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## **ASSESSMENT OF THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PARENTS AND TEACHERS: VALIDATION AND RELIABILITY STUDY THE PARENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIP SCALE\***

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to adapt Parent-Teacher Relationship Scale (PTRS), which was developed by Vickers and Minke (1995) to Turkish and conduct the reliability and validity analyses. The PTRS is a 24-item scale that is designed to assess the quality of the relationships between parents and teachers from their perspectives on two subscales; Joining and Communication. We recruited 150 preschool children's parents and teachers for the current study from the city of, Kırşehir, Turkey. Children's age ranged from three to six ( $M= 4.84$ ,  $SD= .75$ ). Firstly, the PTRS was adapted to Turkish language and culture. The validity of the scale was measured by Confirmatory Factor Analysis and the difference between the Upper %27 and Lower %27 groups. The internal reliability of the scale was calculated by Cronbach's alpha method. The results of the Confirmatory Factor Analyses showed that the scale has a two-factor structure as in the original version. The CFA model for parent report confirmed that there is a 2-factor model ( $\chi^2= 351.442$  ( $p < .001$ ), CFI= 0.90, RMSEA= .08 (.07 to .10 at 90% CI), and SRMR = .06. The CFA model for teacher report also confirmed that there is a 2-factor model ( $\chi^2= 401.805$  ( $p < .001$ ), CFI= 0.90, RMSEA= .08 (.06 to .08 at 90% CI), and SRMR = .08. The analyses showed that the PTRS is a valid, reliable tool for Turkish parents and teachers.

### **STRUCTURED ABSTRACT**

#### **Introduction**

Improvement of children's achievement is an important concern for both parents and teachers in early childhood. One of the most prominent

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factors that influence children's academic and social success in early childhood education is parental involvement (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). The relationships established between parents and teachers could differ depending on parents' cultural and racial background (Hughes & Kwok, 2007). From this point of view to our knowledge, there has been no study examined the quality of parent-teacher relationships within Turkish cultural context, especially from perceptions of both parents and teachers. Therefore, the purpose of the current study was to examine validity and reliability of the Parent-Teacher Relationship Scale (PTRS; Vickers & Minke, 1995). By doing so, we aimed to provide some guidelines for teachers and school practitioners to engage parents in their children's educational process, which has been shown to be effective for positive child outcomes.

### Method

In the current study, we tested the validity and reliability of the Parent-Teacher Relationship Scale (PTRS; Vickers & Minke, 1995) with Turkish parents and teachers whom have interacted with preschool children. The PTRS is 24-item scale that is designed to assess the quality of the relationships between parents and teachers from their own perspectives. Joining (19 items) and Communication (5 items). Joining refers to affiliation, support, shared expectations between parents and teachers. Communication refers to expressing parents' and teachers' need to each other. We recruited 150 children's parents and teachers for the current study in central Turkey. Children's age ranged from three to six ( $M= 4.84$ ,  $SD= .75$ ). First, we adapted the PTRS to Turkish language and culture by translating and back-translating. We ran confirmatory factors analyses for both parent and teacher versions of the scale to test whether the PTRS was same as the original one structured in the United States.

### Results

We run 2-factor CFA Measurement model using *Mplus* (Muthen & Muthen, 2012) to examine the acceptability of 2-factor original model and also used the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) higher than .90, Root Mean Square Residual (RMSEA) lower than .10, and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) lower than .05 (Browne & Cudeck, 1992; MacCallum, Browne, & Sugawa, 1996). CFA model that met the proposed criteria above retained for parent and teacher reports. Results from The CFA model for parent report confirmed that there is a 2-factor model ( $\chi^2= 351.442$  ( $p < .001$ ), CFI= 0.90, RMSEA= .08 (.07 to .10 at 90% CI), and SRMR = .06. The CFA model for teacher report also confirmed that there is a 2-factor model ( $\chi^2= 401.805$  ( $p < .001$ ), CFI= 0.90, RMSEA= .08 (.06 to .08 at 90% CI), and SRMR = .08. Items for parent report did not load significantly to any factor in the CFA model were excluded from the factors. All items from teacher reports significantly loaded on the factors. Considering the PRTS subscales correlate with one another, some items were allowed to covariate with one another for the purpose of model modification (Kline, 2005). Teacher-reported joining and communication subscales were positively correlated ( $r(135) = .444$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In addition, parent-reported joining and communication subscales were positively correlated ( $r(149) = .710$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Interestingly, there was no significant

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correlation between parent-reported joining and teacher-reported joining ( $r(135) = .104, p = .23$ ) and parent-reported communication and teacher reported communication ( $r(134) = .107, p = .22$ ).

### Conclusion

In the current study, we aimed to examine whether the original structure of the PTRS work with Turkish parents and teachers. This measure was designed to obtain information about the perceptions of parents and teachers of their relationships with one another regarding children. Results from the current study revealed that the PTRS could be used with Turkish parents and teachers with some revisions. Inferences from the results are discussed in turn below. We have some practical points from current study. First, given the importance of parental involvement and the quality of the relationship between parents and teachers in early childhood have significant impact on child outcomes (Sheldon, 2003). Secondly, parents and teachers understand each other differently and have different perceptions of their relationships. In that sense, school administrations could provide platforms for both agents to bring them together and exchange views regarding child development and education so that children can have better social and academic outcomes. Intervention programs such as Getting Ready (Sheridan, Knoche, Edwards, Bovaird, Kupzyk, 2010) targeting parents and teachers to improve their relationships for better child outcomes could be utilized within Turkish school contexts. This study has some limitations. Using small sample size from one city, region of Turkey was accepted as the limitation. Thus results may not be representative for all teachers and parents from the early education across Turkey and examined the CFA models fully.

**Keywords:** Parent-teacher Relationship, Early Childhood, Communication, Confirmatory Factor Analyses

## EBEVEYN-ÖĞRETMEN İLİŞKİLERİNİN DEĞERLENDİRMESİ: EBEVEYN-ÖĞRETMEN İLİŞKİ ÖLÇEĞİNİN GEÇERLİK VE GÜVENİRLİK ÇALIŞMASI

### ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Vickers ve Minke (1995) tarafından geliştirilen Ebeveyn-Öğretmen İlişkisi Ölçeğini (PTRS) Türkçe'ye adaptasyonu ve geçerlik ve güvenirlik çalışmasıdır. Ebeveyn-Öğretmen İlişkisi Ölçeği (PTRS) ebeveyn öğretmen arasındaki ilişkinin kalitesini öğretmenlerin ve ebeveynlerin bakış açılarıyla değerlendirmek için tasarlanmış, katılma ve iletişim olarak iki alt boyutu olan 24 maddelik bir ölçektir. Mevcut araştırmada katılımcıları Kırşehir il merkezinde okul öncesi eğitime devam eden 150 çocuğun ebeveynleri ve öğretmenleri oluşturmaktadır. Çocukların yaşları 3 yaş ile 6 yaş arasında değişmektedir ( $M= 4.84, SD= .75$ ). Öncelikle ölçek Türk kültürüne ve diline adapte edilmiş, geçerliği doğrulayıcı faktör analizi ve %27'lik üst grup alt grup farklılığı ile ölçülmüştür. İç güvenirlik Cronbach alpha ile tespit edilmiştir. Doğrulayıcı faktör analizi sonuçları ölçeğin orijinal

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versiyonunda olduğu gibi iki faktörlü model olduğunu göstermiştir. Doğrulayıcı faktör analizi hem ebeveyn ( $\chi^2 = 351.442$  ( $p < .001$ ), CFI= 0.90, RMSEA= .08 (.07 to .10 90% CI), ve SRMR = .06. hem öğretmen ölçeği için ( $\chi^2 = 401.805$  ( $p < .001$ ), CFI= 0.90, RMSEA= .08 (.06 to .08 90% CI), ve SRMR = .08. iki faktörlü bir model ortaya çıkarmıştır. Mevcut çalışmada analizler Ebeveyn-Öğretmen İlişkisi (PTRS) ölçeğinin Türk ebeveynleri ve öğretmenleri için geçerli ve güvenilir bir ölçme aracı olduğunun sonucunu göstermektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Ebeveyn-Öğretmen İlişkisi, Erken Çocukluk, İletişim, Doğrulayıcı Faktör Analizi

## 1. Introduction

Improvement of children's achievement is an important concern for both parents and teachers in early childhood. One of the most prominent factors that influence children's academic and social success in early childhood education is parental involvement (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). For this reason, educational policies set out by governments target inclusion of parents in their children's educational experiences (e.g., Head Start Programs).

Parents' involvement in their children's educational process has been defined differently by different researchers (e.g., Ahmetoglu & Acar, 2017; Fan & Chen, 2001; Fishel & Ramirez, 2005). Nevertheless, researchers have agreed on that parents' involvement refers to parents' participation in educational processes of their children (Christenson, 1995). This definition of parent involvement, however overall dynamic and interactive relationships between parents and teachers (Vickers & Minke, 1995). Overall, the gap in the literature lays on the scarcity in the investigation of this dynamic interaction between parents and teachers; therefore, the purpose of the current study was to examine dynamic processes between parents and teachers regarding children's educational processes perceived by them regarding.

In lights of the ecological model of child development (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Rimm-Kauffman & Pianta, 2000), a large body of research has been referring to the impotence of dynamic interactions between parents (i.e., home) and teachers (i.e., school) as they predict school success of children. In these dynamic interactions, perceptions of both parents and teachers are important. For this reason, the quality of these perceptions uniquely contributes to the overarching quality of parent-teacher relationships and turn child outcomes. Previous research has shown that the quality relationships established between parents and teachers found to be related to child outcomes (e.g., social competence, positive child behaviors, and academic success) (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Hughes, Gleason, & Zhang, 2005; Serpell & Mashburn, 2012). Sheridan and Moorman Kim (2015) posits a model that explains three ways of engagement between parents and teachers; behaviorally, cognitively, and relationally. Behavioral part of engagement refers to the connection between a parent and a teacher by attending parent-teacher conferences. A cognitive strand of the engagement refers to beliefs, attitudes possessed by parents and teachers regarding school and classrooms. Relational strand refers to establishing quality relationships between teachers and parents. The latter strand of the engagement is the most crucial one as it entails involvement of parents to their children's educational experiences (Sheridan & Moorman Kim, 2015). The quality of relationship provides benefits for both parents and teachers as well children when it is built on strong foundations (Sheridan, Moorman Kim, Coutts, Sjuts, Holmes, Ransom, & Garbacz, 2012).

Parent involvement including parent-teacher relationship has been shown to be effective for child outcomes. For example, Fan and Chen (2001) through their meta-analysis showed that parent

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involvement had a significant effect on children's academic achievement. In another study, Wyrick and Moritz Rudasill (2009) found that parent involvement had a negative association with teacher-child conflict, especially for low-income children. Considering the importance of parent-teacher relationship for better child outcomes, measurement of this relationship has been in the scope of the research in early childhood (e.g., Hughes et al., 2005; Kohl, Lengua, McMahon, & Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group, 2000). Most of the measures have been based on perceptions of teachers and parents regarding their attitudes and activities of children in educational settings.

The relationships established between parents and teachers could differ depending on parents' cultural and racial background (Hughes & Kwok, 2007). From this point of view to our knowledge, there has been no study examined the quality of parent-teacher relationships within Turkish cultural context, especially from perceptions of both parents and teachers. Therefore, the purpose of the current study was to examine validity and reliability of the Parent-Teacher Relationship Scale (PTRS; Vickers & Minke, 1995). By doing so, we aimed to provide some guidelines for teachers and school practitioners to engage parents in their children's educational process, which has been shown to be effective for positive child outcomes.

## 2. Methods

**Participants:** We recruited 150 children's parents and teachers for the current study in central district, Kırşehir, Turkey. Children's age ranged from three to six ( $M= 4.84, SD= .75$ ). All teachers were female and working at the state-funded school. Teaching experience ranged from 7 to 17 years ( $m= 12.09$ ). Fathers' education level ranged from 5 years to 17 years ( $M=11.69, SD=3.11$ ) and mothers' education level ranged from 4 years to 24 years ( $M= 10.95, SD=3.59$ ).

### Data Collection and Instrument Adaptation Procedures

After getting permissions from the Ministry of Education Research Authority, teachers were contacted by researchers. A teacher who consented to participate were asked to contact each child's parents about the study. Parents who consented to participate were given questionnaires and demographic information form by teachers. Parents returned their completed forms to the teacher, and they gave them to the researchers. Teachers also completed the PTRS and returned to the researchers. They were recruited from 3 preschool programs.

*Adaptation Procedures.* For starting the adaptation process of the PTRS into Turkish, English items in the original version of the scale were translated into Turkish by the primary investigator and another investigator with English language fluency. Following that, the translations were compared against each investigators' versions for language and meaning accuracy. The final Turkish version of the scale was back-translated to English by the secondary investigator. This English version of the scale was compared with the original English version, and little variations were found. After getting these variations were fixed, the final version of the scale was ready for use.

**Parent-Teacher Relationship Scale:** The PTRS (Vickers & Minke, 1995) is 24-item scale that is designed to assess the quality of the relationships between parents and teachers from their own perspectives. Joining (19 items; "We trust each other") and Communication (5 items; "I tell this teacher when I am pleased"). Joining refers to affiliation, support, shared expectations between parents and teachers. Communication refers to expressing parents' and teachers' need to each other. Each item was rated on 5-point Likert-type scale where 1= almost never and 5= almost always. Higher scores indicated higher levels of that construct. Some of the items were reverse scored. See Table 1 for reversed items.

## 3. Results

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We run 2-factor CFA Measurement model using *Mplus* (Muthen & Muthen, 2012) to examine the acceptability of 2-factor original model by Vickers and Minke (1995). We used the following model fit criteria; Comparative Fit Index (CFI) higher than .90, Root Mean Square Residual (RMSEA) lower than .10, and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) lower than .05 (Browne & Cudeck, 1992; MacCallum, Browne, & Sugawa, 1996). CFA model that met the proposed criteria above retained for parent and teacher reports. The CFA model for parent report confirmed that there is a 2-factor model ( $\chi^2= 351.442$  ( $p < .001$ ), CFI= 0.90, RMSEA= .08 (.07 to .10 at 90% CI), and SRMR = .06. The CFA model for teacher report also confirmed that there is a 2-factor model ( $\chi^2= 401.805$  ( $p < .001$ ), CFI= 0.90, RMSEA= .08 (.06 to .08 at 90% CI), and SRMR = .08. Items for parent report did not load significantly to any factor in the CFA model were excluded from the factors (see Table 1). All items from teacher reports significantly loaded on the factors. Considering the PRTS subscales correlate with one another, some items were allowed to covariate with one another for the purpose of model modification (Kline, 2005). See Table 1 for final factor and item fall under each factor.

**Table 1: Structure of the Parent-Teacher Relationship Scale**

<b>Factor Items</b>	<b>Parent Report</b>	<b>Teacher Report</b>
<b>Factor 1: Joining</b>	<b>(<math>\alpha=.87</math>)</b>	<b>(<math>\alpha=.89</math>)</b>
1. We trust each other.	.76 (.03)	.77(.03)
2R. It is difficult for us to work together.	.30 (.07)	.74(.04)
3. We cooperate with each other.	.62 (.05)	.47(.07)
4R. Communication is difficult between us.	.21 (.08).	.62(.05)
5. I respect this parent/teacher.	.59 (.05)	.63(.05)
6. This parent/teacher respects me.	.80 (.03)	.47(.07)
7. We are sensitive to each other's feelings.	.77 (.03)	.65(.05)
8R. We have different views of right and wrong.	.16 (.08)	.52(.06)
9R. When there is a problem with my child, the parent/teacher is all talk and no action.	.28 (.07)	.43(.06)
10. This parent/teacher keeps his/her promises to me.	.31(.07)	.75(.04)
11R. When there is a behavior problem, I have to solve it without help from this parent/teacher.		.22(.08)
12R. When things aren't going well, it takes too long to work them out.		.56(.06)
13. We understand each other.	.81 (.03)	.85(.02)
14R. We see this child differently.		.60(.05)
15. We agree about who should do what regarding this child.	.77(.03)	.79(.03)
16R. I expect more from this parent/teacher than I get.		.34 (.07)
17. We have similar expectations of this child.	.57 (.05)	.49 (.06)
18. This parent/teacher tells me when s/he is pleased.	.79 (.03)	.44 (.06)
19R. I don't like the way this parent/teacher talks to me.	.22 (.08)	.64 (.05)
<b>Factor 2: Communication</b>	<b>(<math>\alpha=.93</math>)</b>	<b>(<math>\alpha=.77</math>)</b>
20. I tell this parent/teacher when I am pleased.	.85 (.02)	.40(.07)
21. I tell this parent/teacher when I am concerned.	.83 (.02)	.48(.07)
22. I tell this parent/teacher when I am worried.	.85 (.02)	.47(.06)

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23. I ask this parent's/teacher's opinion about this child's progress.	.91 (.02)	.79(.04)
24. r I ask this parent /teacher for suggestions.	.79 (.03)	.87(.04)

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*Not.* Standardized estimates from confirmatory factor analyses are presented. Parentheses shows standard errors.

Teacher-reported joining and communication subscales were positively correlated ( $r(135) = .444, p < .001$ ). In addition, parent-reported joining and communication subscales were positively correlated ( $r(149) = .710, p < .001$ ). However, there was no significant correlation between parent-reported joining and teacher-reported joining ( $r(135) = .104, p = .23$ ) and parent-reported communication and teacher reported communication ( $r(134) = .107, p = .22$ ).

*Internal Reliability.* Internal consistency focuses on correlations between different items on the same measure, and it is assumed that items on the test measure the same construct to produce similar scores across participants. Coefficient alpha measures the internal consistency of a measure (Thorndike & Thorndike-Christ, 2009). The current study showed acceptable internal consistency values that were  $\alpha = .87$  for parent-reported joining,  $\alpha = .93$  for parent-reported communication, and  $\alpha = .89$  for teacher-reported joining and  $\alpha = .77$  for teacher-reported communication.

In addition, we examined whether top and bottom 27<sup>th</sup> percentile of groups differed on their scores for each subscale. We found that there was a significant difference between top ( $M = 4.80, SD = .09$ ) and bottom ( $M = 3.42, SD = .60$ ) for teacher-reported joining ( $t(74) = -13.97, p < .001$ ). There was also a significant difference between top ( $M = 5.00, SD = .00$ ) and bottom ( $M = 4.24, SD = .62$ ) for teacher-reported communication ( $t(109) = -9.90, p < .001$ ).

In addition, there was a significant difference between top ( $M = 4.86, SD = .09$ ) and bottom ( $M = 3.48, SD = .64$ ) for parent-reported joining ( $t(82) = -13.60, p < .01$ ). There was also a significant difference between top ( $M = 5.00, SD = .00$ ) and bottom ( $M = 3.76, SD = .16$ ) for parent-reported communication ( $t(135) = -10.86, p < .001$ ).

#### 4. Discussion

In the current study, we aimed to examine whether the original structure of the PTRS work with Turkish parents and teachers. This measure was designed to obtain information about the perceptions of parents and teachers of their relationships with one another regarding children. Results from the current study revealed that the PTRS could be used with Turkish parents and teachers with some revisions. Inferences from the results are discussed in turn below.

In this study, we spent a decent amount of time to understand items and their relevance to Turkish culture during the adaptation process. Previous research showed that there are two main dimensions of parent-teacher relationships in early childhood: joining and communication (Vickers & Minke, 1995). Our results from the confirmatory factor analyses and item analyses supported the notion that there would be two dimensions reflection Turkish parents and teachers' perception regarding their relationships with one another. These two dimensions generally reflect how and why parents and teachers initiate and maintain relationships regarding children's education during early years, which has been substantially shown as an important foundation for better child outcomes (Sheridan et al., 2012).

In the current study, we found that some of the items did not load on the parent-version of the PTRS (e.g., 11R, 12R). Also, some of the loadings had low coefficients. This may be due to some of the items may have not reflected the Turkish parents' perceptions regarding that concept. However, this was not true for teacher-version of the PTRS. This finding could be explained by the

notion that teachers and parents may perceive their needs and relationships from different perspectives (Barge & Loges, 2011; Lawson, 2003). In addition, we also found that the correlations between parent and teacher' perceptions of the subscales. This is somewhat interesting that teachers and parents are not consistent in their view of how they should initiate and maintain relationships with one another. This may be a problematic situation for children as they would be affected by the lack of teacher-parent relationship and communication regarding their development and education (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Kim et al., 2012; Serpell & Mashburn, 2012 ).

There are some practical points that we could derive from the current findings. First, given the substantial importance of parental involvement in early childhood, the quality of the relationship established between parents and teachers could be reflected on child outcomes (Sheldon, 2003). Second, as parents and teachers have different perceptions of their relationships with one another, school administrations could provide platforms for both agents to bring them together and exchange views regarding child development and education so that children can have better social and academic outcomes. Intervention programs such as Getting Ready (Sheridan, Knoche, Edwards, Bovaird, Kupzyk, 2010) targeting parents and teachers to improve their relationships for better child outcomes could be utilized within Turkish school contexts. Academic tasks with supported parental involvement may have positive impact on o positive improvements in parents' emotional characteristics and in their skills such as collaboration and communication and children's academic success (Akay& Küçükkaragöz, 2014). By doing so, parents and teachers work in collaboration to help children develop better social and academic outcomes.

### 5. Limitations

Using small sample size may have restricted to examine the CFA models fully. In addition, small sample size may have block generalizability. The sample in the current study included a large number of parents from mid and partially high socio-economic status. In addition, there was a low diversity among participants in terms of parents' demographics and characteristics. Most participants were from Kırşehir, region of Turkey. Thus results may not be representative for all teachers and parents from the early education across Turkey. Different structuring of family science and parenting based on regionalö socio-economic factors may have impact explaining and interpreting studies in Turkish culture (Yapıcı, 2010). To close the gap reflected in these limitations, future research should include more participants from different backgrounds and regions of Turkey.

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