



## Emotional Socialization Behaviors of Mothers Having Preschooler\*

### Okul Öncesi Dönem Çocuğa Sahip Annelerin Duygu Sosyalleştirme Davranışları

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**ABSTRACT:** The aim of the study is to investigate emotional socialization behaviors of mothers having preschooler in relation to the child's gender, education and socioeconomic level of the mother. In the research, a correlational survey model was used. The participants of the study consisted of 303 mothers having children aged 4-6 with low, middle and high socioeconomic living conditions. The data of the study were collected with the Coping with Negative Emotions of Children Scale and Personal Information Form. T-test and variance analysis were used to analyze the data. Research results revealed that emotional socialization behaviors of mothers did not differ significantly according to the child's gender. As a result of the analysis, it was found that emotional socialization behaviors differ significantly in terms of the socioeconomic level of the mothers. According to this, low socioeconomic level mothers showed more punitive reactions and minimization reactions than middle and high socioeconomic level mothers. Results also showed that punitive reactions and problem-focused responses differed according to the educational level of the participating mothers. In this direction, as the education level of the mothers increases, it is seen that there is a decrease in punitive reactions while there is an increase in problem-focused responses.

**Keywords:** Early childhood, emotional socialization, gender, socioeconomic level, maternal education level.

**ÖZ:** Araştırmanın amacı, okul öncesi dönem çocuğa sahip annelerin duygu sosyalleştirme davranışlarının çocuğun cinsiyeti, annenin eğitim ve sosyoekonomik düzeyi ile ilişkilendirilerek incelenmesidir. Araştırmada nicel araştırma yöntemlerinden ilişkisel tarama modeli kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın katılımcılarını 4-6 yaş grubu çocuğu olan düşük, orta ve yüksek sosyoekonomik yaşam şartlarına sahip 303 anne oluşturmaktadır. Araştırma verileri Çocukların Olumsuz Duyguları ile Baş Etme Ölçeği ve Kişisel Bilgi Formu aracılığı ile toplanmıştır. Araştırma verilerinin çözümlenmesinde t-testi ve varyans analizi kullanılmıştır. Araştırma sonuçları incelendiğinde; annelerin duygu sosyalleştirme davranışlarının çocuğun cinsiyetine göre anlamlı düzeyde farklılaşmadığı belirlenmiştir. Annelerin içinde bulunduğu sosyoekonomik düzeye göre duygu sosyalleştirme davranışlarının farklılaştığı tespit edilmiştir. Buna göre, düşük sosyoekonomik düzeydeki annelerin orta ve üst sosyoekonomik düzeydeki annelere göre cezalandırıcı ve küçümseyici duygu sosyalleştirme davranışlarını daha fazla gösterdikleri saptanmıştır. Bununla birlikte katılımcı annelerin eğitim düzeyine göre cezalandırıcı ve problem odaklı duygu sosyalleştirme davranışlarının farklılaştığı belirlenmiştir. Bu doğrultuda, annelerin eğitim düzeyi arttıkça cezalandırıcı duygu sosyalleştirme davranışında azalma görülürken, problem odaklı duygu sosyalleştirme davranışlarında artış olduğu görülmektedir.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Okul öncesi, duygu sosyalleştirme, cinsiyet, sosyoekonomik düzey, anne eğitim düzeyi.

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The most common way of direct and indirect emotional socialization in children occurs in observing their parents' reactions to the emotions they express (Root & Rubin, 2010). In daily life, children frequently express their positive and negative emotions through facial expressions, behaviors, or oral expressions (Eisenberg, Cumberland, & Spinrad, 1998). Parents' reactions to children's negative emotions whether it is anger, sadness, or fear are defined as emotional socialization behaviors (Altan-Aytun, Yağmurlu, & Yavuz, 2013). Parents' emotional socialization behavior is regarded as the perfect example to directly socialize reactions related to children's emotions (Eisenberg, Cumberland, & Spinrad, 1998).

Parents can have supportive or non-supportive reactions to children's negative emotions. For example, parents might avoid communicating with the child, exhibit negative and selfish behaviors, or they may punish or ignore a child's emotional experience. However, parents can comfort the child and show reactions that teach the child how to manage emotions or stressful events (Eisenberg, Cumberland, & Spinrad, 1998). These emotions are evaluated in the context of six different types of reactions: positive (Emotion-Focused Reactions, Expressive Encouragement, Problem-Focused Reactions) and negative (Distress Reactions, Minimization Reactions, Punitive Reactions).

Problem-focused reactions among positive emotional socialization behaviors mean parents help the child to solve the problem that causes sadness. Parents' initiative to use strategies that will help their child to feel better (for example, comforting or distracting the child) reflects their emotion-focused reactions. Accepting negative emotions of the child, helping the child to express these emotions and effectively encouraging this expression are considered reactions that Expressive Encouragement. On the contrary, minimization reactions among negative/non-supportive emotional socialization behaviors mean decreasing the child's emotional reactions by the parent and therefore, limiting or trying to limit the child's negative emotion expression. This is defined as oral or physical punishment usage attempts of parents towards children to cope with negative emotions. When children express negative emotions, parents' anxious reaction towards these emotions indicates distressed emotional socialization in the parent (Fabes, Eisenberg, & Bernzweig, 1990; Fabes, Poulin, Eisenberg, & Madden-Derdich, 2002).

Parents' emotional socialization behavior affects children's emotional experience, emotional expression, understanding and organization skills (Denham, Mitchell-Copeland, Strandberg, Auerbach, & Blair, 1997; Eisenberg, Fabes, & Murphy, 1996; Eisenberg, Spinrad, & Cumberland, 1998). Parents that comfort their children and talk about negative emotions might help these children to express their emotions in a socially acceptable manner and to decrease emotional stimulation. Parents' behaviors that support or encourage coping with a child's negative emotions in an instrumental way might support a child's sense of sufficiency and offer tangible methods to regulate negative emotions (Eisenberg et al., 1996). It is known that children of parents that follow an interactive way to express emotions better regulate their emotions and tend not to show aggressive behaviors (Macklem, 2008). Additionally, it is stated that children of mothers that show emotional expression and problem-solving supportive reactions had a higher rate of attention (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1994).

Parents' negative reaction towards children's emotional expression is related to children's negative affectivity and low social competence (Eisenberg, Cumberland, & Spinrad, 1998). Mothers' minimization reactions towards children's emotions negatively affect children's social competence and leads to a tendency of using shy coping strategies. Additionally, non-supportive reactions of parents towards children's negative emotions especially towards fear, sadness and anxiety might decrease the sense of trust in these children, indicate insecure parent-child connection and lead these children with trust issues to struggle in social situations that have emotional regulation and emotions (Eisenberg et al., 1996). It can be seen that mothers' minimization/punitive reactions towards children's emotions are related to children's low attention span and negative affectivity (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1994). For example, punishing parent reactions to a child who shows emotional expression might cause this child to feel anxious about punishment, fear, or anger (Eisenberg, Cumberland, & Spinrad, 1998). Additionally, these children show the tendency to escape rather than express their emotions when they are angry (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1994).

Emotional socialization behaviors are affected by the child's properties (age, gender, and temperament), parents' properties (for example, values, child-raising philosophy, parental organization and sensuality) and culture-specific properties (for example, culture-specific values when expressing emotions, the role of parents in child-raising practices). Additionally, the dimension of a specific context (for example, whether a child's behavior is suitable or the attraction and importance level of a given situation for the child or parent) doubtlessly contributes to emotional socialization of parents (Eisenberg, Cumberland, & Spinrad, 1998).

When the fact that mothers' emotional socialization behavior is important for children's success in various fields is considered, it is an important topic to determine variables that impact mothers' emotional socialization behavior and take steps to increase positive emotional socialization behaviors. Although the role emotional socialization behavior plays in children's emotional development was analyzed in the international literature with various aspects (Eisenberg et al., 1996; Mirabile, Oertwig, & Halberstadt, 2018; Pintar Breen, Tamis-LeMonda, & Kahana-Kalman, 2018; Yang, Song, Doan, & Wang, 2020) there are limited studies in our country (Altan-Aytun et al., 2013; Kılıç & Kumandaş-Öztürk, 2019; Özen-Uyar, Yılmaz-Genç, & Aktaş-Arnas, 2018; Seçer & Karabulut, 2016). In this sense, the purpose of this study is to analyze whether the emotional socialization behavior of mothers having preschool children is differentiated according to child's gender, mother's education level, and socioeconomic level. Based on this purpose, answers to the following research questions will be investigated.

1. Do mothers' emotional socialization behavior (emotion-focused responses, expressive encouragement, problem-focused responses, distress reactions, minimization reactions, punitive reactions) differentiate by the child's gender?
2. Do mothers' emotional socialization behavior (emotion-focused responses, expressive encouragement, problem-focused responses, distress reactions, minimization reactions, punitive reactions) differentiate by the mothers' education level?

3. Do mothers' emotional socialization behavior (emotion-focused responses, expressive encouragement, problem-focused responses, distress reactions, minimization reactions, punitive reactions) differentiate by socioeconomic level?

## Method

### Research Design

This study adopted a relational survey method among quantitative research methods. Correlational survey model analyses the change or quantity of the relationship between two or more variables (Karasar, 2012). Within the scope of this study, a correlational survey model was adopted as its main purpose was to analyze the relationship between mothers with preschool child emotional socialization behaviors and children's gender, mothers' education level and socioeconomic level.

### Participants

Based on the aim of this study, a purposeful sampling method was selected to determine mothers to be included in the study sample. The study sample consisted of 303 mothers with children in preschools in four districts of Adana Provincial Directorate of National Education. The socioeconomic level of participant mothers was determined to be based on education level and household income. In this direction, it was determined that all families in the low socioeconomic level had an income less than the poverty line, and that 42% of mothers were elementary school graduates and 48.7% were high school graduates. It was determined that the families in the middle socioeconomic level had monthly income more than the poverty line and 26.6% of the mothers graduated from elementary school, 38.3% graduated from high school, and 20.2% graduated from university. Monthly incomes of all the high socioeconomic families were more than middle socioeconomic families' income, and 23.3% of the mothers received education at the high school level and 53.3% were educated at the university level. Accordingly, while 39.35% of mothers in the sample had low socioeconomic living standards, 31% were at middle and 29.7% were at high socioeconomic level. Among participant mothers, 27.1% graduated from elementary school, 38% from high school, 8% from college, 24.1% from university and 2.8% from postgraduate programs. Mothers' mean age was 33 years (ranging from 22 to 57 years). Among participant mothers, 149 had girls and 154 had boys. 10.2% of children were four-years-old, 35.3% were five-years-old, and 54.5% were six-years-old.

### Data Collection Tools

Study data were collected with Personal Information Form and Coping with Children's Negative Emotions Scale.

**Personal Information Form:** Demographic information of mothers and their children were obtained by Personal Information Form prepared by the researchers. This form contained information such as mother's age, education level, occupation, monthly income, child's age, and gender.

**Coping with Children's Negative Emotions Scale:** Scale developed by Fabes, Eisenberg and Bernzweig (1990) to measure parent's emotional socialization behavior that was adapted to Turkish culture by Altan-Aytun et al. (2013). This scale consists of

12 scenarios that show a child experiencing negative emotions such as anger, fear, sadness etc. and a possible reaction by the parent to the child expressing this emotion. This scale consists of reactions that expressive encouragement, emotion-focused, problem-focused, distress reaction, punitive reaction and minimization reaction sub-dimensions. The internal consistency coefficient for Turkish form of this scale was found to be .87, .79, .72, .83, .86 and .65 for sub-scales respectively. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha scores were calculated, and internal consistency values were found as .85 for expressive encouragement subscale, .81 for emotion-focused responses subscale, .77 for problem-focused responses subscale, .46 for distress reactions subscale, .84 for punitive reactions subscale, and .83 for minimization reactions subscale.

### **Data Collection Process**

In the data collection process of the study, firstly, preschools in four different districts of Adana were visited by researchers to ensure that the participants varied in three socioeconomic levels. In these schools, the administrators and teachers were informed about the purpose and importance of the study. Accordingly, mothers who volunteered to participate in the research were determined. The Personal Information Form and Coping with Children's Negative Emotions Scales were given to the teachers in the schools for sending them to volunteer mothers. During the current study, ethical principles were followed. Mothers were informed that this study would only be used for scientific research, and that the research focused only on the process, not the individual. All data of the study were kept confidential.

### **Data Analysis**

The data obtained within the scope of this study were analyzed with SPSS 18.0 package program. Normal distribution of research data was analyzed with skewness and kurtosis coefficients. The analysis showed that all coefficients calculated for all variables were between +2 and -2 and it was accepted that obtained data fits with normal distribution. According to Şencan (2005), the skewness value should not be bigger than 2 and the kurtosis value should not be bigger than 7 in order to provide multivariate normality (as cited in Çokluk, Şekercioğlu, & Büyüköztürk, 2012). Parametric tests were applied for research data analysis. Accordingly, the relationship between the mother's emotional socialization behavior (Distress Reactions, Punitive Reactions, Minimization Reactions, Expressive Encouragement, Emotion-Focused Reactions, Problem-Focused Reactions) and the child's gender was analyzed with an independent samples t-test. The relationship between a mother's emotional socialization behaviors (Distress Reactions, Punitive Reactions, Minimization Reactions, Expressive Encouragement, Emotion-Focused Reactions, Problem-Focused Reactions) and education and socioeconomic level were analyzed with variance analysis. The Tukey Test among Post-Hoc tests were applied to identify which groups caused differences between groups. It was benefited from Eta squared ( $\eta^2$ ) value to determine the effect size of the mothers' education level and socioeconomic level variable on the dependent sample. Cohen (1988) states that the small eta squared as ( $\eta^2=.01$ ), medium eta squared as ( $\eta^2=.09$ ) and large eta squared ( $\eta^2=.25$ ) effects (as cited in Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

## Results

This section presents findings obtained from this study based on sub-problems. Table 1 shows the t-test results for the mother's emotional socialization behavior (distress reactions, punitive reactions, minimization reactions, expressive encouragement, emotion-focused responses, problem-focused responses) for the child's gender.

Table 1

*T-test Results of Emotional Socialization Behaviors of Mothers According to Child's Gender*

	Gender	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t	p
Distress Reactions	Girl	149	20.70	6.43	301	.30	.76
	Boy	154	20.50	5.16			
Punitive Reactions	Girl	149	20.05	7.09	301	1.48	.13
	Boy	154	21.38	8.45			
Minimization Reactions	Girl	149	31.08	8.54	301	.24	.80
	Boy	154	31.33	9.07			
Expressive Encouragement	Girl	149	42.72	8.73	301	.06	.95
	Boy	154	42.66	9.03			
Emotion-focused Responses	Girl	149	51.74	6.46	301	.01	.99
	Boy	154	51.74	6.71			
Problem-focused Responses	Girl	149	48.61	5.90	301	.91	.36
	Boy	154	49.25	6.45			

When Table 1 was analyzed, mothers' distressed emotional socialization behavior [ $t(301)=.30$ ,  $p>.05$ ], punitive reactions [ $t(301)=1.48$ ,  $p>.05$ ], minimization reactions [ $t(301)=.24$ ,  $p>.05$ ], expressive encouragement [ $t(301)=.06$ ,  $p>.05$ ], emotion-focused responses [ $t(301)=.01$ ,  $p>.05$ ] and problem-focused responses [ $t(301)=.91$ ,  $p>.05$ ] did not show significant difference for a child's gender.

Table 2 shows descriptive results of mother's emotional socialization behavior (distress reactions, punitive reactions, minimization reactions, emotion-focused responses, expressive encouragement, problem-focused responses) for education level.

Table 2

*Emotional Socialization Behavior Results of Mothers According to Their Educational Level*

Variable	Education level	N	$\bar{X}$	SD
Distress Reactions	Elementary school	82	20.39	5.74
	High school	115	20.40	4.68
	College	25	23.68	11.51

Table 2 *Continued*

Variable	Education level	<i>N</i>	$\bar{X}$	<i>SD</i>
Distress Reactions	University	73	20.16	4.44
	Postgraduate	8	19.87	4.88
	Total	303	20.60	5.81
Punitive Reactions	Elementary school	82	22.86	8.37
	High school	115	21.40	8.66
	College	25	19.16	5.94
	University	73	18.24	5.63
	Postgraduate	8	16.87	3.18
	Total	303	20.73	7.83
Minimization Reactions	Elementary school	82	32.52	8.47
	High school	115	31.80	8.83
	College	25	30.80	9.30
	University	73	28.89	8.78
	Postgraduate	8	31.87	8.28
	Total	303	31.21	8.80
Expressive Encouragement	Elementary school	82	42.29	9.28
	High school	115	41.97	8.60
	College	25	45.88	7.98
	University	73	42.83	9.21
	Postgraduate	8	45.88	6.62
	Total	303	42.69	8.87
Emotion-focused Responses	Elementary school	82	51.29	7.08
	High school	115	51.73	7.15
	College	25	53.04	5.67
	University	73	51.47	5.51
	Postgraduate	8	54.87	3.22
	Total	303	51.74	6.58
Problem-focused Responses	Elementary school	82	46.67	7.07
	High school	115	48.71	5.97
	College	25	50.92	4.94
	University	73	49.61	5.54
	Postgraduate	8	52.87	2.64
	Total	303	48.67	6.20

When Table 2 was analyzed, postgraduate mothers received the highest score in expressive encouragement responses ( $\bar{X}=45.88$ ), emotion-focused responses ( $\bar{X}=54.87$ ), and problem-focused reactions ( $\bar{X}=52.87$ ) which are positive emotional socialization behaviors. However, postgraduate mothers received the lowest score in distress reactions ( $\bar{X}=19.87$ ), punitive reactions ( $\bar{X}=16.87$ ) which are negative emotional socialization behaviors. Elementary school graduate mothers received the highest score in punitive reactions ( $\bar{X}=22.86$ ) and minimization reactions ( $\bar{X}=32.52$ ). In addition to this, elementary school graduate mothers received the lowest score in emotion-focused responses ( $\bar{X}=51.29$ ) and problem-focused responses ( $\bar{X}=46.67$ ).

Table 3 shows ANOVA results of the mother's emotional socialization behavior (distress reactions, punitive reactions, minimization reactions, expressive encouragement, emotion-focused responses, problem-focused responses) according to education level.

Table 3

*Emotional Socialization Behavior ANOVA Results of Mothers According to Their Educational Level*

Variable	Source of variance	Sum of squares	df	Means of squares	F	p	$\eta^2$	Significant difference
Distress Reactions	Between Groups	263.034	4	65.758	1.970	.09	.026	
	Within groups	9947.646	298	33.381				
	Total	10210.680	302					
Punitive Reactions	Between Groups	1056.426	4	264.106	4.508	.00	.057	Elementary school-university, high school-university
	Within groups	17458.921	298	58.587				
	Total	18515.347	302					
Minimization Reactions	Between Groups	582.207	4	145.552	1.900	.11	.025	
	Within groups	22826.850	298	76.600				
	Total	23409.056	302					
Expressive Encouragement	Between Groups	409.016	4	102.254	1.304	.26	.017	
	Within groups	23371.440	298	78.428				
	Total	23780.455	302					
Emotion-focused Responses	Between Groups	142.248	4	35.562	.819	.51	.011	
	Within groups	12939.673	298	43.422				
	Total	13081.921	302					
Problem-focused Responses	Between Groups	661.381	4	165.345	4.488	.00	.057	Elementary school-high school, college, university, postgraduate
	Within groups	10979.615	298	36.844				
	Total	11640.997	302					



When Table 3 was analyzed, it can be seen that there was a significant difference between mothers' emotional socialization behavior punitive reactions [ $F(4, 298)=4.508, p<.01$ ] and problem-focused responses [ $F(4, 298)=4.488, p<.01$ ] sub-dimensions and education level. According to the Tukey test results conducted to determine which groups caused differentiation in mothers' punitive reactions, it was determined that university graduate mothers ( $\bar{X}=18.24$ ) showed less punitive reactions than elementary school ( $\bar{X}=22.86$ ) and high school graduate mothers ( $\bar{X}=21.40$ ). It was seen that the mothers' education level has a small effect on the mothers' punitive reactions when eta squared value ( $\eta^2=.057$ ) which was obtained in terms of the education level variable was considered. According to the Tukey test results conducted to determine which groups caused differentiation in mothers' problem-focused responses, it was determined that elementary school graduate mothers ( $\bar{X}=46.67$ ) showed less problem-focused responses than high school ( $\bar{X}=48.71$ ), college ( $\bar{X}=50.92$ ), university ( $\bar{X}=49.61$ ) and postgraduate mothers ( $\bar{X}=52.87$ ). It was revealed that the mothers' education level has a small effect on the mothers' problem-focused responses when eta squared value ( $\eta^2=.057$ ) which was obtained in terms of the education level variable was considered.

Table 4 shows the descriptive results of the mother's emotional socialization behavior (distress reactions, punitive reactions, minimization reactions, expressive encouragement, emotion-focused responses, problem-focused responses) according to socioeconomic level.

Table 4

*Emotional Socialization Behavior Results of Mothers According to Their Socioeconomic Level*

Variable	Socioeconomic level	N	$\bar{X}$	SD
Distress Reactions	Low	119	21.28	7.20
	Middle	94	19.80	4.39
	High	90	20.52	4.94
	Total	303	20.60	5.81
Punitive Reactions	Low	119	22.89	8.73
	Middle	94	19.78	6.16
	High	90	18.86	7.51
	Total	303	20.73	7.83
Minimization Reactions	Low	119	32.85	9.38
	Middle	94	29.93	7.51
	High	90	30.37	9.00
	Total	303	31.21	8.80
Expressive Encouragement	Low	119	42.04	8.65
	Middle	94	42.61	8.65
	High	90	43.63	9.38
	Total	303	42.69	8.87

Emotion-focused Responses	Low	119	52.09	6.73
	Middle	94	51.35	5.87
Emotion-focused Responses	High	90	51.68	7.11
	Total	303	51.74	6.58
Problem-focused Responses	Low	119	48.12	6.57
	Middle	94	48.56	6.00
	High	90	49.50	5.88
	Total	303	48.67	6.20

When Table 4 was analyzed, mothers with low socioeconomic levels received the highest score in distress reactions ( $\bar{X}$ =21.28), punitive reactions ( $\bar{X}$ =22.89), and minimization reactions ( $\bar{X}$ =32.85) which are negative emotional socialization behaviors. However, mothers with low socioeconomic levels received the lowest score in expressive encouragement ( $\bar{X}$ =42.04), emotion-focused responses ( $\bar{X}$ =52.09), and problem-focused responses ( $\bar{X}$ =48.12) which are positive emotional socialization behaviors. Mothers with high socioeconomic levels received the highest score in expressive encouragement ( $\bar{X}$ =43.63), and problem-focused responses ( $\bar{X}$ =49.50). In addition to this, mothers with high socioeconomic levels received the lowest score in punitive reactions ( $\bar{X}$ =18.86).

Table 5 shows the ANOVA results of mother's emotional socialization behavior (distress reactions, punitive reactions, minimization reactions, expressive encouragement, emotion-focused responses, problem-focused responses) according to socioeconomic level.

Table 5

*Emotional Socialization Behavior ANOVA Results of Mothers According to Their Socioeconomic Level*

Variable	Source of variance	Sum of squares	df	Means of squares	F	p	$\eta^2$	Significant difference
Distress Reactions	Between Groups	115.385	2	57.693	1.714	.18	.011	
	Within groups	10095.294	300	33.651				
	Total	10210.680	302					
Punitive Reactions	Between Groups	951.622	2	475.811	8.127	.00	.051	low-middle, low-high
	Within groups	17563.725	300	58.546				
	Total	18515.347	302					
Minimization Reactions	Between Groups	537.712	2	268.856	3.527	.03	.023	low-middle
	Within groups	22871.344	300	76.238				
	Total	23409.056	302					
Expressive Encourage	Between Groups	130.553	2	65.276	.828	.43	.005	
	Within groups	23649.903	300	78.833				

ment	Total	23780.455	302				
Emotion- focused Responses	Between Groups	29.234	2	14.617	.336	.71	.002
	Within groups	13052.687	300	43.509			
	Total	13081.921	302				
Problem- focused Responses	Between Groups	98.270	2	49.135	1.277	.28	.008
	Within groups	11542.726	300	38.476			
	Total	11640.997	302				

When Table 5 was analyzed, it can be seen that there was a significant difference between mothers' emotional socialization behavior punitive reactions [ $F(2, 300)=8.127, p<.01$ ] and minimization reactions [ $F(2, 300)=3.527, p<.01$ ] sub-dimensions and socioeconomic level. According to Tukey test results conducted to determine which groups caused differentiation in mothers' punitive reactions, it was determined that mothers with low socioeconomic level ( $\bar{X}=22.89$ ) showed more punitive reactions than middle ( $\bar{X}=19.78$ ) and high level ( $\bar{X}=18.86$ ) mothers. It was revealed that the mothers' socioeconomic level has a small effect on the mothers' punitive reactions when eta squared value ( $\eta^2=.051$ ) which was obtained in terms of the socioeconomic level variable was considered. According to Tukey test results conducted to determine which groups caused differentiation in mothers' minimization reactions, it was determined that mothers with low socioeconomic level ( $\bar{X}=32.85$ ) showed more minimization reactions than middle ( $\bar{X}=19.78$ ) and high level ( $\bar{X}=29.93$ ). It was seen that the mothers' socioeconomic level has a small effect on the mothers' minimization reactions when eta squared value ( $\eta^2=.023$ ) which was obtained in terms of the socioeconomic level variable was considered.

### Discussion and Conclusion

Within the scope of this study, it was found that mothers' emotional socialization behavior showed no difference for a child's gender. When related literature was reviewed, there were contradictory results with this study. While there are studies that showed emotional socialization behavior changed for a child's gender (Garner, Robertson, & Smith, 1997; Fivush, 1991; Fivush, Berlin, McDermott Sales, Mennuti-Washburn, & Cassidy, 2003), there are also studies that show there is no change for gender (Denham, Bassett, & Wyatt, 2010; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1994; Kliewer, Fearnow, & Miller, 1996; Klimes-Dougan et al., 2007; Roberts, 1999). According to Garner et al. (1997), mothers' emotional socialization behavior changes based on the child's gender. Accordingly, mothers stated that girls expressed more positive emotions than boys. Additionally, mothers especially talked about sad emotions with girls and tried to comfort them. On the other hand, while anger emotions are acceptable for boys, it is unacceptable for girls (Fivush, 1991). However, this study found no differentiation in mothers' emotional socialization behaviors between girls and boys. In line with study findings, Denham et al. (2010) found that girls and boys did not show a difference in parents' emotional socialization style. Similarly, Klimes-Dougan et al. (2007) studied with adolescents and their parents and found that both girls' and boy's emotions socialized at the same level. Seçer and Karabulut (2016) studied with mothers in

Turkish culture and stated that mothers' minimization reactions are interacting with education level and child's gender. In this sense, it is believed that a child's gender is insufficient to impact mothers' emotional socialization behaviors alone but there are more significant results when combined with variables such as education level and socioeconomic level.

In this study, it was determined that mothers' education level differentiated emotional socialization behaviors. Accordingly, as mothers' education level increased, while punitive reactions among negative emotional socialization decreased, problem-focused reactions among positive emotional socialization increased. When the related literature was reviewed, some similar research findings were found (Altan-Aytun et al., 2013; Fabes et al., 2002; Seer & Karabulut, 2016). Altan-Aytun et al. (2013) determined in their study that there was a slight decline in mothers' punitive reactions and an increase in problem-focused responses with education. Seer and Karabulut (2016) had similar findings with this study and it was determined that as mother's education level increased, their positive emotional socialization behaviors increased and negative emotional socialization behaviors decreased. Bornstein, Hahn, Suwalsky and Haynes (2003) stated that mothers' education level is the variable that best exemplifies mothers' behaviors towards children. Research findings on Turkish mothers showed that a mother's education level is related to the child's socialization goals. Accordingly, while high educated Turkish mothers emphasized targets related to autonomy and self-enhancement more often, low education level mothers emphasized relatedness and obedience (Yağmurlu, itlak, Dost, & Leyendecker, 2009). It is known that mothers with low education level expect the child to behave according to authority and tend to give punishments. According to Coolahan, McWayne, Fantuzzo, and Grim (2002) parents with low level education engaged in significantly more restrictive parenting behaviors. In this sense, it is possible to state that mothers' low education level is related to negative emotional socialization behaviors and mothers' high education level is related with positive emotional socialization behavior finding of this study is in line with the literature.

The findings obtained from this study showed that emotional socialization behaviors of mothers changed based on their socioeconomic level. Accordingly, it was determined that mother's with low socioeconomic levels showed more punitive and minimization reactions compared to mothers with middle and high socioeconomic levels. According to Yağmurlu et al. (2009) the socioeconomic variable is a contextual variable that shapes parent behaviors. In this direction, middle income mothers were more likely than low-income mothers to control hostile/anger emotions in response to child sadness and fear (Martini, Root, & Jenkins, 2004). However, economic hardship affects a parent's interaction with their child (Hashima & Amato, 1994). It is known that risk factors such as low-income level within family context and mother's low education level are related with less supportive and mainly non-supportive parenting behaviors towards children's negative emotions (Shaffer, Suveg, Thomassin, & Bradbury, 2012). Conger et al. (1992) stated that economic hardship had an impact on parents' demoralization and emotional distress. When parents feel emotionally distressed, they tend to see negative emotions of their child (Fabes, Leonard, Kupanoff, & Martin, 2001) and show negative emotional socialization behaviors. Similarly, Hashima and Amato (1994) expressed that low-income level parents especially tend to show punishing and

non-supportive behaviors towards their children. Low income combined with a lack of social support is problematic for parents. Low-income parents, who reported that there were few sources of assistance available to them in a crisis, reported that they especially shouted or slapped their children very often.

### **Implications**

When study findings were analyzed, it was determined that emotional socialization behaviors of mothers did not differ significantly according to the child's gender. When contradicting findings in the related literature were considered, it is recommended to future research with a larger sample group.

It was determined that punitive reactions and problem-focused reactions of participant mothers differentiated by the mother's education level. Accordingly, as mothers' education level increased, while punitive reactions decreased, problem-focused reactions increased. Within this scope, it is important to realize the possible effects of a mother's with low education level emotional socialization behaviors on their children and prepare and implement an intervention program that ensures these mothers show positive emotional socialization reactions.

According to results, emotional socialization behaviors of mothers differentiated for socioeconomic levels. Whereas, it was determined that mother's with low socioeconomic levels showed more punitive reactions and minimization reactions compared to mothers with middle and high socioeconomic levels. Hashima and Amato (1994) stated that parents with low social support perception showed non-supportive and problematic behaviors towards children. In this sense, it is believed that financial support acquisition is important for parents living in low economic conditions.

Within the scope of this study, emotional socialization behaviors of mothers were detected with a self-assessment measurement tool that is commonly used in the related literature. Future studies might apply an observation and interview method to obtain more detailed data related to mothers' behaviors. In line with this, direct observation of mother-child interaction in a natural setting or with in-depth interviews with mothers can be recommended.

### **Statement of Responsibility**

Rabia Özen Uyar; conceptualization, design of research process, methodology, data collection, validation, investigation, data analysis, writing-draft and original, writing- review & editing. Melek Merve Yılmaz; conceptualization, design of research process, methodology, data collection, validation, investigation, writing-original, writing- review & editing. Yaşare Aktaş Arnas; conceptualization, design of research process, validation, writing-review, and supervision.

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