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## EXAMINATION OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE, FAMILY RESILIENCE AND LIFE SATISFACTION OF THE PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS AND THE PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH NORMAL DEVELOPMENT<sup>1</sup>

### ÖZEL GEREKSİNİMLİ ÇOCUKLAR İLE NORMAL GELİŞİM GÖSTEREN ÇOCUKLARIN EBEVEYNLERİNİN PSİKOLOJİK DAYANIKLILIK, YILMAZLIK VE YAŞAM DOYUMLARININ İNCELENMESİ

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#### Abstract

The aim of this study is to compare the psychological resilience, family resilience and life satisfaction of parents of children with special needs and children with normal development and to examine the relationships between these variables. A total of 403 parents, including 198 parents with children with special needs and 205 parents with children with normal development, participated in the study. Personal information form, Adult Resilience Scale, Family Resilience Scale and Life Satisfaction Scale were used as data collection tools in the study. As a result of the research, it was determined that the level of psychological resilience and family resilience of parents with children with normal development was significantly higher than the level of resilience and family resilience of parents with children with special needs. Similarly, it was determined that the life satisfaction of parents with children with normal development was significantly higher than those of parents with children with special needs. In addition, it was concluded that the relationship between psychological resilience and family resilience is stronger in parents with children with special needs than in parents with children with normal development. In addition, it was determined that among the parents with children with special needs, those with high psychological resilience also had higher life satisfaction, but there was no such relationship in parents with children with normal development. Finally, it was concluded that there is a significant relationship between family resilience and life satisfaction in both parents with children with special needs and parents with children with normal development, but this relationship is stronger in families with children with special needs.

**Key Words:** Special needs, parents, psychological resilience, family resilience, life satisfaction

#### Özet

Bu araştırmanın amacı özel gereksinimli çocuklar ile normal gelişim gösteren çocukların ebeveynlerinin psikolojik dayanıklılık, yılmazlık ve yaşam doyumlarının karşılaştırılması ve bu değişkenler arasındaki ilişkilerin incelenmesidir. Araştırmaya özel gereksinimli çocuğa sahip 198 ve normal gelişim gösteren çocuğa sahip 205 ebeveyn olmak üzere toplam 403 ebeveyn katılmıştır. Araştırmada veri toplama aracı olarak, kişisel bilgi formu, Yetişkinler için Psikolojik Dayanıklılık

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Ölçeği, Aile Yılmazlık Ölçeği ve Yaşam Doyumu Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Araştırma sonucunda, normal gelişim gösteren çocuğa sahip ebeveynlerin psikolojik dayanıklılık ve yılmazlık düzeyinin özel gereksinimli çocuğa sahip ebeveynlerin psikolojik dayanıklılık ve yılmazlık düzeyinden anlamlı bir şekilde yüksek olduğu belirlenmiştir. Benzer şekilde, normal gelişim gösteren çocuğa sahip ebeveynlerin yaşam doyumunun özel gereksinimli çocuğa sahip ebeveynlerin yaşam doyumundan anlamlı bir şekilde yüksek olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Buna ek olarak, psikolojik dayanıklılık ve yılmazlık arasındaki ilişkinin özel gereksinimli çocuğa sahip ebeveynlerde normal gelişim gösteren çocuğa sahip ebeveynlere göre daha güçlü olduğu sonucuna varılmıştır. Ayrıca, özel gereksinimli çocuğa sahip ebeveynlerden psikolojik dayanıklılığı yüksek olanların yaşam doyumunun da yüksek olduğu fakat normal gelişim gösteren çocuğa sahip ebeveynlerde bu şekilde bir ilişkinin olmadığı belirlenmiştir. Son olarak, hem özel gereksinimli çocuğa sahip ebeveynlerde hem de normal gelişim gösteren çocuğa sahip ebeveynlerde yılmazlık ve yaşam doyumunu arasında anlamlı bir ilişki bulunduğu fakat özel gereksinimli çocuğa sahip ailelerde bu ilişkinin daha güçlü olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Özel gereksinim, ebeveyn, psikolojik dayanıklılık, aile yılmazlığı, yaşam doyumunu

## Introduction

Becoming a mother and father is an important event that allows both a new and a different life scenario to be successfully played out. All the scenarios created in this direction in the parents are that the child will be born healthy. However, in contrary to the expectations, at first the birth of a child may cause a feeling in a different way, like “shock” and then economic, social, and psychological problems to arise over time. Parents who are stressed by this situation even find it difficult to fulfill the requirements of everyday life (Küçükler, 2001). The inadequacy of the family economically, the experience of changes in the roles of family members, the lack of knowledge and the public's view of children who require special care also increase this stress level (Bilal & Dağ, 2005).

People strive to make their lives more meaningful and have a better life. This situation sometimes occurs as an embrace with nature and sometimes as an individual's dedication to art (Aydın, Kaya & Peker, 2015). Having children and having dreams about their children is also one of the ways parents add meaning to their lives. In parents who have a child with special care requirements, meaning addition may show changes compared to other people. At the heart of this situation is that the difficulties caused by the disability in the child weaken the spiritual resilience of the parents (Aydın, 2019).

Psychological resilience is defined as the way an individual faces this in situations where uncertainty prevails and assumes responsibility, gives the necessary struggle and has the self-confidence to fight (Açar, 2018). Öz and Bahadır-Yılmaz (2009) list the characteristics of individuals who are more psychologically resilient as follows: the ability to fight more actively in the face of stressful events and situations, high interpersonal communication skills and the ability to solve problems effectively.

Success can be defined as psychological adaptation or resilience; tragedy, trauma, or family problems in relationships refers to the ability to adapt in the face of such great sources of stress (Hunter, 2001; Tusaie & Dyer, 2004). An individual with high psychological resilience is

stronger in terms of being able to recover in the face of vital experiences and can successfully overcome disasters (Wagnild & Young, 1993).

There is a strong link between the psychological resilience of the parents with children who has special needs and their decency in parenting roles, investments in the child and the organization of child-parent roles. Based on this, it is possible to say that parents who can find the meaning of life, communicate more effectively with their children and balance their parenting roles will have higher psychological resilience in the face of their children's problems (Aydın, 2019). In parents who are far from these qualities, having a child who needs special care has a decreasing effect on psychological resilience.

Another psychological structure that is important for families with children with special needs to cope with the difficulties they are experiencing is family resilience. Resilience is a concept used to explain the methods of adults to combat unexpected or difficult events related to life. The capacity of a community or a person to overcome, prevent or minimize the damages caused by a difficulty or distress is expressed in the form of resilience (Masten & Tellegen, 2012; Newman & Blackburn, 2003). Family resilience, on the other hand, is considered as the strength of the family system in successfully keeping up with the difficulties and risks of life and developing or maintaining healthy family functioning (Patterson, 2002). It has been stated by McCubbin, McCubbin and Thompson (1993) that there are family schemes covering the expectations, priorities, standards and beliefs shared on behalf of the management of the situation of the families who are faced with a crisis. Families who have children with special needs often there is a crisis and this crisis moments of individual family members and stay in compliance and durable against the boy from a psychological angle depends on both collectively yilmazlig family yilmazlig (Caner, Bayraklı & Güzeller, 2011).

Parents who have a child who needs special care their child's treatment, care, education and training in issues such as problems, has a negative impact on the life satisfaction of parents (Aktan, Orakcı & Durnalı, 2020; Misura & Memisevic, 2017). Life satisfaction; the situation or result obtained as a result of comparing the expectations of the individual with those in his hands can be defined as the positive attitude of the individual to the whole life in accordance with the criteria determined by him and the sum of the beliefs and evaluations of the individual about life or the general attitude of the individual about his life (Rice, Frone & McFarlin, 1992). Shin and Johnson (1978), on the other hand, express this concept as an assessment of the quality of life of an individual according to the criteria determined by him. At the same time, life satisfaction can be explained as the degree of positive development recorded in the quality of life as a whole. In order to achieve life satisfaction, it is necessary that the expectations of the individual with what they have are compatible or that the difference between them dec be small. The difficulties experienced by parents with special needs children prevent them from accessing their expectations. Therefore, the life satisfaction of parents with a child who needs special care is lower when compared with parents with a child whose development course is normal (Cengiz, Yıldız & Peker, 2021).

The literature is examined resilience in families who have children with special needs, family, and life satisfaction yilmazlig studies that examined individually, though, the three variables are examined together, the families who have children with normal development and children with special needs and the families of these variables were compared in terms of study where there isn't. Therefore, the problem of this study is to compare the psychological resilience, family resilience and life satisfaction of children with special needs and the parents of children with normal development.

## **1. Literature Review**

### **1.1. Special Needs**

Each individual has different characteristics that distinguish him from other individuals. These features make it necessary to take some measures to live more comfortably in society and increase the need for social support. Individuals who are in this situation are expressed as having special needs. In other words, individuals whose developmental courses are lower than normal individuals or who do not receive any benefit from this despite receiving education in the same facilities as normal individuals are individuals who need special care (Eldeniz-Çetin, 2017). A special requirement is that there are difficulties with some activities that normal people can do, and a supporter is usually needed. This situation is related to the fact that individuals with special needs are lagging behind their peers in terms of mental and physical development (Çetin & Kurnaz, 2017).

The characteristics of individuals with special needs cause them to have conflicts with their peers, communication breakdowns, arguments, inability to make eye contact, game skills are not developed enough, and language problems. In order to overcome these problems, there are currently educational programs developed for children with special needs (Ergin, 2012; Meral & Cavkaytar, 2014).

The problems that a child with special needs has to face in relation to his disability affect the child and the family. All negative and positive things related to the development of the child play a decisive role on the behavior and attitudes of family members, and the attitude of family members is also reflected in the child (Yazıcı & Durmuşoğlu, 2017). The adaptation of the family to the given situation is directly related to the attitude, environment and conditions exhibited when informing about the situation of their children. The correct information of parents about their children's disability status plays a decisive role in the adaptation of families who are at the beginning of a long road to a situation they are not ready for and do not expect (Akkök, 1997).

Having children, in addition to their current role for families, also brings with it the role of being parents. The individual attention of parents is focused on the child, which is a common being that they produce together, and their lives are shaped to meet the needs of their children (Özgüven, 2000). The main responsibility of a parent is to raise a mentally, psychologically and

physically healthy baby (Şendil & Balkan, 2005). However, expectations may change if the child does not show normal development. Since the role of being the parent of a child with different characteristics than usual is not a role determined by the parents themselves, they are not prepared for this role (Akkök, Aşkar & Karancı, 1992). Therefore, the joy and happiness expected to occur with the birth of a child is replaced by sadness; the psychology of the family becomes complicated (Özsoy, Özyürek & Eripek, 1998). From this point of view, it can be stated that role dissatisfaction is an important challenge faced by parents who have a child with special needs. It has been noted that parents who have a child with normal development feel good as parents and receive satisfaction from the parenting role with the birth of their child (Hyun, 2000). This situation cannot be realized enough by parents who have a child with special needs (Duygun, 2001, Myers et al., 2009). Therefore, families of children with special needs need attention and motivation.

If a child born with special needs cannot fully fulfill his role in the family, adaptation problems occur in the family. The inability of a person with disabilities to adapt to life due to his inability to play the roles that he should perform due to cultural, social, gender and age differences can lead to problems of adaptation in the family (Özsoy, Özyürek & Eripek, 1998). The constant or temporary illness of one or more family members, special needs (mental, hearing, visual or physical special needs, etc.) affects the harmony of all family members, reduces their motivation and can upset the balance of even the most robust families (Yörükoğlu, 1998).

Having a child with special needs can cause parents to experience stress with environmental adaptation problems (Selimoğlu et al., 2014). In the study conducted by Gülaldı (2010), it was concluded that especially the stress levels of the parents who have a child with SP are higher and the feeling of inadequacy is experienced in the parents. In another study, it was found that the lack of social communication observed in children with OSB also negatively affects the child-parent relationship, and the difficult-to-control behavior of children creates an atmosphere of chaos in the family (Myers et al., 2009; Wing, 2012). A study conducted by Hayes and Watson (2013) found that anxiety levels were higher in parents with children with OIZ than in different parents with children with special needs, and parenting stress was higher.

Many cited the difficulty of having a child with special needs for parents that are different and sometimes the parents themselves feel privileged to Entertainment for children, such as patience and empathy may lead to some positive gains gain (Myers et al., 2009).

## **1.2. Psychological Resilience**

Traumatic experiences and stressful situations that are faced throughout life can have a different effect on each person. While some individuals can overcome negativity more easily, the opposite may be the case for others. This condition is referred to as “psychological resilience” in the psychology literature (Doğan, 2015). Açı (2018) defined this term as the ability of an individual to face this in situations where uncertainty prevails and to show the necessary struggle by taking responsibility in a confident way. Öz and Bahadır-Yılmaz (2009) list the qualities of individuals with high levels of psychological resilience as follows: having the

ability to solve effective problems, being able to successfully fight against stressful events and having a high level of interpersonal communication skills.

All kinds of negative events or situations encountered in everyday life (terror, loss or harm of a loved one, dismissal from work...) also bring a difficult life experience. At some times, individuals experience a flood of emotions, and sometimes different reactions may be shown. Although these events are evaluated negatively at first, they become compatible with the lives of individuals thanks to the taking of some steps. Psychological resilience has an important place in achieving this harmony as a reflection of time, effort and an ongoing process (Garmezy 1991, Luthar 1991; Masten 2001).

The success or identifiable psychological adaptation in the form of resilience; tragedy, trauma, problems with the means to adapt to stressful situations or familial relations (Hunter, 2001; Tusaie & Dyer, 2004). Individuals with high psychological resilience are able to collect themselves more easily in the face of negative life experiences and overcome disasters more easily (Wagnild & Young, 1993).

Having a child who needs special care brings with it a number of responsibilities related to the care of the child, as well as the classic maternal role (Varghese & Venkatesan, 2013). Mothers often blame themselves for the fact that their children are disabled, and therefore they may exhibit negative behaviors from time to time. Various problems can also be observed in the marriages of such individuals. Therefore, such individuals are more likely to be depressed (Johnson, 2000; Lenhard et al., 2005).

Mothers who have children with special needs to be able to struggle against the difficulties of life and positions themselves frustrated due at the point of exhaustion, both physical and emotional (Kuhn & Carter, 2006).

According to Becvar (2013), the psychological resilience of parents has the capacity to cope more strongly and firmly with situations that have been tried to be tackled before and to renew itself. Psychological resilience in parents with special needs children acts as a protective shield against stress-related depression and anxiety and supports the more effective performance of family functions (Bitsika et al., 2013; Bekhet et al., 2012; Migerode et al., 2012).

Psychological resilience in parents with children with special needs manifests itself in the form of meeting all the requirements of family members and fully fulfilling their parental roles in the point of acceptance of the child's disability and combating the difficulties that arise along with the obstacle. However, psychological resilience is of great importance for parents to adapt to the current situation and to review the rest of life, more simply, to determine how to best ensure the meaning of life for the child (Aydın, 2019).

### **1.3. Family Resilience**

Family resilience is considered as the strength of the family system in successfully adapting to life's difficulties and risks and in developing or maintaining healthy family functioning

(Patterson, 2002). It was stated by McCubbin, McCubbin, and Thompson (1993) that families who have to face a crisis have a family schema that includes shared expectations, priorities, standards and beliefs for the management of the situation in question. The mentioned family chart helps the family to evaluate the crisis situation.

Stress, Adaptation and Adaptive Resilience Model was developed by McCubbin, Thompson and McCubbin (1996) to explain family resilience. The basic assumption within the scope of the model in question; stress is a natural component of life that contributes to the development of family unity as a whole and supports the family's abilities. Families try to reorganize their lives in this crisis period. the family's ability to adapt to stressful life events and its normative transitions are under the influence of the following four factors in all periods of the life cycle (McCubbin & McCubbin, 1988);

- Strategies developed by the family for coping, problem solving methods and maintaining family integrity
- Social support from family, friends and society/wider groups,
- The cultural heritage of the family, its belief system, the meaning they attribute to the challenge
- Individual sources of resilience of family members (such as self-resilience and positive self-esteem).

Walsh (1998) stated that family resilience is related to family harmony in the form of a functional unity and the family's coping process, and it has been suggested that it has three dimensions: communication processes, management styles and family belief systems.

The inclusion of a child with special needs in the family causes changes in the life of the family, can cause traumatic effects and negatively affect the current order of the family. Studies conducted on the subject reveal that families with children with special needs are more stressed and worried more than families with children with normal development (Metin, 2012). The failure of the expectation of a healthy child and the difficulty that the family has to face in explaining the child's condition to the people around, overcoming the emotional crisis and accepting the child; insufficient knowledge of the child's characteristics and situation; Efforts to combat health problems caused by insufficient knowledge are the main stressors. In addition to these, the anxiety about the future of the child, the distant attitudes of the close people in their relations with the family, and the negative behaviors of the environment towards the child are among the main factors that increase the stress (Cavkaytar & Özen, 2010).

Within the scope of the study carried out by Hardman, Drew, and Egan (1996), the fact that children with special needs are dependent on their parents while they continue their lives, the expenditures made for the treatment of the child create an additional burden on the family budget, and the frequent visits to the hospitals during the treatment period. It is argued that the inability to find the time, the decrease in social relations, the allocation of a significant part of the time to the child are the main factors that increase the level of stress in the family. While some of the families have difficulty in keeping up with the stressful situation that starts with

the birth of the child with special needs, some of them are relieved of the stressful situation and attain calmness by making use of effective fighting methods. In other words, they successfully struggle with this difficult situation caused by inadequacy by continuing their lives despite all the difficulties they face (Patterson, 2002).

Although there are some difficulties in raising a child with special needs, being the parent and sibling of such a child can help them re-evaluate themselves and reveal aspects they have not discovered before. In other words, it offers family members the opportunity to see what they can and cannot achieve, what they can do and what they cannot do, and realize how indomitable they are (Akkök, 2003).

Resilience is the ability of a person to develop and adapt positively and to continue his struggle, despite facing the experiences and situations that lead to negative consequences (Masten et al.; 2002). Rutter (1985) defines resilience as the ability to cope with and recover from situations that are faced despite very difficult conditions. Parents with children with special needs have to face more stress in their family, work and social lives compared to other families (Kaner et al., 2011).

The social support that will be provided for the families in question to cope with this situation in which they have to face coping strategies that enable them to resist stressful situations and events will increase their resilience levels, and beyond that, it will help them to hold on to life with more hope.

#### **1.4. Life Satisfaction**

The concept of life satisfaction was first defined by Neugarten in 1961 as “the result of comparing the expectations of an individual with what they have” (Karabulut & Ozer, 2003). In other dec, life satisfaction is the relationship between what an individual wants to have and what they have. The closer an individual's desire to have and what they have are to each other, the higher their life satisfaction is. The concept of life satisfaction was expressed by Pavot and Diener (1993) as the assessments of individuals about their own lives. This concept covers not only one moment of life, but the whole one. There are more than one factor affecting life satisfaction. Positive relationships that an individual establishes with his environment, happiness that he achieves in everyday life, feeling good in a physical sense, achieving his goals and economic competence are some of them (Recepoğlu, 2013).

Life satisfaction is the cognitive dimension of the concept of subjective well-being (Diener, Lucas & Oishi, 2002). In the literature, usually used in the same sense with the concept of life satisfaction, life satisfaction from different aspects of the individual's own life is close to ideal, to see the living conditions are excellent and most of what they want us to think about life consists of cognitive assessments like to hear the request to change almost anything.

The life satisfaction of parents with special needs children decreases due to the problems arising in matters such as education, care, improvement and treatment of children (Aktan, Orakci & Durnali, 2020; Misura & Memisevic, 2017). Life satisfaction is a cognitive judgment based on

the comparison of expectations and opportunities for a person's life circumstances (Cho & Hong, 2013). The social comparison theory put forward to measure life satisfaction reveals that parents who judge themselves better have more life satisfaction than others (Kaner, 2004). Negative emotions that arise due to stressful transitions in the roles that parents with special needs children are responsible for and the forced change of living conditions negatively affect their perception of satisfaction with living (Darling, Senatore and Strachan, 2017). Parents, whose social support is reduced due to their ability to cope with different problems and negative emotions, often have difficulty developing a positive attitude to negative perceptions in their lives. The satisfaction level of parents who do not receive enough support from the close environment related to their child's special situation and whose ability to cope with emotional problems decreases is quite low (Altug-Özsoy, Özkahraman & Çallı, 2006). Fung and Rogge (2007) stated that the marital satisfaction of couples whose social and emotional life satisfaction is weakened in connection with the special situation of their children is also low. Likewise, Wang, Huang and Kong (2017) suggested that the deceleration of the ability to solve both individual and common problems in these families causes unhappiness among couples.

## **2. Method**

### **2.1 The Model of the Research**

This study is a research in relational screening model in terms of comparing the psychological resilience, family resilience and life satisfaction of children with special needs and parents of children with normal development and determining the relationship between these variables. The relational screening model is defined as the screening approach in which it is aimed to determine the existence of co-variance among multiple variables. In the relational screening model, whether the variables change together; If there is a change, it is tried to determine in which direction it is (Karasar, 2014).

### **2.2 Purpose and Hypotheses of the Research**

The main purpose of this research is to compare the psychological resilience, family resilience and life satisfaction of parents of children with special needs and children with normal development. In line with the main purpose of the research, answers were sought for the following hypotheses.

H1: The psychological resilience level of of parents of children with normal development is significantly higher than the level of psychological resilience of parents of children with special needs.

H2: The family resilience level of parents of children with normal development is significantly higher than the level of family resilience of parents of children with special needs

H3: The life satisfaction of parents of children with normal development is significantly higher than the life satisfaction of parents of children with special needs.

H4: The relationship between psychological resilience and family resilience is higher in parents with children with special needs than in parents with children with normal development.

H5: The relationship between psychological resilience and life satisfaction is higher in parents with children with special needs than in parents with children with normal development.

H6: The relationship between family resilience and life satisfaction is higher in parents with children with special needs than in parents with children with normal development.

### **2.3 Research Group**

The research group of this study consists of a total of 403 parents, including 198 children with special needs and 205 individuals with children with normal development. The participants were reached via Whatsapp, Instagram, Facebook and Twitter social media platforms and an online questionnaire prepared on the Google Forms platform was applied. It can be stated that the objective sampling method is used as a sampling method because parents with special needs children should be reached specifically for the survey application. In objective sampling, which is a non-selective sampling approach, the sampled individuals are selected consciously depending on the purpose of the study (Balci, 2018). As a result of this process, the research sample consisted of 403 people. 47.89% (n=193) of the participants were female and 52.11% (n=210) were male. 75.19% (n=303) of the participants were married, 24.81% (n=100) were divorced. The education level of 24.56% (n=99) of the participants is primary school graduate and below, 27.05% (n=109) of the participants is middle school graduate, 26.80% (n=108) of them is high school graduate and 21.59% (n=87) of them is university graduate. Income level of 17.87% (n=72) of the participants is between 0-1500 ₺, income level of 31.02% (n=125) is between 1501-3000 TL, income level of 17.62% (n=171) is 3001-4500 TL The income level of 21.34% (n=86) was between 4501-6000 TL and the income level of 12.16% (n=72) was 6001 TL and above.

### **2.4 Data Collection Tools**

Personal information form created by the researcher, Resilience Scale for Adults (RSA), developed by Friborg, Hjemdal, Rosenvinge, and Martinussen (2003) and adapted into Turkish by Basım and Çetin (2011), Family Resilience Scale (FRS) developed by Kaner and Bayraklı (2010) and the Life Satisfaction Scale (LSS) developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985) and adapted into Turkish by Dağlı and Baysal (2016) were used in order to collect data in this study.

#### **2.4.1 Personal Information Form**

In order to determine the demographic characteristics of the participants, a personal information form consisting of four questions was used by the researcher. The participants in the study answered the questions that will determine their gender, marital status, education level and income level in the personal information form.

#### **2.4.2. Resilience Scale for Adults**

RSA was developed by Friborg et al. (2003), and includes the dimensions of 'personal strength', 'structural style', social competence', 'family cohesion' and 'social resources'. A later study (Friborg et al., 2005) shows that the six-dimensional structure of the scale better explains the resilience model. In the study of Friborg et al. (2005), the 'personal power' dimension was divided into two as 'self-perception' and 'perception of the future' and a total of six dimensions emerged. In the scale, 'structural style' (3,9,15,21) and 'perception of the future' (2,8,14,20) have 4 items; 'family adjustment' (5,11,17,23,26,32), 'self-perception' (1,7,13,19,28,31) and 'social competence' (4,10,16,22,25) ,29) 6 items each, and 'social resources' (6,12,18,24,27,30,33) are measured with 7 items (Basım & Çetin, 2011).

Basım and Çetin (2011) found that the internal consistency coefficients of the sub-dimensions of the scale ranged between 0.66 and 0.81, and the test-retest reliability ranged between 0.68 and 0.81. The total score that the participants can get from the scale is 165. It was accepted that the participants with high scores had high psychological resilience, and the participants with low scores had low psychological resilience.

#### **2.4.3. Family Resilience Scale**

The FRS, developed by Kaner and Bayraklı (2010), aims to measure parents' perceptions of resilience. As a result of the analyzes made by Kaner and Bayraklı (2010), it was designed as 84 items. As a result of the analyzes of the scale in different dimensions, it was organized by reducing it to 37 items with 4 sub-dimensions as "Struggle-Challenge, Self-Efficacy, Commitment to Life and Control" (Kaner & Bayraklı, 2010). In the form prepared as a 5-point Likert-type scale, participants are asked to mark the option that describes them (describes me very well = 5 points, describes me well = 4 points, describes me moderately = 3 points, describes me a little = 2 points, does not describe me at all = 1 point). The level of family resilience is evaluated with the scores obtained from all items of the scale and from each sub-scale. It is seen that all items of the scale were prepared in a positive structure. Getting a high score from the scale indicates that the individual's perception of resilience is high. The internal consistency reliability coefficient of the scale was found to be between 0.53 and 0.87 when the subscales were examined (Kaner & Bayraklı, 2010).

#### **2.4.4. Life Satisfaction Scale**

The validity and reliability of the scale developed by Diener et al. (1985) were examined on 200 participants consisting of Turkish primary school teachers. The aim of the scale is to measure the perceptions of primary school teachers about life satisfaction (Diener et al., 1985). English version of the original scale, which consists of one sub-dimension and 5 items, was translated into Turkish and then back into English for the adaptation study. After comparing the translated scale items with the original scale items, the necessary arrangements were made and the final Turkish form was reached. Turkish English form is the same as the English form and it is aimed to determine whether it has the same meaning in practice. The translated Turkish

form and the original scale were applied to a group of teachers with an interval of two weeks. It was observed that there was a high level of positive and significant correlation between the correlation coefficient between the scores obtained from the two applications and the forms ( $r=0.92$ ;  $p=0.000$ ). Therefore, it was accepted that the Turkish version of the scale provided linguistic equivalence with the original scale. In order to determine the reliability of the scale, Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient and test-retest technique were used. The consistency coefficient for the whole scale was calculated as  $r=0.88$ . According to the results obtained, the scale has a high degree of internal consistency. In order to test the test-retest reliability of the scale, the Turkish forms were administered to a group of 47 teachers working in public primary schools in Diyarbakır city center with an interval of two weeks, and the correlation coefficient between the two applications was determined as  $r=0.97$  ( $p=0.000$ ). According to this result, it can be said that the test-retest reliability coefficient of the SBS is sufficient. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to examine the construct validity of the scale. It was determined that the distribution of the items forming the scale was the same as the distribution in the original scale as a result of CFA. As a result of the research, a valid and reliable scale consisting of 5 single-dimensional items and a 5-point Likert scale that can be used to determine life satisfaction in schools was produced (Dağlı & Baysal, 2016).

### **3.5. Statistical Analysis of Data**

SPSS (Statistics Program for Social Sciences) 20.0 program was used to analyze the data obtained from the demographic information form and scales used in the study. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the personal characteristics of the participants and the scores they got from ARS, FRS and LSS.

Before deciding on the statistical tests to be used in the analysis, it was checked whether the data provided the assumption of normal distribution and homogeneity. In order to evaluate the normal distribution, skewness and kurtosis values were checked and it was seen that the data met the normal distribution assumption as a result of the skewness and kurtosis values of the data being in the range of  $[-1,1]$ . In addition, Levene's test was performed for the homogeneity assumption and it was understood that the data also met this assumption. Due to the fact that the normal distribution and homogeneity of variance assumptions were provided, it was decided to apply parametric tests such as the independent sample t test and the Pearson correlation test within the scope of this research. In this context, whether the scores obtained by the participants from the ARS, FRS and LSS showed a significant difference according to the type of child owned was determined by the independent sample t test and the relationships between the scores obtained from the scales were determined by the Pearson correlation test.

### **3. Results**

The findings of the independent sample t-test, which was carried out to determine whether the psychological resilience of the parents of children with special needs and children with normal development show a significant difference, are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Comparison of parents' psychological resilience according to the child's developmental status**

	Child Developmental Status	n	$\bar{x}$	sd	df	t	p	Effect Size
Structural Style	Child with special needs	198	8.76	2.66	401	-0.13	0.899	-
	Child with normal development	205	8.79	2.46				
Perception of Future	Child with special needs	198	11.41	3.13	401	-4.04	<b>0.000*</b>	0.04
	Child with normal development	205	12.64	2.98				
Family Cohesion	Child with special needs	198	17.51	3.38	401	-1.51	0.131	-
	Child with normal development	205	18.00	3.24				
Perception of Self	Child with special needs	198	18.89	2.80	401	-2.48	<b>0.013*</b>	0.02
	Child with normal development	205	19.59	2.82				
Social Competence	Child with special needs	198	19.21	2.94	401	-3.32	<b>0.001*</b>	0.03
	Child with normal development	205	20.20	3.02				
Social Resources	Child with special needs	198	14.10	6.62	401	-2.18	<b>0.030*</b>	0.01
	Child with normal development	205	15.55	6.70				
<b>Resilience</b>	Child with special needs	198	89.89	9.53	401	-5.20	<b>0.000*</b>	0.06
	Child with normal development	205	94.79	9.37				

\* $p \leq 0.05$

According to Table 1, it was determined that the scores obtained by the participants from the structural style and family cohesion factors did not differ significantly according to the child's developmental status ( $p > 0.05$ ). It was determined that the scores of the participants on the factors of perception of future, perception of self, social competence and social resources differed significantly according to the child's developmental status ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). Accordingly, it can be said that the scores obtained from the factors of perception of future, perception of self, social competence and social resources of parents with children with normal development are significantly higher than the scores obtained from the factors of perception of future, perception of self, social competence and social resources of parents with children with special needs. . In addition, it was determined that the total scores of the individuals included in the study obtained from ARS differed significantly according to the developmental status of the child ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). Accordingly, it can be stated that the total scores of parents with children with normal

development in ARS are significantly higher than the total scores of parents with children with special needs from ARS.

The findings of the independent sample t-test, which was carried out to determine whether the family resilience of the parents of children with special needs and children with normal development show a significant difference or not, are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. Comparison of parents' family resilience according to the child's developmental status**

	Child Developmental Status	n	$\bar{x}$	sd	df	t	p	Effect Size
Challenge	Child with special needs	198	45.40	4.63	401	-4.67	<b>0.000*</b>	<b>0.05</b>
	Child with normal development	205	47.58	4.68				
Self Efficacy	Child with special needs	198	28.32	3.98	401	-4.12	<b>0.000*</b>	<b>0.04</b>
	Child with normal development	205	29.96	4.02				
Self Control	Child with special needs	198	9.96	1.52	401	-3.30	<b>0.001*</b>	<b>0.03</b>
	Child with normal development	205	10.46	1.54				
Commitment of Life	Child with special needs	198	20.39	3.70	401	-3.27	<b>0.001*</b>	<b>0.03</b>
	Child with normal development	205	21.57	3.54				
<b>Family Resilience</b>	Child with special needs	198	105.26	6.46	401	-4.83	<b>0.000*</b>	<b>0.05</b>
	Child with normal development	205	108.40	6.56				

\* $p \leq 0.05$

According to Table 2, it has been determined that the scores of the participants on the factors of challenge, self-efficacy, self-control and commitment to life of the FRS differ significantly according to the developmental status of the child ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). Accordingly, it can be said that the scores of parents with children with special needs on the factors of challenge, self-efficacy, self-control and commitment to life are significantly lower than the scores of parents with children with normal development on the factors of challenge, self-competence, self-control and commitment to life. In addition, it was determined that the total scores of the individuals included in the study differed significantly according to the developmental status of the child ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). Accordingly, it can be stated that the total scores of the parents with children with special needs on the FRS are significantly lower than the total scores of the parents with children with normal development.

The findings of the independent sample t-test, which was carried out to determine whether the life satisfaction of the parents of children with special needs and children with normal development show a significant difference or not, are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3. Comparison of parents' life satisfaction according to the child's developmental status**

	Child Developmental Status	n	$\bar{x}$	sd	df	t	p	Effect Size
Life Satisfaction	Child with special needs	198	18.51	5.69	401	-2.85	<b>0.005*</b>	<b>0.02</b>
	Child with normal development	205	20.05	5.18				

\* $p \leq 0.05$

According to Table 3, it was determined that the total scores of the participants in the LSS differed significantly according to the child's developmental status ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). Accordingly, it can be stated that the total scores of the parents of children with special needs in the LSS are significantly lower than the total scores of the parents of the children with normal development.

The findings of the Pearson correlation test, which was applied to determine whether the relationship between psychological resilience and family resilience differs according to the developmental status of the child, is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4. Comparison of the relationship between psychological resilience and family resilience according to the developmental status of the child**

	Child Developmental Status		Family Resilience
Psychological Resilience	Child with special needs	r	0.741
		p	0.000
	Child with normal development	r	0.548
		p	0.000

According to Table 4, while there is a highly significant positive correlation between psychological resilience and family resilience in parents with children with special needs ( $r=0.741$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), there is a moderately significant positive correlation between psychological resilience and family resilience in parents with children with normal development ( $r=0.548$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Accordingly, it can be stated that the relationship between psychological resilience and family resilience is higher in parents with children with special needs than in parents with children with normal development.

The findings of the Pearson correlation test, which was applied to determine whether the relationship between resilience and life satisfaction differs according to the developmental status of the child, is presented in Table 5.

**Table 5. Comparison of the relationship between psychological resilience and life satisfaction according to the developmental status of the child**

	Child Developmental Status		Life Satisfaction
Psychological Resilience	Child with special needs	r	0.425
		p	0.000
	Child with normal development	r	0.009
		p	0.657

According to Table 5, while there is a moderately significant positive relationship between resilience and life satisfaction in parents with children with special needs ( $r=0.425$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), there is not significant relationship between psychological resilience and life satisfaction in parents with children with normal development ( $p>0.05$ ).

The findings of the Pearson correlation test, which was applied to determine whether the relationship between family resilience and life satisfaction differs according to the developmental status of the child, are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6. Comparison of the relationship between family resilience and life satisfaction according to the developmental status of the child**

	Child Developmental Status		Life Satisfaction
Family Resilience	Child with special needs	r	0.531
		p	0.000
	Child with normal development	r	0.245
		p	0.000

According to Table 6, while there is a moderately significant positive correlation between family resilience and life satisfaction in parents with children with special needs ( $r=0.531$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), there is a low positive correlation between family resilience and life satisfaction in parents with children with normal development ( $r=0.245$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Accordingly, it can be stated that the relationship between family resilience and life satisfaction is higher in parents with children with special needs than in parents with children with normal development.

Information on the rejection and acceptance status of the hypotheses of the study is presented in Table 7.

**Table 7. Information on the rejection and acceptance status of the hypotheses of the study**

Hypothesis	Rejection/Acceptance Status
H1: The psychological resilience level of of parents of children with normal development is significantly higher than the level of psychological resilience of parents of children with special needs.	Partially Accepted
H2: The family resilience level of parents of children with normal development is significantly higher than the level of family resilience of parents of children with special needs.	Accepted
H3: The life satisfaction of parents of children with normal development is significantly higher than the life satisfaction of parents of children with special needs.	Accepted
H4: The relationship between psychological resilience and family resilience is higher in parents with children with special needs than in parents with children with normal development.	Accepted
H5: The relationship between psychological resilience and life satisfaction is higher in parents with children with special needs than in parents with children with normal development.	Accepted
H6: The relationship between family resilience and life satisfaction is higher in parents with children with special needs than in parents with children with normal development.	Accepted

According to Table 7, all hypotheses of the study were accepted except for the H1 hypothesis. In the H1 hypothesis, however, the H1 hypothesis was partially accepted, since the structural style and family cohesion factors did not show a significant difference according to the child's developmental status.

#### **4. Discussion and Conclusion**

Acting with the view that the protection of individuals' mental health will ensure that the society is also healthy, it is concluded that the results obtained from this research will contribute to the work to be done for the parents of children with special needs, and to determine the form of the measures to be taken or the activities to be presented. Therefore, determining the relationships between individuals' psychological resilience, family resilience and life satisfaction is important in terms of contributing to the suggestions to be made about individual/group education activities for parents of children with special needs. In addition, when the literature is examined, it is seen that there are studies in which the variables of psychological resilience, family resilience and life satisfaction, which are discussed in this research, are examined separately, but there are no studies in which the three variables are considered together and their relations with each other. Therefore, this research is also important in terms of its contribution to the literature with the results obtained.

This research is limited to 198 parents with special needs children and 205 parents with normal development children living in Turkey, whom the researcher can reach through social media platforms. The variables of psychological resilience, family resilience and life satisfaction that are wanted to be measured in the study are limited to the qualities measured by the scales used. All the results obtained within the scope of this study are limited to the students' responses to the scales.

In this study, psychological resilience, family resilience and life satisfaction of parents of children with special needs and children with normal development were compared and the relationship of these variables with each other was determined.

As a result of the research, it was determined that there was no significant difference between the scores obtained from the structural style and family cohesion factors of the parents of children with special needs and children with normal development. It has been determined that the scores of the participants on the factors of perception of future, perception of self, social competence and social resources differ significantly according to the child's developmental status. In addition, it was determined that the total scores of parents with children with special needs in ARS were significantly lower than the total scores of parents with children with normal development. When the findings of the ARS and its sub-factors were evaluated together, it was concluded that the psychological resilience level of parents with children with special needs was higher than the level of psychological resilience of parents with children with normal development. In the literature, it is stated that mothers with children with special needs face more mental problems than mothers with children with normal development, but the level of psychological resilience varies from mother to mother (Eroğlu, Özcan, & Peker, 2015; Kronenbeger, & Thompson, 1992). In some studies, it is stated that mothers with children with special needs are under more stress and experience mental problems (Esdale et al., 2003, Helff & Glidden 1998; Macias et al., 2003; Seltzer, 2001). However, in some studies (Hastings, Allen, McDermott & Still, 2002; Scorgie, Wilgosh, & Sobsey, 2004) children with special needs mothers who have a positive outlook in spite of their difficulties, they have transformed them in a positive direction in terms of this challenge and it is stated that psychological resilience.

As a result of the research, it was determined that the scores obtained by parents of children with special needs and children with normal development from the factors of challenge, self-efficacy, self-control and commitment to life of FRS differed significantly according to the child's developmental status. It was determined that the scores of parents with children with special needs on the factors of challenge, self-efficacy and self-control were significantly higher than the scores of parents with children with normal development on the factors of challenge, self-efficacy, self-control and commitment to life. In addition, it was observed that the total scores obtained by the parents of children with special needs on the FRS were lower than the total scores of the parents with children with normal development. When the findings were evaluated together, it was concluded that the level of family resilience of parents with children with special needs was lower. When the literature is examined, it is seen that there are studies (Fereidouni, 2021; Keniş-Coşkun et al., 2019) in which findings similar to the findings obtained

from this study were obtained. The inclusion of a child with special needs in the family causes changes in the life of the family, can cause traumatic effects and negatively affect the current order of the family. Studies conducted on the subject reveal that families with children with special needs experience more stress and worry more than families with children with normal development (Metin, 2012). The failure of the expectation of a healthy child and the difficulty that the family has to face in explaining the child's condition to the people around, overcoming the emotional crisis and accepting the child; insufficient knowledge of the child's characteristics and situation; Efforts to combat health problems caused by insufficient knowledge are the main stressors. In addition to these, the anxiety about the future of the child, the distant attitudes of the close people in their relations with the family, and the negative behaviors of the environment towards the child are among the main factors that increase the stress (Cavkaytar & Özen, 2010). All these reasons show that the family resilience level of parents with children with special needs is lower than the level of family resilience of parents with children with normal development.

As a result of the research, it was determined that the total scores of the parents of children with special needs and children with normal development differed significantly according to the developmental status of the child. It was determined that the total scores of the parents of children with special needs in LSS were significantly lower than the total scores of the parents of children with normal development. Accordingly, it can be stated that the life satisfaction of parents with children with special needs is lower than those of parents with children with normal development. When the literature is examined, it is seen that there are many studies that support the findings obtained from this research (Say, 2020; Yavuz, 2016). The difficulties experienced by parents with children with special needs and the inability to spare time for their own hobbies due to the time they spend with their children can be seen as the reason for their low life satisfaction.

As a result of the research, it was determined that while there was a positive and high level of significant relationship between psychological resilience and family resilience in parents with children with special needs, there was a moderately significant positive relationship between psychological resilience and family resilience in parents with children with normal development. Accordingly, it can be stated that the relationship between psychological resilience and family resilience is stronger in parents with children with special needs than in parents with children with normal development.

As a result of the research, it was determined that there is a moderately significant positive relationship between psychological resilience and life satisfaction in parents with children with special needs, but there is no significant relationship between psychological resilience and life satisfaction in parents with children with normal development. Accordingly, it can be stated that among the parents with children with special needs, those with high psychological resilience also have high life satisfaction, but there is no such relationship in parents with children with normal development.

As a result of the research, it has been determined that there is a positive moderate and significant relationship between family resilience and life satisfaction in parents with children with special needs, but a low and significant positive relationship between family resilience and life satisfaction in parents with children with normal development. Accordingly, it can be stated that there is a significant relationship between family resilience and life satisfaction in both parents with children with special needs and parents with children with normal development, but this relationship is stronger in parents with children with special needs.

In line with the results reached within the scope of the research, the suggestions that can be given to those who are interested in the subject of children with special needs, parents, those who plan to do research on this subject and psychologists are listed below.

- Education programs that aim to provide parents with problem-solving skills and result-oriented approach qualities can be recommended in order to cope with the difficulties they experience in a healthy way due to the fact that they have a child with special needs. It is expected that the psychological resilience, family resilience and life satisfaction of parents who participate in this program and start to cope with problems will be positively affected. These training programs will also be very useful as they will give parents the chance to observe other parents with similar situations within the scope of social support.
- Since the ability of parents to be psychologically resilient depends not only on their individual characteristics such as temperament, but also on their family and social environment, it can be recommended to raise awareness of the social environment of parents with children with special needs.
- Programs should be established and supported so that parents with special needs children can cope with both their personal development and daily problems related to the care of the child. These educational programs should be available to parents whose child has received the relevant diagnoses.
- Counseling and psychological support programs should be provided to parents in order to cope with the shock and deep grief when they first learn that they have a child with special needs.
- Children with special needs should be supported to follow their education and participate in education programs to support their development.
- Parents with a child with special needs should be provided with information about the existence and functionality of rehabilitation and special educational institutions that are in their immediate vicinity.
- It may be suggested to clinical psychologists who have clients with special needs children that the relationship between psychological resilience, family resilience and life satisfaction is stronger than clients with children with normal development, and therefore, clients with special needs children should consider low psychological aspects as a risk factor.
- Researchers who plan to conduct a study on the subject may be advised to examine the psychological, family resilience and life satisfaction of parents with children with special needs and normally developing children according to demographic variables such as gender, education level, income level.

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