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## Predictor effect of parental acceptance-rejection levels on resilience of preschool children

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to put forth the predictor effect of parental acceptance-rejection levels on resilience of preschool children. The sample group of the study consists of 100 children, who received pre-school education in the center of Denizli, and their parents (100 mothers and 100 fathers). The Children's Ego Resiliency Scale (Teacher form) and Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (mother-father forms) were used as data collection tools. According to results, there is a positive significant relationship between the score that the mothers' warmth and affection levels and children's resiliency levels. In other words, it can be said that as the warmth and affection level increased, the resiliency level increased. Also, the warmth and affection level decreased, the children's resiliency levels decreased. There is not significant relationship between the scores that mothers neglect/indifference, undifferentiated rejection, aggression/hostility levels and children's resiliency levels. Mothers' warmth and affection levels significantly predicted children's resiliency levels. Mothers' neglect/indifference, undifferentiated rejection and aggression/hostility levels didn't not significantly predicted children's resiliency levels. Additionally there is a positive and strong significant relationship between the score that the fathers' warmth and affection levels and children's resiliency levels. There is a negative and strong significant relationship between the scores that fathers neglect/indifference, aggression/hostility levels and children's resiliency levels. Also, there is not significant relationship between the score that fathers undifferentiated rejection and children's resiliency levels. Fathers' warmth/affection, neglect/indifference, aggression/hostility levels significantly predicted children's resiliency levels. According to results, children's resiliency levels most predicted by the aggression/hostility levels of fathers.

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## 1. Introduction

Parental Acceptance-Rejection Theory tries to predict and explain the basic reasons, outcomes and other variables of being accepted and rejected by parents. In other words, it investigates the possible outcomes of parental acceptance and rejection on the behavioural, cognitive and emotional developments of children (Khaleque, & Rohner, 2002). In parental acceptance, parents love, caress, cuddle their child, share her/his feelings and meet her/his needs. In parental rejection, on the other hand, parents delay meeting the physical and mental needs of the child and become hostile towards her/him (Yavuzer, 2000). In parental rejection, parents fail to exhibit affinity and love towards the child, ignore her/his interest and care, and cause both physical and psychological damage in her/him (Rohner, & Khaleque, 2005). Parental acceptance or rejection affects the childhood and other periods of life. There are more than 200 studies that were conducted by a number of researchers in different societies with various methods, which supports the importance of the theory (Khaleque, & Rohner, 2001).

The relationship between parents and the child is able to affect all the developmental areas of the child at all ages. One of the most important concepts that are important in terms of personality development is resiliency.

Psychological resiliency is the process in which the person is adapted to present negative condition with the interaction of protective factors and risk factors when exposed to a negative condition (such as divorce, terror, natural disasters, poverty, dysfunctional family order, change of city, indigence) (Gizir, & Aydın, 2006; Kararmak, 2006. Cited in Gülay Ogelman, 2014). The number of studies that discuss the effect of parental acceptance-rejection on the developments of preschool children in Turkey (Altay, 2012; Erkan, & Toran, 2010; Erler, 2011; Kasuto, 2005) has increased especially for the last 5 years; however, they have not had a sufficient number. Development is very rapid during the preschool period and its effects may last for long years. Thus, it is required to investigate the effect of parental acceptance-rejection on the development of young children with different variables more. In Turkey, there has been no study examining the relationship between the parental acceptance-rejection and the resiliency levels of preschool children. Therefore, the study is thought to possibly set an important example concerning the subject. Considering from this point of view, the purpose of this study is to reveal the predictor effect of acceptance-rejection levels of the parents of preschool children on the psychological resiliency levels of children. Sub-goals of the study are as follows:

- Do mothers' warmth and affection levels predict pre-school children's resiliency level?
- Do mothers' neglect and indifference levels predict pre-school children's resiliency level?
- Do mothers' undifferentiated rejection levels predict pre-school children's resiliency level?
- Do mothers' aggression and hostility levels predict pre-school children's resiliency level?
- Do fathers' warmth and affection levels predict pre-school children's resiliency level?
- Do fathers' neglect and indifference levels predict pre-school children's resiliency level?
- Do fathers' undifferentiated rejection levels predict pre-school children's resiliency level?
- Do fathers' aggression and hostility levels predict pre-school children's resiliency level?

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Research design

A relational survey method was used for this study.

### 2.2. Participants

The sample group of the study consists of 100 children, who received pre-school education in the center of Denizli, and their parents (100 mothers and 100 fathers). Among 100 children in the sample group, 40 (40.0%) were girls and 60 (60.0%) were boys. The sample group comprised of children who belonged to families with low socio-economic levels in the city centre and showed a normal development. While selecting those children, a list was received from the Provincial Directorate of National Education in Denizli concerning the kindergartens of primary schools where children with low socio-economic levels attended. Nine schools were selected among schools on the

list by lot and a permission note was obtained concerning those schools. When the schools were visited with the permission notes, three schools rejected to participate in the study. Six schools were included in the study. It was determined that mothers of all children in the sample group were housewives. On the other hand, 89.0 % of fathers were workers and 11.0 % were retirees. Parents of children lived together.

### 2.3. Instruments

2. 3. 1. Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ) (Mother-Father Forms): The questionnaire was developed by Rohner, Saavedra and Granum in 1980 (Rohner, & Khaleque, 2005). The questionnaire assesses acceptance-rejection as perceived by the mother and father. The scale consists of 60 items measuring 4 dimensions of Parental Acceptance Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ):

a) Parental warmth and affection (20 items): This subscale refers to the parent child relationship where parents are perceived to give love or affection without qualification.

b) Aggression and hostility (15 items): This subscale assesses the conditions where individuals believe their parent is angry, bitter, or resentful toward them, whereas perceived aggression assesses the conditions where individuals believe their parents intend to hurt them, physically and verbally.

c) Neglect and indifference (15 items): This subscale assesses conditions where individuals see their parent as unconcerned or uninterested in them.

d) Undifferentiated rejection (10 items): This subscale assesses the child's feelings of being rejected or unloved, although there may be no observable indicator for rejection (Yıldırım-Ekmekçi, 2008, p. 39).

PARQ is a self-report questionnaire that can be applied to mothers and fathers. The scores change between 4-1, with 4 standing for "almost always true", and 1 standing for "almost never true". Higher scores indicate higher perceived rejection. It was translated and adapted into Turkish by Anjel (1993).

2. 3.2. Children's Ego Resiliency Scale: Eisenberg and colleagues adapted Block's Q-Sort method in 1996 to develop the Children's Ego Resiliency Scale, which is a measuring instrument that identifies the resiliency level of children. The 12-item scale is used to assess the resiliency level of preschool-primary school children. Evaluation of the scale is scored between 1 and 9; where 1 is "not at all descriptive of resiliency" and 9 is "most descriptive of resiliency." The scale has no sub-scale. While the lowest score to be obtained from the scale is 12, the highest score is 108. A high score obtained from the scale indicates that children in the study group have a high resiliency level. Items of the scale measure the resiliency properties of children in various situations, their reactions and behaviours when faced with difficult stressful situations. For example: "When under stress, he/she gives up and backs off". Every item expresses reactions given towards different stressful situations, as the scale has no sub-scale. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the Teacher Version of the original scale form is .87, and .65 for the Mother-Father form. The test-retest reliability of the Teacher Version of the original scale form is .87, and .75 for the Mother-Father form (Eisenberg, Fabes, Guthrie et al., 1996). The adaptation of the scale into Turkish was conducted by Önder and Gülay-Ogelman in 2011. Within the scope of this study, the cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale was determined as .80 in the mother form, .82 in the father form and .87 in the teacher form (Önder, & Gülay Ogelman, 2011).

### 2.4. Procedure

As stated previously, before collecting data, the permission was requested from the Provincial Directorate of National Education in Denizli in order to get in touch with the schools. Kindergarten teachers, fathers, and mothers were informed about the study. They completed these scales.

### 2.5. Data analysis

A SPSS 18.0 package programme was used to analyse data obtained from the research. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient and Basic Linear Regression Technique were used to analyse data.

**3. Results**

Table 1. Descriptive statistic, means, standard deviations

Variables	N	Mean	Std.Deviation
Children’s resiliency levels	100	57.75	6.44
Mothers’ warmth and affection levels	100	68.45	8.25
Mothers’ neglect and indifference levels	100	22.57	6.32
Mothers’ undifferentiated rejection levels	100	16.49	4.21
Mothers’ aggression and hostility levels	100	24.17	6.15

Table 2. Correlation matrix between children’s resiliency levels and mothers’ acceptance-rejection variables

Variables	Resiliency levels	Mothers’ warmth and affection levels	Mothers’ neglect and indifference levels	Mothers’ undifferentiated rejection levels
Children’s resiliency levels	-	-	-	-
Warmth and affection levels	.231*	-	-	-
Neglect and indifference levels	-.160	-.770**	-	-
Undifferentiated rejection levels	-.047	-.534**	.615**	-
Aggression and hostility levels	-.131	-.601**	.696**	.623**

\*p < .05 \*\*p < .001

Table 2 illustrates a positive significant relationship between the score that the mothers’ warmth and affection levels and children’s resiliency levels ( $r=.231$ ,  $p< .05$ ). In other words, it can be said that as the warmth and affection level increased, the resiliency level increased. Also, the warmth and affection level decreased, the children’s resiliency levels decreased. According to table 2, there is not significant relationship between the scores that mothers neglect/indifference ( $r=-.160$ ), undifferentiated rejection ( $r=-.047$ ) aggression/hostility ( $r=-.131$ ) levels and children’s resiliency levels ( $p> 0.05$ ).

Table 3. The results of the basic linear regression analysis between children’s resiliency levels and mothers’ acceptance-rejection variables

Variables	B	Standart Error	$\beta$	t
Children resiliency levels Mothers’ warmth and affection levels $R = .231$ $R^2 = .05$ $F(1,98) = 6.340^{**}$	.168	.067	.23	2.518**
Children resiliency levels Mothers’ neglect and indifference levels $R = .16$ $R^2 = .03$ $F(1,98) = 2.931$	-.163	.095	.16	1.712
Children resiliency levels Mothers’ undifferentiated rejection levels $R = .05$ $R^2 = .00$ $F(1,98) = .247$	-.072	.144	.05	.497

Children resiliency levels				
Mothers' aggression and hostility levels	-.137	.098	.13	1.397
R = .13 R <sup>2</sup> = .02 F(1,98) = 1.951**				

Note: n = 100 \* p < .05, \*\* p < .001

Table 3 illustrates that mothers' warmth and affection levels significantly predicted children's resiliency levels ( $\beta=.23, p<.001$ ). The level of significance was 0.05 and 0.001 for each basic linear regression analysis conducted in this study. The warmth and affection levels accounted for .05 % of the children's resiliency levels. Mothers' neglect/indifference ( $\beta=.16, p>.001$ ), undifferentiated rejection ( $\beta=.05, p>.001$ ) and aggression/hostility ( $\beta=.13, p>.001$ ) levels didn't not significantly predicted children's resiliency levels.

Table 4. Descriptive statistic, means, standard deviations

Variables	N	Mean	Std.Deviation
Children's resiliency levels	100	57.75	6.44
Fathers' warmth and affection levels	100	68.13	9.51
Fathers' neglect and indifference levels	100	23.97	6.59
Fathers' undifferentiated rejection levels	100	15.26	3.90
Fathers' aggression and hostility levels	100	23.95	7.13

Table 5. Correlation matrix between children's resiliency levels and fathers' acceptance-rejection variables

Variables	Resiliency levels	Fathers' warmth and affection levels	Fathers' neglect and indifference levels	Fathers' undifferentiated rejection levels
Children's resiliency levels	-	-	-	-
Warmth and affection levels	.260**	-	-	-
Neglect and indifference levels	-.272**	-.854**	-	-
Undifferentiated rejection levels	-.178	-.672**	.724**	-
Aggression and hostility levels	-.294**	-.680**	.755**	.767**

\*p < .05 \*\*p < .001

Table 5 illustrates a positive and strong significant relationship between the score that the fathers' warmth and affection levels and children's resiliency levels ( $r=.260, p<.001$ ). In other words, it can be said that as the warmth and affection level increased, the resiliency level increased. Also, the warmth and affection level decreased, the children's resiliency levels decreased. According to table 5, there is a negative and strong significant relationship between the scores that fathers neglect/indifference ( $r= -.272$ ), aggression/hostility ( $r= -.294$ ) levels and children's resiliency levels ( $p<.001$ ). Also, there is not significant relationships between the score that fathers' undifferentiated rejection and children's resiliency levels ( $r= -.178, p>.05$ ).

Table 6. The results of the basic linear regression analysis between children's resiliency levels and fathers' acceptance-rejection variables

Variables	B	Standart Error	$\beta$	t
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Children resiliency levels Fathers' warmth and affection levels R = .26 R <sup>2</sup> = .07 F(1,98) = 8.104*	.176	.062	.26	2.847*
Children resiliency levels Fathers' neglect and indifference levels R = .27 R <sup>2</sup> = .07 F(1,98) = 8.925**	-.265	.089	-.27	-2.988**
Children resiliency levels Fathers' undifferentiated rejection levels R = .18 R <sup>2</sup> = .03 F(1,98) = .247	-.072	.144	-.18	-1.915
Children resiliency levels Fathers' aggression and hostility levels R = .29 R <sup>2</sup> = .09 F(1,98) = 10.061**	-.27	.082	-.29	-3.256**

Note: n = 100 \* p < .05, \*\* p < .001

Table 6 shows that fathers' warmth/affection ( $\beta=.26$ ,  $p<.05$ ), neglect/indifference ( $\beta=-.27$ ,  $p<.001$ ), aggression/hostility ( $\beta=-.29$ ,  $p<.001$ ) levels significantly predicted children's resiliency levels. The warmth and affection levels accounted for .07 % ( $p<.001$ ), neglect/indifference levels accounted for .07 % ( $p<.001$ ), aggression/hostility levels accounted for .09 % ( $p<.001$ ), of the children's resiliency levels. Fathers' undifferentiated rejection level didn't not significantly predicted children's resiliency levels ( $\beta=-.18$ ,  $p>.001$ ). According to results, children's resiliency levels most predicted by the aggression/hostility levels of fathers.

#### 4. Discussion

According to results, there is a positive significant relationship between the score that the mothers' warmth and affection levels and children's resiliency levels. In other words, it can be said that as the warmth and affection level increased, the resiliency level increased. Also, the warmth and affection level decreased, the children's resiliency levels decreased. There is not significant relationship between the scores that mothers neglect/indifference, undifferentiated rejection, aggression/hostility levels and children's resiliency levels. Mothers' warmth and affection levels significantly predicted children's resiliency levels. Mothers' neglect/indifference, undifferentiated rejection and aggression/hostility levels didn't not significantly predicted children's resiliency levels. Additionally there is a positive and strong significant relationship between the score that the fathers' warmth and affection levels and children's resiliency levels. There is a negative and strong significant relationship between the scores that fathers neglect/indifference, aggression/hostility levels and children's resiliency levels. Also, there is not significant relationship between the score that fathers undifferentiated rejection and children's resiliency levels. Fathers' warmth/affection, neglect/indifference, aggression/hostility levels significantly predicted children's resiliency levels. According to results, children's resiliency levels most predicted by the aggression/hostility levels of fathers.

The study results demonstrated that perceptions of parents regarding the acceptance-rejection of their children may have a predictor effect upon the resiliency levels of preschool children. This study showed that fathers had a higher and greater effect compared to mothers. This finding is remarkable in terms of revealing the effect of fathers upon the psychological, emotional and personality development of their children in Turkey. The fact that parents support, accept their children and exhibit affection and love towards them may enable them to be stronger towards risk factors, stressful conditions and events. Rejecting attitudes of parents including hostility and aggression towards their children may decrease the psychological resiliency levels of children.

#### 5. Conclusion

This study has some limitations. According to limitations and results, the following points could be paid attention in future studies:

As well as collecting information from different people with broader sample groups, it is possible to conduct studies using techniques such as observation, sociometry. It is required to conduct studies involving different variables (gender, sibling relationships, temperament, variables concerning families etc.) that might affect the resiliency levels of children and parental acceptance-rejection. There are a very limited number of scales and research aimed at determining the resiliency levels of preschool children in Turkey. It is required to develop relevant scales and/or conduct scale validity-reliability and more studies. It is required to develop projects and training programs and extend the practices to increase the ego resiliency levels of young children.

Trainings and seminars should be organized for parents and expectant parents regarding the pediatric development, training and care. Preschool teachers are required to carefully carry out the studies involving the involvement and training of parents throughout the year. These studies should include trainings for parents regarding discipline and communication. In both schools and national educational policies, arrangements should be made for fathers along with mothers to participate in educational activities of their children, spend time with them, increase and diversify their responsibilities in care and training. Longitudinal studies that follow the resiliency levels of young children and parental acceptance-rejection should be conducted.

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