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Analysis of the Relationship Between the Social-emotional Adaptation and Self Perception of 5-6 Year Old Children and the Problem Solving Abilities of Their Mothers and Teachers

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ABSTRACT The purpose of this study is to analyze the relationship between children's social adaptation and self-perception levels and the problem solving ability levels of mothers and teachers. This is a surveillance type of study. Sample group consists of 220 children, 220 mothers, and 22 teachers, a total of 462 people. In this study, Heppner's Problem Solving Inventory was used to determine problem solving ability levels of teachers and mothers, the Marmara Social Emotional Adaptation Scale was used to determine social adaptation levels of children, and the Demoulin Self Perception Scale for Children was used to determine the self-perception levels of children. This study found that the problem solving ability of both mothers and teachers has positive impact on children's social adaptation levels. It was also determined that social skills of children are affected by the social skills of adults, whom they take as models.

INTRODUCTION

The preschool period is an important process for a child's emotional and social development, just as it is for all his developmental zones. Gains from relations within his immediate environment are directly influential on his emotional and social development. For this reason, the preschool years are one of the most sensitive periods with regards to the influence of family and adults from the immediate environment.

This period presents two main sources of learning for child. The first is his own human experience and the second is the information he acquires by observing the behaviors of the adults around him. Information, skills, and observations thatare acquired this way form the basis of his perception of himself, other people, and life in general. Among the fundamental observation and skills that are acquired in preschool period as part of social-emotional development, the development of social skills and development of self-perception are two important elements that influence one another.

Social skills are described as the ability to freely express both positive and negative thoughts and emotions without losing social support in interpersonal communication. Social skills, communication, problem solving, deciding, helping each other, sharing, and cooperation are skills that help a child start and maintain self-management and positive social relations with others, such as peer relations. These behaviors are described as socially acceptable and learned behaviors that allow individuals to achieve agreeable and positive social results in social environments and enable communication with others. Social skills such as sharing and the expression of positive emotions enable interaction between social cognitive perception and linguistic competence and improve positive social behaviors. The expression of positiveemotions is another factor that improves positive social behaviors (Sergin and Giverts 2003; Avcioglu 2005; Kostelnik et al. 2005; Stefan 2008; Wilburn 2000).

Self-concept is a personal portrait and consists of a large variety of interactions that separate the individual from others. These interactions are based on interpretation of feedback acquired from other people, and also from one's experiences in one's physical and social environment. Development of self-concept is a slow

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process that continues throughout life and changes with age. Self-concept consists not only of an individual's ability to self-esteem, but also other elements such as self-knowledge, self-awareness of oneself as as a separate being, and the values, desires, and behaviors that specific to a given individual (Zigler and Stevenson 1987). There are multiple factors that impact the self-esteem of the child's life and development. Many research findings showing that self-perception affects their children's behavior, thinking, academic skills, and achievements (Jansen et al. 2015; Curby et al. 2015).

Effective social problem solving skills involve solving problems with rational methods and with little stress, rather than avoiding the problem all together. It plays an important role in reducing tension in individual and interpersonal problem areas (Onur1999).

The first few years of a child's life are considered critical periods withrespect to thedevelopment of social-emotional skills and observational capacity.The development of self-perception in preschool children consists of the development of concepts like "I" and "mine," development of skills, comparing self to others, seeing one's self from the outside, and identification through environmental interaction (Phillips1983). Social interactions help a child develop correct self-perception while behaviors help develop a positive self-perception; this combination results in the development of positive social skills. Some studies have shown that babies with the innate potential forstrong social skills tend to undergo withdrawal without adequate adult support,whereas babies with the tendency to become withdrawn can easily attain positive social skills with the correct adult support (Shiner 2000; Rubin 1993; Miller et al. 2005).

According to Bandura (1993), the self-sufficiency concept is influential for problem solving skills. This is because people with high social self-sufficiency are confident about their own skills. This confidence encourages them to find and try new ways to solve social problems.

Vygotsky (1978) states that young children initially depend on their families to acquire social skills. However, he also states that as children grow older they actupon theirneed to become independent and use the basic social skills that they acquired from their families in interactions with other people. In other words, children need the support of their families in respect of social skills and problem solving at a young age, and as they grow older, the supportive role of adults diminishes as the adult's role of being a model becomes more important.

Today, in addition to children's daily home life and their parents' behavior, children's school life and teacher's behaviors have become the focus of attention as pre-school education institutions become widespread and an increasing number of children attend these institutions. Preschool teacher's responsibilities include both being a model and giving pedagogical guidance to help children achieve social competence. Thus, in addition to the role of parents, it is also the teacher's perceptions, behaviors, and social skills that influence a child's social and emotional development (Ogden 2006; Lillvist et al. 2009).

Therefore, teachers can become a model and support children about their problem solving skills, since they are in constant interaction with them. In order to present an effective model and learning process, teachers must encourage children to solve problems on their own (Pianta and Hamre 2001 cited in Ocak 2010).

In short, most behaviors of both parents and teachers are interiorized by children who imitate these behaviors during the preschool period. The behavior patterns of parents and teachers in human relations offer children a social learning process. Through acting as a correct role model and creating an educational environment in classroom activities, it is believed that preschool teachers with problem solving competencies are able to present children with opportunities to develop social adaptation skills. It is highly likely that can have a positive impact on a child's perception of self. Similarly, a mother with problem-solving competencies can also be a good example for her child regarding relationships with other people. In turn, this will have positive impact on children's a social skills, adaptation, and perception of self. This viewpoint emphasizes the importance of adult personal characteristics and support during the preschool period.

Social problem solving skills are especially effective with regard to the quality of relationships with other people. Because parents problem solving skills, are taken as role models by children, can influence various aspects of a child's development, including their basic skills

and observations such as social adaptation and self-perception.Various studies which analyze the effects of social skills, social adaptation, problem solving, and self-perception on each other and adults' effect (parent-teacher) on the process, were done:

Leerkes et al. (2011) analyzed the effect of the emotional relationship between mother and child on a child's problem solving skills and preliminary skills. Mavroveli et al. (2009) investigated the relationship between preschool children's cognitive ability and emotional perceptions and their social adaptation. In another study that was conducted to determine the effects of improving a family's social skills on improving achild's social skills, DeRoiser and Gilliom (2007) determined that both improvements can influence each other.

In his longitudinal design study, where he analyzed various related and unrelated cultural factors to see which factors influenced the development of self-perception, Marshall (2001) determined a great number of cultural factorsaffect achild's perception of self. At the end of the study, it was determined that self-perception is closely related to the development and socializing of the child. That is why he stated that the family's child care methods and child's environment affect both the child's development and socializing process, and that these processesare also mutual processes that affect perception of self. Lillvist et al. (2009) conducted a study investigating the way that preschool teachers identify children's social skills. Ocak (2010) investigated the effect of the child - teacher relationship on children's relationship with other children, as well as the impact on social skills like problem solving, in the preschool period.

All of these studies indicate that the effect of adults can be seen in the child's social adaptation and self-perception. However, no study has yet focused on the impact of a mother or teacher's problem solving skills on their child or student's social skills and self-perception.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the relationship between the social adaptation and self-perception levels of 5-6 year old children and problem solving skills of mothers and teachers This study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of problem solving skills of mothers and teachers?
2. What is the level of children's social adaptation and self-perception?
3. Is there any relationship between the social adaptation and self-perception levels of children and the problem solving levels of mother and teachers?

METHODOLOGY

The Research Design

The study uses a relational survey model.

Research Group

The population of the study is comprised of children between the ages of five and six who attended preschool educational institutions in Bursa. The sample group consists of 204 children, 204 mothers (that is, mothers of children of the study group), and 21 teachers (that is, teachers of the children of study group), or a total of 429 people. In order to determine the sample group, 21 classes were chosen from among the independent preschools connected with the Ministry of National Education in Bursa during the 2013-2014 academic year. 56 percent of the children of sample group are girls and 44 percent are boys. 50 percent of them have been receiving education for one year and 50 percent of them have been receiving for two years. Most of mothers (48%) are university graduates and most of them (44%) are in 31 to 35 age range. All of the teachers are females and university graduates, and they work in independent preschools connected with the Ministry of National Education.

Data Collection Tools

The Problem Solving Inventory (PSI), Marmara Social-Emotional Adaptation Scale (MASEAS), DeMoulin Self-Concept Developmental Scale (DSCDS), and Personal Information Form were used in the study.

Problem Solving Inventory (PSI)

The PSI was used to determine the problem solving levels of mothers and teachers.Taylan (1990) translated the inventory into Turkish, and validity and reliability tests of the Likert scale were performed Hepner and Petersen (1989). The

PSI includes 35 articles. The aim of the PSI is to determine the perception of an individual's problem solving attitudes and behaviors.Lower scores indicate effective problem solving and higher scores indicate ineffective problem solving. There is no deadline for completing the PSIand the average time to completion is 15 minutes.The PSI's internal consistency correlation was .49 between Problem Solving Confidence and Approach-Avoidance Way, .49 between Problem Solving Confidence and Personal Control, and .38 between Approach-Avoidance and Personal Control.The test-retest reliability of the PSI changed between .77 and .81 every three weeks (cited in Onur 1999).

Marmara Social-Emotional Adaptation Scale (MASEAS)

The MASEAS was used to determine the social adaptation levels of children.The scale was developed by Guven et al. (2004) and measures the social-emotional adaptation levels of 6 to 6.1-year-old children. 270 girls and 297 boys (that is, a total of 567 children) participated in the validity and reliability study of the MASEAS. According to analysis results, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the scale was 0.83, $p < .01$.

DeMoulin Self-Concept Developmental Scale (DSCDS)

The DSCDS was used to determine the children's level of sense of self.The DSCDS is a measurement tool that enables the systematic and comparative analysis of the individual sense of self concept of children. It was developed by Dr. Donald Demoulin at Tennessee University between the years of 1995 and 1998, in a program study aimed at supporting the sense of self of children named "I love myself." The scale contains 29 articles and 2 sub-scales was first used in Turkish by Turasli (2014) who performed lingual equivalence, validity, and reliability studies. The validity and reliability studies were conducted on the Turkish version of the scale. Maximum reliability was obtained using the Cronbach Alpha method (0.8851) and minimum reliability was obtained using the Guttman method (0.8805).

The "Personal Information Form" was developed by the researcher to determine the demographic features of the whole group.

Statistical Analysis

The data obtained from this research were evaluated by the Statistical Package for Social Science software version 20.0 (SPSS,Chicago,IL USA). Frequencies and percentages of the data werecalculated While analyzing the difference between groups, the significance level used was 0.05.The Chi-square test was used to examine inter-variable dependencies, where the level of significance was set as 0.05.Correlations were analyzed and the level of significance was taken as 0.05.After the normality test, the Mann Whitney U Test was used for abnormally distributed variables in pairs to examine the difference between groups. For groups of more than two, theKruskal Wallis H Test with Bonferroni correction was used for abnormally distributed variables.

RESULTS

The relationship between the problem solving skills of mothers and teachers and children's social adaptation and sense of self levels were evaluated through different statistical methods and attempts were made to interpret the findings.

The comparison between mothers' problem solving skill levels and children's sense of self levels is shown in Table 1.

According to Table 1, 39 mothers who participated in the study social problem-solving skills is high. The total self-perception of all of the children of these mothers level is high (100%). 165 mothers demonstrated medium- or low-level problem solving skills, the total self-perception of children of is high (99.51%). There is non-significant relationship between the problem solving scores of mothers and teachers and the sense of self sub-scale scores and total scores of children ($p>0.05$).

The comparison between mothers' problem solving skill levels and children's social/emotional adaptation levels is shown in Table 2.

As seen in Table 2, a statistically significant difference was found between of communication with peers, proper reaction in social situations, delaying personal satisfaction, positive attitude towards social environment, proper reaction in negative social situations, and acting independently ($p>0.05$).However, a statistically significant difference was found between the

Table 1: Comparison between mothers' problem solving skill levels and children's sense of self levels

Sense of self of the child		*Problem solving score of the mothers*						*Statistical analysis*	
		High problem solving skill		*Medium/low problem solving skill*		*Total*		*Chi-square*	*p*
		n	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*		
Self-sufficiency	Medium/Low	14	35.90	56	33.94	70	34.31	0.002	0.965
	High	25	64.10	109	66.06	134	65.69		
	Total	39	100.00	165	100.00	204	100.00		
Self-esteem	Medium/Low	5	12.82	25	15.15	30	14.71	0.014	0.906
	High	34	87.18	140	84.85	174	85.29		
	Total	39	100.00	165	100.00	204	100.00		
Sense of Self Total	Low	0	0.00	1	0.61	1	0.49	Fisher's Exact	1.000
	High	39	100.00	164	99.39	203	99.51		
	Total	39	100.00	165	100.00	204	100.00		

*p>0.05

problem solving skill level groups of mothers andthe sense of behaving according to the needs of social life scores (p<0.05).Behaving according to the needs of social life was found to be lower in the children of parents with medium/low problem solving skills than in the children of parents with high problem solving skills.

The comparison between teacher's problem solving skill levels and children's sense of self levels is shown in Table 3.

The data in Table 3 indicate that the 70 teachers in the study group have high-level problem-solving skills. Total self-perception of the level of all of the students who work with these teachers is high (100%). 134 teachers have moderate- or low-level problem solving skills, and students of these teachers showed high self-perception (99.25%). According to Table 3, a statistically significant association was found between the problem solving skill levels of teachers and children's overall sense of self (p>0.05).

The comparison between teacher's problem solving skill levels and children's social/emotional adaptation levels is shown in Table 4.

According to Table 4, a statistically significant difference was found between the problem solving skill levels of teachers and the chil-

Table 3: Comparison between teachers' problem solving skill levels and sense of self levels of children

Self concept levels (Children)		*Problem solving (Teacher)*						*Statistical analysis*	
		High problem solving skill		*Medium/low problem solving skill*		*Total*		*Chi-square*	*p*
		n	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*		
Self-sufficiency	Low	0	0.00	1	0.75	1	0.49	-	-
	Medium	31	44.29	38	28.36	69	33.82		
	High	39	55.71	95	70.90	134	65.69		
	Total	70	100.00	134	100.00	204	100.00		
Self-esteem	Low	0	0.00	2	1.49	2	0.98	-	-
	Medium	11	15.71	17	12.69	28	13.73		
	High	59	84.29	115	85.82	174	85.29		
	Total	70	100.00	134	100.00	204	100.00		
Sense of Self Total	Low	0	0.00	1	0.75	1	0.49	Fisher's Exact	1.000
	High	70	100.00	133	99.25	203	99.51		
	Total	70	100.00	134	100.00	204	100.00		

p>0.05

Table 2: Comparison between mothers' problem solving skill levels and children's social/emotional adaptation levels

Social-emotional adapt levels(children)		*Problem solving rate(mothers)*						*Mann Whitney U Test*		
		n	*Mean*	*Median*	*Min*	*Max*	*SS*	*Mean rank*	*U*	*p*
Communication with Peers	High problem solving skill	39	30.90	33.00	13.00	36.00	5.29	117.17	2645	0.083
	Medium/Low problem solving skill	165	29.88	30.00	16.00	64.00	5.41	99.03		
	Total	204	30.08	30.50	13.00	64.00	5.39			
Proper Reaction in Social Situations	High problem solving skill	39	20.85	22.00	11.00	26.00	3.37	104.49	3140	0.814
	Medium/Low problem solving skill	165	20.87	21.00	13.00	27.00	3.43	102.03		
	Total	204	20.86	21.00	11.00	27.00	3.41			
Delaying Personal Satisfaction	High problem solving skill	39	4.38	4.00	3.00	6.00	0.81	108.41	2987	0.455
	Medium/Low problem solving skill	165	4.21	4.00	2.00	6.00	0.86	101.10		
	Total	204	4.25	4.00	2.00	6.00	0.85			
Behaving According to the Needs of Social Life	High problem solving skill	39	16.18	17.00	7.00	18.00	2.09	124.23	2370	0.010*
	Medium/Low problem solving skill	165	15.18	16.00	8.00	18.00	2.35	97.36		
	Total	204	15.37	16.00	7.00	18.00	2.33			
Positive Attitude Towards Social Environment	High problem solving skill	39	7.85	8.00	4.00	9.00	1.27	96.49	2983	0.451
	Medium/Low problem solving skill	165	8.04	8.00	4.00	9.00	1.10	103.92		
	Total	204	8.00	8.00	4.00	9.00	1.13			
Proper Reaction in Negative Social Situations	High problem solving skill	39	7.85	8.00	4.00	9.00	1.27	114.54	2748	0.142
	Medium/Low problem solving skill	165	7.61	8.00	4.00	9.00	1.16	99.65		
	Total	204	7.65	8.00	4.00	9.00	1.18			
Acting Independently	High problem solving skill	39	2.77	3.00	1.00	3.00	0.58	112.04	284	0.141
	Medium/Low problem solving skill	165	2.64	3.00	1.00	3.00	0.62	100.25		
	Total	204	2.67	3.00	1.00	3.00	0.62			

*p>0.05

Table 5: Comparison between problem solving scores of mothers and teachers in the research group

		Teacher / Mother						*Mann Whitney U Test*		
		n	*Mean*	*Median*	*Min*	*Max*	*SS*	*Mean Rank*	*U*	*p*
Problem Solving Score	Teacher	21	76.43	78	45	117	18.30	86.48	1585	**0.013***

dren's sense of communication with peers, ability to delay personal satisfaction, behave according to the needs of social life, and ability to act independently ($p>0.05$).For the students of teachers with high problem solving skills, their scores in these four variables were significantly higher than the scores of students of teachers with medium problem solving skills.

The comparison between problem solving scores of mothers and teachers in the research group is shown in Table 5.

As seen in Table 5, on average teachers scored 76.43 in problem solving skills, as compared to mothers who scored an average of 88.84. According to Table 5, a statistically significant difference was found between the problem solving scores of mothers and teachers ($p<0.05$), and was significantly higher in mothers than in teachers.

DISCUSSION

One of the most important findings of the study is that the social adaptation levels of children increase in parallel with the problem solving skills of mothers and teachers. The average "behaving according to the needs of social life" scores of the children of mothers with high problem solving skills are higher than the scores of children of mothers with medium or low problem solving skills. For students whose teachers had high problem solving skills, their communication with peers, delaying personal satisfaction, behaving according to the needs of social life, and acting independently scores are significantly higher than the scores of students of teachers with medium problem solving skills. Accordingly, the social adaptation levels of children are greatly affected by problem solving levels of mothers and teachers. These results align with a similar study that was conductedwith adolescents. Bilgin and Akkapulu (2007) analyzed the effect of parental sense of self and communication skills on the problem solving skills of their adolescent offspring. According to this research, the problem-solving skills of adolescents are greatly affected by the interpersonal communication levels and social self-efficacy perceptions of their mothers.

Similar results can be found in the studies conducted abroad (Paterson- Sanson 1999; Denham et al. 2003; Nelson et al. 2005). The results of a study by Leerkes et al. (2011) support the findings of this study. Communication and problem solving skills of mothers and teachers were compared with the social adaptation skills of children. According to the findings of this study, the problem-solving skills of parents and teachers directly affect the social adaptation skills of children.

Social adaptation levels of six-year-old children who attend preschool were analyzed in a study made by Orcan and Deniz (2004). The variables studied included gender, educational background of the mother, birth order, number of siblings, and professional status of the mother. The authors found that gender, birth order, and number of sibling are not correlated with child social adaptation levels. However, as the educational background of the mothers rises, the social adaptation levels of children also rises. Furthermore, children with working mothers have higher social adaptation levels.

Another interesting finding of this research study is that the *social problem solving scores of mothers are significantly higher than the ones of teachers.* However, it very important in terms of the contribution of personal qualifications of teachers on the development of the child. The results of several studies also emphasize this point.

Paulou (2014) investigated the effects of teacher-student interactions, student social skills, and classroom context on students emotional and behavioral difficulties. According to the findings of this study, students' of social skills was a significant predictor of emotional and behavioral difficulties; teacher–student

Table 4: Comparison between teachers' problem solving skill levels and children's social/emotional adaptation levels

Social-emotional adapt levels(children)		*Problem solving rate(mothers)*						*Mean Rank*	*Mann Whitney U Test*	
		n	*Mean*	*Median*	*Min*	*Max*	*SS*		*U*	*p*
Communication with Peers	High problem solving skill	70	31.16	33	19	36	4.81	118.4	3576	**0.005***
	Medium problem solving skill	134	29.51	29.5	13	64	5.61	94.2		
	Total	204	30.08	30.5	13	64	5.39			
Proper Reaction in Social Situations	High problem solving skill	70	21.01	21	13	26	3.39	105.3	4491	0.618
	Medium problem solving skill	134	20.78	21	11	27	3.43	101.0		
	Total	204	20.86	21	11	27	3.41			
Delaying Personal Satisfaction	High problem solving skill	70	4.40	5	2	6	0.94	114.8	3828	**0.021**
	Medium problem solving skill	134	4.16	4	2	6	0.80	96.1		
	Total	204	4.25	4	2	6	0.85			
Behaving According to the Needs of Social Life	High problem solving skill	70	15.73	17	9	18	2.37	114.1	3877	**0.040***
	Medium problem solving skill	134	15.18	16	7	18	2.29	96.4		
	Total	204	15.37	16	7	18	2.33			
Positive Attitude Towards Social Environment	High problem solving skill	70	8.10	8.5	4	9	1.12	107.7	4329	0.336
	Medium problem solving skill	134	7.96	8	4	9	1.14	99.8		
	Total	204	8.00	8	4	9	1.13			
Proper Reaction in Negative Social Situations	High problem solving skill	70	7.84	8	5	9	0.99	110.1	4157	0.168
	Medium problem solving skill	134	7.55	8	4	9	1.26	98.5		
	Total	204	7.65	8	4	9	1.18			
Acting Independently	High problem solving skill	70	2.80	3	1	3	0.50	112.6	3982	**0.020***
	Medium problem solving skill	134	2.60	3	1	3	0.66	97.2		
	Total	204	2.67	3	1	3	0.62			

*$p<0.05$

interactions and classroom context also affected students' emotional and behavioral difficulties. This perspective provides educators with a theoretical and practical tool for understanding emotional and behavioral difficulties.Ocak (2010) found that preschool-age childrenwho can communicate well with their teachers are better able to receive support and find different ways of thinking and trying, so they have fewersocial problems with other children, as compared to children who do not communicate well with their teachers.

Erozkan (2014) studied 706 teacher candidates to understand the relationship between sense of social identity and problem solving skills. This study found a negative relationship between lack of self-confidence and social problem solving skills, and a positive relationship between social self-efficacy and creative problem solving.

CONCLUSION

At the end of this study, the researcher found a direct relationship between the sense of self of children and the problem solving skills of mothers and teachers.This may be the result of the lack of some other components that may affect the sense of self of the child in this research (that is, personal qualifications, parent's and teacher attitudes, etc.). However, the positive effect of the problem solving skills of both mothers and teachers on the social adaptation skills of children is elucidated in the research.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Various suggestions may be offered through the findings of this research.The reasons why the problem-solving skills of teachers are lower than the ones of mothers may be researched. Additional lessons may be put into the academic schedule in order to support the problem-solving skills of teacher candidates in the programs of education faculties.The effects of fathers on the social adaptation skills and sense of self of children may also be researched. Supportive trainings for improving the problem solving skills of parents may be given in preschool educational institutions.

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