

## **Social Development of 5 And 6 Year Old Children in Terms of Employment Status of Their Mothers**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The purpose of this study is to evaluate the social development of 5-6 year-old children of employed and unemployed mothers. The population of the study consisted of 5-6 years-old preschool children in the province of Kayseri between 2012 and 2013. The sample group of the study was determined according to random sampling. As the data collection tool, "Marmara Social-Emotional Adaptation Scale (MSEAS) for 60-72 Month- Old Children" developed by Işık (2006) was used. The scale consists of 19 items, which were applied to totally 200 students including 114 girls and 86 boys. In the scale,  $\alpha = .89$ ; and the test-retest stability coefficient was .89. The data were evaluated by using the SPSS 20.00 software package and analyzed as percentage, frequency, and t-test. Results indicated that the social development of children of employed mothers was higher than those of children of unemployed mothers.*

**Keywords:** *Social Development, Employed Mother, Unemployed Mother, Preschool Child*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The preschool period constitutes the foundation of human life. A child begins to recognize and comprehend the life in the preschool period. In this period, what are acquired will considerably affect and direct the future gains. For this reason, each piece of knowledge and skill must be importantly processed in the preschool period and the development fields of the child are required to be supported in a multi-directional manner (Güven, 2004). Social competence and adaptation skill resulting in peer acceptance and successful interactions are primary developmental task for preschool children (Avcıoğlu, 2004). Therefore, preschool children should acquire social skills and be accepted by peers.

The term Sociality as a term was asserted by Georg Simmel in the early 20th century and covers the whole personal relationships established by an individual with others. Social development is a process where individuals, particularly children, become the functional members of a specific group and acquire the values and behaviours of the other members of the group (Mary, 1981).

Social development and accordingly socialization are the act of becoming an individual belonging to a community by appropriating behavioural patterns of that community, in which he/she lives, for himself/herself. Children are not born as socialized beings. The child learns to adapt the rules and values of a group and adopt this system of values during the socialization process. This learning lasts throughout one's life expectancy. During this process, children's relations with the other people in their circle and other environmental factors are also effective on their social adaptation (Başal, 2004). Social development is the process during which individuals, particularly children, become the functional members of a specific group and acquire values and behaviours of the other members of the group (Mary, 1981).

The factors affecting the social-emotional development in the preschool period can be divided into two: individual (biological or genetic) factors and environmental factors. Environmental factors are school, friends, and family factors. Within the family factor; father, mother, and siblings are the first and most important factors affecting the social development of the child.

However, these factors cannot be considered alone. Genetic characteristics and environmental factors play a role together in social development. The innate characteristics of the child and the socio-economic and cultural effects of the community where the child is in are of great importance in the process of social development (Karamanlı, 1998). Children become socialized when they adopt the life style of the community they live in and adapt to the society. In this process, they endeavour to comprehend and adopt the language, customs, and life philosophy of the community, of which they are a member. The socialization process starts in the family within the infancy period and continues at school with the social circle of the child (Durmuş, 2005).

Today, women have taken their place in the business in order to make contributions to the family's budget due to the economic difficulties, or for a set of psychological reasons such as enhancing their life standards, occupation love, earning respect in the society, making a circle of friends, meeting new people and increasing their position when compared to their husbands (Aktaş, 2001). Some problems arise with employment of the woman in the business life. Especially in the case of a married woman having children this situation may become more challenging. Primary ones among such challenges are care of the child at hours when mothers are absent, mothers' being unable to spend sufficient time with their children after having come

from work in an exhausted and tense manner, and thereby unable to establish a healthy communication with them (Yavuzer, 1992). In addition to the mothers' attitudes toward their children; characteristics such as their age, educational level and employment status as well as number of children play a very significant role in establishing a healthy communication with their children (Berns,1993). It has been found that the children with social skills are more successful than peers not possessing such skills sufficiently in various educational institutions (Şentürk, 2007). The child tries to imitate and learn the behaviours of persons they consider as important in the family. The fact that mothers spend excess time with their children and are closer to them than fathers causes the children to be more affected by mothers. Therefore, various characteristics of the parents affect the behavioural problems of the children (Gülerce, 1996.).

The employment status of the mother and the effects of employment of the mother on the child depend on various factors. These factors can be listed as employment status of the mother, her reasons, her educational level, presence of anyone to take care of the child, and age of the child, etc. (Bıçakçı, 2004). A child sees and perceives the world with their mother's eyes (Yavuzer, 1996).

## II. METHOD

This study was conducted in order to evaluate the social development of preschool children (5 and 6 years-old) of employed and unemployed mothers in the province of Kayseri. In order to achieve this purpose, an answer would be sought for the question "is there any significant correlation between social development levels of 5-6 years-old children and their mothers' employment status?".

In this section, the model of the study, population and sample group of the study, data collection tools and data analysis have been emphasized.

### *Model of Study*

This study investigated the social development levels of 5-6 years-old children depending on their mothers' employment status. Since it was intended to describe the existing conditions in the study as they are, the relational screening model which is one of the general screening models was used. Relational screening models are research models that aim to determine presence and degree of covariance between two or more variables. The general screening model was used in the study (Büyüköztürk et al., 2010).

### *Population and Sample Group*

The population of the study consisted of 5- 6 years-old children who received their education in the preschool educational institutions in the city centre and Develi district of the Kayseri province between 2013 and 2014.

The sample group of the study consisted of students attending 10 schools that were either Independent Kindergartens and within the body of Elementary School Kindergarten class. Since all the elements in the population did not have an equal chance of being selected, disproportionate stratified sampling (simple random sampling), one of stratified sampling types, was preferred (Karasar, 2003). The sample group of the study consisted of 200 (B=86 G=114) children selected by using a random sampling method. Table 1 illustrates the demographic data concerning the children who constituted the sample group.

**Table 1:** Distribution of Children Constituting the Sample Group in Terms of Gender

Gender	N	%
Girls	114	57
Boys	86	43
TOTAL	200	100

When the distributions of children participating in the study in terms of their gender were examined, it was observed from Table 1 that while 57% were girls, 43% were boys. The majority of the group was girls.

### *Data Collection Tools and Personal Information Form*

A personal information form and Marmara Social-Emotional Adaptation Scale for 60- 72-month-old children were used as data collection tools in the study. The personal information form was prepared by the researcher for the purpose of determining the personal information of employed and unemployed mothers who had 5-6 year old children attending a preschool educational institution.

### *Marmara Social-Emotional Adaptation Scale for 60- 72-month-old Children*

The Marmara social-emotional adaptation scale was developed between 2002 and 2003 by a group of 9 experts who are the instructors at Marmara University. This scale was also conducted by Işık (2006) as a postgraduate thesis on its validity and reliability study for 5- 6 years-old children as it measures the social and emotional adaptation levels of 0-6, 6-11 years-old children. In the validity and reliability study of the Marmara

Social-Emotional Adaptation Scale conducted by Işık (2006), the scale was reduced from 36 items to 19 as a result of the Factor Analysis. The final form of the scale consists of 19 items and 4 factors. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale is .89 ( $p < .001$ ) and its test-retest stability coefficient is .89. The scale was prepared as three-point Likert scale (Never=1, Sometimes=2, Always=3). While the lowest score that can be obtained from the scale is 19, the highest score is 57. The high score obtained from the scale signifies that the child has a high level of social-emotional adaptation (Işık, 2006).

**Analysis of Data**

The personal information form was delivered to mothers of students randomly selected by taking the class lists during the application and their data were received. For the same students, Marmara Social-Emotional Adaptation Scale (MSEAS) was filled in by the teachers. The data obtained from the sample group were inputted to the computer, assessed by using the SPSS 20.00 software package, and analyzed as frequency, percentage, and t test.

**III. RESULTS**

In this section, the personal information of the mothers in the sample group and the scores obtained by 5-6 years-old children from the MSEAS were illustrated and interpreted with frequency, percentage, and t test statistics. Table 2 illustrates the employment status of the mothers.

**Table 2:** Distribution of Employment Status of the Mothers

Employment Status of the mother	n	%
Employed	118	59
Unemployed	82	41
TOTAL	200	100

When Table 2 was examined, it was observed that while 59% of the mothers of the children participating in the study were employed, 41% were unemployed. Table 3 illustrates the information concerning the mothers' educational level

**Table 3:** Distribution of the Mothers' Educational Level

Educational Level	N	%
Primary	30	15
Secondary School	18	9
High-School	56	28
Associate deg. /Bachelor deg	78	39
Graduate	18	9
TOTAL	200	100

When the educational status of the mothers of children participating in the study was examined according to Table 3, it was observed that 39% had an associate degree or bachelor degree; whereas, 28% were high school graduate, 15% were primary school graduate, 9% were secondary school and graduate school graduates.

Table 4 illustrates the conditions of the children of the employed and unemployed mothers in the subscale "suitable behaviours for the requirements of social life" as a percentage and frequency.

**Table 4:** The conditions of the children of the employed and unemployed mothers in the subscale "suitable behaviours for the requirements of social life"

Questions	Never		Sometimes		Always	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Shares tools and equipments with their friends</b>						
Employed	-	-	38	19	80	40
Unemployed	2	1	22	11	58	29
<b>Obeys the rules in group games</b>						
Employed	-	-	70	35	52	26
Unemployed	2	1	28	14	48	24
<b>Helps their circle when necessary</b>						
Employed	4	2	64	32	54	27
Unemployed	2	1	30	15	46	23
<b>Solves problems without using aggression</b>						
Employed	6	3	36	18	76	38
Unemployed	4	2	20	10	58	29
<b>Uses gentle expressions in their daily life.</b>						
Employed	-	-	70	35	62	31
Unemployed	2	1	28	14	38	19

<b>Fulfils responsibilities appropriate for their age</b>						
Employed	4	2	64	32	54	27
Unemployed	2	1	30	15	46	23
<b>Careful about the use of common belongings</b>						
Employed	-	-	38	19	80	40
Unemployed	2	1	22	11	58	29
<b>Careful about looking well</b>						
Employed	4	2	66	35	48	24
Unemployed	2	1	28	14	52	26
<b>Sensitive to the needs and requests of others</b>						
Employed	-	-	68	34	50	25
Unemployed	2	1	30	15	50	25

Table 4 shows that rates of the answers given by 5-6 years olds for all the questions in the subscale "suitable behaviours for the requirements of social life" were higher in favour of the children of the employed mothers. For the question of "shares materials and equipments with their friends", 40% of the children of the employed mothers were always and 19% were sometimes, making 59% in total; whereas for the condition "shares materials and equipments with their friends" of the children of the unemployed mothers, 29% were always and 11% were sometimes, making 40% in total. For the question of "obeys the rules in group games", 26% of the children of the employed mothers were always and 35% were sometimes, making 61% in total. For the condition "obeys the rules in group games" of the children of the unemployed mothers, 24% were always and 14% were sometimes, making 38% in total.

Table 5 illustrates the conditions of the children of the employed and unemployed mothers in the subscale " suitable reactions to the social situations " as percentage and frequency.

**Table 5:** The conditions of the children of the employed and unemployed mothers in the subscale " suitable reactions to the social situations "

Questions	Never		Sometimes		Always	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Enjoys being liked by others</b>						
Employed	-	-	38	19	80	40
Unemployed	2	1	22	11	58	29
<b>Makes jokes appropriate for the environment and time</b>						
Employed	6	3	72	36	30	15
Unemployed	6	3	60	30	26	13
<b>Gives proper reaction when treated unfairly</b>						
Employed	2	1	32	16	82	41
Unemployed	8	4	24	12	52	26
<b>Struggles to get their right when is necessary</b>						
Employed	6	3	36	18	76	38
Unemployed	4	2	20	10	58	29

Table 5 shows that rates of the answers given by 5-6 years olds for all the questions in the subscale " suitable reactions to the social situations " were higher in favour of the children of the employed mothers. For instance, for the question of "struggles to get their right when necessary", 38% of the children of the employed mothers were always and 18% were sometimes, making 56% in total; whereas, 29% of the children of the unemployed mothers were always and 10% were sometimes, making 39% in total.

Table 6 illustrates the conditions of the children of the employed and unemployed mothers in the subscale "interaction with the peers" as a percentage and frequency.

**Table 6:** The conditions of children with the employed and unemployed mothers in the subscale "interaction with the peers"

Questions	Never		Sometimes		Always	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Communicates easily with peers</b>						
Employed	-	-	30	15	88	44
Unemployed	2	1	28	14	52	26
<b>Easily included in a previously formed peer group</b>						
Employed	-	-	38	19	80	40
Unemployed	2	1	22	11	58	29
<b>Prefers to be with friends in leisure time</b>						
Employed	2	1	32	16	84	42
Unemployed	2	1	24	12	56	28

Table 6 shows that rates of the answers given by 5-6 years olds for all the questions in the subscale "interaction with the peers" were higher in favour of the children of the employed mothers. For example, for the question of "easily included in a previously formed peer group" in this subscale, 40% of the children of the employed mothers were always and 19% were sometimes, making 59% in total; whereas, 29% of the children of the unemployed mothers were always and 11% were sometimes, making 40% in total.

Table 7 illustrates the conditions of the children of the employed and unemployed mothers in the subscale "Adoption of a positive attitude towards the social environment" as percentage and frequency.

**Table 7:** The conditions of the children of the employed and unemployed mothers in the subscale "Adoption of a positive attitude towards the social environment"

Questions	Never		Sometimes		Always	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Separates smoothly from the parent</b>						
Employed	6	3	34	17	78	39
Unemployed	-	-	22	11	60	30
<b>Is a happy child</b>						
Employed	10	5	32	16	58	29
Unemployed	2	1	28	14	70	35
<b>Has a positive facial expression in general</b>						
Employed	2	1	24	12	60	30
Unemployed	2	1	32	16	80	40

Table 7 shows that rates of the answers given by children for the other two questions except for the question "separates smoothly from the parent" in the subscale "adoption of a positive attitude towards the social environment" were higher in favour of the children of the unemployed mothers. For instance, for the question "has a positive facial expression in general" in this subscale, 40% of the children of the unemployed mothers were always and 16% were sometimes, making 56% in total; whereas, 30% of the children of the employed mothers were always and 12% were sometimes, making 42% in total.

Table 8 illustrates results of the independent samples t-test performed for the subscale "suitable behaviours for the requirements of social life" of the Marmara Social-Emotional Adaptation Scale (MSEAS) on 5-6 years-old children of the employed and unemployed mothers.

**Table 8:** Results of the independent samples t-test performed for the subscale "suitable behaviours for the requirements of social life" of the Marmara Social-Emotional Adaptation Scale (MSEAS) on children of the employed and unemployed mothers

Status of the mother	N	X	ss	sh	t test		
					t	sd	p
Employed	118	2,8	,25	0,1	3,79	461	,002
Unemployed	82	1,9	,20	0,1			

As is seen from Table 8, as a result of the independent samples t-test, it was found that there was a statistically significant difference between the employment status of the mothers and scores of the subscale "suitable behaviours for the requirements of social life" of the MSEAS ( $t = 3.79; p < .01$ ).

Table 9 illustrates results of the independent samples t-test performed for the subscale "suitable reactions to the social situations" of the Marmara Social-Emotional Adaptation Scale (MSEAS) on 5-6 years-old children of the employed and unemployed mothers.

**Table 9:** Results of the independent samples t-test performed for the subscale "suitable reactions to the social situations" of the Marmara Social-Emotional Adaptation Scale (MSEAS) on children of the employed and unemployed mothers

Status of the mother	N	X	ss	sh	t test		
					t	sd	p
Employed	118	2,6	,24	0,1	3,51	458	,010
Unemployed	82	2,1	,22	0,1			

As is seen from Table 9, as a result of the independent samples t-test, it was found that there was a statistically significant difference between the employment status of the mothers and scores of the subscale "suitable reactions to the social situations" of the MSEAS ( $t = 3.51; p < .05$ ).

Table 10 illustrates results of the independent samples t-test performed for the subscale "interaction with the peers" of the Marmara Social-Emotional Adaptation Scale (MSEAS) on 5-6 years-old children of the employed and unemployed mothers

**Table 10:** Results of the independent samples t-test performed for the subscale "interaction with the peers" of Marmara Social-Emotional Adaptation Scale (MSEAS) on children of the employed and unemployed mothers

Status of the mother	N	X	ss	sh	t test		
					t	sd	p
Employed	118	2,7	,25	0,2	2,26	428	,040
Unemployed	82	2,0	,22	0,1			

As is seen from Table 10, as a result of the independent samples t-test, it was determined that there was a statistically significant difference between employment status of the mothers and scores of the subscale "interaction with the peers" of the MSEAS ( $t = 2.26; p < .05$ ).

Table 11 illustrates results of the independent samples t-test performed for the subscale "adoption of a positive attitude towards the social environment" of the Marmara Social-Emotional Adaptation Scale (MSEAS) on 5-6 years-old children of the employed and unemployed mothers.

**Table 11:** Results of the independent samples t-test performed for the subscale "adoption of a positive attitude towards the social environment" of the Marmara Social-Emotional Adaptation Scale (MSEAS) on children of the employed and unemployed mothers

Status of the mother	N	X	ss	sh	t test		
					t	sd	p
Employed	118	2,6	,35	0,3	1,98	410	,194
Unemployed	82	2,4	,31	0,2			

As is seen from Table 11, as a result of the independent samples t-test, it was determined that there was no statistically significant difference between the employment status of the mothers and scores of the subscale "adoption of a positive attitude towards the social environment" of the MSEAS ( $t = 2.26; p < .05$ ).

Table 12 illustrates results of the independent samples t-test performed for the total score of the Marmara Social-Emotional Adaptation Scale (MSEAS) on 5-6 years-old children of the employed and unemployed mothers

**Table 12:** Results of the independent samples t-test performed for total score of the Marmara Social-Emotional Adaptation Scale (MSEAS) on children of the employed and unemployed mothers

Maternal Status	N	X	ss	sh	t test		
					t	sd	p
Employed	118	2,7	,25	0,1	3,49	459	,010
Unemployed	82	2,1	,22	0,1			

As is seen from Table 12, as a result of the independent samples t-test, it was found that there was a statistically significant difference between the employment status of the mothers and the total score of MSEAS ( $t = 3.49; p < .05$ ). This difference was in the favour of children with the employed mothers.

#### IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

When the frequency and percentages of the answers given to the questions of the MSEAS were examined, the frequency and percentage rates of the answers given by 5-6 years old children for all the questions except for "is a happy child" and "Has a positive facial expression in general" in the subscale "adoption of a positive attitude towards the social environment" were higher in favour of the children of the employed mothers.

As a result of independent samples t test performed for the subscale scores of the MSEAS according to the employment status of the mothers, it was determined that there were statistically significant differences in the subscales of Suitable behaviours for the Requirements of Social Life, Suitable Reactions to the Social Situations, and Interaction with the Peers. Also in results of the independent samples t-test performed for evaluating total score obtained by children of the mothers from the Marmara Social-Emotional Adaptation Scale (MSEAS), statistically significant differences were found, as well. This difference was in the favour of children with the employed mothers. These results indicated that the social development of the children with employed mothers was higher than those with unemployed mothers. While this result proved that the quality of the time spent by the mothers with their children was important rather than its quantity, it could be thought that the educational level of the mothers which is an significant factor in the development and education of children had a positive effect on all the developmental fields of children, social development being in the first place.

The studies have showed that there is a significant relationship between the child's psycho-social development and their family relations, age, intelligence, gender and the social circle they live in (Başal, 2004).

According to Hoffman, mothers being a full time housewife adopt a more authoritative and stricter attitudes compared to those who are full time employee. Nevertheless, employed mothers support their

independence more. The results of a study conducted by Hoffman on 369 families revealed that child bringing up and discipline approaches between employed and unemployed mothers were considerably different. The results indicate that employed mothers were more positive on their children and that their relationships with their mothers were more warm and emotional when compared to the unemployed mothers (Hoffman, 2000). The results of that study support the results of our study. In the examinations made on three-five year-old children, data concerning that employed mother was not harmful for their children (Perry, 1961). Mothers who are happy at work and are working without being anxious about the care of their children have a better parental role than those who do not work (Aktaş, 1994). The result obtained in a longitudinal study conducted on 5828 women and their 1657 children in the United States did not generally support the argument that employment of mothers would have negative effects on their young children and cause a behaviour disorder. On the contrary, it supported the opinion that employment of the mother and the increasing of the income level of the family would enhance the life standard of the family and thus this general well-being affecting the family would create positive effects on the development of the child because of ensuring to take care the child in a better environment (Yeşilyaprak, 2007). Burchinal and Romsan (1961), who conducted studies on different age groups ranging from childhood to adolescence, revealed that employment of the mother was not unfavourable for the child and that there was no difference between children of employed and unemployed mothers (Ekşi, 1990). According to Scarr-Phillips-Mccartney, (1989), children of employed mothers are less likely to accept the traditional gender roles. Therefore, both girls and boys acquire role expectations that are less stereotyped, more flexible and are likely to adapt to novelties and conditional situations easily.

In the study conducted by Schachter (1981) on 32 employed and 38 unemployed mothers for 7 years, it was found that children of employed mothers were more friendly and at self-sufficient level; whereas, the children of mothers who did not work were more jealous and protected (Şentürk, 2007) .

In the study by Işık (2006), it was determined that there was a statistically significant and negative correlation between social-emotional adaptation levels of 60-72 month old children and the organizational and structural quality of their families. As functions of the families became unhealthier, the social-emotional adaptation levels of their children decreased significantly.

Results of all the aforementioned studies examining the employment of the mother on her child comply with and support results of our study.

In families where the mother does not work, the mothers or adults generally raise their children by relying on the education experiences they go through. The educational experience of the adult becomes generally insufficient based on the sense of the education in our era (Üstünova, 1998). A high level of education of the mother leads to having extensive knowledge about the child's development and makes positive contributions to the personal traits of the child. These experience, high-educated mother, build a significant effects of their children development.(Bıçakçı, 2004). In the study by Yeşilyaprak (2007), it was concluded that the educational level of the employed mothers were an higher, and they made more efforts to improve themselves and had higher awareness level when compared to the unemployed mothers. From this perspective, she stated that employment of the mother is a predictor variable to for adopting appropriate approaches towards her child and creating a healthier atmosphere. Bayley and Schaefer, (1967) stated that while educated mothers with a high socio-economic levels provided more autonomy for their children and have a tendency to treat equally, the mothers being inattentive about autonomy and punitive had more timid and conservative children ( Ekşi, 1990).

A mother's ability to address the child's needs and solve their problems in time is of important for the development of trust of the child. This makes us think that an employed mother may be insufficient for raising a child. The studies have revealed that these problems of the employed mothers are arising from the anxiety about which they may not spend enough time with the children and not knowing how to care for them in the time spent with the children instead of the mother's necessity of working. For this reason, the employed mother has to establish a more qualified relationship with her children in a short time (Ertuğrul, 2002). If the mother is employed, she should pay attention to spending a quality time with her children. Quality time spent together is something we advise for all relationships; however, because the employed mothers cannot spend much time with their children, it becomes more important for them. Spending quality time, establishes "qualified and continuous unity" is to. A real relationship should exist between the mother and the child within the time spent together (Tarhan, 2002). As a consequence, based on the results of this study:

- An employed mother should adopt the maternal role very well.
- She should pursue a healthy attitude as a mother.
- The required support and measures should be taken to minimise the problems she experiences while working.
- It is significant for mothers undertaking the most important task in the development and education of children in Turkey to have higher educational level.

- Measures should be taken for increasing the time and the quality of time spent between the mother and children and mothers should be provided with training programs about this matter.
- To give a more opportunities to the unemployed mothers, like decent job and vocational courses, should be provided so that they can be an active part of the production or economic activities.

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