

## Investigation of the relationship between understanding of marital conflict and interpersonal problem-solving skills among preschool children

Sinem Hayali Emir<sup>1</sup> , Telat Gül Şendil<sup>2</sup> 

### Keywords

Cognitive-Contextual Theory, children's understanding of marital conflict, interpersonal problem-solving skills

### Abstract

One of the most important perspectives explaining the effect of marital conflict on children is the Cognitive-Contextual Theory. Within the framework of this theory, the aims of the present study were to examine preschool children's perceptions of marital conflict; to investigate the effect of children's perceptions of marital conflict on their problem-solving skills; and to find an answer to the question of whether the interaction effect of children's perceived conflict frequency and parental conflict resolution type will make a difference in interpersonal problem-solving skills. Participants were 106 kindergarten children aged 5-6 years and their mothers. "Perception of Marital Conflict Cards" and "Preschool Interpersonal Problem-Solving Test" were administered to children and "O'Leary Porter Marital Conflict Scale" was applied to mothers. To examine children's perception of marital conflict, the answers to the Perception of Marital Conflict Cards were analyzed by content analysis. The findings supported the Cognitive-Contextual Theory for the 5-6 aged. Regression analysis results showed that children's perceived frequency of conflict, feelings of sadness, and perceived type of parental conflict resolution significantly predicted interpersonal problem-solving skills. Two-way ANOVA was used to examine whether the interaction effect of children's perceived frequency and parental conflict resolution type differentiated interpersonal problem-solving skills. No significant difference was found in the interaction effect. However, the main effect of children's understanding of parental conflict resolution type is found to make a significant difference in children's problem-solving skills. The findings revealed that marital conflict is more than a problem within the family and its importance in children's peer relationships.

### Anahtar kelimeler

Bilişsel-Bağlamsal Teori, çocukların evlilik çatışma algısı, kişilerarası problem çözme becerileri

### Öz

**Okul öncesi çocukların evlilik çatışması algısı ile kişilerarası problem çözme becerileri arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesi**

Evlilik çatışmasının çocuklar üzerindeki etkisini birçok bakış açısı açıklamaya çalışır. Bunlardan en önemlisi Bilişsel-Bağlamsal Teoridir. Bu teori çerçevesinde, araştırmanın amaçları, okul öncesi çocukların evlilik çatışması algısını incelemek; çocukların evlilik çatışması algılarının kişilerarası problem çözme becerilerine etkisini araştırmak ve çocukların algıladığı çatışma sıklığı ile ebeveyn çatışma çözüm türünün ortak etkisinin kişilerarası problem çözme becerilerinde farklılık yaratıp yaratmayacağı sorusuna cevap bulmaktır. Katılımcılar okul öncesi kurumlara devam eden 5-6 yaş grubundaki 106 çocuk ve annelerinden oluşmaktadır. Çocuklara "Evlilik Çatışma Algısı Kartları" ve "Okul Öncesi Kişiler Arası Problem Çözme Testi"; annelere ise "O'Leary Porter Evlilik Çatışması Ölçeği" uygulanmıştır. Çocukların evlilik çatışma algısını incelemek için Evlilik Çatışma Algısı Kartlarıyla alınan cevaplar içerik analiziyle incelenmiş, elde edilen bulguların çocukların çatışma algılarının Bilişsel-Bağlamsal Teorinin 5-6 yaş grubu için açıkladığı teoriyi destekler yönde olduğu görülmüştür. Çoklu doğrusal regresyon analiz sonuçlarına göre kişilerarası problem çözme becerilerini; çocukların algıladığı çatışma sıklığı, yaşadığı üzüntü duygusu ve algıladığı ebeveyn çatışma çözüm türünün anlamlı düzeyde yordadığı görülmüştür. İki yönlü ANOVA analiziyle çocukların algıladığı sıklık ve ebeveyn çatışma çözüm türü ortak etkisinin kişilerarası problem çözme becerilerini farklılaştırıp farklılaşmadığı incelenmiştir. Ortak etki analizinde, anlamlı bir fark bulunamamıştır. Ancak çocukların ebeveyn çatışma çözüm türü ana etkisinin kişilerarası problem çözme becerilerini anlamlı düzeyde farklılaştırdığı tespit edilmiştir. Bulgular, evlilik çatışmasının evin içinde yaşanan bir sıklıktan daha fazlası olduğu ve çocukların akran ilişkilerindeki önemi bir kez daha ortaya koymuştur.

**To cite:** Hayali Emir, S. & Şendil, T. G. (2024). Investigation of the relationship between understanding of marital conflict and interpersonal problem-solving skills among preschool children. *Journal of Clinical Psychology Research*, 8(2), 174-186.

**Sinem Hayali Emir** • [sinem.emir@istanbul.edu.tr](mailto:sinem.emir@istanbul.edu.tr) | <sup>1</sup>Res. Asst., Istanbul University, Faculty of Letters, Department of Psychology; <sup>2</sup>Prof., Istanbul Atlas University, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Psychology.

**Received** Dec 26, 2022, **Revised** Apr 08, 2023, **Accepted** May 22, 2023

**Authors' Note:** This article is a summary of Sinem Hayali Emir's master's thesis completed at Istanbul University under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Telat Gül Şendil. The research was presented as a poster paper at the 15th European Congress of Psychology, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 11 - 14 July 2017.



Arguments and disagreements between parents are one of the family stress experiences of that children are exposed to. The Cognitive-Contextual Theory, which examines the effects of conflict between parents on children's development, emphasizes the role of conflict on children's cognitive processes and how cognitive processes affect children's behavior and emotions. The theory aims to examine the effect of conflict characteristics and contextual factors and to discuss conflict as a stressor that children need to understand and cope with. The theory emphasizes the importance of two factors in understanding how children respond to marital conflict: the context in which the conflict occurs and children's interpretation of the conflict. The context is considered in two ways: distal and proximal. Children's temperament and memories of conflicts between parents are treated as distant contexts. The proximate contexts include emotions and thoughts that children directly experience before they appraised the conflict (Grych & Fincham, 1990). The theory describes the process by which the child evaluates the importance of an event for his or her well-being. Both cognition and emotions serve the child's appraisals functions. The emotions, based on cognitive inputs, are regulated by them and affect perceptions and evaluations (Grych & Fincham, 1993). The evaluation process consists of two stages. In primary processing, the child recognizes the occurrence of a stressful event and initially experiences an emotional reaction. The initial stage of the assessment process is influenced by the characteristics of conflicts and contextual factors. Primary processing leads to secondary processing, the more detailed stage of assessment in which the child tries to understand why the conflict is happening and to decide what his/her response should be. Secondary processing entails an attribution of the cause of the event by attributing responsibility, and blame and forming efficacy expectations about potential coping responses. This process is also influenced by the initial level of the child's emotional arousal. The child's subsequent attempt to cope with the conflict is guided by both emotion and secondary appraisal. Successful coping leads to a reduction in negative emotion, but unsuccessful coping can lead to persistent and increased distress in the child (Grych & Fincham, 1990).

Previous studies have mainly focused on the effect of marital conflict on child adjustment problems (Crockenberg & Langrock, 2001; Davies & Cummings, 1994; Keller et al., 2005). However, as the Cognitive-Contextual Theory emphasizes, it is important to identify which dimensions of marital conflict create more tension in children (Grych et al., 1992). Characteristics of conflict include the frequency, severity, resolution, and causes of conflict. Conflict frequency indicates how often the child is exposed to parental conflict. The constant exposure to marital conflict compounds children's negative reactions, such as aggression (Cummings & Davies, 2014).

The type of violence experienced in marital conflict is another characteristic that determines its impact on children. Violence ranges from a quiet argument to physical violence. Another dimension of conflict expression is thematic content. Children's reactions can also be influenced by the content of the parents' conflict. Research has shown that if the conflict between parents is about the child, it is more distressing for the child, thus more linked to more behavioral problems. (Cummings et al., 2004). The last dimension that directs the impact of marital conflict on children is how the marital conflict is resolved. Whether and how marital conflict is resolved is of high relevance for child outcomes, regardless of how adults express their anger (Cummings & Davies, 2014).

Studies have shown that the frequency of conflict affects cognitive assessments of children at a stronger level compared to other dimensions of marital conflict (Van Eldik et al., 2020). Another study with preschool children found that the social skills of children decrease as the frequency of conflict increases (Spjeldnes et al., 2010). A study carried out with primary school-aged children in China revealed that more severe, frequent, child-related, and unresolved conflicts are associated with adjustment problems in children (Xu et al., 2023). Ablow et al. (2009) also examined the relationship between marital conflict and adjustment problems in children aged 5-6 years, and also evaluated the mediating role of marital conflict perceived by children in the relationship. Consistent with the Cognitive-Contextual Theory, the findings of the study showed that the tendency to self-blame has a partial mediating effect between marital conflict and the internalizing problem of children.

Exposure to parental conflict appears to be one of the most powerful factors that negatively affect the social and emotional development of children (Cummings & Davies, 2002; Rhoades, 2008; Zemp et al., 2016). It has been observed that as the level of aggression and anger in the marital conflict to which children are exposed increases and the risk of children developing behavioral, emotional, social, and academic problems also increases (Harold & Sellers, 2018; Van Eldik et al., 2020).

Considering that cognitive assessments of children are significantly affected by hostile and frequent conflicts; it appears to be important to examine the perception of conflict in children and to understand how this perception affects children's daily lives. The relationship between interpersonal problem-solving skills, which is an important skill in peer relations, and marital conflict is an issue that needs to be examined. This is because interacting and communicating with other individuals is one of the most important features of social development. Individuals need to gain some thoughtful and behavioral skills in overcoming the problems and difficulties they experience in the relationships they establish in their daily lives. Interpersonal problem-solving skills are recognized as one of

the lifelong skills that should be supported from the first years of life (Anliak & Dinçer, 2005). D'Zurilla and Goldfried (1971) define problem-solving as the behavioral process, which involves using one of several appropriate alternative responses to deal with problem situations and increasing the likelihood of choosing the best among these options. Social problem-solving is the process of solving problems that arise in the real world or the natural environment (D'Zurilla & Nezu, 1982). Social problem-solving studies include all types of problems that affect an individual's life, such as personal or internal, impersonal, interpersonal, social, and large mass problems (Chang et al., 2004).

Considering that social problem-solving skills are affected by environmental factors; it is important to examine the relationship between perceived marital conflict and children's interpersonal problem-solving skills. However, we have not found any study examining this relationship in the literature. Therefore, the purpose of the current study is to define the perception of marital conflict in 5-6 years old children and to investigate its effect on interpersonal problem-solving skills. In addition, it was examined whether the frequency of conflicts perceived by children, conflict resolution, and the feeling of sadness they experienced differed regarding gender. Finally, the answer to the question of whether the interaction effect of the frequency of marital conflict perceived by children and the type of conflict resolution constitute a difference in interpersonal problem-solving skills was investigated.

## METHODS

### Participants

The sample group of the study consisted of children aged 5-6 years and their mothers. All of the participating mothers are married and living with their spouses and children. Consent forms were given to 250 parents in total at schools, 144 of them stated that they did not want them and their children to participate in the research. The participants consisted of a total of 106 children, 50 boys and 56 girls, and their mothers.

The mean age of the children was 66.7 months ( $SD = 4.01$ ), their demographic information was examined. It was observed that 0.9% ( $n = 1$ ) of the mothers were primary school graduates, 3.7% ( $n = 4$ ) were secondary school graduates, 30.8% ( $n = 33$ ) were high school graduates, 7.5% ( $n = 8$ ) were associate degree graduates, 48.6% ( $n = 52$ ) were undergraduate, and 6.5% ( $n = 7$ ) were postgraduate graduates. Of the fathers, 0.9% ( $n = 1$ ) were primary school graduates, 29.9% ( $n = 32$ ) were high school graduates, 11.2% ( $n = 12$ ) were associate degree graduates, 52.3% ( $n = 56$ ) were undergraduate degree, and 4.7% ( $n = 5$ ) were postgraduate degree graduates. The mean age of the mothers was

37.66 ( $SD = 4.89$ ) and the mean age of the fathers was 41.4 ( $SD = 5.60$ ). When the children's number of siblings was examined, it was observed that 33.6% of them did not have any siblings, 55.1% of them had one sibling, 7.5% of them had two siblings, and 1% of them had three siblings.

### Measures

**Personal Information Form** The Personal Information Form prepared by the researchers was used to determine the demographic characteristics of the participants. The form includes questions about the date of birth, age, educational status, and marital status of the children's parents participating in the research.

**Perception of Marital Conflict Cards** Five cards were developed by Şendil (1999) in order to examine how children and young people perceive different relationship situations between parents. There is one picture on each card. One of the cards shows a happy relationship, and the other four cards show conflictual situations with various severities. The first picture card represents a 'happy' relationship, the second represents an 'argumentative' relationship, the third represents a relationship with 'quarrel', the fourth represents a relationship where 'father's physical violence against mother', and the fifth represents a relationship where there is 'resentment'. Children are asked 7 questions for each card. Whether the pictures reflect the intended relationship situation was tested with a hundred subjects of different ages, genders, occupations, and socio-economic levels. When the data is evaluated, 99% of the subjects stated that card 1 symbolized "happiness", 78% stated that card 2 symbolized "argument", 82% stated that card 3 symbolized "quarrel", 98% stated that card 4 symbolized "father's physical violence against mother", and 97% stated that card 5 symbolized "resentment" (Şendil, 1999). In the present study, one more card representing a relationship in which "mother's physical violence against father" was added. The questions were revised and two questions (Question number two and six as below) were added within the framework of the Cognitive-Contextual Theory. Question number two, (*How often do you think mother and father are in this situation?*), was formed to measure the frequency of conflict. We prepared a Likert scale to answer this question. There are three equal sized rectangular boxes on this Likert scale card. From left to right, there are two apples in the first box, six apples in the second box, and 14 apples in the last box. When the child is asked the second question, (*How often do you think mother and father are in this situation?*), this Likert scale card is placed on the table, and explained to the child as follows.

"Do you see the apples here? See, here (showing the first box) *there are few apples, this box means rarely, here (showing the second box) there are some*

*apples, this box means sometimes, here (showing the third box) there are a lot of apples, this box means always. Now tell me, do you think the mother and father in this picture (showing the boxes one by one) are in this situation rarely, sometimes, or always?"* Thus, the frequency of conflict perceived by the children was measured. Another question which was added for cards is question number six (*Who do you think might have started this situation?*) to learn about children's "attribution of responsibility".

The general guidelines and questions for all cards are as follows:

*"I'm going to show you some pictures of a family. I'm going to ask some questions about the relationship between the parents in these pictures. So, this is our first picture:*

- 1) I want you to tell me what kind of relationship your parents are in.*
- 2) How often do you think mother and father are in this situation?*
- 3) What do you think the child is thinking/going through her/his mind when mother and father are in this situation?*
- 4) What do you think the child feels/what are her/his feelings when the mother and father are in this situation?*
- 5) Why do you think the mother and father are in this situation?*
- 6) Who do you think might have started this situation?*
- 7) What do you think will happen after this situation/what will happen next?*
- 8) What would you think if this situation happened in your home?*

*And this is our second picture..."*

The eighth question was asked as a control question. This question was not discussed in the findings since it was found that the answers given by the children to the third question and the answers to the eighth question were similar in the content analysis. Furthermore, the perceived frequency of conflict was evaluated in quantitative analysis by calculating the total score. The answers of the participants to the picture cards were evaluated over a total of seven questions by content analysis.

Card number one is called the "happiness", card number two is called the "argument", card number three is called the "quarrel", card number four is called the "father's physical violence against mother", card number five is called the "mother's physical violence against father", and card number six is called the "resentment" card. The practice takes approximately 15 minutes. The data were evaluated by the researcher through content analysis using the MAXQDA program. Afterward, the content analysis of 56% of the responses to the picture cards was carried out by a specialist psychologist apart from the researcher. The consistency between the two raters was examined. The analysis of each card was evaluated in itself. It was observed that there was a consistency between 82%

and 95% among raters. Thus, there was no need for a third rater.

The questions asked with the picture cards were determined in accordance with the Cognitive-Contextual Theory. Content analysis was performed with the MAXQDA program. The encodings made were then assigned to the categories formed within the framework of the model. These categories are as follows: Positive thoughts, negative thoughts, willingness to intervene, sad, angry, confused, afraid, happy, mother, father, both (parents), child, successful resolution, unsuccessful resolution, emotion-focused coping, and problem-focused coping. In the second question, Likert-type measurement was carried out and the answers given to five cards (argument, quarrel, father's physical violence against mother, mother's physical violence against father, and resentment) were collected, and the total score of perceived frequency of conflict was obtained. The total frequencies of the successful and unsuccessful resolutions given by the participants to the five cards were taken and the perceived parent positive resolution type and negative resolution type scores, the total frequencies of the feeling of sadness given to the five cards, and the total feeling of sadness score were obtained. The total scores obtained in the quantitative analyzes were used.

### ***Preschool Interpersonal Problem-Solving Test (PIPS)***

The test was developed by Shure and Spivack (1980) to assess the skill of preschoolers to think of alternative solutions for interpersonal problems. The original reliability study of the test was conducted by Shure (1992) and the test-retest technique was used, and the test was applied to 57 children in the 4-year-old group twice at a one-week interval. The reliability coefficient of the test is  $r = 0.72$ ; in addition, in the reliability study between encoders, consistency between encoders was found to be 97%. It is stated that the scale can distinguish children who behave differently in terms of behavioral adjustment in structural validity studies.

The test consists of two parts which are peer-to-peer problem-solving and mother-to-mother problem-solving skills (Shure, 1992). In the first part of the test, short stories describing problems between two peers are presented to the child. In each story, it is told that a child would like to play with the toy that the other child has, and the child is asked to think of ways to play with that toy instead of the child in the story. In this section, for all stories, the child is shown three pictures, two of children of the same sex as the child taking the test and one of is a toy. The problematic situation is explained to the child, as shown in the following example:

'This is Gizem, and this is Ayşe. Can you tell me what this toy is? (.....). Yes, this is a baby doll. Now Gizem has been playing with this baby doll for a long time and Ayşe would like to play with it. What can Ayşe do to play with the baby doll?'

This part presents stories formed from at least seven similar peer-related contents. In order to get different answers from the child and to prevent the child from becoming disinterested, different toys and different children pictures with different names are used for each story. If the child comes up with seven different resolutions in seven stories, additional stories are submitted. The test is finished in the first additional story, in which the child cannot produce a new resolution.

In the second part, it is explained that the child in the story has damaged an item belonging to his mother, and the child is asked to think of ways to prevent the mother from getting angry with him/her. A picture of a child of the same sex as the child being tested and a picture of a mother are also shown. Here, the name of the child presented in each story and the mother-child pictures are changed, as well. At least five similar stories are told and the test continues until the child does not come up with new resolutions.

While scoring, evaluation is made according to different categories for both parts. Some of the categories of problem-solving with peers are as follows: Asking, awaiting her/his turn, playing together, saying please, asking permission to borrow, and comments about the toy. Some of the categories in which the child scores in problem-solving with the mother are: Authority help, repairing, replacing, apologizing, describing the action, and giving gifts. The child gets '1' point for each alternative resolution s/he gives. As the overall score from the test increases, interpersonal problem-solving skills are considered to be high (Shure, 1992).

In Turkey, Dinçer (1995) stated in the research that they used the experimental method in the pre-test-training-posttest order and that the test could determine the changes that occurred as a result of the training applied. Later, Anliak (2004) conducted a validity and reliability study for the test. The test was applied twice, one week apart. Thirty children aged 5-6 years took part in the study. The test-retest reliability coefficient is 0.85 and the reliability values between encoders vary between 82% and 99%. The consistency percentage of the inter-coders reliability findings of the study is between 95% and 96% among the peer and mother parts. The researcher received training from Dinçer (1995), who made the Turkish adaptation of the problem-solving test in preschool children, for the application and evaluation of the test.

***O'Leary-Porter Marital Conflict Scale (OP)*** Porter and O'Leary (1980), developed the scale to measure how often spouses argue in front of the child and how often the child is exposed to verbal and physical aggression between spouses. The scale consists of a total of 10 items. High scores from this five-point Likert-type scale indicate that conflict is high. Participants can get the lowest "10" points and the highest "40" points from the scale. The test-retest reliability coefficient

of the scale was .96 and the Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient was .86. The correlation between the original scale scores obtained from the mothers and the fathers was .74. It was adapted into Turkish by Peksaygılı and Güre (2008). The scale was applied twice 15 days apart to the mothers of 62 students attending the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades of primary school in order to carry out the reliability study. Test-retest correlation ( $r = .78, p < .01$ ) is significant. Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient was .79 according to the results of reliability analysis applied to the whole sample. In the current study, Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient was calculated .73.

### ***Procedure***

First of all, the required permissions were obtained from the Istanbul Provincial Directorate of National Education (Date: 20.01.2016, Number: 59090411-44E.700231). The applications were made in preschool institutions. The research was conducted in four different kindergartens located in Başakşehir and Fatih districts of Istanbul. These schools were selected considering the required conditions for the application of measurement tools. Administrators of schools with appropriate physical space and age groups were interviewed and schools whose administrators agreed to work with were selected. A "consent form" was sent to the families in the designated preschool institutions through the teachers in a sealed envelope asking whether they and their children volunteered to participate in the study. Mothers who approved the form were asked to complete the "O'Leary-Porter Marital Conflict Scale (OP)". "Perception of Marital Conflict Cards" and "Preschool Interpersonal Problem-Solving Test" were applied to their children by the researcher. The duration of the procedure with a child is about 45 minutes.

### ***Analysis***

The first purpose of the study was to descriptively examine children's perceptions of marital conflict. For this purpose, the content analysis of the answers given to the Perception of Marital Conflict Cards was carried out. The second purpose of the study was to examine the effect of children's perceptions of conflict on their interpersonal problem-solving skills. Multiple regression analysis was performed in this respect. The third purpose of the study was to investigate the interaction effects of the frequency of conflict perceived by children and the type of conflict resolution on interpersonal problem-solving skills. For this purpose, the two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed. The findings were submitted according to the results of the analysis conducted for these three pur-

**Table 1. Frequency Distributions of Responses to Argument, Quarrel, Father's Physical Violence Against Mother, Mother's Physical Violence Against Father Cards and Resentment Cards**

		Total	%
Thoughts	Positive Thoughts	17	3.6
	Negative Thoughts	175	33.9
	Willingness to Intervene	26	4.9
Emotion	Sad	341	64.3
	Angry	58	10.9
	Confused	115	21.7
	Afraid	31	5.8
	Happy	6	1.1
	Mother	213	40.2
Causal Attribution	Father	245	46.2
	Both	35	6.6
	Child	7	1.3
Conflict Resolution	Successful Resolution	192	55.1
	Unsuccessful Resolution	129	24.3
Coping	Emotion-focused	124	23.4
	Problem-focused	367	69.2

**Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations of the Scores from the Children's Perception of Marital Conflict Cards, the Preschool Interpersonal Problem-Solving Test, and the Perception of Marital Conflict Scale of Mothers**

		N = 106	M	SD
Responded by Children	Perception of Marital Conflict			
	Perceived frequency		9.87	2.65
	Successful resolution		2.75	1.98
	Unsuccessful resolution		1.21	1.55
	Feeling of sadness		3.21	1.57
	Emotion-focused coping		2.22	1.94
	Problem-focused coping		2.41	1.96
Responded by Children	Interpersonal Problem-Solving Skills		8.78	2.18
Responded by Mother	Perception of Conflict		23.37	4.18

poses, respectively.

## RESULTS

### *Content Analysis Results of the Answers Given to the Perception of Marital Conflict Cards*

The total percentage and frequencies of the responses to the five cards, namely argument, quarrel, father's physical violence against mother, mother's physical violence against father, and resentment cards, were discussed. Children's perception of conflict was evaluated based on these total values.

Within the scope of the third question, 3.6% ( $f = 17$ ) of the responses given to the question "What does the child think when her/his parents are in this situation?" are the responses that fall into the category of "positive thoughts". 33% ( $f = 175$ ) of the responses of the participants were thoughts that fall into "negative thoughts". "S/he thinks about why they are resentful.", "That they shouldn't have a quarrel.", "Bad things." are examples of these responses. 4.9% ( $f = 26$ ) of the responses of the participants were those that fall into the category of "willingness to intervene". 64.3% ( $f = 341$ ) of the responses were "sad", 10.9% ( $f = 58$ ) were "angry", 21.7% ( $f = 115$ ) were "confused", 5.8% ( $f =$

31) were "afraid", and 1.1% were "happy". Causal (blame or responsibility) attributions focused on the "mother" and "father" responses. 40.2% ( $f = 213$ ) of the total responses were "mother", 46.2% ( $f = 245$ ) were "father", 6.6% ( $f = 35$ ) were "both (mother and father)", and 1.3% ( $f = 7$ ) were "child". When the responses regarding conflict resolution were examined, it was observed that 55.1% ( $f = 192$ ) of the responses were in the "positive resolution" category and 24.3% ( $f = 129$ ) were in the "negative resolution" category. 23.4% ( $f = 124$ ) of the responses that gave the coping behavior used by the participants were "emotion-focused" and 69.2% ( $f = 367$ ) were "problem-focused". The total frequency and percentage distributions of the responses given by the participants are shown in Table 1.

### *The Effect of Children's Perceptions of Conflict on Their Interpersonal Problem-Solving Skills*

Before assessing the effect of children's perception of marital conflict on their interpersonal problem-solving skills, the mean score and standard deviation values of the Perception of Marital Conflict Cards, the Preschool Interpersonal Problem-Solving Test, and the score of the O'Leary-Porter Marital Conflict Scale are

**Table 3. Correlation Table for Relationships Between Independent and Dependent Variables**

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. The frequency of conflict perceived by the child	1					
2. Successful parental conflict resolution by the child	-.26**	1				
3. Unsuccessful parental conflict resolution perceived by the child	.10	-.57**	1			
4. The feeling of sadness experienced by the child	-.18	.10	.04	1		
5. Frequency of conflict perceived by the mother	-.14	-.06	.04	-.07	1	
6. Interpersonal problem-solving skills of the child	-.20*	.23*	.15	.30**	.01	1

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ .

**Table 4. Findings on Variables Predicting Interpersonal Problem-Solving Skills of Children**

Variables	$\beta$	$R^2$
Step 1: Sadness (a)	.30	.09**
Step 2: Positive parental conflict resolution perception of the children (b)	.21	.13**

*Note 1.* All scale scores were converted to standard scores prior to the analysis. The standardized  $\beta$  coefficients in the table are the coefficients obtained in step 2. *Note 2.* \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

presented in Table 2.

When the mean frequency of marital conflict perceived by mothers was evaluated, it was revealed that children live in homes where there is low conflict. The relationships between the frequency of marital conflict perceived by mothers, the frequency of conflict perceived by children, parental conflict resolution, the feeling of sadness experienced by children, and the interpersonal problem-solving skills of preschool children were calculated by using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Stability Coefficient.

The findings regarding the correlation values between the variables are presented in Table 3.

As can be seen in Table 3, there is a significantly negative relationship between interpersonal problem-solving skills and the frequency of conflicts perceived by the children and a significantly positive relationship between interpersonal problem-solving skills and the successful conflict resolution perceived by the children and the feeling of sadness of the children.

Based on the correlation above, the variables of the child's perceived conflict frequency, successful conflict resolution, and the child's emotion of sadness, which have a significant relationship with children's interpersonal problem-solving skills, were included in the equation. The feeling of sadness experienced by the children is included in the first step, and the frequency of the conflict perceived by the children, and successful conflict resolution are included in the second step in the regression equation.

In the first step, it was observed that the sense of sadness of the children explained 9% of their interpersonal problem-solving skills significantly. In the second step, it was found that successful conflict

resolution perceived by the children explained 13% of the change in interpersonal problem-solving skills significantly. The frequency of conflict perceived by the children was not included in the analysis. The findings obtained as a result of hierarchical regression analysis are presented in Table 4.

#### *The Perceived Frequency of Conflict and the Interaction Effects of Conflict Resolution Type on Interpersonal Problem-Solving Skills of Children*

In line with the third purpose of the study, the perceived frequency of conflict was divided into two according to the median, two groups were obtained as low and high frequency of conflict. The perceived type of conflict resolution is divided into successful and unsuccessful resolution. Their perceptions of successful and unsuccessful resolutions to different conflict situations were also divided into low and high by the median. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) 2x4 factorial design were conducted to test the effects of conflict frequency (low/high) and conflict resolution type (1.Group: high success-low unsuccess, 2.Group: low success-high unsuccessful, 3.Group: low success-low unsuccess, 4.Group: high success-high unsuccess) on the interpersonal problem-solving skills of the children.

As seen in Table 5, the results of the analysis showed that perception of the type of conflict resolution of the children had a significant main effect on the interpersonal problem-solving skill of the children ( $F_{(3, 105)} = 4.97$ ;  $p < .01$ ). Scheffe test results were examined to find out from which groups the main effect of the four perceived types of parental conflict (1. Gro-

**Table 5. 2x4 ANOVA Results Regarding the Effects of the Parental Conflict Resolution Type on the Interpersonal Problem-Solving Skills of the Children with a Low or High Frequency of Conflict Perceived by the Children**

Variables	df	X <sup>2</sup>	F
Frequency of conflict (2 times)	1	2.72	.63
Perceived resolution type (4 times)	1	21.51	4.97**
Frequency of conflict 2 Times*Success 4 times	3	2.01	.46

Note. \*\*  $p < .01$

up: high success-low unsuccessful, 2. Group: low success-high unsuccessful, 3. Group: low success-low unsuccessful, 4. Group: high success-high unsuccessful) on interpersonal problem-solving skill was obtained. According to the Scheffe test results, those who have a low perception of successful and low unsuccessful resolutions to perceived conflict resolution have significantly lower interpersonal problem-solving skills than other groups ( $M = -2.34$ ;  $p < .01$ ). However, it was found that the main effect of conflict frequency ( $F_{(1, 105)} = .63$ ;  $p > .05$ ) on interpersonal problem-solving skill of the children and the interaction effect of the frequency of conflict and the perceived parental conflict resolution type ( $F_{(3, 105)} = .46$ ;  $p > .05$ ) were not significant.

## DISCUSSION

The current study has three purposes. First, examining descriptively how preschool children perceive marital conflict; second, examining the effect of conflict perceptions on interpersonal problem-solving skills, and third, finding an answer to the question of whether the common effect of the frequency of conflict they perceive, and the type of conflict resolution makes a difference in interpersonal problem-solving skills.

In line with the first purpose of the study, the children were shown the perception of marital conflict cards indicating six different relationship situations and asked questions about these cards in order to descriptively examine the children's perception of marital conflict. When the results of the content analysis of these five cards which show various conflict situations were examined, it was found that the participants reported negative thoughts at similar rates. Grych and Fincham (2001) suggest in Cognitive-Contextual Theory that children suffer the most in case of marital conflict when they perceive themselves and their parents as threatened. In this kind of situations, which corresponds to the primary assessment process, the child focuses on the conflict and tries to understand whether there is a threatening situation (Grych & Fincham, 1990). Children may experience this threat because of various fears, such as that they will be involved in conflict, that their parents' relationship will break down, or that the marriage will be over. In the present study, it was found that the children had a higher percentage

of "negative thoughts" about conflict (for instance; they don't like each other, they get angry with each other, s/he thinks about bad things). It is an expected result in terms of child development that children in the 5-6 age group have more negative thought reports. Research suggests that as children grow older, they develop the ability to understand the details of conflict (Cummings et al., 1989). A study examined how children perceive marital conflict according to their age, and it was revealed that among participants aged 5 to 9, the younger age group suffered more from conflict (Jenkins & Buccioni, 2000). Şendil and Kızıldağ (2003) found that the threat perceived by children due to marital conflict decreases as they grow older and clarified this finding by the fact that older children are more effective in understanding the causes of conflict and evaluating conflict. The Cognitive-Contextual Theory remarks that the most common emotions that children experience in case of marital conflict are distress and strain (Grych and Fincham, 1993). In the current study, the feeling of confusion was expressed the most following the feeling of sadness. This can be explained by the fact that the mean frequency of conflicts received from the mothers of the participants is not high. When the children's thoughts on the content of conflict were examined, it was observed that the majority of them revealed daily communication problems as the cause of conflict. For instance, "You're going to do it – No, you're going to do it", "S/he's misunderstood her/him", "S/he has certainly done something wrong". However, very few children (only seven responses) stated the cause of conflict as the child. Studies have shown that during marital conflict if children think that their parents have a conflict because of them, they blame themselves and are more affected in a negative way (Grych & Fincham, 1993; Kızıldağ & Şendil, 2006; Ulu & Fışıloğlu, 2004). This conclusion can be explained by the fact that the participants came from conflict-free homes. Following the causal attribution, they were asked who initiated the relationship situation on the card in order to form an opinion about the responsibility and blame attributions of the children. Across the five cards, most of the participants blamed "the father" for the conflict, and "the mother" came in the second. In the causal attribution, the seven participants who stated that the conflict was caused by the child responded "child". In 17 responses, it was



stated that the conflict was initiated by both the mother and the father. On the second and fourth cards, the most common number of "the father" responses are seen, and on the third and fifth cards, the answer "the mother" is seen. The most common response was "father" on the second and fourth cards and "mother" on the third and fifth cards. In cards with physical violence, the parent who uses violence is regarded as blamed by the children. Determining the cause of the conflict, the children assess whether to see who caused the conflict are responsible and whether they should be blamed for the conflict. The attributions of responsibility and blame differ developmentally within the framework of Cognitive-Contextual Theory (Grych & Fincham, 1990). Research suggests that four-year-olds distinguish intentions in adult behavior. Children around the age of five are able to distinguish between intentional and unintentional outcomes. However, they adopt a positive bias in this distinction (Grych et al., 2000). Because they suppose the behaviors of their parents in a positive way, they find it difficult to blame their parents for a stressful event such as marital conflict, thus they are apt to blame themselves (Grych et al., 2003). It is observed that self-blame increases when parents punish children in case of conflict (Şendil, 2014). In the present study, where the mean age of the participants was five and a half, the fact that children directed their responsibility and blame attributions more towards their parents could be explained by the fact that they could stop the positive bias and make intention distinctions due to their age. In order to describe the types of parental conflict resolution that they perceive, the children were asked to explain what would happen after this according to the children. The results of the present study indicate that children have two types of responses. Some of the responses showed negative future expectations such as 'they will quarrel and no longer not talk to each other' and some of them indicated positive future expectations such as 'they will make peace, apologize, and be happy'.

The responses were coded under two categories; the ones stating a positive future were coded as "successful resolution" and the ones stating a negative future were coded as "unsuccessful resolution". For each card, half of the children reported a successful resolution. The Cognitive-Contextual Theory suggests that the way families resolve conflicts reduces the negative effects on children (Grych & Fincham, 2001). While insufficient conflict resolutions lead to more frequent conflict and tension in the family, sufficient conflict resolutions make parents become positive models for their children, and they contribute to the development of their problem-solving skills of them by this means. In this research, it was an anticipated result that participants gave answers include more successful resolutions when it is considered that they have had a low frequency of conflict within their family life. We can clarify this result by the fact that they do not consider

the conflict as a threat. Finally, the children were asked 'what would you do if you were them' regarding the picture cards. The aim here was to understand possible marital conflict coping behaviors. Children's responses involving behavioral intervention were coded as "problem-focused" and responses including all emotions, thoughts, and behavioral efforts to reduce the emotional impact of the conflict were coded as "emotion-focused" (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980). Cognitive-Contextual Theory defines children's attempts to intervene in marital conflict as problem-focused strategies. It is suggested that when children believe that the conflict will be further exacerbated and that they will be involved, their behavioral interventions; that is, their problem-focused strategies, will increase (Grych & Fincham, 1993). Studies suggest that coping behavior changes as children age. Preschool children appear to use problem-focused strategies compared to older children (Cummings, 1987). This is explained by the fact that preschool children's relationships with their peers are still developing compared to older children and that they are more dependent on their parents. In the present study, children showed similar rates of coping behaviors for each card. Although the number of problem-focused strategies is more than that of emotion-focused ones, there is no significant difference between them. Observing problem-focused coping behavior was an expected result due to the developmental period in which the participants have been. However, observing high emotion-focused coping behaviors at a high level can be explained by the exposure of participants attending preschool to the diversity of social environments.

As a result of the analyzes performed in line with the second purpose of the study, we found that there were significant relationships between the frequency of conflicts perceived by children, successful conflict resolution, the feeling of sadness experienced by children, and interpersonal problem-solving skills. Studies suggest that as parental conflict increases, social skill decreases (Spjeldnes et al., 2010). In the present study, findings revealed that there was a significant negative relationship between the perceived frequency of conflict and interpersonal problem-solving skills. Afterward, the variables were analyzed by multiple regression. The results showed that the sadness experienced by the child, and the involvement of the perceived parent's successful resolution, had the highest impact on interpersonal problem-solving skills. The effect of the perceived frequency of conflict became insignificant here and the variable was not included in the analysis. Emotions are influenced by children's cognitive assessments of the conflict. Studies have found that children often respond to marital conflict with feelings of sadness and anger and it has been shown that the expressed feeling of anger causes aggressive behavior in children (Cummings et al., 1991). In the present research, we can explain the absence of emotions such

as anger by the fact that the participants came from conflict-free families. The higher the frequency of conflict exposure, the more marital conflict predicts children's emotional responses. (Davies et al., 2012, 2021). It is quite notable that sadness positively changes interpersonal problem-solving skills. According to the results, as the feeling of sadness increases, interpersonal problem-solving skills also increase. A number of studies reveal that marital conflict affects children's interpersonal skills. For instance, Lindsey et al. (2009) found that children from families with high levels of marital conflict showed more relational and overt aggression with their peers. The aforementioned study conducted with adolescents revealed that positive emotional reciprocity between mother and adolescent showed a protective effect on the relationship. In the present study, we could obtain only the current emotion measurement of the children. There is statistically insignificant data on the mother. In addition to this limitation, since we presumed that preschool children are straighter to express the stress they experience, we speculated that the data received from them would present more solid results. When we consider the feeling of sadness expressed in the measurement as their ability to clearly express the emotion they are experiencing, it is an expected result that it positively predicts interpersonal problem-solving skills. The most sensitive age to marital conflict cannot be defined. However, the sensitivity to conflict resolution increases considerably around the age of six. Studies suggest that parents who successfully resolve conflicts are good role models for their children in interpersonal relationships and problem-solving (Grych & Fincham, 2001).

Well-resolved parental conflict can be a sign of positive family function, which can encourage children to be more compliant with their peers, such as problem-solving skills (Bryant & De Morris, 1992). Many studies are revealing that the resolution of marital conflicts is related to child compliance and reduces the negative effects of conflict on children (Cheung, 2021; Cummings et al., 2004; Warmuth et al., 2020). Kitzmann and Cohen (2003) examined the relationship between the dimensions of conflict that children perceive and the quality of friendship. The findings showed that the strongest relationship was between the quality of children's friendship and the quality of resolving marital conflict. Besides, it was found that there was a significant relationship between problem-solving in marital conflict and problem-solving in the conflict between friends. Goodman et al. (1999) found that the positive dimensions and outcomes used in the resolution of marital conflict increased the levels of children's social problem-solving skills. When we examine the results of the present study, we observe that the change in children's interpersonal problem-solving skills is mostly explained by the parental conflict resolution perceived by children. This data, consistent with the literature, has once again drawn attention to

the importance of conflicts which are successfully resolved by parents. The emergence of this result not only in families with high levels of conflict, but also in families with moderate levels of conflict is interpreted differently in Social Learning Theory; accordingly, the theory suggests that children's involvement is lower in families with high conflict and therefore they find a lower resolution (Gottman et al., 1996).

In line with the final purpose of the present study, we examined whether the interaction effect of the frequency of conflict perceived by children and the type of parental conflict resolution differentiated interpersonal problem-solving skills. First of all, the perceived frequency was divided into two groups (low/high), and the type of conflict resolution was divided into four groups. In the resolution type, the first group consists of those who perceive the successful resolution as high, and the unsuccessful resolution as low; the second group consists of those who perceive successful resolution as low and the unsuccessful resolution as high, the third group consists of those who perceive both types of resolutions as low, and the fourth group consists of those who perceive both types of solutions as high. Although the interaction effect was not significant, the main effect of the perceived type of parental conflict was significant. We examined which group constitutes this difference in conflict resolution. The results revealed that the interpersonal problem-solving skills of the group that perceived both types of conflict resolution low were significantly at the lowest score. This result showed that in addition to the importance of the type of conflict resolution for children, it is also important whether the conflict is resolved or not. Studies have revealed that children show lower negative emotional responses to resolved conflict than to unresolved conflict (Cummings et al., 1993; El-Sheikh & Cummings, 1995; El-Sheikh et al., 1996). A study investigated the reactions of children between the ages of 5 and 18 to resolved, partially resolved, and unresolved conflicts. The results of the study revealed that children react more angrily to unresolved conflicts than to partially resolved conflicts, and to partially resolved conflicts than to resolved conflicts. In other words, it was observed that children's negative reactions decreased due to conflict resolution (Cummings et al., 1991). All these results once again showed the importance of examining the impact of conflict resolution on children. Recent studies classify conflicts regarding the types of resolution. In these studies, where the effect of constructive and destructive resolutions in marital conflict on children was investigated, it is observed that destructive conflicts negatively affect children and constructive conflicts have been found to have a positive effect on children (Cheung, 2021; Lee et al., 2021; Warmuth et al., 2020).

## Conclusions

Studies investigating the perception of conflict in pre-

school children are quite limited in the literature in Turkey. One of the reasons for this is the limitation of measurement tools. In current research, child-related measurements are usually taken from parents or teachers. However, the Cognitive-Contextual Theory emphasized the importance of the evaluation being taken from the child, arguing that children's perception of conflict affects interpersonal relationships. However, the number of studies examining this relationship in the international literature is very limited. It draws attention that the relationship between preschool children's perception of conflict and their interpersonal problem-solving skills has never been investigated in Turkey. For all these reasons, the current study is important in terms of investigating the perception of conflict in preschool children and performing this with measurements taken from children. Conflict naturally exists in every marriage. The purpose here is not to eliminate marital conflict, but to try to understand how children can be protected from the negative effects of conflict. In this context, it is necessary to focus on the importance of conflict resolution. In line with the results obtained, we can state that the most important characteristic of marital conflict in the preschool age group is the parental conflict resolution perceived by the children.

Conflict resolution has been shown as the feature that explains children's interpersonal problem-solving skills at the highest level. The fact that the measurement of conflict perception taken from the mothers did not give any significant relationship once more showed the importance of taking the measurements from the child. Interpersonal problem-solving skills are the skills that individuals use throughout their lives that begin to develop from a young age.

The fact that the perception of conflict in children aged 5-6 years affects these skills shows that the relationship between these two variables is valuable to be investigated in future studies. One of the notable limitations of the present study was that we could not reach children living in high-conflict families. Comparing the measurements taken from the children from families with relatively low-frequency conflicts with the data from the high conflict will provide more reliable results. Another limitation was that we could not compare the measurements taken from the families with the measurements taken from the children. We postulate that it would be more beneficial to conduct further studies by taking measurements from fathers. Cognitive-Contextual Theory emphasizes the characteristics of children in the relationship between children's perceptions of conflict and their interpersonal skills. In the future, it will be worthwhile to investigate the effect of the perceived conflict resolution of children on conflict resolution among peers by considering the characteristics of children.

## DECLARATIONS

**Compliance with Ethical Standards** The required permissions were obtained from the İstanbul Provincial Directorate of National Education (Date: 20.01.2016, Number: 59090411-44E.700231).

**Conflicting of Interest** All authors of this article declare that they have no conflict of interest regarding the article.

## REFERENCES

- Ablow, J. C., Measelle, J. R., Cowan, P. A., & Cowan, C. P. (2009). Linking marital conflict and children's adjustment: The role of young children's perceptions. *Journal of Family Psychology, 23*(4), 485-499.
- Anlıak, Ş. (2004). *Farklı eğitim yaklaşımları uygulayan okul öncesi eğitim kurumlarında kişiler arası bilişsel problem çözme becerisi programının etkisinin incelenmesi* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Ege University, İzmir.
- Anlıak, Ş., & Dinçer, Ç. (2005). Farklı eğitim yaklaşımları uygulayan okul öncesi eğitim kurumlarına devam eden çocukların kişiler arası problem çözme becerilerinin değerlendirilmesi. *Ankara Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Fakültesi Dergisi, 38*(1), 149-166.
- Bryant, B. K., & DeMorris, K. A. (1992). Beyond parent-child relationships: Potential links between family environments and peer relations. In R. D. Parke & G. W. Ladd (Eds.), *Family-peer relationships: Modes of linkage* (pp. 159-190). Erlbaum.
- Chang, E. C., D'Zurilla, T. J., & Sanna, L. J. (Eds.). (2004). *Social problem solving: Theory, research, and training*. American Psychological Association.
- Cheung, R. Y. (2021). Constructive interparental conflict and child adjustment in the Chinese context: A moderated mediation model of emotional security and disintegration avoidance. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 30*(3), 733-745.
- Crockenberg, S., & Langrock, A. (2001). The role of specific emotions in children's responses to interparental conflict: A test of the model. *Journal of Family Psychology, 15*(2), 163-182.
- Cummings, E. M. (1987). Coping with background anger in early childhood. *Child Development, 58*(4), 976-984.
- Cummings, E. M., Ballard, M., & El-Sheikh, M. (1991). Responses of children and adolescents to interadult anger as a function of gender, age, and mode of expression. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, 37*, 543-560.
- Cummings, E. M., & Davies, P. T. (2002). Effects of marital conflict on children: Recent advances and emerging themes in process-oriented research. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 43*(1), 31-63.
- Cummings, E. M., & Davies, P. T. (2014). Evlilik çatışmasının belirli yönlerinin çocuklar üzerindeki etkileri. In G. Şendil (Ed.), & H. Sımsıkı (Trans.) *Çocuklar ve evlilik çatışması aile tartışması ve çözümünün etkisi* (pp. 62-86). Nobel. (Original work published 2011)
- Cummings, E. M., Goeke-Morey, M. C., & Papp, L. M. (2004). Everyday marital conflict and child aggression. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology, 32*(2), 191-202.

- Cummings, E. M., Simpson, K. S., & Wilson, A. (1993). Children's responses to interadult anger as a function of information about resolution. *Developmental Psychology*, 29(6), 978-985.
- Cummings, E. M., Vogel, D., Cummings, J. S., & El-Sheikh, M. (1989). Children's responses to different forms of expression of anger between adults. *Child Development*, 1392-1404.
- Davies, P. T., Cicchetti, D., & Martin, M. J. (2012). Toward greater specificity in identifying associations among interparental aggression, child emotional reactivity to conflict, and child problems. *Child Development*, 83(5), 1789-1804.
- Davies, P. T., & Cummings, E. M. (1994). Marital conflict and child adjustment: An emotional security hypothesis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 116, 387-411.
- Davies, P. T., Thompson, M. J., Hentges, R. F., Parry, L. Q., & Sturge-Apple, M. L. (2021). Interparental conflict as a quadratic predictor of children's reactivity to interparental conflict and school adjustment: Stealing effects or risk saturation? *Child Development*, 93(2), 594-611.
- Dinçer, Ç. (1995). *Anaokuluna devam eden 5 yaş grubu çocuklarına kisiler arası problem çözme becerilerinin kazandırılmasında eğitimin etkisinin incelenmesi* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Hacettepe University, Ankara.
- D'Zurilla, T. J., & Goldfried, M. R. (1971). Problem solving and behavior modification. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 78(1), 107-126.
- D'Zurilla, T. J., & Nezu, A. (1982). Social problem solving in adults. *Advances in Cognitive-Behavioral Research and Therapy*, 1, 201-274.
- El-Sheikh, M., Cummings, E. M., & Reiter, S. (1996). Preschoolers' responses to ongoing interadult conflict: The role of prior exposure to resolved versus unresolved arguments. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 24(5), 665-679.
- El-Sheikh, M., & Cummings, E. M. (1995). Children's responses to angry adult behavior as a function of experimentally manipulated exposure to resolved and unresolved conflict. *Social Development*, 4(1), 75-91.
- Folkman, S., & Lazarus, R. S. (1980). An analysis of coping in a middle-aged community sample. *Journal Of Health and Social Behavior*, 21(3), 219-239.
- Goodman, S. H., Barfoot, B., Frye, A. A., & Belli, A. M. (1999). Dimensions of marital conflict and children's social problem-solving skills. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 13(1), 33-45.
- Gottman, J. M., Katz, L. F., & Hooven, C. (1996). Parental meta-emotion philosophy and the emotional life of families: Theoretical models and preliminary data. *Journal Of Family Psychology*, 10(3), 243-268.
- Grych, J. H., & Fincham, F. D. (1990). Marital conflict and children's adjustment: A cognitive-contextual framework. *Psychological Bulletin*, 108(2), 267-90.
- Grych, J. H., & Fincham, F. D. (1993). Children's appraisals of marital conflict: Initial investigations of the cognitive-contextual framework. *Child Development*, 64(1), 215-230.
- Grych, J. H., & Fincham, F. D. (Ed.). (2001). *Child development and interparental conflict*. Cambridge University Press.
- Grych, J. H., Fincham, F. D., Jouriles, E. N., & McDonald, R. (2000). Interparental conflict and child adjustment: Testing the mediational role of appraisals in the cognitive-contextual framework. *Child Development*, 71(6), 1648-1661.
- Grych, J. H., Harold, G. T., & Miles, C. J. (2003). A prospective investigation of appraisals as mediators of the link between interparental conflict and child adjustment. *Child Development*, 74(4), 1176-1193.
- Grych, J. H., Seid, M., & Fincham, F. D. (1992). Assessing marital conflict from the child's perspective: The Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict Scale. *Child Development*, 63(3), 558-572.
- Harold, G. T., & Sellers, R. (2018). Annual research review: Interparental conflict and youth psychopathology: An evidence review and practice focused update. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 59(4), 374-402.
- Jenkins, J. M., & Buccioni, J. M. (2000). Children's understanding of marital conflict and the marital relationship. *The Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines*, 41(2), 161-168.
- Keller, P. S., Cummings, E. M., & Davies, P. T. (2005). The role of marital discord and parenting in relations between parental problem drinking and child adjustment. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines*, 46(9), 943-951.
- Kızıldağ, Ö., & Şendil, G. (2006). Evlilik çatışması ve çocuk davranış problemleri arasındaki ilişkilerin bilişsel bağlamsal çerçeve açısından incelenmesi. *Psikoloji Çalışmaları*, 26, 1-20.
- Kitzmann, K. M., & Cohen, R. (2003). Parents' versus children's perceptions of interparental conflict as predictors of children's friendship quality. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 20(5), 689-700.
- Lee, J. Y., Pace, G. T., Lee, S. J., & Altschul, I. (2021). The associations of constructive and destructive interparental conflict to child well-being among low-income families. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 36(15-16), 7523-7546.
- Lindsey, E. W., Chambers, J. C., Frabutt, J. M., & Mackinnon-Lewis, C. (2009). Marital conflict and adolescents' peer aggression: The mediating and moderating role of mother-child emotional reciprocity. *Family Relations*, 58(5), 593-606.
- Peksaygılı, M., & Güre, A. (2008). Eşler arasındaki çatışma ile erken ergenlik dönemindeki çocukların uyum davranışları: Algılanan çatışmanın aracı ve düzenleyici rolü. *Türk Psikoloji Dergisi*, 23(61), 43-62.
- Porter, B., & O'Leary, K. D. (1980). O'Leary-Porter Scale. *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*.
- Rhoades, K. A. (2008). Children's responses to interparental conflict: A meta-analysis of their associations with child adjustment. *Child Development*, 79(6), 1942-1956.
- Shure, M. B. (1992). *I can problem solve: An interpersonal cognitive problem-solving program. Kindergarten and primary grades*. Research Press, 2612 N.
- Shure, M. B., & Spivack, G. (1980). Interpersonal problem solving as a mediator of behavioral adjustment in preschool and kindergarten children. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 1(1), 29-44.
- Spjeldnes, S., Koeske, G., & Sales, E. (2010). Teacher support as a buffer between interparental conflict and child social skills. *Early Child Development and Care*, 180(3), 335-346.
- Şendil, G. (1999). *Çocukların anne babanın evlilik çatışmasını algılayışı* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation).

- on). İstanbul University, İstanbul.
- Şendil, G. (2014). *Ebeveyn çatışmasının çocuklar üzerindeki etkileri* (1<sup>st</sup> ed.). Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık.
- Şendil, T. G., & Kızıldağ, Ö. (2003). Çocuk ve ergenlerde ebeveyn evlilik çatışması algısı. *Çocuk ve Gençlik Ruh Sağlığı Dergisi*, 10(2), 58-66.
- Ulu, P. İ., & Fıfıloğlu, H. (2004). Çocukların Evlilik Çatışmasını Algılaması Ölçeği'nin geçerlik ve güvenirlik çalışması. *Türk Psikoloji Yazıları*, 7(14), 61-75.
- Van Eldik, W. M., de Haan, A. D., Parry, L. Q., Davies, P. T., Luijk, M. P., Arends, L. R., & Prinzie, P. (2020). The interparental relationship: Meta-analytic associations with children's maladjustment and responses to interparental conflict. *Psychological Bulletin*, 146(7), 553-594.
- Warmuth, K. A., Cummings, E. M., & Davies, P. T. (2020). Constructive and destructive interparental conflict, problematic parenting practices, and children's symptoms of psychopathology. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 34(3), 301-311.
- Xu, F., Chen, X., Xing, H., & Wang, H. (2023). Interparental conflict and Chinese children's social development. *Journal of Family Issues*, 44(1), 165-186.
- Zemp, M., Bodenmann, G., & Cummings, E. M. (2016). The significance of interparental conflict for children. *European Psychologist*, 21, 99-108.