Comparison of Single and Two Parents Children in terms of Behavioral Tendencies

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Abstract

The purpose of the present study was to compare behavioral tendencies such as assertiveness, aggressiveness and submissiveness of single parent children and normal parent children who have two parents. 75 single parent children and 75 two parent children joined in the study. CATS (Children Action Tendency Scale)(Deluty, 1979) which was adapted to Turkish by Usakli (2006) was used as an inventory. At the end of the study, it is found out that the single parent children are less assertive and more aggressive and submissive than their two parent peers. Families, teachers, school administrators and school counselors should be aware of the behavioral tendencies of single parent children. It is recommended that future studies can be about the intervention programs for single parent children to overcome their aggressiveness and submissiveness.

Key Words: Single parent children, assertiveness, aggressiveness, submissiveness

This study consists of three main parts. Firstly, the concept of single parenting was evaluated in terms of related bibliography and researches. Then, the assertiveness and related to two concepts which are aggressiveness and submissiveness was explained. Finally, the research founding was submitted.

Marriage is the state of being united to a person of the opposite sex as husband or wife (or the state of being united to a person of the same sex in a relationship like that of a traditional marriage that is same sex marriage) in a consensual and contractual relationship recognized by law. Legally and socially sanctioned union, usually between a man and a woman, that is regulated by laws, rules, customs, beliefs, and attitudes that prescribe the rights and duties of the partners and accords status to their offspring.

The universality of marriage is attributed to the many basic social and personal functions it performs, such as procreation, regulation of sexual behavior, care of children and their education and socialization, regulation of lines of descent, division of labor between the sexes, economic production and consumption, and satisfaction of personal needs for social status, affection, and companionship. Until modern times marriage was rarely a matter of free choice, and it was rarely motivated by romantic love. In most eras and most societies, permissible marriage partners have been carefully regulated. In societies in which the extended family remains the basic unit, marriages are usually arranged by the family. The assumption is that love between the partners comes after marriage, and much thought is given to the socioeconomic advantages accruing to the larger family from the match (merriam-webster.com).

Family is a group of people in which two or more people are together with blood tide and marriage (Ozkalp, 2003: 111). Family is defined as a complex structure that has common history, togetherness, sharing an emotional bond with an individual action plan to meet the needs of the whole family members of a social construct (Nazli, 2003). In additions to these definitions, family is one of the effective institutions that guide children for their development, integration and socialization (Yavuzer, 2001).

Some reasons affect family's normal structure that is being father, mother and siblings togetherness which constitutes cell family such as divorce, separation, death. This is named as single family (Soyaslan, 1998; Senturk, 2006). Divorce is a normal process in which either two parts or one part with his or her desire ends marriage togetherness according to societies' valid norms or traditions (Ozkalp, 2003: 121). Divorce affects mostly children. After divorce occurrence, children feel themselves insecure and suffer from the feelings of complexity.

Most children think that one day, their father and mother will be together so they occupy themselves to find out solution that is useless. In order to solve conflict between parents, some of them prefer living with one of them (Ozkalp, 2003).

Single-parent families is a concept that defines, families in which either the father or mother is absent because of divorce, marital separation, out-of –wedlock pregnancy, or death (Greenberg, 2002: 329). 28 percent of all families with children still at home were maintained by one parent. That amounts to over 12 million families and over 20 million children. Eighty-four percent of the numbers of one parent families were headed by women in 1998. That amounted to over 9.8 million families. In addition, 2.1 million one-parent families were headed by men. This increase in single-parent families is a result of increase marital separation, divorce, and out of wedlock pregnancies rather than widowhood. Further, in 1998, 63 percent of African American families with children at home, 37 percent of Hispanic families with children at home, and 27 percent of white families with children at home were maintained by one parent (U.S. Census Bureau, 1999).

Divorce occurs in the context of many factors that are co-occurring both before and after the divorce (Ellis, 2000). Wade and Travis (1990) called divorce as the breaking of attachment. According to them thirty years ago, divorce was rare and shameful. Today, divorce is as common as the flu and often strikes as unpredictably, to couples married only a year as well as to couples married for decades, affecting one million children a year. A child born today has a 40 percent chance of living through a second parental divorce by age 18. At least the stigma of being different no longer matters; we know a child who complains that she or he has only one set of parents.

Despite its increasing prevalence, divorce continues to be troubling, difficult, and painful for children of all ages just as it is troubling for most divorcing couples. One reason is that human beings do not break their attachments lightly, even bad attachments (Berman, 1988; Bowlby, 1988). Married couples who fought constantly are often surprised to discover, once separated, how emotionally attached they remain to each other. Children often persist in their attachment to a cold or abusive parent long after the parent has abandoned them.

There are three factors seems to be very important in divorce these are child age, sex and family socioeconomic status. According to longitudinal studies, the effects of divorce depend on the child's gender, age at the time of the parents' divorce and whether you are looking at immediate or long-term reactions (Wallerstein, 1983; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989).

The general effects of divorce are;

• Loss of concentration and attention
• Declining grades and behavior problems at school
• Withdrawal from friends
• Emotional outbursts and health problems
• Serious anger with one or both parents
• Delinquency and substance use (samhsa.gov, 2011).

We know little about the effects of divorce on children younger than two or three years of age. Young children do not always suffer if a divorce occurs. However, problems may occur if a close relationship or bond between a parent and child is broken. Parents should agree on parenting and childcare arrangements so the child does not grow up experiencing conflict between his or her parents. Infants may not understand conflict, but may react to changes in parent's energy level and mood. Infants may loose their appetite or have an upset stomach and spit up more.

Preschool-age children (ages 2 to 6) are the age group most immediately distressed by their parents' divorce, yet the group that does best in the long run. Children from three to five years of age frequently believe they have caused their parents' divorce. For example, they might think that if they had eaten their dinner or done their chores when told to do so, Daddy wouldn't have gone away. Preschoolers may fear being left alone or abandoned altogether. They may show baby-like behavior, such as wanting their security blanket or old toys, or they begin wetting the bed. They may deny that anything has changed, or they may become uncooperative, depressed, or angry. Although they want the security of being near an adult, they may act disobedient and aggressive. Preschoolers become extremely needy and anxious.

Being egocentric in their thinking, they blame themselves for the divorce ("Daddy is leaving because I left my toys on the stairs"). A year and a half later, about half of these children, especially the boys, are still deeply troubled. After five years, more than a third of them are still moderately to severely depressed. By adolescence, however, most have forgotten the distress and fears they felt at the time of the divorce and are less burdened by the divorce then older children.

Yet many still speak sadly of the disruption and some still have fantasies of their parents' reconciliation. Almost all remain emotionally attached to their fathers, whether the father visits them often more rarely, predictably or erratically.

Elementary-school age children (Ages 7 to 12) are not as likely to blame themselves for the divorce, but most feel abandoned and lonely nevertheless. They are better than preschoolers at expressing their feelings, but they have trouble managing conflicting emotions toward the custodial parent, such as anger and sadness. They often fear that if they make that parent angry, he or she will leave them, too. Some psychologists believe the adjustment to parental divorce is more difficult for elementary school children than for younger or older children. School-age children are old enough to understand that they are in pain because of their parents' separation. They are too young, however, to understand or to control their reactions to this pain. They may experience grief, embarrassment, resentment, divided loyalty and intense anger. Their ability to become actively involved in play and activities with other children may help them cope with their family life situation. Children this age may hope parents will get back together. Elementary aged children may feel rejected by the parent who left. They may complain of headaches or stomachaches.

Adolescents (age 13 to 18) report frequent feelings of anger, sadness, shame, helplessness, and a sense of betrayal by the parents. They tend to cope by distancing themselves from their parents, remaining aloof even a year of more later. Teens also experience anger, fear, loneliness, depression and guilt.

Some feel pushed into adulthood if they must take responsibility for many new chores or care of siblings. Teens may respond to parents' low energy level and high stress level by trying to take control over the family. Others feel a loss of parental support in handling emerging sexual feelings. Teens also may doubt for their own ability to get married or to stay married. Teens may understand the causes leading to their parents' separation. Their ability to remember the conflict and stress of the divorce may interfere with their ability to cope with the changes in their family. They may also feel pressure to "choose" one of their parents over the other, or to fault one parent over the other for the "cause" of the divorce. Girls may respond to parental divorce by becoming sexually precocious (Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1985). Boys may become sexually insecure and threatened, acting out their feelings through drug use and aggression. Other boys become "super-macho," exaggerating the male role. Because of their greater cognitive maturity, adolescents are better able than younger children to see the divorce as mainly the parents' problem. But for the same reason, they often become more distressful of the institution of marriage itself. College-age students (ages 18 to 22) intellectually understand and accept the reasons for their parents' divorce, but this understanding does not reduce their emotional upheaval. Many report depression, stress, and feeling of insecurity. They are old enough to feel empathy for their parents, yet they often worry that no one appreciates their own grief and confusion (Cooney et al., 1986).

The summary of developmental considerations as follows:

3 to 5 years old children
• Poor understanding of the family situation
• Feelings: frightened, insecure
• May have nightmares, whining, crying, clinging behavior
• Temper tantrums
• Changes in eating and sleeping
• Regression to more infant like behavior

6 to 8 year old children
• Trouble separating their own needs from those of their parents
• Feel sad, loss, frightened, uncertain
• Generalized anxiety

• Disorganized and unsettled
• School work problems
• Feelings of abandonment by and miss parent they don't see much
• Anger at perceived rejection
• Lashing out at custodial parent, teachers, other children
• Denial, self-blame, feels alienated
• May attach themselves to other adults for security

9 to 12 year old children
• Sense of loss
• Feel rejected, helpless, lonely, ashamed, embarrassed
• Powerless to control parental behavior
• Psychosomatic symptoms
• Anger, withdrawn, overactive
• Blame one parent for the divorce, direct anger
• School work problems
• Struggling with feelings of mixed loyalties, loneliness, depression
• Power struggle with authority
• May seek support from other adults outside of the home (Baris & Garrity, 1988; Johnston & Roseby, 1997; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 2003; O'Rourke & Worzbyt, 1996).

Researchers are now finding that boys rose by fathers and girls raised by mothers may do better than children raised by the parent of the opposite sex. School age boys living with their fathers or in joint living arrangements seem to be less aggressive. They also have fewer emotional problems than those boys who live with their mothers and have little or no contact with their fathers. Girls raised with mothers tend to be more responsible and mature than girls raised by their fathers.

However, the children's adjustment following a divorce has more to do with the quality of the parent-child relationship than with the gender and age of the child. Overall, girls adjust to divorce more easily than boys, and one reason seems to be that boys suffer more by being separated from the father when the mother has custody (Guidubaldi & Perry, 1985). Children who live in joint custody or in custody of the same-sex parent show significantly more competence, maturity, cooperativeness, and self-esteem than children living with the opposite-sex parent.

A child's ability to cope with divorce also depends on whether the parents settle into amicable (or at least silent) relations or continue to feel angry and conflicted. Children will eventually recover form the parents' divorce, unless the parents continue to quarrel about visitation rights, take each other to court, or fight with each other at every visit (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989). From the standpoint of children's adjustment, an amicable divorce is better than a bitter marriage, but a prolonged and bitter divorce is worst of all.

The impact of divorce on children of this age is more profound. Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) found that children six to eight seem to have the hardest time of any age group. As they are old enough to realize what is happening but do not have adequate skills to deal with the disruption. They often feel a sense of responsibility, experience tremendous grief, and have a pervasive sadness and yearning for the departed parent. At the same time, they experience recurring fantasies of reconciliation and often think that they have the power to make it happen.

Findings from a variety of empirical research studies show that the quality of adult-child interaction is related to children's intellectual development and academic success. There is a large body of evidence on the prevalence of mental and social retardation among children raised in orphanages or hospitals where the ratio of adults to children is low and there is little adult-child interaction. The importance of interaction with adults is underscored by the dramatic gains often made by institutionalized children when they received nurturance from substitute mothers, even if the substitutes were severely retarded themselves (Bocoock, 1980: 76). Academic achievement is very important for third and fourth grades because according to Erikson's Theory of Psychosocial personality development they are in "Industry versus Inferiortiy" life transition (Thomas, 1979: 272).

Competence is important in this period, the free use of skill and intelligence in completing tasks, unimpaired by infantile inferiority. Children want to earn recognition by producing something, to gain the satisfaction of completing work by perseverance. The child may have potential abilities which, if not evoked and nurtured during latency, may develop later or never (Erikson, 1959: 87).

When the divorce is bitter, children may be at risk psychologically if involved in loyalty conflicts. Some children assume or are drawn into parentified roles, taking on inappropriate adult responsibilities that are damaging emotionally. They may develop school and/or peer problems characterized by poor performance, problematic behavior with peers or authority, and/or somatic symptoms (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980).

The older the children are at the time of separation, the easier it will be for the father to establish an effective parental role as he knows them as people, with personalities and interests to which he can relate. However, as they get older and more involved with peers and outside involvements, they may draw back from the father both physically and emotionally, unless he is sensitive to their general desire to cut back on their time with parents, and does not take it personally. The long-term consequences of parental divorce for adult attainment and quality of life may prove to be more serious than the short-term emotional and social problems in children (Amato & Keith, 1991). One cannot predict long-term effects of divorce on children from how they react at the outset (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989). Research suggests that problematic parent-child relations associated with divorce persist throughout the life course (Amato and Booth,1996).

Children from disrupted families are significantly more likely to express discontent with their lives as measured by an index of life satisfaction (Furstenberg & Teitler, 1994).

Theories for the negative effect of divorce suggest that:

Parental absence perspective
– Two parents are better than one
Economic disadvantage perspective
– Increased stressors including parents feeling socially isolated, changes in living arrangements, economic hardship, visitation problems, continued parental conflict
Family conflict perspective
– Children are affected negatively by parental conflict (Amato & Keith, 1991).

Risk Factors

• Custodial parent less effective in parenting role
• Less involvement from noncustodial parent
• Interparental hostility
• Decline in economic resources
• Series of disruptive life changes (Kelly, 2001).

Numerous studies have found links between the quality of the parents' relationship and positive outcomes for children and families (Amato, 2005). For example, children living in single-parent and/or low-income households are more likely to exhibit problem behaviors and depressive symptoms and are less likely to display social competence than are children who grow up in more fortunate circumstances (Moore, et al., 2006). Most common problems seen in single parent families' children are depression, stress, loneliness, aggression, compliance, smoke, alcohol, narcotics (Herwing, et al., 2004; Jackson, 2000).

Happy marriage makes for happy kids. On average, children in single-parent families are more likely to have problems including depression and behavioral and social problems that the majority of children who are reared by both parents. A new study by the research group child trends stresses the importance of a child reared by two biological parents in a low conflict marriage for future health and happiness. (childtenrs.org). A substantial body of research has shown that, on average, children who are raised from birth in two-parent families have better cognitive and behavioral outcomes compared with children who have ever lived in single-parent families, more than 80% of which are headed by single mothers (Carlson & Corcoran, 2001; Fields & Casper, 2001; Hetherington & Clingempeel, 1992; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994; Pryor & Rodgers, 2001).

Sometimes having two parents is not enough for child who desired express wanted behaviors. Jaffee and et al. (2003) indicate that, behavioral genetic analyses showed that children who resided with antisocial fathers received a double whammy of genetic and environmental risk for conduct problems. Marriage may not be the answer to the sources of emotional and economic support.

In an overview of the role of fathers in children's development, Lamb (1997) summarized several reasons father absence is associated with poor outcomes for children, citing the emotional distress of single mothers who may receive little social support, economic stressors, perceptions of abandonment by children, and predivorce and postdivorce marital conflict.

National survey studies of family structure and children's outcomes consistently find that children raised in two-parent families do better than children raised in single-parent families on measures of educational achievement and adjustment (Jaffee and et al., 2003: 109).

These differences arise because children in single-parent versus two-biological-parent families grow up in vastly different socioeconomic contexts and because single mothers have lower educational attainment, less social support, and poorer psychological well-being (Carlson & Corcoran, 2001; Dunn, Deater-Deckard, Pickering, & O'Connor, 1998; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994; O'Connor, Dunn, Jenkins, Pickering, & Rabash, 2001).

With respect to socioeconomic context, researchers have found that as much as 50% of the association between family structure and adolescent and young adult outcomes, including school dropout, teen childbearing, and unemployment, can be accounted for by the fact that single-parent families have lower incomes than two-parent families (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). In a meta-analysis of 63 studies dealing with nonresident fathers and children's well-being, Amato and Gilbreth (1999) found that children had fewer behavioral problems and more academic success when fathers paid child support, when children felt emotionally close to their fathers, and when fathers engaged in authoritative parenting practices.

Children with single parents showed increased risks of psychiatric diseases, suicide or suicide attempt, injury, and addiction. After adjustment for confounding factors, such as socioeconomic status and parents' addiction or mental disease, children in single-parent households had increased risks compared with those in two-parent households for psychiatric disease in childhood and, suicide attempt, alcohol-related disease and narcotics-related disease. Boys in single-parent families were more likely to develop psychiatric disease and narcosis related disease than were girls, and they also had a risk of all-cause mortality. Growing up in a single-parent family has disadvantages to the health or the child. Lack of household's resources plays a major part in increased risks. However, even when a wide range of demographic and socioeconomic circumstances are included in multivariate models, children of single parents still have increased risks of mortality severe morbidity, and injury (Weitoft, at al., 2003).

The is a strong relationship between housing status and depression, anxiety and problem behaviors among children of low-income, single-parent, female-headed families (Buckner and Bassuk, 1999).

Children living with only one parent fare considerably worse in school. But the study, entitled "The Most Significant Minority: One-Parent Children in the Schools," was immediately and strongly attacked as "misleading" and damaging by several education groups. About 40 percent of elementary school children who come from single-parent families are classified as "low achievers," according to the study of 18,000 pupils in 14 states in the country. considerable evidence of behavioral problems among single-parent children. For example, these children were twice as likely to be suspended or expelled from school and averaged eight more days of absence each school year (Savage, 1980).

Results indicated that children from two-parent families consistently scored lower on measures of externalizing behavior and hyperactivity when compared to children from parent-absent households, but not when compared to those from single-parent households. Moderation analyses revealed significant interactions between family structure and children's gender. Girls in single-mother households scored higher in externalizing behavior and hyperactivity than those in two-parent households. Behavior problems for boys in single-mother households did not differ from those in two-parent households. These findings encourage further research on parenting practices and child's gender within various family structures (Mokrue, et al., 2012).

Indicated greater cross-generational continuity in single-parent families; in families low in proactive teaching, monitoring, and academic involvement; and in families with lower-IQ children who performed poorly in school and were disliked by peers (Pettit et al., 2009).

Only a low level of education of the mother and the fact the child is living in a single parent family is consistently associated with negative outcomes. This is not true, however, for a whole range of other characteristics, like the work schedule of the parents, the sex of the child, the child's rank in the line of siblings or the number of children in the household. Consequently, policy makers should be wary of quick conclusions when presented with results from single indicator research.

Educational lagging, for example, may seem a very objective measure of problems, yet it does not necessarily coincide with problematic behavior nor a parental perception of special needs (Ghysels and Van Vlasselaer, 2008). There are commonalities and differences among these three approaches and their predictions. In general, they suggest that youth in first-married family units should be advantaged in terms of adjustment and well-being and that adolescents who have experienced parental divorce and those in single-parent families are disadvantaged (Demo and Acock, 1996: 461).

Many theories of adolescent development emphasize extra familial influences, especially peer group affiliation and friendship relations, and suggest a reduced role for families as adolescents seek independence and distance themselves from parents (Bell, 1981; Douvan & Adelson, 1966; Youniss & Smollar, 1985). Adolescence may very well be a life stage punctuated by parent-adolescent disagreement (Collins, 1990; Montemayor, 1986) and by increasing peer and extra familial involvement, but our findings underscore the pivotal role that relationships with parents play in shaping the socio-emotional, academic, and global well-being of adolescents. As important as other contexts are for adolescent development, these results reaffirm the pervasive influence of family relations.

With the acceleration of the divorce rate from the mid-1960s to the early 1980s, the numbers of nontraditional families (such as single-parent families and reconstituted families) have increased relative to intact, first-time nuclear families. This article reviews empirical evidence addressing the relationship between divorces, family composition and children's well-being. Although not entirely consistent, the pattern of empirical findings suggests that children's emotional adjustment, gender-role orientation, and antisocial behavior are affected by family structure, whereas other dimensions of well-being are unaffected. But the review indicates that these findings should be interpreted with caution because of the methodological deficiencies of many of the studies on which these findings are based. Several variables, including the level of family conflict, may be central variables mediating the effect of family structure on children (Demo & Acock, 1988).

Children in mother-only families are more likely to be poor in adulthood than children who live with both parents. They are also more likely to become single parents themselves. Economic deprivation, parental practices, and neighborhood conditions all contribute to lower socioeconomic mobility. (McLanahan & Booth, 1989).

After close look into the concept of single parent now assertiveness and two related concepts aggressiveness and submissiveness will be examined.

Assertiveness is considered to be the ideal style of communicating. It is about giving equal importance to and being able to finely balance between the goals and the relationships. It involves being able to say no effectively, being able to express thoughts, feeling, opinions freely. Assertiveness is also about asking for help or apologizing without feeling belittled. In short it is about respect toward self as well as others. Aggressiveness is giving more importance to your goals than to your relationships. At times lack of respect for others, their thoughts, feelings, opinions, values etc. It can also be seen nonverbal behaviors. Aggressiveness is expressed either directly or passively. Passive aggression includes gossiping, taunting, cracking a mean joke etc. Submissiveness is giving more importance to one's relationship with others at the cost of one's goals. Difficulty saying no, letting the other make a decision not being able to make a request are typical observations with submissive behavior (wiki.answers.com, 2013).

Children behave aggressively, assertively, or submissively for a wide variety of reasons; generally, a combination of factors underlies how a particular child will behave in any given situation.

These factors include how the child perceive those situations, what response alternatives she or he can think of, and what she or he will be the consequences of each response alternatively.

The assertive child expresses herself or himself openly and directly while respecting the rights and feelings of others. For example, in response to being teased about her new hair-cut any child says calmly, assertively, "Please stop teasing me. You wouldn't like it if I made fun of you. I really like the way my hair looks. "If assertiveness entails both self-expression and the non-violation of others' rights, then unassertiveness can take one of two forms: aggressiveness or submissiveness. Aggressive children express their thoughts and feelings openly, but the do so coercively and at other people's expense. Submissive children take into account the feelings, power and/or authority of others, but deny (or do not stand up for) their own rights and feelings. For some aggressive children and for some submissive children, the thought of acting assertively simply never occurs to them. These children see their options as limited to fight or flight.

Other aggressive and submissive children, however can conceive of assertive alternatives, but choose not to exhibit such behavior because they believe that aggressive or submissive acts will yield grater benefits and/or costs than assertive behaviors (Deluty, 2004: 32; Deluty & Usakli, 2009: 20).

From 1970s to today mainly in United States of America, being assertive is one of chief issues that draw people's attentions. Alberti & Emmons, (1998) state that any children can behave in three different styles. These are assertive, aggressive and submissive. An assertive behavior is seeing equality in relations, without unnecessary anxieties, protecting our benefits, expressing our feelings, ideas honestly and being aware of other people' rights. Behaving assertive, children's assertiveness, fundamentals of aggression and submission and assertiveness training programs are also issues of researches conducted in Turkey (Ari, 1989; Culha & Dereli, 1987; Voltan, 1980).
Adler (1994) clarifies aggressive characters such as, arrogance, greed, jealousy, meanness and hatred; in contrast to these, submissive people express alienation, the fear, timidity and lowered adaptation. Any person who has failure in his or her desires or wants cannot reach his or her goals so this cause aggression, submission, unhappiness and desperation (Cuceloglu, 1993: 309).

Deluty (1981) highlights five major areas in the field of children's assertiveness that have received insufficient attention by researchers and clinical practitioners. These areas include the nature and components of verbal and nonverbal assertiveness; cognitive and affective mediators of assertive expression, the influence of parental values, attitudes, and practice, the addictiveness and successfulness of assertive versus unassertive behavior, and the assessment and treatment of specific assertiveness deficits and inhibitions.

Between years of 1960s and 1990s there are many researches about assertiveness (Brown & Elliot, 1965; O'Connor, 1969; O'Connor, 1972; Pinkston et al., 1973; Tophoff, 1973; Keller & Carlson, 1974; Cooke & Apolloni, 1976; Borstein et al., 1980). These researches examined the nature of aggressive and submissive behaviors, measuring and evaluating assertiveness and interventional assertiveness trainings and programs.
Assertive behavior has been variously defined as the "proper expression of any emotion other than anxiety toward another person" (Wolpe, 1973: p.81); as "the act of declaring oneself, of stating this is who I am, what I think and feel" (Fensterheim, 1972, p. 161); as interpersonal behavior that involves the direct expression of thoughts and feelings in a socially acceptable manner (Rimm & Masters, 1974); and as effective social problem-solving behavior (Goldfried & Goldfried, 1975).

The person who impels his desire for self-assertion to excessive proportions by expressing his opinions in a hostile, threatening, or assaultive manner is aggressive. The aggressive person shows little or no consideration for the rights of others. The person who behaves aggressively does not recognize the potential consequences of his action and does not assume responsibility for them. It is for these reasons that aggressive behavior often results in unfavorable consequences for the aggressor as well as for the object of aggression. By contrast, assertive behavior is expressed with consideration of mutual rights and the possible outcome that may follow. Accordingly, the assertive person has a better chance of obtaining satisfactory remedy in a situation where expectancy has been violated (Fornell & Westbrook, 1979). The verb 'assert' means: to declare something as true; to maintain or defend one's claim or right; or to put oneself forward boldly and insistently. Strictly speaking, the assertive skills are not part of the counseling process as such, yet they are of great importance.

Assertive skills help to define the boundary between the need to express one's personal needs authentically, and the desire to meet another's needs empathically a tension that must be balanced for counselors to live fully and effectively. Aggression refers to a loose cluster of actions and motive around the theme of intent by one individual to hurt or control another. The antecedents of aggressive behavior in children and the relationship between aggression and learning are not very clear. It seems that extremes of parental behavior are most likely to produce this behavioral motive (Boocock, 1980: 76).

Both permissiveness and punishment have been shown to contribute to the development of aggressiveness in young children. Since these two qualities of parental behavior can vary somewhat independently, there is possibility of variation in the amount of aggression produced in children simply by virtue of combining different degrees of these antecedents (Sears, 1965: 134).

Different temperaments differentially expose children to certain life circumstances. For example, a violent parent might be more likely to abuse an aggressive child than a placating, passive child. In addition, different temperaments cause children to react differently to similar life circumstances. A shy child may become increasingly withdrawn and dependent on a neglectful mother, whereas a sociable child of the same mother may develop independence and make other, more positive connections. The interaction of temperament and early life events produces different coping styles in each child (Dobson, 2010: 320).

Maladaptive Coping Modes: individual acts in a passive, subservient, submissive, approval-seeking, or self-deprecating way around others out of fear of conflict or rejection; tolerates abuse and/or bad treatment; does not express healthy needs or desires to others; selects people or engages in other behavior that directly maintains the self-defeating schema-driven pattern (Dobson, 2010: 330).

Assertiveness is the balance between aggressive and submissive behavior and it is commonly misunderstood as aggression. Getting your way or winning at the expense of someone else may momentarily feel good but that is aggression not assertiveness. The short feel good factor can subsequently be diluted by the after effects of such behavior. For instance, if you have used your position to put pressure on someone, they will probably do what you ask. However, you may have lost their loyalty and respect in the long term. We also often mistake aggressive behavior as loud and angry but in fact aggression can come in many forms and identifying it is part of the key to succeeding in developing refined assertiveness skills. Aggressive behavior is best defined as getting your way, but at the expense of someone else. You may have done this politely and with a smile but you will still have been aggressive. It follows, therefore, that submissive behavior is the opposite. This is where you let someone else have their way at your expense. Being submissive may appear to lead to an easy life in the first instance but the cumulative effect can create problems in the long term. For example, not being able to say no to tasks not only overloads you but makes you feel bad about yourself. Being constantly submissive makes people respect you less and, what is wore, you respect yourself less. Submissive and aggressive behaviors both arise from a feeling of lower self-worth or fear and act to reinforce this feeling. They are self-perpetuating. Any gain from using them is short term. Submissiveness may reduce anxiety in the short term but will result in disappointment in the self and increase the inability to act assertively. Assertive behavior describes the middle approach where no one is left feeling badly treated and all parties come out of the encounter feeling full of worth. Assertive behavior makes you feel better at the time and makes it more likely that you will be assertive in the future as it is confidence building (Lee-Davies & Bailey, 2007, 128).

Divorce is one of chief issues of the word. It is the fact that divorce is not only effect parties but also deeply effect children. Every child from single parents is expressing unwanted behaviors. Expressing desired behaviors in social settings is very crucial for children. That is why it shows children socialization process. It is very important to find out the differences behavioral tendencies between single and two parent children.

The aim of this study is to find out differences between behavioral tendencies these are assertiveness, aggressiveness and submissiveness of single parent children and normal two parent children. For this aim three hypotheses will be tested in the study. These are; there is no significant differences between single and two parent children' assertiveness, there is no significant differences between single and two parent children' aggressiveness and there is no significant differences between single and two parent children' submissiveness. The study is limited with only third and forth grades elementary school students in Sinop Turkey.

Method

Subjects

75 single parents and 75 two parents children attending 3. and 4. elementary grades in Sinop in Turkey joined in the study. Although all elementary 3. and 4. grades single parent students joined in the study but 75 students from two parents children were selected at random. For example, if an elementary school of 3 A grade has one single parent male student from that class, a male student whose school number ends with nine was selected. If an elementary school of 4 B grade has two single parent female students from that class, two female students whose numbers end with one and second were selected. If end of school numbers are one and nine students are not female the first following number female students was selected. Before the study permissions from school administrations and parents were gathered.

Instrument and Procedure

The Children Action Tendency Scale (CATS), measures assertive, aggressive, and submissive behavior in children. It ascertains how a child would respond in 13 situations involving frustration, provocation, and conflict. Each of the 13 situations is followed by three response alternatives (one aggressive, one assertive, and one submissive) presented in a paired-comparison format

CATS was group administered to the children in their classrooms. The experimenter emphasized to the children the importance of answering honesty, pointing out that the purpose of the questioner was to find out what children would do in certain situations and not what they should do.

The number of aggressive, assertive, and submissive alternatives a subject chose constituted his or her aggressiveness, assertiveness, and submissiveness scores, respectively. Since a paired comparisons format was used, a subject could receive two aggressiveness points, two assertiveness points, ort two submissiveness points for each of the 13 conflict situations; for example, if for a particular situation the subject chose the aggressive alternative both when it was pitted against the assertive alternative and when it was pitted against the submissive one, he or she received two aggressiveness points for that situation. Thus, scores on a particular dimension could range from 0 to 26, with the sum total of aggressiveness, assertiveness, and submissiveness scores always equaling 39. This scoring procedure reflects a theoretical model in which the three response modes are somewhat dependent. High scores on any two dimensions (e.g., a strong tendency to act aggressively and submissively) necessitate a relatively low score on the third dimension (e.g., are incompatible with the expression of assertive behavior). That a child's score on the assertiveness subscale is, therefore, dependent on his or her aggressiveness and submissiveness scores is not viewed as problematic, for it reflects a rather obvious characteristic of interpersonal behavior: If in most conflict situations one behavior: If in most conflict situations one behaves unassertively (i.e., aggressively and submissively), then by necessity one cannot be considered assertive (Deluty, 1979: 1065).

Population for which designed age range is 6 through 12 years old and time to administer is 15 minutes. There are 39 items psychometric information provided for subscales. The range of test-retest value is 0.44 to 0.70 and the range of internal consistency is 0.63 to 0.70. The split-half reliability of the instrument has been computed using the Spearman-Brown reliability coefficient. The reliability coefficients for the aggressiveness, assertiveness, and submissiveness subscales were 0.77, .063 and, 0.72 respectively. The correlations between the first and second administrations were found for the subjects' aggressiveness scores, $r = 0.48$, $p<0.001$, assertiveness scores, $r = 0.60$, $p<0.001$ and submissiveness scores, $r = 0.57$, $p< 0.001$. The validity of CATS has been established by determining the correlation between a peer rating of an individual on the CATS and the self-report data form that individual. The aggressiveness scores correlated very highly with peer physical aggression scores, $r = 0.68$, $p< 0.001$. The assertiveness scores correlated positively with the peer assertiveness score, $r = 0.34$, $p< 0.05$, and submissiveness scores correlated positively with peer submissiveness ratings, $r = 0.51$, $p< 0.001$ (Deluty, 1979: 1068).

CATS adapted Turkish population by Usakli (2006). Inner reliability of scale made with 168 students $\alpha= 0.82$. Three weeks interval test-retest reliability with 76 students $(r76) =$ for assertiveness points .085, for submissive points 0.75, and for aggressiveness points 0.89 ($p< .001$).

As a further test of the CATS's validity, the Topukcu (1982) Assertiveness Scale was group administered to the children. Assertiveness dimension (r76) = .47) submissiveness dimension (r76) = 0.78 (Usakli, 2006: 136). An example from CATS:

You're playing a game with your friends. You try your very best but you keep making mistakes. Your friends start teasing you and calling you names. What would you do?
(SUB) a. Quit the game and come home. or
(AGG) b. Punch the kid who's teasing me the most.
(ASS) a. Tell them to stop because they wouldn't like if I did it to them. or
        b. Quit the game and come home.
        a. Punch the kid who's teasing me the most. or
        b. Tell them to stop because they wouldn't like if I did it to them

Results

This study was designed as a relational research study. A study that investigates the connection between two or more variables is considered as a relational research. The variables that are compared are generally already presented in the group or population. In correlational studies (looking at relationships between particular characteristics of a population, for example smoking and health), there should be at least 30 participants (Lewin, 2005: 218).

Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) is a statistical test procedure for comparing multivariate (population) means of several groups. The purpose of MANOVA is to test whether the vectors of means for the two or more groups are sampled from the same sampling distribution (Ozturk, 2010).

There are two major situations in which MANOVA is used. The first is when there are several correlated dependent variables, and the researcher desires a single, overall statistical test on this set of variables instead of performing multiple individual tests. The second, and in some cases, the more important purpose is to explore how independent variables influence some patterning of response on the dependent variables. Here, one literally uses an analogue of contrast codes on the dependent variables to test hypotheses about how the independent variables differentially predict the dependent variables. Wilk's Λ was the first MANOVA test statistic developed and is very important for several multivariate procedures in addition to MANOVA (Carey, 1998).

The results of MANOVA from Children Action Tendencies Scale' assertiveness, aggressiveness and submissiveness points, there is significant difference between single parents and two parents of third and fourth grades students' in terms of Children Action Tendencies assertiveness, aggressiveness and submissiveness [Wilks Lambda (Λ) = 0.401, F(3,   146) = 72.72, p<.05]. This founding shows that points that gathered linear components of assertiveness, aggressiveness and submissiveness with regards to parental situation.

Table I The ANOVA Founding of Mean and Standard Deviation Assertiveness, Aggressiveness and Submissiveness Points with Regards to Parental Situation

Variable	Parental situation	n	$\bar{X}$	S	sd	F	p
Assertive	One	75	9.73	3.62	1-148	212.56	.000
	Two	75	20.48	5.25			
Aggressive	One	75	14.13	6.85	1-148	25.81	.000
	Two	75	9.36	4.38			
Submissive	One	75	15.12	7.44	1-148	38.99	.000
	Two	75	9.03	4.00			

The Table illustrates that the Scale about three factors' means and standard deviations values and one way ANOVA of parental status. According to Table Children Action Tendency Scale assertiveness points shows significant difference in terms of parental situation [AS(1, 148) = 212.56,   p<.01], aggressiveness points shows significant difference in terms of parental situation [AG(1,148) = 25.81, p<.01], and submissiveness points shows significant difference in terms of parental situation [SU(1,148) = 38.99, p<.01].

Abbreviation: AS: Assertiveness, AG: Aggressiveness, SU: Submissiveness

Discussion

The family as a social institution is crucial for continuum and future of society. But there are some reasons which affects families' normal structure. Psychological problems between parties, economic problems, and death turn family structure two parents to single parent.

Overall founding of this results show that children of third and fourth grades have differences in terms of their behavioral tendencies. This result resembles Deluty (1979; 1981)'s founding. Those behavioral tendencies mainly result from family and child interactions (Deluty, 2004; Deluty and Usakli 2009).

As most researches founding indicate that aggressiveness, submissiveness, loneliness, stress, depression, guiltiness, tendency to crime are basic and common problems of single parent children (Baris & Garrity, 1988; Johnston & Roseby, 1997; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 2003; O'Rourke & Worzbyt, 1996).

This study' founding is parallel to these researches' founding. Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) found that children six to eight seem to have the hardest time of any age group this shows the significant difference between single and two parent children' aggressiveness and submissiveness points in the study.

Numerous studies have found links between the quality of the parents' relationship and positive outcomes for children and families (Amato, 2005). One of these positive out come is assertive life skills of elementary age children that indicated in this study. Assertiveness is very important for all age of people. Assertive living is seeing equality in relations, without unnecessary anxieties, protecting our benefits, expressing our feelings, ideas honestly and being aware of other people' rights (Alberti & Emmons, 1998).

For example, children living in single-parent and/or low-income households are more likely to exhibit problem behaviors and depressive symptoms and are less likely to display social competence than are children who grow up in more fortunate circumstances (Moore, et al., 2006). Most common problems seen in single parent families' children are depression, stress, loneliness, aggression, compliance, smoke, alcohol, narcotics (Herwing, et al., 2004; Jackson, 2000).

Children of single parents still have increased risks of mortality severe morbidity, and injury (Weitoft, at al., 2003). As they are aggressive this leads them to fight with other people or due to the submissiveness they are lack cope with protecting themselves.

Loneliness is one of other problem that single parent children deal with (Cooney et al., 1986; Herwing, et al., 2004; Jackson, 2000). Aggressive of submissive children have less or no social skills. Coming form single parents causes behave aggressively or submissively this make children lonely.

Many researches founding agree with the unsuccessful school life of single parent children. Academic achievement is very important for third and fourth grades because according to Ericson they are in "Industry versus Inferiority" life transition (Thomas, 1979: 272). Aggressive or submissive children are failure in finding peer support such as study with together. Busily with discipline problems also makes single parent children draw himself or herself from study lessons and doing homework so these makes lower academic achievement.

As social problem, divorce affects children negatively. Families, teachers, administrators and counselors should be aware of these problems of single parent children. Immediate action should be done. Single parent children are less assertive, more aggressive or submissive so they should join social skills training programs that is conducted by counselors who are experienced with individual counseling, group counseling, family counseling, play therapy etc. in whole or at least one of them.

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