



The Effect of Family Education Program on Paternity Role and Children's Play Skills

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the study was to evaluate the effects of fathers' participation in the Father Support Education Programme on their perception of their role as fathers and the development of play skills in their children. The study sample comprised 40 fathers whose children, aged 5 and 6, were enrolled in independent pre-schools located in the city centre of Bartın. The experimental design of pre-test and post-test control group was adopted to facilitate the study. All technical terms were defined when first used. The study comprised 20 fathers, who were divided into control and study groups. Fathers in the study group received the Father Support Education Program over a period of 10 weeks, while no education program was provided to the control group. Information was collected using the "Personal Information Form," "Father Role Perception Scale (FRPS)," and "Game Skills Assessment Scale (PSAS)." The research's quantitative data was analysed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) programme for Windows 22.0. To compare continuous data between two independent groups, the t-test was employed. The analysis established that following the educational programme, fathers in the study group exhibited a significant difference between their pre-test and post-test mean scores for their roles in their children's play skills. It was found that the Father Support Education Programme had a positive impact on fathers' roles and the development of children's play skills.

Keywords:

Parenting education, father role, play skill, pre-school period, child development

1. Introduction

Family, which affects child development starting from birth, also forms the basis of the child's beliefs, attitudes and behaviors. Providing rich environmental conditions in the family environment, positive family attitudes of parents towards their children, meeting the interests and needs of the child in a timely manner and not experiencing a lack of love play an important role in the development processes of children (Bayraktar, Güven, and Temel, 2016). Upon examination of family structures, it is observed that mothers assume more responsibilities than fathers in raising and developing children. Depending on social life and family conditions, the help of mothers and fathers is required more (Anliak, 2004).

The father, who makes direct and indirect impacts on his children, plays a direct role in the development of the child when they play games with their children, conduct many activities together, do educational activities in every area, and set a good example for children (Ersan, 2013). The father, who plays an important role in the life of the child, needs various opportunities to establish an active bond with the children and to provide the children with behavior, skills and knowledge (Hoffman, 2011). One of the important opportunities is family education programs in which fathers participate.

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Family education programs are planned and systematic educational activities that aim to provide parents with knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors related to parenting, child development, behavior acquisition, child nutrition, child mental health, adult and child communication, and child play activities (Cömert and Erdem, 2016; Tezel-Şahin and Özyürek, 2017; Ünal, 2015;). It is observed that when parents participate in family education, parent-child bonds develop, communication between family members increases, child development progresses well and parenting skills improve (Mahoney, Kaiser, Girolametto, MacDonald, Robinson, Safford, and Spiker, 1999). Fathers, who do not perceive their role in the family only as a role that meets the financial needs of the children, but spend effective time with their children and participate in the care of children take more responsibility in lives of children after participating in family education programs (Ünüvar and Senemoğlu, 2010). By positively affecting children's language skills and analytical thinking capacity, fathers contribute to their mental development and depending on their interest in children, they contribute to their social and emotional development. It was found that if fathers are present in children's lives, their ability to empathize, problem-solving skills, self-confidence and self-control increase (Easterbrooks and Goldberg, 1984; Kuzucu, 2011). In a study conducted with children aged 0-6, it was revealed that father's participation had positive effects on children's language, mental, social and emotional development (Cabrera, Shannon and Tamis-LeMonda, 2007). Fathers who actively participate during the pre-school period would ensure that the child is successful both in pre-school and during other academic periods (Allen and Daly, 2007; Coley et al., 2011; Kotaman, 2008). On the other hand, a child with father deprivation has low academic achievement, experiences cognitive dysfunction and displays aggressive behaviors (Amato & Gilbreth, 1999; Radin, 1981). Fathers are an important role model for boys and girls in the family. Considering the results of various studies, it is observed that children observe their fathers in social setting and try to use the behaviors they observed (Rane and McBride, 2000). In case fathers, who have an impact on children's social and emotional development, are also present in their children's lives, this reduces their behavioral disorders (Uludağlı, 2017). Close and sincere relationship between fathers and children ensures that children are psychologically well, acquire social behavior, regulate their emotions effectively, and improve their relationship with their peers (Lamb, 1997; Vogel, Bradley, Raikes, Boller and Shears, 2006). When the father, who is an important role model in social life, does not take part in children's lives, that negatively affects their social development (Flouri, 2005). Fathers that participate in child education, spend time at home with various activities, and chats with the children can establish strong relationships with children which enriches their communication (Cowan and Pruett, 2009). The activities, experiences and opportunities that parents participate and offer to their children are important (Ercan, 2019; Özkan, 2019; Uluğ 2019). In case fathers participate in activities related to children and help mothers, this supports children's cognitive and physical development, gaining language skills, becoming healthy individuals and avoid dangers (Allen and Daly, 2007; Beets and Foley, 2008; Nepomnyaschy and Donnelly, 2015; Trost, Kerr, Ward and Pate, 2001; Uludağlı, 2017).

Quality play time with the child has an important place in establishing a positive bond between father and child. Fathers would provide information to children on many subjects through play, while they also contribute to the development of children's play skills. Play, which is a natural activity in children's lives, is the most important tool enabling children to understand the environment where they live. Children try to know and explain themselves by playing. Playing is an environment where children learn alone through various experiences. Playing has both entertaining and educational dimensions and is an important activity for children to establish a relationship with their environment and to reflect their feelings and thoughts to the other side (Barbaroğlu, 2016; Kurt and Özkaya, 2014; Ulutaş, 2011; Oktay, 2002; Yavuzer 2007). Similar to meeting basic needs of children such as nutrition and sleep in a healthy development process, having an effective playtime is as important for children (Oktay, 2002). Children's first playmates are their parents and their first play environment is their home (Sezer, Yılmaz, and Koçyiğit, 2016). However, it is understood that while mothers mostly deal with the routine work and care of children, it is fathers that play more games (Özyürek, 2015). It is observed that the development of children who play games with their parents progresses positively and they gain behavior, skills and knowledge (Işıkoğlu and İvrendi, 2008).

Many physical systems of children that play games work regularly while their bodies also gain flexibility (Çakmak and Elibol, 2005). Play enables children to perceive their environment, helps them reason, establish cause-effect relationships, gain problem-solving skills and establish relationships between objects, thoughts, and words (Driscoll and Nagel, 2008; Durualp and Aral, 2015). Children use language and thought effectively by forming clear and long sentences and develop the ability to express themselves (Çakmak and Elibol, 2015;

Tuğrul, 2013). Children that gain social skills such as waiting for their turn, obeying the rules, and sharing by playing have the ability to make friends, cooperate and act with the group in the play setting (Catron and Allen, 2003; Driscoll and Nagel, 2008; Sevinç, 2004). Children gain many behaviors and skills through play. Thus, fathers play an important role in the development of children's play skills as well as having a healthy development process.

Family education programs applied to fathers have an important place in terms of their effective demonstration of their supportive role towards their wives and children and for children to acquire play skills. In this study, presentations were made on family attitudes, communication with children, child development, children's games, behavior acquisition within the scope of education. It can be said that family trainings organized for fathers have positive effects on family environments. For this reason, it is thought that fathers can effectively perform fatherhood roles by taking the necessary responsibilities in the family and will contribute to both their development and the acquisition of play skills by spending productive play time with their children. This study aims to demonstrate the impact of education on fathers to positively increase the perception levels of father role and present quality play time experiences with children to participate in the lives of their children and make children gain play skills. Within the framework of this general purpose, the following questions were tried to be answered:

1. Is there a noteworthy distinction between fathers in the experimental and control groups regarding the scores they obtained from the pre-test, post-test and pre-test post-test FRPS assessment?
2. Is there a significant difference in pre-test, post-test, and pre-test post-test scores received from the PSAS test between fathers in the experimental and control groups?

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Model

A quantitative research method was implemented in this study to investigate the influence of AÇEV's Father Support Education Programme on fathers' perception of their role and children's play skills. The experimental model, which involved selecting experimental and control groups through random assignment, was employed in the research process. Consequently, a pretest-posttest control group randomised experiment was conducted. In this study, the pre-test-post-test group model was employed to create two groups through random assignment: the test group and the control group. Technical term abbreviations were defined when first introduced. In this study, the pre-test-post-test group model was employed to create two groups through random assignment: the test group and the control group. The language was clear, concise, and used a formal register with consistent technical terms. The writing adhered to conventional academic structure and citation style guidelines, with no filler words or biased language. Grammatical correctness was ensured throughout. Random sampling was used to match two groups according to demographic characteristics from the sample pool (Gliner, Morgan and Leech, 2015; Fraenkel and Wallen, 2003; Karasar, 2005; Büyüköztürk et al., 2020). At the outset of the investigation, the pretest scores of the dependent variable were assessed in the control group design among the experimental and control groups. Subsequently, the independent variable was solely administered to the experimental group. Ultimately, both groups underwent post-test measurements and were compared to evaluate the effect of the experimental procedure (Büyüköztürk, 2001).

2.2. Research Limitations

It is limited to 40 fathers who have children aged five and six with normal development living in the province of Bartın. The investigation employed the Father Support Education Program, while the paternity role perception scale and the play skills assessment scale were restricted to measurable behavioral indicators.

2.3. Experimental grup

Study group is composed of 40 fathers that have 5–6-year-old children attending pre-school in Bartın district. Before the study the fathers were sent invitation letters to participate in introduction meeting for fathers. The fathers who attended the meeting were informed about the Father Support Education Program and the planned work on education. The 20 fathers that volunteered and that wanted to participate in education created experimental group while 20 fathers that were not included in education but agreed to join the study created the control group.

When number of children of fathers in experimental and control groups are studied, they had 1, 2, and 3 children but there were more fathers with 2 children. Regarding distribution of sex, number of girls and boy children in both groups were balanced. When age groups of children are studied, fathers that participated in experimental group had more 5-year-old children, fathers in the control group had approximate numbers of 5- and 6-year-old children. Fathers in experimental and control groups stand out as being in 30-39 age range. While fathers in experimental group have varying levels of education, they mostly have undergraduate degrees. There were no primary or secondary school graduate fathers in the control group and just like in the experimental group, fathers mostly had undergraduate or graduate degrees. Fathers in experimental and control groups were employed both in state and private sectors. In terms of family structure of both groups, they had nuclear family structure. Only in experimental group there were two fathers that had senior members in their family.

2.4. Data Collection Tools

During data collection Father Role Perception Scale (FRPS) developed by Kuzucu (1999) and Play Skills Assessment Scale (PSAS) developed by Fazlıoğlu, Ilgaz, and Papatğa (2013) were used.

Father Role Perception Scale: The scale developed by Kuzucu (1999) could be applied on fathers. This is a 5-point Likert scale. This scale measures father role perception level with 25 expressions and has 14 positive and 11 negative expressions. Validity and reliability study of the scale was conducted with 125 fathers. 40 expressions on father role were created based on study of the literature, expert opinion, and responses of fathers. In order to determine distinctiveness of scale items, item analysis was conducted. As a result of analyses, the scale was finalized with 25 items. In the 25-item scale there are 5 steps for subjects to define their judgment. These steps are 1- Not Suitable At All, 2- Not Very Suitable, 3- Undecided, 4- Partially Suitable, 5- Completely Suitable. Positive items are scored from 1 to 5 while negative items are scored from 5 to 1. Items 2, 4, 8, 11, 16, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25 have negative statements while remaining items have positive statements. Some of the scale items are: "The father should apologize to his child when necessary." or "Boys should play with their fathers, and girls with their mothers." A high score from the scale means positive paternal role perception, and a low score means negative paternity role perception. Test-retest method was used for reliability study of the scale. Also, for reliability study, internal consistency of the scale was checked and Cronbach Alfa coefficient was found to be 0.75.

Play Skills Assessment Scale: It was developed by Fazlıoğlu, Ilgaz and Papatğa (2013). The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale is 0.93, which indicates that the scale is reliable. The scale, which is one-dimensional and 5-point Likert type, consists of 27 items. The grading used for the items in the scale was scored as Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), Strongly Agree (5). Some of the scale items are as follows: "My child expresses himself easily while playing." or "My child chooses which toys to play with." This scale is applied to people who know children between the ages of five and six, parents and teachers. It is considered to be used to collect information about children's game skills. Thus, it is aimed to identify children who are insufficient in play skills and to take necessary measures to develop these skills in children.

In this study, the reliability of the Father Role Perception Scale was found to be high with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.855. Additionally, the Play Skills Assessment Scale also demonstrated high reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.926.

Father Support Education Program (FSEP): FSEP is a scientific educational programme created by the Mother Child Education Foundation (AÇEV). It trains fathers who take part in the course to undertake responsibility for the care of their children, establish a democratic relationship with them and support their development in a practical manner. In the training sessions, fathers are trained for the social, emotional, physical, sexual and mental development of the child through group discussions, case studies, stories and games. In addition, within the scope of training; sharing equal responsibilities within the family, taking active responsibility in the upbringing and supporting content related to paternity roles such as development of children, trying to understand them by communicating effectively with the mother and the child, supporting children in all areas such as education, social skills and art, being democratic in the family environment, being a good example to their children, enabling children to acquire positive behaviors and skills, spending time with their spouse and children, playing games with their children, and supporting all developmental areas of children were presented (Koçak, 2004).

When family structure is considered, a nuclear family is composed of parents and children and fathers assume as significant role in development and upbringing of children as mothers. Thus, purposes of the program can be listed as follows:

- Realizing by father of his importance in child development,
- Informing father of child development,
- In light of information gained, father having suitable expectations for child’s development,
- Preventing child abuse,
- Receiving necessary support by father to play a more effective role in child development,
- Establishing a balance among sexes by including father in child development,
- Informing father of democratic methods and father’s realization of such methods at home with his wife and children, thus supporting a more democratic, happier family and society structure,
- Father’s using some skills learned in the program (communication skills, problem solving strategies, etc.) in other relationships (Koçak, 2004).

2.5. Data Collection Process

Regarding the scales used in the study, initially, required permissions were obtained from the authors who owned the scales. The Father Support Education Program implemented for the study was carried out in collaboration with Bartın University Continuing Education Application and Research Center (BÜNSEM) and AÇEV. Training meetings were held in the classrooms within the training center (BÜNSEM). Attention was paid to the fact that fathers participating in the training had at least one child aged five or six and were literate. FSEP training, which consists of 12 sessions, was given on Tuesday evenings, on the day and time determined by the fathers, between 19.00-21.30. Ten sessions were held with fathers and two sessions with mothers. Before the training started, a pre-test was applied to the participants in the experimental and control groups. All fathers participated in the training sessions during the training. At the end of the Father Support Education Program, post-test was applied to both the experimental group and the control group.

In addition, at the end of each session, mothers were given informative notes about the educational content applied to the fathers in order for them to have information about education and to ensure its continuity in the home environment, next to play activities in line with the developmental characteristics of preschool children to enable fathers to spend time with their children.

2.6. Data Analysis

FSEP group study was conducted with the volunteer fathers of children attending independent kindergarten in Bartın Province. Pre-test and post-test assessments were administered to the fathers in both the experimental and control groups. The study data was analysed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) for Windows 22.0 programme. Descriptive statistical methods such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to evaluate the data. To assess distribution of demographic characteristics by groups, chi-square analysis was employed. The t-test was also utilised to compare continuous quantitative data between the two independent groups. Intragroup changes were analyzed with dependent group t-test. In the study, pre-test scores of father role and play skills were controlled and the difference in post-test scores according to the groups was analyzed with ANCOVA (Covariance Analysis) test. The results of the normality test of the data are presented in the table below.

Table 1. *Normal Distribution, Kurtosis, Skewness Test*

Group		Father role pre-test	Father role post-test	Play skills pre-test	Play skills post-test
Test	Kurtosis	-0.757	-0.823	4,670	0.809
	Skewness	-0.238	-0.333	-1.714	0.886
Control	Kurtosis	0.987	0.102	-0.570	0.271
	Skewness	0.663	0.566	0.066	-0.259

In relevant literature, a normal distribution is deemed acceptable when kurtosis skewness values of variables fall between +1.5 and -1.5 (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2013) and between +2.0 and -2.0 (George and Mallery, 2010).

Analysis proceeded under the assumption that the distribution was normal due to a sufficient sample size following the central limit theorem (Harwiki, 2013; İnal and Günay, 1993; Johnson and Wichern, 2002).

2.7. Ethical

Necessary approval for the use of scales in the study was obtained from the Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee at Karabuk University. (Document Number: 2018/11)

3. Findings

Findings of FRPS and PSAS tests and interviews held following training are presented in tables.

Table 2. *Differentiation of Paternity Role According to Groups*

Groups	Experimental (n=20)		Control (n=20)		t	p
	Mean	Sd	Mean	Sd		
Father Role Pre-Test	108,750	7,853	101,700	5,536	3,281	0,002
Father Role Post-Test	114,900	6,743	102,950	7,824	5,174	0,000
t	-2,897		-0,833			
p	0,009		0,415			

According to Table 2, father role pre-test scores of fathers differ significantly according to groups ($t(38)=3.281$; $p=0.002<0.05$). The father role pre-test mean scores of experimental group ($\bar{x}=108,750$) were higher than the father role pre-test mean scores of the control group ($\bar{x}=101,700$). Although perception level of the fathers in the experimental group was higher than the perception level of the fathers in the control group, it could be argued that the two groups demonstrated similar characteristics ahead of the application because their score values were close to each other. In the experimental group, a significant increase ($p=0.009<0.05$) was found in father role post-test scores ($\bar{x}=114.900$) compared to father role pre-test scores ($\bar{x}=108.750$). There was no significant increase between father role post-test value ($\bar{x}=102.950$) and father role pre-test value ($\bar{x}=101.700$) in the control group ($p=0.415>0.05$). It is noted that the father role post-test scores of the fathers differ significantly according to the groups ($t(38)=5.174$; $p=0.000<0.05$). The post-test scores for father role in the experimental group ($\bar{x}=114,900$) exceeded those of the control group ($\bar{x}=102,950$). It could be argued that the fathers' perception levels in the experimental group increased positively after the FSEP training, while no significant increase was observed in fathers' perception levels in the control group. The Father Support Education Program, as applied to the experimental group, has a statistically significant impact on the fathers' perception of their fatherly role.

Table 3. *Differentiation of Game Skills According to Groups*

Groups	Experimental (n=20)		Control (n=20)		t	sd	p
	Mean	Sd	Mean	Sd			
Play Skills Pre-Test	95,300	13,247	110,500	9,950	-4,103	38	0,000
Play Skills Post-Test	116,400	7,493	110,250	14,825	1,656	38	0,106
t	-7.186		0.066				
p	0.000		0.948				

On examining Table 3, it becomes apparent that there is a significant difference in the pre-test scores received by fathers in play skills between the groups ($t(38)=-4.103$; $p=0.000<0.05$). The play skills pre-test scores of the control group ($\bar{x}=110,500$) were higher compared to the play skills pre-test scores of the experimental group ($\bar{x}=95,300$). One could argue that the play skill levels of the children whose fathers were in the control group were higher than those whose fathers were in the experimental group. The difference in game skills between the experimental group's post-test value ($\bar{x}=116.400$) and pre-test value ($\bar{x}=95.300$) was statistically significant ($p=0.000<0.05$). The difference in value between the post-test play skill scores of the control group ($\bar{x}=110.250$) and the play skill scores of the pre-test ($\bar{x}=110.500$) was deemed statistically insignificant ($p=0.948>0.05$). While the experimental group showed higher post-test game skill scores ($\bar{x}=166.400$) as compared to the control group's post-test scores ($\bar{x}=110.250$), there was no significant difference in the post-test scores of fathers on play skills based on group criteria ($p=0.106>0.05$). The mean scores for fathers in the experimental

group indicate they received higher play skills training than those in the control group. Based on analysis of post-test scores in both groups, it can be argued that the children of the fathers in the experimental group achieved the same level of play skills as those in the control group. Upon evaluation of Table 3, it can be argued that the Father Support Education Programme, implemented with fathers in the experimental group, is statistically significant in enhancing the play skills of pre-school children.

In the study, the difference of father role according to the groups was analyzed by ANCOVA (Covariance Analysis) test and presented in Table 4 and Table 5.

Table 4. Mean Father Role Scores Received by Experimental and Control Groups

Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	Adjusted Mean
Test	114.900	6.743	113.682
Control	102.950	7.824	104.168

The difference in father role scores between the groups was assessed through ANCOVA using adjusted means. Prior to the analysis, it was determined that the variances were homogeneous ($p=0.254>0.05$). Homogeneity of the regressions (group * father role post-test) was also confirmed, as the slopes of the regression lines were equivalent ($p=0.366>0.05$).

Table 5. Results of ANCOVA Test Conducted on the Group Difference in the Effect of Father Role Post-test Scores on Father Role Pre-test Score

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	sd	Mean of Squares	F	p	η^2p
Total Model	1637,540	2	818.770	16.671	0.000	0.474
Father role pre-test	209.515	1	209.515	4.266	0.046	0.103
Group	705.206	1	705.206	14.358	0.001	0.280
Error	1817.235	37	49.114			
Sum	478041.000	40				

R²= 0.474 (Corrected R²= 0.446)

The Ancova analysis revealed a significant difference ($F= 14.358$; $p=0.001<0.05$) between the adjusted father role post-test scores. Specifically, the experimental group achieved higher father role post-test scores compared to the control group. Therefore, the result is in favour of the experimental group.

In the study, the difference of play skills according to the groups was analyzed by ANCOVA (Covariance Analysis) test and is presented in Table 6 and Table 7.

Table 6. Mean Scores Experimental and Control Groups Received from Play Skills

Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	Adjusted Mean
Test	116.400	7.493	117.665
Control	110.250	14.824	108.985

The play skill scores between the groups were evaluated for their significance using ANCOVA based on adjusted means. Firstly, the variances were tested for homogeneity ($p=0.545>0.05$) before undertaking the ANCOVA analysis. When the homogeneity of the regressions was analysed (group * play skill post-test), it was found that the regression lines had equal slopes ($p=0.347>0.05$).

Table 7. Results of ANCOVA Test Conducted on the Group Difference in the Effect of Play Skills Post-test Scores on Game Skills Pre-test Score

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	sd	Mean of Squares	F	p	η^2p
Total Model	522.725	2	261.363	1.897	0.164	0.093
Play skills pre-test	144.500	1	144.500	1.049	0.312	0.028
Group	522.134	1	522.134	3.789	0.059	0.093
Error	5098.050	37	137.785			
Sum	519323.000	40				

R²= 0.093 (Corrected R²= 0.044)

The difference between post-test play skill scores corrected according to Ancova analysis results was not found to be significant ($F= 3.789$; $p=0.059>0.05$).

4. Conclusion and Discussion

FSEP training was administered to the experimental group, while the control group did not receive any family training. In this study, the pre-test scores of fathers in the experimental and control groups from the Father Role Perception Scale were found to be similar before education. Considering the high point value to be received from the scale, it could be argued that the perception of father role is at a good level based on the scores both groups received. There was a significant difference identified between the pre-test scores obtained by the experimental group from the scale and their post-test scores after undergoing education. It could be argued that the increase in the mean score fathers received on the pre-test after the education had a positive effect on the fathers, and their perception of father role was positively affected by the Father Support Education Program. There was no noticeable disparity in the pre-test and post-test scores received by fathers from the scale in the control group. The increase in the average scores on the scale received by fathers who do not attend any family education and continue their routine daily work does not reveal a significant change in their perceptions of father role. There was a notable disparity between the post-education test scores of the experimental group and the control group on the scale. Based on these findings, it is evident that the experimental group demonstrated enhanced levels of father role perception compared to the control group following the training. Upon examination of the research findings, a favourable increase was discovered in the perception of paternal roles before and after FSEP education. The results indicate that the father support education programme had a positive impact on fathers' perception of their role, with significant increases in paternity awareness. The average post-test score of the experimental group was higher than that of the control group, which received an insufficient and increasing average score from the scale.

Family education programs were observed to have an important place in the development of parenting skills of parents. In other studies, in the literature, as in this study, fathers were observed to contribute to the development of children in many ways through family education and that these educations have positive effects on fathers. Alibeyoğlu (2009) used FESP training in his study and examined the effect of the training program on child-rearing attitudes of fathers. As a result of the study, it was found that FESP was significantly effective on non-traditional roles and non-authoritarian attitudes. In another study conducted with the Father Support Education Program, it was found that it was effective in controlling behavior, showing interest, communication skills, and emotional response to roles (Mutlu, 2018). In a study conducted with fathers and 12-month-old babies, it was found that the Play-Based Father-Infant Interaction Program was effective on interactional behaviors of father and child (Demir-Öztürk and Belgin-Aksoy, 2020). In a study conducted with fathers who have children between 36-48 months of age and whose children do not receive pre-school education, the Father Language Support Education Program prepared by the author was applied and it was observed that fathers who received the education contributed positively to the language development of children (Ersan, 2013).

In the study, fathers who participated in the education were presented information on various subjects and they had the opportunity to practice with their children. In the study, education was given within the scope of father role dependent on expectations of spouses, children and the society and father role depending on gender roles. It could be argued that with education, fathers begin to understand how gender roles in society are formed and what those roles are. It was observed that fathers who gain fatherhood skills depending on social and familial expectations are aware of the things they like about and challenges of fatherhood. It was put forward that family education programs that support fathers help in creating the desired and ideal father role depending on the expectations of the society and in diminishing the problems experienced in fatherhood skills (East, Hutchinson, Power, and Jackson, 2018). In a study conducted with fathers who have children in the preschool period, their perceptions of fatherhood and lifelong learning were assessed. Participants stated that their father roles in the family differ and they care about what they understand from the concept of fatherhood (Şölen and Ulusoy, 2020).

Participating fathers were given education on the importance of fathers, development of positive behavior, development areas of children, pre-school education, and effective communication with the family. It could be argued that fathers, whose father roles expected in the society are supported, have a positive effect on the awareness of fatherhood towards the protection, care and needs of their children, depending on the increase in the perception of level of father role. It could be argued that the education programs applied to family

members, especially fathers, increase the awareness of responsibility in the family, while providing an important role in the development and upbringing of the child. Decker argues that father consciousness changes with the social environment, while defining father consciousness as the sharing of responsibilities in child care, depending on the relationship between parents (Decker, 2016). When data of a study are studied, it is observed that fathers define fatherhood awareness as the father who assumes a role in meeting the needs development, education and care of the child together with his wife (Ünal and Kök, 2015). In a study conducted with the fathers of children attending preschool, a positive relationship was found between perception of fatherhood by fathers and father involvement. It could be argued that fathers are effective in responsibilities related to children (Deleş and Kaytez, 2020).

The fathers who participated in the education were informed about the attitudes exhibited in the family regarding upbringing of their children. It was noted that oppressive, overprotective and inconsistent attitudes negatively affect the relations between parents and children and the necessity of implementation a democratic attitude family was mentioned. Emphasis was placed on the democratic method being the most appropriate method in terms of fathers supporting the development of children, taking responsibilities related to their care, establishing an effective communication with children and the importance of reflecting this attitude within the family was underlined to the fathers that participate in the education. In a study, it was determined that parents who attend preschool institutions exhibit various family attitudes, but they apply democratic attitude the most (Uygun and Kozikoğlu, 2020). When scores received by fathers from the father role perception scale after the education are assessed, it could be argued that the father's attitudes and behaviors towards his children were positive, thus children would feel peaceful, safe and happy. In their study Levin and Currie (2010) determined that there was a connection between the happiness and well-being of young children in their lives and the communication between the child and the father. This study demonstrates parallel features with the results of this study. Father's attitude towards children is the determining factor in the communication between them.

There were two training programs in FESP that mothers participate. Besides, at the end of each session applied to the fathers, mothers were sent education letters to inform them about the session. Thus, it was ensured that not just fathers, but also mothers could benefit from education and be informed. It could be observed that FESP education, where parents participate together, ensures positive relations between parents and positively affects the processes of arriving at joint decisions regarding the development of children. In studies where the dimensions of the family relationship between the mother and father are good and they participate together, it was observed that quality of parenting increases by reducing the symptoms of depression and stress and developmental processes of the children are positively affected (Baker, Bishop, Stigall, and Dulmen, 2018; Cabrera, Volling, and Barr, 2018).

Participating fathers were trained on how to develop the social skills that their children acquired, when the socialization of the child would begin, what they should pay attention to in order for children to realize and appropriately express their feelings. It could be argued that fathers, who were informed within the scope of the education, experience more positive relations with their children, and fewer conflict and problem situations. Uzun (2016) found that the social skill level of children whose fathers participated in education increased in comparison to those whose fathers did not receive education. This finding aligns with the results of the present study.

With Father Support Education Program, fathers were presented with content on the importance of play in the preschool period, how the family would spend time, and the importance of the family in play activities. At the end of each training, fathers were provided with four different play activities addressing the developmental areas of children in a way both children and fathers could understand and implement, where they could spend time with their children and fathers were informed about how to play. While the interaction of fathers with their children was increased through play activities, it could be argued that children also have an impact on situations such as playing, establishing a game, starting and continuing the game, being involved in the game, and participating in individual and group play activities. A notable distinction arose in the pre-test scores of fathers in the experimental group, as measured by the pre-educational play skills assessment scale, when compared with those of the control group. Upon examination of the test's cumulative scores, it is plausible to claim that the control group scored higher than the experimental group. It could be contended that play skills of children with fathers in the control group were superior to those in the experimental group.

Notably, a significant disparity was discovered between the pre-test score the experimental group attained on the scale and their post-test score following education. It is understood that the increase in the score values after the education had a positive effect on fathers and fathers contributed to the play skill levels of their children. There was no significant difference observed in the pre-test and post-test scores received from the scale in the control group. It is worth mentioning that the fathers who were not a part of any family education process had a slightly decreased average score value. It could be argued that there was no alteration in the play skill levels of the children of fathers in the control group. There was a significant discrepancy between the post-testing results of the experimental group after training and the control group from the scale. It is noteworthy that the experimental group's post-test scores were higher than those of the control group. Therefore, the play skill levels of children of fathers in the experimental group improved, and they were higher than those of the children of fathers in the control group.

It was observed that the Father Support Education Program, which the fathers received within the scope of the research, had an effect on development of the habit of playing games and play skills in pre-school children. This demonstrates that fathers play an important role in development of the ability to play in children. As a result of a study, it was found that fathers took on the role of children's playmates (Taşkın and Erkan, 2009). In a study conducted with fathers of children receiving pre-school education, it was determined that fathers engage in activities such as chatting with their children, reading books, painting, doing exercise, going to the theater-cinema, picnics and parks, as well as playing games (Tezel-Şahin, Çoşgun, and Kılıç, 2017).

Fathers who participated in education were informed about the importance of play, the effect of play on the development of the child, the role of the family in the play, and the play activities that can be played with their children. At the end of each training, play activities that contribute to the development of children were given in line with the educational content and fathers were presented with opportunities to play games with their children, in addition to putting forward their state of spending effective time together. Thus, preschool children find opportunities to develop their play skills by playing games with their fathers. In addition, it could be ensured that children develop physical, language, mental, social and emotional skills. When studies with fathers are examined, play between father and child supports children's social, language and cognitive skills, thus children's play skills develop (Coley et al., 2011; Duursma, Pan, and Raikes, 2008; Grossmann et al., 2002). Since the play activities supporting children's physical development that fathers conduct with their children bring in physical skills to the child, they would also improve social-emotional skills by enabling children to explore the environment actively (Feldman et al., 2010).

In a study conducted with fathers, they stated that boys and girls prefer active games (Ogelman et al., 2019). In yet another study, fathers who thought that their children should play active games in order to relieve their energy stated that they played active games without gender discrimination and that children's play skills improved (Açev, 2017). The play activities given in the educational content applied in this study are active games that can be played together both in the open air and in the home environment. It could be argued that the play skills of the children of fathers who participated in the education improved thanks to these active games.

Considering the test scores fathers participating in the education received from the play skills assessment scale, it is observed that play skills such as children's taking responsibility while playing, communicating with their friends and cooperating, listening to their friends, establishing a game, continuing the game, sharing their toy and taking a role in determining the rules of the game positively increased. In a study, it was found that a good relationship between father and child ensured the child to have few problems while playing games with his peers and to show fewer disobeying rules of the game behavior, while the lack of a good relationship between father and child negatively affected the quality of playing games (Karaca, Kaya, and Can-Yaşar, 2019). In another study, it was concluded that the participation of fathers in children's leisure activities and playing with them contributes to the reduction of anger and aggression in preschool children (Torres et al., 2014).

Fathers who participated in the study were given education on communication topics such as active listening, self-expression, empathy and anger management. Educational content can enable fathers to communicate effectively with their children and positively influence the father-child relationship. When the post-test scores of the fathers who participated in the education are assessed, it could be observed that good relationship between fathers and children is positively reflected in the children's games. In a study investigating the

relationship between the mother-father-child relationship and children's play skills, it was concluded that the active listening and understanding behaviors of the parents, such as speaking, listening, non-verbal communication, and empathy between father-mother-child, affect children's play skills (Sezer et al., 2016).

5. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and the literature review, various study recommendations can be proposed. The diversity of education programs towards increasing fathers' sense of responsibility towards their spouse and children, the quality of time they spend, and the perception of the father role could be increased. The study was carried out with fathers who have preschool children. Fathers with offspring spanning various age groups can also enrol in the study to comprehensively investigate its outcomes. Information meetings and seminars can be held at pre-school, primary and secondary schools in order to ensure educations access more fathers. In addition, trainings can be planned at institutions where fathers work such as municipalities, private sectors, etc. In this study, the perception of the father role and the play skills of preschool children were assessed. The effects of the Father Support Education Program applied to fathers on other variables could also be investigated. In addition to family trainings aimed at increasing the father-child relationship, arrangements could be made in schools that will ensure the participation of and appeal to fathers. Father Support Education Program is implemented in many provinces throughout Turkey. By carrying out this study with fathers in different provinces at the same time, cultural differences between fathers can be studied. It may be possible to organize other activities in addition to family education for fathers to contribute to the development of pre-school period or play skills of other age groups. Children's teachers could be informed or training activities could be organized for them out in order to effectively guide fathers in increasing their perception of father role and their children's skills in play and other areas. Activities could be organized in which other family members can participate in addition to the father, in order to achieve positive results in father role and the play skills of their children. A longitudinal study could be conducted with the fathers participating in the education by applying the same education again five years later, and studies on the effect of the education may be carried out. Seminars promoting family education programs could be organized at the institutions where fathers work, and time and day arrangements can be made through the institutions they work to ensure their participation in various family education programs. Educational programs could be organized in which parents can attend together, that is, at the same time.

6. References

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