increases, mother's child rejection increases and her child acceptance decreases (Öner, 2012). Anjel (1993) tested the validity and the reliability of the scale. The alpha value that was found after the Kuder Richardson analysis was .90.

2.3.3 Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation-30 (SCBE-30)

The Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation-30 (SCBE-30) was developed by LaFreniere and Dumas (1996) and adapted to Turkish by Çorapçı and her colleagues (2010). It includes 30 items evaluating preschool children's problematic symptoms and the magnitude of their social skills under three subscales, namely "Social Competence", "Anger-Aggression" and "Anxiety-Withdrawal". "Social Competence" subscale measures children's positive behaviors such as the cooperation and seeking solutions to conflicts when they are with their peers. "Anger-Aggression" evaluates the symptoms of externalization problems, such as being recalcitrant against adults and behaving incompatibly and aggressively in peer relationships; whereas "Anxiety-Withdrawal" evaluates sad, depressive mood of the children and the symptoms of internalization problems, such as timidity within a group. It is a 6-point Likert scale and it can be filled by the teacher or a parent. The Cronbach Alfa values of each subscales of the Turkish form were found as .88 for social competence, .87 for anger-aggression and .84 for anxiety-withdrawal (Çorapçı et al., 2010).

2.3.4 Emotion Regulation Checklist

Emotion Regulation Checklist was developed by Shields and Cicchetti (1997), its adaptation to Turkish was performed by Batum and Yağmurlu (2007). The checklist consists of 24 items that evaluate emotional reactivity of preschool and school children and their regulation and expression of their emotions according to the conditions of the environment; it includes two subscales, namely "Emotion Regulation" and "Lability-Negativity". It is a 4-point likert scale and it can be filled by the teacher or a parent. The related literature indicate the scale is a valid and reliable one (Miller et al., 2006; Shields & Cicchetti, 1997). The

internal consistency value of mother evaluations was found as .75 and the value of teacher evaluations was .84 (Yağmurlu & Altan, 2010).

2.4 Data Collection and Analysis

The study group of the research consisted of 303 mother-child dyad who were attending a pre-school educational institution during 2014-2015 academic years, in Anatolian side of Istanbul; they were selected by random sampling and they have participated in the research voluntarily. “Personal Information Form” and “Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire-Mother Form” were filled by the mothers of the children in the workgroup, whereas “Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation-30” and “Emotion Regulation Checklist” were filled by the teachers of these children. The obtained data were analyzed by Pearson correlation test and t-test using appropriate statistics software. The significance level of the analysis was taken as $p < .05$.

3. Findings

This part contains the findings obtained at the end of the research. First of all, the results of the t-test, where children’s social competence and emotional regulation skills and maternal acceptance-rejection levels were analyzed according to gender, are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. T-test results of maternal acceptance-rejection levels and children’s social competence and emotional regulation skills according to gender

	Subscales	Gender	n	\bar{X}	SD	SS	t	p
Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire - Mother Form	Warmth and Affection	Girl	159	25.35	3.797	300	-2.187	.029*
		Boy	144	26.48	5.141			
	Hostility and Aggression	Girl	159	22.23	5.004	300	.244	.807
		Boy	144	22.09	5.527			
	Indifference and Neglect	Girl	159	14.69	2.808	300	-1.447	.149
		Boy	144	15.20	3.326			
	Undifferentiated Rejection	Girl	159	11.03	2.442	300	.508	.612
		Boy	144	10.88	2.699			
	Total Score	Girl	159	73.31	10.483	300	-1.004	.316
		Boy	144	74.65	12.744			
Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation-30	Social Competence	Girl	159	48.14	8.880	300	2.926	.004**
		Boy	144	44.99	9.837			
	Anger-Aggression	Girl	159	17.83	7.582	300	-2.429	.016*
		Boy	144	20.35	10.399			
	Anxiety-Withdrawal	Girl	159	19.84	8.794	300	1.106	.269
		Boy	144	18.79	7.723			
Emotion Regulation Checklist	Emotion Regulation	Girl	159	25.20	4.076	300	.735	.463
		Boy	144	24.85	4.148			
	Lability-Negativity	Girl	159	24.69	6.630	300	-3.258	.001**
		Boy	144	27.45	8.092			

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

According to Table 1, average scores of the mothers did not differentiated in terms of overall parental acceptance-rejection score, “Hostility/Aggression”, “Indifference/Neglect” and “Undifferentiated Rejection” according to gender ($p > .05$). On the other hand, a significant difference has been identified for “Warmth and Affection” subscale of Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire in favor of the girls ($p < .05$).

It has been found that “Social Competence” and “Anger-Aggression” subscales’ scores of Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation-30 have been significantly differentiated according to gender whereas there is no

significant differences on “Anxiety-Withdrawal” subscale ($p > .05$). Accordingly, higher scores of “Social Competence” subscale means higher social skills and the findings indicate that the difference is in favor of the girls. Higher scores of “Anger-Aggression” subscale means more angry and aggressive behaviors, thus it has been interpreted as that boys display angry and aggressive behaviors more than girls.

It has been found that there was no significant difference on the average scores of “Emotion Regulation” subscale of Emotion Regulation Checklist according to gender ($p > .05$). However, a significant difference has been identified for “Lability-Negativity” subscale in favor of the girls, means the girls indicate less lability/negativity than boys ($p < .01$).

Table 2. T-test results of maternal acceptance-rejection levels and children’s social competence and emotional regulation skills according to age

	Subscales	Age	n	\bar{X}	SD	SS	t	p
Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire - Mother Form	Warmth and Affection	5 y/o	114	25.67	4.066	301	-.617	.538
		6 y/o	189	26.00	4.757			
	Hostility and Aggression	5 y/o	114	22.27	5.640	301	.267	.790
		6 y/o	189	22.10	4.999			
	Indifference and Neglect	5 y/o	114	15.03	3.301	301	.325	.745
		6 y/o	189	14.91	2.979			
	Undifferentiated Rejection	5 y/o	114	10.85	2.565	301	-.549	.584
		6 y/o	189	11.02	2.562			
	Total Score	5 y/o	114	73.84	12.505	301	-.153	.878
		6 y/o	189	74.05	11.045			
Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation-30	Social Competence	5 y/o	114	44.01	8.593	301	-3.831	.000***
		6 y/o	189	48.21	9.613			
	Anger-Aggression	5 y/o	114	21.73	9.631	301	4.122	.000***
		6 y/o	189	17.39	8.351			
	Anxiety-Withdrawal	5 y/o	114	20.37	8.666	301	1.696	.091
		6 y/o	189	18.71	8.021			
Emotion Regulation Checklist	Emotion Regulation	5 y/o	114	24.85	3.974	301	-2.460	.014*
		6 y/o	189	25.47	4.123			
	Lability-Negativity	5 y/o	114	27.82	7.262	301	3.385	.001**
		6 y/o	189	24.87	7.386			

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

According to Table 2, average scores of the mothers did not differentiated in terms of overall parental acceptance-rejection score, “Warmth and Affection” “Hostility/Aggression”, “Indifference/Neglect” and “Undifferentiated Rejection” according to age of the children ($p > .05$).

It has been found that Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation-30’s “Social Competence” and “Anger-Aggression” subscales’ scores have been significantly differentiated according to age ($p < .001$) whereas there was no significant difference on “Anxiety-Withdrawal” subscale ($p > .05$). The table shows that “Social Competence” score of 6 years old children are higher than 5 years olds. On the other hand the scores of “Anger-Aggression” subscale indicate that 5 years old children display angry and aggressive behaviors more than 6 years olds.

As can be seen form Table 2, there are significant differences on the average scores of “Emotion Regulation” and “Lability-Negativity” subdimensions of Emotion Regulation Checklist according to age ($p > .001$). According to this result, emotion regulation skills of 6 years old children are higher than 5 years olds’.

Table 3. Results of the correlation analysis about the relationship between maternal acceptance-rejection levels and children's social competence behaviors

		Social Competence	Anger-Aggression	Anxiety-Withdrawal
Warmth and Affection	r	-.115*	.148*	.030
	p	.046	.010	.602
	n	303	303	303
Hostility and Aggression	r	-.086	.007	-.039
	p	.137	.898	.500
	n	303	303	303
Indifference and Neglect	r	-.070	.026	.028
	p	.224	.650	.622
	n	303	303	303
Undifferentiated Rejection	r	-.096	.031	.045
	p	.096	.594	.437
	n	303	303	303
Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire Total Score	r	-.123*	.074	-.012
	p	.032	.196	.839
	n	303	303	303

* $p < .05$.

As can be seen from Table 3, where the relationship between maternal acceptance-rejection levels and children's social competence behaviors have been presented, "Warmth and Affection" subdimension of Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire has a negative significant relationship with "Social Competence" subscale of Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation-30 ($r = -.115$, $p < .05$); and a positive significant relationship with "Anger-Aggression" subscale ($r = .148$, $p < .05$).

In addition, it has been found that there is a negative significant relationship between the overall score of Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire and "Social Competence" subscale of Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation-30 ($r = -.123$, $p < .05$). On the other hand, the relationships between "Hostility and Aggression", "Indifference and Neglect" and "Undifferentiated Rejection" subdimensions of Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire and "Social Competence", "Anger-Aggression" and "Anxiety-Withdrawal" subscales of Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation-30 were not found to be significantly.

Table 4. Results of the correlation analysis about the relationship between maternal acceptance-rejection levels and children's emotion regulation skills

		Emotion Regulation	Lability-Negativity
Warmth and Affection	r	-.079	.128*
	p	.168	.026
	n	303	303
Hostility and Aggression	r	-.082	.091
	p	.155	.115
	n	303	303
Indifference and Neglect	r	-.047	.036
	p	.415	.535
	n	303	303
Undifferentiated Rejection	r	-.157**	.085
	p	.006	.139
	n	303	303
Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire Total Score	r	-.115*	.119*
	p	.049	.038
	n	303	303

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

As shown in Table 4, there is a positive significant relationship between “Warmth and Affection” subdimension of Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire and “Lability-Negativity” subscale of Emotion Regulation Checklist ($r = .128$, $p < .05$). Moreover, it has been found that there is a negative significant relationship between “Undifferentiated Rejection” subscale of Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire and “Emotion Regulation” subscale of Emotion Regulation Checklist ($r = -.157$, $p < .01$).

In addition, it has been found that the overall score of Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire was negatively correlated with “Emotion Regulation” subscale of Emotion Regulation Checklist ($r = -.115$, $p < .05$) and positively correlated with “Lability-Negativity” subscale ($r = .119$, $p < .05$).

4. Results and Discussion

The significant relationships observed between “Warmth and Affection” subscale of the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire with the subscales of Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation-30, namely the negative relationship with “Social Competence” and the positive one with “Anger-Aggression”, demonstrate the expected effects of parental behaviors on the social development of the child. Other studies in the literature also show that child's social competence increases as the parental care/warmth increase (Metin-Orta, Çorapçı, Yağmurlu, & Aksan, 2013). However the definition of parental care/warmth may vary according to cultures. A study conducted in Australia revealed that positive behavior levels of both Turkish immigrant and Australian children were similar but this fact was based on different maternal behaviors in each culture. It has been found that the predictors of child's positive behavior were mother's perseverant character and warmth for the Australian group, whereas it was mother's obedience expectance for the Turkish group (Yağmurlu, Sanson, & Köymen, 2005). The researches conducted in Turkey with preschool children and their mother also revealed positive effects of parental warmth/affection on the social competence of the children. For example, the research conducted by Gülay-Ogelman and Uçar-Çabuk (2013) with 5 years old children and their parents ($n = 115$) showed that mother acceptance was determining social status of preschool children. Social status of the children, who receive higher acceptance from their parents, was higher. Similarly, in the study conducted by Tepeli and Yılmaz (2013) with 5-6 years old children and their mothers ($n = 359$), it has been found that mother's acceptance was the predictor of social problem solving skills of the child. In another study conducted by Gülay (2011) with 277 children, parental acceptance was found to be positively correlated with prosocial behaviors of the children. In the study conducted by Akçınar (2009), with 3 years old child-mother dyad ($n = 123$), it has been concluded that parental acceptance has decreased externalization behavior problems of

the child. These studies show the role of parental behaviors on different dimensions of social development in line with the results of this research.

It has been found that overall score of Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire had a negative significant relationship with “Emotion Regulation” subdimension of Emotion Regulation Checklist and a positive significant relationship with “Lability-Negativity” subdimension. This result shows the positive and significant effect of maternal acceptance on emotion regulation skills of the child and it confirms the results of many studies reported in the literature. The study conducted by Tepeli and her colleagues (2014) showed that emotion comprehension skills of preschool children, who were accepted by their mothers, were higher.

The differentiation of parental acceptance-rejection level according to gender and age of the children has been analyzed. It has been found that mothers’ overall score of Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire did not change significantly according to the gender of the child. The relevant literature also shows that mothers’ acceptance-rejection level does not differentiate according to gender (Ansari, 2002; Brody et al., 2004; Çakıcı, 2006; Erkan & Toran, 2004; Gülay-Ogelman & Uçar-Çabuk, 2013; Toran, 2005; Yaşar, 2009). However the results of this study indicated a change of the “Warmth and Affection” subdimension of Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire in favor of the girls. T-test results of acceptance-rejection level according to age showed that acceptance level did not differentiate according to child’s age. This result is in accordance with the results of the other studies investigating acceptance level according to age (Erkman & Rohner, 2006; Veneziano, 2000).

It has been observed that there were significant differences on “Social Competence” and “Anger-Aggression” subscales of Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation-30; girls were found to be socially more competent and they show aggressive behaviors less. This result confirms the results of the studies expressing that girls are socially more competent than boys and they show aggressive behaviors less (Arslan-Yalçın, 2009; Çorapçı et al., 2010; LaFreniere et al., 2002; Eisenberg et al., 2001). There are certain views arguing that higher social competence of the girls compared to the boys may be related to genetic effects (Macoby & Jacklin, 1980) or family attitudes (Colder, Mott, & Berman, 2002). The outcomes of this study can be associated with both.

“Social Competence” of the children has been analyzed according to age and a significant difference in favor of 6 years old group has been found. The outcomes of the studies conducted using Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation-30 show that participants’ social competence increases as the age increases (Arslan-Yalçın, 2009; LaFreniere et al., 2002; Eisenberg et al., 2003). The increase of social competence with age may be related to child’s increasing social interaction (Howes & Phillipsen, 1998) and development of mental capacity (LaFreniere et al., 2002). This study also revealed that 5 years old children showed angry-aggressive behaviors more than 6 years olds. However, this result does not overlap with the outcomes of another study conducted with a Turkish sample, as well as the outcomes of the studies conducted with Chinese, Japanese and Brazilian samples (Çorapçı et al., 2010). The lack of differentiation observed in Anxiety-Withdrawal sub-dimension according to age is similar to many studies conducted in Turkey and over the world (LaFreniere et al., 2002; Çorapçı et al., 2010).

Another outcome of the study is indicating the effect of the age on “Emotion Regulation” and “Lability-Negativity” scores of the children. Accordingly, emotion regulation skills of 6 years old children are higher than 5 year old ones. Researches revealed that children, who recognize and understand emotions better, have more positive social behaviors and they are more popular among peers (Downs & Strand, 2008; Yılmaz & Tepeli, 2013). The review of the studies conducted in Turkey with preschool children showed that emotion regulation skills (Arslan-Yalçın, 2009; Metin-Orta et al., 2013) and emotion comprehension skills (Yılmaz & Tepeli, 2013) are related to social competence.

One of the limitations of this study is that the characteristics of the mothers who did not want to participate in the study are unknown. Only the ones who were voluntary to participate in filled out the forms. All the mothers were from İstanbul city in Turkey. Also, the evaluation of the level of parental acceptance and rejection was performed according to mothers’ perceptions. In addition, the social competence and emotion regulation skills of children were evaluated by the views of preschool teachers. Next studies could be designed by including different assessment methods from different sources together. Also, the sample could be selected from different districts of Turkey to be able to generalize the results to Turkey population.

To sum, this research shows positive and significant relationships between parental acceptance, social competence and emotion regulation skills of preschool children. The findings that point the importance of parenting, remind us the importance of supporting them.

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