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Examining Parents' Ways of Coping With Their Children's Problem Behaviors and Their Perceptions of Causality

Belgin Liman¹, Aylin Mentiş Köksoy²

¹ Niğde Ömer Halisdemir University, Niğde, Turkey. ORCID: 0000-0003-4965-2379

² Ege University, İzmir, Turkey. ORCID: 0000-0003-4549-0579

Correspondence: Belgin Liman, Department of Child Development, Niğde, Turkey.
E-mail:belgin.liman@gmail.com

Abstract

This study explored parents' ways of coping with their children's problem behaviors and their perceptions of causality. The study group was composed of 164 children aged 7-12 years (84 females and 80 males) and their parents (120 mothers and 44 fathers). In order to collect data, "General Information Form" for the demographical statistics and "Problem behavior Scale – Coping – Parents Form" and "Problem behavior Scale – Causal Factors – Parents Form" which was developed by Kaner (2007) were used. The study findings revealed that there was no significant difference between the subtest scores of both scales according to children's sex. Also, mothers use defective coping, negative coping, and preventive coping approaches more than the fathers. Compared to mothers who graduated from high school, mothers who graduated from elementary school and middle school used more effective coping methods while coping with their children's problem behaviors. Furthermore, compared to mothers who graduated from elementary school and middle school, mothers who graduated from university and above attributed their children's problem behaviors more to their children's negative relationships with the people important in their lives. Mothers who graduated from university and above believed that negative socioeconomic conditions of the family were more effective in the causality of their children's problem behaviors compared to mothers who graduated from elementary school and middle school. In addition, fathers with under graduate and higher degrees attributed the causality of their children's problem behavior to their children's negative relationships with the people important in their lives compared to fathers who graduated from elementary school and middle school.

Keywords: Parents, Problem behaviors, Coping Strategies for Problem Behaviors, Causal Factors

1. Introduction

Children acquire new knowledge and skills each time they enter a new developmental period. With these skills come new problems that need to be solved. Children's family, their environment, and other variables that affect them play an important role in coping with these problems. These problems may be normal and temporary in accordance with the age periods, or they may negatively reflect in later ages without being resolved over time (Sertbaş-Çimen, 2006). Behaviors that prevent learning new skills and using existing skills, that negatively affect

social interaction and that may harm the student are defined as problem behaviors (Erbaş, 2002; Kanlıkılıçer, 2005; Sucuoğlu & Kargın, 2006, as cited in Orhan, 2010).

Problem behaviors refer to behaviors that significantly affect children's learning and development, parents and educators' effective teaching and socialization of children, and harm both the child himself and others (Kaner, 2007). Assessment of whether a behavior is a problem or not should be based on factors such as age-appropriateness of behavior, intensity and continuity of the behaviors, compatibility with gender roles, and social factors. Behavior problems are classified into two dimensions, namely internalized problems, and externalized problems. Related to internal-emotional distress, internalized problems include symptoms of social shyness, anxiety, introversion, inhibited reactions, somatic problems, and depression. Externalized problems include aggression, rebellion against authority, and destructive and hyperactive behaviors (Quay 1986, as cited in Merrell, 1996). Behavioral problems seen in children differ from child to child (Le Compte, Okman, & Sükan, 1979), and emotional and behavioral problems are seen in children at different rates according to age. Arı, Bayhan, and Artan (1995) stated that 59.5% of 4-11 age group children have behavioral and emotional problems. Avcı (1990) conducted a study on the psycho-bio-social evaluation of kindergarten children aged 6–12 years. 71 children whose adjustment and behavioral disorders were identified were included in this study. The study results revealed that the adjustment problems of the participants were statistically significant. 52% of these problems were about bad temper, 50% about fighting, 46% about irritability, 38% about lying, 36% about running away from school, 32% about being messy, 32% about wastefulness, 24% about night urination, 21% about fearful dreams, and 13% about night fears.

Various factors cause behavioral problems in children. While some of them are related to the child, some of them are related to the unsuitable program or the conditions in the learning environment (Jones et al., 1999: 56). Therefore, behavioral problems in the child can be divided into internal and external causes. Socio-economic status, ethnicity, mother's depression, and illness may be listed as external causes, whereas parenting practices and traces of the child's illnesses left on the child may be listed as internal causes. Although these causes are not very important, when they come together, they create significant effects on the internal and external behaviors of the child (Pike, Ervolino, Eley, Price, & Plomin, 2006: 55,58). Studies put forth that the negative family-related experiences are at the root of behavioral problems in children. The studies also emphasized that the emergence of behavioral problems in children or the reinforcement of existing disorders are caused by being exposed to stress in social environments, parental mental health disorders, low income, parental depression, poor quality parenting indicators, increased current stress on parents, chronic parenting stress, wrong parenting practices that are known to be correct, negative attitudes of parents and parents' lack of knowledge about how to deal with problem behaviors (Işık, 2021).

Especially in the emergence of behavioral problems, the effect of parent and child communication is very high (Kandır, 2000). In particular, the family and demographic variables such as poverty, parents not getting along, one of the parents leaving the house, parents' health, and absence of one of the parents, may also have a negative effect on children's behavior (Sezer, 2006, as cited in Kaya, Açar, & Güneş; 2017). In addition, negative parenting, parents' competitive attitudes and behaviors presented in the relationships between siblings (Akbaş, 2019), parents' anxieties and their feelings of inadequate parenting (Manti et al., 2019), parents' difficulties in distinguishing problem behaviors from developmental period characteristics (Poulou, 2015), children's inability to find appropriate solutions for the problem situations they encounter (Yörükoğlu, 2008), and children being exposed to more than one risk factors (Arkan & Üstün, 2009; Dursun, 2010) are also effective in the emergence of externalization and internalization problems.

Problem behaviors serve four basic functions: (a) obtaining social attention and interest, (b) obtaining an object, (c) obtaining sensory stimuli, and (d) escaping from an unwanted situation (Erbaş, 2003). Therefore, problem behaviors continue due to environmental variables. It is predicted that more effective intervention programs may be developed by knowing the environmental variables continuing the problem behavior (Özyürek, 2004). It is believed that there is a relationship between the causal attributes made to problem behaviors and the ways to cope with these behaviors. For this reason, it is necessary to know which behaviors parents see as a problem, what kind of factors they attribute to unwanted behaviors and how they cope with these behaviors. In this

respect, in the present study, parents' causal attributions to problem behaviors and their ways of coping were analyzed comparatively according to independent variables such as sex, mother's education, father's education, and being a mother or father.

2. Method

2.1 Study Design

Exploring the causal factors attributed by parents to the problem behaviors of their children and whether the ways parents use to cope with their children's problem behaviors differ according to sex, mother's education, father's education, being a mother or father, and the number of children parents had, the study employed the causal-comparison design.

2.2 Study Group

Determined by the random sampling method, the study group was composed of 164 children aged 7-12 years (84 females and 80 males) and their parents (120 mothers and 44 fathers). The information on the demographic characteristics of the children and their parents participating in the study is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the study group

Demographic characteristics	F	(%)	
Sex	Female	84	51.2
	Male	80	48.7
Number of children	1 child	28	17.1
	2 children	93	56.7
	3 children	32	19.5
	4 and above	11	6.7
Mother's education status	Elementary-middle school	38	23.1
	High school	40	24.3
	Associate degree	22	13.4
	Undergraduate and above	64	39.0
Father's education status	Elementary-middle school	28	17.0
	High school	43	26.2
	Associate degree	18	10.9
	Undergraduate and above	75	45.7
Being a father or mother	Mother	120	73.1
	Father	44	26.8
Total	164	100	

2.3 Data Collection Tools

2.3.1 General Information Form

Developed by the researcher, the General Information form included information on the sex of the child, age of the child, sex of the parent who filled the form, the number of children had, the age of parents, and the education levels of the parents.

2.3.2. *Problem Behavior Scale-Coping-Parent Form*: Developed by Kaner (2007), the Problem Behavior Scale-Coping-Parent Form (PBS-PF-C) aims to measure the ways parents use to cope with the problem behaviors of their children and how often they use these ways. It consists of three subscales and a total of 25 items. The items of the PBD-PF-C are rated on a four-point Likert scale ranging as every day (3 points), several times a week (2 points), several times a month (1 point), and never (0 points).

Effective Coping: Effective Coping subscale (EC) includes items regarding the degree to which the child's unwanted behaviors can be eliminated without an increase and without spreading to their peers. Item numbers of the 11-item subscale are 1, 9, 12, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, and 23. The highest score and lowest score that can be obtained from this subscale are 33 and 0, respectively.

Negative Coping: Negative Coping subscale (NC) aim to evaluate the degree of parents' use of negative and punitive ways to cope with their children's problem behaviors. Item numbers of the 10-item subscale are 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 13, 14, 15, 24, and 25. The highest score and lowest score that can be obtained from this subscale are between 30 and 0, respectively.

Preventive Coping: Preventive Coping subscale (PC) includes items regarding parents' coping ways that prevent their child's unwanted behavior using verbal and non-verbal. Item numbers of the 4-item subscale are 6, 7, 8, and 11. The highest score and lowest score that can be obtained from this subscale are 12 and 0, respectively.

2.3.3 Problem Behavior Scale-Causal Factors-Parent Form (PDÖ-ABF-NF): Developed to determine the causal factors parents attribute to the problem behaviors of their children, Problem Behavior Scale-Causal Factors-Parent Form (PBS-CF-PF) consists of 29 items and four subscales. The items of the PBS-CF-PF are rated on a four-point Likert scale ranging as too much (4 points), much (3 points), some (2 points), a little (1 point), and never (0 points).

Negative Relationships with Significant People: The Negative Relationships with Significant People subscale (NRSP) includes items regarding the negative relationships the student has with people who have an important place in the student's life such as parents, siblings, peers and teachers. Item numbers of the 12-item subscale are 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14. The highest score and lowest score that can be obtained from this subscale are 48 and 0, respectively.

Negative Teacher and School Conditions: The Negative Teacher and School Conditions subscale (NTSC) includes items regarding the teacher's teaching style, personality traits, classroom management skills, and methods used to prevent the occurrence of problem behaviors or to cope with problem behaviors. Item numbers of the 10-item subscale are 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, and 29. The highest score and lowest score that can be obtained from this subscale are 40 and 0, respectively.

Adverse Socioeconomic Conditions of the Family: The Adverse Socioeconomic Conditions of the Family subscale (ASCF) includes items regarding the low income and education level of the family. Item numbers of the 4-item subscale are 4, 5, 18, and 19. The highest score and lowest score that can be obtained from this subscale are 16 and 0, respectively.

Negative Factors Regarding the Child: The Negative Factors Regarding the Child subscale (NFC) includes items regarding the student's observation of the behaviors of the people around him/her, his/her desire to attract attention, and his/her desire to avoid unpleasant situations. Item numbers in the 3-item subscale are 15, 16, and 17. The highest score and lowest score that can be obtained from this subscale are 12 and 0, respectively.

2.4. Data Analysis

The causal factors attributed by parents to the problem behaviors of their children and whether the ways parents use to cope with their children's problem behaviors differ according to sex and being a mother or father was examined using in terms of the independent-samples t-test. Whether the ways parents use to cope with their children's problem behaviors differ according to the mother's education, father's education, and the number of children had was examined using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA).

3. Findings

Table 2: The t-test results according to being a father or mother

	Parents	n	X	Ss	t	P
Effective coping	Mother	120	23.78	5.97	2.04	.04*
	Father	44	21.56	6.61		
Negative coping	Mother	120	26.75	2.87	3.05	.00*
	Father	44	24.84	4.98		
Preventive coping	Mother	120	8.36	2.86	2.61	.01*
	Father	44	7.04	2.91		
Negative relationships with significant people	Mother	120	32.60	13.57	.98	.33
	Father	44	30.31	12.23		
Negative teacher and school conditions	Mother	120	26.21	11.58	.67	.51
	Father	44	24.93	8.88		
Adverse socioeconomic conditions of the family	Mother	120	8.60	3.94	.69	.49
	Father	44	8.15	2.98		
Negative factors regarding the child	Mother	120	8.45	2.40	1.98	.04*
	Father	44	7.52	3.33		

As seen in Table 2, there was a significant difference between the subtest scores at the PBS-EC level ($t(162)=2.04$, $p<.05$), at the PBS-NC ($t(162)=3.05$, $p<.05$), and at the PBS-PC level ($t(162) 2.61$, $p<.05$) according to being a mother or a father. Accordingly, while dealing with their children's problem behaviors, mothers used more effective coping, negative coping, and preventive coping approaches compared to the fathers. In addition, in terms of being a mother or a father, there was no significant difference between the subtest scores at the PBS-NRSP level ($t(162) =.98$, $p>.05$), at the PBS-NTSC level ($t(162)=.67$, $p>.05$), at the PBS-ASCF level ($t(162)=.69$, $p>.05$), whereas there was a significant difference between the subtest scores at the PBS-NFC level ($t(162)=1.98$, $p<.05$). Thus, compared to fathers, mothers mostly attribute the problem behaviors of their children to the negative factors regarding the child.

Table 3: Results of the independent samples t-test regarding problem behavior scale-coping and problem behavior scale-causal factors according to the sex of the participating mothers' children

Scales	Sex	n	X	Ss	t	p
Effective coping	Female	65	23.03	6.08	-1.508	.134
	Male	55	24.67	5.78		
Negative coping	Female	65	27.08	2.79	1.322	.189
	Male	55	26.38	2.96		
Preventive coping	Female	65	8.48	2.80	.450	.649
	Male	55	8.24	2.96		
Negative relationships with significant people	Female	65	32.77	13.43	.141	.888
	Male	55	32.42	13.87		
Negative teacher and school conditions	Female	65	25.46	11.64	-.775	.440
	Male	55	27.11	11.56		
Adverse socioeconomic conditions of the family	Female	65	8.65	3.95	.114	.910
	Male	55	8.56	3.98		
Negative factors regarding the child	Female	65	8.52	2.49	.320	.750
	Male	55	8.38	2.31		

According to Table 3, there was no significant difference between the PBS-EF ($t(162)=.134, p<.05$), PBS-NC ($t(162)=189, p <.05$), PBS-PC ($t(162)=.649, p<.05$) subtest scores. The findings revealed that mothers used more negative and preventive coping methods for their daughters compared to their sons, and they used more effective coping methods for their sons compared to their daughters. However, these differences were not significant ($p>0.05$). In addition, there was a significant difference between the PDS-NRSP ($t(162)=.888, p>.05$), PBS-NTSC ($t(162)=.440, p>.05$), PBS-ASCF ($t(162) =.910, p>.05$), and PBS-NFC ($t(162)=.750, p<.05$) subtest scores. Although negative teacher and school conditions were more a reason for problem behaviors for males compared to females and although negative relationships with significant people, adverse socioeconomic conditions of the family, and negative factors regarding the child were more a reason for problem behaviors for females compared to males, these differences were not significant ($p> 0.05$).

Table 4: Results of the independent samples t-test regarding problem behavior scale-coping and problem behavior scale-causal factors according to the sex of the participating fathers' children

Scales	Sex	n	X	Ss	U	P
Effective coping	Female	19	21.53	7.04	230.000	.859
	Male	25	21.60	6.41		
Negative coping	Female	19	25.84	4.30	195.500	.317
	Male	25	24.08	5.42		
Preventive coping	Female	19	6.00	2.89	161.000	.068
	Male	25	7.84	2.73		
Negative relationships with significant people	Female	19	33.68	10.90	169.500	.107
	Male	25	27.76	12.78		
Negative teacher and school conditions	Female	19	25.11	9.16	233.500	.924
	Male	25	24.80	8.85		
Adverse socioeconomic conditions of the family	Female	19	8.37	3.22	231.000	.877
	Male	25	8.00	2.86		
Negative factors regarding the child	Female	19	8.05	4.08	212.000	.540
	Male	25	7.12	2.65		

According to Table 4, there was no significant difference between the PBS-EF ($t(162)=.859, p<.05$), PBS-NC ($t(162)=.317, p <.05$), PBS-PC ($t(162)=.068, p<.05$) subtest scores. The findings revealed that fathers used more negative coping methods for their daughters compared to their sons, and they also used more effective and preventive coping methods for their sons compared to their daughters. However, these differences were not significant ($p>0.05$). In addition, there was a significant difference between the PDS-NRSP ($t(162)=.107, p>.05$), PBS-NTSC ($t(162)=.924, p>.05$), PBS-ASCF ($t(162) =.887, p>.05$), and PBS-NFC ($t(162)=.540, p<.05$) subtest scores. Although negative teacher and school conditions, negative relationships with significant people, adverse socioeconomic conditions of the family, and negative factors regarding the child were more a reason for problem behaviors for females compared to males, these differences were not significant ($p> 0.05$).

Table 5: Variance analysis results of the problem behavior scale-coping according to the number of children parents have

Dimension	Number of Children Parents Have	n	M	Variability Source	Sum of Squares	sd	Mean Square	F
Effective Coping	1 child	28	23.39	Between Groups	139.40	3	46.47	1.21
	2 children	93	22.46	Within Groups	6147.74	160	38.42	
	3 children	32	24.66	Total	6287.14			
	4 and above	11	24.55					
Negative Coping	1 child	28	9.21	Between Groups	26.81	3	8.94	.66
	2 children	93	7.72	Within Groups	2147.44	160	13.42	
	3 children	32	8.59	Total	2174.24			
	4 and above	11	8.63					
Preventive Coping	1 child	28	7.54	Between Groups	23.98	3	7.99	.93
	2 children	93	7.89	Within Groups	1373.99	160	8.59	
	3 children	32	8.72	Total	1397.98			
	4 and above	11	8.18					

According to Table 5, there was no significant difference between group means at the EC level ($F(3, 160)= 1.21, p> .05$), at the NC level ($F(3, 160)= .66, p> .05$), and at the PC level ($F(3, 160)= .93, p> .05$) in terms of the number of children the parents had.

Table 6: Variance analysis results of the problem behavior scale-causal factors according to the number of children parents have

Dimension	Number of Children Parents Have	n	M	Variability Source	Sum of Squares	sd	Mean Square	F
Negative relationships with significant people	1 child	28	38.07	Between Groups	1384.73	3	461.68	2.16
	2 children	93	30.99	Within Groups	27150.27	160	169.69	
	3 children	32	31.19	Total	28534.99			
	4 and above	11	27.36					
Negative teacher and school conditions	1 child	28	28.43	Between Groups	695.35	3	461.68	1.89
	2 children	93	24.92	Within Groups	18710.96	160	169.69	
	3 children	32	28.09	Total	19406.31			
	4 and above	11	20.91					
Adverse socioeconomic conditions of the family	1 child	28	9.86	Between Groups	78.62	3	26.21	1.93
	2 children	93	8.17	Within Groups	2168.36	160	13.55	
	3 children	32	8.63	Total	2246.98			
	4 and above	11	7.27					
Negative factors regarding the child	1 child	28	9.21	Between Groups	57.24	3	19.08	2.63
	2 children	93	7.72	Within Groups	1133.71	160	7.09	
	3 children	32	8.59	Total	1190.95			
	4 and above							

According to Table 6, there was no significant difference between group means at the NRSP level ($F(3, 160)= 2.61, p> .05$), at the NTSC level ($F(3, 160)= 1.98, p> .05$), at the ASCF level ($F(3, 160)= 1.93, p> .05$), and at the NFC level ($F(3, 160)= 2.63, p> .05$) in terms of the number of children the parents had. Accordingly, parents' causality reactions were not affected by the number of children.

Table 7: Variance analysis results of the problem behavior scale-coping according to the mother's education level

Dimension	Mother's Education	n	M	Variability Source	Sum of Squares	sd	Mean Square	F
Effective Coping	1. Elementary-middle school	38	24.74	Between Groups	378.369	3	126.12	3.42*
	2. High school	40	20.72	Within Groups	6147.74	160	36.93	
	3. Associate Degree	22	24.59	Total	6287.14			
	4. Undergraduate and above	64	23.33					
Negative Coping	1. Elementary-middle school	38	7.89	Between Groups	81.422	3	27.14	2.08
	2. High school	40	8.27	Within Groups	2092.82	160	13.08	
	3. Associate Degree	22	8.55	Total	2174.24			
	4. Undergraduate and above	64	8.23					
Preventive Coping	1. Elementary-middle school	38	7.97	Between Groups	10.99	3	3.67	.42
	2. High school	40	7.78	Within Groups	1386.97	160	8.67	
	3. Associate Degree	22	8.64	Total	1397.97			
	4. Undergraduate and above	64	7.97					

According to Table 7, there was a significant difference between group means at the EC level ($F(3, 160)=3.42, p<.05$) according to the mother's education level. The Scheffe test was performed to determine the source of this difference. The test result revealed that mothers who graduated from elementary school and middle school used effective coping to cope with problem behaviors compared to mothers who graduated from high school. In terms of mother's education, there was no significant difference between group means at the NC level ($F(3, 160)=2.08, p>.05$) and PC level ($F(3, 160)=.42, p>.05$).

Table 8: Variance analysis results of the problem behavior scale-causal factors according to the mother's education level

Dimension	Mother's Education	n	M	Variability Source	Sum of Squares	sd	Mean Square	F
Negative Relationships with Significant People	1. Elementary-middle school	38	24.34	Between Groups	3071.37	3	1023.7	6.33*
	2. High school	40	33.72	Within Groups	25463.62	160	8	
	3. Associate Degree	22	32.72	Total	28534.99		159.14	
	4. Undergraduate and above	64	35.36					
Negative Teacher and School Conditions	1. Elementary-middle school	38	21.45	Between Groups	969.83	3	323.27	2.63
	2. High school	40	27.12	Within Groups	18436.47	160	115.22	
	3. Associate Degree	22	27.05	Total	19406.31			
	4. Undergraduate and above	64	27.31					
Adverse Socioeconomic Conditions of the Family	1. Elementary-middle school	38	24.97	Between Groups	118.25	3	39.41	2.96*
	2. High school	40	26.75	Within Groups	2128.72	160	13.30	
	3. Associate Degree	22	26.73	Total	2246.97			
	4. Undergraduate and above	64	26.52					

Continuation of Table 8: Variance analysis results of the problem behavior scale-causal factors according to the mother's education level

Dimension	Mother's Education	n	M	Variability Source	Sum of Squares	sd	Mean Square	F
Negative Factors Regarding the Child	1. Elementary-middle school	38	7.89	Between Groups	6.45	3	2.15	.29
	2. High school	40	8.27	Within Groups	1184.49	160	7.40	
	3. Associate Degree	22	8.55	Total	1190.95			
	4. Undergraduate and above	64	8.23					

According to Table 8, there was a significant difference between group means at the NRSP level ($F(3, 160)=6.33, p<.05$) according to the mother's education level. The result of the Scheffe test conducted to determine the source of this difference revealed that mothers with an undergraduate degree or above attributed problem behaviors more to people who had an important place in the child's life compared to mothers who graduated from elementary and middle school. According to the mother's education level, there were no statistically significant differences between group means at the NTSC level ($F(3, 160)=2.63, p>.05$), and at the NFC level ($F(3, 160)=.29, p>.05$), whereas there was a significant difference between group means at the ASCF level ($f(3, 160)=2.96, p>.05$). The result of the Scheffe test conducted to determine the source of this difference determined that mothers with an undergraduate degree or above attributed problem behaviors more to negative socioeconomic conditions of the family compared to mothers who graduated from elementary and middle school.

Table 9: Variance analysis results of the problem behavior scale-coping according to the father's education level

Dimension	Father's Education	n	M	Variability Source	Sum of Squares	sd	Mean Square	F
Effective Coping	1. Elementary-middle school	38	24.74	Between Groups	97.44	3	32.48	.84
	2. High school	40	20.72	Within Groups	6189.70	160	36.69	
	3. Associate Degree	22	24.59	Total	6287.14			
	4. Undergraduate and above	64	23.33					
Negative Coping	1. Elementary-middle school	38	7.89	Between Groups	63.65	3	21.22	1.61
	2. High school	40	8.27	Within Groups	2110.59	160	13.19	
	3. Associate Degree	22	8.55	Total	2174.24			
	4. Undergraduate and above	64	8.23					
Preventive Coping	1. Elementary-middle school	38	7.97	Between Groups	57.37	3	19.12	2.28
	2. High school	40	7.78	Within Groups	1340.60		8.38	
	3. Associate Degree	22	8.64	Total	1397.97	160		
	4. Undergraduate and above	64	7.97					

As seen in Table 9, there were no statistically significant differences between group means at the EC level ($F(3, 160)=.84, p>.05$), at the NC level ($F(3, 160)=1.61, p>.05$), and at the PC level ($F(3, 160)=2.28, p>.05$) according to the father's education level. Accordingly, the strategies fathers use to cope with their children's problem behaviors were similar to each other.

Table 10: Variance analysis results of the problem behavior scale-causal factors according to the father's education level

Dimension	Father's Education	n	M	Variability Source	Sum of Squares	sd	Mean Square	F
Negative Relationships with Significant People	1. Elementary-middle school	38	38.07	Between Groups	2393.68	3	797.89	4.88*
	2. High school	40	30.99	Within Groups	26141.30	16	163.38	
	3. Associate Degree	22	31.19	Total	28534.99	0		
	4. Undergraduate and above	64	27.36					
Negative Teacher and School Conditions	1. Elementary-middle school	38	28.43	Between Groups	171.645	3	239.21	2.05
	2. High school	40	24.92	Within Groups	18688.66	16	116.80	
	3. Associate Degree	22	28.09	Total	19406.31	0		
	4. Undergraduate and above	64	20.91					
Adverse Socioeconomic Conditions of the Family	1. Elementary-middle school	38	9.86	Between Groups	113.058	3	37.69	2.63
	2. High school	40	8.17	Within Groups	2133.91	16	13.34	
	3. Associate Degree	22	8.63	Total	2246.97	0		
	4. Undergraduate and above	64	7.27					
Negative Factors Regarding the Child	1. Elementary-middle school	38	9.21	Between Groups	5.45	3	5.45	.25
	2. High school	40	7.72	Within Groups	1185.50	16	1185.5	
	3. Associate Degree	22	8.59	Total	1190.95	0	0	
	4. Undergraduate and above	64						

According to Table 10, there was a significant difference between group means at the NRSP level ($f(3, 160)=4.88, p<.05$) according to the father's education level. Scheffe test was performed to determine the source of this difference. Compared to fathers who graduated from elementary and middle school, fathers with an undergraduate degree or above attributed problem behaviors to people who had an important place in the child's life. According to the father's education level, there were no statistically significant differences between group means at the NTSC level ($f(3, 160)=2.05, p>.05$), at the ASCF level ($f(3, 160) =2.63, p>.05$), and at the NFC level ($f(3, 160)=.25, p>.05$).

4. Discussion and Result

In the study, there was a significant difference between the PBS-EC, PBS-NC, and PBPC subscale scores according to being a mother or being a father. Compared to fathers, mothers used effective coping, negative coping, and preventive coping approaches more in coping with their children's problem behaviors. In their study, Özen, Çolak & Acar (2003) determined that mothers use all the methods of explaining why that behavior should not be done, applying physical punishment and verbal warning while they cope with problem behaviors. This study result coincides with the findings of the present study.

The findings of the present study determined that mothers used more negative and preventive coping methods with their daughters and more effective coping methods with their sons. However, these differences were not significant ($p> 0.05$). As seen in Table 3, for mothers, negative relationships with significant people were more a reason for problem behaviors for boys and negative teacher and school conditions, adverse socioeconomic conditions of the family, and negative factors regarding the child were more a reason for problem behaviors for

girls compared to boys. Yet, this difference was not significant ($p>0.05$). Similarly, in a study conducted with mothers of different socioeconomic levels, Yaşar, Kızıltepe, and Uyanık (2013) put forth that there was no significant difference between the PBS-EF, PBNC, and PBS-PC subscale scores according to children's sex. In addition, the findings of the present study revealed that fathers used negative coping methods with girls more than boys and used effective and preventive coping methods with boys more than girls. However, these differences were not significant ($p>0.05$). As seen in Table 4, for fathers, negative relationships with significant people, negative teacher and school conditions, adverse socioeconomic conditions of the family, and negative factors regarding the child were more a reason for problem behaviors for girls compared to boys. However, these differences were not significant ($p>0.05$). Similar results were found in the study conducted by Kaner (2007).

The study findings showed that the number of children parents had did not make a difference in the ways mothers and fathers cope with their children's problem behaviors and their causal responses. The literature presents different results. In their study with mothers of different socioeconomic levels, Yaşar, Kızıltepe, and Uyanık (2013) determined that behavioral problems differ according to the number of children. Also, Kaner (2007) determined that the causal factors parents attributed to the problem behaviors of their children differ according to the number of children they have. In the present study, although there was no statistically significant difference between the sub-dimensions of the scales according to the number of children mothers and fathers have, the number of children in the family affects the problem behaviors of the children, and depending on the number of children, the family has difficulty in allocating sufficient time for each child to monitor the child's problems (UyanıkBalat et al., 2008). This suggests that mothers and fathers may ignore children's unwanted behaviors and the causality of these behaviors.

The present study revealed that there was a significant difference at the PBS-EC level according to the education level of the mothers. The mothers who graduated from elementary school and middle school used more effective coping methods in coping with problem behaviors of their children compared to mothers who graduated from high school. Mother's education level is an important determinant of children's behavioral outcomes. The literature stated that an increase in a mother's education level has a positive effect on the psychosocial development of children (Nagin & Tremblay, 2001).

According to the findings of the present study, there was a significant difference at the PBS-EC level, at the PBS-NC level, and at the PBS-PC level in terms of the education level of the fathers. Accordingly, the fathers used similar strategies to cope with their children's problem behaviors. It can be stated that fathers who spend less time with their children may be more tolerant of their children's unwanted behavior.

In the present study, according to the mother's education level, there were no statistically significant differences between group means at the NTSC level and the ASCF level. About the causes of the behavioral problems in their children, compared to mothers who graduated from elementary school and middle school, mothers who had undergraduate or above degrees attributed the problem behaviors of their children to negative relationships of their children with the people who had a significant place in their lives. Mothers who had undergraduate or above degrees attributed more to the negative socioeconomic conditions of the family for the causality of their children's problem behaviors compared to mothers who graduated from elementary school and middle school. In his study, Kaner (2007) revealed that as the education levels increase, the causal attributions of parents to problem behaviors decrease. On the other hand, the higher the education level, the more effective the parents were able to cope with unwanted behaviors.

According to the findings of the present study, in terms of the father's education level, there were no statistically significant differences between group means at the PBS-EF level and the PBS-PC level. It can be stated that the strategies fathers use to cope with their children's problem behaviors are similar. Furthermore, in terms of the father's education level, there was no significant difference at the NTSC level, the ASCF level, and the NFC level. However, there was a significant difference at the NRSP level. The study results showed that fathers who had undergraduate or above degrees attributed the problem behaviors of their children more to negative relationships of their children with the people who had a significant place in their lives compared to fathers who

graduated from elementary school and middle school. These findings suggest that mothers and fathers perceive the unwanted characteristics of their children to temporary circumstances and attribute them to external causes.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

In line with the findings from the literature, the followings recommendations are presented.

- Educational workshops should be developed for couples before they become parents.
- Coping with problem behaviors will be much easier when the reasons behind these problem behaviors are uncovered. Therefore, it is important that parents try to understand their children's behavior.
- When positive solution methods are put into practice in coping with problem behaviors, parents or other individuals around the child should show the same determination and consistency.
- In order for parents to learn the ways to cope with the problem behaviors of their children, it can be ensured that they receive support from institutions giving guidance to families such as family counseling centers and parent schools.
- The fact that negative parental attitudes and erroneous disciplinary practices increase children's behavioral problems should be emphasized through various communication tools. In this regard, the media should show the necessary sensitivity and raise societal awareness by giving more positive examples.
- Behavioral assessments of people whom the child considers important to him/her, such as parents and teachers, are considered important in determining and classifying problem behaviors of children and adolescents. Conferences, seminars, etc. can be offered to help parents gain positive behavior examples for their children.
- Mothers and fathers should give children the opportunity to express their feelings and thoughts. They should appreciate positive examples of behavior. Instead of acts such as threatening, criticizing, comparing, and pressure, they should try to develop internal discipline in the child. At this point, they should develop a sense of trust and offer unconditional love to the child.
- Experts, educators, and especially school psychological counselors working in this field should pay more attention to raising conscious and self-confident individuals who can stand on their own legs.

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