
Fathers and Their Young Children's Self-Perception, Levels of Being Liked by Their Peers and Prosocial Behaviours

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Abstract

The aim of the study is to investigate the predictive effect of fathers' supporting development tasks of their children on their self-perception, level of being liked by their peers and their prosocial behaviours. The sample group of this study conducted by the correlational survey model consisted of 127 father and 127 children in the age group of 5-6 years attending preschool education in Denizli province, Turkey. In the study, the data were collected with the help of Scale of Supporting Development Tasks, Ladd and Profilet Child Behaviour Scale-Prosocial Behaviour Subscale, Peer Rating based Sociometric Technique, and Self-Perception Profile for Young Children. According to the results of the study, fathers' supporting development tasks of their children predicted the children's self-perception, the level of being liked by their peers, and their prosocial behaviour levels in a statistically significant way ($p < 0.05$).

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INTRODUCTION

Parenting is a cultural product on the one hand; and forms the culture on the other hand; therefore, it is the most basic tool of human-culture relationship (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2012). In this regard, culture has characteristics of being the determinant of fatherhood perception in some cases (Gander & Gardiner, 2001). Related studies also support the subject. White (1994) determined that fathers followed a path according to the fatherhood roles of their own fathers when they created fatherhood role perception. The results of the study conducted by Telli and Özkan (2016) also showed that fathers' education, working condition, occupation, income status perception, family type, requesting the child receiving education currently, age of becoming a father for the first time, the number of children and state of receiving information about fatherhood affected the fatherhood role perception. In line with the father to be seen as the main authority figure at home in the traditional structure of Turkish society; this result was interpreted as the fathers used less affection terms to their children with the anxiety of losing authority. According to Harris and Morgan (1991), fathers involve more in the boys' lives. Fathers feel responsible for the boys' gender development. They perform joint activities with the boys. Therefore, they spend more time with the boys compared to the girls. When Yablonsky (1991) explains the relationships between fathers and sons, he mentions that father is also as important as mother. In addition, he also stated that sons take their fathers as a model for learning how to establish a relationship with their own kids.

With the changing social life, value judgments and women's entrance into business life, the importance of the father in the child's life becomes more comprehensible (Cabrera et al., 2000; Crespi & Ruspini, 2015). Recent studies on fatherhood and fatherhood perception made important contributions in presenting fathers' importance in development of children more clearly (Dermott, 2008; Lawhon, 1997; Maridaki Kassotaki, 2000; Marissa & Ishaq, 2012; Miller, 2011; Nugent, 1991; Paschal, Lewis Moss & Hsiao, 2011; Rossini, & Loiacono, 2013). In this context, fathers' involvement in development and education of their children influence their children's development positively in various aspects. Children of fathers who are involved in their education develop better (Ishii-Kuntz, 1995; McBride, 1989; McBride & Mill, 1993) and show more positive adult-child relationships and less behavioural problems (as cited in Kimmel, 2003) than the children of fathers who are not effectively involved in terms of basic intellectual, academic and language skills as well as psycho-social adaptation and skills of independently acting.

Father has an important role in the child's social - emotional development (Barnett & Baruch, 2015; Marsiglio, Day & Lamb, 2008). In this context, children who are connected to their parents with confidence can be more social. In addition to the contribution of father factor in the family to the child to learn social skills quicker, it is a determinative factor for children to establish friendship relations in social life (Lieberman, Doyle & Markiewicz, 1999). In McDonald's study (1988), it was determined that the children who did not receive much attention from their peers aged between three and five years demonstrated less love to their fathers compared to the other children. This result shows that the stimuli provided by the fathers to the children are quite valuable (Kandır & Alpan, 2008). Lamb (2000) stated that depending on the increase of the time fathers spend with their children, roles they were exhibiting in a social relation are diversified, which enriched the father-child relationship (as cited in Gürşimşek, Kefi & Girgin, 2007). In addition, it is known that fathers' involving in development of their children supports children's cognitive development and reduces the behavioural problems that may arise (Amato & Rivera, 1999; Nugent, 1991). According to Güngörmüş-Özkardeş (2015) relation form of father with the child being different than mother's and difference in the roles they have in the society and family cause father to affect the child in a different way from the mother. In other words, parents' roles in child's education

support and complete each other; therefore, participation of both into the educational process must be ensured (Gürşimşek, Kefi & Girgin, 2007).

Children learn social behaviours largely by taking their parents as a model. Interactions that took place between child, mother and father are known to affect also the child's self-perception. According to Coopersmith, self-concept is a structure developed on the person's interests, abilities, and objectives. This structure is shown with "I" symbol. To put it another way, it means the person's thoughts about, against himself (as cited in İnanç, 1997). According to Franzoi, self can be defined as a social entity having characteristics like establishing symbolic communication and self-awareness acquired through socialization and maturation. Since human cannot grow detached from the society and exist only in a social asset, self is also a social entity (as cited in Sümer, 1999). Self-concept draws a framework for the perception and organization of our own life experiences. At the same time, this concept is a large and systematic structure we use to understand others' feelings, thoughts and behaviours (Markus, Moreland & Smith, 1985).

In the study conducted by Albukrek (2002); as long as the family members have negative perception regarding father's behaviours towards the child, child's self-concept is determined to be negatively affected by this. In their approach developed for strengthening the self, Kwan, Kenny, John, Bond and Robins (2004) stated that self-perception has also an interpersonal dimension. In the detailed analyses carried out about them, it was observed that in case that the child perceives father's attitude negatively, self-concept is directly affected. In the case that the children perceive their relation with their fathers positively, self-perception is observed to develop positively (Ünüvar & Senemoğlu, 2010). In addition, fathers' involvement to the children's education and care improve children's emotion regulation skills (Downer & Mendez, 2005).

Social-emotional development, child's self-expression, and being able to control his/her emotions is to be in piece and in harmony with himself/herself and environment (Kandır & Alpan, 2008). According to Kimmet (2003), positive relationship between parents' child-rearing attitudes and values affects the child's social and emotional development positively. In their study, Rubin et al. (1995) found that emotional disorder in preschool children results in social maladjustment (as cited in Kandır & Alphan, 2008). According to Sailor (2004) child gains most of his/her social and emotional characteristics in the family. For a child to gain social competence is realized through imitation of adults and his/her peer models. Mothers and fathers indirectly affect peer group, where they don't take part directly, owing to child-rearing attitudes, communication forms they establish with their children and the family structure. Similarly, children can affect the family relations by their behaviour and attitudes formed by the peer interactions. Peer group and parents have various indirect effects on each other through children (Gülay-Ogelman, 2018). In family relations where fathers are also effective, children's cognitive structure, self-perception, social competence, and emotional maturity develop (Santrock, 2011).

According to Ladd, Kochenderfer and Coleman (1996), preschool peer relationships are determinant for peer relationships during preschool period and in the following years, social and emotional adjustment. Rejection by peers in preschool period, and experiencing peer's violence are determined to be related with depression, loneliness, anxiety and rejection by peers in the coming years (Boulton & Underwood, 1992). Social status, one of the basic concepts related to peer relationships, indicates the degree of acceptance and being liked of the child by the peer group (Gülay-Ogelman, 2018). According to Kaya (2004), social status, sociometric status, social acceptances, and peer acceptance in the peer group in which the child is in are also called as peer status. Sociometric status is the child's social status or social acceptance condition in the peer group. Social acceptance includes two different dimensions as social popularity (for the child to be liked by his/her peers) and social rejection (not being liked by peers) (Kaya, 2004). According to Beyazkürk, Anlak and Dinçer (2007) and Gülay-Ogelman (2018), peer acceptance and rejection show the children's social status and thus peer relationships are evaluated.

While defining social liking degree the child see in social interaction as popularity, Hartup (1989) states that concept of status or social position is a general concept containing popularity.

Social status in preschool period is a concept that should be addressed in terms of developing the children's social skills and contributing their cognitive, emotional and social development. Therefore, parents and teachers should be in cooperation to improve the child's social status (Gülay, 2009).

In brief, fathers' supporting development of their children is observed to have numerous positive effects on their children. It is seen that they can affect particularly the children's self-perception, peer relationships, and prosocial behaviours. When the studies conducted in Turkey are examined, studies on mothers about preschool children are more common than those studying fathers. Studies examining the fathers' effects on preschool children have increased especially in the last decade (Evans, 1997; Kaya, 2016; Kuruçırak, 2010; Şahin, 2012; Telli, 2014; Türkoğlu, 2013; Ünlü, 2010; Ünüvar, 2008, Yalçınöz, 2011). However, these studies are not at sufficient level. The fact that there is only one Turkish assessment instrument measuring fathers' development tasks on their children has a part in the reason behind why the number of related studies is limited. In developing countries such as Turkey, as a result of more active participation of women in business life, fatherhood identity and fathers' importance as a role model in child rearing have increased. Number of the related studies should be increased in terms of especially the developing countries having a patriarchal family structure like Turkey. From this point of view, the study is thought to provide contribution to the literature in terms of revealing the profile in a developing country.

Purpose of the study

The aim of the study is to investigate the predictive effect of fathers' supporting development tasks of their children on their self-perception, being liked by their peers and prosocial behaviours. Research questions of the study are as follows:

- Is there any predictive effect of fathers' supporting development tasks of their children on children's self-perception?
- Is there any predictive effect of fathers' supporting development tasks of their children on children's prosocial behaviours?
- Is there any predictive effect of fathers' supporting development tasks of their children on children's being liked by their peers?

METHOD

Study design

This study was conducted by using relational descriptive model to examine the predictive effect of fathers' involvement in development of their children's on self-perception, prosocial behaviour, and preschool children's level of being liked by their peers. Descriptive design allows quantitative or numerical description of tendency, attitudes and opinions throughout a population through the studies conducted on sample group selected in the population (Creswell, 2013). Studies investigating the relationships and connections between different variables are expressed as correlational research (Büyüköztürk et al., 2014). Studies aiming to describe a situation related to a past or current subject or event in terms of characteristics such as interest, skills, abilities, attitudes, behaviours etc. in accordance with the participants' opinions are called as survey study (Büyüköztürk et al., 2014; Karasar, 2011).

Participants

The sample group of the study consisted of 127 fathers and 127 children in the age group of 5-6 years attending preschool education in 2016-2017 academic year in Pamukkale and Merkezefendi districts of Denizli in Turkey. 70 children (55.1%) were girl and 57 (44.9%) were boy. 66 (52.0%) of the children were 5 years old and 61 (48.0%) were 6 years old. All the children lived with their parents and showed normal development characteristics. 2 (1.6%) of the fathers were illiterate, 4 (3.1%) were literate, 25 (19.7%) were primary school graduates, 20 (15.7%) were secondary school graduate, 35 (27.6%) were high school graduate, and 41 (32.3%) were university graduate. In terms of the employment, 1 (0.8%) of the fathers were unemployed, 20 (15.7%) were civil servant, 67 (52.8%) were workers, 35 (27.6%) were self-employed, and 4 (3.1%) were retired.

Data Collection Tools

Development Tasks Supporting Scale (DTSS): was developed by Ünüvar and Şahin (2011) for fathers with children aged between 3-6 years attending kindergarten. Validity and reliability studies were conducted on the 36-item trial form of the scale. For the validity study, expert opinions, explanatory and confirmatory factor analysis, bottom and top 27% group discrimination and item total correlation coefficients were calculated. At the end of explanatory factor analysis, a structure with 17 items and five dimensions was obtained. Five dimensions explain 64.46% of the total variance. As a result of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), it was determined that compatibility statistics of the scale were [RMSEA (0.03), RMR (0.07) and SRMR (0.05), GFI (0.93), AGFI (0.89), NNFI (0.98), CFI (0.98)] near perfection. Cronbach's alpha value of the reliability study of the scale was calculated as 0.84 and re-tests' reliability was 0.86. High score obtained from the total scale indicates that the child is supported in development fields whereas low score indicates that the child is not supported in development fields. Minimum 17 scores and maximum 119 scores can be obtained from the scale. Example from the items on the scale can be given as: "I answer his/her questions by making explanations that he/she can understand" (Ünüvar & Şahin, 2011). Internal consistency coefficient of DTSS was determined as .83 in this study.

Ladd and Profilet Child Behaviour Scale-Prosocial Behaviour Subscale: The scale developed by Ladd and Profilet in 1996 in order to evaluate preschool children's relations with their peers at school and in their lives in accordance with opinions of preschool teachers (cited in Gülay, 2008) was adapted to Turkish by Gülay (2008) by performing language equivalency. Items are evaluated by the teachers as "Not Proper", "Sometimes Proper", "Absolutely Proper". *Ladd and Profilet Child Behaviour Scale* consists of six subscales and 44 items. In this study, Prosocial Behaviour Subscale (10 items) was used. The internal consistency coefficient of the scale during its Turkish adaptation studies is .92. Total item correlations in prosocial behaviour subscale had a value between .60 and .70 (Gülay, 2008). Internal consistency coefficient of the subscale within the scope of this study was determined as .87.

Sociometry Technique Based on Peer Rating: In this technique, each child evaluates his/her classmates in terms of a requested criterion. This technique was developed by Smith, Cowie and Blades (2005). Thus, each member of the group can be evaluated by his/her peers (Smith, Cowie & Blades, 2005). In this study, the questions of "How much do you like to play with your friend in the picture?", "How much do you like to do activities with your friend in the picture?", "How much do you like to go on a trip with your friend in the picture?", "How much do you like to sit side by side with your friend in the picture?" were asked to the children and they were requested to choose one of the options as "I love it.", "I like a little.", "I don't like.". The opinions "I love it.", "I like a little.", and "I don't like." are scored as 3, 2, and 1, respectively. Thus, children evaluated all their peers based on a certain criterion. With three-point Likert type evaluation, level of each child to be liked by their peers was determined. The children's responses were recorded in the sociometric scoring list prepared before in accordance with the class list.

Scores of the children for being liked by their peers according to peer's opinions were standardized in their own groups (Converted to Z score). It was adapted to Turkish by Gülây (2008).

Self-Perception Profile for Young Children: In order to determine the children's self-perception, "Self-Perception Profile for Young Children" developed by Harter and Pike (1984) and adapted to Turkish by Önder (1997) was used. Assessment instrument is composed of four subscales (24 items) as cognitive competence perception, physical competence perception, perception of acceptance by peers, perception of acceptance by mother. Each item is scored on an ordinal type scale ranging from 4 (highest level of perceived self-competence) to 1 (lowest level of perceived self-competence). Each item consists of two juxtaposed pictures. Each picture couple depicts an activity (running or playing outside with friends) involving the opposite levels of competence and social acceptance perception. The scale has two different forms for girls and boys. When assessment instrument was adapted into Turkish culture, it was evaluated by 5 preschool teachers and 2 school psychologists. Then, the measurements regarding the validity and reliability of the assessment instrument were performed. In line with this, Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the scale was calculated as .89. In addition, Cronbach Alpha coefficients are calculated as .87 for the age of 4 years, .91.6 for the age of 5 years, and .88 for the age of 6 years. The reliability coefficients measured by using the same technique for the subscales vary from .64 and .78 when all age groups are evaluated together. The internal consistency coefficients are calculated as .73 for cognitive competence perception, .64 for physical competence perception, .78 for perception of acceptance by peers, and .75 for perception of acceptance by mother. Internal consistency coefficients of the scale showed similarities with those of the English form, for example Cronbach Alpha coefficient of English form was calculated as .88 for all tests, .86 for the age group of 4 years, and .89 for the age group of 5 years. The scale consisting of twenty-four pictorial items is applied to the children individually and it took approximately 15 minutes to complete the profile (Önder, 1997). The internal consistency coefficient of overall scale was determined as .82 in this study.

Data Collection Process and Data Analysis

Development Tasks Supporting Scale was filled by Children's fathers. Prosocial Behaviour Sub-scale was filled separately for each child by their preschool teachers. Sociometry Technique Based on Child Rating was administered by the researchers conducting individual interviews with children in a quiet room other than the class environment. Each child of the group can be evaluated by his/her. In this study, the questions of "How much do you like to play with your friend in the picture?", "How much do you like to do activities with your friend in the picture?", "How much do you like to go on a trip with your friend in the picture?", "How much do you like to sit side by side with your friend in the picture?" were asked to the children and they were requested to choose one of the options as "I love it.", "I like a little.", "I don't like.". Self-Perception Profile for Young Children is conducted by interviewing with the children individually in a quiet room other than the class environment. It lasted for approximately 15-20 minutes.

In data analysis, Simple Linear Regression Analysis Technique was applied. The Simple Linear Regression analysis was performed to determine the predictive effect of fathers' supporting development tasks of their children on preschool children's being liked by their peers, self-perception and *prosocial behaviour levels*.

FINDINGS

Table 1. *Result of Simple Linear Regression Analysis concerning the predictive effect of fathers' supporting development tasks of their children on preschool children's level of being liked by their peers.*

	R	R ²	F	Std. E.	β	t	p
Fathers' supporting development tasks of their children	.234	.055	7.247	.005	.234	2.692	.008*
Children's level of being liked by their peers							

* $p < 0.05$

When Table 1 was examined, a statistically significant positive correlation was observed between scores of fathers' supporting development tasks of their children and being liked by their peers level scores of preschool children ($R=.234$, $R^2=.055$, $F=7.247$, $p < 0.05$). Besides, fathers' supporting development tasks of their children predicted the preschool children's level of being liked by their peers in a statistically significant manner and fathers' supporting development tasks of their children explained 0.55% of total variance of children's level of being liked by their peers.

Table 2. *Result of Simple Linear Regression Analysis concerning the predictive effect of fathers' supporting development tasks of their children on preschool children's self-perception levels.*

	R	R ²	F	Std. E.	β	t	p
Fathers' supporting development tasks of their children	.270	.073	9.866	.050	.270	3.141	.002*
Children's self-perception							

* $p < 0.05$

When Table 2 was examined, a statistically significant positive correlation was observed between scores of fathers' supporting development tasks of their children and preschool children's self-perception ($R=.270$, $R^2=.073$, $F=9.866$, $p < 0.05$). Accordingly, fathers' supporting development tasks of their children explained 0.73% of total variance of preschool children's self-perception level. Fathers' supporting development tasks of their children could be asserted to predict the preschool children's self-perception level in a statistically significant manner.

Table 3. *Result of Simple Linear Regression Analysis concerning the predictive effect fathers' supporting development tasks of their children on preschool children's prosocial behaviour levels.*

	R	R ²	F	Std. E.	β	t	p
Fathers' supporting development tasks of their children	.237	.056	7.440	.028	.237	2.728	.007*
Children's Prosocial Behaviours							

* $p < 0.05$

When Table 3 was examined, a statistically significant positive correlation was observed between scores of fathers' supporting development tasks of their children and preschool children's prosocial behaviour scores ($R=.237$, $R^2=.056$, $F=7.440$, $p < 0.05$). Accordingly, fathers' supporting development tasks of their children explained 0.56% of total variance of the children's prosocial behaviour level. Fathers' supporting development tasks of their children could be asserted to predict the preschool children's prosocial behaviour levels in a statistically significant manner.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

When the results of the study were examined, it was seen that, fathers' supporting development tasks of their children significantly predicted children's level of being liked by their peers. In this context, a statistically significant positive correlation was determined between fathers' supporting development tasks of their children and preschool children's level of being liked by their peers. In this regard, fathers' supporting development tasks of their children can be accepted as a variable to be effective on levels of being liked by their peers. When the results of the studies conducted in the literature were examined, fathers' approach to their children and their involvement levels to their children's lives are seen to be effective on children's social status. In a study (Çabuk, 2013), a positive significant correlation was determined between children's social status levels and the levels of fathers' affection terms. In the same study (Çabuk, 2013), a negative significant correlation was determined between children's social status levels and fathers' total acceptance-rejection scores. As the fathers' total rejection level increased, a decrease was observed in level of children's rejection by their peers. When the total acceptance level increased, an increase was observed in children's acceptance level (Çabuk, 2013). In the study conducted by Decovic and Janssens (1992) to examine the correlation between parents' child rearing attitudes and social status of 6-11 year old children, they stated that while popular children's families had an authoritative/democratic attitude, rejected children's parents had authoritarian/ restrictive attitude.

In the study investigating the effects of communication forms in the family on children's social status (Black & Logan, 1995), 24-60 month-old 43 children, their parents and peers participated. In the study, it was stated that the communication styles of popular and rejected children in family and peer environment were different. A difference was also observed between the communication styles of controversial and rejected children. It was stated that parent-child communication is positively or negatively reflected on the child's relationships with his/her peers, similarities can be seen between parent-child communication and peer-child communication. It was determined that while the rejected children's families respond their children's requests late, popular children's families approach it more sensitively. Additionally, the parents of the rejected children imposed the condition of fulfilling their children's wishes in return for fulfilling their own wishes.

Another result of the current study was that fathers' supporting development tasks of their children predicted the preschool children's self-perception levels in a statistically significant way. In this regard, fathers' supporting development tasks of their children increased the level of the children's self-perception significantly. In this regard, when the studies conducted on fathers and children's self-perception were examined, this result could be asserted to coincide with the literature. In fact, in their study, McGuire and McGuire (1982) stated that young children's self-perceptions were shaped by their parents and the other members of the family more compared to elder children. Sulzer, Azdroff and Mayer (1977) expressed that fathers' negative approach could be harmful to children's self-concept (as cited in Gander and Gardiner, 2001, p.302). Fathers' attitudes and behaviours towards children can affect the children's self-concept. Jogawars (1982) stated that self-concept of the children whose fathers accept their children could be higher compared to the children rejected by their fathers.

There was a significant correlation between the children's self-perception and their perceived father behaviours concerning the care provided to them, helping them to achieve their objectives, providing consistency for them, and clarity of discipline standards (Kehale, 2002). In a study conducted by Albukrek (2002), as the family members had negative perception regarding fathers' perceptions towards their children, child's self-concept was determined to be also affected by this.

In the study, fathers' supporting development tasks of their children predicted the children's prosocial behaviour levels in a statistically significant way. Children mostly gain their social and emotional characteristics in the family (Sailor, 2004). Fathers' establishment of a warm relationship with their children supports children's prosocial behaviours and helps them to develop a self-control personality; whereas, hostile relationship tends to support aggression (Gander, & Gardiner, 2001). Children encountering with parents' prosocial behaviours can reflect this condition to their social environment (Derman & Başal, 2013). Accordingly, it can be asserted that results of the studies in the literature coincided with the results of this study.

In the study, the fathers were observed to be effective in young children's personal and social developments. It is also expressed in related studies (Black, Dubowitz & Starr, 1999; Harris, Fustenberg & Marmer, 1998) that the nature of negative father-child relationship may be associated with behavioural problems, more psychological distress, risky or antisocial behaviours.

When the study results were examined, fathers' supporting development tasks of their children predicted preschool children's social status levels, self-perception and prosocial behaviours in a statistically significant way. In this context, a positive correlation was determined between fathers' supporting development tasks of their children and the related variables. According to the results of the study, following suggestions can be involved for parents, educators and the future studies:

Parents having preschool children may participate in necessary seminars and trainings in terms of supporting the children's development. In addition, through these seminars/trainings, they can have information about establishing correct communication with the children and developing the children's social adaptation and skills. Parents can spend quality time by having knowledge about activities appropriate to child development with the help of educational materials such as magazine, book prepared for children. They can prepare environments for the children to spend time with their peers. Studies on evaluating and supporting the children's social status can be conducted. Activities intended for families can be sent in order to ensure maintenance of social adaptation and skills at home. In order to support children's social development, activities where the children will be interacting with one another can be selected during in-class/out-of-class activities. In this study examining fathers' supporting development tasks of their children, the other factors like mother, teacher instead of father can be examined. In addition to sociometry, studies in which the data from different sources like observation and teacher's view are collected can be conducted. Furthermore, experimental and longitudinal related studies can be performed. Trainings about parent education especially about the father can be developed.

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