



The Study of 48-60 month-old Preschool Children's Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation Conditions

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Abstract

The purpose of the present study is to examine 48-60 month-old preschool children's social competence and behavior evaluation conditions. Relations between gender differences, social competence, anger-aggression, and anxiety-introversion are also examined. From the correlational and comparison type of General Scanning Model, Relational Screening is used. The study group is formed with 847 pre-school children (417 girls and 430 boys) who were 48-60 months-old and living in the center of Ankara. Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation Scale (SCBE-30) with a personal information form are used to collect data within the study. Frequency (f) and percentage (%), Arithmetic Mean (\bar{X}), Standard Deviation, Ss, Mann Whitney U Test, Correlation Analysis (Pearson Correlation Coefficient) were applied and significance level is determined as 0,05-0,01-. According to the findings, while there was a meaningful difference in favor of girls regarding social competence, the difference in terms of anger-aggression was higher in boys. However, there was no statistically significant difference regarding anxiety-introversion, girls' arithmetic mean scores of anxiety-introversion were found higher than boys'. When the relation between social competence, anger-aggression and anxiety- introversion is examined, there were reverse relations between social competence and anger-aggression; social competence and anxiety- introversion. Contrary to this, the relation between anger- aggression and anxiety-introversion was positive and meaningful.

Keywords

Social Competence
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Introduction

Social competency is a multi-faceted concept that includes a positive motivational mood requiring a successful social adaptation and development of awareness to make the expectations real in addition to social-emotional capabilities, cognitive capabilities and behavioral capabilities (Clickeman, 2007). Also social competency reflects the ability of evaluating the facts from someone else's point of view, adapting them to the daily life by learning from previous experiences and the ability of using what they have learned in the social interactions (Clickeman, 2007). Doll (1941), states that social capability is one of the most important criteria revealing the efficiency of meeting the individual's social responsibility and independency, and according to Hops (1983), the concept of social competency indicates both social and anti-social competencies (behavioral, language, cognitive competences), (Akkök, & Sucuoğlu, 1990). If these competencies develop positively and interdependently, then it increases the social competency of individual.

Individuals should acquire social competencies such as obeying the rules, having positive relations with others, being sensitive to others, controlling one's negative feelings in order to adapt to people around as well as within the society. Individuals who have acquired social competency can have healthy relations with others through personal learnings taken from experiences. These individuals can work in cooperation, may be happy and successful, can be respectful to others' rights and feelings, can refuse requests which are not suitable for themselves and can ask for help from others if needed. In brief, they show the social behaviors required in order to integrate within society and to be loved by others. (Gülay, & Akman, 2009). Having problems and delays in social competency is indicative in some situations like anger, anxiety, and introversion (Çorapçı, Aksan, Arslan- Yalçın, & Yağmurlu, 2010).

The process of developing social competency has a relationship with situations like anger, anxiety, aggression, and introversion. Research indicates that situations involving anger, anxiety, aggression, introversion are among the effective factors of children's gaining social competency. (Hanish, Eisenberg, Fabes, Spinrad, Ryan, & Schmidt, 2004; Reeve, Jang, Carrell, Jeon, & Barch, 2004).

Anger and aggression are the concepts used together in literature. Aggression is one of the styles used in expression of anger, and perhaps is the most important one (Balkaya, & Şahin, 2003). Many researches in literature state that anger is an important factor in individuals' way of showing aggression. (Brezina, Piquero, & Mazerolle, 2001; Kesen, Deniz, & Durmuşoğlu, 2007; Karataş, 2008; Larson, 2008; Yavuzer, & Karataş, 2012). Anxiety and introversion are characterized by the fear of being evaluated negatively and the disturbance felt in the social environment (Demir, Demir, Türksoy, Erdoğan, & Uysal, 2000). Anger-aggression indicates that externalization behaviors such as defiance with adults and behaving incompatibly and aggressively, while anxiety-introversion indicates the symptom of internalization such as children's unhappy and depressive feelings and showing shyness in a group (La Freniere, & Dumas, 1996). These situations are the main variables effecting the process of children's social interaction and if there is an extreme situation, it can cause social withdrawal, avoidance, and staying away from the activities suitable for their age which are important for their normal development (Schneier, Johnson, & Hornig, 1992).

Social competency has the highest importance in terms of the development of child, because satisfactory social relations are a good early indication of academic success and adaptation of interpersonal relations later on in life (La Greca, & Stone, 1993). By taking all these situations into consideration in the present study, the observation of social competency and behavior evaluation of 48-60 month-old children focusing on preschool education is aimed, the relationships of differentiation according to gender, social competency, anger-aggression and anxiety-introversion are examined.

Method

In this study, from general scanning models, the relation scanning model as a kind of research-correlation and comparison is used. Relational scanning model as a kind of scanning model is a research model aiming at defining the presence and degree of change between two or more variables. Relational scanning model has both correlation and comparison types. In the correlation type of models, the variants are examined whether they change together or not, and how the existing change occurs. In the comparison types, by forming groups according to independent variables, at least two variables are examined to see whether or not there is difference according to the dependent variable (Karasar, 2005).

Study Group

Study group is composed of 847 48-60 month-old pre-school children from Ankara from different socio-economic levels. There are 417 girls (49,2%) and 430 boys (50,8%) in the study group.

Data Collection Tools

To collect the data of the present research, the Social Competency and Behavior Evaluation Scale developed by LaFreniere and Dumas (1996) (Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation Scale-SCBE-30) and the Personal Information Form developed by the researchers are used.

Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation Scale(SCBE-30)

The study inquiring about the validity and reliability of the scale's adaptation to Turkish children (LaFreniere and Dumas in 1996) was made by Çorapçı et al (2010). The scale is improved for three-six year-old children and consists of 30 questions. SCBE-30 which evaluates the symptoms of problems and quantity of social competencies of preschool children has three subscales in which each of them has 10 items. The subscale of social competency has positive features like cooperation when the children are relating with their peers and finding solutions to disagreements. The subscale of anger-aggression evaluates externalization symptoms such as defiance with adults and behaving incompatibly and aggressively in peer relations. Anxiety-introversion evaluates the internalization symptoms of children such as unhappiness and depression and showing shyness in a group. The symptoms of emotional and behavioral problems and social competencies of children are evaluated by the six-step Likert Scale (1=never, 2 or 3=sometimes, 4 or 5=often, 6=always). SYDD-30, can be filled out both by teachers (LaFreniere and Dumas 1996) or parents (Kotler and McMahon 2002). In the study of validity and reliability of the application within Turkey performed on 417 children, it is concluded that the scale is reliable and valid for this example (RMSEA=.07, GFI=.84, CFI=.84, AGFI=.81, Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficients in order are: .88, .87 and .84).

In the present study, depending on the forms filled out by 847 teachers of five year-old children the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficients are as follows: for social competency scale it is found as .90, for Anger-Aggression subscale found as .91, and for the subscale of anxiety-introversion it is found as .87. The results show that Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficients are consistent with the findings of the study conducted by Çorapçı et. al. In the present study, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) .93, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Approx. Chi-Square:1.422E4, df:433, Sig.0,000) tests were meaningful so this shows that they are suitable for factor analysis. The scale is accepted as valid and reliable within the study.

The sub-size of Scale and scoring

For the subscale score of social competency (SC) the items 2, 6, 11, 13, 15, 17, 20, 22, 27, 30 in the scale are evaluated. For the subscore of anger-aggression (AA), the scores obtained from the items 3, 4, 5, 10, 16, 18, 24, 25, 28, 29 in the scale are calculated. For the subscale of anxiety and introversion (Aİ) the scores obtained from the items 1, 7, 8, 9, 12, 14, 19, 21, 23, 26 in the scale are calculated.

Personal Information Form

Information such as the child's date of birth, gender, school, class and district is collected.

Data analysis

The data of the present study is analysed with the SPSS 16 packet program. For the analysis of data, the processes are as follows: For the descriptive statistical analysis, frequency(f) and percentage (%) arithmetic average-Standard Deviation, and Standard Error Scores are calculated. When the differences between the groups are examined, standardized z scores are given for Mann Whitney U Test because of the variants not coming from the normal distribution and the unit number of Mann Whitney U being more than 20. When the subdimensions of the Scale and the relation between the subdimensions are examined, Pearson Correlation Coefficient is used for the correlation analysis. For the interpretation of the results, 0,05-0,01- taken as signifiacnce level; $p < 0,05$ - $p < 0,01$ shows a meaningful difference/relation, and $p > 0,05$, $p > 0,01$ shows there isn't a meaningful difference/relation.

Findings

In this section, the data analysed is given in accordance with goals by being tabulated.

Table 1. The Scores of Arithmetic Average of Social Competency and Behavior Evaluation Scale

	N	\bar{X}
Social Competency Subscale (SC)	847	44,05
Anger-Agression Subscale (AA)	847	20,10
Anxiety-Introversion Subscale (AI)	847	20,69

From the subscales of Social Competency and Behavior Evaluation, the arithmetic average of Social Competency Subscale(SC) is 44.05, the arithmetic average of Anger-Agression (AA) Subscale is 20.10, the arithmetic average of Anxiety-Introversion(AI) Subscale is 20.69.

Table 2. Arithmetic Average, Standard Deviation, Standard Error Scores of Social Competency and Behavior Evaluation Scales According to Gender

Subscales	Gender	N	\bar{X}	Ss
Social Competency Subscale (SC)	Girl	417	46,10	9,833
	Boy	430	42,00	10,560
Anger-Agression Subscale (AA)	Girl	417	18,69	8,291
	Boy	430	21,50	11,124
Anxiety-Introversion Subscale (AI)	Girl	417	20,92	9,687
	Boy	430	20,45	9,072

*Total N=847

From these subscales within the Social Competency and Behavior Evaluation Scale, the arithmetic average of Social Competency(SC) Subscale scores for girls is 46.10, for boys it is 42.00, the arithmetic average of Anger-Agression (AA) Subscale scores for girls is 18.69, for boys it is 21.50, the arithmetic average of Anxiety-Introversion(AI) Subscale scores for girls is 20.92, for boys it is 20.45.

Table 3. The results of Mann Whitney U Test related to gender for the subscales of Social Competency and Behavior Evaluation Scale (n=847)

Groups		N	Range average	Range total	Mann-Whitney U	Z	P
Social Competency Subscale (SC)	Girl	417	473,22	197332,50	6,913E4	-5,769	,000
	Boy	430	376,27	161795,50			
Anger-agressiveness Subscale (AA)	Girl	417	395,94	165105,50	7,795E4	-3,292	,001
	Boy	430	451,22	194022,50			
Anxiety-Introversion Subscale (AI)	Girl	417	425,41	177394,00	8,907E4	-,165	,869
	Boy	430	422,64	181734,00			

According to the arithmetic average results, the scores of girls are higher than boys in the social competency subscale score average. The scores of boys are higher than girls in the anger-aggression subscale score average. The scores of boys and girls are close to each other in Anxiety-Introversion(AI) subscale. When the results related to the Mann-Whitney U test illustrated in table 3 are examined, it is seen that there is a meaningful difference in favor of girls according to Social competency (SC) Subscale; according to Anger-Agression (AA) Subscale there is a meaningful difference in favor of boys; and for Anxiety-Introversion(AI) Subscale there is no meaningful difference between boys and girls.

Table 4. The Results Related to Correlation Analysis of 48-60 Month-Old Children's Social Competency Scores and Anger-Agression Scores

		Anger-Agression
Social Competency	R	-,407
	P	,000
	N	847

p<0,01

In Table 4, the findings related to 48-60 month-old children's social competency scores and anger-aggression scores are given. When it is examined, there is a meaningful relationship at a moderate level between social competency scores and anger-aggression scores of 48-60 month-old children (p<0,01). The relation is negative (r = -,407). As the social competency scores of 48-60 month-old children increase, the anger-aggression scores decrease.

Table 5: The Correlation Analysis Results of Social Competency Scores and Anxiety-Introversion Scores of 48-60 Month-Old Children

		Anxiety-Introversion
Social Competency	R	-,363
	P	,000
	N	847

p<0,01

In Table 5, the findings related to the social competency scores and anxiety-introversion scores of 48-60 month-old children are given. When it is examined, there is a moderate relationship between the social competency scores and anxiety-introversion scores of 48-60 month-old children (p<0,01). The relation is the negative (r = -,363). While the social competency scores of 48-60 month-old children increase, the anxiety-introversion scores decrease.

Table 6. The correlation analysis results related to anger-agression scores and anxiety-introversion scores of 48-60 month-old children

		Anxiety-Introversion
	R	,291
Anger-Agression	P	,000
	N	847

p<0,01

In Table 8, the findings related to social competency scores and anxiety-introversion of 48-60 month-old children are given. When it is examined, there is a meaningful relationship at a moderate level between social competency scores and anxiety-introversion scores of 48-60 month-old children ($p<0,01$). The relation is positive ($r = -0,363$). As the anger-agression scores of 48-60 month-old children increase, anxiety-introversion scores also increase.

Discussion

The aim of the present study conducted with 847 48-60 month-old preschool children is to examine the relationship between Social Competency and Behavior Evaluation in terms of gender and social competency, anger-agression and anxiety-introversion.

From these subscales within Social Competency and Behavior Evaluation Scale (SCBES), the arithmetic average of Social Competency Subscale (SC) is 44.05, the arithmetic average of Anger-Agression Subscale (AA) is 20.10, the arithmetic average of Anxiety-Introversion (AI) is 20.69. All these results show consistency with the results found by Çorapçı et al.

When the total scores and subscales of Social Competency and Behavior Evaluation Scale are examined in terms of gender, it is found that there is a meaningful difference in favor of girls according to Social Competency (SC), a meaningful difference in favor of boys according to Anger-Agressiveness Subscale (AA). Although the significance level was not statistically meaningful for the arithmetic scale of Anxiety-Introversion Subscale (AI) girls had slightly higher scores than boys.

When the effect of gender on social anxiety tendencies is examined, the findings indicate that there is a meaningful statistical relationship between gender and tendency of social anxiety, with girls' tendency to social anxiety higher than boys. That finding is also supported by Lee, Herbert and Manassis (2014), Karataş (2011), and Özyürek and Demiray (2010). Girls are more sensitive to both negative and positive events taking place around them in comparison to boys, and they can be affected much more emotionally (Terzi, 2000). Jerath, Hasija and Malhotra, (1993) emphasizes that the situation of anxiety-introversion is closely related to problem solving ability. According to them, the individuals who are not sure of their problem solving ability spend less time focusing on the task of problem solving and lose their motivation. Because of losing motivation, they can not develop ideas suitable for their task so their anxiety level rises (Jerath et al,1993). Genç and Kalafat (2007) found that there is not a meaningful relationship between gender and problem solving ability in their study. This finding is also supported by Terzi (2000). Also the findings of their study indicate the scores of girls are higher in terms of anxiety-introversion, and this difference is not found to be meaningful statistically (Çorbacı-Oruç, 2008 and Fesbach, 1970 (cited in Yavuzer, 2005). These findings are consistent with research findings. The research examining the differences according to gender in the view of social competency indicates that girls have a much higher tendency to interpersonal relations than boys (Kuyucu, 2012). According to the results of the research completed with 252 children by Seven (2008) the social competency abilities are found meaningful in the favor of girls statistically. Seven's findings are also consistent with the results of research of Jamyang-Tshering (2004). Seven's

(2008) study shows that expectations of families and society from boys, especially in the preschool term, can cause differences regarding gender roles such as them adopting harder roles above their ages. This is seen as a challenging situation in terms of social relationships for his age group.

When the relationship between social competency, anger-aggressiveness, and anxiety-introversion of 48-60 month-old children is studied, there appears a meaningful and opposite relation between the social competency scores and anger-aggressiveness scores, and also there is a meaningful and opposite relation between social competency scores and anxiety-introversion scores. When the relation between the anger-aggressiveness scores and anxiety-introversion scores of children are examined, the results indicate that this relation is meaningful and in the positive direction.

According to the study conducted by Bierman (2004), the ability to control their feelings is not strong for the children who show aggressive behaviors, and they can also show weak abilities in terms of social competency. This finding is supported by Gifford-Smith and Rabiner (2004), Hanish et al (2004); Dodge (2003), Lengua (2003), Crick and Dodge (1996), Smithmyer, Hubbard and Simons (2000). In a study conducted by Cohin and Ramsey (1995), it is emphasized that children and adolescents who do not have sufficient social competency can become risky peer-groups in terms of antisocial behaviors and aggression (cited in Ünsal, 2010). Crick, Grotpeter and Bigbee (2002), and Arsenio and Lemerise (2001), indicate a positive relationship between anxiety and aggressive behaviors, but this relation was reversed between social competence skills and aggressive behaviors. These findings support the findings of the present research.

Related to social competency and anger-aggression, Fraser et. al. (2005) indicate that the rise in social competency abilities can decrease aggressive behaviors. In parallel with this finding, the present study revealed that there is a meaningful relation and it is inversely proportional between anger-aggression and social competency.

The rise in social competency abilities supports the positive social abilities and prevents such situations as introversion and anxiety (Prinstein, & La Greca, 2004). The following researches indicate the rise in the social competency scores effect attitudes and behaviors towards peers positively (Hanish and Guerra, 2002; Reid, Petterson, & Snyder, 2002; Nelson, & Crick, 1999). Juntilla, Vauras, Niemi and Laakkonen (2012), found that social competency abilities predict anxiety and introversion with their research including 509 children and adolescents. Wichstrom et. al. (2013) in their study with 1000 children found an inverse relationship between social competency and anxiety-introversion. These findings coincide with the findings of the present study.

When the relation between anger-aggression and anxiety-introversion is examined, the findings of the present research indicate a meaningful and positive relationship. Studies indicate that aggressive behaviors are related with negative situations such as anxiety (Solberg, & Olweus, 2003; Crick, Casas and Mosher, 1997; Crick and Grotpeter, 1995). In a longitudinal study conducted with 1100 children, the children are examined from the toddler age until the third-grade. According to the findings of this longitudinal study, children showing weak abilities in terms of social competency have much more tendency to introversion and aggressive behaviors (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD] Early Child Care Research Network, 2004). The findings mentioned above support the findings of the present research.

Conclusion and Suggestions

In the present study examining the social competency and behavior evaluation and the relation between gender variable and social competency, anger-agression, anxiety-introversion of 48-60 month-old preschool children, a meaningful difference is found in favor of girls in terms of social competency but in terms of anger-agression the difference is found in favor of boys. Although there was no meaningful difference in terms of anxiety-introversion, the arithmetic average of girls' anxiety-introversion scores were higher than boys. When the relation between social competency, anger-agression and anxiety-introversion is examined, it is found that there is an opposite relation between social competency with anger-agression and social competency with anxiety-introversion. However, this relation was meaningful and positive between anger-agression and anxiety-introversion.

According to the findings of the present study, it is considered that developing educational programs that support social competency and applying these in educational institutions might reduce negative behaviours related to anxiety-introversion and aggression. While developing these programs it should be considered that the teachers should have the necessary training and support and the emphasis on in-class activities should be placed to have effective results. Besides, gender variable is essential and should be considered as it causes differences between boys and girls. In this context, needs related to gender should be considered in educational programs and families should be informed to do activities at home regarding these needs to support their children's social competency.

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