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# Examination of Conflict Resolution in Adolescents in Terms of Parent Attitudes<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to analyze the relationship between conflict resolution and parental attitudes among adolescents. The research was carried out by using relational scanning model a sub-genre of general scanning model. The study group was selected using random sampling method in four different high schools, in Konya. 280 (%52.2) of the participants are female students and 256 (%47.8) male. Conflict Resolution Behavior Scale and Parent Attitude Inventory are used to collect the relevant data. Data obtained was analyzed using SPSS 16.00 package program. Statistical analyses were conducted using Pearson Moments Product Correlation and Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Techniques were used. Research findings indicate that whereas there is a negative statistical relation between democratic parental attitudes and aggressiveness subscale of conflict resolution inventory, a positive relationship was established between protective and authoritarian parental attitudes and aggressiveness. Moreover, a positive relationship emerged between democratic parental attitudes and problem solving subscale of conflict resolution inventory. A negative relationship emerged between authoritarian parental attitudes and problem solving subscale of conflict resolution inventory. The results showed that parental attitudes predict conflict resolution behavior of adolescents.

**Keywords:** Conflict Resolution Behavior, Parent Attitude, Adolescents

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## Ergenlerde Çatışma Çözme ve Anne Baba Tutumlarının İncelenmesi

Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı, ergenlerde çatışma çözümü ile anne baba tutumları arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektir. Araştırma, genel tarama modelinin bir alt türü olan ilişkisel tarama modeli kullanılarak gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışma grubu Konya'da dört farklı lisede rastgele örnekleme yöntemiyle seçilmiştir. Katılımcıların 280'i (% 52.2) kız öğrenci ve 256'sı (% 47.8) erkektir. İlgili verilerin toplanması için Çatışma Çözme Davranış Ölçeği ve Ebeveyn Tutum Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Elde edilen veriler SPSS 16.00 paket programı kullanılarak analiz edildi. İstatistiksel analizler Pearson Moments Product Korelasyon yöntemi ve Çoklu Doğrusal Regresyon Analizi Teknikleri kullanılarak yapıldı. Araştırma bulguları, demokratik anne baba tutumları ile çatışma çözme davranışının saldırganlık alt ölçeği arasında negatif bir istatistiksel ilişki olduğunu gösterirken, koruyucu ve otoriter anne baba tutumları ile saldırganlık arasında pozitif bir ilişki kurulduğunu göstermektedir. Ayrıca, demokratik anne baba tutumları ile çatışma çözme davranışının problem çözme alt boyutu arasında olumlu bir ilişki ortaya çıkmıştır. Otoriter anne baba tutumları ile çatışma çözmenin problem çözme alt boyutu arasında olumsuz bir ilişki ortaya çıkmıştır. Sonuçlar anne baba tutumlarının, ergenlerin çatışma çözme davranışını yordadığını göstermektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Çatışma Çözme Davranışı, Anne Baba Tutumu, Ergenler.* 

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#### Introduction

Adolescence is a period in many changes, biological, cognitive, psychological, and social take place. Although there are individual differences regarding this period, it is widely accepted that it takes place between 12-18 (Steinberg and Morris, 2001). Along with rapid growth, many physical, social, emotional, and psychological changes occur during this period.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, puberty was considered by many psychologists as a period characterized with ambivalence and strong emotions. Nowadays, adolescence is considered not as a transition period from childhood to adulthood but as a period on its own (Smetana and Villalobos, 2009).

In the process of adaptation to these changes, which are extremely important for the future of the individual, the relationship of the adolescents with their parents and their support becomes even more important. Therefore, the relationship between parents and adolescent is one of the strongest determinants of adolescent development (Özen, 2009).

Research shows that the parent's behavior towards the child affects the child's subsequent relations with others, his/her self-perception, perception of others, and his / her expectations from the future (Ventura &Birch, 2008).

Asides its' impact on the development of the individual's character and behavior, the family has an important contribution to adolescents in the successful completion of a critical development process such as adolescence. In a family, in which the need for autonomy is met, where family members support and trust each other, adolescents succeed with their developmental processes. Besides effective parental attitudes, the quality of the relationship with the children has a positive impact on the assertiveness, self-acceptance, self-esteem, academic achievement, social skills and adaptation to their environment skills of chidren. Positive relationships based on supportive and mutual trust between family members are determined as one of the basic pillars preparing adolescents for adulthood (Smith, Perou, & Lesesne, 2002).

The order and well-being of a society is directly related to the attitudes of its people. This requires individuals to have a range of skills,

such as creative thinking, critical thinking, problem solving skills, bringing different viewpoints to problems, empathic understanding, respect for different attributes, and resolving conflicts positively. Conflict resolution skills have an important place among these. It is inevitable and natural that there will be conflicts in every place and environment where people are, because individuals' views, thoughts and values are different from one another's point of view.

Contacts with the parents are the first contacts established by the individual forming the basis for a unique incompatible relationship. The interaction and relationships established with the parent also initiate the adaptation processes of the individuals to the society. The importance of conflict resolution in interpersonal communication and relationship is inherently evident. It has been observed that family attitudes affect the behavior of children in the research conducted. Misguidance, not being able to limit the child, errors in punishment and reinforcement system cause children to have problems in peer relations and affect their ability to solve problems encountered (Baran, 2005). Positive social behaviors that children gain are mostly thought to be based on learning in the family and learning from a model displayed by the people in the family. The interaction of the family members with the child determines the child's position within the family life. The child forms first social experiences as a result of interaction with the individuals in the family.

Conflict is a condition of disagreement experienced between two or more people and regarded as a natural part of human life (Deutsch,1993). Conflict is always present in our lives and arises in any situation where individuals have problems in their interactions with each other and the attainment of some certain goals (Aslan, 2008). When conflicts are encountered in the life of an individual, it is considered to be a phenomenon that must be avoided in the first stage; however, these may also have positive sides such as enhancing the individual's development and problem-solving skills (Hisli, Şahin, Basım & Çetin, 2009).

Conflict resolution skill is one of the most effective skills that will help a person find a healthy solution to the problems encountered in life. Since conflict resolution will be needed at every moment of life, it is important to know the variables that predict conflict resolution skills in positive and negative directions (Korkut, 2004). According to Glasser

(1990) the fundamental reasons of conflicts are Unsatisfied basic needs, different values, and limited resources. Unsatisfied five basic needs leading to the emergence of conflicts are survival, love and belonging, power, freedom and fun. In order to resolve conflicts, first the basic need not satisfied has to be determined and various ways of answering this need has to be taught to the individual (Öğülmüş, 2004). Development of target behavior, skill will only be possible by finding precisely what directly influences the behavior. In this context, parental attitudes are thought to be influential on the individual's conflict resolution skills (Tuzcuoğlu & Erdoğan, 2014). The overall objective of this research is to examine conflict resolution in adolescents in terms of parental attitudes.

### Aims of the Study

In response to this general objective, the following questions will be answered:

- 1. Is there a significant relationship between conflict resolution skills of adolescents and parental attitudes?
- 2. The skills of conflict resolution in adolescents predict parental attitudes?

### Method

#### Research Model

This research is a general survey model which is a type of general survey model. General screening models refer to screening studies carried out on a whole sample of the universe or a sample taken to reach a judgment about the universe consisting of a large number of elements (Karasar, 2011). Relational screening is a research model to determine the relationship between two or more variables and to obtain clues about cause and effect (Büyüköztürk, Çakmak, Özcan, Karadeniz & Demirel, 2014).

### **Study Group**

The study group of this research consists of 536 students who are enrolled in the eighth grade of middle school and the 9th, 10th and 11th graders enrolled at various high schools within the Meram District during the 2015-2016 Academic Year. Out of these 280 (%52.2) are female students and 256 (%47.8) male students aged between 18-28 with an average of 24.08 years (Ss = 4.47).

Conflict Resolution Behavior Scale: In the study, "Conflict Resolution Behavior Scale" adapted by Koruklu (1998) was used to determine the conflict resolution behavior of adolescents. The validity and reliability of Conflict Resolution Behavior Scale has been conducted by Koruklu (1998) based on the data obtained from 6th, 7th, and 8th graders. For the validity and reliability study of the Conflict Resolution Behavior Scale Koruklu (1998) focused on the item and structural discrepancy levels. The values obtained have shown to be that the values obtained are statistically significant and item discrepancy levels were quite high. The reliability of Conflict Resolution Behavior Scale has been analyzed via test retest method and for the aggressiveness scale as r = .64 and for the problem solving subscale as r = .66. The internal consistency of Conflict Resolution Behavior Scale has been analyzed using Cronbach -Alpha, t scale internal consistency for the aggressiveness subscale as r= .85, and for problem solving subscale as r= .83. These outcomes are statistically significant.

Parent Attitude Inventory: Parent Attitude Inventory (PAI) developed by Kuzgun & Eldeleklioğlu (2005) was used to measure parents attitudes and to obtain personal information related to the demographics of participants. Before the implementation of the inventory, the guidelines for the scales were read out loud to the participants and information about the study was provided to participants. The implementation lasted for about 25-30 minutes. Internal consistency and validity of Parent Attitude Inventory has been analysed using Cronbach Alpha formula and the alpha coefficient for democratic attitude has been determined as.89, for authoritarian attitude as .78, and for protective – demanding parental

attitude as .82. The consistency of Parent Attitude Inventory has been analyzed using test retest method. The correlation values of democratic attitude have been determined as .92; for protective – demanding parental attitude as .75; and for authoritarian attitude as .79.

### **Data Analysis**

In the analysis of the data, first the presence of missing data was examined first. In the unidirectional and bidirectional extreme value analysis, 2 cases were excluded from the data set because of their outlier value property. Therefore, data of 536 students were included in the analyses. Data were analyzed using SPSS 16.00 package program. In order to determine the relationship between conflict resolution behavior and parent attitudes of the participants, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Technique was applied. Multiple Regression Analysis was used to determine whether parent attitudes variables significantly predict the level of conflict resolution behavior. The threshold significance level of .05 was taken into consideration in the interpretation of the statistical results.

### Results

As seen in Table 1, there was a negative relationship between democratic parental attitudes and aggression, whereas a positive relationship between protective and authoritarian parental attitudes and aggression (p <.05, p <.01) was determined. That is, as the democratic attitude of the parents towards the children increases, the aggressiveness decreases and as the protective and authoritarian attitudes increase, the aggressiveness increases. In addition, there was a positive (p <.01) relationship between democratic parental attitude and problem solving (p <.01), while there was a significant negative relationship between authoritarian parental attitude and problem solving (p <.01).

Table 1. Correlation Analysis Results of Parental Attitudes on Problem Solving Subscale

	Aggressiveness	Problem Solving	Democratic Maternal At- titude	Protective Maternal Atti- tude	Authoritarian Maternal Attitude	Democratic Paternal Attitude	Protective Paternal Attitude	Authoritarian Paternal Attitude
Aggressiveness	1							
Problem Solving	-,245**	1						
Democratic Mater- nal Attitude	096*	.228**	1					
Protective Mater- nal Attitude	.230**	072	-,190**	1				
Authoritarian Maternal Attitude	.214**	- .148**	-,493**	,576**	1			
Democratic Pater- nal Attitude	171**	.238**	,610**	-,056	-,287**	1		
Protective Paternal Attitude	.140**	013	-,119**	,731**	,464	,029**	1	
Authoritarian Paternal Attitude	,.231*	187**	-,361**	,395**	,750**	-,444**	,541**	1
$\overline{X}$	31,67	44,21	49,94	38,79	8,09	47,18	36,86	20,76
SS	10,33	9,52	8,47	8,09	6,27	10,45	8,26	6,52

(\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01)

In other words, as the democratic attitude of the parents increases, the problem solving ability of the adolescent's increases and as the authoritarian attitude increases, the problem solving ability of the adolescent's decreases.

Table 2. Regression Analysis Results of Parental Attitudes on the Aggressiveness Subscale

Independent Variable	β	T	p
Democratic Maternal Attitude	.069	1.118	.264
Protective Maternal Attitude	.277	3.741	.000
Authoritarian Maternal Attitude	017	192	.847
Democratic Paternal Attitude	117	-1.812	.070
Protective Paternal Attitude	142	-1.852	.065
Authoritarian Paternal Attitude	.183	2.097	.036

**Not.** R=.310; R2=.096; F=.086 \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01)

In Table 2, multiple regression results on the power to predict the aggression levels of the adolescents, all parental attitude variables that explain the process explain 10% of the aggression levels of the adolescents (R=.310, R<sup>2</sup>=.096, F =0,86). When the variables explaining aggression levels of adolescents are considered, the protective parental attitude ( $\beta$ =.277, p<.01) and the authoritarian father attitude ( $\beta$ =.183, p<.05) were found to be important predictors of the aggression levels of adolescents.

Table 3. Regression Analysis of Parental Attitudes of Problem Solving Subscale

Independent Variables	β	T	р
Democratic Maternal Attitude	.168	2.726	.007
Protective Maternal Attitude	159	-2.130	.034
Authoritarian Maternal Attitude	.138	1.595	.111
Democratic Paternal Attitude	.049	.759	.448
Protective Paternal Attitude	.193	2.498	.013
Authoritarian Paternal Attitude	249	-2.834	.005

Not. R=.292; R2=.085; F=.075 \*p<.05,

As can be seen in Table 3, multiple regression results on the power of predicting problem-solving skills of adolescents, all parental attitude related variables explain 9% of problem solving skills of adolescents (R=.292, R<sup>2</sup>=.085, F =0,75). When which variables explain the problem solving skills of adolescents are examined, the democratic attitude of mother ( $\beta$ =.168, p<.05), protective attitude of mother ( $\beta$ =-.159, p<.05), protective father attitude ( $\beta$ =.193, p< .05) and authoritarian father attitude ( $\beta$ =-.249, p<.05) were found to be important predictors of problem solving skills of adolescents.

#### Discussion

According to the results of the present study in the conflict resolution behaviors, there is a positive relation between aggressiveness subscale and parental attitudes. This outcome is in line with the outcomes of Tuzcuoğlu and Erdoğan (2014) who also have determined a positive relation between 11-12 year old kids' conflict resolution behavior and parental attitudes. Whereas a negative correlation was determined between democratic parental attitudes and aggressiveness, a positive one was determined between protective and demanding parental attitudes and aggressiveness subscale. This findings of the present study is in line with the outcomes of earlier studies proving that aggressiveness is decreasing with the increase of democratic parental attitude (Sezer, Kolaç & Erol'un (2013) and increasing with the increase of protective demanding parental attitude (Sahin, 2015; Gülay 2011) Sürücü & Ceylan (2013) stated that, in the relevant literature, the general adaptive behavior of adolescents affect problem solving behaviors and those who are living with their parents prefer to use opening themselves up behavior among the problem solving behaviors. (Dede, 2005)

Hence, considering that democratic parental attitudes contribute to the development of healthy characteristic features and to establishing healthy relationships, these findings also support, though indirectly, the outcomes of the present study. And a positive relation was determined between protective and demanding maternal attitude and authoritarian paternal attitudes and aggressiveness. The increase in these parental attitudes resulted with an increase in the aggressiveness subscale. These outcomes are supported with the findings of Yavuzer, Karatas & Gündoğdu (2013)'s study. Students who display aggressive behavior to resolve conflicts make use of physical and verbal force (Yavuzer, Karataş and Gündoğdu; 2013). Individuals who were exposed to authoritarian parental attitudes exert aggressiveness in their social setting. According to Basım, Çetin and Meydan (2009) individual who are focused on internal control have a positive attitude to conflicts. These findings support the finding of the present study showing that the increase in the democratic parental attitude leads to a decrease in the aggressiveness level. Likewise, the increase in the empathy tendency level leads to a decrease

in aggressiveness (Rehber, 2007). A further positive contribution of democratic parental attitude on children is that children can express themselves better and are able to understand better also supporting the findings of the present study.

There is a positive relation between conflict resolution behavior of adolescents and parental attitudes. Whereas the more democratic maternal attitude increases the more does the conflict resolution skills of adolescent's increase, and in protective demanding maternal attitudes conflict resolution skills decrease. Democratic maternal attitude is considered to have a positive impact on students domestic, family, and social lives as well as live skills. Hence, a positive relation between conflict resolution skills & family (Starling, 2001) supports this finding too. Increase in authoritarian paternal attitude, leads to a decrease problem solving skills and in protective and democratic paternal attitudes problem solving skills increase. This outcome of the present study is supported with the findings of Kaya, Bozaslan & Genç (2012).

### **Results and Suggestions**

According to the findings of the present study there are significant relations between conflict resolution skills of adolescents and parental attitudes. In the conflict resolution process of adolescents displaying problem solving behavior instead of aggressive behavior has an important place. In the conflict resolution process, more effective use of problem solving behavior depends on the presence of democratic parental attitudes. It is of utmost importance that individual acquire problem solving based conflict resolution behaviors during the adolescence in order to become functional in their later lives Considering that in the formation of parental attitudes that the attitudes of the individuals' parents may have a significant impact, the importance of the process becomes more important.

Hence, based on these following suggestions could be made:

1. As parental attitudes have an impact on conflict resolution behavior, theoretical and applied courses on conflict resolution and parental attitudes could be given in the education process of families.

- 2. In order to improve conflict resolution skills, changes in preschool, primary, and secondary education curriculums could be made.
- 3. In the present study the focus was on adolescents. Further studies could be conducted with young adults and mothers and fathers.

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