

Study of the parents' attitudes about child abuse *

Hatice YALÇIN

Asst. Assoc. Dr., KTO Karatay University, ht_yalcin@hotmail.com

Abstract

For the younger generation, adults are parts of life that can be reported and that, in certain situations, they can or cannot follow. Things are even more obvious when those adults are teachers recognized by a formal qualification obtained in this sense. By their work, the teachers should transmit a set of values and by their personality they should be a model for students to follow them no matter what. The first task can be achieved during compulsory school courses, while the human qualities of the teacher can be better recognized during extracurricular activities specific for non-formal education (NFE). So for example, during various trips or school camps, teacher performs multiple roles: designed to support students: submit the significance of various visited tourist attractions, supports students in passing a certain path, or to choose adequate clothing or food, plan events and organize their program, first aid in case of medical emergencies, consulting pupils in difficulty, managing conflict situations etc. These means that, in the context of non-formal education, teacher must be both, educator, parent, doctor, counselor etc., but most importantly, to be a true friend of the student. Therefore, in this article, we intend to identify those personality characteristics that can convert an effective teacher in the classroom in a manager's performance as extracurricular activities.

Keywords: Child abuse, parental attitudes, the potential of child abuse.

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1. Introduction

Despite the fact that the child abuse could have been seen since the beginning of written history, humanity's attention could be drawn to the subject in the last century (Sicher et al, 2000). Yet the abuse of children is a serious problem which is medical, legal, progressional, psycho-social and it has complicated reasons and tragic consequences (Kairys et al, 2002). Nowadays there is a requirement of detecting children's needs, creating events according to their needs and evaluations which show the point the person accomplished after the application (Pressel, 2000:3058). World Health Organization is defining child abuse as the behaviours that committed by adults on purpose or unwittingly and these behaviours effect child's health, physical and psycho-social development negatively (Arieff, 1999; Bahar ve ark, 2009; Dubowitz, 2002:192; Jain, 1999; Margolin, 1982; Pressel, 2000). This behaviour should obstruct child's physical and psycho-social development and it should be outside of the cultural values of the society. And it should be accepted by experts as an abuse (Polat 1993). Child abuse is examined in four main groups.

Physical Abuse: Physical abuse should be defined as a child's injury in a non-accidental way. The most common cases are physical violence or beating the child. Cases causing physical damage in the body are physical abuse which leads to the emergence ecchymosis, broken or burnt. It is the most commonly encountered and the easiest determined abuse type.

Sexual Abuse : Sexual abuse is an abuse type in which a child who is under age and does not accomplish his psycho-social development is used for sexual stimulation. It encompasses all the attitudes like touching genital areas, exhibitionism, peeping, pornography or rape.

Emotional Abuse: It is the situation which the children and the youth undergo psychological damage according to the social standards because of being deprived of attention, affection and care or being exposed to the attitudes and behaviours that effect them negatively.

Neglect: In this case, the person who is responsible for child's care does not fulfill his obligation and neglect the child emotionally or physically. Neglect could be defined as not paying enough attention for feeding, clothing, medical requirements, emotional needs or optimal living conditions.

In Turkey, the beginning of the studies related with child abuse is so new, and these studies are mostly being carried out under the leadership of the forensic medicine professionals, child and youth mental health professionals and social pediatrics (Ziyalar, 1999: 32). The Rehabilitation Association of Protect the Child from Abuse (ÇIKORED) and The Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Association's studies have given positive results in recent years (Polat, 2002). In a study, made by The Prime Ministry Institution of Family and Research shows that the 46% of the children are abused and neglected, and in another study which is

conducted throughout Turkey shows the 45% of the children are abused and neglected (Bahar ve ark, 2009: 253). In USA, 1% of the children are abused and 1.5% of the children are neglected according to a study which is done in 2003. And these numbers are only the tip of the iceberg (Dubowitz, 2005:194). If the child's age is smaller, the possibility of abuse would increase. One third of the cases is under 6 months children, one third of the cases is between 6 months and 3 years old children and the other one third of the cases is over 3 years old children (Tercier, 2008:1109; Rimsza et al, 2002:110). The possibility of being abused prominently diminishes after the age of 12 (Jain, 1999:581)

The girls experience the abuse cases more than the boys (52% to 48%) (Alexander, 1997:39; Jain, 1999:581). Except the sexual abuse, the suspects are determined 77% probability from the family, 11% probability from the other relatives, 11% probability from the people who aren't related with nursing, 11% probability from the other people who are nursing the child (Jain, 1999:582). It is known that children are mostly abused by their family members and their relatives in sexual abuse cases. The suspects are mostly among 20 and 40 years old and there is a slight female supremacy in the cases. However the suspects are mostly men at the sexual abuse cases (Kara et al, 2004:142). Deaths resulting from abuse are shaken infant syndrome, blunt trauma and suffocation among infants, shaken infant syndrome, blunt trauma, suffocation and neglect among 1 to 4 years old children, and shaken infant syndrome, blunt trauma, suffocation and intoxication over the 4 years old children (Kempe et al, 1992:18-20).

Children are abused by their mother or father at the rate of 95%. Exploitative parents could be from all of the ethnical, geographic, religious, educational, professional or socio-economic groups. But this possibility increases in the groups which are disadvantageous in terms of socio-economic positions. Because of the women are responsible for nursing the children more than the man, they are responsible of abuse more. However this statistic reverses if the father is at home and especially unemployed. Drug or alcohol addiction and existence of psychotic issues among parents increase the possibility of abuse. Exploitative parents usually prefer their personal satisfaction over their child. They take their child for a tool which would fulfill their needs. They are bad tempered people who can not control their emotions and have unrealistic expectations about their child (Kara et al, 2004:143).

The periods in which abuse frequently increases are triggered by the times when parents' dealing ways are consumed. Financial problems, unemployment, familial issues, diseases and absence of one of parents are the most frequent periods among these (Tercier, 2008:1109; Rimsza et al, 2002:111). Behavioral disorders and developmental delay occur to the children who experienced violence in the family. And the possibility of being future's exploiter is more likely for these children (Polat, 2002:87; Tercier, 2008:1109; Parkinson et al, 2001:47).

The typical application form among the physical abuse cases is bruises that aren't explained properly how they happened by the parents. Burnt, penetrating trauma, intoxication and suffocation could be rarely seen (Pressel, 2000:3058; Tercier, 2008:1109). Shaken infant syndrome is a serious form of child abuse. It is seen mostly under the age of 2, but it is reported that could be seen until the age of 5. It is especially seen under the 15 months or 6 months children. When these children are shaken strongly by their angry parents, their brain moves back and forth causing concussion, bleeding in the vein and cerebral hemorrhage (Kara et al, 2004:146). Any medication or chemicals could have been used in intentional intoxication of children. If a child is poisoned because of getting drugged overdose, that should cause suspicion. Because the cases in which children get drugged by accident, they do not take overdoses (Arieff&Kronlund, 1999:1293). Having worked the children in compelling works is an important abuse reason. According to a child survey which is done in 1994 by The State Institute of Statistics, 1 million 8 thousand of children aged 6 to 14 were worked for economic income in Turkey (Bahar et al, 2009:53). One of the most common period in which abuse and neglect are experienced is pre-school period. Pre-school period is the term in which children's cognitive, physical and social improvement is the fastest and a person's life foundation is formed. Teaching of the children's rights provides positive personal qualities for children. Education of rights and responsibilities could be provided by participative applications and family support (Peterson, 2004: 299).

The aim of this study is to identify the effect of socio-demographic characteristics on parent's attitude about child abuse and neglect. The study is important for getting information about which factors effect the attitudes of parents on child rights, drawing parents' attention about child abuse and neglect, contributing to the studies about child abuse and neglect in Turkey.

2. Methods

This study is a descriptive field study for identifying the effect of socio-demographic characteristics on parent's attitude about child abuse and neglect. The data of 107 parents (63 mother and 44 father) whose child study in pre-school institution and first grade of elementary school is used in this study. Parent's attitude about child abuse is the dependent variable, socio-demographic characteristics about the family and the child is the independent variable.

Tools for data collection

The scales and tools for data collecting are:

1. The Form of Parents' Socio-Demographic Characteristics
2. The Inventory of Child Abuse Potential (ICAP)
3. The Scale of Emotional Abuse Awareness (SEAA)
4. The Interview Form About Parents' Discipline Procedures

The Form of Parents' Socio-Demographic Characteristics: "The Form of Parents' Socio-Demographic Characteristics" is improved by researchers in terms of literature. Gathering information about the child and his/her parents' socio-demographic characteristics is aimed in this form. Parents' age, educational status, financial income, profession, number of children, number of the students in the family, ownership of the house in which the family live, attitudes of parents on raising the child, family type, child's age, gender and the child's old stamping ground are some of the informations in this form.

The Inventory of Child Abuse Potential: The scale is especially developed for scanning and specifying the individuals who have the potansial of physical abuse (Milner, 1986). The study of validation and reliability was done by Öner and Sucuoğlu in 1994. The parameter of the original scale for abuse is 0.95. The reliability parameter for the inventory's abuse scale is KR-20 to 0.89. And 0.90 was found with splitting half method (Öner,1994). It is formed with 160 questions which are answered as "I agree" or "I do not agree". And there are 10 scales which are collected in 3 groups. 1- Fundamental clinic scale is "The Abuse Scale" with 77 items.

It has 6 inferior scale. The border score for abuse is accepted as 215 but it is accepted as dangerous above 166. 2- Scales of Validation have 3 subscales: Scale of Lie, Scale of Random Answer and Scale of Incongruity. The border score in these scales are 7 for sub-dimension of Lie and 6 for sub-dimension of Random answer. 3- Index of Bad Response: There are subfields of Showing oneself better index, Showing oneself worse index and Randomness index. This index result is interpreted by total abuse score. If abuse score is under 215 and index of showing oneself better is high, it would be interpreted as abuse score is low because of the person showed himself better (Aktas, 2011).

The Scale of Emotional Abuse Awareness: It was developed by Uslu and his friends in 2010. There are 26 small stories in it. And participants are asked for evaluating every story whether parents attitudes are appropriate or not for children's psychological development. It is a type of quatro Likert scale. 1 is "definitely not appropriate" and 4 is " 'definitely appropriate". As 21 stories of 26 are various abuse life stories, 5 small story shows positive parent attitudes. These 5 items are not implicated in the stage of scale's scoring. It has 4 sub-dimension. These sub-dimensions are 1.Inappropriate expectations, 2.Stolidity, 3.Intimidation, 4.Rejection / Isolation (Uslu, 2010). As the score of the scale raises, the possibility of realizing emotional abuse decreases. The parameter of alpha scale of Cronbach is measured as 0.70 (Aktas, 2011).

The Interview Form About Parents' Discipline Procedures: The discipline procedures that parents' performed in the study group and their awareness of children rights were evaluated with a form by using Kükürçü's (2011) study. Expert opinion was taken for the interview form and application was performed after the pilot study.

Gathering of the data: Parents in the study group are interviewed at the school where their kids study. They are informed about the study before the meeting. The participants who accepted participate in the study are given the enlightened Information Form. After all their questiones are responed, they were asked to come to the institution once again. Parents were accompanied for being explained about the application of gathering data tools for the purpose of explaining incomprehensible spots on questions. The importance of stating their own answers was explained at the answering stage. So they were prevented from being influenced by each other . Filling the gathering information forms lasted 25 minutes.

Analyze of the data: The data is evaluated by SPSS statistical package programme and informative findings are presented in the form of percentage distribution. The relationship between the variable of socio-demographic characteristics about the family and the median of ICAP, SEAA and the interview form about parents' discipline procedures was tested with analysis of variance.

3. Findings

The data about the study group was acquired with “The form of socio-demographic characteristics about the family”. The data is presented as frequency (*f*) and percentage (%) in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics about parents in the study group (N=107)

Characteristics of Parents		f	%
Age of Mother	Under age of 25	4	6,3
	aged 26 to 35	31	49,2
	over age of 36	28	44,4
Educational status of mother	Primary school graduate	19	30,1
	Secondary school graduate	28	44,4
	Postgraduate	16	25,3
Profession of mother	Does not work	25	39,6
	Civil servant	31	49,2
	Employee	4	6,3
	Craft	3	4,7
Age of father	aged 26 to 35	18	40,9
	over age of 36	26	59
Educational status of father	Primary school graduate	4	9
	Secondary school graduate	16	36,3
	Postgraduate	24	54,5
Profession of mother	Civil servant	29	65,9
	Employee	4	9
	Craft	6	13,6
	Other	5	11,3

When Table 1 and Table 2 were analyzed, it was determined that 49,2% of mothers in the study group was age 26 to 35, 44,4% of them was secondary school graduate and 49,2% of them was civil servant. When fathers' status were analyzed, it was determined that 40,9% of them was 26 to 35 years, 54,5% of them was postgraduate and 65,9% of them was civil servant.

Table 2. Family structure and sociodemographic characteristics about child in the study group (N=107)

Characteristics of Family Structure		f	%
Number of children	One child	37	34,5
	1 to 3 children	68	63,5
	4 and more children	2	1,8
Financial income of the family	Low	9	8,4
	Medium	88	82,2
	High	10	9,3
Number of the students in the family	1 child	54	50,4
	2 child	45	42
	3 and more	8	7,4
Family's house	Rent	58	54,2
	Ownership of house	49	45,7
Type of family	Elementary type	78	72,8
	Patriarchy type	29	27,1
Characteristics of Child			
Age	4 to 5 aged	68	63,5
	6 to 7 aged	39	36,4
Gender	Girl	58	54,2
	Boy	49	45,7
The child's old stamping ground	Rural area	10	9,3
	Urban area	97	90,6

63,5% of the study group has 1 to 3 kids. 82,2% of them stated their financial income was medium-level. 50,4% of them had one kid attending the school. 54,2% of them lived in a rented house and 72,8% of them were elementary family type. 54,2% of the parents in the study group had a girl and 63,5% of these girls were 4 to 5 years. 90,6% of them was born and raised in the urban area. The ranges of frequency and

percentage of the parents' discipline procedures and the techniques about children rights were given in Table 3.

Tablo 3. Parents' discipline procedures and techniques about children rights (N=107)

Discipline Procedures*	Discipline Tecqhnique*	f	%
Adult-centered procedures based on oppression and obedience	-Forfending from unfavorable situations by punishment. -Approaching the child with an oppresive and authoritarian manner. -Forfending or sending away to the room. -Threating. -Shouting. -Depriving of child's favored things.	2	9,9
Children-centered procedures based on equality and democracy	-Talking to the child about the reasons and consequences of the situation. -Establishing rules and applying these rules consistently. -Approaching the child with love in all circumstances. -Directing to the positive attitudes with rewards. -Using rewards and punishments on necessary situations	9	5,1
Conditions in which a spesific discipline procedure is not used	-I do not use a discipline procedure. -Nothing is useful. -I do not know.	6	4,9

*They replied to multiple answers.

According to Table 3; 55,1% of the parents in the study group preferred the children-centered procedures based on equality and democracy. However 29,9% of the parents in the study group preferred the adult-centered procedures based on oppression and obedience. There are also similar results in Kükürtçü's study (2011). The data about the study's variables was acquired the interview form about parents' discipline procedures. These data were presented as arithmetic average (X), standart error of arithmetic average (Sh_x) and standart deviation (ss). The scores of "The Interview Form About Parents' Discipline Procedures" are in Table 4. These scores were used for determining parents' discipline procedures in connection with child abuse.

Tablo 4. The scores of the form of parents' discipline procedures

Discipline Procedure	f	%	X	Sh	ss
Procedures based on oppression and obedience	2	9,9	2,7	,25	,5
Procedures based on equality and democracy	9	5,1	9,64	,38	,7
Conditions in which a spesific discipline procedure is not used	6	4,9	6,57	,29	,3

As it is stated in Table 4, 29,9% of the parents in the study group use procedures based on oppression and obedience, 55,1% of them use procedures based on equality and democracy, 14,9% of them do not use any spesific discipline procedure considering child abuse. According to the form of parents' discipline procedures, arithmetic averages are 22,93±7.55 for mothers who use procedures based on oppression and obedience, 19,64±4,78 for mothers who use procedures based on equality and democracy and 26.57±6,34 for mothers who do not use a spesific discipline procedure. Parametric tests were used for determining whether the scores of the inventory of child abuse potential (ICAP) change or not. Independent groups are tested with t test for testing whether the scores of subdimension of ICAP change or not according to the variables of mother or father. The analyze of comparing the ICAP scores of mothers' and fathers' in the Table 5.

Table 5. The analyzes of interfunctional comparing the icap scores of mothers' and fathers'

Group	Subdimension	X	n	ss	Min-Max	Kruskal Wallis
Mother	Abuse	79.27			69.00	± 0.013*
	Stress	76.69	-3	11.2	113.52	
	Stiffness	26.32		4		
Father	Abuse	104.88	4	17.3	51.00	± 0.037*
	Stress	97.18		7	127.43	
	Stiffness	28.06				

*p<0.05

4. Result, Discussion and Suggestions

With this study which was examined on the purpose of parents' and child's socio-demographic characteristics' effects on parental child abuse, some results were presented in the light of findings that were acquired from the study group. One of the difficulty of studying the abuse area is not having a sufficient evaluation tool because of the difficulty of acquiring accurate information. The abuse and neglect of children is mostly performed by their families. However in terms of the notice rate, only 59,9% of children is noticed by the professionals such as policemen and social service experts who are in touch with the children (Taner, Bahar 2004:83). The difficulty of acquiring information from families obstructs evaluating the studies about abuse.

In our study, we performed an attentive work with the aim of gathering information by using The Form of Parents' Socio-Demographic Characteristics, The Inventory of Child Abuse Potential (ICAP), The Scale of Emotional Abuse Awareness (SEAA) and The Interview Form About Parents' Discipline Procedures. When foreign studies are examined, it could be seen that an accurate tendency and awareness are developed about especially child care, protection and procedures based on child discipline. In the study which Peterson-Badali, Morine, Ruck ve Slonim (2004) examined the children's and their mothers' care, protection and self decision making attitudes and children's participation of intrafamilial decision-making process, they found a link among child's own decision making attitude and on condition that the child participate in intrafamilial decision-making process. They found a negative relation between familial conservatism and mother's care and self decision making attitudes. And they stated that there is a positive relation of self decision making attitudes between child's participation of intrafamilial decision-making proces and child's emotional autonomy. With similar findings, in our study it is stated that 29,9% of the parents in the study group use procedures based on oppression and obedience, 55,1% of them use procedures based on equality and democracy, 14,9% of them do not use any spesific discipline procedure considering child abuse. In our study, arithmetic averages are 22,93±7.55 for mothers who use procedures based on oppression and obedience, 19,64±4,78 for mothers who use procedures based on equality and democracy and 26.57±6,34 for mothers who do not use a spesific discipline procedure.

In our study, 55,1% of the parents in the study group preferred the children-centered procedures based on equality and democracy. However 29,9% of the parents in the study group preferred the adult-centered procedures based on oppression and obedience. There are also similar results in Kükürtçü's study (2011). Margolin (1982) examined the children's own decision-making situations and parents' attitudes. Seven different situations which are about children abuse and children rights, were chosen and illustrated. These situations should be decided. Some discussions were made with the children while these illustrations were being showed to them. It is stated that the rights about self decision making attitudes raises on boys as this raise for girls differs from the boys. These results were discussed according to the age, gender, adult- child relationship and equality of rights. In our study, a comparison was made between intergroups and the Scale of Emotional Abuse Awareness-SEAA which was applied on parents. And The SEAA scores of parents' and groups were compared with the Kruskal Wallis test. Any statistical difference at significance level was determined in terms of "sub-dimensions of stolidity, intimidation,rejection/isolation" (p>0.05).

Dekovic ve Gerris (1992) stated in their studies that children showed interest in activities about child abuse and they liked teaching of their rights and child abuse types. These children who took education of child abuse and rights, behaved in a respectful manner than the other children who did not take this education. And these children parents' awareness level was found as high. In our study, independent groups were examined with t test for testing whether the scores of subdimension of ICAP change or not

according to the variables of mother or father. It is stated that mothers' average "abuse" score is 79.27, fathers' average "abuse" score is 104.88, and any statistical difference at significance level was determined in terms of abuse scores ($p=0.013$). It is presented that ($p=0.003$) difference was between mothers' and fathers' ICAP abuse scores in the dual post hoc evaluations. It could be said that the abuse scores in the study group are low, considering the boundary abuse score is accepted as 215 and over 166 is dangerous.

Yurtsever (2009) examined the attitudes of parents about child rights in terms of different variables. This scanning test which is used for revealing the variables of parents' attitudes about child rights, determined that parents interiorized different attitudes depend on child's gender. In our study, the abuse attitude in ICAP scores was not determined according to children's gender. When we examine the studies about discipline procedures in the studies which are done in Turkey's rural areas, children are frequently punished with physical punishment in spite of being appreciated and loved. On the other hand we could come across some findings of psychological discipline techniques and especially some cognitive techniques like verbal explaining to the child (Kükürtçü, 2011). In our study, 55,1% of the parents in the study group preferred the children-centered procedures based on equality and democracy. However % 29,9 of the parents in the study group preferred the adult-centered procedures based upon oppression and obedience. Laskey ve Hatton examined the relation between parents' discipline procedures and children's internalization issues in 2009 and they found the children have more internalization issues whose parents' imposed strict discipline procedure. When examined ICAP "the subdimension of stress" in our study, a statistical difference ($p=0.037$) was determined in terms of stress score. There is no difference intragroups in term of subdimension of strictness.

This study has various limitations. First of all, the number of the study group is not sufficient for being generalized of results. The validity of findings which were found after the study could be increased with studies including more children. The relation between abuse and the scales which were used for evaluating seems indirect. Emotional abuse awareness was evaluated with SEAA, and child abuse potential was evaluated by ICAP. Although the thought of the awareness about parent-child abuse was evaluated in the results, it is hard to say there is an explicit influence between the frequency of demographic data and child abuse.

In contrast to these limitations, it could be thought that the parents who have children in pre-school period, have higher scores in terms of the scales examining the awareness of abuse and abuse is more risky in pre-school period in the light of the above findings. Our experiences and observations in pre-school institutions also seem coherent with these scales. Acquired findings contribute to the attitudes of parents about abuse and neglect of children in pre-school period. The importance of necessity to begin educating the children in pre-school period, which is the most important development step of life, emerge when we look at the results. And this education could be provided only by means of activities with family participation. The studies connected with abuse could be taken into account as inadequate in spite of the raise of them in recent years. In this respect, we think that our study is able to contribute to the area in terms of the awareness of parents who have children in pre-school period.

The following suggestions could be given in this connection; Applied seminars should be organized for creating awareness about child abuse on pre-school children. With the studies on media and printed press, it could be reached the large masses by drawing attention to the importance of educating parents about child abuse. Discipline applications and education for child abuse should be dynamized and increased in licence and pre-school teachers' in-service seminars. By this way, teachers could inform the parents and important attempts could be done in the manner of abuse introduction.

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