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## Effect of Parental Attitudes on Skills of Emotional Management in Young Adults

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### Abstract

In this study it is aimed to investigate the effects of parental attitude on young adults' emotional management skills. Correlational research model was used to analyze the data. The study group consists of 170 young adults whose ages ranged from 20 to 36 in central district of Ankara. To gather the data, "Emotional Management Skill Scale" and "Parental Attitude Scale" were used. Multiple regression analysis was performed to predict the determinants of young adults' emotional skills. Emotional Management Skill Scale Points' are the dependent variable of this study also the independent variables of this study are the subscales points of Parental Attitude Scale. According to the result of investigation three independent variables which are authoritative, over parenting and authoritarian parental styles predict emotional management skills. Authoritative and authoritarian parental style effects emotional management skills positively whereas over parenting style effects negatively. Findings discussed according to contribution of handled determinants and appropriate suggestions were recommended for future researches.

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### 1. Introduction

Changing life conditions have resulted in changing intra-family relationship patterns also. The role of the family especially of parents is accepted as an important factor affecting the emotional development of children (Eisenberg, Cumberland & Spinrad, 1998). The quality of the relationship of children with their parents includes the whole

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parent behaviors intended to create an emotional atmosphere between the parent and the child (Darling and Steinberg, 1993). The parent-child relationship that changes its form and differentiates throughout life, represents parental attitudes, specific behavior patterns, quality of approachments (Bornsteinve Zlotnik, 2009). Parental attitudes and their perceptions about bringing up children could affect parental behaviors and developmental outputs throughout (Belsky, 1984). Baumrind (1966, 1967) set three parental attitudes as a result of her studies. According to Baumrind (1966) Democratic parental attitude is the most suitable attitude for the personality development of children. Parents that practice this attitude exhibit unconditional love and respect to their children control their children and enable their needs to be fulfilled. In Democratic parental attitude, behaviors of parents are consistent with each other, decided and reassuring. Children are permitted to practice some behaviors within definite borders and thereby a suitable environment for development of their sense of responsibility is prepared. Parents know that each child has a unique developmental potential and for this reason, free development, discovering abilities and self-fulfillment of those children is allowed. In the case of Protective/ demanding parental attitude, parents protect, monitor and control the children excessively. Most skills and tasks that the children are able to do are done by parents and this way, children's chance of learning by experience is prevented. Over-interference of parents to their children in every subject matter interfere the children in being self-sufficient and learning to be self-confident (Navaro, 1989). Thus, bringing up children that cannot decide by themselves and those are dependent is the point in question (Baumrind, 1966; Cagdas & Secer, 2004; Dokmen, 1996; Kulaksizoglu, 1998). According to Maccoby and Martin, (1983) in authoritarian parental attitude, parents demand children to behave in the way they think to be suitable, neglecting the developmental level, personality characteristics and desires of the children. Parents punish their children very often. Children growing up under this kind of an atmosphere have difficulty in showing their emotions and thoughts like anger and resentment. It is known that authoritarian attitude prevents independent personality development of children and in especially boys, increases the level of aggressiveness and decreases the level of self-esteem (Maccoby & Martin, 1983).

In the first years of life, parents have greater effect on their children compared to other people. Parental attitudes, especially positive and supportive parental attitudes have quite powerful effects on the emotions and the emotional development of children (Eisenberg, Zhou, Spinrad, Valiente, Fabes & Liew, 2005). However, research showing the power and direction of this effect and relationship in the latter periods of life is little if any. Within this frame, one of the domains that parental attitudes are influential is emotional competence. Emotional competency of children begins from birth and demonstrates a rapid development throughout early childhood periods (Denham, Blair, DeMulder, Levitas, Sawyer & Auerbach-Major, 2003). Different theories and models trying to explain emotions and emotional competency from birth to adulthood have taken part in the literature. One of those models is emotional intelligence model. Emotional intelligence that is described as the interaction of two cognitive process; emotion and cognition (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2000) is proposed to be carrying some basic skills (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Mayer and Salovey, (1997) draws up those skills as perceiving and expressing the emotion in a correct way, accessing the emotion which gives way to the formation of thought, comprehending emotions and organizing emotions. According to Yesilyaprak (2001), emotional competency development is important in every stage of education from kindergarten to higher education, development of emotional intelligence is critical in academical achievement, reducing discipline problems at school and decreasing social and psychological problems. It is seen that effects of dynamics related to family like parenthood styles and attitudes, parental socializing behaviors and practices on the emotional development and emotional skills of children are related to early childhood and adolescence period most of the time (Morris, Silk, Steinberg, Myers & Robinson, 2007; Ramsden & Hubbard, 2002). However, very little research has examined the developmental outputs of parental styles on late adolescents and early adults (McKinney & Renk, 2008). Early adults are passing through a distinctive-unique developmental period expressed as "emerging adult" (Arnett, 2000). Parents play a very critical role in adaptation of young people to this emerging adulthood. In this respect, in this study, it is examined that whether there is an effect of parental styles on emotional management skills of young adults, in other words, graduate students.

## 2. Material and Method

Correlational research model has been used in this research. It can be said that correlational studies are effective in revealing the relations between variables and determining the levels of relationships between variables and they are important studies providing clues for further studies about those relationships (Büyüköztürk, Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz and Demirel, 2009).

### 2.1. Participants

In accordance with the research study, 170 graduate students have been worked with. The age and sex distributions of the participants are in table 1.

Table 1. Sex and age distributions of early adult participants of the study.

	Sex		Age		
	Female	Male	20_25	26_30	31_36
Frequency	109	61	109	49	12
Percent	64,1	35,9	64,1	28,8	7,1

Examining the table 1, it can be seen that the 64% of the participants are females and 36% are males and most of the participants (64%) are in between ages 20-25.

### 2.2. Procedure

“Emotion Management Skills Scale” developed by Çeçen (2006) and “Parental Attitudes Scale” developed by Kuzgun and Eldeklioğlu (1996) has been used as tools for gathering data. Both of the scales are 5 point likert-type. Emotion Management Skills Scale is comprised of five sub-dimensions. Cronbach’s alpha reliability co-efficient calculated for the intra-consistency of the scale has been found as .83. Parental Attitudes Scale consists of three sub-dimensions as Democratic, Protective/Demanding and Authoritarian. Cronbach’s Alpha Reliability Co-efficients calculated for sub-dimensions range between 0,78- 0,82. Multiple regression analysis has been used for assessing whether parental attitudes have an effect or not on the emotional management skills of early adults. The predicted (dependent) variables of the study were the points acquired from “emotional management skills scale”. The predictor (independent) variables of the study were the points obtained from the sub-dimensions of the “parental attitudes scale”.

### 2.3. Statistical Analysis

Multiple regression analysis has been used in the direction of the data obtained from the study for describing the predictor variables of early adults’ emotional management skills. Results of the analysis are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Variables that predict emotional management skills of early adults (separately for each sub-dimension).

Variables	B	Std Error	$\beta$	t	p
(Constant)	92,73	8,97		10,34	0,00
Demokratic_attitude	0,26	0,12	0,22	2,22	0,03
Protective_attitude	-0,39	0,15	-0,28	-2,53	0,01
Authoritarian_attitude	0,10	0,23	0,05	0,42	0,68
R <sup>2</sup> = 0,122      F=6,451      fd= 3,142      p=0,000					

According to the results of the analysis, only three variables predict the emotional management skills of early adults significantly ( $F_{3,142}=6,45$ ;  $p<.01$ ). These variables, together, explain approximately %12 of the variance. ( $R=0,350$ ,  $R^2=0,122$ ;  $p<.01$ ). According to the results of the regression analysis; parents having democratic attitudes

affect the emotional management skills of early adults positively and parents having protective attitudes affect negatively. That is, when parents show democratic attitudes toward their children, their emotional management skills get stronger and when they display protective attitudes, their emotional management skills get weaker.

### 3. Results and Discussion

Although a numerous number of research exist related to how parenting styles affect the development of young children, there are few studies about what kind of an effect does parenting make on late adolescence or early adulthood period (McKinney & Renk, 2008). In addition, parenting styles contain parental attitudes on the behaviours of children as asserted in the model of Darling and Steinberg (Chan, Bowev & Wyver, 2009). For these reasons, though emotional management skills have been assessed in terms of parental attitudes, in the phase of discussing results, it becomes clear that parenting styles along with parental attitudes cannot be ignored. Similar results can be seen in the literature just as this study that democratic parenting has positive effects on emotional management skills consisted of dimensions like expressing emotions, coping with emotions of early adults. It is manifested that while authoritarian parent use too much punishing parental practices embracing their children's emotions and a hierarchical structure emerge between parents and children, democratic parents affect their children's skill of expressing emotions more positively by establishing warmer relationships (Chan, Bowev & Wyver, 2009). Alongside expressing emotions, skills of organising emotions is also influenced by authoritarian parenting (Eisenberg, Chang, Ma, & Huang, 2009; Zhou, Eisenberg, Wang, & Reiser, 2004). In the study, it is revealed that families displaying protective parenting attitudes affect the emotional management of early adults negatively. While children are growing up, this negative effect of parents will influence children's skills of manifestation and expression of emotions in socially acceptable ways, when parental control is exhibited in a developmentally suitable manner, children and adolescents are known to be in the need of parental control lesser (Moilanen 2007; Strayer & Roberts 2004). The findings of this study show that parents in the protective/demanding parental attitude protect and control their children excessively and in this way in the period of early adulthood, they cannot display parental attitudes in a developmentally healthy way as a result. This situation reveal that parents in the early adulthood period get in touch with other people other than family members (Manzeske & Stright, 2009) and parents insist on their protective attitudes and this attitude affect emotional management skills of early adults negatively in terms of development. Parents' child rearing attitudes that is a kind of socializing tool in transferring cultural values and expectations to the next generations (Sumer, 2006), influence the emotional climate within the family very closely (Grusec, 2006). The finding that this effect influences the emotional management skills in the early adulthood is supported in the study.

This research has some limitations in terms of method and assessment instruments. First of all, the study has been conducted with individuals who were newly graduated from university. Replicating the study with individuals who are in different educational levels, working individuals or married individuals would be beneficial in terms of comparing the results and increasing the generalization of the results. Secondly, this study has been made in cross-sectional pattern. This type of studies gives information about psychological processes of participants at the moment of the research by its very nature. For this reason, in following studies, a longitudinal comparement can be made by taking the changes in the lives of participants (graduating, starting a job, getting married, having children) into account and by this way, relationships between emotional management skills and parental attitudes can be investigated thoroughly.

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