

## A Study on the Gatekeeping Behaviors of Mothers of Preschool Children

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### Abstract

This descriptive study was conducted with quantitative research methods to examine the gatekeeping behaviors of mothers of preschool children. The study group in this research consisted of 332 mothers with children aged 36-72 months, who attended preschool education in a primary school or an independent kindergarten in the central districts of Etimesgut, Mamak, Gölbaşı and Polatlı in Ankara and who volunteered to participate in the study. The "General Information Form", which included questions to determine the general characteristics of the participants and children, was used as a data collection tool in the study, and the "Maternal Gatekeeping Scale" was used to determine the interaction behaviors of mothers with their children and spouses. After permission was obtained from the school administration, the mothers with children aged 36-72 months were contacted through teachers. To test whether there was a significant difference in the scales and sub-dimensions in which the parametric test assumptions were made according to age, employment, child's age and child's gender, the t-test was used in independent groups; the One-Way ANOVA test was used to determine whether there was a significant difference according to education and duration of marriage. As a result of the study, it was determined that the mother's age variable made a significant difference in overly attached motherhood, traditional motherhood; education in overly attached motherhood and the total score; employment in modern motherhood, overly attached motherhood; the duration of marriage in twice as much responsibility in motherhood, traditional motherhood, indirect motherhood and the total score; the age of the child in indirect motherhood.

**Keywords:** Preschool, maternal gatekeeping, mother-child contact, parental contact

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### Introduction

The contribution of parents to child development and early childhood education is being increasingly emphasized every day. Mothers are regarded as the main source in child development both in the family and society (Kiliç ve Aral, 2015). Mothers typically offer emotional nurturing and support, fostering strong family bonds and ensuring the well-being of family members. Many mothers undertake the primary role in caregiving, managing household tasks and caring for children, which helps maintain family stability. In studies conducted on children, the importance of the mother is generally emphasized, while the father's involvement is generally ignored (Akyıldırım, 2023; Kuzucu, 2011; Üstündağ, 2023; Yogman and Garfield, 2016). With developing technology, education, politics, science and industry, over the years, people have realised the fact that the father is as important as the mother in a child development (McBride and Mills, 1993). Traditional roles, widely accepted in the past, where the father was primarily responsible for providing financial support, and the mother had a more passive role with housework and child care, have changed over time. The traditional roles of mothers as providing care, nutrition, education and meeting the physical needs of children are gradually decreasing, and more fatherly involvement is necessary due to the changing conditions (Tezel Şahin, Akıncı Coşgun and Aydın Kılıç, 2017).

It has also been observed that active involvement of fathers in childcare not only improves father-child attachment, which benefits child development, but also positively impacts the relationship in the whole family. (Yogman & Garfield, 2016). Flouri (2016) revealed that a father figure has been positively related to the child's academic, mental, social and emotional development, while negatively associated with aggression and low academic achievement. It has also been found that there is a negative association between the major public health issues, such as obesity and Type-2 diabetes, and father-involved child development (Sharp and Lawlor, 2019). However, parents who have internalized the traditional parental roles imposed on by society display some conservative behaviors in order to keep these roles and try to prevent their spouse from taking away their roles (Allen and Hawkins, 1999). Protecting the adopted parental roles and not allowing the other spouse to take up their role is called parental gatekeeping. On the other hand, modern parents share responsibilities related to the household and children and exhibit behaviors that encourage each other's active participation (Fagan & Barnett, 2003). Although a father's participation in a child's life is important in such a manner, some mothers adopt a protective attitude from the moment the child is born and do not allow their spouses to get close to the child, touch or care for them, and although they seem to allow it, anxiety and uneasiness might show up (Dönmez, 2019). In the literature, the refusal of mothers to allow fathers to interfere in child-related matters and the development of critical and negative attitudes towards fathers who want to participate in childcare is called "maternal gatekeeping" (Cannon, Schoppe-Sullivan, Mangelsdorf, Brown, and Sokolowski, 2008). In traditional families, mothers, in particular, may display such behaviors that alienate their spouses from these areas because they regard themselves as more competent in domestic responsibilities and childcaring and may perceive these as maternal duties. Overly attached mothers, besides, may tend to exclude fathers because they believe that there is a natural bond between the mother and the child, and that fathers' involvement damage this bond. Doubly burdened mothers take on excessive responsibility because their spouses do not play any role in child care and education, or in child development, and they take on too much of a burden in order to compensate for the lack of a fatherly role. Through their behaviours, indirect mothers, on the other hand, convey the message; "I am such a perfect mother and wife that my husband does not need to take responsibility in this regard" (Dönmez, 2019). Studies have shown that the involvement of fathers has increased (Arslan, 2022; Deretarla Gül, 2017; Flouri, 2016; Özyürek et al., 2018; Kuzucu, 2011; Semiz and Ören, 2024; Uludağlı, 2017; Yogman et al, 2016). One of the important factors in fathers' involvement in their children's lives is the extent to which the mother approaches the father's participation positively, as well as the cultural background (Deretarla Gül, 2017).

In a developing and changing world, it is important for mothers to allow and support fathers to be active in childcare and development. Although studies on paternal involvement could be found as a result of the literature review (Arslan, 2022; Kuzucu, 2011; Deretarla, 2017; Semiz and Ören, 2024; Tezel Şahin, Akıncı Coşgun and Aydan Kılıç, 2017; Uludağlı, 2017), a limited number of studies were found in Türkiye on maternal gatekeeping behavior in childcare (Başegmez, 2023; İnce, 2022; Kırac, 2023). Nevertheless, it is a known fact that awareness of the father's importance and his role in the care and

development of children is increasing every day. For this reason, the study aims to fill a significant gap in the existing literature. With this motivation, this study was conducted to examine the gatekeeping behaviors of mothers of 36-72 month old children in preschool.

## Method

### Research Model

This descriptive study was conducted with quantitative research methods to examine the gatekeeping behaviors of mothers of preschool children. Descriptive research serves the purpose of describing the characteristics of individuals, groups or physical environments as fully and carefully as possible (Büyüköztürk et al., 2018).

### Study Group

The study group in this research consists of 332 mothers with children aged 36-72 months who attended preschool education in a primary school or an independent kindergarten in the central districts of Etimesgut, Mamak, Gölbaşı and Polatlı in Ankara and who volunteered to participate in the study. The distribution of the demographic characteristics of mothers is shown in Table 1.

Table 1.

Distribution of the demographic characteristics of mothers

		f	%
Age	30 and younger	134	40.40
	31 and older	198	59.60
Education	Primary school	27	8.13
	Middle school	24	7.23
	High school	136	40.96
	Associate degree	64	19.28
	Bachelor's Degree	81	24.40
Employment	Employed	93	28.01
	Unemployed	239	71.99
Duration of marriage	1-5	47	14.16
	6-10	188	56.63
	11-15	57	17.17
	16 and longer	40	12.05
Age of the child	3-4	163	49.10
	5-6	169	50.90
Gender of the child	Girl	162	48.80
	Boy	170	51.20

When Table 1 is examined, it can be observed that 59.60% of the mothers are 31 and older, 40.96% are high school graduates, 71.99% are unemployed, and 56.63% have been married for 6-10 years. A rate of 49.10% of the mothers have children aged 3-4, 50.90% have children aged 5-6, 48.80% have daughters and 51.20% have sons.

### Data Collection Tools

The "General Information Form", which included questions to determine the general characteristics of the mothers and children, was used as a data collection tool in the study, and the "Maternal Gatekeeping Scale" developed by Dönmez (2019) was used to determine the interaction behaviors of mothers of preschool children with their children and spouses.

#### *General Information Form*

The General Information Form created by the researchers includes questions to determine the mothers' age, education level, employment, marriage duration, and the gender and the age of their children.

#### *Maternal gatekeeping scale*

The Maternal Gatekeeping Scale was developed by Dönmez (2019) to determine the interaction behaviors of mothers of preschool children aged 36-72 months with their children and spouses. The scale explains 41.31% of the total variance and shows a 5-factor structure. The scale consists of 5 subdimensions consisting of modern motherhood, twice as much responsibility in motherhood, overly attached motherhood, traditional motherhood and indirect motherhood. The 5-point Likert scale consists

of a total of 57 items (1 "Never", 2 "Rarely", 3 "Sometimes", 4 "Usually", 5 "Always"). The maximum score that can be obtained from the modern motherhood subdimension is 85, whereas the minimum score is 17; the maximum score that can be obtained from the twice as much responsibility in motherhood subdimension is 65, whereas the minimum score is 13; the maximum score that can be obtained from the overly attached motherhood subdimension is 70, whereas the minimum score is 14; the maximum score that can be obtained from the traditional motherhood subdimension is 25, whereas the minimum score is 5; the maximum score that can be obtained from the indirect motherhood subdimension is 40, whereas the minimum score is 8; the maximum score that can be obtained from maternal gatekeeping is 285 and the minimum score is 57. The modern motherhood subdimension, unlike other subdimensions, includes opportunistic mothering behaviors. Therefore, the scores in this subdimension should be reversed and added to the total score when calculating the total score of "Maternal Gatekeeping". In the scale development study, the Cronbach's Alpha values calculated for the subdimensions and total score of the scale were 0.89 for the Modern Motherhood Subdimension, 0.87 for the Twice as Much Responsibility in Motherhood Subdimension, 0.85 for the Overly Attached Motherhood Subdimension, 0.71 for the Traditional Motherhood Subdimension, 0.63 for the Indirect Motherhood Subdimension and 0.90 for the total score of the scale (Dönmez, 2019).

The Cronbach's Alpha values for the maternal gatekeeping scale and its subdimensions in this study were calculated to be 0.92 for the modern motherhood subdimension, 0.91 for the twice as much responsibility in motherhood subdimension, 0.76 for the overly attached motherhood subdimension, 0.77 for the traditional motherhood subdimension, 0.63 for the indirect motherhood subdimension and the total score of the scale was found to be 0.92. It can be concluded that these values are similar to the Cronbach Alpha values calculated in the development study by Dönmez (2019).

### **Data Collection**

The permission to use the scale employed in the study has been obtained from the author herself. Afterwards, ethical permission was obtained from the Ethics Commission of Gazi University dated 21.01.2021 and numbered E.10658. Necessary permissions have been obtained from the Ministry of National Education, and appointments were made with the school administrations where data would be collected. During the interview, the ethics committee permission was shown to the school administration and the purpose of the study was explained. After the permission was obtained from the school administration, mothers with children aged 36-72 months were contacted through the teachers. The data collection tool, which was drafted online in "Google Forms", was sent to the participants via WhatsApp due to pandemic conditions. On the first page of the data collection tool, participants were informed about the scope of the study and the informed consent form, which included that participation in the study was completely voluntary and that participants had the right not to participate in the study or to withdraw at any time after participating in the study.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis was carried out with the SPSS program and a confidence level of 95% was maintained. Extreme values were detected in the data by taking the z-scores of the data. The 12 participants showing these extreme values and 11 participants who did not answer some of the questions were removed from the data set. Data analysis was carried out with the data of 332 participants. In the analysis of the data, the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficients were calculated to determine the reliability of the scale and its subdimensions. Mean, standard deviation (ss), median, minimum and maximum values were used for descriptive analyses.

Since the modern motherhood subdimension of the scale includes opportunistic mothering behaviors unlike other subdimensions, the scores in this subdimension were reversed and added to the total score when calculating the total score of "Maternal Gatekeeping".

Before determining the total score of the Maternal Gatekeeping Scale and the subdimension scores of modern motherhood, twice as much responsibility in motherhood, overly attached motherhood, traditional motherhood, indirect motherhood according to the variables of age, education, employment, marriage duration, child's age, and child's gender, Levene statistics were used to test the homogeneity of the data set and skewness and kurtosis coefficients were used to test the normality assumption. It has been observed that kurtosis and skewness values meet the normality assumption between +1 and -1

(Can, 2013; Çokluk, Şekercioğlu, and Büyükoztürk, 2010; Morgan, Leech, Gloeckner, and Barrett, 2004).

To test whether there was a significant difference in the scale and sub-dimensions in which the parametric test assumptions were made according to age, employment, the child's age and child's gender, the t-test was used in independent groups; the One-Way ANOVA test was used to determine whether there was a significant difference according to education and duration of marriage. In order to decide which post-hoc multiple comparison technique would be used to determine the groups from which differences arose after ANOVA, the hypothesis of whether the variances of the group distributions were homogeneous or not was tested with the Levene test, according to which it was determined that the variances were homogeneous ( $p>0.05$ ). Therefore, the widely used Scheffé method of multiple comparisons was preferred in homogeneous variances. The reason why the Scheffé test is preferred is that the test is sensitive to Alpha type errors.

### Findings

In this section, the total score of the Maternal Gatekeeping Scale and modern motherhood, twice as much responsibility in motherhood, overly attached motherhood, traditional motherhood, indirect motherhood subdimension scores and the tables and explanations for comparing these scores according to age, education, employment, marriage duration, child's age and child's gender are included.

Table 2.

Descriptive Statistics Regarding the Maternal Gatekeeping Scale and Subdimensions

	$\bar{X}$	ss	Median	Minimum	Maximum
Modern Motherhood	68.72	12.58	72.00	17.00	85.00
Twice as much responsibility in motherhood	24.52	10.30	21.00	13.00	65.00
Overly Attached Motherhood	51.49	7.77	52.00	27.00	70.00
Traditional Motherhood	13.75	4.66	14.00	5.00	25.00
Indirect Motherhood	14.11	3.97	13.00	8.00	29.00
Total Score Maternal Gatekeeping	137.15	27.12	132.00	79.00	233.00

When Table 2 is examined, it can be observed that the modern motherhood subdimension mean score is 68.72 ( $ss=12.58$ ), the twice as much responsibility in motherhood subdimension mean score is 24.52 ( $ss=10.30$ ), the overly attached motherhood subdimension mean score is 51.49 ( $ss=7.77$ ), the traditional motherhood subdimension mean score is 13.75 ( $ss=4.66$ ), the traditional motherhood subdimension mean score is 13.75 ( $ss=4.66$ ), the indirect motherhood subdimension mean score is 14.11 ( $ss=3.97$ ), and the maternal gatekeeping (total score) mean score is 137.15 ( $ss=27.12$ ). Accordingly, it can be suggested that the modern motherhood and overly attached motherhood of participants are closer to the maximum value, whereas the twice as much responsibility in motherhood and indirect motherhood are closer to the minimum value. It can be said that the traditional motherhood and maternal gatekeeping behaviors of mothers are somewhere between the minimum and maximum values.

Table 3.

Independent Group t-test Results Conducted to Determine whether Maternal Gatekeeping Scale and Subdimension Scores Differ According to Age Variables

	Age of mother	n	$\bar{X}$	ss	t	sd	p
Modern Motherhood	30 and younger	134	69.50	12.76	0,933	330	0,351
	31 and older	198	68.19	12.46			
Twice as much responsibility in motherhood	30 and younger	134	23.25	9.41	-1,841	330	0,066
	31 and older	198	25.37	10.81			
Overly Attached Motherhood	30 and younger	134	52.57	6.67	2,093	330	0,037
	31 and older	198	50.76	8.37			
Traditional Motherhood	30 and younger	134	12.90	4.38	-2,764	330	0,006
	31 and older	198	14.33	4.76			
Indirect Motherhood	30 and younger	134	14.10	4.10	-0,015	330	0,988
	31 and older	198	14.11	3.90			
Total Score Maternal Gatekeeping	30 and younger	134	135.33	24.66	-1,006	330	0,315
	31 and older	198	138.38	28.66			

When Table 3 is examined, it can be observed that there is a significant difference in the average scores of mothers in the maternal gatekeeping scale, the subdimensions of overly attached motherhood ( $t(330)=2.093$ ) and traditional motherhood ( $t(330)=-2.764$ ) according to age ( $p<0.05$ ). In terms of the scores obtained from the overly attached motherhood subdimension of the scale, it can be observed that the average score of mothers aged 30 and younger ( $\bar{x}=52.57$ ,  $ss=6.67$ ) is higher than the average score of mothers aged 31 and older ( $\bar{x}=50.76$ ,  $ss=8.37$ ). In terms of the scores obtained from the traditional motherhood subdimension, it can be observed that the average score of mothers aged 31 and over ( $\bar{x}=14.33$ ,  $ss=4.76$ ) is higher than the average score of mothers aged 30 and younger ( $\bar{x}=12.90$ ,  $ss=4.38$ ). In addition, there was no significant difference between the subdimension score averages of modern motherhood, twice as much responsibility in motherhood, indirect motherhood scores and total score of maternal gatekeeping ( $p \geq 0.05$ ) according to the age variable.

Table 4.

Results of One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Conducted to Determine Whether the Maternal Gatekeeping Scale and Sub-Dimension Scores Differ According to the Education Variables.

Gatekeeping Scale and Sub-Dimension Scores Differ According to the Education Variables.											
		n	$\bar{X}$	ss	Var. c.	Sum of squares	df	Squares average	F	p	
Modern Motherhood	Primary school	27	64.63	14.16	Intergr.	644.92	4	161.23	1,019	0,397	
	Middle school	24	68.96	13.00	Intragr.	51720.47	327	158.17			
	High school	136	69.07	11.10	Total	52365.39	331				
	Associate degree	64	67.95	13.97	Significant difference : -						
	Bachelor's degree	81	70.02	13.08							
	Total	332	68.72	12.58							
Twice as much responsibility in motherhood	Primary school	27	27.96	10.33	Intergr.	871.97	4	217.99	2,080	0,083	
	Middle school	24	28.17	12.62	Intragr.	34276.95	327	104.82			
	High school	136	24.06	9.29	Total	35148.92	331				
	Associate degree	64	24.66	10.79	Significant difference : -						
	Bachelor's degree	81	22.94	10.52							
	Total	332	24.52	10.30							
Overly Attached Motherhood	Primary school	27	55.19	7.40	Intergr.	2445.07	4	611.27	11,404	0.000	
	Middle school	24	57.42	7.19	Intragr.	17527.88	327	53.60			
	High school	136	52.24	6.95	Total	19972.95	331				
	Associate degree	64	50.84	6.72	Significant difference : Bachelor> Primary school, Middle school, High school						
	Bachelor's degree	81	47.75	8.33							
	Total	332	51.49	7.77							
Traditional Motherhood	Primary school	27	14.44	5.23	Intergr.	116.31	4	29.08	1,347	0,252	
	Middle school	24	15.08	4.61	Intragr.	7057.44	327	21.58			
	High school	136	13.95	4.56	Total	7173.75	331				
	Associate degree	64	13.58	4.90	Significant difference : -						
	Bachelor's degree	81	12.94	4.38							
	Total	332	13.75	4.66							
Indirect Motherhood	Primary school	27	15.70	3.39	Intergr.	147.54	4	36.89	2,375	0,052	
	Middle school	24	15.42	3.74	Intragr.	5078.55	327	15.53			
	High school	136	13.90	3.91	Total	5226.10	331				
	Associate degree	64	14.17	3.82	Significant difference : -						
	Bachelor's degree	81	13.48	4.28							
	Total	332	14.11	3.97							
Total Score Maternal Gatekeeping	Primary school	27	150.67	28.62	Intergr.	13643.2	4	3410.82	4,853	0.001	
	Middle school	24	149.13	26.57	Intragr.	229816.4	327	702.80			
	High school	136	137.08	24.20	Total	243459.7	331				
	Associate degree	64	137.30	28.56	Significant difference : Bachelor> Primary school, Middle school						
	Bachelor's degree	81	129.09	27.80							
	Total	332	137.15	27.12							

When Table 4 is examined, it can be observed that the average scores of the overly attached motherhood subdimension ( $F(4, 327)=11.404$ ) and total score ( $F(4, 327)=4.853$ ) of the maternal gatekeeping scale show a significant difference in terms of education ( $p<0.05$ ). After the Scheffé test was conducted to determine between which groups differences were present, it was established that the overly attached motherhood scores of mothers with a bachelor's degree ( $\bar{x}=47.75$ ,  $ss=8.33$ ) were significantly lower than that of primary school ( $\bar{x}=55.19$ ,  $ss=7.40$ ), middle school ( $\bar{x}=57.42$ ,  $ss=7.19$ ) and high school ( $\bar{x}=52.24$ ,  $ss=6.95$ ) graduates. It was also established that the total maternal gatekeeping scores of mothers with bachelor's degrees ( $\bar{x}=129.09$ ,  $ss=27.80$ ) were significantly lower than those of primary school ( $\bar{x}=150.67$ ,  $ss=28.62$ ) and middle school graduates ( $\bar{x}=149.13$ ,  $ss=26.57$ ). In addition, the education variable did not result in a significant difference on the average scores of the modern motherhood, twice

as much responsibility in motherhood, traditional motherhood and indirect motherhood subdimensions ( $p \geq 0.05$ ).

Table 5.

Independent Group t-test Results Conducted to Determine whether Maternal Gatekeeping Scale and Subdimension Scores Differ According to Employment Variables

		n	$\bar{x}$	ss	t	sd	p
Modern Motherhood	Employed	93	67.92	13.77	-0.715	330	0.475
	Unemployed	239	69.03	12.10			
Twice as much responsibility in motherhood	Employed	93	24.33	10.28	-0.200	330	0.841
	Unemployed	239	24.59	10.33			
Overly Attached Motherhood	Employed	93	47.87	7.76	-5.523	330	0.000
	Unemployed	239	52.90	7.32			
Traditional Motherhood	Employed	93	12.85	4.85	-2.219	330	0.027
	Unemployed	239	14.10	4.54			
Indirect Motherhood	Employed	93	14.00	4.48	-0.310	330	0.757
	Unemployed	239	14.15	3.77			
Total Score Maternal Gatekeeping	Employed	93	133.13	27.32	-1.689	330	0.092
	Unemployed	239	138.71	26.94			

When Table 5 is examined, it can be observed that there is a significant difference in the average scores of the overly attached motherhood ( $t(330)=-5.523$ ) and traditional motherhood ( $t(330)=-2.219$ ) subdimensions of the maternal gatekeeping scale, according to employment ( $p < 0.05$ ). In terms of the scores obtained from the overly attached motherhood and traditional motherhood subdimensions, the average score of unemployed mothers (overly attached motherhood:  $\bar{x}=52.90$ ,  $ss=7.32$ ; traditional motherhood:  $\bar{x}=14.10$ ,  $ss=4.54$ ) seems to be higher than that of employed mothers (overly attached motherhood:  $\bar{x}=47.87$ ,  $ss=7.76$ ; traditional motherhood:  $\bar{x}=12.85$ ,  $ss=4.85$ ). In addition, there was no significant difference between the subdimension score averages of modern motherhood, twice as much responsibility in motherhood, indirect motherhood scores and total score of maternal gatekeeping ( $p \geq 0.05$ ) according to the employment variable.

Table 6.

Results of One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Conducted to Determine Whether the Maternal Gatekeeping Scale and Sub-Dimension Scores Differ According to Marriage Duration.

		n	$\bar{x}$	ss	Var. c.	Sum of squares	df	Squares average	F	p
Modern Motherhood	1-5	47	66.28	12.80	Intergr.	3974.55	3	1324.85	8980	0.000
	6-10	188	71.12	11.89	Intragr.	48390.83	328	147.53		
	11-15	57	68.46	10.25	Total	52365.39	331			
	16 and longer	40	60.65	14.80	Significant difference: 16 and longer<1-5, 6-10 and 11-15					
	Total	332	68.72	12.58						
Twice as much responsibility in motherhood	1-5	47	23.19	7.59	Intergr.	1825.19	3	608.40	5988	0.001
	6-10	188	23.35	10.33	Intragr.	33323.74	328	101.60		
	11-15	57	25.23	9.84	Total	35148.92	331			
	16 and longer	40	30.55	11.64	Significant difference: 16 and longer> 1- 5 and 6-10					
	Total	332	24.52	10.30						
Overly Attached Motherhood	1-5	47	50.64	7.55	Intergr.	100.25	3	33.42	0.552	0.647
	6-10	188	51.95	7.63	Intragr.	19872.70	328	60.59		
	11-15	57	50.86	8.18	Total	19972.95	331			
	16 and longer	40	51.20	8.18	Significant difference: -					
	Total	332	51.49	7.77						
Traditional Motherhood	1-5	47	13.53	4.40	Intergr.	282.96	3	94.32	4490	0.004
	6-10	188	13.32	4.51	Intragr.	6890.79	328	21.01		
	11-15	57	13.63	4.85	Total	7173.75	331			
	16 and longer	40	16.23	4.74	Significant difference: 16 and longer> 1- 5 and 6-10					
	Total	332	13.75	4.66						
Indirect Motherhood	1-5	47	15.34	4.94	Intergr.	211.21	3	70.40	4605	0.004
	6-10	188	13.44	3.41	Intragr.	5014.88	328	15.29		
	11-15	57	14.60	4.51	Total	5226.10	331			
	16 and longer	40	15.13	3.86	Significant difference: 1- 5> 6- 10					
	Total	332	14.11	3.97						
Total Score Maternal Gatekeeping	1-5	47	138.43	22.85	Intergr.	15423.40	3	5141.13	7395	0.000
	6-10	188	132.93	26.14	Intragr.	228036.37	328	695.23		
	11-15	57	137.86	27.65	Total	243459.77	331			
	16 and longer	40	154.45	29.27	Significant difference: 16 and> 1-5, 6-10 and 11-15					
	Total	332	137.15	27.12						

When Table 6 is examined, it can be observed that the modern motherhood ( $F(3.328)= 8.980$ ), doubly burdened motherhood ( $F(3.328)= 5.988$ ), traditional motherhood ( $F(3.328)= 4.490$ ), indirect motherhood subdimension scores of the maternal gatekeeping scale and maternal gatekeeping total score ( $F(3.328)= 7.395$ ) averages show a significant difference in terms of marriage duration ( $p<0.05$ ). After the Scheffé test was conducted to determine between which groups differences were present, it was established that the modern motherhood subdimension scores of participants who had been married for 16 years or longer ( $\bar{x}=60.65$ ,  $ss=14.80$ ) were significantly lower than those of mothers who had been married for 1-5 ( $\bar{x}=66.28$ ,  $ss=12.80$ ), 6-10 ( $\bar{x}=71.12$ ,  $ss=11.89$ ) and 11-15 ( $\bar{x}=68.46$ ,  $ss=10.25$ ) years. It was found that mothers who had been married for sixteen years or longer had significantly higher twice as much responsibility in motherhood ( $\bar{x}=30.55$ ,  $ss=11.64$ ) and traditional motherhood ( $\bar{x}=16.23$ ,  $ss=4.74$ ) subdimension scores compared to mothers who had been married for 1-5 (twice as much responsibility in motherhood,  $\bar{x}=23.19$ ,  $ss=7.59$ ; traditional motherhood,  $\bar{x}=13.53$ ,  $ss=4.40$  and 6-10 (twice as much responsibility in motherhood,  $\bar{x}=23.19$ ,  $ss=7.59$ ; traditional motherhood,  $\bar{x}=13.32$ ,  $ss=4.51$ ) years. It was determined that the indirect motherhood subdimension scores of mothers who were married for 1-5 years ( $\bar{x}=15.34$ ,  $ss=4.94$ ) were significantly higher than those of mothers who were married for 6-10 years ( $\bar{x}=13.44$ ,  $ss=3.41$ ). Ultimately, it was established that the total maternal gatekeeping scores of mothers who had been married for 16 years or longer ( $\bar{x}=154.45$ ,  $ss=29.27$ ) were significantly higher than those of mothers who had been married for 1-5 ( $\bar{x}=138.43$ ,  $ss=22.85$ ), 6-10 ( $\bar{x}=132.93$ ,  $ss=26.14$ ) and 11-15 ( $\bar{x}=137.86$ ,  $ss=27.65$ ) years. In addition, the marriage duration variable did not result in a significant difference in the overly attached motherhood subdimension score averages ( $p\geq 0.05$ ).

Table 7.

Independent Group t-test Results Conducted to Determine whether Maternal Gatekeeping Scale and Subdimension Scores Differ According to Child Age Variables

		n	$\bar{x}$	ss	t	sd	p
Modern Motherhood	3-4	163	68.24	12.34	-0.679	330	0.498
	5-6	169	69.18	12.82			
Twice as much responsibility in motherhood	3-4	163	24.66	9.90	0.256	330	0.798
	5-6	169	24.37	10.71			
Overly Attached Motherhood	3-4	163	50.94	7.48	-1.267	330	0.206
	5-6	169	52.02	8.03			
Traditional Motherhood	3-4	163	13.93	4.53	0.689	330	0.491
	5-6	169	13.58	4.78			
Indirect Motherhood	3-4	163	14.59	4.44	2.176	330	<b>0.030</b>
	5-6	169	13.64	3.42			
Total Score Maternal Gatekeeping	3-4	163	137.88	26.68	0.485	330	0.628
	5-6	169	136.44	27.60			

When Table 7 is examined, it can be observed that there is a significant difference in the average scores of the indirect motherhood ( $t(330)=2.176$ ) subdimension of the maternal gatekeeping scale, according to the age of the child ( $p<0.05$ ). In terms of the scores obtained from the indirect motherhood subdimension, it can be observed that the average score of mothers with children aged three and four ( $\bar{x}=14.59$ ,  $ss=4.44$ ) is higher than the average score of mothers with children aged five and six ( $\bar{x}=13.64$ ,  $ss=3.42$ ). In addition, there was no significant difference between the subdimension score averages of twice as much responsibility in motherhood, overly attached motherhood, traditional motherhood scores and total score averages of maternal gatekeeping ( $p\geq 0.05$ ) according to the child age variable.

According to table 8, there is no significant difference between the subdimension score averages of twice as much responsibility in motherhood, overly attached motherhood, traditional motherhood, indirect motherhood and total score averages of maternal gatekeeping ( $p\geq 0.05$ ) according to the child gender variable



Table 8.

Independent Group t-test Results Conducted to Determine whether Maternal Gatekeeping Scale and Subdimension Scores Differ According to Child Gender Variables

		n	X	ss	t	sd	p
Modern Motherhood	Female	162	68.51	11.64	-0.289	330	0.773
	Male	170	68.91	13.44			
Twice as much responsibility in motherhood	Female	162	24.91	10.35	0.687	330	0.492
	Male	170	24.14	10.27			
Overly Attached Motherhood	Female	162	51.58	7.98	0.211	330	0.833
	Male	170	51.40	7.58			
Traditional Motherhood	Female	162	14.01	4.56	0.967	330	0.334
	Male	170	13.51	4.74			
Indirect Motherhood	Female	162	14.35	4.15	1.090	330	0.277
	Male	170	13.88	3.79			
Total Score Maternal Gatekeeping	Female	162	138.34	26.04	0.781	330	0.435
	Male	170	136.01	28.15			

### Discussion, Conclusion, and Suggestions

According to the analysis on the maternal gatekeeping scale and its subdimensions, it can be suggested that modern motherhood and overly attached motherhood are closer to the maximum value, whereas twice as much responsibility in motherhood and indirect motherhood are closer to the minimum value. It can be said that the traditional motherhood and maternal gatekeeping behaviors of mothers are somewhere between the minimum and maximum values. According to the results of the study conducted by Altenburger and Schoppe-Sullivan (2021), which supports this finding, the maternal gatekeeping behaviors were found to be at a moderate level. They have stated that the father's personality and the mother's sense of responsibility, extroversion and belief factors may play an important role in the maternal gatekeeping behavior. In the study conducted by Wang, Zhu and Ji (2021), it was stated that one of the factors affecting maternal watchdog behavior is mother-adolescent attachment. Also in this study, it is thought that the quality of mother-child attachment may be effective on overly attached motherhood behavior. The reason why mothers have higher scores in the modern motherhood and overly attached motherhood subdimensions is perhaps that mothers may be more inclined to exhibit modern rather than traditional behavior due to the current age and opportunities, and to give the father also some opportunities and responsibilities in child development and education.

According to the analysis conducted, to determine whether the maternal gatekeeping scale and subdimension scores differ according to the mother's age variable, no significant difference was found between the mother's age and the total maternal gatekeeping score, and the modern motherhood, twice as much responsibility in motherhood, indirect motherhood subdimension scores. However, it was determined that there was a significant difference in favor of mothers aged 30 and younger in the overly attached motherhood subdimension, and in favor of mothers aged 31 and older in the traditional motherhood subdimension. In the study conducted by Kulik and Tsoref (2010), it was established that there was no relationship between maternal gatekeeping behavior and the age of the mother; In the study conducted by Akdan (2021), it was found that as the age of the mother increased, the traditional motherhood score increased as well. In the study conducted by Dönmez (2019), it was found that young mothers showed overly attached motherhood behavior. These findings support the study results. In this study, the reason why the mother's age does not make a significant difference in on the total score of maternal gatekeeping and in modern motherhood, twice as much responsibility in motherhood, and indirect motherhood subdimension scores is thought to be that even though the mothers' ages are different, their awareness of childcare is similar due to the age they live in and their ability to access the opportunities offered. For this reason, it can be thought that the maternal gatekeeping behaviors of mothers of different ages are similar because they provide similar opportunities for their spouses in child development. Nevertheless, the fact that mothers aged thirty and younger showed overly attached behavior more than other age groups, which is one of the maternal gatekeeping behaviors, and may be due to the fact that young mothers are more attached to the child since they have just begun motherhood. The fact that mothers aged thirty-one and older exhibited overly attached behavior more than other age groups, which is one of the maternal gatekeeping behaviors, can be explained by the fact that mothers

were more closely related to a more traditional age in a world that was constantly developing and changing.

According to the results of the analysis conducted to determine whether the maternal gatekeeping scale and its subdimension scores differ according to the mother's education variable, it was determined that the overly attached motherhood behaviors of mothers with a bachelor's degree were significantly lower than those of primary school, secondary school and high school graduates. It was also established that the total maternal gatekeeping scores of mothers with bachelor's degrees were significantly lower than those of primary school and middle school graduates. In addition, the education variable did not result in a significant difference in on the average scores of the modern motherhood, twice as much responsibility in motherhood, traditional motherhood and indirect motherhood subdimensions. When the literature is examined, there are studies (Maslauskaitė, 2011; Nakagawa, 2010; Reed, 2009) that support these results. It is thought that as the education level of mothers increases, their ability to access information about childcare increases, and thus, they have knowledge on the responsibilities of their spouses and act in cooperation with them in childcare, and show less excessive attachment behaviors towards the child. However, in the study conducted by Hauser (2015), it was concluded that as the education level of the mother increases, maternal gatekeeping behaviors are exhibited more. It is thought that the reason for such a result in the study conducted by Hauser (2015) is that as the mother's education level increases, she may exhibit maternal gatekeeping behavior due to the fact that she finds herself more educated, knowledgeable and qualified than the father in terms of childcare. In this study, the reason why there is no significant difference between the elements of maternal gatekeeping behavior, such as indirect motherhood, traditional motherhood and twice as much responsibility in motherhood according to the mother's education level suggests that these dimensions of maternal gatekeeping behavior are related to the difference in child development and care and the social structure they are in, rather than the level of education. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory supports this by positing that an individual's development is influenced by a series of interconnected environmental systems.

According to the analysis conducted to determine whether the maternal gatekeeping scale and its subdimension scores differ according to the mother's employment variable, it can be concluded that unemployed mothers exhibit more overly attached motherhood and traditional motherhood behaviors than employed mothers. In addition, there was no significant difference between the subdimension score averages of modern motherhood, twice as much responsibility in motherhood, indirect motherhood scores and the total score of maternal gatekeeping according to the employment variable. In support of this finding, the study conducted by Karabulut and Şendil (2017) found that the mother's employment status did not affect maternal watchdog behavior. In this study, it is revealed that the reason why unemployed mothers showed more overly attached motherhood and traditional motherhood behaviors than employed mothers is that unemployed mothers may exhibit overly attached and traditional motherhood behaviors because they regard observe themselves as the responsible person for childcare in terms of their social roles and may want to glorify the role of motherhood, as a result of not having economic freedom.

According to the results of the analysis conducted to determine whether the maternal gatekeeping scale and its subdimension scores differ according to the variable of marriage duration, it has been found that mothers who have been married for 16 years or longer exhibit fewerless modern motherhood behaviors and more maternal gatekeeping than those who have been married for 1-5, 6-10 and 11-15 years. In addition, it can be said that mothers who have been married for 16 years or longer exhibit twice as much responsibility in motherhood and traditional motherhood than mothers who have been married for 1-5 and 6-10 years. It can be said that mothers who have been married for 1-5 years exhibit more indirect motherhood behaviors than mothers who have been married for 6-10 years. It was determined that mothers with a marriage duration of 16 years or longer exhibited more maternal gatekeeping behaviors than other mothers. In addition, the marriage duration variable did not result in a significant difference in the overly attached motherhood subdimension score averages. As a result, it can be observed that mothers with longer marriage durations exhibit twice as much responsibility in motherhood, traditional motherhood and maternal gatekeeping behaviors than those with shorter marriage duration, but less modern motherhood behaviors.

In the study conducted by Dönmez (2019) on the relationship between the duration of marriage and maternal gatekeeping behaviors in the literature, similar results were found in the modern motherhood subdimension to support these findings. To summarize, this study concluded that those who have been married for a long time display more maternal gatekeeping, twice as much responsibility in motherhood and traditional motherhood behaviors and less modern motherhood than those who have been married for a short time. It is suggested that the reason for this is that mothers who have been married for a longer time are less affected by the cultural changes, such as traditions in society due to an early marriage, and as a result, they may exhibit more traditional and twice as much responsibility in motherhood behavior, considering themselves to be the parent responsible for childcare, and they may exhibit maternal gatekeeping behaviors.

According to the analysis carried out to determine whether the maternal gatekeeping scale and its subdimension scores differ according to the child's age variable, it was concluded that the mothers whose children were three and four years old showed more indirect motherhood behaviors than those whose children were aged five and six. In addition, it was concluded that there was no significant difference between the subdimension score averages of twice as much responsibility in motherhood, overly attached motherhood, traditional motherhood scores and total score averages of maternal gatekeeping according to the child age variable. In the study conducted by Yıldız (2021), these findings are supported by similar results in the dimensions of twice as much responsibility in motherhood, traditional motherhood and maternal gatekeeping. In the study conducted by De Luccie (1995), it is stated that the maternal gatekeeping behaviors exhibited by mothers are related to the age of the child. In this study, it is proposed that the reason why mothers with children aged three and four showed more indirect motherhood behavior than mothers with children aged five and six may be due to the fact that younger children are more reliant upon their mothers and that mothers take on more responsibility and want to show those around them that they have succeeded in the responsibilities they have taken as these experiences are newer for them compared to mothers with more experience and support from the environment seems to be more crucial at this stage.

According to the analysis conducted to determine whether the maternal gatekeeping scale and subdimension scores differ according to the child's gender variable, the child's gender variable does not create a significant difference in the average subdimension scores of modern motherhood, twice as much responsibility in motherhood, overly attached motherhood, traditional motherhood, indirect motherhood subdimension average scores and the total score averages of maternal gatekeeping. There are other studies in the literature showing that the child's gender does not make a significant difference in the total score and subdimensions of maternal gatekeeping behavior (Akdan, 2021; Yıldız, 2021). Ideally, parents would not behave differently according to gender in the care and education of their children in the process of social change and development. Therefore, it can be thought that maternal gatekeeping behaviors do not differ according to the gender of their children.

Rather than the increase in the employment rates of mothers in a changing and developing world, fathers are becoming more and more involved in the care of their children each day, as the role of the father in the child's development has become undeniable. In this situation, some mothers sometimes feel twice as much responsible because they doubt that fathers provide adequate care, especially in the care of children at a young age, therefore, sometimes becoming overly attached, taking up a traditional role, and sometimes exhibiting indirect motherhood through fathers, thereby excluding fathers. Some mothers, on the other hand, exhibit modern motherhood behavior by exhibiting a cooperative attitude with fathers in the care and development of the child.

In this study, which was conducted to examine the maternal gatekeeping behaviors of mothers with children aged 36-72 months, it was concluded that the modern motherhood and overly attached motherhood exhibited by mothers were closer to the maximum value, while twice as much responsibility in motherhood and indirect motherhood were closer to the minimum value, and that traditional motherhood and maternal gatekeeping behaviors fell between the minimum and maximum values. It was concluded that there was a significant difference in favor of mothers aged 30 and younger in the overly attached motherhood subdimension, and in favor of mothers aged 31 and older in the traditional motherhood subdimension. It was determined that the overly committed motherhood behaviors of mothers with bachelor's degrees were significantly lower than those of primary school, secondary school

and high school graduates. It was also established that the total maternal gatekeeping scores of mothers with bachelor's degrees were significantly lower than those of primary school and middle school graduates. It was concluded that unemployed mothers exhibited more overly attached motherhood and traditional motherhood behaviors than employed mothers. It has been determined that mothers who had been married for 16 years or longer exhibited less modern motherhood and more maternal gatekeeping behaviors than those who had been married for 1-5, 6-10 and 11-15 years. It was concluded that the indirect motherhood behaviors of mothers with children aged three and four was significantly higher than those with children aged five and six. It was concluded that the gender of the child variable did not create a significant difference in the total score and subdimension score averages of the maternal gatekeeping scale.

The following suggestions are included in line with the findings obtained in this study, which examines the maternal gatekeeping behaviors of mothers with children aged 36-72 months.

1. This study, conducted with mothers of children aged 36-72 months, can be carried out more comprehensively with a different sample and variable group (such as different age groups, inclusion of fathers and grandparents).
2. Organizing informative trainings for mothers who have been married for a long time, especially to support their spouses in child care and development,
3. By conducting a scale study on maternal gatekeeping behaviors, the paternal gatekeeping behaviors in childcare can be examined.
4. This study was conducted in a quantitative manner. A qualitative study on maternal gatekeeping behaviors can be conducted by face-to-face interviews with both mothers and fathers.
5. Face-to-face or online educational-supportive activities and programs such as seminars, courses, posters, brochures, public service announcements and family participation activities can be carried out for families and other stakeholders responsible for child care and health by educators and institutions on issues, such as gender equality, the role of parents in child care, parental communication skills and parental attitudes.

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