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Parents' attachment to their children and their level of interest in them in predicting children's self-concepts

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ABSTRACT

It is believed that parental behaviours play a critical role in the development of self-concept. Recent research studies have shown that parents' romantic attachments affect both their parental behaviours and their children's behaviours. The purpose of this research is to examine predictive levels of parents' level of dimensions of attachment (attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance) together with their participation in the development of their children's self-concept. In this research, which examines parents' level of interest towards their children, The Scale of the Mother's and Father's level of Interest towards their Children were used to examine the level of the children's self-concept through the Demoulin Self-Concept Developmental Scale for Children in order to obtain the parents' dimensions of attachment in the Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised II Scale. It was seen that both types of dimensions of attachment on the mothers' and on the fathers' affected the children's self-concept negatively.

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Self-concept; parental attachment; the interest level towards the child; the preschool period

Introduction

A self-concept can be described as an individual's perspective of their own, general opinion (Ayđın, 1996), and their views and knowledge regarding the qualities they correlate to themselves (Bee & Boyd, 2009). One's self-concept is composed of two components: self-sufficiency and self-esteem. While self-sufficiency is a term related to what the individual feels about themselves in their own inner world, self-esteem is about what the individual feels about what others think about them (Demoulin, 1998; Öngider, 2013). Composed of themes related to self-sufficiency and self-value, self-concept is a multidimensional structure which is conceptualized as the overall beliefs about the individual's own qualities (Beck, Beck, Jolly, & Steer, 2005). One's self-concept is a sophisticated structure which stems from others' behaviours towards them. A self-concept can be described as the totality of emotions and thoughts which constitute an individual's personal attitude in various living conditions (Dusek, 2000; Rosenberg, 1985). It is believed that the preschool children's self-perception is related to their attachment experiences (Toth, Cicchetti, Macfie, Maughan, & Vanmeenen, 2000). The first three years of life has been known to be critical for emotional, cognitive and social development. In the course of this critical process, parental behaviours are the most important elements which contribute to children's emotional and cognitive well-being (Schore, 1994).

The proper amount of attention received by children during early childhood presents a substantial support for their developments (Harter, 2006; Sroufe, 2002). For instance, in a secure relationship attachment set up between children and their parents will help them have a high self-value (Sroufe, 2002; Thompson, 2006). Besides, the consistent, warm and supportive relationship

established between children and their parents will enable them to develop a self-perception in which they see themselves as important and worth of being loved (Thompson, 2006). Additionally, in many research studies (conducted with various groups of culture and samples), the relationships between the connection established between the parents and their children's self-esteem was revealed (Barber, Chadwick, & Oerter, 1992; Rice, 1990; Verschueren, Marcoen, & Schoefs, 1996). In their study, Swenson and Prelow (2005) revealed that having at least one supportive parent enhances their children's self-esteem. Additionally, it was also noted that children's self-esteem mediates the relationships between any over-protectiveness of one parent and depression (Patock-Peckham & Morgan-Lopez, 2009). It was shown that negative parenting style negatively affects children's self-esteem and the relationships they establish with their peers. Besides, it was seen that self-esteem, along with parents' affiliative behaviours, have an intermediary role in the negative relations of children in terms of behavioural disorders of both internal and external orientations. In other words, the parents' affiliative behaviours, by making the children feel themselves to be valuable and lovable, increase the children's self-esteem and decrease their exhibited self-destructive and outwardly destructive behavioural problems (Georgiou, Stavrinides, & Georgiou, 2016). In research conducted by Harris et al. (2015), it was revealed that there was a relationship between the affinity of parents and the self-esteem of teenagers. The parent-child interactions contributed to the development of the children in terms of self-confidence, self-esteem, well-being and their quality of close relationships (Parke & Buriel, 1998). It was seen that warm and responsive parenting techniques were associated with their children's positive developmental qualities such as a secure attachment, positive peer relationships and high self-esteem (DeWolf & Van Ijzendoorn, 1997; Hastings, Zahn-Waxler, Robinson, Usher, & Bridges, 2000). It was stated that a more positive self-perception would be developed as a result of a warm, supportive and democratic relationship with no conflict (Harter & Pike, 1984).

Known for the theoretical frame he presented for the perception of the relation between baby and caregiver, Bowlby (1969/1982), one of the pioneers of attachment theorists, stated that attachment goes on from birth to death. So, people have started to benefit from the attachment theory in the examinations of attitudes adults exhibit in their close relationships and in the examination of their characteristics (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). In terms of revealing individual differences in the best way possible, a binary attachment aspect (attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance) was suggested to be used in the attachment research carried out for the adulthood period. While attachment anxiety has been generally associated with a process in which individuals experience an intense concern of the possibility of being abandoned, attachment avoidance has been associated with the need for less affection in interpersonal relationships. In the research carried out, the relationships of attachment dimensions with nursing attitudes of individuals towards their partners (Collins & Feeney, 2010; Kunce & Shaver, 1994; Mikulincer, Shaver, Gillath, & Nitzberg, 2005) and the emotions and thoughts about themselves (Fralely, 2007; Nofle & Shaver, 2006) have been revealed. In the recent years, there has been an increase of the studies in which the adult dimensions of attachment are used as a frame in examining the roles of parents in their children's experiences (Jones, Cassidy, & Shaver, 2015). Generally, due to the importance attached to the research related with dimensions of attachment and parenthood, it was thought that, in this research as well, it is of an importance to examine the effect of parents' dimensions of attachment to the self-esteem of their children. Studies on the effects of parents on the child's self-perception mostly focused on the mother (Adam, Gunnar, & Tanaka, 2004; Goodvin, Meyer, Thompson, & Hayes, 2008; Kılıçaslan, 2012; Özkan, 2015; Tazeoğlu, 2011; Yıldız Çiçekler & Alakoç Pirpir, 2015; Yukay Yüksel & Yıldırım Kurtuluş, 2016), and the father (Albükrek, 2002; Yakupoğlu, 2011). However, there is not much research focusing on both parents when examining the concept of a child's self-perception (Güner Algan & Şendil, 2013; İkiz, 2009; Sarıca, 2013; Uluç, 2005). It was thought that the participation of both mothers and fathers in the sampling group was significant. Within this context, the main purpose of this study was to examine the predictive levels of the parents' dimensions of attachment (attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance) and of their participation towards their children's self-concept.

Method

Model

In this research, quantitative methods were used to examine to what extent the preschool children's self-perceptions were predicted by their parents' dimensions of attachment and attention towards them. The research is in a relational screening model.

Study group

The study group of this research was composed of 129 five-year-old children from four preschools and their parents (129 mothers and 129 fathers) in Mugla ($n = 129$) during the 2015–2016 educational year. The preschools were selected by an easily accessible sampling method. The ages of the participant parents were between 27 and 47. It was seen that the age range of the mothers were 27–44 ($Avr = 37.50$, $S = 2.24$), while the fathers' ages varied between 31 and 47 ($Avr = 41.50$, $S = 3.21$). All of the participant parents were employed. All of the fathers who participated in the research had a bachelor's degree, at minimum (77% of them have bachelor's degree and 23% have master's degree). Eighty-five per cent of the mothers had bachelor's degree, while 15% of them were high school graduates. Regarding the average monthly income of the parents, it was seen that they were in a higher income group. It was found that participant parents were in the middle socio-economic level with incomes between 8000 TL (~2000 USD) and ~25,000 TL (~7000 USD).

Data collection tools

Experiences written in the Close Relationships-Revised II Scale

Developed by Fraley, Waller, and Brennan (2000), the validity and reliability examination of the scale for the Turkish culture was made by Selçuk, Günaydin, Sümer, and Uysal (2005). The items were created to measure the two sub-dimensions of attachment (anxiety and avoidance). Each sub-dimension included 18 questions and the scale consisted of 36 questions in total. The participants were supposed to rate each item through a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree). Some items in the scale were reversely graded. As a result, two different total points were acquired. The points acquired from each sub-dimension varied between 18 and 126. Following the examination, it was observed that a two-dimensional factor structure was maintained. In terms of an internal consistency value of the scale, a Cronbach alpha co-efficient had calculated 0.90 for avoidance and 0.86 for anxiety. Additionally, the scale's reliability in its test–retest method had found 0.81 for avoidance and 0.82 for anxiety.

The scale of the mother's and father's interest towards their children

The Parental Interest Scale was developed in two separate forms by Sucuoğlu, Özkal, Demirtaş, and Güzeller (2015) to separately examine the fathers and mothers' interest levels towards their four- to six-year-old children attending preschools. The scale is a 5-point Likert scale and it includes answer choices which follow: (5) very often, (4) often, (3) sometimes, (2) rarely and (1) never. The studies were carried out to develop and illustrate the scale's validity and reliability. The mothers' interest scale consisted of 34 items, and the fathers' interest scale consisted of 40 items. The total internal consistency co-efficient of the fathers' interest scale was found to be 0.94. Regarding the internal consistency co-efficient of the sub-dimension of the scale, it was found that the 'Parental interest towards the children's developing attitude' sub-factor was 0.94, the 'Parental interest towards control' sub-factor was 0.89, and the 'Parental interest towards school' sub-factor was 0.85. The total internal consistency co-efficient of the mothers' interest scale, which consisted of 34 items, was found to be 0.91. The internal consistency co-efficient of the sub-dimension of the scale was listed with the following: the 'Parental

interest toward control' sub-factor was 0.88; the 'Parental interest towards the developing attitude' sub-factor was 0.87; the 'Parental interest towards school' sub-factor was 0.76, and the 'Parental interest towards the developing interests' sub-factor was 0.77. The mothers' interest scale was composed of four sub-dimensions and the fathers' interest scale had three sub-dimensions. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were carried out to specify the construct validity of the scale.

The personal information form

Developed within the context of the research by the researchers, it is a form in which some basic information, like parents' marriage duration and their number of children, is asked.

The Demoulin Self-Concept Developmental Scale for Children

A scale which enables a systematic analysis of the self-concept of children was developed by Demoulin (1998) and was adapted to Turkish by Kuru Turaşlı (2006). The evaluations about how children perceive themselves in a group constituted the self-esteem dimension (the first 24 questions) and the self-evaluations of children constituted the self-sufficiency dimension of the project (the last 25 statements). In the evaluation of the scale which was composed of 29 items in total, information from three different sources, being the family, teacher and child, was collected. On the evaluation form, each smiling face was given three points, each impassive face was two points and each unhappy face meant one point (Kuru Turaşlı, 2006).

The process

First of all, to be able to conduct this research in preschools, the necessary permissions were granted by the Mugla Provincial Directorate of National Education. Discussing with the administrators of the school, the day and hour were arranged to meet with the parents. Initially, a meeting was held for the parents to inform them about the importance and coverage of the research. Following the meeting, the parents who were willing to participate in the research were asked to fill in the questionnaire battery which was prepared to gather information about the parents' dimensions of attachment, their interests towards their children, and to obtain some demographic information. Before using the measurement tools prepared for examining the self-esteem of children, a parental permission form was asked to be completed by each of the parents. After the parents filled their scales, going on different days to the relevant schools, the children's class teachers who were to fill out their versions were informed about how to apply the scale.

The point of the teachers taking charge, rather than the researchers doing so, in the process of collecting data from children was that researchers who have not known the children before and who have not contacted them so far may have difficulty in collecting data from the children. Researchers were pushed to take such a decision on considering the developmental qualities of preschool children, and such factors as children's giving answers to people they do not know, and determining potentially reasonable uncertainty about the validity and reliability of the answers.

The analysis of the data

SPSS 21 was used to analyse the data. A hierarchical regression analysis method was used to examine whether or not independent variables predict dependent variables. Thus, it was tested whether or not the data met the regression analysis assumptions. Distributions were accepted to be within the normal range when the analysed coefficients of skewness and kurtosis (maximum = 1.10, minimum = -0.79) were between -3 and +3 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007) and when the variable errors had a normal distribution in the histogram and p-plot graphics.

Results

The correlations between the variables included in the research are presented in Table 1. When the correlations between the variables were examined, it was detected that the children's total self-concept points displayed a significant negative relation with both parents' attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance (the mothers' attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance, respectively: $r = -.41, p < .001$; $r = -.37, p < .01$; the fathers' attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance: $r = -.18^*, p < .001$; $r = -.35^*, p < .01$). A negative relation was detected between the children's self-sufficiency dimensions and their mothers' degree of both attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance ($r = -.28, p < .001$; $r = -.21, p < .01$). A negative relation was seen between the children's self-sufficiency dimensions and their fathers' degree of both attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance ($r = -.17, p < .001$; $r = -.32, p < .01$). Similarly, a negative relation was detected between the children's self-esteem dimensions and the mothers' degree of both attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance ($r = -.39, p < .001$; $r = -.24, p < .01$). It was revealed that there was a relation between the children's self-sufficiency dimensions and the fathers' degree of both attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance ($r = -.28, p < .001$; $r = -.33, p < .01$).

A regression analysis was carried out, respectively, so as to specify the explained levels of the independent variables, such as the dimensions of attachment (attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance) and the mother's and father's interest towards controlling their child, their developing attitudes, school and developing interests (predictive variables of the dependent variable), to evaluate the self-concept of the child (total self-concept, self-sufficiency and self-esteem) (criteria variable).

The first regression model, in which a total self-concept was regarded as a dependent variable and the attachment styles of the mother were regarded as independent variables, has found this to hold a significant correlation ($F = 30.968$; $p < .05$). In other words, their mothers' dimensions of attachment led to a prediction of their children's total self-concept to a significant extent. Independent variables explain the rate of the dependent variable to be (R^2) 33%. On examining the significance levels of the variables in the model, it was seen that on the constant term, the mothers' attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance were significant (Table 2).

The second regression model, in which the total self-sufficiency was regarded as a dependent variable and the attachment styles of a mother are regarded as independent variables, has found this to be significant ($F = 3.091$; $p < .05$). In other words, the mothers' dimensions of attachment predicted the total self-sufficiency levels to a significant extent, and the independent variables' showed the rate of the dependent variable (R^2) to be 4.7%. On examining the significance levels of the variables in the model, it was seen that the constant term and the mothers' attachment anxiety are significantly correlated, yet the mother's attachment avoidance was not significant.

The third regression model, in which a child's total self-esteem was regarded as a dependent variable and mothers' attachment styles were regarded as independent variables, found a significant correlation ($F = 34.846$; $p < .05$). In other words, the mothers' dimensions of attachment led to a prediction of their children's total self-esteem levels to a significant extent. The independent variables' exemplified the rate of the dependent variable as (R^2) 35.6%. On examining the significance levels of the variables in the model, it was seen that the constant term, the mothers' attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance were of significant influence.

Table 3 shows the pinpointed and conclusive levels of the children's self-sufficiency, self-esteem and total self-concept by their fathers' dimensions of attachment in three regression models, in which their self-sufficiency, self-esteem, and total self-concept were, respectively, regarded as dependent variables, and the fathers' dimensions of attachment were regarded as independent variables.

The first regression model, in which the child's total self-concept was regarded as a dependent variable and the attachment styles of the fathers are regarded as independent variables, has found a significant correlation ($F = 31.575$; $p < .05$). In other words, a father's dimensions of attachment influence their child's total self-concept to a significant extent. The independent variables' influence on the dependent variable here was (R^2) 33.4%. On examining the significance levels of the

Table 1. The correlations of the children's self-concept dimensions between their parents' dimensions of attachment and interest levels towards their children.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Attachment Anxiety (mother)	–													
2. Attachment Avoidance (mother)	.35**	–												
3. Attachment Anxiety (father)	.07	.05	–											
4. Attachment Avoidance (father)	.02	.09	.28**	–										
5. Interest Towards Control (mother)	–.28**	–.19	–.23**	–.09	–									
6. Interest Towards Child's Developing Attitudes (mother)	–.07	–.11	–.10	–.02	.13	–								
7. Interest Towards School (mother)	–.04	–.03	–.02	.01	.02	.10	–							
8. Interest Towards Child's Developing Interests (mother)	–.13	–.18*	–.17*	–.19*	.04	.02	.03*	–						
9. Interest Towards Control (father)	–.04	.01	–.09	–.10	.24*	.07	.06	.05	–					
10. Interest Towards Child's Developing Attitudes (father)	.05	.03	–.06	–.08	.13	.12	.05	.09	.11	–				
11. Interest Towards Child's School (father)	.02	.01	–.09	–.03	.11	.04	.07	.08	.17*	.22*	–			
12. Child's Total self-concept	–.41*	–.37*	–.18*	–.35*	–.19*	.23*	.22*	.26*	–.27*	.28*	.33*	–		
13. Child's Self-sufficiency	–.28*	–.21*	–.17*	–.32*	–.15*	.19	.13	.19	–.23*	.26*	.30*	.28*	–	
14. Child's Self-esteem	–.39*	–.24*	–.28*	–.33*	–.17*	.21	.18*	.22*	.33*	.17*	.17*	.24*	.27*	–

Table 2. The children's explained levels of self-sufficiency, self-esteem, and total self-concept based on the mothers' dimensions of attachment.

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Non-standard coefficients		Standard coefficients		
		<i>B</i>	Std. Error	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Child's total Self-concept <i>F</i> = 30.968 <i>R</i> ² = 0.330	Constant Term	-140.89	32.41		-4.35	.000*
	Attachment Anxiety (mother)	1.46	0.20	-0.55	7.45	.000*
	Attachment Avoidance (mother)	1.29	0.39	-0.25	3.35	.001*
Child's Self-sufficiency <i>F</i> = 3.091; <i>R</i> ² = 0.047	Constant Term	45.85	5.05		9.08	.000*
	Attachment Anxiety (mother)	-0.07	0.03	-0.21	-2.41	.017*
	Attachment Avoidance (mother)	-0.05	0.06	-0.08	-0.87	.386
Child's Self-esteem <i>F</i> = 34.846; <i>R</i> ² = 0.356	Constant Term	137.49	14.64		9.39	.000*
	Attachment Anxiety (mother)	-0.72	0.09	-0.58	-8.08	.000*
	Attachment Avoidance (mother)	-0.52	0.17	-0.22	-2.99	.003*

**p* < .05.

variables in the model, it was seen that on the constant term, the fathers' attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance were significant.

The second regression model, in which the child's total self-sufficiency was regarded as a dependent variable and the attachment styles of the father were regarded as independent variables, did not find a significant correlation (*F* = 2.874; *p* > .05). In other words, the father's dimensions of attachment did not change the total self-sufficiency levels to a significant extent (*p* > .05).

The third regression model, in which the children's total self-esteem was regarded as a dependent variable and the attachment styles of the father were regarded as independent variables, had significance (*F* = 5.350; *p* < .05). The independent variables' influence on the dependent variable here was (*R*²) 28.7%. On examining the significance levels of the variables in the model, it was seen that on the constant term, the fathers' attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance were significant.

Table 4 shows the pinpointed and conclusive levels of the children's self-sufficiency, self-esteem and total self-concept tied to their mothers' interest levels and three regression models. In it, the child's self-sufficiency, self-esteem and total self-concept were, respectively, regarded as dependent variables, and the mothers' interest levels were regarded as independent variables.

The first regression model, in which the children's total self-concept was regarded as a dependent variable and the interest levels of their mothers were regarded as independent variables, found them to hold a significant correlation (*F* = 32.203; *p* < .05). In other words, the mother's interest levels influenced their child's total self-concept to a significant extent. The independent variables' shown effect rate on the dependent variable was (*R*²) 43.6%. On examining the significance levels of the variables in the model, it was seen that the constant term, the interest levels towards the developing attitude, school and developing interests were significant.

Table 3. Children's explained levels of self-sufficiency, self-esteem and total self-concept corresponding to the fathers' dimensions of attachment.

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Non-standard coefficients		Standard coefficients		
		<i>B</i>	Std. Error	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Child's Total Self-concept <i>F</i> = 31.575; <i>p</i> < .05 <i>R</i> ² = 0.334	Constant Term	-120.77	23.37		-5.167	.000*
	Attachment Anxiety (father)	1.08	0.18	-0.43	5.862	.000*
	Attachment Avoidance (father)	1.29	0.27	-0.35	4.758	.000*
Child's Self-sufficiency <i>F</i> = 2.874; <i>p</i> > .05	Constant Term	43.74	3.66		11.950	.000
	Attachment Anxiety (father)	-0.06	0.03	-0.19	-2.223	.028
	Attachment Avoidance (father)	-0.03	0.04	-0.06	-0.672	.503
Self-esteem <i>F</i> = 25.350; <i>p</i> < .05 <i>R</i> ² = 0.287	Constant Term	126.26	11.15		11.325	.000*
	Attachment Anxiety (father)	-0.43	0.09	-0.37	-4.862	.000*
	Attachment Avoidance (father)	-0.61	0.13	-0.35	-4.695	.000*

**p* < .05.

The second regression model, in which the child's self-sufficiency was regarded as a dependent variable and interest levels of the mothers were regarded as independent variables, was found to have a significant effect ($F = 7.748; p < .05$). In other words, the mothers' interest levels led to a prediction of their children's self-sufficiency to a significant extent. The independent variables' explained rate of its dependent variable was (R^2) 15.7%. On examining the significance levels of the variables in the model, it was seen that on the constant term, the parents' interest levels towards their child's developing attitudes, school and their developing interests were of significant influence.

The third regression model, in which the children's self-esteem was regarded as a dependent variable and the interest levels of the mothers were regarded as independent variables, found a significant correlation ($F = 31.354; p < .05$). In other words, the mother's interest levels led to a prediction of their children's self-esteem to a significant extent. The independent variables' correlation rate of this dependent variable was (R^2) 42.9%. On examining the significance levels of the variables in the model, it was seen that on the constant term, the mothers' interest levels towards their child's developing attitudes, school and their developing interests were of significant influence.

Table 5 shows the pinpointed and conclusive levels of the children's self-sufficiency, self-esteem and total self-concept in correlation to their fathers' interest levels, three regression models, in which self-sufficiency, self-esteem and total self-concept were, respectively, regarded as dependent variables and the fathers' interest levels were regarded as independent variables.

The first regression model, in which the children's total self-concept was regarded as a dependent variable and the interest levels of their fathers were regarded as independent variables, found a significant correlation ($F = 45.742; p < .05$). In other words, the father's interest levels led to a prediction of their children's total self-concept to a significant extent. The independent variables' correlation rate of this dependent variable was (R^2) 52.3%. On examining the significance levels of the variables in the model, it was seen that the constant term, the fathers' interest levels towards control and towards their child's school were of significant influence.

The second regression model, in which the child's self-sufficiency was regarded as a dependent variable and the interest levels of the father were regarded as independent variables, found a significant correlation ($F = 3.650; p < .05$). In other words, the fathers' interest levels lead to a prediction of

Table 4. Explained levels of self-sufficiency, self-esteem and total self-concept tied to the mothers' interest levels.

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Non-standard coefficients		Standard coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	β	t	p
Child's Total Self-concept $F = 32.203; p < .000$ $R^2 = 0.436$	Constant Term	-13.51	19.21		-0.70	.483
	Interest towards control	15.40	5.58	0.53	4.41	.110
	Towards Child's Developing Attitudes (mother)	41.29	4.65	0.67	8.88	.000*
	Towards Child's School (mother)	-18.88	3.48	0.41	-5.42	.000*
	Towards Child's Developing Interests (mother)	-11.47	2.85	0.30	-4.02	.000*
Child's Self-sufficiency $F = 7.748; p < .05$ $R^2 = 0.157$	Constant Term	32.62	3.07		10.63	.000*
	Interest towards control	3.45	0.68	0.17	2.09	.127
	Towards Child's Developing Attitudes (mother)	-1.51	0.74	0.19	-2.03	.045*
	Towards Child's School (mother)	2.24	0.56	0.37	4.04	.000*
	Towards Child's Developing Interests (mother)	0.69	0.46	0.14	1.52	.132
Child's Self-esteem $F = 31.354; p < .05$ $R^2 = 0.429$	Constant Term	69.86	8.91		7.84	.000*
	Interest towards control	22.43	3.57	0.84	9.11	.274
	Towards Child's Developing Attitudes (mother)	-17.52	2.16	0.62	-8.12	.000*
	Towards Child's School (mother)	9.11	1.61	0.43	5.64	.000*
	Towards Child's Developing Interests (mother)	6.07	1.32	0.34	4.59	.000*

* $p < .05$.

Table 5. Explained levels of the child's self-sufficiency, self-esteem and total self-concept based on the fathers' interest levels.

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Non-standard coefficients		Standard coefficients		
		<i>B</i>	Std. Error	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Child's Total self-concept <i>F</i> = 45.742; <i>p</i> < .05 <i>R</i> ² = 0.523	Constant Term	2.920	13.383		0.218	.828
	Interest Towards Child's Developing Attitudes (father)	-6.013	4.743	-0.126	-1.268	.207
	Interest Towards Control (father)	40.400	4.871	-0.806	8.294	.000*
	Interest Towards Child's School (father)	-29.137	3.336	0.622	-8.734	.000*
Child's Self-sufficiency <i>F</i> = 3.650; <i>p</i> < .05 <i>R</i> ² = 0.081	Constant Term	41.699	2.429		17.166	.000*
	Interest Towards Child's Developing Attitudes (father)	-0.499	0.861	-0.080	-0.580	.563
	Interest Towards Control (father)	-1.642	0.884	-0.251	-1.858	.066
	Interest Towards Child's School (father)	1.278	0.606	0.209	2.110	.037*
Child's Self-esteem <i>F</i> = 46.527; <i>p</i> < .05 <i>R</i> ² = 0.528	Constant Term	81.831	6.142		13.323	.000*
	Interest Towards Child's Developing Attitudes (father)	1.870	2.177	0.085	0.859	.392
	Interest Towards Control (father)	-18.978	2.236	-0.821	-8.489	.000*
	Interest Towards Child's School (father)	12.334	1.531	0.571	8.056	.000*

**p* < .05.

their child's self-sufficiency to a significant extent. The independent variables' correlation rate of the dependent variable was (*R*²) 8.1%. On examining the significance levels of the variables in the model, it was seen that the constant term, the parent's interest levels towards control and towards their child's school were significant.

The third regression model, in which the child's self-esteem was regarded as a dependent variable and the interest levels of the father were regarded as independent variables, found a significant correlation (*F* = 46.527; *p* < .05). In other words, the fathers' interest levels led to a prediction of their child's self-esteem to a significant extent. The independent variables' explaining rate of their dependent variable was (*R*²) 52.8%. On examining the significance levels of the variables in the model, it was seen that on the constant term, the parental interest levels towards control and towards their child's school are significant.

Discussion

This research examined how five-year-old children's self-concept (total self-concept, self-sufficiency and self-esteem) were affected by their parents' dimensions of attachment (attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance) and their interest levels towards their children. The results have been discussed within the context of adult dimensions of attachment and interest levels shown towards their children.

It was seen that both types of dimensions of attachment on the mothers' part (attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance) affected the children's self-concept negatively. Based on that result, it was revealed that the mothers' low dimensions of attachment have a negative effect on their children's self-concept. It can be said that research results indicated that attachment anxiety in general give partners messages of too much concern and unease; causing them to bring their own interests and wishes to the fore rather than those of their partners (Gillath, Shaver, & Mikulincer, 2005; Mikulincer et al., 2005 support this current finding). The tasks of research which were carried out on adult attachment and couple relationships (e.g. Kunce & Shaver, 1994) indicated that adults were attached securely and supported their partners. On examining to what extent the dimensions of the children's self-concept are affected by the mothers' dimensions of attachment, it was seen that only the anxiety attachment dimension of the mothers played a negative elucidatory role for the self-sufficiency levels of their children. It was found that both the mothers' attachment anxiety and

attachment avoidance are negatively affected by their children's levels of self-esteem. The present findings seem to be consistent with other research (Cowan, Cowan, & Mehta, 2009; Halford & Petch, 2010) which found that secure mothers showed more warmth and supportiveness towards their children. In his study, Sequerra (2010) stated that there is a positive relationship between children's behavioural problems and their mothers' attachment anxiety, yet children's behavioural problems are not associated with attachment avoidance.

In terms of the relationship between the fathers' dimensions of attachment (attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance) and their children's self-concept, it was found that both attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance had a negative effect on their children's self-concept. It was revealed that the children's self-sufficiency was not affected by the fathers' attachment anxiety and his attachment avoidance. It was found that the children's self-esteem dimension is negatively affected by the fathers' attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance. In the same vein, Feeney and Collins (2001) suggested that attachment insecurity is associated the particular form of ineffective caregiving. On the other hand, in the study by Yakupoğlu (2011), it was found that the children's self-concept points do not show a significant difference based on variations in their father's attachment style (secure, anxious, unstable, avoidant).

In terms of the effects of the mothers' interest levels (their interest towards control, interest towards their children's developing attitudes, interest towards their children's school and interest towards their children's developing interests) on their children's total self-concept, it was seen, based on the degree of interest, that there were effects of their mothers' interest towards developing their attitudes, school and developing interests. When it was examined to what extent the children's self-concept dimensions were affected by the interest levels of the mothers, it was found that the mothers' interests towards their school and developing attitudes were positively effective in their children's self-sufficiency dimensions. It was also seen that the mothers' interests towards their children's developing attitudes, school and developing interests were positively related to their children's self-esteem dimensions. It has been seen that the mothers of children with positive self-esteem were using regression and physical punishment methods less, but used less controlling disciplinary methods more compared to the mothers of children with negative self-esteem. Additionally, mothers of children with positive self-esteem, supported their children in declaring their opinions independently and their active participation in the decision-making processes, in contrast to those whose children have negative self-esteems (Coopersmith, 1967).

In terms of the fathers' interest levels, it was found that their children's total self-concept were affected negatively by the fathers' interests towards control and positively by their interest towards their education. Kernis, Brown, and Brody (2000) stated in their studies that there was a positive relationship between the parents' problem-solving method (such as working on a problem together and recognizing the emotions of the child) which support the autonomy and self-esteem of their children. On the other hand, controlling problem-solving strategies (for instance ignoring the solution of the child and insisting on the solution of the parents) was found to be associated with low self-esteem in their children. It was revealed that the children's self-sufficiency dimensions were positively related to the fathers' interests towards their children's school. It was seen that while the children's self-esteem dimensions were negatively elucidated by their fathers' interests towards control, they were positively elucidated by their interests towards their children's school. In a study in which the relation between the self-perception of children and family functionality was examined, a significant relation was found between the function of behavioural control in the family and the child's self-sufficiency, self-esteem and self-perception (İkiz, 2009). It is also said that being warm, supportive and sensitive parents are more likely to promote their children's self-esteem (Barber et al., 2005).

Rosenberg (1979) found that parents with children who have high self-esteem dealt with their children and their activities more than others. Tazeoğlu's (2011) study found that there was a significant relationship between the children's self-concept and their parents' discipline methods (indifference and overreacting). In his study in which the relationship between the self-concept notion of a

group of children attending first grade in primary school and the parental attitude of their mothers was discussed, Skowron (2005) found that the self-concept points of children with parents who have negative parental attitudes are lower than those of the children with parents who have positive attitudes. Hence, it was revealed that the parental attitudes had an influence on the self-concept points of the children. Sequerra (2010) concluded that as the mothers' care increased, their children's behavioural problems decreased. Additionally, it was found by the increase of their academic self-concept that children's behavioural problems decreased in the event that their parents displayed positive parental behaviours towards their children and minimized their negative parental behaviours (Sangawi, Adams, & Reissland, 2016). In his study, Merritt (2012) found that competent parenting influenced their children's self-esteem. He found that the children with parents who define themselves as competent have high and medium levels of self-esteem. Since it was stated that young children need educational guidance and instruction, parents should have the ability of enforcing limits and behaving flexibly from time to time. The studies in which parental behaviours are associated with a series of their children's developmental results are abundant in the related body of literature (Batool & Bond, 2015; Scharf, Wiseman, & Farah, 2011). Parents' behaviours play a key role their children's development (Maccoby, 2000). The experiences created as a result of a parent-child relation affect the self-system in some sort of way (Cicchetti, 1998).

On the other hand, Yukay Yüksel and Yıldırım Kurtuluş (2016) did not find a significant relationship between the mothers' attitudes and the self-concept of children. The fact that there are different results in some studies on the existence of a relation between parental attitudes and the self-concept of children may be related to the target age group in this study. Lau, Siu, and Chik (1998), in the results of the longitudinal research in which he examined the developmental stages of the self-concepts of children between 2 and 12 years old, concluded that children in the preschool period approached themselves positively and usually had a positive self-concept, yet overall after beginning primary school they began to see themselves more negatively. Furthermore, apart from the parent's behaviour towards the child, child's perception about the parent's behaviour is also important in the sense of the child's self. For example, in the study of Albürek (2002), the child's self-perception increased positively in positive perception of the child's relations with his father.

These results therefore need to be interpreted with caution considering the limitations of our design. We used self-report measures and a single sample, although our sample was fairly substantial for a more difficult-to recruit population of couples with children of a specific age. Despite these limitations, our findings provide valuable evidence that parents dimensions of attachment, parenting styles and their children's self-concept. For the research to be conducted in the future, research particularly on the information related with children, data about the parent-child relationship can be enriched through such techniques as observation and interview along with paper-and-pencil tests. Secondly, future research can involve families with various socio-cultural characteristics.

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Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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