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The Investigation of the Effect of Secure Attachment to Mother on Self-Perception in Middle Childhood

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Abstract

The relationship between parents and children is important for realizing developmental tasks, intra-family, and peer relationships. Self-concept and self-esteem are closely related to a person's personality and identity. This study examined the relationship between 5th grade primary school students' secure attachment to their mothers and their self-perceptions. The study group consisted of 431 5th grade students in a secondary school, aged 12-13 years. Piers Harris' Child Self-Concept Scale (PHCSCS) and Kerns Secure Attachment Scale-KSS were used to collecting data. The correlation coefficient and the decision tree CHAID algorithm, one of the classification techniques, were used to estimate data trends in the data analysis. The CHAID analysis was used to decide whether demographic characteristics and secure attachment to the mother, which are independent variables, affect self-perception, the dependent variable, and the extent of this effect. Finally, secure attachment to the mother and self-perception in middle childhood were related to the father's occupation; family structure, birth order, and gender were important variables in the child's self-perception. It was found that the mother-child secure attachment pattern in middle childhood affected the development of high self-perception. It is foreseen that the consequences of the study will provide to the literature.

Keywords: Middle childhood, Secure attachment, Self-perception, Attachment to mother

Introduction

The relationship between parents and children is important for realizing developmental tasks, intra-family, and peer relationships. Emotional interaction with parents, especially with the mother during childhood and called "attachment" is important for shaping interpersonal relationships and confidence in the outside world. Attachment begins as a form of interaction with the mother after birth and affects the individual's whole life. The attachment style of the individuals is effective on their personality development, and it continues to influence the development of their behavior in childhood, adolescence, and adulthood (Tok and Öğretir Özçelik, 2018). The concept of attachment includes the individual's confidence in the existence of the attachment figure to be used as a secure fundament. The attachment figure is a haven where the individuals can freely explore their environment when they are not in distress and seek support or protection in cases of distress. The environmental exploration of the individuals includes the physical world, their relationships with other people, and the reflection of this exploration on their inner experience. The attachment style is derived from John Bowlby's attachment theory (1969) and generally expresses characteristic relationships in close relationships with attachment figures such as parents-children (Levy et al., 2011). Attachment figures vary according to the developmental period; attachment to parents or other people can be developed.

Main, Kaplan, and Cassidy (1985) suggested that observable attachment behaviour and attachment representations should be identifiable in attachment processes. Evidence for this was found in studies of middle childhood. Kerns and Brumariu (2016) identified several typical characteristics for the system of attachment behaviours in middle childhood. Accordingly;

- the purpose of the attachment system changes from proximity to the attachment figure in early childhood to accessibility to the attachment figure in middle childhood. These changes are due partly to the child's increased self-regulation and partly to parents' and children's expectations of greater child autonomy.

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However, children need to feel that they can reach the caregiver when needed. Parents continue to be primary attachment figures in middle childhood. When asked about situations that may lead to the need for an attachment figure, even 11 to 12-year-old children often prefer parents over their peers (Kerns, Tomich and Kim 2006; Seibert and Kerns, 2009).

- trust-based contact between the child and parent figure is a shift towards more co-regulation.
- in middle childhood, attachment figures continue to function safe havens in times of distress and safe bases supporting the child's discovery. In middle childhood, attachment figures support exploration as children's worlds expand. Thus, one indicator of secure attachment is the ability of parent-child dyads to coordinate and balance care needs with their needs for exploration. (Kerns, Mathews, Koehn, Williams and Siener, 2015).

People internalizing positive representations or models of others and self-have a secure attachment style observed in various social situations. Secure attachment is associated with coping with stress, more adaptive emotion regulation, and self-esteem (Steele and Steele, 2008). Self-concept and self-esteem are strongly related to an individual's personality and identity. These are structures intertwined with culture. The concept of self is a versatile and hierarchical structure including self-cognition in various areas such as physical appearance, relationships with peers and parents, and academic life (Nishikawa, Hägglöf and Sundbom, 2010).

On the other hand, self-esteem consists of two different dimensions, namely competence and value (Gecas and Schwalbe 1983). The competence dimension expresses the degree to which people see themselves as competent, and the value dimension expresses the degree to which individuals feel as valuable persons. High self-esteem expresses a highly positive view of the self, while low self-esteem refers to vague or purely negative evaluations (Campbell *et al.*, 1996). Self-esteem is not necessarily right or wrong. High levels of self-esteem may be proportional to an individual's qualities and achievements, or these feelings of self-worth may have little to do with any objective assessment of the individual. This is crucial because self-esteem reflects perception rather than reality (Zeigler-Hill, 2013).

The mental representation of the self in relation to others, attachment is correlated with other variables of the child's self-representations and self-concept. Attachment theorists argue that attachment to parents affects expectations about other close relationships (Sroufe & Fleeson, 1986). In secure attachment, caregivers always give feedback effectively, allowing children to develop confidence and dependence. Secure individuals have confident models of self and others; secure attachment affects to self-confidence and security (Wu, 2009). Theory and research also support the view that securely attached children are more social, few hostile, more adaptable, and unrestricted to discovering new exercises and practices (Kerns, Klepac, and Cole, 1996). The positive effects of secure attachment can be observed at any age from a developmental point of view. Especially in adolescence, when secure attachment effectively reduces risky behaviors and mental illnesses and increases social relations, the importance of attachment security increases even more (Nalbant, Kalaycı, and Akdemir, 2020). In most studies, positive relationships between secure attachment and general self-perception are noticed (Davila, Hammen, Bürge and Daley, 1996; Verschueren, Marcoen and Schoefs, 1996). It was found that there are studies on issues such as self-concept among primary school students (Özyürek *et al.*, 2020), adolescents (Algünerhan, 2017) and high school students (Adana, Arslantaş and Şahbaz, 2012); attachment and loneliness in adolescents (Karakuş, 2012), variables related to attachment (Morsünbül and Çok, 2011), attachment and social anxiety in adolescents (Tok and İlkir Özçelik, 2018).

Regarding attachment and self-perception, Suemer and Anafarta Şendağ (2009) concluded in their study examining the effects of attachment to parents in middle childhood on self-perception and anxiety that secure attachment to parents is associated with positive evaluation in all self domains and low anxiety. Toprak's (2020) study found that there are positive relationships between how students are attached to their mothers and their self-esteem. In their study, Kaya and Öz (2020) determined that perceived parental attitudes and attachment styles significantly affect adolescents' self-development. Doğruyol and Yetim (2019), on the other hand, found that self-esteem has a partial mediating role in the relationship between attachment to mother and peer attachment. Secure attachment to parents in childhood creates a positive self-perception, and it is vital in terms of its positive effects on peer relations, school adjustment, and social-emotional competencies. (Doğruyol and Yetim, 2019; Morsünbül and Çok, 2011; Sümer and Anafarta Şendağ, 2009). Grounding on the literature knowledge, the importance of the attachment to the mother regarding self-perception in middle childhood can be inferred (Kaya and Öz, 2020; Toprak, 2020). This study proposed investigating the relation between 5th-grade secondary school students' secure attachment to their mothers and self-perceptions. In this stage, which can be described as the transition period to adolescence, variables affecting mother attachment and self-esteem were tried to be revealed. It is foreseen that the consequences of the study will provide to the literature. In the study, it is sought to answers for the following questions:

1. What variables affect the level of secure attachment of children to their mothers?

2. What are the variables which affect children self-perception?
3. Does the secure attachment of children to their mothers affect their self-perceptions?
4. How does the relationship between children secure attachment to their mothers and self-perception?

Method

Research Design

The study designed quantitatively is in the relational survey model.

Participants

In the population of the study, students attending secondary school in Safranbolu District of Karabük Province in the 2018-2019 academic year. The sample group was formed from all children (n=431) attending 5th grade and ages 12-13 in five secondary schools (Kanuni Secondary School, Misak-ı Milli Secondary School, Ünsal Tülbentçi Secondary School, Harmanlar Secondary School, and Safranbolu Imam Hatip Secondary School) who gave their consent for the study by using a cluster sampling method. The demographic characteristics of the study group are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Some Personal Information About Study Group

		f	%			F	%
Gender	Female	188	43.6	Number of Siblings	Only Child	47	10.9
	Male	243	56.4		2 Siblings	238	55.2
					3 Siblings	105	24.4
					4 and more	41	9.5
Birth Order	First- Child	205	47.6	Family Structures	Nuclear Family	358	83.1
	Last- Child	160	37.1		Extended Family	58	13.5
	Middle- Child	66	15.3		Single Parent F.	15	3.5
Mother's Age	Younger than 31 y.	18	4.2	Father's Age	Younger than 35	38	8.8
	31-34 y.	103	23.9		35-39 y.	148	34.3
	35-39 y.	180	41.8		40-45 y.	193	44.8
	40-45 y.	113	26.2		46 years and above	52	12.1
	46 years and above	17	3.9				
Mother's Education Status	Primary Sch.	119	27.6	Father's Education Status	Primary Sch.	62	14.4
	Secondary Sch.	74	17.2		Secondary Sch.	77	17.9
	High Sch.	147	34.1		High Sch.	154	35.7
	Bachelor	91	21.1		Bachelor	138	32.0
Mother's Profession	Not-working	257	59.6	Father's Profession	Retired	102	23.7
	Worker	55	12.8		Civil Servant	92	21.3
	Civil Servant	46	10.7		Self-Employed	26	6.0
	Self-Employed	39	9.0		Worker	142	32.9
	Professional	34	7.9		Professional	69	16.0

According to Table 1, 43.6% of students are female, 55.2% have two siblings, and 24.4% have three siblings. 47.6% of the students were born as the first child and 37.1% as the last child, and 83.1% of their families are nuclear families. 41.8% of mothers are in the 35-39 age group and 44.8% of fathers are in the 40-45 age group. 59.6% of mothers are housewives and 32.9% of fathers are workers.

Data Collection Tools

The Personal Information Form was used to collect the data and to obtain some personal information of the participants. In addition, Piers Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (PHCSCS) and Kerns' Security Scale (KSS) were used.

Piers Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (PHCSCS); can be applied to the 9-16 age group and aims to determine the participants' feelings, thoughts, and attitudes about themselves. The level of agreement with the statements in

the 80-item scale is indicated as "Yes" or "No". It consists of six sub-dimensions: Happiness/Satisfaction, Anxiety, Popularity/Social Admiration or Being Favor, Behavior and Compliance/Confirmation, Physical Appearance, Mental and School Status. High scores except for the anxiety sub-dimension are considered positive and low scores are regarded as negative self-concept. The scale's reliability coefficient, which was adapted into Turkish by Çataklı and Öner, was found to be between .81 and .89 (Öner, 2005). Yan et al. (1996) evaluated the PHCSCS mean score as 45–60. While a high score (>60) indicates positive self-evaluation, a low score (<45) indicates negative self-concept (Eryılmaz, 2008). In this study, the average PHCSCS score of 431 students in the sample group was found to be 51.16. Accordingly, it was interpreted that the self-concept of the students in the sample group was at an average level.

Kerns Secure Attachment Scale-KESS (Kern's Security Scale-CSS); It is a 15-item scale developed by Kerns et al. (1996), adapted into Turkish by Sümer and Anafarta Şendağ (2009), and aims to measure the level of secure attachment of children to their parents. The scale was developed as suitable for children aged 9-12. The scale measures how much children trust their attachment figures as delicate and accessible, their inclination to trust attachment figures when under pressure, and the easiness and willingness levels of communication with attachment figures. There are two contradictory statements for items. Students are asked to mark how much they are more similar to children identified on the right or left of the box written "BUT" for each statement. They are then asked to go to the chosen side and mark how similar they are to the child described (very similar to me - somewhat similar to me). Seven items are reverse coded and scored by the total score in the scale, which can be completed separately for mother and father. A high score is interpreted as an increase in secure attachment to parents. In the study of the scale conducted with 194 5th and 6th grade students, the reliability coefficient for the mother form was .84 (Sümer and Anafarta Şendağ, 2009).

Data Collection and Analysis

In this study, before collecting data to use the measure, the support of Prof. Dr. Nebi Sümer, who adapted the scale, the approval of the Ethics Committee of Karabuk University of Social and Human Sciences (decision dated 16/10/2018 and number 2018/10(03)) and the approval of the Governor of Karabuk were obtained. The measurement tools were applied to participants in their classroom environment, accompanied by school counselors. The students were asked to fill the KSS form only thinking of their mothers. The students who filled both scale forms were evaluated, and the data were entered into the computer.

The correlation coefficient and CHAID decision tree algorithm were used for data analysis. CHAID decision tree algorithm is one of the classification techniques used to estimate data trends. The CHAID analysis was used to decide whether demographic characteristics and secure attachment to the mother, which are independent variables, affect self-perception, the dependent variable, and the extent of this effect.

Findings

Under the heading of findings, the results of study and their comments obtained in line with the sub-problems are given.

What variables affect the level of secure attachment of children to their mothers?

Demographic variables were included in the analysis. As a result of CHAID analysis, a decision tree structure consisting of three nodes at a single level is formed, which explains the attachment level of children in the decision tree structure, and it is given in Figure 1.

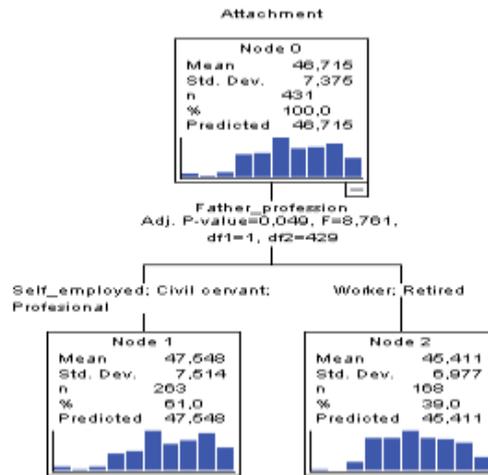


Figure 1. Decision Tree Structure of Students' Secure Attachment to Their Mothers

According to Figure 1, the most important variable affecting children's KSS scores is their father's occupation. Children's attachment scores differ significantly according to their father's profession ($F=8.761$; $p=.049$). CHAID analysis divided children into two clusters according to their father's profession.

The attachment score of the children whose fathers are self-employed, civil servants, and the professional occupation group (61%) is 47.548, while the attachment score of the children whose fathers are workers or retired (39%) is 45.411. In summary, children whose fathers are self-employed, civil servants, and professionals have higher secure attachment to their mothers.

What are the variables that affect children self-perception?

A decision tree structure consisting of six nodes at two levels, which explains the children's self-perception, was formed in the decision tree structure and is given in Figure 2.

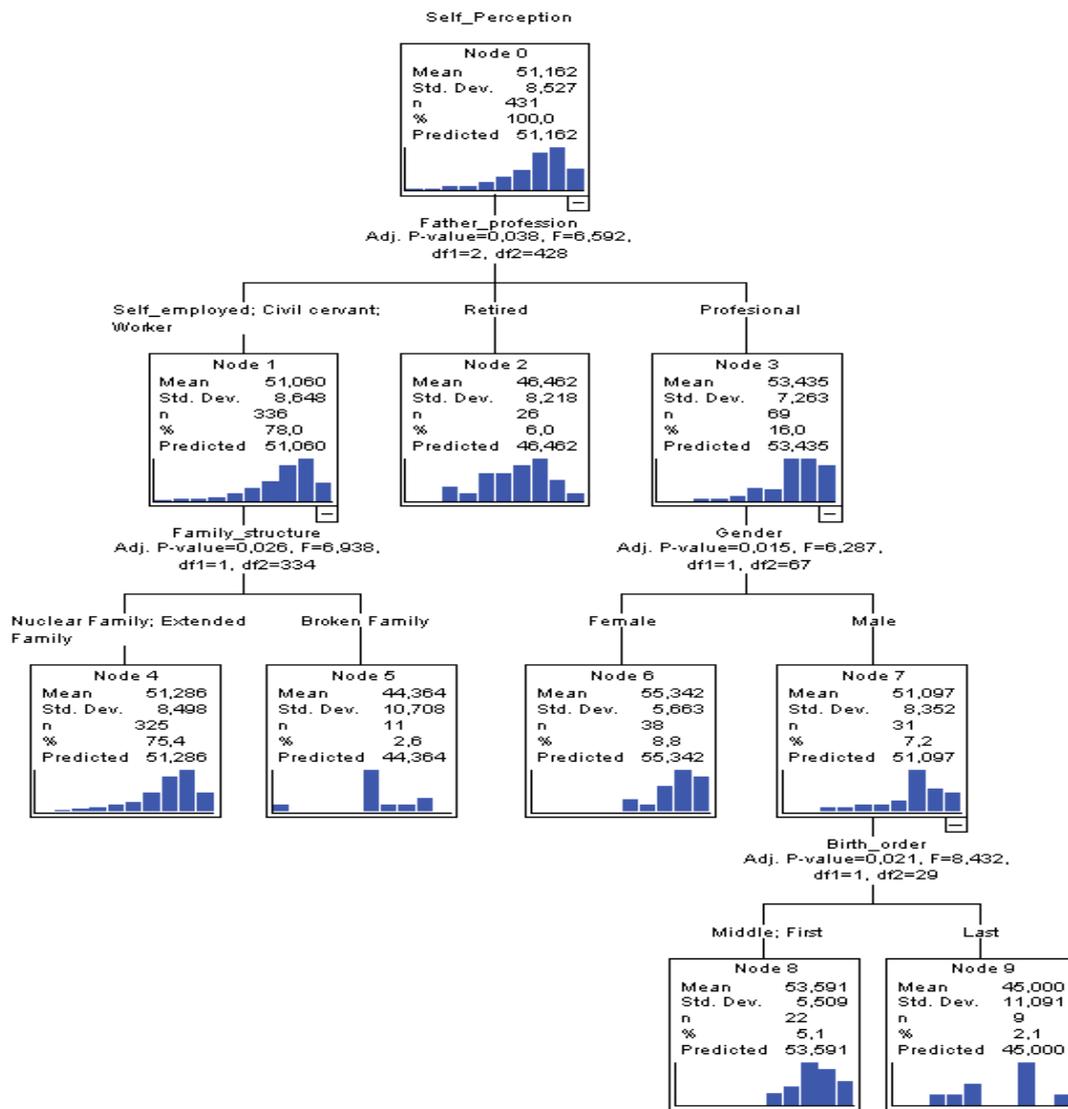


Figure 2. Decision Tree Structure for Students' Self Perceptions

According to Figure 2, the most important variable affecting children's PHSCS scores is their father's occupation. Children's self-perceptions differ significantly according to their father's occupation ($F=6.592$; $p=.038$). CHAID analysis divided children into three clusters according to their father's occupation. Children whose fathers are self-employed, civil servants and workers (78%) have a PHSCS score of 51.060, those whose fathers are retired (6%) have a score of 46.462, and those whose fathers have a professional occupation (16%) have a score of 53.435. In other words, the positive self-perceptions of children whose fathers are professional occupations are higher.

Family structure is the most important variable affecting the self-perception of children whose fathers are self-employed, civil servants, and workers. Children's self-perception scores differ significantly according to family structure ($F=6.938$; $p=.026$). CHAID analysis divided children into two clusters according to family structure. The self-perception scores of children with nuclear or extended families (75.4%) are 51.285, and the self-perception scores of children with broken families (2.6%) are 44.354. In other words, positive self-perceptions of children with nuclear or extended family structures are higher than those with broken families.

The most important variable affecting the self-perception of children whose fathers have a professional occupation is the gender variable. Children's self-perception scores differ significantly according to gender ($F=6.287$; $p=.015$). CHAID analysis divided children into two clusters by gender. The self-perception score of females (8.8%) whose fathers have a professional occupation is 55.342, and the score of males whose fathers have a professional occupation (7.2%) is 51.097. In other words, the positive self-perception of females is higher than that of males.

Self-perception scores of males with fathers having professional occupations differ significantly according to birth order ($F=8.432$; $p=.021$). CHAID analysis divided males into two clusters according to birth order. The self-perception of males born in the first and middle orders is 53,591 and that of males born in the last order is 45,000. In other words, the self-perception of children born in the first or middle orders is higher than that of children born in the last order.

Does the secure attachment of children to their mothers affect their self-perceptions?

In the decision tree structure, in which the children's attachment score variable was included in the analysis, a decision tree structure with a single-level and five-nodes describing the children's self-perception was formed. The relevant decision tree structure is given in Figure 3.

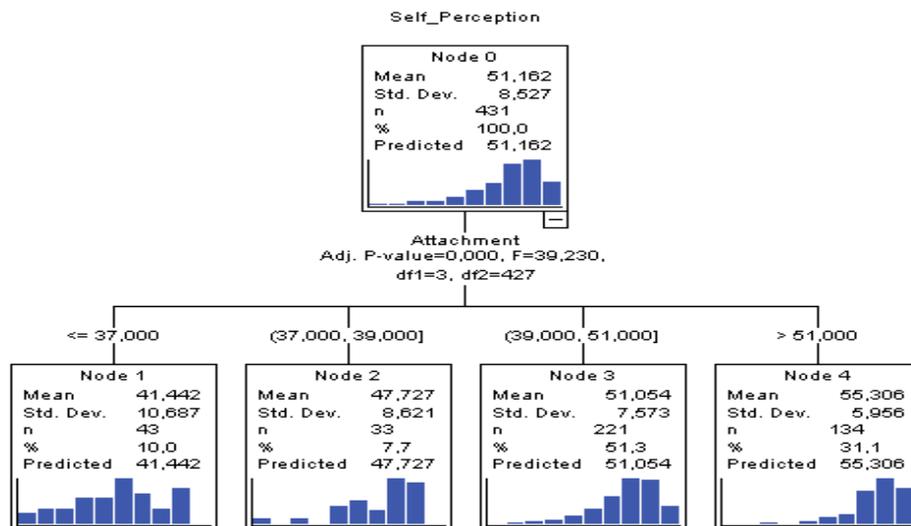


Figure 3. Self-Perception Decision Tree Structure According to Students' Secure Attachment to Their Mothers

As shown in Figure 3, children's PHCSCS scores were significantly different from KSS scores ($F=39.230$; $p=.000$). The CHAID analysis divided the children into four clusters according to their KSS scores. As children's attachment to their mothers increases, their self-perceptions also increase at a positive level.

The mean attachment score of children (10%) with a KSS score of 37 and below is 41.442, the mean attachment score of the children (7.7%) who scored between 37-39 is 47.727, the mean attachment score of the children (51.3%) with a score between 39-51 is 51.054 and the mean score of children who score above 51 is 55.306. In summary, children with high attachment levels to their mothers have higher positive self-perceptions.

Is there any significant relationship between children's secure attachment to their mothers and the sub-dimensions of self-perception?

Table 2. The Results of Correlation Analysis of the Sampling Group's KSS and PHCSCS Scores

		PHCSCS						
		Happiness and Satisfaction	Anxiety	Popularity	Behaviour and Conformity	Physical Appearance	Mental and School Status	Total
KSS	r	.361	.280	.270	.346	.236	.268	.416
	p	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000*

According to Table 2, the relationship between the KSS scores of the sample group and all sub-dimensions and total scores of PHCSCS is positive and significant ($p<.001$). The relationship between KSS scores and PHCSCS Anxiety, Popularity, Physical Appearance, Mental and School Status sub-dimension scores is low. The relationship between Happiness and Satisfaction, Behaviour and Conformity, and scale's total scores is moderate (Büyükoztürk, 2003). As the level of secure attachment to the mother increases, the children in the study group

see themselves more positively about happiness, fame, behavior and compliance, physical shape, mental and school status, and feel less anxious. Generally, there is also an increase in their self-perceptions positively.

Discussion

This paper examines the effect of secure attachment to mothers on children's self-perception in middle childhood. Moreover, other variables affecting children's secure attachment to their mothers and self-esteem were also examined. It is found that the most important variable affecting secure attachment to the mother is the father's occupation, and it was found that children whose fathers are self-employed, civil servants, and the professional occupational group have higher levels of secure attachment to their mothers. Although attachment theory was initially developed to explain the development and importance of the child-mother relationship, all developmental psychology researchers agree that children are attached to their fathers and their mothers (Bacro and Florin 2008). Based on the observed variations between mother-child and father-child communications, some researchers consider fathers to play an essential but several roles in child improvement than mothers (Grossmann et al., 2002). Regarding them, the primary role of the father-child relationship is to inspire the child to be open to the outside world. Fathers are considered to play an essential role in the development of exploration and autonomy. Consequently, it can be said that those who belong to the group of professionals do not have to worry about taking care of a house due to their sufficient financial resources and that the self-employed can arrange their working hours as they wish, which allows them to devote qualified and regular time to their children.

It is acquired that the most critical variable affecting the self-perceptions of children in the middle childhood period is the father's profession, and the self-perceptions of the children whose fathers have a professional profession are higher. In addition, it is determined that children having nuclear or extended families have more positive self-perceptions than children with broken families. Also, girls have more positive self-perceptions than boys, and boys born in the first or middle-order have more positive self-perceptions than those born in the last order. Middle childhood is a period of uncertainty and formation in self-esteem (Robins and Trzesniewski, 2005). In the study by Özyürek et al. (2020), in which the self-concept of primary school children was examined, it was stated that gender, birth order, and father's profession made a difference in children's self-concept. Moreover, it was observed that the satisfaction, behavior and compliance, physical condition, mental and scholastic status of female students are higher than those of male students, and those born in the middle rank have lower anxiety, popularity, mental and scholastic status than those born in the first or last rank. In Harter's (2006) study, it is seen that children develop associated cognitive skills in middle childhood and start to use external comparisons to estimate themselves realistically. Studies focusing on the childhood period suggest that the family environment is crucial in developing the self (Harter, 2015). In the longitudinal study applied by Orth (2018), it has been proposed that the family environment in early childhood has a long-term and probably permanent self-esteem effect that can still be observed in adulthood. The support of a second parent provides more sensitive sources to react to the child's needs with warmth also commitment (Orth, 2018). Bulanda and Majumdar (2009) concluded in their studies that the presence of both parents in their children's lives and they are having a qualified relationship with them positively affect their children's self-esteem. Similarly, Bulut Serin and Öztürk (2007) determined in their study that the self-esteem levels of children having broken families are lower than the level of self-esteem of those of children having complete families. Accordingly, in parallel with the finding obtained from the study, it can be said that there is a relationship between self-esteem and family structure.

Factors affecting self-esteem were reviewed in various sources. It is possible to come across different study results on self-esteem factors. To develop self-esteem, generally, men and women follow basically the same trajectory. Gender does not have a strong influence on the development of self-esteem. In both sexes, self-esteem is relatively high in childhood, but it declines during adolescence, constantly grows throughout adulthood, and declines in old ages. However, in some studies some differences related to gender have also been found. Although males and females report comparable levels of self-esteem during childhood, the finding of some studies about males' tendency for having slightly higher levels of self-esteem than females in adolescence is trustworthy (Orth and Robins, 2014; Robins and Trzesniewski, 2005). Magro et al. (2019) concluded in their study that males have higher self-esteem than females from the age of 8, long before the onset of puberty. Researchers have mentioned multiple factors for the gender gap, from maturation changes linked with puberty to social-contextual factors associated with different treatment to boys and girls in the classroom or gender differences in body image ideals. According to the results of the current study, it can be said that the higher self-perception of women compared to men is due to factors such as realigned attitudes towards gender in the relationship and interaction of parents with their children, data collection in the urban centre, and lower gender discrimination in urban centres than in rural areas.

Çetinkaya et al. (2006) concluded that there is a positive relationship between the self-esteem level of primary school students in different socioeconomic situations and their father's occupation and educational status. On the other hand, Özkan (1994) could not find a relationship between a father's profession and self-esteem in his study.

According to the findings obtained from the study, there is a relationship between a father's profession and self-esteem. It is thought that the different results obtained from the studies are due to the effect of different variables. Secure attachment has been proposed as a descriptive marker regulating one's expectations from others and a determinant of trust-based social interaction in personal relationships (Holmes, 2002). The study determined that children having a high level of secure attachment to their mothers has with a high secure attachment to their mothers have more positive self-perceptions. It has been determined that as the level of secure attachment to their mothers increases, children see themselves more positively about happiness, popularity, behavior and conformity, physical appearance, mental and school status, they have less anxiety, and their self-perceptions generally increase positively. People who have different attachment styles have different self-perceptions.

Many studies have investigated the relationship between different attachment styles, such as secure and insecure attachment and self-concept. In his study with secondary school students, Toprak (2020) found a secure relationship between children's attachment style to their mothers and their self-esteem. According to attachment theory, secure individuals have higher self-esteem than insecure individuals because of their past experiences with stable and reliable social interactions. For example, securely attached people often receive adequate and timely feedback from their caregivers. This stable and reliable environment allows them to see themselves as lovely and to build a positive self-image. They have more confidence in interacting with others with the help of this positive self-esteem; they create opportunities to get the feedback of others and form a straight self-concept from the feedback received from their positive and stable environment (Wu, 2009). Similar ways are also hypothesized to explain the relationship between attachment security and self-concept in the domains of school competency, physical shape, and physical abilities. For example, the child's school self-concept is determined not only by their success experiences but also by attachment security to the extent that it fosters openness and adaptability to new experiences. Parents with a secure attachment to their children are more likely to support their child's school success. (Doyle et al., 2000). In the study done by Doyle et al. (2000), it was found that child-mother attachment is highly correlated with general self-worth, physical appearance, peer relationships, and positively perceived physical abilities. Verschueren, Doumen, and Buyse (2012) noticed that social self-concept and general self-concept, which affect peer acceptance, are related to the degree of attachment to the mother and concluded that the quality of early mother-child attachment has an indirect effect on the academic dimension of the self. Individuals whose needs for attachment and trust are met during childhood are more advantageous in character development and mental health. The level of empathy and sensitivity will be higher in children who do not experience intense trauma in childhood and have a secure attachment (Öztürk, Türel and Oğur, 2020). The result of the study in question and all these findings from other studies are consistent with attachment theory. Securely attached individuals have higher and stable self-esteem, higher self-awareness about themselves, greater self-certainty, and a better-organized self-build than insecure people.

Conclusion and Recommendations

As a result, secure attachment to mother in middle childhood and self-perception are associated with father's occupation, and family structure, birth order, and gender are important variables in the child's self-perception. In summary, it is found that the mother-child secure attachment pattern in middle childhood affects to development of high self-perception. Longitudinal studies are thought to be needed to confirm and extend these findings. Self-esteem changes systematically throughout life at certain stages. Therefore, it is recommended to investigate individual differences affecting self-esteem. The results obtained from this study have important practical implications because they indicate that individuals may be vulnerable due to their attachment patterns and low self-perception. It can be said that the development of positive attitudes towards school, academic success, and future aspirations in middle childhood influence these attitudes' having significant effects on children's success as adults.

For this reason, for children to acquire a positive self-perception, it can be suggested that the person caring for them from infancy should be a safe base, provide support, protection, and security to the child, should give feedback effectively, and reach the requirements of the child in a timely and stable habit. To increase the adaptation of children to their developmental stages and strengthen their self-perception, supportive mentoring programs can be applied in schools for both families and children. This study examined the effect of secure attachment to the mother on self-perception in middle childhood. This can be considered a limitation of the study. The effect of secure attachment to mothers and fathers on children's self-perception can be studied. Another limitation may be that the data were collected only from children. Accordingly, information about parent-child attachment can be obtained from parents.

Attachment and self-perception can be analyzed according to the variables such as peer relationships, school success, anxiety, loneliness or emotional states, etc., and longitudinal studies which reveal attachment security and self-perception can be conducted. Moreover, the effects of secure attachment on the self-perception of children

having different ages can be examined comparatively. Family-education activities held in educational institutions may provide training on attitudes and behaviors towards increasing secure attachment and self-esteem during childhood.

Author (s) Contribution Rate

The study was conducted and reported with equal collaboration of the researchers.

Conflicts of Interest

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Ethical Approval

Ethical permission (06/12/2018 – E.29860) was obtained from Karabuk University for this research

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