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Comparative Evaluation of Mother Attitudes and Behaviors Toward Preschool-Aged Children in Rural Areas

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ABSTRACT: The aim of our study was to compare the attitudes and behaviors of mothers toward their preschool-aged children in a mountain and lowland village. The data were obtained from the answers to survey completed by women living in two rural areas—a mountain village and a lowland village—in Tokat Province, Turkey in 2016, who were selected using the purposive sampling method. Within these villages, 106 women with children ≤ 6 years old were identified, and each was interviewed based on the full-count method. The data were interpreted using frequency and percentage distribution tables and mean values, and chi-squared analyses were conducted to compare the results from the two different villages. Our results indicated that the communication between mothers and their children are instinctive and based on the patterns they learn from their social environment. The overprotective attitudes within the family, the tendency to rear a child according to tradition, and the mothers' imagination and the future expectations limited to the opportunities in the rural area are some of the factors that determine the responses in our research areas.

Keywords – *Rural area, rural society, preschool period, mother–child communication.*

Kırsal Alanda Annelerin Okul Öncesi Dönemdeki Çocuklara Karşı Tutum ve Davranışlarının Karşılaştırmalı Değerlendirilmesi

ÖZET: Bu çalışmanın amacı, bir dağ ve ova köyündeki annelerin okul öncesi çağındaki çocuklarına yönelik tutum ve davranışlarını karşılaştırmaktır. Veriler, Tokat ilinde 2016 yılında Gayeli Örnekleme yöntemiyle seçilen, biri dağ köyü diğeri ova köyü olmak üzere, iki farklı kırsal alanda yaşayan kadınların, ankete verdikleri cevaplarından elde edilmiştir. Bu köylerde 6 yaş ve altı çocuğu olan 106 kadın belirlenmiş ve bu kadınların her biri ile Tam Sayım yöntemine göre görüşme yapılmıştır. Veriler, frekans ve yüzde dağılım tabloları ve ortalama değerler kullanılarak yorumlanmış ve iki farklı köyden elde edilen sonuçların karşılaştırması amacıyla ki-kare analizleri yapılmıştır. Sonuçlar, anneler ve çocukları arasındaki iletişimin içgüdüsel ve sosyal çevrelerinden öğrendikleri kalıplara dayalı olduğunu göstermiştir. Aile içindeki aşırı korumacı tutumlar, geleneklere göre çocuk yetiştirme eğilimi, annelerin hayal gücü ve kırsal kesimdeki fırsatlarla sınırlı gelecek beklentileri, araştırma alanında dikkati çeken belirleyici faktörlerden bazılarıdır.

Anahtar Sözcükler – *Kırsal alan, kırsal toplum, okul öncesi dönem, anne-çocuk iletişim*

1. Introduction

The impact of a child's family, especially the relationship with the mother, on shaping the child's personality and paths of life can be directly observed and revealed in specific studies. Many studies have addressed the importance of the mother–child relationship on the child from different perspectives (Çelenk, 2003; Akıllıoğlu et al., 2014; Durakoğlu,

2011; Dursun and Dede, 2004). The preschool age is considered specially important in both child development and in later periods of life.

Education for preschool children in rural areas presents two main disadvantages. First, there is a lack of extensive preschool educational opportunities in cities, especially big cities. Second, mothers reared with limited environmental stimuli and limited formal educational opportunities have an effect on the children. There are several disadvantages for children growing up in rural areas (Grace et al., 2011). Studies have revealed the lack of educational opportunities in rural areas and its results; however, there also may be advantages for children who live in these areas. The probability of a more relaxed and closer mother–child relationship may be higher in the rural areas. The validity and extent of these advantages or disadvantages that are presumed, observed, or partially determined by research can only be revealed using scientific studies. Efforts in development in these areas set solutions for women and children as a priority. To that end, any issues must be determined.

This study was conducted in the villages of Tokat Province, Turkey, to assess mothers' attitudes and behaviors toward their children ≤ 6 years old by comparing a mountain village with a lowland village. The participants answered basic survey questions regarding the education of children ≤ 6 years old. The results with regard to the mothers' attitudes, behaviors, or approaches were evaluated and compared between the mountain and lowland villages.

Several studies have emphasized how effective the first years of a child's life and his or her relationship with the mother are on subsequent periods (Winnicott, 1998; Öngider, 2013; Akıllıoğlu et al, 2014; Durakoğlu, 2011; Dursun and Dede, 2004). Studies have also shown that the education level of the mother, more than that of the father, plays a more decisive role in the education and academic success of the child (Çelenk, 2003; Dursun and Dede 2004). According to research, the education level of parents along with parent support and care are effective in the child's readiness for and success in school. (Çelenk, 2003). The results of a study by Diaz (1989) have indicated that the most important factor that distinguishes students who have low academic achievement from others is the lack of support and attention from the parents. The same study concluded that parental rigidity, inconsistency, and incompatibility were also seen as important risk factors for low school success (Diaz, 1989 cited in Çelenk, 2003). Buyruk Genç (2008) has reported that the quality of the parents' relationship with their children also plays an important role in determining the mental characteristics of the child. According to Kuzgun (1972) cited from Maslow (1968), humans can be aggressive as well as generous, cooperative, and altruistic. The emergence of either situation depends on the environment in which he/she is reared. It has been suggested that if an individual feels insecure or threatened, and basic needs are often not met, negative characteristics will dominate. It has also stated that the behavior of the mother has an important effect on the development of empathy skills in the child during the socialization process (Sali, 2012). Bowlby (1982) has emphasized the close relationship between the baby's social, psychological, and biological capacity and maternal care.

In one study, the excitement and lack of national consciousness among young people after the Balkan Wars was associated with women's education. It has been suggested that the mother is accepted as the first teacher of citizenship education during this period, and that the woman's ideal republican citizenship during this period is measured by being a good mother (Arı, 1991 cited in Şirin, 2013). Although these studies cover specific periods, the

mother is usually held primarily responsible for the care and education of the child (Türkoğlu et al., 2013).

As research has shown, education affects not only one's own life but also the lives of other family members. Rural residents who are often at a disadvantage in reaching a significant part of their country's career possibilities are also significantly disadvantaged in terms of educational opportunities. Yağan Güder (2019) has indicated that rural areas are lacking terms of the number of institutions, teachers, and students related to preschool education. On the other hand, the advantages for the child of being reared in a rural area are also mentioned. Some studies have shown that the children in a rural village have closer and more intimate relationships and learn more about life by living in a more natural environment (Koçak, 2012; Akbaş 2006). Acquiring knowledge and skills specific to rural life can become an advantage over time.

2. Material and Methods

The data were obtained from the answers to survey completed by women living in two rural areas—a mountain village (Artova Region) and a lowland village (Artova Region)—in Tokat Province, Turkey in 2016 who were chosen using the purposive sampling method. These two settlements were chosen because of their different sociological structure and level of development. Within these villages, 106 women with children ≤ 6 years old were identified, and each was interviewed based on the full-count method. Fifty-one of the women lived in the lowland village and 56 in the mountain village.

The data were interpreted primarily through frequency and percent distributions, after which we used chi-squared analyses to determine a relationship between living in indifferently located settlements and attitudes and behaviors related to children. If more than one expected value was less than 5, it was decided that the analysis was not suitable for interpretation. In this case, groups that could have been analyzed as a single group were combined and analyzed together. Additionally, some groups were combined in some of the chi-square analyses. For example, in Table 1, some of the education levels of the mother were combined in some cases (see Tables 1–3). When combining the groups was not suitable or the problem with the expected values were not resolved after combining the groups, the results were interpreted and not presented here; therefore, there are no chi-squared values for some of the criteria presented in the tables. Financial values are given in U.S. dollars using the exchange rate for the year in which the research was conducted.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Some socioeconomic findings regarding mothers and their families

The average age of the women participating in the study was 29.40 years. The average ages of those in the mountain village (28.80 years) and lowland village (30.06 years) were similar. All the women were married (Table1).

The primary educational level of those in our study was primary school graduate. A similar study conducted in the Kazova Region found that 57.5% of the women are primary school graduates (Büyükbay and Gözener, 2011). There were no illiterate women among those we studied. It was noted that the percentage distribution of education levels did not differ significantly between those in the mountain and the lowland villages. According to the chi-

squared analysis, the difference between education levels of the mothers living in the lowland and mountain villages is not statistically significant (Table1).

The education ratio of the husbands of the interviewed women was high at the primary and secondary levels. There were slightly more men than women who graduated high school, but were less men than women at the graduate and undergraduate levels. The majority of husbands (83.95%) in the mountain village had completed a lower secondary-level education; this rate was slightly lower in the lowland village (72.00%). The difference between education levels of the husbands living in the lowland and mountain villages was not statistically significant (Table 1).

Table 1. Some socioeconomic findings regarding mothers and their families

Tablo 1. Anneler ve aileleri ile ilgili bazı sosyoekonomik bulgular

	Lowland village		Mountain village		General		
	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Education level of mother	Literate	1	2.00	0	0.00	1	0.94
	Primary school graduate	29	58.00	34	60.71	63	59.43
	Secondary school graduate	13	26.00	15	26.79	28	26.42
	High school graduate	5	10.00	3	5.36	8	7.55
	Graduate/undergraduate deg.	2	4.00	4	7.14	6	5.66
	Total	50	100.00	56	100.00	106	100.00
$\chi^2 = 0.053$; $df = 2$; $P = 0.974$							
Education level of father	Primary school graduate	24	48.00	24	42.86	48	45.28
	Secondary school graduate	12	24.00	23	41.07	35	33.02
	High school graduate	13	26.00	8	14.28	21	19.81
	Graduate/undergraduate deg.	1	2.00	1	1.79	2	1.89
	Total	50	100.00	56	100.00	106	100.00
$\chi^2 = 4.218$; $df = 2$; $P = 0.121$							
Father's occupation	Farmer	27	54.00	26	46.43	53	50.00
	Worker	11	22.00	25	44.64	36	33.97
	Tradesmen	5	10.00	2	3.57	7	6.60
	Public servant	2	4.00	1	1.79	3	2.83
	Agricultural worker	3	6.00	0	0.00	3	2.83
	Hauliers	1	2.00	0	0.00	1	0.94
	Other	1	2.00	2	3.57	3	2.83
	Total	50	100.00	56	100.00	106	100.00
$\chi^2 = 6.554$; $df = 2$; $P = 0.038$							
Family type	Extended family	24	48.00	37	66.07	61	57.55
	Nuclear family	26	52.00	19	33.93	45	42.45
	Total	50	100.00	56	100.00	106	100.00
$\chi^2 = 3.531$; $df = 1$; $P = 0.060$							
Monthly income per person in the family (\$)	≤55	9	18.00	22	39.29	31	29.25
	56–110	17	34.00	20	35.71	37	34.90
	111–160	10	20.00	11	19.64	21	19.81
	161–200	10	20.00	2	3.57	12	11.32
	≥201	4	8.00	1	1.79	5	4.72
	Total	50	100.00	56	100.00	106	100.00
$\chi^2 = 12.561$; $df = 3$; $P = 0.006$							

Notes: F: frequency

Fifty percent of the fathers in the mountain village were farmers compared with 57.57% of those in the lowland village. The lowland village was more suitable for agricultural production because of its land and climate conditions, which resulted in farming as a more

widespread economic activity. There were approximately twice as many men working in other than farming in the mountain village as in the lowland village. According to the women, nearly 50.0% of the men in the mountain village were factory workers at the nearby plant. Apart from these, there were tradesmen, civil servants, agricultural workers and hauliers in higher percentages in the lowland village. The father's occupations are categorized as farmer, worker, or other for chi-square analyses. As a result of the chi-square analyses, it was concluded that the difference in occupations between the villages was statistically significant ($P < 0.05$) (Table1).

According to our results, the extended family type (57.55%) is more common in these villages, but more so in the mountain village than the lowland village. The number of nuclear families gradually increased in the lowland village. There was an average of approximately six people (5.76) per family in the lowland villages and approximately eight (8.05) in the mountain village. According to the result of the chi-squared analyses, the difference between villages in family type was not statistically significant (Table1).

Among the various socioeconomic characteristics in the villages, income was the most important difference between the mountain and lowland villages, and this difference was statistically significant ($P < 0.01$). When considering average total family income, it appeared that there was no significant difference. The average total monthly income of the family was \$627.89 in the lowland village and \$552.63 in the mountain village; however, because families were large, the monthly income per capita in mountain villages was much lower than that in the lowland village. In the mountain village, 75.00% of the families had a maximum per-capita rate of \$105.26. In the lowland village, this rate was 52.0%. In particular, there were more than double the number of families in the mountain village who earned $< \$52.63/\text{person}/\text{month}$ than in the lowland village. The middle-income level was considered to be \$111–160/capita, and most income levels in the villages were approximately within this range; however, a higher income level of $\geq \$161/\text{capita}$ was observed more often in the lowland village (Table1).

3.2. Attitudes, behaviors, and approaches of mothers toward children ≤ 6 years old

Early childhood is considered a critical period for all developmental areas (San Bayhan and Artan, 2011). It has been suggested that during the first years of life, behaviors and habits that will last a lifetime are formed. Some psychologists have indicated that the habits and behaviors acquired during this period account for 30% of lifelong behaviors and 90% of all others. Because a child spends most of this period with the family, it is believed that many of the factors that lead to harmony or adaptation problems later in life occur within this environment (Çağdaş and Seçer, 2004). During this period, healthy physical and mental development of children is associated with the positive (or negative) attitudes of the parents (Sak et al., 2015). Çağdaş and Seçer (2004) have suggested that the relationship between parents and their children is more important than heredity, intelligence, birth order, bad friends, media, and similar inputs as the factors that influence behavioral problems in children. Their study also suggested that the most healthy and successful parental attitude is one that is democratic (Çağdaş and Seçer, 2004).

Kuzgun (1973) has determined that the democratic parental attitude, characterized by sincere love and developer control, positively affects self-realization in offspring. According to this study, the authoritarian parental attitude, characterized by strict discipline

and conditional love, negatively affects self-realization in offspring, and the effect of careless parental attitude is between these two results.

In our study, we asked the mothers to determine the type of family environment in which their children were reared and their approach. The majority of children are reared in the “overprotective” family environment, and we noticed a self-critical approach in this regard by the mothers. The number of protective families in the lowland village was 10.57% higher than that in the mountain village. The number of mothers who stated that their children were reared in an authoritative family environment was higher in the mountain village (~33.3%) than in the lowland village. The democratic structure, the most favorable environment for the child, was observed only in the lowland village and its proportion to the total number of families there was small (Table 2).

Data on what the mother believes about her child’s future are included in Table 2. Generally, 22.65% of the mothers expected their children to have high goals; these results were approximated for both the lowland and mountain villages. According to the result of the chi-squared analyses, there was a significant relationship between the future expectations of mothers for their children and the village in which they lived (P < 0.001).

Table 2. Some factors that define the mother and family in child rearing
Tablo2. Çocuk yetiştirme konusunda anneyi ve aileyi tanımlayan bazı özellikler

		Lowland village		Mountain village		General	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
Family	Overprotective	41	82.00	40	71.43	81	76.42
	Authoritative	6	12.00	16	28.57	22	20.75
	Democratic	3	6.00	0	0.00	3	2.83
	Total	50	100.00	56	100.00	106	100.00
Mothers’ expectations about the future of the child	Education as high as possible	10	20.00	29	51.78	39	36.79
	Having a profession	28	56.00	14	25.00	42	39.62
	High expectations	12	24.00	12	21.43	24	22.65
	She has never thought about her child’s future	0	0.00	1	1.79	1	0.94
	Total	50	100.00	56	100.00	106	100.00
$\chi^2 = 13.716; df = 2; P = 0.001$							
Decision maker	Father	35	70.00	52	92.86	87	82.08
	Mother	42	50.00	39	69.64	81	76.42
	Grandfather	3	3.60	16	28.57	19	17.92
	Grandmother	4	4.80	5	8.93	9	8.49
	Total	50	*	56	*	106	*
$\chi^2 = 6.567; df = 2; P = 0.037$							
Authority figure	Father	15	30.00	45	80.36	50	47.17
	Mother	25	50.00	23	41.07	48	45.28
	Grandfather	4	8.00	15	26.79	19	17.92
	Grandmother	1	2.00	3	5.36	4	3.77
	Other	5	10.00	1	1.79	6	5.66
Total	50	*	56	*	106	*	
$\chi^2 = 8.430; df = 2; P = 0.015$							
Parent input	Exchange of views	50	100.00	54	96.43	104	98.11
	No exchange of views	0	0.00	2	3.57	2	1.89
	Total	50	100.00	56	100.00	106	100.00

F: Frequency

Slightly more than one-half of the mothers (51.78%) in the mountain village considered it important that their children continue their education as far as possible. In the lowland

village, 56.00% of mothers placed importance on their child having a profession (Table 2). All mothers believed that any profession that would economically secure the child's life was positive.

Data on who makes the decisions about the child in the family indicated that the father was at the forefront; however, the mothers were not far behind them. According to our results, the father, mother, or both could make the decisions about the child. Although there were families in which the elders also had a voice, that number was not significant. According to the chi-squared analyses, there was a significant relationship between the type of village and the person who was the decision maker ($P < 0.05$). The father and family elders had more of a role in this in the mountain village (Table 2).

According to the data in Table 2, although the children accepted the father as an authoritarian in the family, the ratios of this between the father and mother is fairly equal (i.e., 47.17 to 45.28%, respectively). There is a statistically significant difference in this ratio between villages based on chi-squared analyses ($P < 0.05$). Although the father was the main authority in the mountain village, they represented only 50% of that in the lowland village, clearly indicating that both parents were accepted as the authority in some of these families. Although the men in the mountain villages appeared to be the main authority, both parents exchanged views on issues related to their children in nearly all families regardless of which village was represented.

Problematic behaviors in children were observed to be associated with failure in their relationships with their environment, especially with their mothers. The psychodynamic theorists who advocate this association suggest that this interaction occurs between 0 and 2 years old, when the child is most dependent on others (Hassoy and Çakıcı 2012). Research has also indicated that the type of parenting and the parents' attitudes are factors related to the behavioral disorders of children, and that this parental approach is very important (Özkafacı, 2012; Argon and Kıyıcı, 2012; Hassoy and Çakıcı, 2012; Kuzgun, 1973). The findings on how mothers react, either positively or negatively, to some behavioral disorders of their children are summarized in Table 3.

More than one-half of the mothers (58.49%) stated that they reacted by getting angry when the child embarrassed her in front of people. Some of the mothers displayed their anger at that moment, while others displayed it later and in private. In general, 16.98% of the mothers talked with their child under such circumstances and attempted to explain to the child the results of the behavior. This approach was observed at a higher rate among mothers in the lowland village than among those in the mountain village. Some mothers did not intervene in such a situation; the percentage of this group was slightly higher in the mountain village. The difference between villages on this issue was statistically significant ($P < 0.05$).

One of our questions was how the mother reacts if the child interrupts or obstructs her while she is doing her daily tasks. The most common answer (36.79%) was that the mother would attempt to persuade the child that his/her behavior was not acceptable and that she had to complete her tasks. This approach was observed more in the lowland village (44.00%) than in the mountain village. The percentage of mothers who left the child alone and continued to work without acknowledging the child were lower in the lowland village.

Table 3. Mother’s approach or reactions to child’s negative behaviors

Tablo 3. Çocuğun olumsuz davranışları karşısında annenin yaklaşımı ve tutumu

		Lowland village		Mountain village		General	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
Child embarrasses the mother in front of people	She reflects anger at that moment	5	10.00	14	25.00	19	17.92
	She criticizes later	23	46.00	20	35.71	43	40.57
	She talks to child later	13	26.00	5	8.93	18	16.98
	She does not interfere	3	6.00	6	10.71	9	8.49
	Other	6	12.00	11	19.64	17	16.04
	Total	50	100.00	56	100.00	106	100.00
$\chi^2 = 10.183$; df = 3; P = 0.017							
Child interrupts mother’s daily tasks	She tries to persuade not to do	22	44.00	17	30.36	39	36.79
	She leaves the child alone	7	14.00	18	32.14	25	23.59
	She gets angry, orders not to obstruct	9	18.00	13	23.21	22	20.76
	She takes a break, takes care of the child	12	24.00	1	1.79	13	12.26
	Other	0	0.00	7	12.50	7	6.60
	Total	50	100.00	56	100.00	106	100.00
$\chi^2 = 20.527$; df = 3; P = 0.000							
Child exhibits bad temper and acts aggressively	She tries to understand the reason	18	36.00	29	51.79	47	44.34
	She tries to explain that this is wrong	22	44.00	7	12.50	29	27.36
	She reacts harshly	6	12.00	14	25.00	20	18.87
	Other	4	8.00	6	10.71	10	9.43
	Total	50	100.00	56	100.00	106	100.00
$\chi^2 = 13.637$; df = 3; P = 0.003							
Child is stubborn	She gets angry	21	42.00	31	55.35	52	49.06
	She tries to persuade not to do	24	48.00	17	30.36	41	38.68
	She remains indifferent	1	2.00	5	8.93	6	5.66
	Other	4	8.00	3	5.36	7	6.60
	Total	50	100.00	56	100.00	106	100.00
$\chi^2 = 3.482$; df = 2; P = 0.175							
Child lies	She gets angry at that moment	14	28.00	39	69.64	53	50.00
	She explains lying is a bad behavior	29	58.00	12	21.43	41	38.68
	She ignores	2	4.00	0	0.00	2	1.89
	Other	5	10.00	5	8.93	10	9.43
	Total	50	100.00	56	100.00	106	100.00
$\chi^2 = 18.895$; df = 2; P = 0.000							
Child has daytime or nighttime toilet accidents	She does not react	25	50.00	11	19.65	36	33.97
	She explains that this can happen	10	20.00	25	44.64	35	33.02
	She gets angry	11	22.00	14	25.00	25	23.58
	Other	4	8.00	6	10.71	10	9.43
	Total	50	100.00	52	100.00	106	100.00
$\chi^2 = 12.333$; df = 3; P = 0.006							
Child does not want to eat	She acts insistently and compelling	22	44.00	20	35.71	42	39.62
	She does not interfere	9	18.00	22	39.29	31	29.25
	She tries to persuade to eat more	18	36.00	12	21.43	30	28.30
	Other	1	2.00	2	3.57	3	2.83
	Total	50	100.00	56	100.00	106	100.00
$\chi^2 = 6.742$; df = 2; P = 0.034							

F: Frequency

Although it was a lower approach, in the mountain village it was more than twice that of the lowland village. Some of the mothers who were angry with the child ordered him/her not to interfere with her job. This approach was also higher in the mountain than in the lowland village. Some of the mothers (12.26%) stated that when the child interfered with their work,

they took a break and dealt with the child. Nearly all of these mothers lived in the lowland village and 25.0% of all mothers there used this approach. Chi-squared analyses indicated that the attitude of the mothers toward the child interrupting their daily tasks differed according to village (Table 3). Our analyses indicated that the villages were significantly different in terms of the mother's approach to specific behavior, and that the child was approached more positively in the lowland village ($P < 0.001$).

Children might sometimes show indeterminate bad temper and act aggressively. In such cases, 44.34% of the women stated that they attempted to understand the child's reasons for the behavior. This attitude was more often observed (51.79%) in the mountain village than in the lowland village (36.00%) (Table 3). The second most common response was to explain to the child directly that his/her behavior was wrong; these responses were more dominant in the lowland village than in the mountain village. A mother's negative or harsh reaction to the child behaving aggressively or having a bad temper was observed more in the mountain village than in the lowland village. There was a difference between the villages based on the chi-squared analyses and it was statistically significant ($P < 0.005$).

In the research conducted with parents of children 4–12 years old in Kyrenia, some of the methods, such as telling the child about the harmful results (35.88%), punishing (10.53%), and not fulfilling their wishes (5.26%), were adopted. In this area of very different social structures, the solution most different from the others and adopted according in the village was to discuss the issue with a professional (17.54%).

When the child exhibited stubbornness, the number of mothers who got angry at the child was highest. One-half of the mothers reacted to stubbornness by getting angry. Although higher in the mountain village, this approach was also high in the lowland village. Chi-squared analyses revealed that the difference between villages in the attitude toward stubbornness was not statistically significant; however, the effort to persuade the child was seen a little more frequently in the lowland village. Although there were more (8.93%) in the mountain village, 5.66% of the mothers stated that they would be indifferent to this situation and would not focus on the child's stubborn behavior (Table 3).

The reaction of the mother to a child lying was either anger or reasoning with the child about the effect of lying. According to the chi-squared analyses, these reactions were significantly different between the lowland and mountain villages ($P < 0.001$). The number of mothers who showed anger toward the child after lying was quite high in the mountain village (69.64%). In the lowland village, the mothers tended to explain to the child that lying was bad behavior. There was a low number of unresponsive mothers in the lowland village; however, all the mothers in the mountain village responded to this behavior in their children (Table 3).

The results of the research conducted in Kyrenia, where both parents are included in decision making, determined that 43.85% of the families choose to resolve the issues by discussing the negative behavior with the child. Some families believe that behavior can be improved by boosting confidence in the child and setting a good example (Hassoy and Çakıcı, 2012). The environment in which this research was conducted was quite different from that of the rural areas in Tokat Province, which is a factor that makes a difference in the parents' attitudes toward behavioral issues.

Toilet habits are critical behaviors that should be taught in early childhood. The age for toilet training is generally between 18 and 24 months, and toilet habits, in general, are formed between 30 and 36 months. Success in toilet training can be influenced by the income level of families; the sex, age, and ability of the child; and the attitudes and behaviors of the parents during toilet training; however, even though toilet habits have been established, the child may have accidents, such as bed wetting at night or soiling their clothing during the day (Çalışır et al., 2011, Önen et al., 2012).

At times, a child at the age at which toilet habits should have been formed may have difficulties in properly maintaining that habit. Some studies have indicated that after forming the toilet habits, less incidents of accidents during the day or night are related to the methods used by the parent during training. These methods are such as taking into account the developmental characteristics of the child when beginning toilet training, using rewards, and diapering the child during toilet training. In addition, some studies have reported that accidents may happen during the day and night from urinary-tract infections and social and any emotional traumas experienced by the child (Çalışır et al, 2011; Özçetin et al, 2010).

In a study conducted in Kyrenia, the parents were asked how to approach the child after incidents of daytime or nighttime toilet-related accidents. According to the research, many parents believe that it is necessary to consult with a doctor (31.57%) or another health professional (17.54%). Some parents (10.53%) approve of punishing the child; however, others believe that talking to the child, letting the child take care of himself/herself, or acting as though there was nothing wrong is the way to deal with these situations (Hassoy and Çakıcı, 2012). Although never mentioned as an option in our research area, consultations with professionals has been reported as the most important action by the parent in a study conducted in Kyrenia in the lowland and mountain villages (Hassoy and Çakıcı, 2012). In our study, the number of mothers in the lowland village who did not react was high because these mothers believe that some accidents are normal for the child. In the mountain village, the number of mothers who explain to the child that this can happen is high. Chi-square analyses indicated that mothers' attitude toward accidental wetting are related to the locations of the two villages ($P < 0.01$). Although these attitudes differed between the villages, positive approaches were observed at a high rate in both. It is suggested that these attitudes are associated with the freer environment in the villages and that wetting accidents are accepted as normal more by the rural women than those in urban areas, where 23.58% of the mothers stated that they would react by getting angry (Table 3).

Some studies have indicated that the feeding habits of children during the preschool period affect them throughout life. It has been suggested that the insistent and compelling attitudes of families on feeding and eating will have a negative impact on these habits in the child later. It has been recommended that parents be a router and a model, but not insistent or compelling with regard to this issue (Özyürek et al, 2013).

The number of mothers who insist that the child eat is large; however, their approaches differ according to village, and this correlation is statistically significant based on chi-squared analyses ($P < 0.05$). Although more mothers in the lowland village were persistent, those in the mountain village acted in terms of believing that the behavior was somewhat normal and thus did not interfere with the child's eating habits. Similarly, the number of mothers who tried to persuade the child to eat was higher in the lowland village than in the mountain village.

Part of the survey included questions on rearing children and whether the mothers agreed (Table 4). Nearly all women agreed that children have their own personalities, and the number of mothers who agreed that efforts should be made to understand the child’s abilities was also very high. Only 6.60% of mothers did not agree, and nearly all of those were from the lowland village (Table 4).

The ratio of mothers who believed that child-rearing methods should be based on traditions was very high at 75.00%. There was a higher percentage of women (87.50%) from the lowland village who did not believe in child rearing based on traditions (Table 4).

Table 4. Mother’s thoughts on child rearing
Tablo 4. Çocuğun geleceği hakkında annenin düşüncesi

		Lowland village		Mountain village		General	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
Children have their own personalities	Agree	49	98.00	55	98.21	104	98.11
	Disagree	1	2.00	1	1.79	2	1.89
	Total	50	100.00	56	100.00	106	100.00
Mother should make an effort to understand the child’s abilities	Agree	44	88.00	55	98.21	99	93.40
	Disagree	6	12.00	1	1.79	7	6.60
	Total	50	100.00	56	100.00	106	100.00
Child-rearing methods should be based on traditions	Agree	31	62.00	49	87.50	80	75.47
	Disagree	19	38.00	7	12.50	26	25.53
	Total	50	100.00	56	100.00	106	100.00
$\chi^2 = 9.279$; $df = 1$; $P = 0.002$							
Children should be raised according to the expert literature	Agree	7	14.00	12	21.43	19	17.92
	Disagree	43	86.00	44	78.57	87	82.08
	Total	50	100.00	56	100.00	106	100.00
$\chi^2 = 0.991$; $df = 1$; $P = 0.320$							
If necessary, the mother should spare time for her children by sacrificing her time.	Agree	45	90.00	52	92.86	97	91.51
	Disagree	5	10.00	4	7.14	9	8.49
	Total	50	100.00	56	100.00	106	100.00
Even if the child does not want to go to bed, he/she should be put to bed when the time comes.	Agree	20	40.00	22	39.29	42	39.62
	Disagree	30	60.00	34	60.71	64	60.38
	Total	50	100.00	56	100.00	106	100.00
$\chi^2 = 0.006$; $df = 1$; $P = 0.940$							
In child education, there must be first discipline and then love and respect	Agree	32	64.00	23	41.07	55	51.89
	Disagree	18	36.00	33	58.93	51	48.11
	Total	50	100.00	56	100.00	106	100.00
$\chi^2 = 5.563$; $df = 1$; $P = 0.018$							
All children are nearly the same; therefore, the rules of education are also the same	Agree	45	90.00	3	5.36	48	45.28
	Disagree	5	10.00	53	94.64	58	54.72
	Total	50	100.00	56	100.00	106	100.00
$\chi^2 = 76.379$; $df = 1$; $P = 0.000$							
Showing too much love and interest spoils the child.	Agree	43	86.00	54	96.43	97	91.51
	Disagree	7	14.00	2	3.57	9	8.49
	Total	50	100.00	56	100.00	106	100.00
It is necessary to give clear answers to all questions asked by children	Agree	50	100.00	56	100.00	106	100.00
	Disagree	0	0.00	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Total	50	100.00	56	100.00	106	100.00

The majority of women (82.08%) disagreed that children should be reared according to the literature written by experts in this field. Although there was not a significant difference in

this between villages, the number of women who agreed with the statement was higher in the mountain village (Table 4). Considering the high number of parents who want their children to attend formal education as much as possible in the mountain village, it was clear that the lack of an opportunity for education brings an unconditional respect for education and books.

The majority of the mothers (91.51%) agreed that, when necessary, she should spare time for her children even if that meant sacrificing her own time. Some of the women (8.49%) did not consider that their own sacrifice was necessary (Table 4).

According to the general results, 60.38% of the mothers did not approve of putting the child to bed before he/she wants to go to bed. Others (39.62%) believed that the child should be put to bed at a specific time each night (Table 4). These results were nearly the same in both villages.

The mothers shared different opinions on the discipline–love–respect priorities in rearing a child. Slightly more than one-half (51.89%) believed that discipline should come first, while 48.11% disagreed. The proportion of mothers who accepted discipline as a priority was higher in the lowland village than in the mountain village, and the proportional difference (22.93%) was significant (Table 4).

According to the general results, 45.28% of the mothers agreed that all children are nearly the same; therefore, the rules of education are nearly the same; 54.72% believed that the opposite was true. This difference was significant ($P < 0.001$). While nearly all of the mothers who believed that children differ from each other and that the rules of education should differ were from the mountain village; nearly all of the mothers who believed that the opposite was true were from the lowland village (Table 4).

According to 91.51% of the mothers, showing too much love and interest spoils the child; however, the number of mothers who disagreed with this view was higher in the lowland village (Table 4).

All of the mothers interviewed believed that it is necessary to give clear answers to all questions asked by children and to provide appropriate explanations. The results were similar in both villages.

4. Conclusion

Rural development can be possible only with the development of the community living there. Social development, on the other hand, means being reared by the individuals who make up society. Early childhood education has a great impact on people later in life. During this period, a child's relationship with his/her mother plays a decisive role in his/her development. In our study, we compared the maternal attitudes and behaviors between two villages—one mountain and one lowland—in Tokat Province, Turkey.

According to our results, the formal education for the mothers was limited in both village types. The most important source of income was agriculture. Families were generally low income, with those in the mountain village having less income than those in the lowland village.

The majority of children were reared in an overprotective family environment and the mothers' expectations for the future of their children were generally not high. Those in the mountain village attached more importance to the continuity of their child's formal education and we suggest that the mothers wanted more educational advantages and differences. These mothers most likely believed that a good education would provide a better future for their child. In the lowland village, women cared more about their children having a profession. This low expectation can be viewed as a positive attitude from mothers in that they would not have big expectations for their children and not choose their child's profession. On the other hand, we observed that the mothers felt that existing opportunities and possibilities were limited, and that this attitude would be passed on to the child.

According to our results and observations, both advantages and disadvantages are associated with the rural mother-child relationship. Time flexibility shared with the mother, the comfort of the environment because of its natural setting, a more flexible approach to making and enforcing rules, and superficial and low-targeted levels of expectation for the child's future can be considered as advantages for the children in these two villages. The protectionist approach of the family, the tendency for tradition-oriented rearing, and the mothers' expectations for the child's future limited to the opportunities within the rural area, and the limited and unsystematic knowledge about child rearing were considered to be disadvantages in both villages.

We found that the time mothers spent with their children was important; therefore, we suggest that the mothers should try to educate themselves on rearing methods. They should strive to enrich their child's imagination through better communication.

Support should be provided to women living in the rural areas who have children at the preschool age. To support them with the right information flow, child-rearing issues should be expanded within the scope of education and extension services in these rural areas. Another means by which to reach the mothers in the rural areas is by using mass media; however, mothers must also develop media literacy to be able to distinguish qualified and accurate information from that transmitted through mass media.

The important role of mothers during the first 6 years of their child's life should not be ignored. The effect mothers have on these children enables them to grow with stronger inner dynamics and abilities.

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