

# Examining the Relationship Between Social-Emotional Adaptation and Competition Types of Children Aged 60-72 Months

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## Abstract

Social-emotional development plays a crucial role in an individual's life. Social-emotional adaptation and a positive feeling of competition are elements of social-emotional development that intensively progress at early ages. The purpose of this study is to analyze the relationship between social-emotional adaptation and competition types of 60–72-month-old children. In this study, the survey model was applied, and the sample was selected via convenience sampling. 110 children who attended preschool education institutions in the 2018-2019 academic year participated in this research after participation approval forms were obtained. "Marmara Social Emotional Adaptation Scale" and "Preschool Competition Questionnaire" were data collection tools. After convenient statistical tests were performed, a statistically significant relationship between social-emotional adaptation and competition types of children was explored. Additionally, a significant relationship was observed in social-emotional adaptation with regard to gender and the mother's educational background, and a significant relationship was found in competition types with regard to the mother's and father's educational background. Recommendations were provided for preschool teachers and further research.

**Keywords:** preschool education, social-emotional adaptation, competition in preschool.

## 60-72 Aylık Çocukların Sosyal Duygusal Uyumları ve Rekabet Türleri Arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi

### Öz

Sosyal duygusal gelişim, bireyin yaşamında önemli bir rol oynamaktadır. Sosyal duygusal uyum ve olumlu bir rekabet duygusu, erken yaşlarda yoğun bir şekilde ilerleyen sosyal duygusal gelişimin unsurları arasındadır. Bu çalışmanın amacı, 60-72 aylık çocukların sosyal duygusal uyumları ile rekabet türleri arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektir. Tarama modeli kullanılan çalışmanın örnekleme kolay erişilebilirlik esasına göre uygun örnekleme yoluyla belirlenmiştir. Bu çalışmaya 2018-2019 eğitim-öğretim yılında İstanbul ilindeki anaokullarında öğrenim görmekte olan 110 çocuk "Katılım Onam Formu" temin edildikten sonra katılmıştır. "Marmara Sosyal Duygusal Uyum Ölçeği" ve "Okul Öncesi Rekabet Ölçeği" araştırmada kullanılan veri toplama araçlarıdır. Uygun istatistiksel analizler yapıldıktan sonra çocukların sosyal duygusal uyumları ve rekabet türleri arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir ilişki olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Cinsiyet ve anne eğitim durumu değişkenlerine göre sosyal duygusal uyumda, anne ve baba eğitim durumu değişkenlerine göre ise rekabet türlerinde anlamlı ilişkiler saptanmıştır. Okul öncesi öğretmenleri için ve gelecek araştırmalar için öneriler sunulmuştur.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** okul öncesi eğitim, sosyal duygusal uyum, okul öncesinde rekabet.

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## INTRODUCTION

Development follows a holistic path (Karatel, 2019). Cognitive, physical, social-emotional, and language development phases are not separated domains; they have impacts on each other in both positive and negative ways. Social-emotional development, just like the other developmental areas, starts to emerge at an early age (Kargı, 2016). Establishing relations with people, choosing environmentally compatible behaviors, understanding social clues and responding to them appropriately, and recognizing, understanding, and naming the emotions are some abilities of a child in social-emotional development phase. Children who have completed their social-emotional development in a healthy way can successfully establish relationships with peers and other people and live in harmony with society (Kargı, 2016; Bakioğlu, 2014). Considering that developmental areas grow in a holistic way, it is very important for children to experience social-emotional development in a healthy and successful manner (Yeşilyaprak, 2018; Kargı, 2016; Bakioğlu, 2014).

One of the skills regulated in connection with social-emotional development is social-emotional adaptation (Kargı, 2016). As a social being, a child needs to establish a balance between personal needs, urges, intents and conditions, and expectations of the social environment (Sevgi-Özden, 2006; Gençöz, 1998). These personal needs or urges, which can be emotional or physical, are not stable. Considering that the social environment also carries conditions that are prone to change, balancing individual needs and environmental conditions is an active process. The conceptual definition of this balancing task is the adaptation process (Sevgi-Özden, 2006). Experiencing the adaptation process in a healthy way would support social-emotional development (Gençöz, 1998). Social-emotional adaptation develops in the preschool period (Bağcı-Çetin, 2021) in which personality begins to emerge and get formed (Özdemir et al., 2012). Social relations and interpersonal interactions have an impact on personality development at early ages. Social-emotional adaptation experiences are built on the child's past adaptation experiences, and the care and education given to the child at early ages. The adaptation behaviors and patterns in the preschool period also give clues about the adaptation processes likely to be experienced in the future (Sroufe et al., 2005). Adaptation is a concept that will be encountered not only in the preschool period but throughout life (Senemoğlu, 2015). The care given to the child in early ages has an effective power in the adaptation processes in adulthood (Cornell, 2006-2007).

Children interact with their social environment and especially with their peers (Cowie, 2012). This interaction is an attempt to socialize for the child, and the child who shows social enterprise behaviors makes an effort to communicate with and reach and adapt to his/her peers. According to Erikson, this sense of entrepreneurship experienced at early ages is valuable in terms of development of self, as it will make children feel succeed (Trawick-Smith, 2014). Therefore, it is known that social-emotional adaptation skills also have an effect on a child's perception and development of self (Özkan & Aksoy, 2017).

Another element of social-emotional development is competition behaviors at early ages. If the environment includes the competitive factors that result in success, it contributes to the development of a child's self (Ames et al., 1977). The feeling of competition, which is becoming much more common in today's societies and educational environments, is an emotion and a type of behavior that exists in human nature (Kargı, 2016; Sönmez, 2016). It is known that competitive attitude affects human behavior and life from many dimensions (Martin & Larsen, 1976). Competitive behavior, which is also seen in the socialization processes of children (Sheridan & Williams, 2006), is defined as the tendency to perform an action better (Tsiakara & Digelidis, 2012). While the feeling of competition enables a child to concentrate on a task better, being exposed to a competitive environment over a long period may negatively affect the child's social-emotional adaptation (Sönmez, 2016).

Research on competitive behavior seen in preschool children is quite limited (Uyanık-Balat et al., 2017). Paquette et al. (2013) developed The Preschool Competition Questionnaire to evaluate competitive behavior in preschool-aged children. They categorize children's competition styles into four. Other-referenced competition is comparing one's own performance with the success of another. This type of competition motivates children to perform better than others. Task-oriented competition includes competitive behaviors exhibited by children to improve and develop themselves by comparing with their own performances. Another competition style is conceptualized as the maintenance of dominance hierarchy. The maintenance of dominance hierarchy which is directly related to the social status of children, can be defined as the effort to protect the priority of children in accessing the resources they want to achieve.

Supporting the social and emotional development of children is very valuable both in terms of their individual and social beings (Kargı, 2016). According to social learning theory, observation and role modeling are the ways of learning for children (Bandura, 1977). If the child cannot witness and observe good examples of social

behaviors in the home environment, being motivated from the outside will not be enough. If there are no adults in the family from whom the child can learn social behaviors by taking role models, it becomes very difficult for the child to adapt to social contexts (Yavuzer, 2018). At this point, preschool education plays a critical role in the socialization process in which all these adaptations and competition styles take place (Bakioğlu, 2014). There are various studies on social-emotional adaptation of preschool children (Bilici, 2019; Aydın, 2018; Durmuşoğlu-Saltalı et al., 2018; Maliyok, 2018; Zelyurt & Göktürk-İnce, 2018; Buluş & Öztürk-Samur, 2017; Günindi, 2013; Ramazan & Ünsal, 2012); while the number of studies examining the competition behavior observed in preschool children is relatively higher abroad, the literature is quite limited in Türkiye. Yet, no research examining the relationship between social adaptation and competition at early ages exists in the literature as to the knowledge of the author. There may be a relationship between the social-emotional adaptation, which is directly related to the social-emotional development of the child, and the competition style of the child. Therefore, it is thought that examining the relationship between these variables would contribute to the field.

### The Aim of the Study

This research aims to analyze the relationship between the social-emotional adaptation and competition styles of 60–72-month-old children, and the social-emotional adaptation and competition styles of children with regard to various variables.

### Research Questions

The questions to be answered in this research are as follows:

1. Do the social-emotional adaptation and competition styles of 60–72-month-old children differ significantly in terms of their demographic characteristics (gender, age, parental educational level)?
2. Is there a significant relationship between the social-emotional adaptation and competition styles of 60–72-month-old children?

## METHOD

### Research Design

This research was based on a quantitative model. The descriptive survey model, which aims to define and determine the problem situation (Erkuş, 2013), was used since the study aimed to explore the relationship between the social-emotional adaptation and competition styles of children. The relational survey model, which is a subtype of the descriptive survey model, was used in this study. The relational survey model is used in studies conducted to explore if there is a relationship between two or more variables or not, and if there is one, to determine the strength of the relationship (Büyükoztürk et al., 2016).

### Population and Sample

60-72-month-old children who attended preschool education institutions in the 2018-2019 academic year in Üsküdar district of Istanbul were the population of the research. The sample of the study was determined based on the convenience sampling method. Convenience sampling is a type of sampling method that enables researchers to reach the volunteers who want to participate in the research (Aziz, 2014; Erkuş, 2013). 110 children who were randomly selected from 12 classes of 7 preschools participated in the research. A total of 10 students, 5 girls and 5 boys from each class, participated in the study. The demographic information of the participated children is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequency and Percentages of Children's Demographic Information

Groups	<i>f</i>	%	Groups	<i>f</i>	%		
Gender	Girl	54	49.09	60 to 66 months old children	56	50.91	
	Boy	56	50.91	67 to 72 months old children	54	49.09	
	Total	110	100	Total	110	100	
Mother's Educational Level	Middle School	22	20.00	Father's Educational Level	Middle School	20	18.20
	High School	31	28.20		High School	36	32.70
	Undergraduate and Graduate	54	49.10		Undergraduate and Graduate	51	46.40
Total	107	97.30	Total	107	97.30		

As presented in Table 1, 49.09% (N=54) of the children were girls, while 50.91% (N=56) were boys. While 50.91% (N=56.00) were 60 to 66 months old children, 49.09% (N=54) were 67 to 72 months old children. 20% (N=22) of the mothers are middle school graduates, 28.20% (N=31) are high school graduates, 49.10% (N=54) are undergraduate and graduates. While 18.20% (N=20) of the fathers are middle school graduates, 32.70% (N=36) are high school graduates, 46.40% (N=51) are undergraduate and graduates.

### **Data Collection Tools**

A personal information form was used to receive the demographic information of the children, the Marmara Social Emotional Adaptation Scale (MSEAS) was used to evaluate social-emotional adaptation of children, and the Preschool Competition Questionnaire was used to evaluate competition styles of children. The personal information form, which includes items about the demographic characteristics of the children (gender, age, and education level of the parents), was prepared by the researcher.

The original MSEAS was developed by Önder et al. (2004) to decide social-emotional adaptation of children aged 6.0-6.11 years. Güven and Işık (2006) made an adaptation study of the MSEAS for 5-year-olds. The study group consisted of 405 girls and 471 boys, a total of 876 children. The adapted scale consists of 19 items. The teacher is expected to evaluate a child's observable behaviors according to the 3-point likert rating scale. The reliability coefficient of the scale was found to be high. While performing MSEAS reliability analysis, resistance was also made. The findings revealed that the test-retest reliability of the scale is at a satisfactory level. While there were 6 factors in the original scale, 4 factors were included as a result of factor analysis in the adapted scale: Acting in compliance with the requirements of social life (ACRSL, 9 items), reacting compliance with social life (RCSL, 4 items), interaction with peers (IP, 3 items), and treating the social environment positively (TSEP, 3 items).

The Preschool Competition Questionnaire was developed by Paquette et al. (2013) to evaluate the competition styles of children aged 3-6. The scale consists of 17 items expressing observable competitive behaviors. In the scale which needs to be filled by teachers, participants are expected to evaluate children's behavior according to the 6-point rating scale. The scale consists of three sub-scales: other-referenced competition (ORC, 8 items), task-oriented competition (TOC, 6 items), and maintenance of dominance hierarchy (MDH, 3 items). In this scale, children's scores are evaluated for each sub-scale separately (Uyanık-Balat et al., 2017; Paquette et al., 2013). Preschool Competition Questionnaire was adapted into Turkish by Uyanık-Balat et al. (2017) and Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients were found as .96, .92 and .91 for each sub-scale, respectively. As a result of the test-retest reliability coefficient calculation, .95, .92 and .85 values were obtained for each sub-scale, respectively. Findings reveal that the reliability of the scale is at a very good level.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

Data collection procedure began with obtaining the necessary permissions. First, permission for the use of MSEAS and the Preschool Competition Questionnaire were obtained. After selecting the preschools, the school principals and teachers were informed about the research, and it was clarified that the participation would be on a voluntary basis. A total of 10 students, 5 girls and 5 boys, were randomly selected from each class. The purpose of randomly selecting students was to eliminate the possible judgments that teachers may have. After the children were selected, the participation approval forms were sent to their parents. The participation approval forms that informed parents about the research and were filled by parents were received back. Personal information form, the MSEAS and the Preschool Competition Questionnaire were introduced to the teachers, and they were asked to fill the forms for each child. After the forms were received from the teachers, the data were examined and checked for missing data. The missing information was completed with the help of negotiation with teachers.

### **Data Analysis**

Data were analyzed by using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 23.0). To determine which statistical analyses need to be conducted, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was performed to find out whether the data were normally distributed or not. The results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test performed on MEAS and the Preschool Competition Questionnaire showed that the data from MEAS and its sub-scales did not have a normal distribution since  $p < .05$ . On the other hand, total scores for the Preschool Competition Questionnaire according to gender variable (girl=.200, boy=.200;  $p > .05$ ), age variable (60-66 months=.200, 67-72 months=.200;  $p > .05$ ), mother's educational level variable (middle school=.200, high school=.200;  $p > .05$ ), and father's educational level variable (middle school=.200, high school=.200, undergraduate and graduate=.200;  $p > .05$ ) were found to be normally distributed. According to age variable the TOC sub-scale for the Preschool Competition Questionnaire was also found to be normally distributed (60-66 months=.189, 67-72 months=.200;  $p > .05$ ). In accordance with the results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, for the data which was normally distributed ( $p > .05$ ), parametric tests were used and, for the data which was not normally distributed ( $p < .05$ ), non-parametric tests were used.

Descriptive statistics were used while examining the social-emotional adaptation and competition styles of children. Percentages, frequencies, means, and standard deviations were used as descriptive statistics to analyze

the relationship between children's social-emotional adaptation and competition styles with demographic variables; t-test, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), Kruskal-Wallis H test, and Mann-Whitney U test were used to examine how social-emotional adaptation and competition styles of children differed according to demographic variables. After the tests were conducted, post hoc analyses were carried out when necessary. The Spearman rank correlation coefficient analysis was conducted to test whether there was a relationship between children's social-emotional adaptation and competition styles.

### Research Ethics

To carry out this research at preschools in Üsküdar district of Istanbul, research consent was received from the Istanbul Provincial Directorate of National Education. Preschool principals, teachers, and parents were informed about the purpose of the study and research procedure. Data were obtained from voluntary participants. Parents' approval was obtained through participation approval forms, and data were collected after receiving approval from parents. Universal ethical rules were followed by the researchers in this study. However, approval of an ethics committee could not be obtained since the data were collected in 2019.

## FINDINGS

Five tables presented below (Table 2 to Table 6) show the results of the tests that were carried out to determine whether social-emotional adaptation varies according to demographic variables such as gender, age, and parental educational level of children.

Table 2. Mann-Whitney U Results for the Relationship Between Social-Emotional Adaptation and Gender

Sub-scale	Gender	N	Order Mean	Order Total	U	Z	p
ACRSL	Girl	54	66.70	3602.00	907.00	-3.71	.000*
	Boy	56	44.70	2503.00			
RCSL	Girl	54	52.89	2856.00	1371.00	-0.86	.388
	Boy	56	58.02	3249.00			
IP	Girl	54	53.39	2883.00	1398.00	-0.75	.452
	Boy	56	57.54	3222.00			
TSEP	Girl	54	54.59	2967.00	1482.00	-0.21	.833
	Boy	56	56.04	3138.00			
MSEAS Total	Girl	54	60.04	3242.00	1267.00	-1.47	.141
	Boy	56	51.13	2863.00			

As presented in Table 2, the ACRSL sub-scale of 60–72-month-old children differs significantly according to gender ( $z=3.71$ ;  $p<.05$ ). Girls were found to be more inclined to ACRSL when compared to boys ( $\bar{X}_{girl}>\bar{X}_{boy}$ ). A statistically non-significant difference was found for other sub-scales.

Table 3. Mann-Whitney U Results for the Relationship Between Social-Emotional Adaptation and Age

Sub-scale	Age	N	Order Mean	Order Total	U	Z	p
ACRSL	60-66 months	56	59.58	3336.50	1283.50	-1.40	.161
	60-72 months	54	51.27	2768.50			
RCSL	60-66 months	56	53.42	2991.50	1395.50	-0.71	.476
	60-72 months	54	57.66	3113.50			
IP	60-66 months	56	54.26	3038.50	1442.50	-0.45	.646
	60-72 months	54	56.79	3066.50			
TSEP	60-66 months	56	54.21	3036.00	1440.00	-0.50	.613
	60-72 months	54	56.83	3069.00			
MSEAS Total	60-66 months	56	55.79	3124.00	1496.00	-0.09	.923
	60-72 months	54	55.20	2981.00			

As presented in Table 3, social-emotional adaptation of children aged 60–72 months did not differ significantly according to their ages.

Table 4. Kruskal-Wallis H Analysis Results for the Relationship Between Social-Emotional Adaptation and Mother's Educational Level

Sub-scale	Mother's Educational Level	N	Order Mean	X <sup>2</sup>	df	p
ACRSL	Middle School	22	57.45	0.36	2	.832
	High School	31	53.45			
	Undergraduate and Graduate	54	52.91			
	Total	107				
RCSL	Middle School	22	62.23	2.17	2	.338
	High School	31	50.31			
	Undergraduate and Graduate	54	52.77			
	Total	107				
IP	Middle School	22	67.16	6.05	2	.048*
	High School	31	50.90			
	Undergraduate and Graduate	54	50.42			
	Total	107				
TSEP	Middle School	22	60.50	1.69	2	.428
	High School	31	53.10			
	Undergraduate and Graduate	54	51.87			
	Total	107				
MSEAS Total	Middle School	22	64.14	3.20	2	.202
	High School	31	49.29			
	Undergraduate and Graduate	54	52.57			
	Total	107				

As presented in Table 4, the social-emotional adaptations of 60-72-month-old children differ significantly according to mother's educational level in the IP sub-scale ( $\chi^2=6.05$ ;  $df=2$ ;  $p<.05$ ). After this finding, post-hoc analyzes were applied to further understand which group differed significantly from the others. The homogeneity of the variances test did not show a homogeneous distribution; therefore, the Tamhane's T2 test was used. The Tamhane's T2 test results are demonstrated in Table 5.

Table 5. Tamhane's T2 Test Results for the Relationship Between Social-Emotional Adaptation and Mother's Educational Level

(I) Mother's Educational Level	(J) Mother's Educational Level	Mean Difference (I-J)	p
Middle School	High School	.60	.060
	Undergraduate and Graduate	.80	.008*
High School	Middle School	-.60	.060
	Undergraduate and Graduate	.19	.867
Undergraduate and Graduate	Middle School	.25	.008*
	High School	.28	.867

As presented in Table 5, the significant difference between IP sub-scale of children and their mother's educational level was between mothers with middle school degrees and mothers with undergraduate and graduate degrees. Children with mothers who graduated from middle school were found to have more interactions with peers when compared to children with mothers who graduated from undergraduate and graduate school. A statistically non-significant difference was observed between the other groups.

Table 6. Kruskal-Wallis H Analysis Results for the Relationship Between Social-Emotional Adaptation and Father's Educational Level

Sub-scale	Father's Educational Level	N	Order Mean	X <sup>2</sup>	df	p
ACRSL	Middle School	20	57.55	0.35	2	.836
	High School	36	53.72			
	Undergraduate and Graduate	51	52.80			
	Total	107				
RSCL	Middle School	20	55.58	1.00	2	.606
	High School	36	57.38			
	Undergraduate and Graduate	51	51.00			
	Total	107				
IP	Middle School	20	56.88	2.26	2	.322
	High School	36	58.43			
	Undergraduate and Graduate	51	49.75			
	Total	107				

TSEP	Middle School	20	58.53	1.24	2	.536
	High School	36	55.44			
	Undergraduate and Graduate	51	51.21			
	Total	107				
MSEAS Total	Middle School	20	58.13	0.63	2	.729
	High School	36	54.79			
	Undergraduate and Graduate	51	51.82			
	Total	107				

As presented in Table 6, social-emotional adaptation of 60-72-month-old children did not differ significantly according to father's educational level. The tables given below (Table 7 to Table 17) show the results of the tests that were carried out to determine whether competition styles of children aged 60-72 months vary accordance with their demographic characteristics such as gender, age, and parental educational level.

Table 7. Mann-Whitney U Results for the Relationship Between Competition Styles and Gender

Sub-scale	Gender	N	Order Mean	Order Total	U	Z	p
ORC	Girl	54	52.27	2822.50	1337.50	-1.04	.296
	Boy	56	58.62	3282.50			
TOC	Girl	54	61.26	3308.00	1201.00	-1.86	.062
	Boy	56	49.95	2797.00			
MDH	Girl	54	50.30	2716.00	1231.00	-1.69	.089
	Boy	56	60.52	3389.00			

As presented in Table 7, a statistically non-significant difference was found between the sub-scales of competition styles of children and gender variable.

Table 8. Mann-Whitney U Results for the Relationship Between Competition Styles and Gender

Score	Gender	N	$\bar{x}$	ss	t Test		
					t	sd	p
Total Preschool Competition Questionnaire	Girl	54	65.42	9.47	-.684	108	.495
	Boy	56	66.73	10.50			

As presented in Table 8, a statistically non-significant difference was found between the total score of competition styles of children and gender.

Table 9. Mann-Whitney U Results for the Relationship Between Competition Styles and Age

Sub-scale	Age	N	Order Mean	Order Total	U	Z	p
ORC	60-66 months	56	50.91	2822.50	1255.00	-1.53	.124
	67-72 months	54	60.26	3282.50			
MDH	60-66 months	56	54.42	3308.00	1451.50	-0.36	.714
	67-72 months	54	56.62	2797.00			

As presented in Table 9, a statistically non-significant difference was found between gender and the ORC and MDH sub-scales.

Table 10. Independent Group t-Test Results for the Relationship Between Competition Styles and Age

Score	Age	N	$\bar{x}$	ss	t Test		
					t	sd	p
TOC	60-66 months	56	27.37	4.82	.456	108	.649
	67-72 months	54	26.96	4.63			
Preschool Competition Questionnaire Total	60-66 months	56	65.42	9.47	-.592	108	.555
	67-72 months	54	66.73	10.50			

As presented in Table 10, a statistically non-significant difference was found between gender and the TOC sub-scale and total scores.

Table 11. Kruskal-Wallis H Analysis Results for the Relationship Between Competition Styles and Mother's Educational Level

Score	Mother's Educational Level	N	Order Mean	X <sup>2</sup>	df	p
ORC	Middle School	22	58.48	1,93	2	.380
	High School	31	47.68			
	Undergraduate and Graduate	54	55.81			
	Total	107				
MDH	Middle School	22	74.55	12.44	2	.002*
	High School	31	48.18			
	Undergraduate and Graduate	54	48.97			
	Total	107				
Preschool Competition Questionnaire Total	Middle School	22	65.80	7.61	2	.022*
	High School	31	42.52			
	Undergraduate and Graduate	54	55.79			
	Total	107				

As presented in Table 11, the MDH sub-scale differs significantly in accordance with the mother's educational level ( $\chi^2=12,44$ ;  $df=2$ ;  $p<.05$ ). Competition styles differ significantly according to the mother's educational level ( $\chi^2=7.61$ ;  $df=2$ ;  $p<.05$ ). After this finding, post-hoc analyzes were applied to further understand which group differed significantly from the others. After checking the homogeneity of the variances, the homogeneous distribution was not detected, and the Tamhane's T2 test was applied. Tamhane's T2 test results are presented in Table 12 and Table 13.

Table 12. Tamhane's T2 Test Results for the Relationship Between Competition Styles and Mother's Educational Level

(I) Mother's Educational Level	(J) Mother's Educational Level	Mean Difference (I-J)	p
Middle School	High School	2.66	.002*
	Undergraduate and Graduate	2.61	.000*
High School	Middle School	-2.66	.002*
	Undergraduate and Graduate	-.05	1.000
Undergraduate and Graduate	Middle School	-2.61	.000*
	High School	.05	1.000

As presented in Table 12, the scores in MDH sub-scale differs between the children whose mothers with high school degree and middle school degree. A significant difference was found between mothers who graduated from high school and mothers who graduated from middle school, in favor of mothers who graduated from middle school. The MDH sub-scale differs between the children's competition styles of children whose mothers with undergraduate and graduate degree and with middle school degree. The significant difference was in favor of mothers who graduated from middle school.

Table 13. Tamhane's T2 Test Results for the Relationship Between Competition Styles and Mother's Educational Level

(I) Mother's Educational Level	(J) Mother's Educational Level	Mean Difference (I-J)	p
Middle School	High School	7.28	.035*
	Undergraduate and Graduate	3.08	.543
High School	Middle School	-7.28	.035*
	Undergraduate and Graduate	-4.20	.173
Undergraduate and Graduate	Middle School	-3.08	.543
	High School	4.20	.173

As presented in Table 13, there is a significant difference between the total score of preschool competition questionnaire of children whose mothers with high school degree and middle school degree in favor of mothers who have high school degree.

Table 14. One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Results for the Relationship Between Competition Styles and Mother's Educational Level

Source of Variation	Sums of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between Groups	83.30	2	41.65	1.985	.143
Within Groups	2182.11	104	20.98		
Total	2265.42	106			



As presented in Table 14, a statistically non-significant difference was found between the competition styles and the mother's educational level.

Table 15. Kruskal-Wallis H Analysis Results for the Relationship Between Competition Styles and Father's Educational Level

Score	Father's Educational Level	N	Order Mean	X <sup>2</sup>	df	p
ORC	Middle School	20	60.93	1.24	2	.536
	High School	36	51.86			
	Undergraduate and Graduate	51	52.79			
	Total	107				
MDH	Middle School	20	70.23	7.24	2	.027*
	High School	36	52.64			
	Undergraduate and Graduate	51	48.60			
	Total	107				
TOC	Middle School	20	58.23	1.79	2	.409
	High School	36	48.47			
	Undergraduate and Graduate	51	56.25			
	Total	107				

As presented in Table 15, the MDH sub-scale differs significantly according to the father's educational level variable ( $\chi^2=7.24$ ;  $df=2$ ;  $p<.05$ ). After this finding, post-hoc analyses were applied to explore which groups caused the significant difference. After checking the homogeneity of the variances, the homogeneous distribution was not detected, and the Tamhane's T2 test was used. Tamhane's T2 test results are presented in Table 16.

Table 16. Tamhane's T2 Test Results for the Relationship Between Competition Styles and Father's Educational Level

(I) Father's Educational Level	(J) Father's Educational Level	Mean Difference (I-J)	p
Middle School	High School	1.86	.062
	Undergraduate and Graduate	2.17	.008*
High School	Middle School	-1.86	.062
	Undergraduate and Graduate	.31	.962
Undergraduate and Graduate	Middle School	-2.17	.008*
	High School	-.31	.962

As presented in Table 16, a statistically significant difference was found between the scores of MDH sub-scale of children with fathers whose educational level is middle school and whose educational level is undergraduate and graduate. The children with fathers who graduated from middle school were found to have more MDH when compared to other groups.

Table 17. One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Analysis Results for the Relationship Between Competition Styles and Father's Educational Level

Source of Variation	Sums of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between Groups	256.08	2	128.04	1.271	.285
Within Groups	10474.81	104	100.71		
Total	10730.89	106			

As presented in Table 17, a statistically non-significant difference was found between the total scores of competition styles of children and the variable of father's educational level.

Table 18. Spearman Rank Differences Correlation Coefficient Analysis Related to the Relationship Between Social-Emotional Adaptation and Competition Styles

Sub-scales	ORC			TOC			MDH		
	N	r	p	N	r	p	N	r	p
ACRSL	110	-.541	.000*	110	.475	.000*	110	-.287	.002*
RCSL	110	.204	.032*	110	.453	.000*	110	.46	.000*
IP	110	.028	.770	110	.222	.020*	110	.31	.001*
TSEP	110	-.090	.349	110	.385	.000*	110	.215	.024*

\* $p<.05$

As presented in Table 18, a moderate and negative relationship was found at a statistically significant level of .05 between ACSRSL life sub-scale and ORC sub-scale ( $p=.05$ ,  $r=-.541$ ). With this finding, as the children's level of behaving in compliance with the requirements of social life increases, their competition focused on others

decreases. There was a positive and weak correlation at a statistically significant level of .05 between the ACSRL sub-scale and ORC sub-scale ( $p=.05$ ,  $r=.204$ ). With this finding, as the children's level of appropriate response according to the social situation increases, their competition focused on others decreases. Statistically, a moderate and positive relationship was found at .05 significance level between ACSRL sub-scale and TOC sub-scale ( $p<.05$ ,  $r=.475$ ). With this finding, the level of children's behavior in compliance with the requirements of social life increases, their competitiveness for the task increases. Statistically, a moderate and positive relationship was found at .05 significance level between RCSL sub-scale and TOC sub-scale ( $p<.05$ ,  $r=.453$ ). With this finding, as the children's level of appropriate response according to the social situation increases, their competitiveness for the task increases. There was a weak and positive relationship at a statistically significant level of 0.05 between IP sub-scale and TOC sub-scale ( $p<.05$ ,  $r=.222$ ). With this finding, as children's interaction levels with peers increase, their competitiveness for the task increases. Statistically, a moderate relationship was found between TSEP sub-scale and TOC sub-scale ( $p<.05$ ,  $r=.385$ ). With this finding, it can be concluded that as the level of children's positive approach to the social environment increases, their competitiveness for the task increases. A negative and weak correlation was found at .05 significance level between ACSRL sub-scale and MDH sub-scale ( $p<.05$ ,  $r=-.287$ ). With this finding, it can be concluded that as the level of children's behavior in compliance with the requirements of social life increases, their rivalry in the hierarchy of dominance decreases. Statistically, a moderate and positive correlation was found at .05 significance level between RCSL sub-scale and MDH sub-scale ( $p<.05$ ,  $r=.46$ ). With this finding, as the children's level of appropriate response according to the social situation increases, their competitiveness in the hierarchy of dominance protection increases. Statistically, a weak and positive relationship was found at .05 significance level between IP sub-scale and MDH sub-scale ( $p<.05$ ,  $r=.31$ ). With this finding, as children's interaction levels with peers increase, their competitiveness in the hierarchy of dominance protection increases. It was explored that there is a moderate and positive relationship at a significance level of .05 between TSEP sub-scale and MDH sub-scale ( $p<.05$ ,  $r=.215$ ). With this finding, children's level of positive approach to the social environment increases, their competitiveness in the hierarchy of dominance protection increases.

## DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

This research was carried out with the aim of examining the relationship between social-emotional adaptation and competition styles of children aged between 60 and 72 months and examining children's social-emotional adaptation and competition styles in terms of demographic variables.

In this study, it is found that the ACSRL sub-scale differed significantly according to the gender variable. The participants' level of behaving in compliance with the requirements of the social life was found to be higher for boys than girls. Based on this result, it can be said that boys' ability to behave in compliance with the requirements of social life, which is one of their social-emotional adaptation skills, is higher compared to girls. There are several research studies in the literature showing that the social-emotional adaptation of children in the preschool period differs according to gender; and these studies support the findings of this research. (Arabacıoğlu & Bağçeli-Kahraman, 2021; Çetinkaya, 2016; Kacı, 2015; Kurtulan, 2015). There are also studies showing that the level of social-emotional adaptation does not differ in accordance with gender (Malyok, 2018). This finding in this current study is thought to be encouraging when the differences in the way boys and girls are brought up in our society are considered. The fact that the participating boys have role models that develop their social-emotional adaptation skills and support their aspects of behaving in compliance with the necessities of life and that these aspects are supported in the classroom can be seen among the possible reasons for this result.

In this research, the social-emotional adaptation of children did not differ significantly according to children's age. Studies showing both similarities (Ünsal, 2010) and differences (Alwaely, Yousif, & Mikhaylov, 2021; Kurtulan, 2015) with this finding are available in the literature. In Kurtulan (2015), participants' social-emotional adaptation differs according to their ages, and it is thought that carrying out research with children between the ages of 4-7 formed the basis for the difference. It might be thought that the fact that the age range of the children participating in the current research is very close and that only 60-72 months old children are included, the social-emotional adaptation of the children does not vary according to age.

Another finding of the study is that IP sub-scale differs significantly in accordance with the mother's educational level variable. This statistically significant difference was explored between mothers who graduated from middle school and mothers with undergraduate and graduate degrees, in favor of mothers with middle school degree. In line with this result, it can be said that the interactions of children with mothers having middle school degree are better than the children with mothers having undergraduate or graduate degrees. Çetinkaya (2016) and Arabacıoğlu and Bağçeli-Kahraman (2021) found that mother's educational level does not affect children's social-

emotional adaptation. In the current study, it was explored that the children of mothers who graduated from middle school were at a better level in peer interaction. It is thought that this difference is related to the changes in the occupations of the mothers and the amount of time they can spend at home. With the increase in the level of education, the time for mothers to be more involved in working life and to spend time with their children and other families with children may decrease. Significant difference was not found between the social-emotional adaptation of children and father's educational level variable. The current findings were supported by the research of Çetinkaya (2016), in which no difference was found according to the father's educational level variable.

Competition styles of children, which is another variable of the study, did not differ according to the gender variable. There are studies that reached similar findings (Doğan, 2022; Uyanık-Balat et al., 2017; Sönmez, 2016). However, it is thought that the fact that children's competition styles do not differ significantly according to age is since the ages of the participating children are very close to each other.

Statistically significant difference between the children's preschool competition questionnaire total score and MDH sub-scale with mother's educational level variable was explored. The total scores of the children with high school graduate mothers are significantly higher than the scores of the children whose mothers graduated from middle school. In the MDH sub-scale, the scores of the children of mothers with middle school degree are significantly higher than the scores of the children of mothers with high school degree. It can be interpreted as the difference detected in the current study is due to the life experiences parents offer to their children and the expectations of the family. The expectation of the family and the experiences provided to the child affect the competition style of the child (Sönmez, 2016). Based on this information, it is expected that the change in the education level of the mother would cause a difference in the life experiences that the mother would provide to the child and in the expectations from the child.

It is among the findings of the research that there is a significant difference between the MDH sub-scale and the father's educational level variable. There was a significant difference between the fathers with undergraduate and graduate degrees and fathers with middle school degree, in favor of fathers who graduated from middle school. There was no significant difference between the other graduation groups. The difference found in this study is thought to be related to the effect of the mother's educational level on the child's competition behavior in a similar way. It is thought that a significant difference arises because of the change in the father's educational level, causing differentiation in the life experiences that the father would provide to the child and in the expectations from the child.

Within the scope of this research, it was explored that there were significant differences between social-emotional adaptation and competition styles. As the level of children's behaving in compliance with the requirements of social life increases, their competition for others decreases, as the level of appropriate response according to the social situation of children increases, their competition for others decreases, and as the level of children's behavior in compliance with the requirements of social life increases, their competitiveness for the task increases. The MSEAS includes items that evaluate skills such as acting in compliance with the requirements of social life, obeying rules and being sensitive to others. It is understandable that children with such skills prefer not to compete with others. At the same time, since the maintenance of dominance hierarchy is a competitive style for accessing resources, it may not be a style that can be adopted for a child who is sensitive to the rights of others. TOC, on the other hand, is thought to be positively related to the ability to acting in compliance with the requirements of social life, as it includes the healthy adaptation process and the goals that will lead the child to success in his own development.

As the children's reactions in compliance with social life increased, the results showed that other-referenced competition, task-oriented competition, and maintenance of dominance hierarchy increased. Since the MSEAS includes items, such as reacting in compliance with social life, obtaining the right when necessary, reacting to injustice and gaining admiration, it is thought that it may be related to three competition styles.

As the children's interaction levels with their peers increased, the results showed that their task-oriented competition and the maintenance of dominance hierarchy increased. It is understandable that children with a good level of interaction with peers adopt task-oriented competition, which is a desired competitive style. The fact that their interaction with peers has a positive effect on status and resource access also explains their adoption of a maintenance of dominance hierarchy.

As the children's level of treating the social environment positively increases, it has been concluded that the situation of task-oriented competition and maintenance of dominance hierarchy increases. Since the MSEAS includes items, such as treating the social environment positively, being a happy individual, having a positive face,

and respecting the common goods, it can be interpreted as an indicator of social status required for the maintenance of dominance hierarchy. It is also understandable that the child, who can establish a positive relationship with his social environment, adopts competition for the task, which is the desired competitive style.

### **Recommendations**

Considering the findings of this study, suggestions for researchers and preschool teachers are presented. It is recommended to study the social-emotional adaptation and competitive styles of preschool children with randomly selected sample from a wider population. There is little research on the competition styles of preschool children; thus, it is recommended to conduct in-depth qualitative research that includes methods such as observations and interviews to shed better light on the subject. It is recommended that preschool teachers be provided with educational opportunities that support their professional development in terms of understanding children and responding to their needs and be aware of the existence of the relationship between social-emotional adaptation and competing styles that take place in the social development of children. It is recommended to consider the frequency and duration of playing digital games that trigger children's sense of competition. For children who play competitive digital games at an unfavorable level, it is recommended to create a plan to increase the duration and entertainment level of in-class games and game-based activities.

### **Statements of Publication Ethics**

The consent for this research was received from the Istanbul Provincial Directorate of National Education and authors admit that this study was conducted considering ethical rules.

### **Researchers' Contribution Rate**

The first author conducted the research and the second author contributed to the whole process. The final manuscript was read and approved by each author.

### **Conflict of Interest**

This study contains no conflict of interest.

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