



The Predictive Effect of Preschool Children's Temperament Characteristics and Parenting Styles of Mothers on Ego Resiliency Level of Children *

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Abstract

The aim of the study is to investigate the predictive effect of the temperament characteristics of preschool children and their mothers' parenting styles on ego resiliency level of children. The study was designed in survey method. The sample of the study was selected by random sampling method from central districts of İstanbul, Turkey. The sample consists of 367 children in total and 198 (54%) of these children are girls and 169 (46%) of them are boys. Demographic Information Form, Children's Ego Resiliency Scale, Short Temperament Scale for Children and Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire were used to collect data. The data was collected during fall semester in 2015-2016 academic year. Multiple regression analyses were used to test the relation between children's ego resiliency level, temperament characteristics and their parents' parenting styles. Authoritarian and permissive parenting styles and persistence and reactivity traits of temperament together explained 33% of the variance in ego resiliency and the relation between these variables was found to be as moderate ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.05$). The authoritarian parenting style among other explanatory variables is the most powerful variable on ego resiliency of children and these variables are inversely related.

Keywords

Preschool period
Ego resiliency
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Introduction

Masten and Coastworth (1998) state that children and adolescents must meet two criteria to be classified as ego resilient. First of all, risk factors that threaten the individual must be found, and secondly the adaptability and development capacity of the individual should be high despite these risk factors. As can be seen from this statement, ego resiliency is a concept which defines the adaptation to risk factors and predisposition to development. In Turkish literature this concept is nomenclatured in various ways (Gizir, 2007; Gürkan, 2006; Önder & Gülay Ogelman, 2011). Individuals with high ego resiliency can adapt to changing conditions easily, regulate their behaviors in necessary situations and use their problem solving strategies in a flexible way (Block & Block, 2006; Stipek, Recchia, & McClintic, 1992). Children with high ego resiliency can maintain their positive development against important risk factors such as poverty, lack of parental attention and diseases (Gizir, 2007). Individuals with low ego resiliency show lower adaptive flexibility, they feel uncomfortable against changes and have difficulty in coping with stress and traumatic events (Block & Block, 2006). Ego resiliency is related with social competency (Block & Block, 2006), internalization and externalization problems (Eisenberg et al., 1996; Hofer, Eisenberg, & Reiser, 2010) and mental and attentional functions (Martel et al., 2007). Individual (Eisenberg et al., 2004; Eisenberg, Spinrad, & Morris, 2002), familial (Stams, Juffer, van IJzendoorn, & Hocksbergen, 2001) and environmental characteristics (Masten & Coastworth, 1998) are considered to be related with ego resiliency.

One of the individual characteristics considered to be related with ego resiliency is temperament (Wyman, Cowen, Work, & Parker, 1991). Individual differences which are biological and partially fixed in emotional, behavioural and attention processes are called temperament (Rothbart, 1989; as cited in Yağmurlu, Sanson, & Bahar Köymen, 2005). Yavuzer (2006), mentions characteristics as quick tempered, shy, cheerful, friendly and being introvert or extrovert while giving examples for temperament which is a part of personality. Prior, Sanson, and Oberklaid (1989; as cited in Yağmurlu et al., 2005), claimed that there were four temperament characteristics between the ages of 3 and 8. These are reactivity, persistence, friendliness/approach and rhythmicity. Readiness of reacting to a specific stimulus or event is described as reactivity. Individuals with high reactivity show lower social competence (Sanson, Smart, Prior, Oberklaid, & Pedlow, 1994). Persistence defines focusing attention on a certain situation or event. Persistent individuals who can maintain their attention longer are successful socially (Kyrios & Prior, 1990; Yağmurlu et al., 2005; Youngblade & Mulvihill, 1998) and academically. Friendly individuals have high willingness when approaching to new people and environments. Another temperament characteristic is rhythmicity which defines the regularity of the daily routines like eating and sleeping.

While defining the concept of ego resiliency Block and Block (1980; as cited in Eisenberg et al., 2004), used the concept of "capacity of regulating ego control according to the required environmental conditions of the individual". This definition is very similar to the definition of effortful control which we often encounter in the body of literature in recent years (Eisenberg et al., 2004). Effortful control is defined as a temperament characteristic which has an effect on ego resiliency (Taylor, Eisenberg, Spinrad, & Widaman, 2013). Some studies also unveiled this positive relationship between effort-requiring control and ego resiliency (Eisenberg et al., 2002; Eisenberg et al., 2010). Rothbart and Bates (1998; as cited in Eisenberg et al., 2004), pointed out that effortful control is used for regulating temperament-dependent reactivity which also includes emotional reactivity. It can be said that if individuals can establish their control desirably they can have advantage over adapting stressful situations (Eisenberg et al., 2004). As described above, regulation of the attention is accepted as an indicator of persistency. There are different points of views which claim that attention regulation skill facilitates coping with negative emotions and therefore it has a positive effect on psychological resiliency (Derryberry & Reed, 1996; Lengua, Sandler, West, Wolchik, & Curran, 1999; Rothbart, Ahadi, & Evans, 2000).

One of the most important familial factor that is proved to have effect on ego resiliency is parental behaviours (Stams et al., 2001; Taylor et al., 2013). The phenomenon named as parental behaviours, parental attitudes or parenting style means the quality of the parents' behaviour patterns and approaches towards their children. Positive and supportive attitudes are the factors which have powerful effects on children's positive development (Eisenberg et al., 2005). Supportive parental attitude, sufficient parent child interaction are the most important protective factors for children (Gizir, 2007; Kararmak, 2006). Baumrind (1967, 1996) defined three parenting styles which are authoritarian, authoritative and indulgent parenting styles. Parents who show intense control behaviours over children, expect their orders to be obeyed and punish their children when the rules are not obeyed are described as authoritarian parents (Baumrind, 1967). Authoritarian parents value control and obedience. This expectation prevents children from developing positive social behaviours (Hoffman, 2001; as cited in Baydar, Küntay, Gökçen, Yağmurlu, & Cemalcılar, 2010) and results in problematic peer relationships (Keown & Woodward, 2006). Parents with authoritative parenting style respect their children's individuality. Children's ideas are valued and there is a mutual interaction in the family. Children of the parents with authoritative parenting style are socially more adaptive, responsible, creative, independent, successful and happier (Keown & Woodward, 2006; McGillicuddy-De Lisi & De Lisi, 2007). Indulgent parents on the other hand do not have clear rules. They show low parental control over their children. These parents can even tolerate their children's unwanted aggressive behaviours. It was found out that these children have difficulties in obeying rules and show opposition behaviours (Marsiglia, Walczyk, Buboltz, & Griffith-Ross, 2006). Insensitive and over controlling parent behaviours affect children's independent coping skills negatively whereas sensitive parent behaviours can be a model for coping skills (Power, 2004). It was shown that supportive parental behaviours have positive effects on children's ego resiliency level (Stams et al., 2001). Parental support and care make children feel secure and help them establish positive views about themselves (Zahn-Waxler, Radke-Yarrow, & King, 1979; as cited in Yağmurlu et al., 2005). Therefore it can be said that parental support and care are related to ego resiliency which children are to establish. Oppressive, extreme insensitive and over controlling parents affect their children's independent coping skills and development of independent behaviours negatively, whereas sensitive parents can be models for coping skills (Power, 2004).

In forming parental behaviours, besides parents' characteristics and environmental support features, child's temperament is also effective (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994; Yağmurlu et al., 2005). It was found out that child's temperament affect mother's child raising behaviours and parental stress (Yağmurlu et al., 2005). The body of literature shows that parents with amiable children display more sensitive and positive parental behaviours (Yağmurlu & Altan, 2010) whereas parents with reactional children show less supportive behaviours and more control behaviours over their children (Bryan & Dix, 2009). It can be said that, besides the direct effect of children's temperament on ego resiliency, this factor also indirectly affects ego resiliency because of its impact on parental behaviours.

In Turkey, studies investigating ego resiliency of preschool children and the variables affecting this situation are very limited. While mutual interaction of ego resiliency, temperament and parental styles are investigated in various different ways in foreign literature, in this study they are approached together. To support ego resiliency which predicts academic success, social competence and psychological well-being, other factors that affect this variable should be identified. In the frame of these rationales the aim of the study is to reveal how temperament and parenting styles predict ego resiliency in preschool children. To achieve this goal, the following questions are tried to be answered in the study;

- 1) Does temperament of preschool children predict ego resiliency level of the children?
- 2) Does parenting styles of preschool children's families predict ego resiliency level of children?

Method

Research Model of the Study

The research, which investigated the effect of the temperament characteristics of preschool children and their mothers' parental behaviours on their ego resiliency level was designed in survey model.

Sample of the Study

The study group was selected by random sampling method from among central districts of İstanbul. 367 children who attend in preschools, kindergardens and private preschools participated in the study. The children participated were between 55 and 78 months old and the age average is 66.38 months. 54% of the children were girls (n=198); 46% of them were boys (n=169). The participants were selected considering the distribution of socioeconomic status of their families. And it was tried to represent the socioeconomic status by selecting 15.3% (n=56) of the sample from low, 71.9% (n=264) from middle and 12.8% (n=47) from high socioeconomic status families.

Data Collection Tools

Within the scope of the research, the tools used for data collection were Demographic Information Form, Children's Ego Resiliency Scale, Short Temperament Scale for Children and Parenting Styles and Dimensions Scale.

Demographic Information Form: This form was developed by the researchers. It consists of 12 questions to obtain information about children's age, gender, schooling year, parent's age, parental education level, labour, marriage, level of income, number of children in the family, birth order, number of family members and whom the child was raised by.

Children's Ego Resiliency Scale (Mother form): The scale aims to determine the level of ego resiliency level of children by using mother-father or teacher evaluations. It is a 9 point likert type assessment tool including 12 questions. The scale was developed by Eisenberg et al. (1996) and it was adapted into Turkish by Önder and Gülay-Ogelman in 2011. It consists of one dimension and it is assumed that the resiliency increases as the score increases. The cronbach alfa value of the Turkish form is .86 (Önder & Gülay Ogelman, 2011).

Short Temperament Scale for Children: Short Temperament Scale was developed by Prior, Sanson and Oberklaid (1989; as cited in Baydar et al., 2010) to determine the temperament characteristics of children. Parents evaluate the frequency of children's behaviours mentioned on each item by 6 point likert type assessment. It consists of 30 items and 4 subscales named as approach/withdrawal, reactivity, persistence and rhythmicity. The item; "My child is shy when she/he first meets new children" is an example of Approach subscale; "My child likes to complete one task or activity before going on to the next" is an example for Persistence, "My child asks for or takes a snack about the same time each day" is an example for Rhythmicity and "When upset or annoyed with a task, my child throws it down, cries, slams doors, etc." is an example for Reactivity subscale. The first Turkish version of the scale was prepared by translation-back translation method by Kumru, Sayil, and Yağmurlu (2006; as cited in Baydar et al., 2010) and it was adapted into Turkish by Yağmurlu and Sanson (2009). The internal consistency for reactivity subscale was .84, persistence subscale was .84, approach subscale was .81 and rhythmicity subscale was found as .65 in a study done by Baydar et al. (2010).

Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire: The scale was developed by Robinson, Mandleco, Olsen, and Hart (1995; as cited in Önder & Gülay, 2009) and it was adapted into Turkish by Önder and Gülay (2009). It aims to determine the parenting styles of the parents who have 4-12 years old children. All items of the scale were evaluated by 5 point likert type evaluation sorted from "I always do" to "I never do". It has three subscales which are authoritative, authoritarian and permissive styles. "I am sensitive to the feelings and needs of my child" item is under authoritative, "with questioning or no questioning at all, I use threatening as punishment against him/her" item is under authoritarian and "I have difficulty in disciplining my child" item is under permissive subscales. The internal consistency

values of the subscales of the Turkish version were found as .71 for authoritative, .84 for authoritarian and .38 for permissive (Önder & Gülay, 2009).

Data Collection Procedure

The ego resiliency level, temperament characteristics of children and the parenting styles were evaluated by the mothers of the children participated in the study. The data was collected in the fall semester of 2015-2016 academic year. All the scales were distributed to the mothers by preschool teachers of the participant children and the documents were collected back after two weeks. However, 367 returned from 500 submitted. While the scales were distributed to mothers, a written text was sent containing the purpose of the research and the contact information of the researchers. In this text, it is stated that the mothers could participate in the research on the basis of volunteerism, the data would only be used for this research and the information would be kept confidential. The data collection means do not include any identity information question belonging to the mother or child.

Data Analysis

The obtained data were analyzed by Multivariate regression analyses. In this study, ego resiliency of children was accepted as the dependent variable and it was examined how the parents' parenting styles and temperament characteristics affect their ego resiliency. The effects of subscales of parenting styles and temperament were taken into consideration together. Stepwise multivariate regression analysis model was preferred because it allows to select the variables, which best explain the dependent variable, from among a amount of variables (Özdamar, 2004, p. 553).

In order to be able to perform multiple regression, there should be no significant deviation from the normal distribution in the observed and expected cumulative probability distribution plot drawn with respect to standardized deviation values (Sipahi, Yurtkoru, & Çinko, 2006). The graph of standardized values with standardized deviations shows that the linearity assumption is met. When the observed and expected cumulative probability distribution graph is examined, it is seen that there is no significant deviation from the normal. Besides are also made that normal distribution of error terms providing multiple regression, constant variance of error terms and no relation between error terms. Analysis was carried out after conditions required for multiple regression assumptions were met.

Results

Results on Correlations

The ego resiliency of the children was accepted as the dependent variable and this variable was tested with a multiple regression model to investigate the predictivity of the parenting styles and the temperament. In this study, the effects of subscales of parenting styles and temperament on the ego resiliency were tested together and stepwise regression model was preferred. First, the necessary assumptions to run multi-relational model were evaluated. The hypothesis of not having a multi relation was approved by testing and verifying that the relation between multi-related independent variables is lower than 0,70; VIF value is smaller than 10; there is not an autocorrelation and all variables are normally distributed.

The correlations, mean and standart deviation values of the relation between parenting styles, temperament and the level of ego resiliency were given in the Table 1.

Table 1. The Basic Correlation, Mean and Standart Deviation Scores of the Relationships Between Dependent and Independent Values

	Parenting Style				Temperament			
	Ego Resiliency Total	Permissive Style	Authoritative Style	Authoritarian Style	Approach/Withdrawal	Persistence	Rhythmicity	Reactivity
Ego Resiliency	1							
Permissive Style	0.081	1						
Authoritative Style	0.061	-0.178**	1					
Authoritarian Style	-0.488**	0.29**	-0.173**	1				
Approach/Withdrawal	0.025	-0.76	0.112*	-0.006	1			
Persistence	-0.133**	-0.148**	0.073	-0.018	0.065	1		
Rhythmicity	0.076	-0.184**	0.131*	-0.2**	0.144*	0.169**	1	
Reactivity	0.123*	0.287**	-0.134*	0.076	-0.161**	-0.087	-0.276**	1

N=367; *p<.05, **p<.01

As seen in Table 1, no significant relation was found between ego resiliency and permissive and authoritative parenting styles and approach/withdrawal and rhythmicity characteristics of temperament by the basic correlation analyses. Positive significant relations between ego resiliency and authoritarian parenting style ($r = 0.488$, $p < .01$) and also temperament ($r = 0.133$, $p < .01$) and reactivity ($r = 0.123$, $p < .05$) traits of temperament were found.

Results of Regression Analysis

Then, a stepwise multiple regression analysis was applied to determine whether the parental styles and temperament predicted the children's ego resiliency levels significantly. The results of the stepwise multiple regression analysis are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Results of Multivariate Regression Analyses

Predictive Model	B	SH _B	β	t	F	R	R ²	ΔR^2
(Constant)	6.339	0.117		54.397**	110.936	0.488	0.239	0.236
Authoritarian style	-.550	0.052	-0.488	-10.533**				
(Constant)	5.708	0.166		34.484**	73.011	0.541	0.293	0.289
Authoritarian style	-0.629	0.053	-0.559	-11.948**				
Permissive style	0.358	0.069	0.243	5.192**				
(Constant)	4.792	0.299		16.045**	54.845	0.564	0.319	0.313
Authoritarian style	-0.634	0.052	-0.563	-12.247**				
Permissive style	0.395	0.069	0.268	5.770**				
Persistence	0.21	0.057	0.163	3.659**				
(Constant)	4.414	0.334		13.215**	43.234	0.575	0.33	0.322
Authoritarian style	-0.633	0.051	-0.562	-12.317**				
Permissive style	0.348	0.071	0.237	4.934**				
Persistence	0.217	0.057	0.168	3.795**				
Reactivity	0.157	0.064	0.112	2.458*				

a. Dependent Variable: EGOTOTAL *p<0.05, **p<0.01

When the R^2 values in Table 2 are examined, in the first step it appears that authoritarian style scores explain 24% of the total variance [$F(1,354): 110.936; p < .01$]. In the second step, by the inclusion of the permissive style scores in the model the total variance explained increases to 29% [$F(2, 353): 73.011; p < .01$]; in the third step, with inclusion of the persistence temperament trait to the model the total variance explained rises to 32% [$F(3, 352): 54.845; p < .01$]; in the fourth step, the total explained variance increases to 33% ($R^2 = .330, r = 0.575, p < .05$) by the addition of score of reactivity to the model. From the results, it was found that the most important contribution was the authoritarian style ($\beta = -.562$) followed by the permissive style ($\beta = .237$), followed by the persistence trait of temperament ($\beta = .168$) and finally reactivity ($\beta = .112$). When the directions of interrelationships between variables were examined, it could be seen that although the authoritarian style from parental style negatively affects children's ego resiliency levels, permissive parenting style, and persistence and reactivity temperamental traits of childrens' affect ego resiliency levels in the positive direction. To conclude, it can be claimed that the founded model is statistically significant to explain the ego resiliency of children because there is not a problem on multivariate correlate and covariance about regression assumptions and also the residuals were normally distributed (Sipahi et al., 2006).

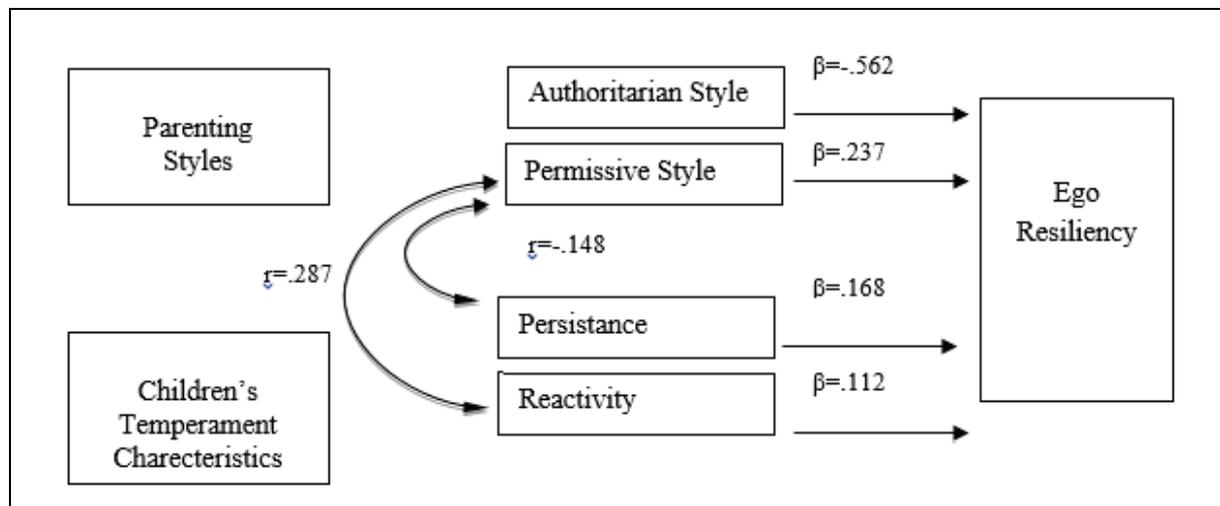


Figure 1. The Model on Explanatory Level of Temperamental Characteristics and Parenting Styles on Ego Resiliency

Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions

This research was aimed to reveal the predictive effect of children's temperament and parenting styles of preschool children on ego resiliency level. It was found out that, authoritarian and indulgent parenting styles and persistence and reactivity traits of temperament together are variables which predict ego resiliency level. The results of statistical analysis shows that being authoritarian and indulgent, and the traits of persistence and reactivity together explain the variance in ego resiliency up to %33 level and the relationship between them was found as 0.58. The most important variable which predicts ego resiliency level of preschool children was found as parents' being authoritarian in this study. Children of parents with authoritarian parenting style show lower levels of ego resiliency. The results of the research on the relationship between temperament traits and ego resiliency levels and on the relationship between parenting styles and ego resiliency levels are discussed below in light of the body of literature.

It was seen that persistence temperament trait has an explanatory effect on ego resilience level. The meaningful relationship found between ego resilience and persistence as a temperament trait corresponds with previous studies (Hutchinson, Stuart, & Pretorius, 2010). Attention control and self-control skills which are thought to be related to temperament are named under effortful control skills

in the body of literature (Eisenberg et al., 2005; Eisenberg et al., 2010). The results which state effortful controls has a positive effect on ego resiliency (Eisenberg et al., 2010), correspond with the results that indicate the positive relation between persistence trait and ego resiliency. It can also be said that results may support the idea of attention regulation skills which can be considered as a part of persistence trait, make it easier to cope with negative feelings and therefore it has a positive effect on psychological resilience (Derryberry & Reed, 1996; Lengua et al., 1999; Rothbart et al., 2000). The relationship between reactivity and ego resiliency contradicts the results of this research (Eisenberg et al., 2002; Eisenberg et al., 2010; Rothbart & Bates, 1998 as cited in Eisenberg et al., 2004), Delay of gratification and self-control skills are expected to have a positive effect on ego stability. The result of this research, which shows that increasing reactivity is a positive predictor of ego resiliency may be resulted from data collection procedure based on mothers' evaluations.

In simple correlational analysis there was inverse correlation only between authoritarian parenting style and ego resilience level of children. Data on the negative relationship between authoritarian parenting and child's ego resilience level corresponds with other research results which showed that negative parenting has negative effect on child's ego resiliency (Taylor et al., 2013). Different from these results in the academic literature, indulgent parent behaviour was included in the model. The relationship found between indulgent parenting and ego resiliency differs from the findings which show the negative effects of negative parenting on ego resiliency in the foreign body of literature. And also, no explanatory effect of authoritative parenting style was found on ego resiliency. This result does not support the findings which show supportive parenting behaviours have a positive effect on ego resiliency level of children (Stams et al., 2001). In this research, the predictive effect of parenting attitudes on ego resiliency is put forth especially by the depiction of the negative parenting effects.

There are views and research results which emphasize that parental control in the Turkish family culture is independent from parental love and they can both exist together (Baydar et al., 2010; Kağıtçıbaşı, 2010). However, in terms of authoritarianism subscale items under the scale used in the research, including "love/care" and "control/punishing behaviours away from warmth", the relationship between ego resiliency and authoritarian parenting style was found meaningfully negative.

A study which includes the variables of this study was conducted by Taylor, Eisenberg, Spinrad, & Luidaman in 2013. In this longitudinal study on ego resiliency, effort requiring control and parenting behaviours, the effect of parenting on ego resilience level is addressed from the perspective of children's control skills. The measurements were made when children were 18, 30 and 42 months old. It was found out that the effort requiring skills, which are measured when the children were 30 months old, predicted positively the ego resiliency level when they reached 42 months of age. Findings were interpreted as negative parenting had negative effects on children's ego resiliency because of the effects of negative parenting on children's attention and regulating their behaviours (Taylor et al., 2013). The findings Taylor et al. (2013) obtained, favors the temperament traits more on predicting ego resiliency level.

The most significant limitation of this research, which provides important information on the predictors of ego resiliency levels of preschool children, is that the data depends only on the mother's assessments on child's temperament traits, ego resiliency and their parenting styles. This increases the risk of bias. In order to avoid this risk, evaluation of these variables based on different sources is suggested for future studies. The results of the research can be tested by observations on a limited number of sample groups. In addition, the effects of fathers' parental behaviors on ego resiliency can be examined. Another limitation of the study is that the collected data reflect only a fraction of the data collection time. The relationship between the temperament characteristics of children and their ego resiliency and their parents' behavior can be discussed in more detail by taking the data longitudinally.

The findings of the study is also important in terms of revealing the effect of temperament and parenting styles on children's ego resiliency in Turkey. Research on ego resiliency in Turkey seems to have been made on adolescents and adults. For this reason, the research carried out on pre-school children is another contribution of the research to the field. This research puts forward the negative effect of authoritarian parenting behaviours on ego resiliency most prominently. For this reason, as Baydar, Akçınar, and İmer (2012) supported, a policy of supporting positive parenting behaviours should be empowered. In the light of the conducted studies, it is recommended that families be supported and encouraged by various training and support programs, taking into account the effects on the development of children. The effects of other variables such as parents' education level, economic level, emotional relationship between parents and parents' psychological well being which were not investigated in this research can also be adressed. Also, effects of variables based on children's individual differences like social competence and cognitive skills on ego resiliency can be investigated.

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