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Parent's General and Specific Attitudes and Children's Test Anxiety

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ABSTRACT The aim of this study is to investigate randomly selected students' parents' general and specific attitudes regarding their children and students' test anxiety according to their gender, age, number of siblings and nationality during an examination period. A total of 668 females and 334 males from 7th and 8th grades form the population of this study. The results showed no significant differences between males and females on the Parental Attitude Scale and Parental Attitudes Scale Specific to Examination Period scores. However, the researchers found that there is a significant difference between the gender variable and Test Anxiety Emotionality subscale scores. The researchers concluded that female students had higher emotionality subscale scores compared to male students. Significant differences between different age groups and Test Anxiety worry and emotionality subscale scores have been found. Finally, there are significant differences between parental attitudes and the number of siblings and nationality variables

INTRODUCTION

Education prepares individuals for life. If we attempt to give a definition for education, we can say that education is a process that is renewed continuously and lasts lifelong (Çaglayan 2004; Uzunboylu and Kosucu 2017). It helps individuals to know themselves and discover what their talents are, and develop these talents. It also helps them to understand their environment (Çaglayan 2004). Additionally, education either provides new knowledge for individuals at every single stage of life or it changes their present knowledge (Erdem 2005). The contemporary understanding claims that education targets to develop individuals in many ways. In other words, individuals develop physically, emotionally, intellectually and socially through education (Yesilyaprak 2008).

Family structure and family attitudes influence children's education. The attitudes and values of the family are extremely important as they determine children's learning-based attitude. A negative attitude of one or both of the parents to school may cause children to develop negative feelings towards the school (Gümüs et al. 2011; Ozcan and Katlav 2016).

If the concept of "attitude" is defined, it can be defined as a pre-tendency, a mental, emotional and behavioral response, which individuals give and is based on their experience, knowledge, emotion and motivation against any object, social subject or event in his or her environment (Inceoglu 2004). Attitude is the causal factor behind human behavior. Attitudes are not instantly changing evaluations; they are the totality of relatively unchanging beliefs and evaluations. Attitude is a state of being "ready to behave" in a certain manner, in the face of a certain event, object or person. Attitudes form the emotional basis; based on this emotional basis, the person evaluates the events in their environment and responds accordingly (Tutar 2012).

Additionally, family attitudes are a factor that affects children's anxiety and anxiety lev-

els (Akgün et al. 2007). A study found that family conflicts are positively related with child anxiety (Tanaka et al. 2010). The concept of anxiety is one of the basic feelings of life. This feeling has the qualities that can cause various mental disorders. Anxiety acts as an alarm signal for individuals, which ensures that measures are taken against an approaching danger. Anxiety is a threatened response that is an inherent source of insight, a source of internal conflict and has a structure that puts the person who is distressed and uncertain about the problem (Senol 2006). Anxiety is also defined as a form of fear that is perceived as something that is frightening or something that is worrying (McKenzie 2006). Anxiety is not about the facts but about a given person's reaction to what is actually happening in his/her mind (McLellan 1992; Dunant and Porter 1996). According to Nardo (1992), anxiety is a fear caused by stress.

Anxiety is one of the most frequent variables in studies conducted in the field of education (Akacan and Secim 2015). The most intense moments in school that reveal anxiety are the examinations (Yousofi et al. 2015; Karadag 2017). At this point, test anxiety is a special kind of anxiety, and it is a feeling of anxiety with the fear that arises when the individual is assesed. Examination anxiety is an intense problem in the preparation of education and teaching after primary school in many countries. In particular, without considering the child's mental competence and school success, the constraints imposed on the preparation of the test are also the basis for behavioral disorders such as anxiety (Baltas 2002).

Test anxiety can be defined as a condition that causes the individual to experience negative feelings of failure in an examination (Kutlu 2001). Akca (2011) defined test anxiety as a violent emotional reaction before and during the exam. In other words, test anxiety is a set of reactions against the assessment (Cizek and Burg 2006). The first studies on test anxiety started in 1914 (Stober and Pekrun 2004). This kind of anxiety is a major problem for students and affects the academic performance negatively (Kavakli et al. 2011; Dündar et al. 2008).

Many students think that their own personality is assessed along with the exam, and such assessment affects learning and success in a negative way (Kutlu 2001). Vitasari and friends (2010) found in their study that there is a significant correlation between high level anxiety and low academic performance. This finding supports Ergene's (2003) findings that test anxiety is negatively correlated with academic performance. In addition, DordiNejad (2011) achieved the same result which demonstrates that test anxiety affects students's academic performance negatively. Test anxiety is a mood that occurs during childhood and also affects later ages. The conditions leading to the development of test anxiety at an early age include strict discipline at home, strict parenting practices, authoritarian teaching-learning in school; negative, cold and hurtful teacher criticism, penalties, and difficult classroom conditions. Frequent recurrent school failures, adverse evaluations of adults, and threats to the individual's perceived nature are important factors in the development of test anxiety (Öner 1990; Demirok and Baglama 2016; Onder and Karatas 2017; Ozdamli et al. 2017)

The aim of this research is to examine the selected parents' general and examination-specific attitudes towards their children according to children's gender, age, sibling number and nationality variables.

METHODOLOGY

Study Group

The study group consisted of 668 female (334) and male (334) from secondary school students in the 7th and 8th grade, aged 12-15 year olds studying in 2014-2015 academic year. The students in the study group and the schools they attended were randomly selected.

Instruments

In this research, "Parental Attitude Scale" was used to determine the attitudes of the randomly selected students' parents while the "Parental Attitude Scale Specific to the Examination Period" was used to measure the attitudes of the students to their parents during the examination period. "Test Anxiety Inventory" was also used to measure students' test anxiety.

Parental Attitude Scale (PAS)

PAS was developed in this research with the aim of determining the attitudes of parents towards their children. The Parental Attitude Scale was developed to measure two sub-dimensions

consisting of a total of 25 items. These sub-dimensions are "Supportive Parental Attitudes" (PASSA) and "Strict and Repressive Attitudes" (PASSRA). Supportive Parental Attitudes subscale consists of 19 items, Strict and Repressive Attitudes consist of 6 items. PAS is a Likert type scale with a 5-point Likert scale and includes the options "Always", "Often", "Occasional", "Rarely" and "Never" for each item. The reliability coefficient for the Supportive Parental Attitudes subscale of PAS was 0.823, and the reliability coefficient for Strict and Repressive Attitudes subscale was 0.805. Scores that could be taken from the scale were at least 19, at most 95 for the Supportive Parental Attitudes sub-dimension; for the sub-dimension of Strict and Repressive Attitudes, it was at least 6, at most 30 points.

Parental Attitude Scale Specific to the Examination Period (PASSEP)

PASSEP was developed in this research with the aim of determining the attitudes of parents towards their children during the exam periods. It is a scale of two sub-dimensions consisting of a total of 42 items. These sub-dimensions are "Supportive Parental Attitudes" (PASSEPSA) and "Strict and Repressive Attitudes" (PASSEPSRA). The "Supportive Parental Attitudes" subscale consists of 34 items and the "Strict and Repressive Attitudes" consists of 8 items. PASSEP is a 5-point Likert type scale and includes the options "Always", "Often", "Occasional", "Rarely" and "Never" for each item. The reliability coefficient for the Supporting Parental Attitudes subscale of PASSEP was determined as 0.900, while the reliability coefficient for the Strict and Repressive Attitudes subscale was 0.706. For the "Supportive Parental Attitudes" subscale, the score of the PASSEP could be taken was at least 34 and at most 170, and for the "Strict and Repressive Attitudes" subscale was at least 8 and at most 40 points.

Test Anxiety Inventory (TAI)

TAI consists of two sub-dimensions: Worry and Emotionality. There are 8 items in the dimension of Worry (TAW), and 12 items in the dimension of Emotionality (TAE). The scale consists of a total of 20 items. TAI is a scale of four-point Likert type. There are 4 options for each item, "Never", "Sometimes", "Often" and "Always". The internal coefficients of the TAI were calculated to determine the intrinsic value of the scales varying between 93 and 94 (Konyalioglu 2013; Bacanli and Sürücü 2006; Koçkar et al. 2002; Yildirim and Ergene 2003). The data was analysed through SPSS 20 packet program. MANOVA was used for the statistical analysis.

RESULTS

In this section, statistical analyses of the data collected using the Parental Attitude Scale, Parental Attitude Scale Specific to the Examination Period, and the Test Anxiety Inventory were given.

Findings Whether There is a Significant Difference between PASSRA, PASSA, PASSEPSA, PASSEPSRA, TAW And TAE Scores and Gender Variable

As a result of the statistical analyses, the mean, the number of people and MANOVA results were given for each variable.

Table 1: One Way Multivariate Analysis of Variance Analysis Results (MANOVA) between the PASSRA, PASSA, PASSEPSA, PASSEPSRA, TAW and TAE scores and gender variables

The dependent variable	*Gender*	*N*	$\bar{X}$	*SS*	*Sd*	*F*	*P*
PASSRA	Female	334	23.97	5.79	1-666	.423	.516
	Male	334	23.69	5.38			
PASSA	Female	334	69.15	12.46	1-666	.136	.712
	Male	334	69.80	11.63			
PASSEPSA	Female	334	118.11	23.14	1-666	.058	.809
	Male	334	117.69	21.29			
PASSEPSRA	Female	334	26.68	7.01	1-666	1.978	.160
	Male	334	27.42	6.56			
TAW	Female	334	16.21	5.05	1-666	.700	.403
	Male	334	16.53	4.92			
TAE	Female	334	23.57	7.03	1-666	10.447	.001
	Male	334	21.90	6.30			

As shown in Table 1, according to the results of one-way multivariate analysis of variance, there was a significant difference between TAE scores of students according to gender. [$F_{(6\text{-}1328)}$=10,447, p<0.05 Wilks' =0,948, partial η^2= 0.052]. According to the results, TAE scores of female students were 23.57, which was higher than male students (21.90). However, there was no significant difference between gender and other variables.

Findings Regarding Whether There is a Significant Difference between PASSRA, PASSA, PASSEPSA, PASSEPSRA, TAW and TAE Scores and Age Variable

Findings Whether There was a Significant Difference between the PASSRA and PASSA Scores and Age Variable

As shown in Table 2, according to the results of one-way multivariate analysis of variance, no significant difference was observed between the scores of the students at different ages according to the combined dependent variable [$F_{(6\text{-}1328)}$=.554, p<0.05 Wilks' = 0.995, partial η^2= 0.003]. This results means that parents' general supportive and strict attitudes doesn't depend on their childrens' ages.

Findings Whether There was a Significant Difference between PASSEPSA and PASSEPSRA Scores and Age Variable

As shown in Table 3, according to the results of the one-way multivariate analysis of variance, no significant difference was observed between the scores of the students of different age categories according to the combined dependent variable [$F_{(6\text{-}1328)}$=.636, p<0.05 Wilks' = 0.994, partial η^2= 0.003]. This result means that parents' supportive and strict attitudes specific to examination period doesn't depend on their childrens' ages.

Findings Whether There is a Significant Difference between the TAW and TAE Scores and Age Variation

As shown in Table 4, according to the results of the one-way multivariate analysis of variance, there was a significant difference between the scores of the students of different age categories according to the combined dependent variable [$F_{(6\text{-}1328)}$ =5.32 , p<0.05 Wilks' Λ = 0.953, partial η^2= 0.24].

The results of the LSD test to determine the age difference between the observed differences were given in Table 5.

Table 2: One-way multivariate variance analysis results between the PASSRA and PASSA scores and age variable

The dependent variable	*Age*	*N*	$\bar{X}$	*SS*	*Sd*	*F*	*P*
PASSRA	12	31	23.16	5.09	3-664	.273	.845
	13	266	23.97	5.53			
	14	295	23.85	5.69			
	15	76	23.53	5.60			
PASSA	12	31	70.61	12.80	3-664	.432	.730
	13	266	68.83	12.11			
	14	295	68.68	12.13			
	15	76	69.97	11.27			

Table 3: One-way multivariate variance analysis results between the PASSEPSA and PASSEPSRA scores and age variable

The dependent variable	*Age*	*N*	$\bar{X}$	*SS*	*Sd*	*F*	*P*
PASSEPSA	12	31	120.19	23.79	3-664	.334	.801
	13	266	117.21	21.91			
	14	295	117.86	22.91			
	15	76	119.55	20.05			
PASSEPSRA	12	31	25.67	7.02	3-664	.905	.438
	13	266	27.47	6.54			
	14	295	26.80	6.86			
	15	76	27.14	7.26			

Table 4: The results of one-way multivariate analysis of variance between TAW and TAE and age variables

The dependent variable	*Age*	*N*	$\bar{X}$	*SS*	*Sd*	*F*	*P*
TAW	12	31	13.74	4.16	3-664	9.86	.043
	13	266	15.65	4.92			
	14	295	16.78	4.93			
	15	76	18.39	4.93			
TAE	12	31	19.93	5.93	3-664	6.96	.030
	13	266	21.73	6.48			
	14	295	23.45	6.70			
	15	76	24.57	7.17			

As shown in Table 5, the scores of the test anxiety worry scale for the students in the age group of 12 were significantly lower than the students in the 14 and 15 age categories. The students who were in the 13 age category group had significantly lower test anxiety subscale scores than the students in the 14 and 15 age categories.

Table 5: The results of LSD test between TAW and TAE scores and age variable

The dependent variable	*Age*	*Age categories*	*Averages difference*	*P*
TAW	*12*	13	-1.87	.263
		14	-3.01*	.007
		15	-4.67*	.00
	13	12	1.87	.263
		14	-1.13*	.037
		15	-2.74*	.00
	14	12	3.01*	.007
		13	1.13*	.037
		15	-1.60	.065
	15	12	4.62*	.00
		13	2.74*	.00
		14	1.60	.065
TAE	*12*	13	-1.80	.919
		14	-3.52*	.031
		15	-4.64*	.006
	13	12	1.80	.919
		14	-1.72*	.014
		15	-2.84*	.006
	14	12	3.52*	.031
		13	1.72*	.014
		15	-1.12	.9
	15	12	4.64*	.006
		13	2.84*	.006
		14	1.12	0.9

As shown in Table 5, the scores of test anxiety emotionality subscale scores of students in 12 age category were significantly lower than students in 14 and 15 age categories. The scores of test anxiety emotionality subscale scores of students in the 13 age group were significantly lower than those in the 14 and 15 age groups.

Findings Whether There is a Significant Difference between PASSRA, PASSA, PASSEPSA, PASSEPSRA, TAW and TAE Scores, Sibling Number and Nationality Variables

Findings of PASSEPSA and PASSEPSRA Scores and Whether There is a Significant Relationship between Sibling Number and Nationality Variables

According to the number of siblings and the nationality of the students, whether they differ according to PASSEPSA and PASSEPSA subscores, they were analysed using bidirectional MANOVA and the results were given in Table 6.

While the MANOVA results showed that the number of siblings of students did not have a significant effect on nationality, it was determined that PASSEPSA and PASSEPSRA had a significant effect on the number of siblings and national interaction.

The dependent variance of the observed significant differences was interpreted by looking at the significance values in the Intergroup Response Table (Table 7) and comparatively, the alpha value was 0.025 (.05/2) in the Bonferroni correction direction.

Although the PASSEPSA subscale scores of the students did not show any significant difference according to the number of siblings and nationality interaction variables in Table 7, PASSEPSRA subscores showed a significant difference. According to this it was found out that The Turkish Cypriot students ($\bar{X}$=29.05) with 1 sibling PASSEPSRA scores are higher than the binational (Turkish and Turkish Cypriot) ($\bar{X}$=27.46) and Turkish students' ($\bar{X}$=28.80); The Turkish students ($\bar{X}$=28.16) with 2 siblings PASSEPSRA scores are higher than the binational ($\bar{X}$=27.46) and Turkish Cypriot students' ($\bar{X}$=26.91); the Turkish students ($\bar{X}$=28.77) with

Table 6: MANOVA values of PASSEPSA and PASSEPSRA scores according to sibling number and nationality

Influence	*Wilks'*	*F*	*Hypothesis sd*	*Error sd*	*P*	η^2
Sibling number	.994	.501	8	1304	.856	.003
Nationality	.990	1.63	4	1304	.162	.005
Sibling number* Nationality	.956	1.86	16	1304	.020	.022

Table 7: Intergroup Test Results of PASSEPSA and PASSEPSRA scores according to the number of siblings, nationality and; number os siblings and nationality variables

Source	*The dependent variable*	*Sum of squares*	*Sd*	*Square of average*	*F*	*P*	η^2
Number of Siblings	PASSEPSA	673.57	4	168.394	.340	.851	.002
	PASSEPSRA	118.51	4	29.630	.653	.625	.004
Nationality	PASSEPSA	2685.04	2	1342.521	2.709	.067	.008
	PASSEPSRA	61.02	2	30.512	.673	.511	.002
*Sibling Number**	PASSEPSA	4522.30	8	565.288	1.141	.334	.014
Nationality	PASSEPSRA	976.25	8	122.032	2.491	.006	.032

3 siblings PASSEPSRA scores are higher than the binational ($\bar{X}$=26.42) and the Turkish students' ($\bar{X}$=25.14); the binational students ($\bar{X}$=27.93) with 4 siblings PASSEPSRA scores are higher than the the Turkish students ($\bar{X}$=24.50) and Turkish Cypriot students' ($\bar{X}$=27.84); and the binational students ($\bar{X}$=31.80) with 5-9 siblings PASSEPSRA scores are higher than the the Turkish students ($\bar{X}$=25.30) and Turkish Cypriot students' ($\bar{X}$=28.69).

In addition to these results, no significant difference was found between Parent Attitude Scale subscales (PASSRA, PASSA) and Test Anxiety Scale subscales (TAW, TAE) scores and the number of siblings and nationality variables of students.

DISCUSSION

Gender, age, sibling number and nationality variables of secondary school students were taken into account, and the results of this study, which examined the students' test anxiety and parental attitudes, did not show any significant difference between gender variables and Parental Attitude Scale Specific to the Examination Period Scale. There was a significant difference between the gender variables and the Test Anxiety Scale Emotionality dimension. According to the results, the female students' scores on the Test Anxiety Scale Emotionality subscale scores were higher than the male students. Similar results were found in many studies, and these studies showed that female students had significantly higher test anxiety levels than male students (Bacanli and Sürücü 2006; Szafranski et al. 2012; Sena et al. 2007; Küçük 2010; Devine et al. 2012; Reteguiz 2006). However, another study reached the result which was indicated that there was not significant difference between gender and test anxiety (Katrin Arens et al. 2017).

Λ

There was no significant difference between the Parental Attitude Scale and the Parental Attitude Scale Specific to the Examination Period. However, there was a meaningful difference between the scores of the Worry and Emotionality subscales of Test Anxiety Scale and age variable. According to the results obtained, the scores of Test Anxiety Worry subscale scores of students in the 12-year age group were significantly lower than scores of students in the 14 and 15 years age groups. The students who were in the 13-age group had significantly lower Test Anxiety Worry subscale scores than the students in the 14 and 15-age categories. In addition, the scores of Test Anxiety Emotionality subscale scores of students in the 12-year age category were found significantly lower than those in the 14 and 15 age categories. The scores of the test anxiety emotionality subscale scores of students in the 13-age group were significantly lower than those in the 14 and 15-year age groups. These results revelaed that as the age of the students grew, the level of test anxiety also increased. However, according to Bozkurt (2004), contrary to this result, anxiety level decreased as the age of the students' increased.

In another study, it was found that the age variable was not an effect on children's anxiety levels (Aral and Basar 1998).

Another result obtained in this study showed that there is no significant relationship between Parent Attitude Scale and Test Anxiety Inventory scores and sibling number and nationality variables.

CONCLUSION

In this study, it was concluded that there was a significant relationship between the scores of the Parental Attitude Scale Specific to the Examination Period and the number of siblings and nationality. According to the results obtained from the research, PASSEPSA subscale scores of the students were not significantly different according to the number of siblings and nationality interaction; whereas subscale scores of PASSEPSRA significantly differ. The results obtained from the study show that the parents of TRNC students who have one sibling are in a stricter stance during the examination periods than the ones who have Turkish nationality and double nationality students. Also, it is seen that the parents of Turkish nationals who have more than one sibling have a stricter attitude than the parents of TRNC citizens and double citizens during the examination periods.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommented that it is better to interview parents and students in a qualitative research design to better understand the expectations and attitudes and behaviours of parents towards their children related with their childrens' examinations and to understand the students' perceptions of test related anxiety.

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