

Investigating the Attitude of PCG University Students Towards their Parents and Towards Marriage

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to investigate students in classes 1-2-3-4, studying Psychological Guidance and Counselling (PGC) at a university in T.R.N.C. (Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus) in their relationships with their parents and their attitudes towards marriage. The study includes 325 students and was conducted during the spring of 2015-2016. 'Personal information forms', 'İnönü Marriage Attitudes Scale', 'Attitudes towards Parents Scale I and II' have been used in order to collect research data. The viewpoints of the student PCG group, who work with child and family, have been particularly focused in connection to all of these. The findings revealed that female students' attitudes towards their mothers are better compared to that of male students. However, in terms of gender, no connection was found between attitude towards their father and their attitude towards marriage. As female PCG students' attitude towards their mother increases, so too has their attitude towards their father and their attitudes towards marriage. For the men whose parents are still together (not separated), there is no link between their strong attitudes towards their parents and their attitude towards marriage. It has come to light that female students, whose parents are separated, have a stronger attitude towards their mother and father. No connection was found between the students' parents being married or having separate living arrangements and the students' gender. Male students with parents who live separately have a stronger approach towards their mother and father.

Keywords: parent relationship, marriage, attitude towards marriage

1. Introduction

Family, parents and the upbringing of children are the most important factors that contribute towards forming a healthy society (Çaylıoğlu, 2002). Attitudes and relationships within the family affects all aspects of a child's development (Amato, 2008). As an individual develops physiologically, socially and psychologically, their attitude towards society is also affected (Onur, 2003). The mother, father and spouse are familiar with their roles and responsibilities within the family (İmamoğlu, 1991). Parents' attitudes affects all areas of an individual's life. An individual that first learns sociability within the family develops friendships and relationships with others (Ondaş, 2007). Family attitudes towards the individual's self-development (Kayhan 2011) is effective in developing positive personality traits (Kayhan ve Seçkin 1999). When an individual feels ready and realises the necessity of actualising their social roles within society, then they feel a need to choose a fitting spouse (Kılıç, Kaygısız, Tortumluoğlu, 2007).

Freud believes that, an individual expresses the closeness they feel towards their parents and positive admiration they have for them, by choosing a partner who reflects their similar characteristics; daughters in relation to their fathers and sons, their mothers (Özgen 2000). According to the family systems theory, there are responsibilities that guarantee balanced familial relationships and unifies the family and when every family member brings forth these responsibilities, relationships thrive (İmamoğlu, 1991). In Bowen's family closeness approach, the only way to solve problems is by recognising the need for a change in pattern, instilled by previous family units (Nichols and Schwartz, 1997). A model has been developed that examines what the boundaries of the relationship between structural family counselling, parents and children should be. When there are clear boundaries between parent and child accompanied by a healthy level of compassion, healthy attitudes ensue. If there is a problem with this balance and a child embodies the role of a parent and lives within unhealthy boundaries, their own parent and spousal roles will also be affected (Nazlı, 2000).

The experiential-humanistic approach, which expresses the importance of communication and relationship patterns within the family, also defends the notion that families sharing their emotions and humour with each other appropriately is healthy (Gladding, 2002). Systematic theory of family deals with functional and dysfunctional life within family, as well as emotional and intellectual structure. This theory also encompasses the idea that family dynamics can change and that children's own family-building processes become efficient (Carr, 2009). Accordingly, attitudes and experiences between parents and children are significantly important (Özgül, 2009). Cognitive behavioural theory defends that - dating, marriage, having children, changing residencies, changing professions, the period where children are at school and the period where children leave home and retirement begins - can end up in a dysfunctional state. If the dysfunctional period does not improve, this can be carried over to the next stage. As the social learning theory supports, during this long period of time, incorrect attitudes the individual learns will reflect badly when said individual has their own spouse (Smith and Stevens-Smith 1992).

As a parent raises their children, their attitudes need to nourish feelings of being loved, protected and respected. If the child feels the need to be perfect, however, and get the impression that imperfection means they won't be loved, they will feel burdened with feelings of worthlessness, insufficiency and guilt (Gladding, 2002). In Bener and Günay's (2012) study on young marriage and attitude towards family life, the findings show that when you look at university students' attitudes towards choosing a spouse and marriage, there is a traditional point of view, i.e. there are no concerns with marriage and choosing a spouse. In Burcu et al.'s (2015) study, they reached the conclusion that women with viewpoints linked to traditional cultural characteristics towards marriage, (İmamoğlu, 2000) especially at a young age was largely positive. It is thought that a significant effect on marriage is culture. In particular, a viewpoint has developed that honour should be protected, rather than being an economic burden on their family, one should leave home and start their own life.

2. Method

The focus group: PCG students in classes 1-2-3-4 at an Education Faculty of a T.R.N.C university in the Spring semester of 2015-2016 academic year participated in the study. A total of 325 students participated in the study on a voluntarily basis. 'Personal information forms', 'İnönü Marriage Attitudes Scale', 'Attitudes Towards Parents Scale I' and 'Attitudes Towards Parents Scale II' have been used in order to collect data. First of all, permission was granted from the relevant authorities before collecting data. Then, researchers talked with course teachers, and informed them about the application of the inventories at the end of the lesson. To achieve the highest participation rate, researchers preferred to employ the inventory at the end of the lesson. Inventories were applied to four branches of classrooms of the same course. Researchers explained the aim of the study to students and then announced students that the participation was voluntary. Inventory application was completed within three days and data were collected from all participants. Scale applications took 45 minutes of the students. In the following table, demographic characteristics of the students' are given.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics

Demographic Characteristics	N
Gender	
Female	158
Male	167
Parents' Marital Status	
Married	294
Separated	31
Guardian	
Birth parents	232
Only birth mother	58
Stepmother	4
Only birth father	4
Stepfather	2
Grandparents	19
A minder	2
Birth father + stepmother	1
Total	325

As shown in Table 1, 167 males, 158 females took part in the study. A majority of these students were raised at home with both their birth parents.

2.1 Data Collection Tools

Information Form: This mainly addressed the student’s age, gender, number of siblings and details about their parents (age, marital status, guardian, level of education, etc.)

‘İnönü Marriage Attitude Scale’ (İETÖ); A valid and reliable study developed by Bayoğlu and Atlı (2014) with the purpose of measuring young and old individuals’ attitudes towards marriage were also used in the present study. 21 questions with an likert-type answer scale of 1-5: (1) completely disagree (2) slightly disagree (3) slightly agree (4) agree, (5) definitely agree. High scoring questionnaires showed a positive attitude towards marriage, and low scoring questionnaires showed a negative attitude towards marriage.

‘Attitude Towards Parents Scale I’; A valid and reliable scale reflecting individuals’ positive-negative attachment towards their ‘mothers’ was used. Students answered the scale based on their thoughts of their mothers by shifting to age sixteen years old and younger. The scale is a likert-type scaling made of 25 statements. The choices were as follows: (3)‘completely accurate’, (2)‘slightly accurate’, (1)‘not accurate’, (0)‘completely inaccurate’. Some of the statements were pointed on a reverse scale. These statements were: ‘2.,4.,8.,9.,10.,13.,14.,16.,18.,19.,20.,23. and 24. The statements 8.,9.,10.,13.,19.,20.,23. found on the scale ‘overprotective’, the other statements were regarding attention and control.

‘Attitude Towards Parents Scale II’; This scale is similar to ‘Attitude Towards Parents Scale I’ but focuses on measuring the individuals’ attitudes towards their fathers’.

All Scales and information form are given to all students at the same time. The form and scales were created in the form of a booklet, and then were distributed to the students. Each scales’ directives was given to the students in 5 minutes. Students did not write their names on the booklet.

2.2 Data Collection Process and Analysis

Data was collected by a research group compiled of volunteers who first expressed a desire to take part. After information on the research was shared, research materials were carefully distributed. The research was carried out amongst 325 volunteer PCG at an Education Faculty at a T.R.N.C university. The data was analysed using the program SPSS. Data was analysed using descriptive statistical methods (frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation) as well as the One Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Distribution Test to determine whether the data was distributed. To determine the scale of interpersonal relationships, the Kruskal Wallis H test non-parametric and ANOVA analysis for Pramatrik. Results $p < 0.05$ was considered significant. (1)

3. Results

Table 2. PCG department students’ Attitude Towards Parents Scale and ve İnönü Marriage Attitude Scale, General Points Average and Standard Deviation values

	N	Av.	Standard Deviation	Min.	Max.
Mother att.	325	52,0492	10,97658	9,00	79,00
Father att.	325	41,0369	7,66537	17,00	76,00
Marriage att.	325	81,3938	16,23321	21,00	129,00

As seen in the table, the students’ attitude towards marriage and attitude towards their mothers scale results’ average scored high.

Table 3. Table 2. PCG department students’ Attitude Towards Parents Scale and ve İnönü Marriage Attitude Scale distribution analysis

	Mother att.	Father att.	Marriage att.
N	325	325	325
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	1,648	,810	1,356
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,009	,528	,051

The results show that Mother Attitude Scale doesn’t show normal distribution, Father Attitude and Marriage Attitude does show normal distribution. Consequently, Mother Attitude was put through the Mann-Whitney U test, the others were analysed using t-test and ANOVA.

Table 4. PCG department students' Attitude Towards Mother Totals and relationship with gender

	gender	N	Row av.	Row totals	P
Mother att.	female	158	175,00	27649,50	.033
	male	167	151,65	25325,50	
	Total	325			

As seen in the table, the attitude towards their mothers scored higher amongst the female students than the male students. There was no correlation between attitudes towards father, marriage and gender. At the same time, no correlation was found between gender and marriage status of the students' parents.

Table 5. PCG department's female students with parents not separated attitudes towards parents scale average and standard deviation values

	Average	Std. Deviation	N
Mother att.	53,25	11,08766	143
Father att.	42,20	7,56433	143
Marriage att.	80,21	15,99962	143

As shown in Table 5, the average attitude towards marriage was high amongst students whose parents live together.

Table 6. Relationship between - PCG department's female students with parents not separated – and attitude towards parents

		Mother att.	Father att.	Marriage att.
Mother att.	Pearson Correlation	1	,338**	,202*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000	,016
	N	143	143	143
Father att.	Pearson Correlation	,338**	1	,067
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000		,429
	N	143	143	143
Marriage att.	Pearson Correlation	,202*	,067	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,016	,429	
	N	143	143	143

**p<0.001

*p<0.005

As seen in Table 6, as the attitude towards the mothers of female students in PCG department increases so does their attitude towards their father and towards marriage.

Table 7. PCG department's male students with parents not separated attitudes towards marriage scale average and standard deviation values

	Av.	Standard Deviation	N
Mother att.	51,01	10,37	151
Father att.	40,01	7,50	151
Marriage att.	83,65	15,97	151

As noted in Table 7 PCG department's male students with parents not separated attitudes towards marriage scale averages are higher.

Table 8. Relationship between -PCG department’s male students with parents not separated attitudes towards parents - and attitudes towards marriage

		Mother att.	Father att.	Marriage att.
Mother att.	Pearson Correlation	1	,225**	,046
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,005	,577
	N	151	151	151
Father att.	Pearson Correlation	,225**	1	-,010
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,005		,904
	N	151	151	151
Marriage att.	Pearson Correlation	,046	-,010	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,577	,904	
	N	151	151	151

Relationship between - PCG department’s male students with parents not separated attitudes towards parents - and attitudes towards marriage, has failed to show any correlation.

Table 9. PCG department’s female students with parents separated attitudes towards parents and marriage scale average and standard deviation values

	Av.	Std. Deviation	N
Mother att.	54,06	10,47	15
Father att.	39,40	8,26	15
Marriage att.	75,53	13,89	15

Table 10. Relationship between - . PCG department’s female students with parents separated attitudes towards parents and towards marriage

		Mother att.	Father att.	Marriage att.
Mother att.	Pearson Correlation	1	,527*	-,050
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,044	,859
	N	15	15	15
Father att.	Pearson Correlation	,527*	1	-,339
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,044		,217
	N	15	15	15
Marriage att.	Pearson Correlation	-,050	-,339	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,859	,217	
	N	15	15	15

*p<0.05

As noted in Tables 9 and 10, female students with separated parents attitude towards marriage scale averages are high and it can be said that there is correlation between attitudes towards mother and attitude towards father.

Table 11. PCG department’s male students with parents not separated attitudes towards parents and attitude towards marriage scale average and standard deviation values

	Av.	Std. Deviation	N
Mother total	49,12	14,87	16
Father total	41,81	8,58	16
Marriage att. total	76,06	20,21	16

Tablo 12. Relationship between - PCG department's male students with parents separated attitudes towards parents - and attitudes towards marriage

		Mother att.	Father att.	Marriage att.
Mother att.	Pearson Correlation	,647**		-,391
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,007		,134
	N	16	16	16
Father att.	Pearson Correlation	,647**	1	-,279
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,007		,296
	N	16	16	16
Marriage att.	Pearson Correlation	-,391	-,279	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,134	,296	
	N	16	16	16

As shown in Tables 11 and 12, male students with separately living parents have higher attitudes towards their mothers and fathers, respectively.

4. Discussion

In general, it has emerged that female students' attitude towards their mothers was higher than male students. It could be said that female children's relationships with their parents being stronger when compared to male children, can also be due to societal and cultural reasons. The gender differences in the students showed no correlation between attitude towards father and attitude towards marriage. So, it could be said that attitudes towards relationships with father do not affect perception towards marriage. But this is in contrast with Nazlı (2000). According to her research, when there are clear boundaries between parent and child accompanied by a healthy level of compassion, healthy attitudes must be regained. If there is a problem with this balance and a child embodies the role of a parent and lives within unhealthy boundaries, their own parent and spousal roles would also be affected.

As the attitudes of PCG department female students towards their mothers increases, so too it seems does attitudes towards fathers and towards marriage. That attitudes towards mother affect attitudes towards father and that this in turn make female children's attitude towards marriage positive cannot be denied. This is in contrast with Freud. He believes that, an individual expresses the closeness they feel towards their parents and positive admiration they have for them, by choosing a partner who reflects their similar characteristics; daughters in relation to their fathers and sons, as well as their mothers (Özgen, 2000). With male students with parents that are not separated, as their attitude towards parents increases, there seems to be no correlation with their attitude towards marriage.

As shown in the results, female students in the PCG department whose parents are separated have high scale averages in attitudes towards marriage and it can be said that there is correlation between the students' attitudes towards their mother and their father.

Male students with parents that are separated also have higher attitudes towards their relationships with their mothers and fathers. Generally, when you look at it, you can come to the conclusion that female children who have positive attitudes towards their mothers also results in their attitudes towards their father and to marriage positive. The fact cannot be escaped that the same cannot be said for male children.

It can be said that in the prevailing patriarchal Turkish societies, the female factor is in fact, with their attitudes towards relationships and perspectives towards marriage, quite effective, yet it is not obvious because it has been suppressed. This study suggests that parents' relations is important predictors of children's perspectives on marriage. However, Burcu et al., (2015) found that, women with viewpoints were linked to traditional cultural characteristics towards marriage.

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