

# Effect of Socio-Economic Situation on Attitudes of Parents for Children's Rights<sup>1</sup>

**Müge Yurtsever Kılıçgün**

*Erzincan University, Faculty of Education, Department of Early Childhood Education, Erzincan-Turkey  
mykiligun@erzincan.edu.tr, Tel: +090 446 224 00 89/97 (40284), Fax: +090 446 223 19 01*

**Ayla Oktay**

*Maltepe University, Faculty of Education, Department of Primary Education, Istanbul-Turkey,  
aylaoktay@maltepe.edu.tr, Tel: +090 216 626 10 50 (2219), Fax: +090 216 626 10 93*

## **Abstract**

In this study, effects of socio-economic status on parents' attitudes for children's rights were investigated. Socio-economic status of the family in this study was limited with gender, age, education level of parents, family income and the place where born and raised of parents. The study was organized in accordance with the relational screening model. 642 mothers and 642 fathers, totaly 1284 parents took place in the research sample. "Family Information Questionnaire" and "Parental Attitude Scale for Children's Rights" were used as the data collection equipments in this study. Parents' attitudes for children's rights were defined in two dimensions in scale which were "Nurturance" and "Self-Determination". According to the research findings, it was seen that mothers had attitudes in favor of "Nurturance" while fathers had attitudes in favor of "Self-Determination". On the other hand, it was determined that both mothers and fathers with a high education level and family income status had attitudes in favor of "Nurturance". Mothers and fathers born and raised in the town, county and city center, had attitudes in favor of "Nurturance" while parents born and raised in the village, had attitudes in favor of "Self-Determination". Although maternal age was not effective on attitudes for "Self-Determination", with increasing of mothers' age significant difference was determined for "Nurturance". Fathers aged 31 to 50 had attitudes in favor of "Nurturance", while fathers under the age of 30 and over the age of 50 had attitudes in favor of "Self-Determination".

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**Keywords**

Attitudes of Parents for Children's Rights, Nurturance, Self-Determination, Socio-Economic Situation

**Introduction**

Parental attitudes for children's rights are defined in accordance with two different orientations which are "Nurturance" and "Self-Determination". "Nurturance" was firstly emphasized by Farson (1974) and Worsfold (1974). According to this attitude, nurturance of children must be provided and guaranteed by the state and their families. As for "Self-Determination", it was firstly identified by Rogers and Wrightsman (1978). According to this attitude the child should be able to decide on something what the child wants to do and should be able to control their lives and surroundings (Day, Peterson-Badali & Ruck, 2006; Margolin, 1982; Melton, 1980). Despite the fact that attitudes of "Nurturance" and "Self-Determination" appear to be opposite to each other. In fact they complete each other (Ruck, 1994). Attitude of "Nurturance" includes issues such as feeding, shelter and protection of children from danger. On the other hand, attitude of "self-determination" covers issues such as self-expression and communication freedom of children. According to the "Convention on the Rights of the Child", to live in family environment, development, protection and participation for child are essential. These two attitudes ("Nurturance" and "Self-Determination") supports the four core principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; (1) the prevention of discrimination, (2) the best interests of the child, (3) the right to survival and development, and (4) the principles that child's views to be taken into account (UNICEF, 1998). Children's socialization skills are grounded in their families first. Socialization is a process which is based on adults. In this process, the children mimic their culture, acquire habits and gain the appropriate values in their culture. Children depend on their parents in the first years of their lives (the child's need for "Nurturance") (Polat, 2001). Children with maturation want to act independently and control their life in accordance with their wishes (the child's need to be right on his own life) (Polat, 2002). In this developmental process, several factors come to mind that parental attitudes may be under the influence of many variables for the rights of children (Baumrind, 1978). In fact, studies stated that the variables such as the family authority type, age and gender of the child effected the attitudes of parents for children's rights (Day, Peterson-Badali & Ruck, 2006; Peterson-Badali, Morine, Ruck & Slonim, 2004; Sutton, 2003; Morine, 2000). Morine (2000) and Wolfe (1998) examined attitudes of mother and children for children's rights. It was seen that parents had attitudes in favor of Nurturance. On the other hand, for decisions within the family, children had attitudes in favor of Self-Determination. In terms of socio-economic status variables, it was not encountered any evidence in the literature. Identification of this information was effective to determine the purpose of this study.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine whether socio-economic status effects on the attitudes of parents for children's rights or not. Socio-economic status of the family in this

study was limited with gender, age, education level of parents, family income and the place where parents were born and raised.

## Methodology

### Research Design

The study was organized in accordance with the relational screening model. The frequency (f), percentage (%), mean (X), standard deviation (SD) and analysis of variance were used for analysis of the data.

### Sample

The sample of the study was determined and chosen randomly from parents who have children aged 6-14 years continued private and public kindergarten and primary schools in the province of Istanbul. In this study, totally 1284 parents (642 mothers and 642 fathers) participated in place. Identifying information for parents was obtained from results of "Family Information Questionnaire" and "Parental Attitude Scale for Children's Rights" applied on parents in the sample of the study. According to this information;

- The ages of Mothers; 20.6% were aged 20-30 years, 58.6% between the ages of 31- 40, 16.0% between the ages of 41 to 50 and 4.8% were aged 51 to 60 years.
- The ages of Fathers; 13.2% were aged 20-30 years, 44.4% between the ages of 31-40, 29.0% 41-50 years and 13.4% were between the ages of 51-60.
- 5.3% of mothers were literate, 43.6% of primary school, 32.1% high school, 17.8% of the university and 1.2% of master's degree / doctorate degree.
- 10.4% of fathers were literate, 28.8% of primary school, 32.2% high school, 22.3% of the university and 6.2% have a master / doctorate degree.
- As for family income; 21.8% of mothers identified as low-income, 35.2% lower than average income, 29.3% average income, 8.9% above average income and 4.8% identified as wealthy.
- 24.7% of the fathers identified as low-income, 31.3 % lower than average income, 27.3% of average income, 11.7% above average income and 5.0% defined as wealthy.
- 26.6% of mothers were born in the village, 5.1% in the town, 19.5% in the county and 48.8% were born in the city center.
- 20.6 % of fathers were born in the village, 17.3% in town, 17.1% in the county and 45.0% were born in the city center.
- According to sub-dimensions of Parental Attitude Scale for Children's Rights, arithmetic mean and standard deviation values of mothers were  $170.61 \pm 19.06$  for "Nurturance" sub-dimension and  $103.54 \pm 12.05$  for "Self-Determination" sub-dimension.
- Arithmetic mean and standard deviation values of fathers were  $165.09 \pm 27.22$  for "Nurturance" sub-dimension and  $104.26 \pm 12.45$  for "Self-Determination" sub-dimension.

## **Instrumentation**

"Family Information Questionnaire" and "Parental Attitude Scale for Children's Rights" were used as the data collection equipment in this study.

### *Family Information Questionnaire*

"Family Information Questionnaire" was developed for this study. With that survey, it was intended to collect information about the parents who answered "Parental Attitude Scale for Children's Rights"

### *Parental Attitude Scale for Children's Rights*

"Parental Attitude Scale for Children's Rights" was developed by Yurtsever (2009) to determine parents' attitudes for children's rights. The scale was consisted of 63 items. It evaluated Parents' attitudes toward children's rights in two dimensions which were "Nurturance" and "Self-Determination".

"Nurturance" attitude included two sub-dimensional structures named "State Assurance and Support" and "Care and Protection", on the other hand, "Self-Determination" attitude had one sub-dimensional structure. There were 23 items in "State Assurance and Support" sub-dimension, 15 items "Care and Protection" sub-dimension and 25 items in sub-dimension of "Self-Determination". Exploratory factor of "State Assurance and Support" sub-dimension was 26.11% and its reliability was 0.9806. In sub-dimension of "Care and Protection", exploratory factor was %17.36 and reliability was 0.9490. In sub-dimension of "Self-Determination", exploratory factor was %24.50, and reliability was 0.9772. Parental Attitude Scale for Children's Rights" was a 5-grade Likert type scale. According to agreement degree, it was scored as totally agree (5 points), partially agree (4 points), undecided (3 points), disagree (2 points) strongly disagree (1 point) (Yurtsever-Kılıçgün and Oktay, 2011).

## **Results**

Within the scope of the research, t-test was used to determine whether any differences among attitudes of parents towards children's rights. According to age of the parents, the enclave in which parents was born and raised, education levels and identification of family income, analysis of variance (ANOVA) was made to determine whether or not any differences in parental attitudes towards the rights of children. The findings of the study are as follows:

Table 1. T-test results for parental attitudes towards the rights of children

Attitudes of Parents for Children's Rights	Parents	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	Sig.
Nurturance	Mother	64	170.6	19.06	128	4.2	p<.01
	Father	64	165.0	27.22	128	1	
Self-Determination	Mother	64	103.5	12.05	128	-	p<.05
	Father	64	104.2	12.45	128	1.0	

In Table 1, it was seen significant differences between Nurturance and Self-Determination scores of parents' attitudes for children's rights. It was determined that this difference was in favor of mothers in attitude of Nurturance ( $\bar{X}_{\text{mother}} = 170.61$ ). On the other hand, in attitude of Self-Determination this difference was in favor of fathers ( $\bar{X}_{\text{father}} = 104.26$ ).

Table 2. The results of the analysis of variance were made to determine whether or not any differences in parental attitudes towards the rights of children with the age of the parents

Parents	Attitudes of Parents for Children's Rights	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Mother	Nurturance	Intergrup	59990.49	3	19996.83	73.79	p<.01
		Within the groups	172883.71	63	270.98		
		Total	232874.20	64			
Father	Self-Determination	Intergrup	1609.78	3	536.59	3.74	-
		Within the groups	91403.67	63	143.27		
		Total	93013.45	64			
Mother	Nurturance	Intergrup	155666.08	3	51888.69	103.68	p<.01
		Within the groups	319291.04	63	500.46		
		Total	474957.11	64			
Father	Self-Determination	Intergrup	5863.08	3	1954.36	13.33	p<.01
		Within the groups	93540.48	63	146.62		
		Total	99403.56	64			

In Table 2, it was observed significant differences in Nurturance attitude's scores of mothers. ( $F_{\text{Nurturance}} = 73.79$   $p < .01$ ). There were no differences in Self-Determination attitude's scores of mothers. Post-hoc Scheffe test was used to determine Nurturance attitude scores' differences of mothers who were different age groups.

According to the results of analysis, it was observed that Nurturance attitude's scores were in favor of 31-40, 41-50 and 51-60 age range of mothers.

In Table 2, significant differences were observed both Nurturance and Self-Determination attitudes' scores of fathers ( $F_{\text{Nurturance}} = 1103.68$ ,  $p < .01$ ;  $F_{\text{Self-Determination}} = 13.33$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

Post-hoc Scheffe tests were used to determine Nurturance and Self-Determination attitude's scores of fathers who were different age groups. According to the results of analysis, it was observed that Nurturance attitude's scores were in favor of 31-40, 41-50 age range of fathers. On the other hand, "Self-Determination" attitude's scores of fathers were in favor of the fathers in the range of 20-30 and 51-60 years, respectively.

Table 3. According to the enclave in which parents was born and raised, it was seen the results of analysis of variance in order to identify whether or not any differences in parental attitudes towards the rights of children

Parents	Attitudes of Parents for Children's Rights	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Mother	Nurturance	Intergroup	53221.46	3	17740.49	63.00	p<.01
		Within the groups	179652.74	63	281.59		
		Total	232874.20	64			
	Self-Determination	Intergroup	2129.88	3	709.96	4.98	p<.01
		Within the groups	90883.56	63	142.45		
		Total	93013.45	64			
Father	Nurturance	Intergroup	274856.02	3	91618.67	292.12	p<.01
		Within the groups	200101.09	63	313.64		
		Total	474957.11	64			
	Self-Determination	Intergroup	8435.18	3	2811.73	19.72	p<.01
		Within the groups	90968.38	63	142.58		
		Total	99403.56	64			

In Table 3, significant differences were observed both Nurturance and Self-Determination attitudes' scores of mothers ( $F_{\text{Nurturance}} = 63.00$ ,  $p < .01$ ;  $F_{\text{Self-Determination}} = 4.98$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

Post-hoc Scheffe tests were used to determine "Nurturance and Self-Determination" attitude's scores of mothers who were born and raised in different enclaves. According to the results of analysis, it was observed that Nurturance attitude's scores were in favor of mothers who were born and raised in town, county and city center. On the other hand, "Self-Determination" attitude's scores of mothers were in favor of the mothers who were born and raised in village.

In Table 3, significant differences were observed both "Nurturance and Self-Determination" attitudes' scores of fathers ( $F_{\text{Nurturance}} = 292.120$ ,  $p < .01$ ;  $F_{\text{Self-Determination}} = 19.72$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

Post-hoc Scheffe tests were used to determine "Nurturance and Self-Determination" attitude's scores of fathers who were born and raised in different enclaves. According to the results of analysis, it was observed that "Nurturance" attitude's scores were in favor of fathers who were born and raised in town, county and city center. On the other hand, "Self-Determination" attitude's scores of fathers were in favor of the fathers who were born and raised in village.

Table 4. The results of analysis of variance to identify Parents' attitudes towards children's rights according to the study carried out on education levels of parents

Parents	Attitudes of Parents for Children's Rights	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Mothers	Nurturance	Intergrup	22433.60	4	5608.40	16.98	p<.01
		Within the groups	210440.59	637	330.36		
		Total	232874.20	641			
	Self-Determination	Intergrup	1273.38	4	318.34	2.21	-
		Within the groups	91740.07	637	144.02		
		Total	93013.45	641			
Fathers	Nurturance	Intergrup	313987.44	4	78496.86	310.63	p<.01
		Within the groups	160969.67	637	252.70		
		Total	474957.11	641			
	Self-Determination	Intergrup	7358.90	4	1839.73	12.73	p<.01
		Within the groups	92044.66	637	144.50		
		Total	99403.56	641			

In Table 4, it was observed significant differences in Nurturance attitude's scores of mothers. ( $F_{\text{Nurturance}} = 16.68$   $p < .01$ ). There were no differences in Self-Determination attitude's scores of mothers. Post-hoc Scheffe test was used to determine Nurturance attitude scores' differences of mothers who were different education levels.

Post-hoc Scheffe test was used to determine Nurturance attitude scores' differences of mothers who were different education levels. According to the results of analysis, it was observed that Nurturance attitude's scores were in favor of mothers who were graduated from high school, university, Master of Science and doctorate degrees

In Table 4, significant differences were observed both "Nurturance and Self-Determination" attitudes' scores of fathers ( $F_{\text{Nurturance}} = 310.63$ ,  $p < .01$ ;  $F_{\text{Self-Determination}} = 12.73$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Post-hoc Scheffe tests were used to determine "Nurturance and Self-Determination" attitude's scores of fathers who were different education levels. According to the results of analysis, it was observed that "Nurturance" attitude's scores were in favor of fathers who were graduated from primary education, high school and university. On the other hand, "Self-Determination" attitude's scores of fathers were in favor of the fathers who were literate and graduated from master of science /doctorate degrees



Table 5. The results of analysis of variance to identify Parents' attitudes towards children's rights according to family income status defined by parents

Parents	Attitudes of Parents for Children's Rights	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Mother	Nurturance	Intergroup	37178.44	4	9294.61	30.25	p<.01
		Within the groups	195695.76	637	307.21		
		Total	232874.20	641			
	Self-Determination	Intergroup	1956.98	4	489.25	3.42	-
		Within the groups	91056.47	637	142.95		
		Total	93013.45	641			
Father	Nurturance	Intergroup	47211.79	4	11802.95	17.58	p<.01
		Within the groups	427745.33	637	671.50		
		Total	474957.11	641			
	Self-Determination	Intergroup	3053.34	4	763.33	5.05	-
		Within the groups	96350.22	637	151.26		
		Total	99403.56	641			

In Table 5, significant differences were observed Nurturance attitude's scores of mothers ( $F_{\text{Nurturance}} = 30.25$ ,  $p < .01$ ). There were no differences in Self-Determination attitude's scores of mothers. Post-hoc Scheffe test was used to determine Nurturance attitude scores' differences of mothers who identified their family income as different levels. According to the results of analysis, it was observed that Nurturance attitude's scores were in favor of mothers who defined their family income as lower than average income, average income, above average income and wealthy.

In Table 5, significant differences were observed Nurturance attitude's scores of fathers ( $F_{\text{Nurturance}} = 17.58$ ,  $p < .01$ ). There were no differences in Self-Determination attitude's scores of fathers. Post-hoc Scheffe test was used to determine Nurturance attitude scores' differences of fathers who identified their family income as different levels. According to the results of analysis, it was observed that Nurturance attitude's scores were in favor of fathers who defined their family income as average income, above average income and wealthy.

## Discussion

In this study, effects of socio-economic status of parents' attitudes for children's rights were investigated. Socio-economic status of the family in this study was limited with gender, age, education level of parents, family income and the place where parents were born and raised. Parents' attitudes for children's rights were defined in two dimensions in scale, which were "Nurturance" and "Self-Determination".

When parental attitudes towards children's rights were examined according to gender, it was seen that mothers had an attitude in favor of "Nurturance". On the other hand, father had an attitude in favor of "Self-Determination". This finding showed that there were differences between attitudes of parents for their children's rights. In Family Structure (1996) and Children's Education in Family researches (1995) made by General Directorate of Family and Social Researches Department of Republic of Turkey were seen that parents could have different attitudes in their relations with their children. Kağıtçıbaşı (1981) and Smith (2002) stated that different attitudes in parent-child relationship were formed according to educational vision of parents' culture including gender roles.

It was thought that this difference in attitudes was also reflected on the attitudes of mothers and fathers for children's rights (Day, Peterson-Badali & Ruck, 2006; Peterson-Badali, Morine, Ruck & Slonim, 2004; Sutton, 2003; Morine, 2000). It was determined that attitude of "Nurturance" was effected from (1) the age increases of mothers, (2) fathers age between 31-50 years, (3) approaches the place to the life of urban where the parents were born and raised, (4) the rise of education situation of parents and (5) increase in family income. As for attitude of "Self-Determination", it was observed that this attitude was effected from (1) fathers' age over 50 years and under 30 years, (2) approaches the place to the life of rural where the parents were born and raised, (3) father's literacy status or level of education such as Master / PhD degrees.

In reviewing the literature it could not coincide with any study associated with attitudes of parents towards the rights of their children and variables such as age of parents, place where parents born and raised, education level and family income. However, Melton (1980) and Ruck (1994) mentioned about relationship between socio-economic status and realization of children for their rights. In study of Melton (1980), it was remarked that there was a relationship between socio-economic status and realization of children for their rights. However, Ruck (1994) stated that there was not such a relationship in his study. Research findings have shown that parental attitudes for children's rights can be under the influence of many variables determining the socio-economic situation. For example, in this study, mothers with age had an attitude in favor of "Nurturance", these characteristics of the mother reminiscent traditional Turkish family structure. One of the most important responsibilities of mothers in traditional Turkish family structure is to ensure the maintenance of order in the family and care for children. When this responsibility given to the mother is thought, "Nurturance" attitude of mothers for children's rights seems as normal. However, in today's world the increasing number of working women and sharing of mother this responsibility ("Nurturance") with his wife create orientation needs on children to make their own decisions. As a matter of fact, this idea supports fathers under the age of 30 because they had an attitude in favor of "self-determination". Another finding from the

study showed that if the place approaches to the life of urban where the parents were born and raised, parents had an attitude in favor of "Nurturance", and if the place approaches to the life of rural where the parents were born and raised, parents had an attitude in favor of "self-determination". In order to assessment of these findings the way of life of families living in rural and urban areas should be considered. Economies of families living in rural based on agriculture and livestock. Almost all members of the family have to take responsibility and to work in this chain. This information suggests that parents born and raised in rural areas had left their children more free to decide on their own. When parents living in the urban area are considered, it is seen that parents are the only working of the family and the main responsibility of children are to go to school. This matter suggest that parents born and raised in urban areas are perceiving the problems of children as problems to be solved by parents and they feel that they have to take care them more also. Because of the fact that attitude of "Nurturance" is affected by the rise of education of parents and the increase in family income. It is thought that the attitude of "Nurturance" of parents negatively affects the right of self-determination of child and leads to grows of child as dependent on the parents. When the social and cultural diversities in our country are concerned, this research conducted in the province of Istanbul can be carried out in different working groups.

In the same way, examination of attitudes towards children's rights in different occupations for children (education, security, health, social services, etc.) or to make studies on children's awareness of their rights are strongly recommended.

The necessary information and support programs can be arranged about children's rights for families, children and the relevant professional groups. Thus, in accordance with the basic principles of children's rights, correct behavior and attitudes can be achieved. Hence, child's usefulness can be ensured.

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