

Attachment Patterns, Social-Emotional Development and Perspective-Taking Skills of Preschoolers

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Abstract

The present study was conducted to analyze the relationship between attachment patterns, social-emotional development, and perspective-taking skills of preschoolers. The sample group of the study consisted of 201 children attending preschool education and their parents. The study utilized the causal comparison model, one of the survey models. T-test and ANOVA, which are parametric tests, were employed for normally distributed data, while non-normally distributed data were analyzed by Mann-Whitney U Test and Kruskal-Wallis Test. A cross-tabular analysis was conducted to identify children's attachment patterns based on the variables. Spearman Correlation analysis was applied to analyze the relationship between preschool children's social-emotional development, perspective-taking skills, and attachment patterns. The effect sizes of the analyses with significant differences were also determined. The study revealed that there was no relationship between children's perspective-taking skills and their social-emotional development, and that children's social-emotional development and perspective-taking skills did not differ based on the attachment patterns. Children's attachment patterns were found to be related to both mothers' and fathers' education levels. It was observed that a significant portion of the children in the study had an insecure attachment pattern. Secure attachment can be supported by creating support education programs for families starting from the prenatal period.

Keywords: Attachment, Perspective-Taking, Preschool Education, Social-Emotional Development

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Introduction

Development can be defined as a regular and continuous change in the physiological and neurological structure, social interaction patterns and thinking skills of the growing organism. The approach in the field of psychology suggests that developmental areas consist of five developmental domains: psychomotor development, cognitive development, physical development, language development, and social-emotional development. This developmental process increases the child's cognitive, physical, and psychomotor skills as well as the child's social-emotional development in early childhood (Küçükturan, 2020; Weissberg et al., 2013). An individual's relationship with his/her environment is one of the factors that affect his/her emotional development the most. Therefore, emotional-social development is two areas of development that are not considered separately from each other and interact with each other. Accordingly, researchers use the term “social-emotional” (Bayhan & Artan, 2004; Kandır & Alpan, 2008).

The preschool period has a critical developmental role in the social-emotional field as in every field (Ekinci Vural, 2018). Parents who communicate positively with their children during this period will support their children's development in the social-emotional field (Tüzün & Sayar, 2006). The relationship and attachment established with parents in early childhood can be effective in shaping the ongoing relationships of individuals in the following years and ensuring healthy personality development. Attachment pattern can affect the relationship between the individual and his/her peers in childhood and adolescence, with friends and spouse in adulthood, and with his/her child in the process of becoming a parent (Evirgen Geniş & Gözün Kahraman, 2018; Sümer & Şendağ, 2009).

Attachment is defined as a close emotional bond between two people. Bowlby emphasized the significance of attachment in the first year of life and the sensitivity of the caregiver. Bowlby argues that infants and caregivers are equipped for the emergence of attachment behavior (Santrock, 2014). Parental availability provides the child with a secure base from which to explore and learn (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991). The main point of attachment theory is that the baby observes the outside world and creates a safe environment where it can return to its mother with a sense of trust (Tüzün & Sayar, 2006).

According to Ruby and Decety (2003), various relationships, such as romantic relationships, family and kinship relationships, and friendships, are influenced by the individual's ability to be aware of and predict the behaviors of others, and this characteristic is explained as the "Perspective-Taking Skill," which is the first stage of empathy (Tan Niam, 2003). Perspective-taking skill is an essential social skill that helps to understand what a person is thinking, perceiving, or feeling at the time of an event (Heagle & Rehfeldt, 2006; Moll & Meltzoff, 2001).

Upon reviewing the literature on research conducted in the preschool period, it can be seen that the following studies were conducted: studies on social-emotional development (Arslan Çiftçi & Uyanık Balat, 2018; Bayrakçı, 2013; Kalkan & Rakap, 2021; Kaya Bican & Sarıtaş Atalar, 2017; Kuru Turaşlı & Zembat, 2013); studies on attachment patterns (Doğanay Koç & Gültekin Akduman, 2017; Evirgen & Gözün Kahraman, 2018; Güloğlu & Kararımak, 2017; Mutlu, 2020); research on perspective-taking skills (Aslan & Köksal Akyol 2016; Önem & Coşkun, 2020; Yıldız & Güney Karaman, 2017); on social-emotional development and perspective-taking skills (Genal 2018); on attachment and perspective-taking skills (Mutlu, 2020). However, the lack of studies on social-emotional development, attachment patterns, and perspective-taking skills in five-year-old children receiving preschool education indicates that there is a gap in the literature. However, it is also evident that studies on attachment are limited. The present study differs from similar studies in that it analyzed social-emotional development, perspective-taking skills, and attachment in preschoolers. Within this context, it is anticipated that the data obtained as a result of the study will fill the gap in the literature and guide new studies to be conducted. The present study aimed to analyze the social-emotional development, attachment patterns, and perspective-taking skills of preschoolers. For this purpose, the views of children attending public preschools and kindergartens in the central districts of Bursa and their parents were examined. Bursa, one of the five major cities of Turkey, is a cosmopolitan city where individuals of different cultures, socio-economic levels, and educational levels live. Considering that it would be easier to reach diversity, the central districts of Bursa were included in the scope of the study. In the sub-objectives created in line with this purpose, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. Is there a relationship between children's social-emotional development and perspective-taking skills?
2. Do children's social-emotional development and perspective-taking skills differ based on attachment patterns?
3. Do children's social-emotional development and perspective-taking skills differ based on gender, mother's age, father's age, mother's and father's education level?
4. Are children's attachment patterns related to gender, mother's age, father's age, and mother's and father's education level?

Method

The Study Model

Studies conducted to determine certain characteristics of a group are defined as survey studies (Büyüköztürk et al., 2012). The present study employed the causal comparison model, which is one of the survey models. The studies conducted with the causal comparison model aim to determine the causes of an existing situation or event and the situations or variables affecting these causes (Büyüköztürk et al., 2012).

Study Group

The population of the study consisted of preschoolers and their mothers in the central districts of Bursa province. The study group of the survey was selected through convenience sampling. In convenience sampling, easily accessible, voluntary people are included in the study (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). The study group of the survey consisted of 201 preschoolers aged 60-71 months and their mothers attending official preschools and kindergartens in the central Nilüfer, Osmangazi and Yıldırım districts of Bursa. Approximately 68,000 preschool children receive education in the city center of Bursa (MoNE Statistics, 2021/2022). The sample size for the study was based on power analysis,

and was determined as 202 in total, 101 for the mother and 101 for the child, with an error size of 0.03 and a confidence interval of 0.95. Children and their mothers were selected through simple random sampling. Simple random sampling is a type of sampling in which all units in the population have independent and equal chances to be selected for sampling (Büyüköztürk et al., 2012). Within the scope of the present study, a total of 310 kindergarten children and their parents were reached in the central districts of Bursa province, but 109 children were not included in the study due to reasons such as the forms that should be filled out by the parents were not filled out and sent to the researcher or the Table 1 shows that 57.3% of the children participating in the study were male, and 45.7% were female. The age distribution of the mothers is 68.7% between the ages of 31 and 40, while the age distribution of the fathers is 62.5% between the ages of 31 and 40. Regarding the education level of the

Table 1. *Frequency and Percentage Values of The Study Group*

		Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Female	92	45.7
	Male	109	54.3
Mother's age	20-30	40	19.9
	31-40	138	68.7
	40 years and over	23	11.4
Father's age	20-30	17	8.5
	31-40	125	62.5
	40 years and over	59	29
Mother's Education Level	Literate	16	8
	Primary School Graduate	77	38.3
	Secondary School Graduate	44	21.9
	University-Higher Education Institution Graduate	64	31.8
Father's Education Level	Literate	9	4.5
	Primary School Graduate	47	23.4
	Secondary School Graduate	64	31.8
	University-Higher Education Institution Graduate	81	40.3

mothers, it was revealed that the majority of the mothers (38.3%) were primary school graduates and the education level of the fathers indicated that the majority of the fathers (40.3%) were university/higher education institution graduates.

Data Collection Tools

The Family Personal Information Form was used to obtain family demographic information, the Vineland Social-Emotional Early Childhood Scale was used to assess children's social-emotional development, the Secure Place Scenarios Test was used to analyze attachment patterns, and the Perspective Taking Test for Children was used to analyze children's perspective-taking skills.

Secure Place Scenarios Test

The scale consists of a total of 6 stories. The child's insecure responses to three or more stories are classified as insecure attachment. It was observed that the consensus coefficient of two raters for each story varied between .78 and .85, and the inter-rater consensus coefficient was .91 for the general attachment classification (Granot & Mayeseless, 2001). The present study, Cronbach's Alpha value was found to be .75 as a result of the analysis of all stories.

Perspective-Taking Test for Children

The scale has three subdimensions. Among these subdimensions, "Perceptual Perspective-Taking" subdimension consists of 4 items, "Cognitive Perspective-Taking" subdimension consists of 4 items, and "Emotional Perspective-Taking" subdimension consists of 16 items. It was observed that the consensus coefficient of two raters for each story varied between .78 and .85, and the inter-rater consensus coefficient was .91 for the general attachment classification (Granot & Mayeseless, 2001). The Cronbach's Alpha value was .60 in the "Perceptual Perspective Taking" subdimension, .76 in the Cognitive Perspective Taking subdimension, and .77 in the Emotional Perspective Taking subdimension.

Vineland Social-Emotional Early Childhood Scale

The Turkish validity and reliability study of the scale was conducted by Ceylan et al., (2019) and the scale was developed by Sparrow et al., in 1998. The internal consistency coefficients were .61 in the “Interpersonal Relationships” subscale, .64 in the “Play and Leisure” subscale, .83 in the “Adaptability Subscale”, and .81 in the total scale (Ceylan et al., 2019). In this study conducted with children aged 60-71 months, the internal consistency coefficient was .77 in the “Interpersonal Relationships” subscale, .86 in the “Adaptation” subscale, and .76 in the “Play and Leisure” subscale.

Data Collection

Prior to starting the data collection process, the necessary permissions were obtained from the Ethics Committee of Bursa Uludağ University with the letter dated and numbered 2022-03, then the schools where the application was to be carried out were applied to with a petition and the permissions of the school principals were obtained. Since the study was conducted in schools, a detailed study proposal was submitted to the Provincial Directorate of National Education, including the purpose and content of the study, the measurement tools used, the schools where the study was to be conducted and the necessary permissions. Upon obtaining the permission of the Provincial Directorate of National Education, the data collection process was initiated. Consent was obtained from the families at the beginning of the implementation process for both them and their children to participate in the study based on the voluntariness criterion, and the children of families who did not give permission were not included in the study.

Data Analysis

Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality tests were conducted to determine the methods to be used in the analysis of the study data. It was concluded that the data were not normally distributed and only the total scores of social-emotional developments were normally distributed. Therefore, t-test and ANOVA, which are parametric tests for normally distributed data, and

Mann-Whitney U Test and Kruskal-Wallis Test for non-normally distributed data were analyzed. A cross-tabular analysis was also conducted to identify children's attachment patterns based on the variables. Spearman Correlation analysis was applied to analyze the relationship between preschool children's social-emotional development, perspective-taking skills, and attachment patterns. The effect sizes of the analyses with significant differences were also determined. In this regard, Cohen's (1988) values of no significant effect (between 0-0.01), low effect (between 0.01-0.06), moderate effect (between 0.06-0.14), and high effect (between 0.14-1) were taken (cited in Cohen 1988; Demir, 2019, p. 216).

Findings

Table 2 demonstrates that 46.26% of the children who participated in the study showed a secure attachment pattern, while 53.73% of them showed an insecure attachment pattern.

Attachment Patterns	n	%
Secure Attachment	93	46.26
Insecure Attachment	108	53.73

As presented in Table 3, there was no significant relationship between the total scores and subdimensions of social-emotional development and the total scores and subdimensions of perspective taking ($p>.05$).

As presented in Table 4, it was concluded that children's perspective-taking skills and social-emotional development did not differ based on attachment patterns ($p>.05$). It was also observed that social-emotional development total scores did not differ based on attachment pattern [$t(199)=.622$, $p=.532$; $p>.05$].

It was observed that the subdimensions of children's social-emotional development and total scores of social-emotional development did not differ based on gender [$t(199)=.943$, $p=.347$; $p>.05$]. It was also concluded that the total scores and subdimensions of the

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Table 3. *The Relationship Between Children's Social-Emotional Development and Perspective-Taking Skills*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Vineland Interpersonal Relationships (1)	1.000	.533**	.506**	.796**	.102	-.061	.008	-.021
Vineland Play and Leisure (2)	.533**	1.000	.411**	.714**	.030	.117	.057	.088
Vineland Adaptation (3)	.506**	.411**	1.000	.863**	.091	-.017	.030	.029
Vineland Total (4)	.796**	.714**	.863**	1.000	.078	.009	.017	.019
Perspective-Taking Perceptual Total (5)	.102	.030	.091	.078	1.000	.135	.213**	.376**
Perspective-Taking Cognitive Total (6)	-.061	.117	-.017	.009	.135	1.000	.455**	.707**
Perspective-Taking Emotional Total (7)	.008	.057	.030	.017	.213**	.455**	1.000	.927**
Perspective-Taking Total (8)	-.021	.088	.029	.019	.376**	.707**	.927**	1.000

Table 4. *Man Whitney U Test Analysis Results for Children's Social-Emotional Development and Perspective Taking Skills Based on Attachment Patterns* N=201

Subdimensions	Attachment	n	Rank Mean	Rank Total	U	p
Interpersonal Relationships Subdimension	Secure	93	104.13	9684.50	4730.500	.477
	Insecure	108	98.30	10616.50		
Leisure and Play Subdimensions	Secure	93	106.90	9942.00	4473.000	.180
	Insecure	108	95.92	10359.00		
Adaptation Subdimensions	Secure	93	99.46	9250.00	4879.000	.728
	Insecure	108	102.32	11051.00		
Perspective-Taking Perceptual Total	Secure	93	104.41	9710.50	4704.500	.340
	Insecure	108	98.06	10590.50		
Cognitive Perspective-Taking Total	Secure	93	104.19	9689.50	4725.500	.453
	Insecure	108	98.25	10611.50		
Emotional Perspective-Taking Total	Secure	93	105.68	9828.50	4586.000	.285
	Insecure	108	96.97	10472.50		
Perspective-Taking Total	Secure	93	106.07	9864.50	4550.000	.250
	Insecure	108	96.63	10436.50		

Table 5. Mann Whitney U Test results for Children's Social-Emotional Development and Perspective-Taking Skills Based on Gender
N=201

Subdimensions	Children Gender	n	Rank Mean	Rank Total	U	p
Interpersonal Relationships Subdimensions	Female	92	100.04	9204.00	4926.000	.830
	Male	109	101.81	11097.00		
Leisure and Play Subdimension	Female	92	101.54	9342.00	4964.000	.903
	Male	109	100.54	10959.00		
Adaptation Subdimension	Female	92	109.41	10066.00	4240.000	.059
	Male	109	93.90	10235.00		
Perspective-Taking Perceptual Total	Female	92	104.22	9588.50	4717.500	.373
	Male	109	98.28	10712.50		
	Total	201				
Perspective-Taking Cognitive Total	Female	92	98.14	9028.50	4750.500	.505
	Male	109	103.42	11272.50		
Perspective-Taking Emotional Total	Female	92	104.47	9611.00	4695.000	.433
	Male	109	98.07	10690.00		
Perspective-Taking Total	Female	92	102.93	9470.00	4836.000	.664
	Male	109	99.37	10831.00		

Table 6. χ^2 Square Test Results for The Relationship Between Children's Attachment Patterns and Gender
N=201

Attachment Patterns	Female	Male	Total	χ^2	sd	p
Secure Attachment	50	43	93	4.454	1	.035*
Insecure Attachment	42	66	108			

* $<.05$

Perspective Taking scale did not differ based on the gender of the child.

It is evident from the table that attachment patterns of children change based on their gender ($\chi^2= 4.454$; $p<.05$). Girls are more likely to be securely attached ($f=50$), while boys are more likely to be insecurely attached ($f=66$).

As presented in Table 7, it was found that the "Leisure and Play" subdimension differed based on the age of the mother [$KWH(2)=13,985$, $p=.001$, $p<.05$; $\eta^2=.074$]. When the eta squared value of mother's age on the Vineland Play and Leisure subdimension is analyzed, it is revealed that there is a moderate effect.

Table 7. *KWH Test on Children's Social-Emotional Development and Perspective-Taking Skills Based on Mothers' Age*
N=201

Subdimensions	Mother's age	n	Rank Mean	sd	KWH	p
Interpersonal Relationships	20-30	40	91.19	2	2.041	.360
	31-40	138	104.90			
Subdimensions	41-50	23	94.67			
Play and Leisure	20-30	40	70.58	2	13.985	.001*
	31-40	138	109.41			
Subdimensions	41-50	23	103.46			
Adaptation	20-30	40	103.80	2	1.067	.587
Subdimensions	31-40	138	98.48			
	41-50	23	111.24			
Perspective-Taking Perceptual Total	20-30	40	80.00	2	9.920	.007*
	31-40	138	106.18			
	41-50	23	106.41			
Perspective-Taking Cognitive Total	20-30	40	84.06	2	4.900	.086
	31-40	138	104.19			
	41-50	23	111.30			
Emotional Perspective Total	20-30	40	88.01	2	7.191	.027*
	31-40	138	100.22			
	41-50	23	128.24			
Perspective Total	120-30	40	82.15	2	8.743	.013*
	31-40	138	102.22			
	41-50	23	126.48			

*p<.05

Furthermore, in the perceptual subdimension [$p=.007$, $p<.05$; $\eta^2=.033$] in children's perspective-taking skills differed in the emotional subdimension [$p=.027$, $p<.05$; $\eta^2=.030$] and in the total scores of the perspective-taking scale [$p=.013$, $p<.05$; $\eta^2=.043$]. It is observed that the effect sizes are low.

As presented in Table 8, the total scores of the perspective-taking scale [$KWH(3)=10,158$, $p=.006$, $p<.05$], the perceptual subdimension [$KWH(3)=6,540$, $p=.038$, $p<.05$] and the emotional subdimension [$KWH(3)=10,397$, $p=.006$, $p<.05$] of the scale differed based on the fathers' age. When the eta squared values of the father's age variable on children's

perspective-taking skills are analyzed, it is observed that the Emotional Perspective-Taking subdimension ($\eta^2=.063$) and Total Perspective-Taking ($\eta^2=.068$) have a moderate effect and the Perceptual Perspective-Taking subdimension ($\eta^2=.020$) has a low effect.

Table 8. *KWH Test on Children's Social-Emotional Development and Perspective-Taking Skills Based on Fathers' Age* N=201

Subdimensions	Father's Age	n	Rank Mean	sd	KWH	p
Vineland Interpersonal Relationships Subscale	20-30	17	84.88	3	2.152	.541
	31-40	126	103.43			
	Over 41	58	100.44			
Vineland Leisure and Play Subdimension	20-30	17	76.65	3	3.824	.281
	31-40	126	105.21			
	Over 41	58	98.99			
Vineland Adaptation Subdimension	20-30	17	98.47	3	.213	.975
	31-40	126	100.81			
	Over 41	58	102.15			
Perspective Perceptual Total	20-30	17	73.91	3	6.540	.038*
	31-40	126	102.01			
	Over 41	58	106.75			
Perspective Cognitive Total	20-30	17	78.50	3	3.672	.159
	31-40	126	100.80			
	Over 41	58	108.03			
Perspective Emotional Total	20-30	17	74.26	3	10.397	.006*
	31-40	126	96.17			
	Over 41	58	119.32			
Perspective Total	20-30	17	69.68	3	10.158	.006*
	31-40	126	97.59			
	Over 41	58	117.59			

*p<.05

As seen in Table 9, it was revealed that the Leisure and Play [KWH(3)= 12.538, p=.006, p<.05] subdimension differed based on the mother's education level. When the eta square value of the mother's education level variable on the Vineland Play and Leisure subdimension was analyzed ($\eta^2=.071$), a moderate effect was observed.

As presented in Table 10, it is evident that children's attachment patterns differed based on the mother's education level ($X^2=10.132$, p<.05).

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Table 9. *KWH Test on Children's Social-Emotional Development and Perspective-Taking Skills Based on Mothers' Education Level*
N=201

Subdimensions	Mother's Education Level	n	Rank Mean	sd	KWH	p
Interpersonal Relationships Subdimensions	Literate	16	76.13	3	5.870	.118
	Primary School	77	95.07			
	Secondary School	44	111.19			
	University - higher education institution	64	107.34			
Play and Leisure Subdimension	Literate	16	88.13	3	12.538	.006*
	Primary School	77	105.38			
	Secondary School	44	109.94			
	University – higher education institution	64	92.80			
Adaptation Subdimensions	Literate	16	88.13	3	3.543	.315
	Primary School	77	105.38			
	Secondary School	44	109.94			
	University - higher education institution	64	92.80			
Perspective Perceptual Total	Literate	16	100.16	3	3.010	.390
	Primary School	77	96.64			
	Secondary School	44	96.83			
	University - higher education institution	64	109.33			
Perspective Cognitive Total	Literate	16	119.66	3	2.621	.454
	Primary School	77	98.77			
	Secondary School	44	94.51			
	University - higher education institution	64	103.48			
Perspective Emotional Total	Literate	16	114.41	3	2.562	.464
	Primary School	77	100.08			
	Secondary School	44	91.16			
	University - higher education institution	64	105.52			
Perspective Total	Literate	16	118.63	3	3.412	.332
	Primary School	77	98.45			
	Secondary School	44	91.28			
	University - higher education institution	64	106.34			

*p<.05

Table 10. χ^2 Test Results on Children's Attachment Patterns Based on Mothers' Education Level N=201

Attachment Pattern	Literatec	Primary School	Secondary School	University - higher education institution	Total	χ^2	Sd	p
Secure Attachment	6	31	16	40	93	10.132	3	.017*
Insecure Attachment	10	46	28	24	108			

*p<.05

Table 11. KWH Test on Children's Social-Emotional Development Based on Fathers' Education Level N=201

Subdimensions	Father's Education Level	n	Rank Mean	sd	KWH	p
Interpersonal Relationships Subdimensions	Literate	9	67.11			
	Primary School	47	89.70			
	Secondary School	64	100.52	3	7.613	.055
	University - higher education institution	81	111.70			
Leisure and Play Subdimensions	Literate	9	83.17			
	Primary School	47	84.03			
	Secondary School	64	95.95	3	11.415	.010*
	University-higher education institution	81	116.82			
Adaptation Subdimensions	Literate	9	72.61			
	Primary School	47	100.73			
	Secondary School	64	113.35	3	6.042	110
	University-higher education institution	81	94.55			
Perspective Perceptual Total	Literate	9	99.44			
	Primary School	47	90.94			
	Secondary School	64	103.82	3	2.906	.406
	University - higher education institution	81	104.78			
Perspective Cognitive Total	Literate	9	134.06			
	Primary School	47	96.19			
	Secondary School	64	96.46	3	4.103	251
	University-higher education institution	81	103.70			
Perspective Emotional Total	Literate	9	129.06			
	Primary School	47	94.43			
	Secondary School	64	103.56	3	2.913	405
	University - higher education institution	81	99.67			
Perspective Total	Literate	9	135.44			
	Primary School	47	92.35			
	Secondary School	64	101.99	3	4.251	236
	University – higher education institution	81	101.41			

*p<.05

As presented in Table 11, it was revealed that there was a differentiation in the “Leisure and Play” [KWH(3)= 11.415, $p=.010$, $p<.05$] subdimension based on fathers' education level. When the eta squared value of the father's education level variable on the Leisure and Play subdimension was analyzed ($\eta^2=.068$), a moderate effect was observed.

Table 12. χ^2 Test Results for Children's Attachment Patterns Based on Fathers' Education Level

N=201

Attachment Pattern	Literate	Primary School	Secondary School	University Higher education institution	Total	χ^2	Sd	p
Secure Attachment	1	11	33	48	93	20.578	3	.000*
Insecure Attachment	8	36	31	33	108			

* $p<.05$

As presented in Table 12, children's attachment patterns differed based on their fathers' education level ($\chi^2 = 20.578$, $p<.05$). The Man Whitney U test results revealed that there was a difference between literate-secondary education graduates and university-higher education institution graduates, primary education-secondary education and university-higher education institution graduates.

Discussion

Within the scope of the present study, the relationship between preschoolers' social-emotional development and perspective-taking skills was attempted to be analyzed. Analysis of the obtained data revealed that there was no relationship between children's perspective-taking skills and their social-emotional development, and that children's social-emotional development and perspective-taking skills did not differ based on their attachment patterns.

The relationship between parents and children can be affected by various social and cultural judgments (Mutlu, 2020). The results of the study differ from other studies in this respect. This difference is attributed to many variables such as the environment in which the study group lived, demographic characteristics, friendship relations, and family environment.

Analysis of the data obtained revealed that children's social-emotional development and perspective-taking skills did not differ based on the gender variable. This can be interpreted as gender variable has no effect on social-emotional development and perspective-taking skills. It is suggested that parents are understanding and tolerant towards all their children without gender discrimination in today's conditions, that they give the same attention to the upbringing and education of both their sons and daughters, and that children develop skills such as tolerance towards others, empathy, and sharing in the social environment they establish with pre-school education. It is possible to encounter similar study results in the literature (Akaydın & Akduman 2016; Sang & Nelson, 2017). Ştefan and Avram (2019) revealed that the mean scores of girls were higher than boys in the cognitive and emotional perspective-taking subdimension, but the mean scores of boys were higher than girls in the perceptual perspective-taking subdimension. Unlike this study, Hinnant and O'Brien stated in their study conducted in 2017 that the emotional subdimension of the perspective-taking scale was correlated with the gender variable and that girls' "Emotional Perspective-Taking" scores were higher than boys' scores.

The study revealed that there was a relationship between the gender variable and attachment patterns of children, and that boys had more insecure attachment patterns than girls. This suggests that in Turkish culture, girls spend more time with their mothers and consequently establish a healthy bond between mother and child, which is effective in the formation of secure attachment. It is possible to find similar study results in the literature (Chen 2012; Doğanay Koç & Gültekin Akduman, 2017; Pierrehumbert et al., 2009; Szewczyk Sokolowsky, et al., 2005; Uluç & Öktem, 2009).

The study findings revealed that the total scores of the Play and Leisure subdimension differed based on the mother's education level. Bilek (2011) concluded that mother's age had

no effect on children's social skills in a study comparing children's social skills in school and home environments. Unlike this study, considering the differences between the results of the studies, it is assumed that the participants who became mothers at a young age are more protective towards their children due to their less knowledge and less experience in motherhood, and consequently, their children's perspective-taking skills develop more slowly.

The study revealed that the attachment patterns of children did not differ based on the age of the mothers. Based on these studies, it is argued that it is essential for the mother to establish healthy relationships with her child, to be caring and loving towards her child, to exhibit a reassuring approach towards the child and to fulfill her child's needs in the attachment process, and that the age of the mother is not a variable affecting attachment.

The study revealed that children's social-emotional development did not differ based on the age of the father. Karaca et al., (2011) found that fathers' age did not have an effect on children's social behaviors. This can be interpreted as that fathers develop themselves regardless of their age in order to establish healthy relationships with their children and exhibit behaviors that support their social-emotional development by establishing positive communication with their children. A review of the literature reveals no research showing that the perspective-taking skills of fathers differed based on their age, and unlike the results of the present study, there are studies showing that all subdimensions of children's perspective-taking skills did not differ based on the age of fathers (Mutlu, 2020; Önem & Coşkun, 2021).

The study concluded that fathers' age was not related to children's attachment patterns. Similar to this result, Gözübüyük (2020) and Mutlu (2020) revealed that children's attachment patterns did not differ based on the fathers' age variable in their studies. Considering that factors such as the social environment, the family environment in which fathers are raised, and their personality traits affect the communication between them and their children regardless of their age, it can be argued that fathers exhibit a more democratic attitude towards their children, establish a healthy bond with their children, and spend quality time with their children. In the light of the above findings, it can be

concluded that fathers' age has no effect on children's attachment patterns, which is an expected result.

The findings of the study showed that children's perspective-taking skills did not differ based on the mother's education level. Today, many factors such as online seminars, mother-child training programs, books on child rearing, which have increased with technological developments, may have enabled mothers to improve themselves in the field of child rearing. The increase in the social status of women as they started to be more involved in business life and the change in their social environment may have enabled them to develop their skills in child-rearing. Accordingly, it can be considered as an expected result that children's perspective-taking skills do not differ based on the mother's education level. Yıldız and Güney Karaman (2017) revealed in her study that the perspective-taking skills of the children of mothers whose education level was university or college graduates differed significantly. Cutting and Dunn (1999) stated in their study that maternal education level affects emotional and cognitive perspective-taking skills.

The study revealed that a mother's education level was associated with children's attachment patterns. A review of the literature reveals that there are studies that attachment scores are not affected by maternal education level (Gözübüyük, 2020; Kavlak & Şirin, 2007). Seven (2006) stated that the mothers of children with low attachment security also had low education levels.

The study revealed that the total scores of the Play and Leisure subdimension differed based on the father's education level. There are various studies in the literature on the effect of father's education level on social-emotional development. Cabrera et al., (2020) reported that supportive father behaviors increased as fathers' education level increased. Akbaş (2019) reported that children's social-emotional competence did not differ based on their fathers' education level.

The study revealed that children's perspective-taking skills did not differ based on the level of education of the fathers. A review of the literature reveals similar study results (Mutlu, 2020). Unlike this study, Yıldız and Güney Karaman (2017) revealed in their studies that children's perspective-taking scores differed based on their fathers' level of education and

that children's perspective-taking skills scores increased as the fathers' level of education increased.

The study findings show that children's attachment patterns differ based on the level of education of the fathers. This can be interpreted as fathers becoming more conscious and sensitive to the needs of their children with the increase in their level of education and the contribution of the education they have received. The level of parental education is expected to have an effect on the parent-child relationship. The richness of attachment patterns in the interaction between the child and the father suggests that the father should have the personality traits that will provide the child with basic empathy skills and that the emotional bond between the child and the father should be strong. It is possible to argue that all these factors can be supported by the education level and can be raised higher than the level found in individuals, and in this context, it is an expected situation that the level of education and attachment patterns are related. A review of the literature reveals that there are different study results from this study (Gözübüyük, 2020; Mutlu, 2020). This study supports the results of the present study.

Recommendations

The present study is limited to 201 children. Future studies can be conducted with larger groups. Furthermore, the effect of cultural values can be analyzed by working with different groups of parents.

The present study did not gather any data on the attachment patterns of the mothers and fathers of the children who participated in the study. Studies analyzing the relationship between children's and parents' attachment patterns can be conducted.

It was observed that a significant majority of the children in the study group had insecure attachment. Support training programs can be developed for families to support the secure attachment of children starting from the prenatal period.

The study found that gender, one of the demographic variables, was effective on children's attachment patterns, and girls were more likely to have secure attachment than boys. In order

to minimize this difference, activities can be designed to support families' child-rearing attitudes.

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