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## The Relationship Between School Adjustment of Preschool Children and Parenting Style Attitude<sup>1</sup>

Vakkas YALÇIN<sup>2</sup>, Özlem Melek ERBİL KAYA<sup>3</sup>

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### Abstract

The research was carried out using the explanatory sequential mixed method design of the mixed method designs. In the quantitative part of the study, the sample group consisted of 380 children, their families and teachers, and the qualitative part participants consisted of 9 children, 9 families and 9 teachers. As a result of the study, it was concluded that there was a statistically significant difference between the employment status of the mothers and the overprotective parent attitudes. Teachers stated that there were children in their classroom who did not like school and showed the behavior of not wanting to come to school and that these were caused by reasons such as family problems, over-dependence on the mother and absenteeism. The conclusion has been reached that some teachers were not aware of children who have problems with school adjustment. It was found that a part of the parents stated that their children did not want to go to school because of reasons such as getting caught up in play at home, sleeping problems (being unable to wake up in the morning) and making excuses not to go.

*Keywords:* Pre-school education, early childhood education, parental attitude, school adjustment, mixed method

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<sup>2</sup> Kilis 7 Aralık University, Muallim Rifat Faculty of Education, Department of Primary Education, e-mail: [yakkasyalcin@kilis.edu.tr](mailto:yakkasyalcin@kilis.edu.tr), ORCID: 0000-0002-8571-9203

<sup>3</sup> Anadolu University, Faculty of Education, Department of Primary Education, e-mail: [omkaya@anadolu.edu.tr](mailto:omkaya@anadolu.edu.tr) ORCID: 0000-0003-0738-5807

## Introduction

In the first years of life, children begin to learn new and different things through the help of their parents and the different stimuli in their surroundings, and, together with this, to adapt to their current situation. Likewise, through pre-school education institutions, children participate in new environments, meet with their peers and create a new social environment. In this way, children develop socially and emotionally and begin to learn new things. On the contrary, since the environments in which environmental stimuli are insufficient do not adequately support children's social and linguistic development, this can also affect the social environment and school adjustment of the child during school life ahead and at the same time reduce the academic achievement of the students (Yüksel et al., 2016; Üstünoğlu, 1991).

Pre-school education is one of the most important areas that aim to develop children programmatically after family (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Bronfenbrenner's philosophical considerations require an understanding of the child's development, both the individual and the environment, in order to understand the ecological perspective. The Bronfenbrenner ecological theory is that the child is surrounded and influenced; microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem. At the heart of this approach is the child. The development of the child is influenced by the relationships of these layers with each other and with their own internal relations (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Microsystem in ecological theory; such as family or school represents the area where they interact with people face to face. One of the important factors affecting preschool children's school adjustment is the family environment. The kid is leaving a home environment that the he has lived in, adapted to and made himself accepted, and switch to a school environment with different characteristics (Çeliktürk, 2011). The child, who is the center of attention of his family until that day, is expected to spend a great deal of time in a different environment with people he does not know,

which can lead to the emergence of the child's inability to adapt to the school, his friends and the new environment (Topçu, 2012). This situation requires not only the child but also the family to adapt to the school (Dinçer, 2005, p.105). In this context, pre-school children's adjustment to new and different environments and fulfilment of meaningful, new and creative experiences will be possible with the support of their parents, teachers and schools (Başar, 1999, Kaya, Genç, Kaya and Pehlivan, 2007). For this reason, families, teachers and the school have important duties and responsibilities for children to adjust to school (UNICEF, 2012; Yaşar, 2009, p.126). The problem of adjustment of the children to the school must be resolved within the first few weeks after the beginning of the school. In this way, it can be ensured that children benefit from pre-school education at the highest level throughout the year. In this context, it is very important for children to start the school without problems in terms of themselves, being in the first place, as well as their parents and teachers. For this reason, it is seen important to investigate the effects of family environment and parent attitudes on children's adjustment to school, and to suggest solutions, if exist, for these effects.

In the literature, many studies can be found indicating that school adjustment problems experienced by preschool children adversely affect children, families, teachers and classmates (Başaran, Gökmen, and Akdağ, 2014; Coplan and Arbeau, 2008; Doğan et al., 2008; Eratay, 2011; Erten Sarıkaya, 2013; Ewing and Taylor, 2009; Gülay Ogelman and Erten Sarıkaya, 2013; Kandır and Koçak Tümer, 2013; Özden and Celen, 2014; Shields et al., 2001; Şeker and Özdemir, 2014; Yalçın, 2017). In addition to these, there are studies showing that the relationship among siblings affect children's success throughout their school life (Unutkan, 2007) and kids who can establish good relations with siblings may also establish similar relations with friends (Schneyer, 2007). There are studies in the literature also determining that for children, mothers to be their biological mothers have a high level of positive effect in

comparison to others (mother who are not biological, or mothers whose status is unknown) (Özel, 2012), that children who do not stay with their families have more serious problems than children who live with their families, and that speaking skills of children who are raised in family environments with good communication are better (Demirel, 2002). In addition, studies can be found with the results that as parental education levels drop, protective family characteristics increase (Karasan, 2015, p.44), and that as mothers' level of education increases, their democratic attitudes towards their children increase (Özyürek and Şahin, 2005). However, there have been no studies encountered in the literature to determine whether there is a relationship between the school adjustment process of the children in the preschool period and the parenting attitudes (Coplan and Arbeau, 2008; Doğan et al., 2008; Eratay, 2011; Erten Sarıkaya, 2013; Ewing and Taylor, 2009; Gülay Ogelman and Erten Sarıkaya, 2013; Kandır and Koçak Tümer, 2013; Özden and Celen, 2014; Schneyer, 2007; Shields et al., 2001; Şeker and Özdemir, 2014; Yalçın, 2017).

When all these are taken into consideration, it is thought that this study will help pre-school teachers to more easily identify children who have school adjustment problems and to help them overcome their problems; with the help of this study, teachers will work in cooperation with families by understanding the importance of family participation in solving the problems of adjustment to school; and it will also fill the gap that exists in the field by determining the relationship between parent attitudes and the school adjustment of preschool children. On the other hand, the present study have been conducted with trends that have one dimensional and quantitative outlook. In this study, after the effort to determine the relationship between parent attitudes and children's adjustment to school in terms of quantitative perspectives, qualitative interviews were conducted with the families and teachers of the children who had problems with school adjustment to carry out a study with the mixed method,

in which more detailed and profounder information on what the causes of school adjustment might be. From this point of view, it is thought that this work will be an important resource for future research and will guide researchers' in their studies. Taking all this into account, the aim of this study is to determine the Relationship between Pre-School Children's Adjustment to School and Their Parents' Parenting Attitudes. In the context of this stated purpose, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. Is there a difference
  - (a) between mothers' employment status and parenting attitudes and
  - (b) between mothers' employment status and children's adjustment to school?
2. Is there a difference
  - (a) between children's gender and their parents' parenting attitudes?
  - (b) between children's gender and adjustment to school?
3. Is there a difference between the school adjustment of children who live with their parents and children who live in other (scattered, and the like) families?
4. What are the opinions of the teachers of children who experience problems with school adjustment in their classes in this regard?
5. What are the opinions of the parents of children who experience problems with school adjustment in this regard?

## **Method**

### **Research Design**

A mixed method was used in this study aiming to reveal the relationship between the school adjustment process of preschool children and their parents' parenting attitudes. Mixed

method researches focus on the collection, analysis and presentation of both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study. Thus, the mixture of quantitative and qualitative data sets are made broader and richer through the strategies of synthesis, diversification and integration. According to Creswell (2013, p.224) although there are many design types in the field of mixed methodology, three basic designs can be mentioned in social sciences, the convergent parallel mixed method design, explanatory sequential mixed method design and exploratory sequential mixed method design. In this study, the explanatory sequential mixed method design was used. The explanatory sequential mixed method design is the use of qualitative data to explain and interpret quantitative findings in more detail (Creswell, 2013).

In the study, the necessary permissions were taken from the Eskişehir Provincial Directorate of National Education with the number of 88074293 / 605.01 / 1598438 dated 12.02.2015 and each teacher and family involved in the study. On 11.02.2015, permission was obtained from the ethics committee of Anadolu University. Then, quantitative data were collected with the “Teacher Evaluation Scale for School Adjustment” filled in by the teacher for each child in the scope of the research and the “Parent Attitude Scale” filled in by the parents of these children. Subsequently, more in-depth information was gathered by individual semi-structured interviews with volunteers from parents and teachers of children identified as having school adjustment problems according to the results of the “Teacher Evaluation Scale for School Adjustment” (Mulhall, 2003; Patton, 2002).

### **Population and Sample**

The population of the research consisted of the children, the teachers and families of the children who were educated in the preschools of the Ministry of National Education in the city center of Eskişehir in the academic year 2014-2015. While determining the sample of the

quantitative dimension of the study, the systematic sampling was utilized from the sampling approaches based on the probability. Systematic sampling is the determination of the individuals to be included in the sample by means of a systematic method based on certain criteria (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006, p.105). These criteria can be numbers or letters. The number 7 was assigned by the researcher to identify participants in the systematic sample and schools at 7 and at its multiples were included in the study. The minimum number of children to be reached in this study (the number of children in the population was 3593, the number that must be reached with the sampling error margin of 0.05) was determined as 347, but at the end of the study, 380 children were reached.

The typical case sampling of the purposive sampling approaches have been utilized to define the participants of the qualitative dimension of the research. Typical case sampling is the inclusion of a person or persons considered representative in the research (Ekiz, 2013, p. 105). Within the scope of the research, the teachers and parents of 10 children who had the lowest score from the “Teacher Evaluation Scale for School Adjustment” and who were found to have problems with school adjustment were scheduled to be interviewed. However, since one of the parents did not want to participate in the study and there were 2 children who were having school adjustment problems in the class of a teacher, 9 children, 9 parents and 9 teachers formed the qualitative dimension of the research. Table 1 shows the family characteristics of children with school adjustment problems.

Table 1

*Family Characteristics of Children with School Adjustment Problem*

Gender	Mother Education	Mother age	Mather Employment Status	Number of children
K1	Primary school	26	Housewife	1
K2	Undergraduate	36	Housewife	2

K3	Middle school	42	Housewife	1
K4	Middle school	38	Babysitter	2
E1	Middle school	47	Housewife	2
E2	High school	39	Housewife	1
E3	Middle school	35	Babysitter	2
E4	Undergraduate	36	Housewife	1
E5	Primary school	35	Housewife	1
E6	Middle school	40	Worker	1

As can be seen in Table 1, the mean age of mothers whose children experienced school adjustment problems was 37. Based on the (2016) birth statistics of the Turkish Statistical Institute (TSI), the average age of giving birth in Turkey is 27. When TSI data is compared with the average age of the surveyed mothers, it can be interpreted that the mothers gave birth late. Families also have one child or two children.

The study was conducted with 34 teachers from 12 schools, 380 children and their families. Of the children, 177 (46.6%) were girls and 203 (53.4%) were boys. Of the families participating in the study, in 352 (92.6%) the mother, father and kid were living together, while in the remaining 28 (7.4%) had separated family structures. In this study, taking into account the separated families, parent names were used as well as the mother's name for the participants who took care of the children. The majority of the participants in the study were housewives, teachers, workers and nurses from 31 different professions. The average age of the mothers is 34. Of the mothers who participated in the survey, 103 (27.1%) were primary school, 65 (17.4%) were middle school and 151 (39.7%) were high school graduates while the remaining 58 (15.26%) were two-year-college or university graduates. 323 (85%) of the mothers participating in the study have one or two children.

## Instruments

The tools used to collect the data can be listed as follows:

- i. Pre-school Teacher Evaluation Scale for School Adjustment
- ii. Parent Attitude Scale (PAS)



- iii. Semi-structured Teacher Interview Form
- iv. Semi-structured Parent Interview Form
- v. Researcher Observation Notes (RON)

### **Pre-school teacher assessment scale for school adjustment**

The scale to be filled in for each child by the teacher in order to determine the children's school adjustment qualities was developed by G.W. Ladd, B. Kochenderfer and C. Coleman in 1996. The original scale consists of 27 3-point Likert type items with 4 sub-dimensions. The scale was later adapted to Turkish by Önder and Gülay (2010, p.204-224). The Turkish form consists of 25 3-point Likert type items with 4 sub-dimensions. The Loving School Sub-Scale consists of 5 items and measures the perception of teacher about how much the child loves the school. Its internal consistency coefficient is 0.81. The cooperative participation sub-scale, consisting of 10 items, measures the degree of child's acceptance of the authority of teacher, class rules and their responsibilities. Its internal consistency coefficient is 0.84. The Sub-scale of Avoidance from School consists of 5 items and determines the teacher perception about the tendency of the child to avoid the class environment. Its internal consistency coefficient is 0.73. There are 5 items in the Self-Management Subscale, and the scale measures the independent and self-centered behavior of the child in the classroom. Its internal consistency coefficient is 0.67.

### **Parent attitude scale (PAS).**

The scale to be used by parents to determine their child-rearing attitudes was developed by Karabulut Demir and Şendil (2008). It is a scale with 5-point Likert type items developed to measure the behaviors of parents towards their children aged 2-6 years. The scale consists of 4 sub scales, democratic, authoritarian, overprotective and permissive attitudes, and 46 items in

total. In order to determine the reliability of the dimensions of Parent Attitude Scale, internal consistency coefficients were examined, and Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients of each dimension were calculated. Analyses were conducted through responses of 420 mothers and fathers participating in the study. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients of the dimensions were 0.83 for the democratic dimension, 0.76 for the authoritarian dimension, 0.75 for the overprotective dimension and 0.74 for the permissive dimension.

### **Semi-structured parent interview form**

The semi-structured parent interview form was prepared by the researcher to interview parents about their children's school adjustment problems. The literature review led the researcher to prepare the questions and identify the points that should be particularly focused on the questions. The "*Semi-structured Parent Interview Form*", prepared, consists of 3 basic questions and probing questions which are prepared in order to understand, in a more detailed way, children's relations with their home environment, family and peers as well as the child's attitude towards the school in the parents' eyes. The prepared form was sent to 7 specialists in the field of pre-school education and their examinations were requested. The final form was given to the interview form by making necessary corrections in line with the opinions from the field experts.

### **Semi-structured teacher interview form**

The semi-structured teacher interview form was prepared by researchers for interviews with pre-school teachers about children's adjustment problems with the school. The examination of scientific studies on the subject and the results of the literature review have helped to prepare the questions and led the researcher on the points that need particular focus

on the questions. It consists of a total of 7 basic questions and probing questions in order to examine, in the eyes of the teacher in a more detailed way, the attitude of the child towards the school, friends and teachers. The form prepared by the researcher was sent to 7 experts in the field of pre-school education and their examinations were requested. The final form was given to the interview form by making necessary corrections in line with the opinions from the field experts.

### **Researcher observation notes**

Notes were taken by the researcher from the beginning to the end of the phase of collection of data, which would form the qualitative part of the study. In qualitative studies observations are made in a less structured way, and the researcher tries to observe the research process as naturally as possible instead of observing according to pre-determined categories and classifications (Punch, K. F, 2011). Researcher observation notes were often included in the study to support the findings of the research.

### **Data Collection**

Teachers were called by phone to be informed that they would be interviewed and interviews were held by determining the day and time they were available. Semi-structured interviews were held with teachers on the possible causes of children's adjustment problems with school. These interviews took between 14 and 22 minutes. Interviews were recorded with a voice recorder.

Parent interviews lasted between 8 and 16 minutes. In the interviews, the family and the child were tried to be understood and recognized better by using the "*Semi-structured parent interview form*" prepared by the researcher. The family has never been told anything negative

about the child, but the family has been encouraged by saying the strengths of the child. A total of 9 families out of 10 agreed to the interview. Since 2 of these did not allow voice recording during the interview, the answers given by the parents during the interviews were written down by the researcher.

Within the scope of the study, data collection process was started after obtaining the necessary permissions from the Provincial Directorate of National Education, School Principal, teachers and parents. During the data collection process, interviews were conducted in order for 36 teachers from 12 schools affiliated to the Ministry of National Education in Eskişehir province to participate in the study; of those, 2 teachers refused to participate in the study due to different reasons; and 34 teachers volunteered. Of the teachers who indicated that they would not participate in the study, B35 stated that he did not want to participate in the study because he was very busy. In a total of 12 schools, 580 “*Teacher Evaluation Scales for School Adjustment*” were distributed and all of these scales were completed by the teachers and delivered to the researcher. Another quantitative data collection tool the “*Parent Attitude Scale*” was distributed to 580 parents, 138 of them were not answered, and 392 were filled in by the parents and delivered to the researcher through the teacher. When teachers were informed about the study, some teachers said “*Sir, the parents are very uninterested. We send documents to the house for signing or we ask for something very small to use in the events, and they do not even send it, so I do not think they will fill in the “Parent Attitude Scale” and send it back*” (AGN, 2015, p.1) and indicated that there may not be returns on scales to be sent to parents. Of the 392 returned “*Parent Attitude Scales,*” 12 were withdrawn from the study because they were filled incorrectly and incompletely so much that the scale items could not be calculated, and the quantitative data were collected by the participation of the remaining 380 children. In the qualitative dimension of the study, it was planned to interview the teachers and parents of 10

children who had the lowest score on the “*Teacher Evaluation Scale for School Adjustment Scale*” and who were found to have problems with school adjustment. However, since one of the parents did not want to participate in the study and there were 2 children in the class of a teacher who were having school adjustment problems, 9 children, 9 parents and 9 teachers formed the qualitative dimension of the research. Teachers were called by phone to be informed that they would be interviewed and interviews were held by determining the day and time they were available. Semi-structured interviews were held with teachers on the possible causes of children’s adjustment problems with school. These interviews took between 14 and 22 minutes. Interviews were recorded with a voice recorder. Parent interviews lasted between 8 and 16 minutes and were conducted at the place and time the parents were available. In the interviews, the family and the child were tried to be understood and recognized better by using the “*Semi-structured parent interview form*” prepared by the researcher. The family has never been told anything negative about the child, but the family has been encouraged by saying the strengths of the child. A total of 9 families out of 10 agreed to the interview. Since 2 of these did not allow voice recording during the interview, the answers given by the parents during the interviews were written down by the researcher.

### **Data Analysis**

In the quantitative part of the study, whether there was a difference in parenting attitudes depending on mothers’ employment status and children’s genders was analyzed by the independent samples t-test. Furthermore, whether there was a difference in mother’s employment status depending on children’s gender and school adjustment was analyzed by the t-test. When data do not satisfy the parametric test assumptions; when the number of subjects in each group are less than 30, even though the data are determined by measurement; or when

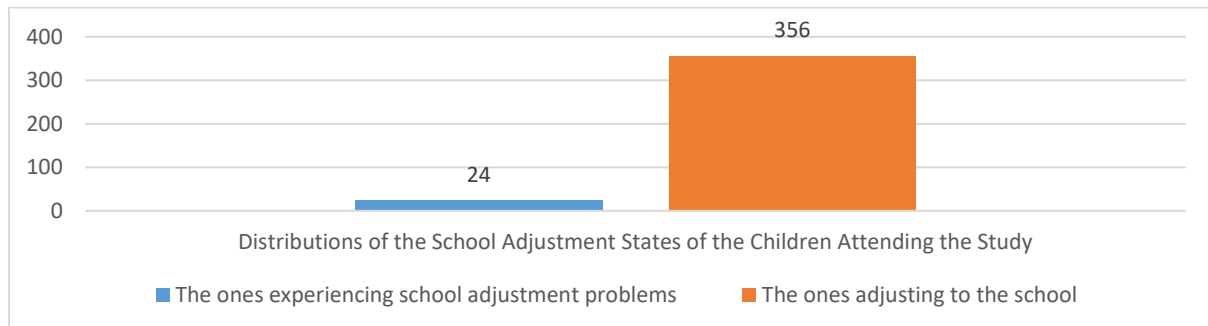
the data cannot satisfy parametric test assumptions, even though the number of subjects is sufficient, Mann – Whitney U test is applied (Sümbüloğlu and Sümbüloğlu, 2007, p.147). While the number of children living with parents is 352, the number of children living in other families is 28. Mann-Whitney U test was used to look at the difference between the school adjustment of children living with their mothers and fathers and children living with other families (families scattered, and so on). Quantitative data were analyzed statistically in terms of the aim and method of the research. Based on the analyses, 9 children with the lowest total school adjustment scores were determined. Based on the aims of the research, interviews were conducted with parents and teachers of the children experiencing school adjustment problems. When analyzing the data derived from interviews, the descriptive analysis method were utilized in which description comes to the foreground.

## **Results**

### **Findings from Quantitative Analyses**

In the analysis of quantitative data, the “Teacher Evaluation Scale for School Adjustment” scores of the children who participated in the research were determined. According to this, the numbers and frequencies of children with school adjustment problems and children adjusting to the school are given in Table 2.

Table 2

*Distributions of School Adjustment Status of The Children Attending to The Research*

According to the scores of school adjustment, 24 (6.31%) of the children who participated in the study had school adjustment problems and 356 (93.69%) adjusted to the school.

According to the “Parent Attitude Scale” of the parents participating in the research, the average of parent attitude scores were calculated. Information on attitude scores of parents is given in Table 3.

Table 3

*Parental Attitude Score Averages of Parents Attending The Research*

Parent attitudes	Score average
Democratic attitude	4.4178
Authoritarian attitude	1.9222
Overprotective attitude	3.9408
Permissive attitude	2.2408

As seen in Table 3, it was determined that parents who participated in the study had high democratic and overprotective attitude score averages and low authoritarian and permissive parent attitude scores. In this context, it can be said that the parents participating in the research often have democratic and overprotective parent attitudes.

## Findings on The Difference between Mothers' Employment Status and Parents' Parenting Attitudes

Whether or not there was a statistically significant difference between mothers' employment or non-employment status and parents' parenting attitudes was analyzed by the independent samples t-test. The results are given in Table 4.

Table 4

### *Independent Samples T-Test Results between Mothers' Employment Status and Parents' Parenting Attitudes*

Parent attitudes		N	$\bar{X}$	SD	t	df	p<
Democratic	Not working	271	4.4160	.42167	-1.393	342	.164
	Working	73	4.4912	.36133			
Authoritarian	Not working	271	1.8775	.48813	.869	342	.385
	Working	73	1.8229	.42817			
Overprotective	Not working	271	3.9748	.63744	2.517	342	<b>.012</b>
	Working	73	3.7655	.60441			
Permissive	Not working	271	2.1971	.59455	-.849	342	.397
	Working	73	2.2615	.49709			

Considering the arithmetic averages of the groups presented in Table 4, it is seen that while there was no statistically significant difference between mothers' employment status and democratic parent attitudes, authoritarian parent attitudes and permitting parent attitudes, there was a statistically significant difference between mothers' employment status and overprotective parent attitudes ( $t(342)=2.517$ ,  $p=.012$ ;  $p<.05$ ). By looking at the average of overprotective parent attitudes, it can be said that non-working mothers exhibit a more protective parent attitude than working mothers.



### **Findings on The Difference between Mothers’ Employment Status and Children’s School Adjustment**

Whether or not there was a statistically significant difference between mothers’ employment or non-employment status and children’s school adjustment was analyzed by independent samples t-test. The results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5

*Independent Sample T-Test Results between Mothers’ Employment Status and Children’s School Adjustment*

School adjustment		N	$\bar{X}$	SD	t	df	p<
School adjustment	Not working	271	.1768	.29401	.694	342	.488
	Working	73	.1501	.28342			

Table 5. No statistically significant difference was observed between mothers’ employment status and children’s school adjustment ( $t(342)=.694, p=.488$ ) because the value of “p” was greater than .05.

### **Findings about the Difference between Children’s Gender and Parents’ Parenting Attitudes**

An independent sample t-test was conducted to determine whether there was a difference between children’s genders and parents’ parenting attitudes. The results are given in Table 6.

Table 6

*Independent samples t-test results between children's genders and parents' parenting attitudes*

Parent attitudes		N	$\bar{X}$	SD	t	df	p<
Democratic	Female	172	4.4197	.41240	-.357	363	.721
	Male	93	4.4351	.40732			
Authoritarian	Female	172	1.8409	.46762	1.289	363	.198
	Male	93	1.9056	.48763			
Overprotective	Female	172	3.9496	.64395	.632	363	.528
	Male	93	3.9079	.61499			
Permissive	Female	72	2.2685	.56852	1.593	63	.112
	Male						

Table 6 shows that a statistically significant difference was not seen between children's genders and democratic parent attitude scores, authoritarian parent attitude scores, overprotective parent attitude scores, and permissive parent attitude scores when the arithmetic averages of the groups were examined.

### **Findings about The Difference between Children's Gender and Their School Adjustment**

An independent sample t-test was conducted to determine whether there was a difference between children's gender and their school adjustment. The results are given in Table 7.

Table 7

*Independent samples t-test results between children's gender and their school adjustment*

		N	$\bar{X}$	SD	t	df	p<
School adjustment	Female	172	.1663	.28804	-.003	363	.997
	Male	193	.1664	.28694			

Table 7 shows that a statistically significant difference was not seen between children's genders and their school adjustment ( $t(363) = -.003, p = .997$ ) when the arithmetic averages of the groups were examined because the value of "p" was greater than .05.

### **Findings about A Difference between The School Adjustments of Children Who Live with Their Parents and The Children Who Live in Other Families**

When data do not satisfy the parametric test assumptions; when the number of subjects in each group are less than 30, even though the data are determined by measurement; or when the data cannot satisfy parametric test assumptions, even though the number of subjects is sufficient, Mann – Whitney U test is applied (Sümbüloğlu and Sümbüloğlu, 2007, p.147). In this analysis, it was determined whether there was a significant difference in the children's school adjustment total score between the children living with their families and children living elsewhere. While the number of children living with parents is 352, the number of children living in other families is 28. Because the difference was too much and in order to obtain a more accurate statistical result, 28 children were randomly selected from the children living with their parents, too, and the analysis was made accordingly.

Table 8

*Mann-whitney u test results concerning the school adjustment of children living with mothers and fathers and children living with other families*

Score	Groups	<i>N</i>	$\bar{x}_{sira}$	$\sum_{sira}$	<i>U</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>P</i>
School Adjustment Score	Together	28	29.93	838.00	352.000	-.841	.400
	Other	28	27.07	758.00			
	Total	56					

The significance value between the school adjustment scores of the children participating in the study and the children living with their mothers and fathers, and the children living in the other families was found to be  $p=0.400$ . When the p value is greater than 0.05, it can be said that there is no significant difference (Büyüköztürk, 2014, p.168). Although there was no significant difference, there was a difference of about 3 points between the mean rank (29.93) of the children living with their parents and the mean rank (27.07) of the children living in different places. The direction of the values can be determined by considering the mean rank of the test (Ekiz, 2013, p.153). When we look at the mean rank of the test, it can be said that the children living with their parents (29.93) adjusted better compared to the children living in the different places (27.07) but there is no statistically significant difference.

## **Findings from Analysis of Qualitative Data**

### **Findings from interviews with teachers**

In the qualitative part of the study, interviews were conducted with teachers and parents of children who had school adjustment problems in order to better understand the causes of school adjustment problems. This section includes findings from interviews with teachers to better understand the causes of children's school adjustment problems.

In response to the question "*how do you describe the school adjustment*" asked by the researcher, the teachers responded by sorting out the general characteristics that the children adapted to school could display, instead of defining the school adjustment. 5 of the teachers stated that children who "*comply with the school rules*", 4 "*are compatible with their friends*", 3 "*listen to his/her teacher*" and 2 "*easily participate in the activities*" adjust to school. One of the teachers listed the characteristics of children who adjust to school in the following order:

“they communicate properly”, “they are smooth with their friends, teachers and school”, “they are able to adapt to a new environment” and “they can easily participate in games”. Another one of the teachers, while describing the adjustment to school, pointed out that “parents’ adaptation to the school”.

Of the teachers, B30 expressed his opinion as “Adjustment to school... We can refer to the child who follows the rules of the class, is in harmony with his friends, and conforms to the rules of the school as the one who has adjusted to the school.” B20 expressed his opinions in the form of “The child conforming to school rules, communicating well with friends and getting along well with them, and listening to the teacher’s words has adjusted to the school.” B24 said, “In terms of adjustment, I think that first of all the family should be harmonious, first the parents should adapt to the school” to express his opinions about the school adjustment.

In response to the question “When you consider the children in your class since the beginning of the school what do you think about their school adjustment process,” asked by the researcher, while 4 of the teachers stated that they did “the school adjustment studies in the first days of the school”, 3 of the teachers said that “children’s school adjustment happens through a process.” While two of the teachers talked about that “family problems affect school adjustment”, 1 teacher mentioned that “children who knew each other do not experience adjustment problems”.

In response to the question “What kind of studies did you do in the first days of school in order to facilitate the adjustment of children to the school?” asked by the researcher, 2 of the teachers answered “Simple activities”. 2 teachers responded “I chat with children to give them orientation training”. While 1 of the teachers gave the answer “I am conducting one-to-one interviews”, 1 teacher gave the answer “I am organizing meeting parties”. Teacher B12, by stating that “I am doing 1 or 2 game-intensive activities”, expressed what he did in the first

week of school to facilitate children's adjustment to school as follows, "*First, I sat the children on the cushions, and we made a talk that was not long, on things such as what the school was, what was going on here, and what the rules of the place were, then I walked them through the school and I tried to introduce the school. We watched a lot of games, cartoons, and enjoyed as much fun as possible, especially in the first weeks*". Two of the teachers did not answer this question.

In response to the question "*Among your children did any show dislike behavior for the school?*" asked by the researcher, 4 teachers responded "*no*" while 5 of the teachers gave the answer "*Yes*". The teachers who answered "*yes*" were asked "*What could be the cause?*" Teachers listed the reasons for the behavior of disliking the school as that: some children are the only child in their families, some children do not like school, some families do not allow their children to socialize, some children have family problems, some children cannot join friends and want to play solo, children who are absent from school do not want to attend school, some children are dependent on the mother and do not want to leave their mothers so they experience school adjustment problems. Regarding the issue, of the teachers, B24 expressed that "*The first is that the child is the only child, the second is that the family has not much introduced the child into the social life. They must have approached protectively, as such that the family also says that; he has an overprotective family. They themselves are not very social, either, and as they do not involve the child, there are problems in adapting to the social environment.*" B12 expressed that family problems were effective on liking the school by saying that, "*The parents are separated and the child stays with the mother. There are serious family problems and we cannot get in touch with the mother; she does not attend the meetings, either.*"

While 2 of the teachers answered "*yes*" to the question "*Are there any among your children who do not want to come to school?*" asked by the researcher, 7 teachers responded

“no”. Teachers who answered “yes” were also “*If so, what could be the reason? What are you doing to prevent this?*” Teachers expressed the reasons why children do not want to come to school as “*Discussing family problems in the presence of children*” and “*Absence from school*”. 2 of the teachers stated that they tried to solve the problem by giving responsibility to the children who do not want to come to school.

To the question “*Do you have a conversation with children about what they live in school or at home? Did he mention about any problem?*” asked by the researcher, all the teachers gave the answer “*yes we are chatting*”. Teachers, in general, stated that they talked with children in everyday matters. However, teacher B24 stating that he especially had a chat with the children with problems said, “*We are talking a lot with the child who has a problem of adjustment; I observe the child, he takes what I give to him, but there is always a deficiency in the child; he has not been given any duty and responsibility at home; the child will do everything if the mother is and sits next to him. When the child come from an overprotective family, he cannot stand on his feet.*”

While 4 teachers responded “yes” to the question “*Among your children do you have any who wants to leave an activity or leave the class/school by making up excuses or illnesses?*” asked by the researcher, 5 teacher gave the answer “no”. Teachers who answered “yes” were also asked “*What could be the cause? What are you doing to prevent this?*” While teacher B24 expressed his opinion by stating, “*Yes, there are; sometimes Emine was making up excuses such as ‘teacher, I have a stomachache,’ and ‘I am coughing’; later we overcame this problem. Especially in the last 2 months he has not done this. Well, he was telling excuses such as ‘I have a stomachache’ and ‘I feel nauseous when eating’*”, B20 explained the situation by saying, “*Yes, there are; when I leave the child he is leaves the activity; he wants me to be with him all the time; excuse me to say this but he wants me to follow him just like a tail.*” B25, a teacher

who gave the response “no” to the research question, said, “*There are not any kids who want to go out of school by making up excuses; Taha says, ‘I want to go’ but he does not make excuses for this or does not say anything about this; he just says ‘I want to go’*”.

### **Findings from interviews with parents**

While 5 out of 9 parents answered “yes” to the question “*Are there times when your child does not want to go to school?*” asked by the researcher, 4 parents responded “no”. Parents who answered “yes” were also asked “*What could be the cause?*” While 2 parents explained why the children would not want to go to school as “*he gets absorbed in playing games and watching cartoon at home*”, 2 parents said that their children have “*sleeping problems*”. One of the parents said, “*The child made up excuses not to go to school.*” One of the parents, E1, said that “*Sometimes he does not want to come, but the kid plunges into play or something; sometimes I warn, I say it is the school hour, but he does not want to go. When I ask why he does not want to go, he just says ‘I do not want to go, mother’ and does not say anything else.*” E3 explained that “*Sometimes he does not want to come. She gets absorbed in play and cartoons and he does not want to go; but, when I insist, he goes.*” Another parent, E4, said, “*sometimes he cannot wake up and do not want to come to school. In those days, I struggle to wake him up and persuade him to go to school, and other than that there are not times when he does not want to come to school.*”

To the question “*Do you have a conversation with your child when he comes home from school? What does he tell? Did he mention any problem?*” asked by the researcher, 9 parents who participated in the research answered “*yes we are chatting*”. While 7 of the parents stated that they wanted to talk but the child did not tell much, 2 parents stated that their children usually informed them about the activities they do in school. Of the parents, E5 stated her



opinion as *“When leaving, I ask my child what they did today, but she never tells anything. She even tells me, “Mom, do not ask me anything about school.” She does not let me ask; that is, she shies, she probably feels embarrassed. She says, “Do not ask me anything about the school; have not I told you not to ask?” I am not asking anymore, because she gets angry at me. “Do not ask anything today,” she says; that is, she does not want to tell. In other words, Nisa is my supreme”*.

To the question *“How often do you talk to the teacher?”* asked by the researcher, 4 of the parents who participated in the research responded *“every day”* while 4 parents answered *“as often as I need and as often as there is something about the child”*. One of the teachers gave the answer that he talks at the *“parent meetings”*. One of the parents, E1 stated his opinion as *“I talk every day while I drop off the child; other than that, the teacher talked to me privately a couple of times about the child, he had not been playing with the other kids as much; I also told him that he was a bit shy outside too.”*

### **Conclusion and Discussion**

As a result of this study, when the arithmetic mean between mothers' employment status and parents' parenting attitudes is examined, there appeared to be a statistically significant difference between mothers' employment status and overprotective parent attitudes, while there was no significant difference between mothers' employment status and democratic parent attitudes, authoritarian parent attitudes and permissive parent attitudes. In this case, it can be said that mothers exhibiting overprotective parent attitudes and non-working mothers exhibit a more protective parental attitude than working mothers. This result of the research is thought to be related to the educational status of working mothers. This finding is parallel to other research findings. In studies that examine the relationship between parent attitudes and

educational status, as the level of education drops down, an increase in the protective-willing attitude and in the authoritarian attitude has been observed. In addition to this, it has been determined that overprotective attitudes decrease as parents' education level increases (Karasan, 2015, Ayyıldız, 2005, Özyürek and Şahin, 2005, Ömeroğlu, 1996, Mızrakçı, 1994).

There was no statistically significant difference between the groups in the analysis to determine the relationship between the employment status of the mothers and the children's school adjustment. This result is consistent with the findings of research on parent attitudes and children's school adjustment (Ogelman et al., 2013, Bilek, 2011, Günalp, 2007).

There was no significant difference between the groups in the analysis of the relationship between the gender of the children and the parenting attitudes of the parents. This result is in agreement with Dursun's (2010) study of the effect of parent attitudes on behavior disorders of children, with the result that parent attitudes do not differ according to the genders of the children.

In the analyses made to determine the relationship between the genders of the children and their school adjustment, there was no significant difference between the groups. This result is in support of other studies in which the effect of gender on school adjustment is sought (Yoleri & Tanış, 2015, Önder and Gülay, 2010).

When the significance and the rank order of the test in order to determine the relationship between the school adjustments of children who live with parents and the children who live in other families are examined, it can be said that children who lives with parents adjusted to school better than the children living in different places. Studies in the literature related to the subject are in support of the research findings. In the study conducted by Özel (2012) as one of them, it was found that the mother's being the biological mother in comparison to other mothers (those who did not have the mother and the mother did not know the status of

the mother) had a high positive effect on the child, which had positive effects on the child together with the emotions of love, trust and connection between the mother and child. Fındıkçı and Akingüç (1992) in their study on the academic achievement of students whose mother and father have separated emphasized that separation of mother and father may affect the academic achievements of the children. Given this research and others supporting the research results, it can be said that it is very important for the children to have biological parents and to be educated in a good and healthy family environment in order to adjust to school.

Teachers stated that in the early days of school, they generally performed simple activities to facilitate children's adjustment to school and chatted with the children to conduct school adjustment studies. The school adjustment week studies prepared by the MNE [Ministry of National Education] (2015) support studies on adaptation to the school by Başaran, Gökmen and Akdağ, (2014) and Çeliktürk (2011). In this context, it can be said that it is important to carry out studies towards school adjustment in the first days of school.

Teachers have indicated that in their classrooms there were children who showed the behavior of disliking the school. They stated the usual reasons for this as the child's being the only child at home, the child's being away from socializing outside the school, the problems within the family, the inability to participate in group games at school, the lack of school attendance of children with adjustment problems, and the child's being dependent on the mother. However, in the study of the primary school children's school adjustment levels according to the number of their siblings, Topçu (2012) did not find a statistically significant difference in the school adjustment scores in terms of the variable of number of siblings. According to Unutkan (2007), sibling relationships can affect children's ego and success during school life. In Schneyer's (2007) study, it was seen that participants who had good relationships with their siblings also had close relationships with their friends at a similar degree. From the

findings of the research, it can be said that protective family attitudes comes to the fore especially in single child families. In protective mother attitudes, protecting the child from other children and from others with the thinking that “my child may be harmed”, may cause the child to communicate with others as little as possible. This can lead to the development of children who are more dependent on the mother, who do not start a job without the help of the mother or another person, or who cannot finish the job without getting help. The development of disliking the school may be due to the fact that when the child goes to school, he does not see the interest, attention and support he sees at home, or that he does not want to share the interest shown by the teacher with other children in the classroom.

Are there children among your children who do not want to come to school? If so, what could be the reason? What are you doing to prevent this? To those questions, teachers in general have cited familial problems and school absenteeism in children as reasons. As a result of the research, it can be said that not wanting to come to school increases because a negative situation develops if the children do not want to come to school and if they are absent from school. Similarly, it can be argued that children’s having disinterest towards school, talking every family matter among children and children’s direct or indirect exposure to these reinforce the unwillingness of the child to come to school. However, in the quantitative study of Kaya and Akgün (2016), the conclusion that the duration of attending the school was not a standalone determining variable was reached.

To the question “Do you have a conversation with children about what they live in school or at home? Did he mention about any problem?”, teachers responded that they talk about everyday things too in their conversations. Based on the findings of the research, 3 comments can be made to explain this subject:

i. It may be because pre-school teachers do not make enough observations to recognize children. Because, according to the literature, there are certain characteristics of children who experience school adjustment problems. These are situations like introversion, timidity (shyness), unable to establish a play, difficulty or disagreement while participating in other children's plays, other children's not wanting to include the child who has school adjustment problems because the child cannot maintain the play or comply with the rules, crying behavior, and absenteeism. One or more of these situations can be seen in children with adjustment problems and these can be easily noticed with careful observation by the teacher. If the teacher cannot recognize this, it can be said that he cannot make good observations.

ii. The child may not be talking about what he lives at home or at school because the child is not feeling secure in school or in the classroom, or because the child is not provided with the feeling of trust by the teacher or other individuals in the school. This may be due to teachers' insensitive attitudes.

iii. Finally, this may be related to the child himself. It may be due to the child's emotional state may, self-confidence and inability to speak within the community.

Are there children asking questions like "Teacher, how much time is left to go home" during school hours? What could be the reason for this? What are you doing to prevent this from happening? To these questions, teachers in general have responded that children wanted to leave school by making statements such as asking for a mother, making up excuses to go home and not wanting to participate in the event. This result supports each other with Özarlan's (2014) study. This may be due to that children do not feel they belong to the class, that they develop a feeling of leaving school immediately, and that they have made up for it too.

Are there times when your child does not want to go to school? What could be the reason? To these questions, parents in general replied that there were times when their children did not want to come to school. They listed the reasons for that as meeting with situations such as plunging into play at home, sleeping problems (unable to wake up in the morning), and making up excuses for not going to school. This result supports Özarlan's (2014) study. During the interviews, the teachers stated the sleeping problem and the reason for not being able to wake up as the fact that when there was only one child and the mother was protective they often were not insisting on waking their children up in the morning and did not send them to the school. Parents talked about this situation in the interviews as "I cannot make him go to bed in the evening and as he does not sleep in the evening, he is unable to get up in the morning". Based on the findings of the research and the results of previous research, the reasons for children to be unable to wake up can be attributed to the fact that families are insensitive to the school or do not attach importance to the school, or that the family does not care about the sleeping pattern of the child or the child does not have a regular sleeping pattern.

Do you have a conversation with your child when he comes home from school? What does he tell? To these questions, families responded that in general they tried to talk after the children came home, but that the children did not want to talk too much about what they did at school. In this context, children's not wanting to talk about school after school can be regarded as a sign of children having problems with school adjustment.

Finally, based on the teacher and parent interviews, while the characteristics of children who have problems with school adjustment are introversion, timidity (shyness), unable to establish a play, difficulty or disagreement while participating in other children's plays, other children's not wanting to include the child who has school adjustment problems because the child cannot maintain the play or comply with the rules, crying behavior, and absenteeism, the

family characteristics of children who have problems with school adjustment can generally be listed as being the only child or excessive age difference with close siblings, overprotective family attitude, and family problems. This finding is supported by the study of Bařaran, Gökmen and Akdağ (2014).

### **Recommendations**

In particular, single-kid families may show protective family attitudes towards their children. In this regard, parents can ask for help from classroom teachers or they can be trained to improve democratic family attitudes by participating in childrearing courses of public or private institutions. Since the advice of teachers can be a guide for families, families should be constantly exchanging views with teachers.

It has been observed that some teachers did not talk about children who were experiencing adjustment problems in their classes and that they were not aware of such children. Some teachers stated that they could solve the school adjustment problem only by the end of the year. With good observation and research, it is possible to recognize children who are experiencing this problem and take necessary measures early on. For this reason, teachers must diligently fulfill their duties related to observing children and their development, and should be in constant contact with the family in this regard. Researchers can prepare a “school adjustment program” in order to help teachers and parents and present it to the teachers’ use.

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