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Do Fathers Effects the Social Skills of Preschool Children: An Experimental Study

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The aim of this study was to investigate the effect of a Father Training Program (FTP) on the social skills of pre-school children. The study was carried out in two preschools in the central province of Kilis in Turkey. A pretest-posttest control group experimental design was implemented in this study. Both the study group and the control group consisted of 40 preschool children and their fathers from different preschools. The FTP was implemented with fathers in the experimental group for twelve weeks, but the FTP was not applied to the fathers in the control group. In this study, Social Skills Assessment Scale (SSAS) was used. Data were collected by preschool teachers before and after FTP. Covariant analysis with one factor (ANCOVA) and t test were used to analyze the data. At the end of the FTP, it was observed that there were statistically significant differences between the children in the control group and experimental group in terms of their level of social skills ($p<.01$). It was observed that the difference between the mean scores of post-test and retention tests of the children in the experimental group was insignificant and the effect of the FTP was continuing. This shows that training program including fathers has an effect on children's social skills.

Introduction

Social skills are acquired behaviors accepted by most of the society which enable the individual to interact with the other members of the society and to avoid the non-approved reactions (Gibson & Gibson, 2015; Gresham & Elliot, 1990; Çiftçi & Sucuoğlu, 2004). Social skills are the skills we use every day to interact and communicate with others. They include verbal and non-verbal communication, such as speech, gesture, facial expression, and body language etc. As a result of experimental work with more than 22,000 children between 1974 and 1994, Caldarella and Merrell (1997) identify five dimensions of social skill. “First, the

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peer relations dimension involves positive peer behaviors, such as giving compliments, offering help, and inviting others to play. Second, the self-management skills dimension includes behaviors such as controlling temper, following rules, and compromising. Third, academic skills are behaviors related to being productive in independent classroom settings, such as accomplishing tasks independently, completing individual seatwork, and listening to teacher directions. Fourth, compliance involves behaviors related to complying with social rules, such as appropriately using free time and sharing. Finally, the assertion skills dimension includes behaviors such as initiating conversations, acknowledging compliments, and making friends". More specifically, social skills have been linked to academic achievement, psychological adjustment, coping skills, and employment (Miles & Stipek, 2006). Many social skills are developed non-systematically and without noticing because of the child's observing the behaviors of the parents, siblings, relatives, and other grown-up people around, friends and their peers in the environment and within the family and modelling them. However, the children need to be taught the social skills systematically and they need to be supported to use these skills (Avcıoğlu, 2007; Merrell & Gimpel, 2014). Emotional and cognitive skills of children show great improvement if they have learnt social skills during pre-school period and can use these skills. It is predicted that children who can have healthy social relations during this period will become happy individuals who can continue their relations and express themselves easily in the future (Gülay & Akman, 2009). During this stage, children spend most of their time with their parents, although with father not as much as their mother. However, the father has an importance in the development of the children as much as the mother. The quality of parenting behaviour and relationships with their children are affected by numerous contextual factors, including those within familial, social, psychological, and cultural domains (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). However, some researchers have argued that because the role of father is less well defined than that of mother, fathering is especially sensitive to the contexts in which it occurs (Marsiglio, Roy& Fox, 2005). Within the context of the family, this idea is known as the father vulnerability hypothesis (Cummings, Merrilees & George, 2010), and suggests, for instance, that interparental conflict has a more detrimental effect on father-child than on mother–child relations. Although empirical evidence in support of the father vulnerability hypothesis is mixed (Stevenson, Volling & Gonzalez, 2019), during the past decade there has been an increasing emphasis on understanding fathering as situated within and inseparable from the contexts in which fathers and children are embedded (Schoppe-Sullivan & Fagan, 2020).

The ability to be a father who cares for young children is hardwired into our genetic make-up (Sriram, 2019). Fletcher (2013) summarizes evidence which tells us that "fathering in humans has evolved to ensure that our offspring survive and that fathers from the ice ages onwards have the needed social skills to communicate and bond with others". The levels of 'nurturing hormones' are found to be the same in men and women exposed to 'infant stimuli' before their babies are born and when interacting with them afterwards. However, fatherhood has been change depending socio-economic situations since the first humans and has emerged in different ways until today. The father as a provider is a construct that is linked to 19th and 20th century understandings of male generativity (Gillis, 2000). With the rise of the middle-class, the 19th century ushered in a new understanding of fatherhood called breadwinner. So, fatherhood became linked to marriage, paternity, and masculinity. When the studies on parent-child relationships in the last 30-35 years reviewed, it is seen that the role of fathers in raising children is indirectly examined, and mother-child relationships studies were more prominent. Starting with the first half of the 1980s there has been an increase in the number of studies regarding the effects of fathers on the development of children and family life (Cano et al., 2019; Koçak, 2004; Lamb, 2013). Changes in the fatherhood roles of men caused an

increase of research in this subject in different countries. Jackson (2013) claims that social acceptance has increased for men's displaying affection and involvement in childcare in Great Britain. Similarly, Mussang (2013) indicated that there have been changes fatherhood in Swedish society. Parke (2004) identifies several important trends, including studies that examine the impact of fathers' hormonal levels on the father-child relationship, or the re-biologization of fathers; the cultural embeddedness of fathering; the assumption that fathers are essential to children's socialization; reproductive technologies that expand the routes to fatherhood; the link between fathering and men's development; and studies that examine intergenerational aspects of the father's role. Marsiglioni, Amato, Day, and Lamb (2000) identified four broad categories in the father literature: theorizations about fatherhood as a cultural representation, examinations of fatherhood's cultural embeddedness and diversity, examinations of how the various dimensions of the father-child relationship impact child outcomes, and examinations of the actors involved in the constitutive processes of the development of a father identity. They outlined theoretical and methodological issues, which include reconceptualizing 'fatherhood' as something fluid and changing rather than as a stable identity and improving the reliability of data gathered through observation.

When studies conducted in this area are analysed it can be found that parents play important roles in their children's life and the roles of fathers and mothers both complete and support each other. However, it is also expressed that the type of relationship of a father has with his child is different than mother, because of the father takes on different roles in society and within the family (Bronstein & Zlotnik, 2008; Cabrera, 2020; Çağdaş, 2008; Ferreire et al., 2016). In the early period of children's life, the behaviours of the father may affect the mental functions of the child in the following periods. It is expressed that there is a positive relationship between a father's interest in his child's feeding, care, play and mental development. According to Sriram (2019), fathers' parenting styles help children to understand the world in different ways. Fathers also respond to children's emotions by a problem-solving approach. Quality time for father and child increases children's self-esteem, confidence, social competence, emotional intelligence, and life skills. Fathers have an important role in the personality and sexuality development of a child (Crouter & Crowley, 1990). Today, in many countries, there are many studies on father child relations, father's role, father involvement (Budd & O'Brien, 1982; Coplin & Houts, 1991; Hulbert, 2003; Lamb, 1997Jessee & Adamsons, 2018; Laxman et al., 2015; Opondo et al., 2016; Planalp & Braungart-Rieker, 2016; Pruett et al., 2019; Ünlü-Çetin & Olgan, 2018, 2019) and father child attachment (Bureu et al., 2017; Demidenko et al., 2015; Fagan, 2020; Fuertes, 2016; Grossmann & Grossmann, 2020; Manion & Lee, 2015) in early years. Upon studying the effects of the training programs aimed at fathers, it was seen that the fathers to whom these programs were applied had positive effects in bringing up their children, grew positive relationships with their children and that they were willing to show more interest (Aydın,2003; Bagner & Eyberg, 2003; Kocayörük & Sümer, 2009; Maxwell et al., 2012; Uzun & Baran, 2017; Webster-Stratton, 1985). In studies, it was expressed that there is a great difference between fathers and mothers in terms of interaction and that despite this, most fathers continue to interact with their children actively and build positive relations with them. Fathers have been shown to express their warmth by providing guidance and assistance to children in learning social skills, acquiring social status, and achieving academic attainment. Several studies carried out in Turkey and throughout the world have shown that the role of fathers in the education of a child is as important as the role of mothers (Çağdaş, 2008; Kocayörük, 2016; Tezel-Şahin, 1998; Öz, 2005; Öztürk & Aksoy, 2019). Many studies have also found that paternal warmth and involvement play positive roles in children's social and academic performance (Chao & Tseng, 2002; Liu, Lin & Chen, 2010). As a result, it is

seen that fathers have great contributions in their child socializing and acquiring social skills development (Güngörmüş-Özkardeş, 2011; Knoester & Randolph, 2019; Tezel-Şahin & Özyürek, 2010; Yavuzer, 2011).

Family characteristics (such as parental attitudes, parental involvement, and family relationships) have been found to be directly and indirectly associated with children's social competence (Hauser-Cram et al., 2001; Marfo et al., 1992). Therefore, it is important to educate parents, who are the child's first and most influential teachers, about child development and education if they want to participate in educational programs, with respecting their child-rearing skills and parenting style. Parents' participation in educational programs enables them to learn more about children's development and needs, and to improve their relationship with their children, and as a result, some research states that the educated family provides guidance for better quality education for their children (Aydın,2003; Bagner & Eyberg, 2003; Fine, 2014; Kocayörük & Sümer,2009; Morrison, 2013; Özyürek & Tezel-Şahin, 2017; Uzun & Baran, 2017; Uzun & Baran, 2019). This education programs gives the necessary information to parents to raise their children as individuals who can make up their own minds and respect the decisions they make, express their ideas and feelings easily, use their skills, have cultural values, and maintain strong physical and mental health (Ersoy & Tezel-Şahin, 1999; Essa, 2012; Gustafsson & Yang Hansen, 2018; Rönkä et al., 2019). When the children are educated by their families, they are educated without being isolated from their natural surroundings. Furthermore, family becomes a more suitable educational environment for the child (Çağdaş & Seçer, 2006; Flecha, 2012; Gustafsson & Yang-Hansen, 2018; Varol, 2005).

Therefore, because of changes in social life, it can be said that it is important that fathers, who are as important in children's life as mothers, should be given support regarding child development and education. As the view of previous studies, there are some researches that determine the effect of family education on the child's social skills and the effect of social skills training programs on the social skills of the child; but research examining the effect of a general father's training (which enables fathers to learn about child development and education) on children's social skills are very limited. It is important to reveal training programs in which support fathers in child development and education and the effects of father participation on children's social skills. For this purpose, a Father Training Program (FTP) was developed within the framework of this study and the potential effects of this program on children's social skills was tested. The aim of this study was to investigate the effect of a Father Training Program (FTP) on the social skills of pre-school children.

Method

Research Design

In this study, the pretest-posttest-retention test control group quasi-experimental design was used to determine the effects of the FTP on the social skills development of the children. Quasi-experimental designs identify a control group that is as similar as possible to the experimental group in terms of baseline (pre-intervention) characteristics. The control group captures what would have been the outcomes if the program/policy had not been implemented (i.e., the counterfactual). Hence, the program or policy can be said to have caused any difference in outcomes between the experimental and control groups (White & Sabarwal, 2014). In the pattern, the social skill levels of the children attending preschool is the dependent variable, while the FTP is the independent variable. (Büyüköztürk et al., 2011).

Participants

The study group consisted of a total of 80 fathers and their children attending preschool run by the Kilis Provincial Directorate of National Education (KPDNE) in Turkey at 2014-2015 education year. First, KPDNE was consulted for research and permissions were obtained. Meetings are arranged in preschools and the managers, teachers and fathers in the two-preschool participating in the research were informed about the aims of the research, the FTP process, and the research process, and it was stated that participation in the research was voluntary. 80 of 113 fathers were included by criterion sampling who wanted to participate in the study voluntarily and who allowed their children to be tested was included in the study. Criterion sampling involves selecting cases that meet some predetermined criterion of importance (Patton, 2001). Forty of these fathers who all had married and were willing to join the FTP voluntarily with their children who showed normal growth (children who do not have abnormal development reports at school) have been included in the experimental group (EG) and other forty fathers with similar demographic characteristics in the control group (CG). Both experimental and control group participants' consent was received. Therefore, research ethics for teachers, fathers and their children were taken into consideration. To avoid any interaction with FTP, the control group was in a distant neighborhood with similar socio-economic characteristics as the experimental group.

Table 1. Demographics of fathers and children included in the study.

Variables (CHILDREN)	**Experimental**		**Control**		**Variables (FATHERS)**	**Experimental**		**Control**	
Gender	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**Age**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Girl	18	45	19	47.5	21-30	18	45	16	40
Boy	22	55	21	52.5	31-40	13	32.5	16	40
Total	40	100	40	100	41-50	9	22.5	8	20
					Total	40	100	40	100
Order of Birth					**Education level**				
First child	20	50	19	47.5	Primary school graduate	10	25	8	20
Middle/One of the middles	11	27.5	11	27.5	Secondary school graduate	12	30	13	32.5
Last child	9	22.5	10	25	High school graduate	16	40	15	37.5
Total	40	100	40	100	University graduate	2	5	4	10
					Total	40	100	40	100
Attendance to Preschool					**Number of children they have**				
Less than 1 year	16	40	18	45	1 child	7	15	9	17,5
Between 1-2 years	24	60	22	55	2 children	17	40	16	35
Total	40	100	40	100	3 children	16	37.5	15	32.5
					Total	40	100	40	100

According to Table 1, most of the fathers in the EG and CG are between 21-30 and 31-40 years old. Most of the fathers in both groups are secondary school and high school graduates and have two or three children. Within both the EG and CG, the proportion of girls and boys are like each other, most of the children in the two groups who attend pre-school are the first child and most of them have attended preschool for 1-2 years.

Measures

General Information Form (GIF)

The GIF was developed by researchers and filled in by the fathers in the experimental and control groups. It includes items to determine some of demographic variables such as the age of the child, the number of children they have, the age of the father, the educational level of the father etc.

Social Skills Assessment Scale

To evaluate the social skills of the children Social Skills Assessment Scale **(**SSAS) (Avcıoğlu, 2007) was used in this study. The instrument included nine factors with 62 items. These factors are Interpersonal Skills (IS), Ability to Control and Adapt to Anger Behaviors (ACAAB), Skills to Peer-to-Peer Coping (SPPC), Verbal Explanation Skills (VES), Self-Control Skills (SCS), Ability to Accept Results (AAR), Listening Skills (LS), Goal Creation Skills (GCS), Tasks Completion Skills (TCS). The scale aimed to evaluate the social skills of the children by the people who knew these children. Avcıoğlu (2007) worked with 52 preschool teachers of students who are 4 to 6 years of age and 251 students during the preparation period of the SSAS. For the validity of the scale, with literature and two academicians studying on the social skills, two academicians of child development and two preschool teachers' opinions were used by Avcıoğlu (2007). The internal consistency coefficient for the scale in general was .97, for the subscales it was between .78,9 and .95,7. SSAS is filled by preschool teachers to measure the social skills of 4-6-year-old children attending preschools.

The reliability study of SSAS was conducted in this study to re-determine the reliability of the scale. For reliability, in accordance with ethical principles, permission for data collection from preschools was obtained from KPDNE. Twenty-seven preschool teachers, who were not a part of the FTP, with students between the ages of 4 and 6 in their class were randomly assigned. 400 forms were distributed to these teachers, who were asked to evaluate the social skill levels of the children. Incomplete or blank forms collected from the teachers were extracted and a total of 310 forms were included in the statistical analysis for reliability. To determine the reliability of the scale, the Cronbach alpha coefficient which is most suitable for Likert type scales was calculated by SPSS (Tezbaşaran, 1997). The analysis indicated that the internal consistency coefficient for the SSAS is .97, for the subscales it was between 0.83 and 0.97. These values are sufficient for the reliability of the scale (Tavşancıl, 2014) and mean that SSAS is still a reliable scale after all this time.

Father Training Program

There are some points to be taken into consideration in preparation, planning and implementation stages of the Father Training Program as an adult training program. While arranging training for adults, it is necessary to consider the learning styles, learning strategies and learning models of adults, and to apply those suitable. The application of such theoretical knowledge throughout the program is highly important for the quality and effectiveness of instruction for participants (Demirel, 2013). For instance, while explaining a subject to adults, some adults prefer a type of instruction in the form of a structured, planned, and graduated presentation and some of them can prefer less structured discussions like a conversation. It can be claimed that motivation and success will decline considerably when the methods and techniques used in educational activity are not compatible with the learning preferences of

participants (Lundahl, 2008; Su et al., 2020; Uzun, 2016). Thus, it is crucial to prepare the training program in line with fathers' educational needs, by using methods and techniques compatible with their learning preferences and taking into consideration such aspects as the place and time of the program as well as implementation budget. The FTP was prepared by searching the literature for family relations, father-child relations, social skills, social skill programs, adult training programs. In addition, a Father Training Requirement Form (FTRF) was formed, and fathers were asked that what kind of educational needs they had in subjects such as child development and education and father-child relations. Then, the fathers' responses in the FTRF were analyzed and the demands of the fathers were grouped. At the end of all these studies, the 12 sessions thought to support the development of children and the father-child relationship, using the activities that would ensure fathers' active participation and methods, techniques and materials that would make the training functional were determined. The program was organized and finalized by asking the opinions of seven academicians working at different universities in Turkey in the fields of preschool education, parent education and program development, child development and education. The academicians were asked to mark the appropriate parts in the evaluation form to indicate whether the statements/content were appropriate, the outcomes were suitable, the outcomes in the sessions were adequate, the activities were suitable and adequate, and whether the materials were suitable. In addition, they were asked to explain their opinions in the "Comments" section on the topic they deemed "unsuitable" or "partially appropriate" for each session, as well as the appropriateness of the methods and techniques used in FTP. Based on the feedback received from the specialists, the program was reviewed, necessary revisions were made, and the FTP was finalized. The process for FTP to be finalized took more than a year. FTP was a new program developed by the researcher, in line with the needs of the fathers, views of specialists and created with the literature. In Turkey, there was a few numbers of programs developed on father training and FTP is one of them. The importance of father training in early childhood education is increasing day by day in Turkey and we believe that FTP, which improves fathers' knowledge of child development (enables communication with the child and father, child access to the father and spending time with father) is an important tool for the widespread of father education and the benefit of children. To test the applicability of the FTP, 10 fathers with children attending another preschool different from that of the experimental and control groups were contacted through school principals and teachers. Their voluntary participation to the pilot program was asked and a pilot scheme was run regarding "Family Relationships and Parental Attitudes" which was a third session in the FTP. As result of the pilot scheme, the applicability of the program was accepted.

SESSIONS	Number of Outcomes	Number of Activities
SESSION 1: General information about development and motor development characteristics of children aged between 3-6	5	2
SESSION 2: Cognitive, social-affective and language development characteristics of children aged between 3-6	3	1
SESSION 3: Family relationships and parental attitudes	14	5
SESSION 4: Family communication	7	3
SESSION 5: Negative behaviours observed in preschool period and coping with such behaviours	9	2
SESSION 6: Gaining self-confidence in preschool period	7	2
SESSION 7: Adopting social behaviours and the significance of social skills in preschool period	8	1
SESSION 8: Preschool children's social skills regarding themselves	5	2
SESSION 9: Preschool children's social skills regarding their responsibilities	5	2
SESSION10: Preschool children's interpersonal social skills	5	2
SESSION 11: Play and playthings in preschool period	8	3
SESSION12: Children's books in preschool period	6	3
TOTAL	**84**	**28**

Figure 1. Father Training Program Sessions, Number of Outcomes and Activities.

To make the 12 session trainings (one session per week) more efficient, the fathers were divided into two groups and each group was trained one hour a week. Each group attended the training for twelve weeks.

Session 4 as an example session from the implemented Father Training Program is shown in figure 2 below.

SESSION 4

Subject: Family communication

Aim of the Session: Inform fathers about family communication, communication methods, communication barriers and errors.

OUTCOMES	SUBJECTS	ACTIVITY	METHODS AND TECHNIQUES
	1.Introduction - Summarizing the previous session - Highlighting the outcomes of the fourth session		Instruction, question-answer, discussion, small study group, demonstration, case study
✓ Become informed about the importance of family communication. ✓ Express the significance of communication with the mother and child.	2. Importance of family communication		
✓ Explain basic concepts related to communication barriers. ✓ Explain communication errors made in daily life ✓ Become informed about establishing a healthy communication. ✓ Realize the importance of listening to the child actively.	3. Communication barriers	Activity: 9 Communication Barriers Activity Activity: 10 Body Language Activity Activity: 11 I am Listening Actively	
	Co-evaluation of Session 4 with fathers		

Session Materials: Projector, white board and coloured pencils, brochure, air horn, confetti, whistle, cards with numbers from 1 to 20 and two pouches with plastic tombola (bingo) balls.

Figure 2. An example training session in the Father Training Program

As seen in Figure 2, FTP includes the aims that father want to achieve, the subjects determined within the framework of these purposes, the activities to be carried out, the materials to be used, the training methods and techniques to be used, and the evaluations. Active participation of fathers was prioritized in FTP, and fathers' development of paternal behaviours was the centrepiece.

"Activity 9: Communication Barriers" as an example activity from the *Session 4* implemented Father Training Program is shown in figure 3 below.

Activity 9: Communication Barriers
Trainer invites two voluntary participants, asks the participants A and B to sit on chairs placed opposite to each other with two meters distance, and hands over a short text to each. The trainer asks them to read the text to each other. (The text given to the participants A and B is a short dialogue between two friends.) For this activity, pairs are invited in order. While these groups communicate with each other, the trainer tries to disrupt communication by first breaking into their conversation verbally, and then by making noises and playing an air horn-whistle etc. and throwing confetti etc. at them. The fathers are asked questions like *"Did you hear what your friend said sufficiently? Did these obstacles disturb you?"*, etc. Then, the trainer emphasizes that there can be some barriers in communication that prevent message from travelling from source to destination and these barriers must be removed to establish a healthy communication.

Figure 3. Communication Barriers Activity in the Family Communication Session as Part of the FTP

Data Collection

Before implementing the FTP in September 2014, fathers filled the GIF for demographic data. At the same time teachers of the children who were attending different preschools and whose fathers were in the EG and CG were asked to fill the SSAS to identify the level of social skills of the children as pre-test. After performing these pre-tests, the FTP was conducted on the fathers in the experimental group and no intervention was made in the control group. After completing the twelve sessions (12 weeks) in the FTP, the teachers of the children asked to conduct the SSAS as a post-test. Then retention test of SSAS was filled by teachers for only EG four weeks later, and the research data was obtained from these processes. All data collect at 2014-2015 education year. Data collection process was shown in figure 4.

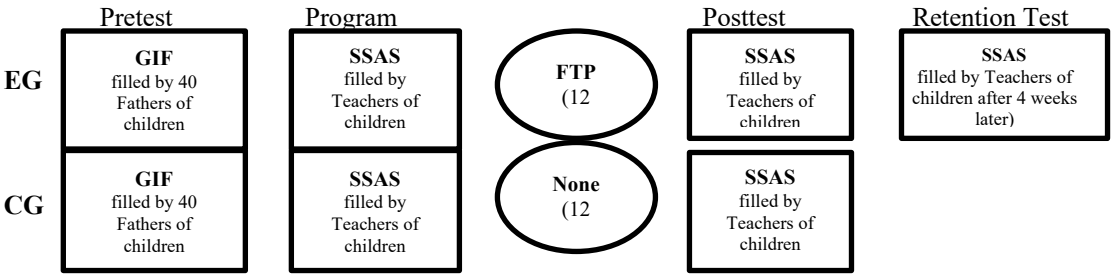

Figure 4. Data collection process

Analysis of the Data

In the analysis of the data obtained, descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, and arithmetic mean and parametric statistical analyzes were used to test the aims of the study. The analysis of the collected data was done by SPSS program. To determine whether there is a significant difference between the pre-test averages of social skills of the children in the EG and CG included in the study group t test was used. This test was conducted to determine the social skill levels of children in EG and CG before applying FTP.

Then analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to determine whether the social skill levels of the children of the fathers in the EG and CG differ depending on whether their fathers participated in the FTP. ANCOVA decided because it reduces the error variance and provides great statistical power and in an experimental study it helps to reduce the bias in the experiment in case of differences between the groups at the beginning (Büyüköztürk, 1998). At last, retention test was performed four weeks later to determine FTP's effectiveness and durability and t test has been used to determine whether there is a significant difference between the scores of the children's social skills in the EG and the post-test and retention test scores for the sub-dimensions and sum of SSAS (Büyüköztürk et al., 2011). Cohen's d (effect size) and eta-squared (η2) value were used for the effect size analysis. Effect size between 0-0.4 represented a small effect, between 0.5-0.7 represented a medium effect and above 0.8 represented a large effect (Cohen, 1988).

Findings

The findings of the effects of the FTP applied to the fathers with children attending preschool on the social skills of their children are presented in the following tables. In this research, it was assumed that the results obtained are the effect of FTP and that environmental effects do not affect fathers and children.

In Table 2, it is shown that show that the mean scores for all the sub-dimensions of the scale and the sum of the scale are very close in both groups. However, when the results of the t test on the pre-test scores in SSAS of the children in the experimental and control groups are examined, it is determined that there is no significant difference between the scale sub-dimensions and the scale ($t(39) = 6.031$, $p > .05$). These results indicate that the children in the EG and CG in the study group had similar levels of social skills before the FTP.

Table 2. t-test results of the pretest scores of the children of EG and CG from SSAS

SSAS	Group	N	$\bar{X}$	S	SD	t	p
Interpersonal Skills (IS)	Experimental	40	56.32	12.07	39	1.081	0.420
	Control	40	55.22	10.97			
Anger Management and Adaptability Skills (AMAS)	Experimental	40	37.65	6.15	39	0.930	0.390
	Control	40	36.67	6.71			
Peer Resistance Skills (PRS)	Experimental	40	32.92	7.51	39	1.784	0.082
	Control	40	29.65	6.88			
Verbal Explanation Skills (VES)	Experimental	40	17.75	3.68	39	1.583	0.723
	Control	40	18.25	3.27			
Self-Control Skills (SCS)	Experimental	40	13.67	4.58	39	1.312	0.563
	Control	40	12.02	4.16			
Ability to Accept Results (AAR)	Experimental	40	10.50	2.96	39	0.340	0.075
	Control	40	10.17	2.85			
Listening Skills (LS)	Experimental	40	17.32	4.61	39	1.628	0.852
	Control	40	18.52	3.92			
Goal Creation Skills (GCS)	Experimental	40	9.35	2.67	39	0.876	0.622
	Control	40	10.47	2.41			
Task Completion Skills (TCS)	Experimental	40	11.70	3.16	39	1.632	0.120
	Control	40	10.02	2.68			
Sum of the SCALE (SSAS)	Experimental	40	207.18	44.14	39	6.031	0.154
	Control	40	200.91	35.95			

$p > .05$

Table 3 also shows the results of the scores of the children whose fathers were in the EG and CG on the sub-dimensions and sum of the SSAS. According to these results, it can be said that the children of the fathers in the EG have higher scores when the sub-dimensions are considered, compared to the children of the fathers in the non-training CG. However, the Cohen's d (effect size) was calculated for each dimension and the effect size was found for IS d= 0.095.; for AMAS d= 0.152; for PRS d = 0.454; for VES d= 0.143; for SCS d= 0.377; for AAR d= 0.113; for LS d= 0.280; for GCS d= 0.440; for TCS d= 0.573, and for sum of SSAS d= 0.155. According to these results, considering the effect size of the SSAS scores of the children in EG compared to the children in CG, it can be said that it has a small effect in all dimensions except TCS (medium effect) and in the sum of SSAS.

Table 3. The mean and standard deviations of the children in the EG and CG post-test scores adjusted for pre-test averages of the sub-dimensions and sum of the SSAS.

Groups	**Pre-test**			**Post-test**			**Corrected Post-test**		
	N	$\bar{X}$	**S**	**N**	$\bar{X}$	**S**	**N**	$\bar{X}$	**S**
IS									
Experimental	40	56.32	12.07	40	75.13	11.02	40	77.22	7.52
Control	40	55.22	10.97	40	58.25	10.25	40	59.85	6.56
AMAS									
Experimental	40	37.65	6.15	40	46.52	6.17	40	47.83	4.12
Control	40	36.67	6.71	40	38.25	5.13	40	39.52	3.25
PRS									
Experimental	40	32.92	7.51	40	41.25	4.99	40	42.52	3.25
Control	40	29.65	6.88	40	30.05	5.33	40	31.63	3.86
VES									
Experimental	40	17.75	3.68	40	27.32	3.43	40	29.02	1.56
Control	40	18.25	3.27	40	19.50	1.21	40	20.05	0.85
SCS									
Experimental	40	13.67	4.58	40	16.25	2.24	40	17.52	0.92
Control	40	12.02	4.16	40	12.55	3.52	40	13.29	1.07
GCS									
Experimental	40	10.50	2.96	40	13.02	1.27	40	14.05	0.43
Control	40	10.17	2.85	40	11.22	1.36	40	12.16	1.12
LS									
Experimental	40	17.32	4.61	40	21.85	1.15	40	22.52	1.33
Control	40	18.52	3.92	40	18.65	2.12	40	19.20	1.54
TCS									
Experimental	40	9.35	2.67	40	13.02	1.34	40	14.07	0.61
Control	40	10.47	2.41	40	10.58	2.65	40	11.25	1.86
AAR									
Experimental	40	11.70	3.16	40	16.02	2.27	40	17.85	1.27
Control	40	10.02	2.68	40	11.78	3.22	40	12.57	1.19
SSAS									
Experimental	40	207.18	44.14	40	270.38	32.12	40	288.11	18.12
Control	40	200.91	35.95	40	210.83	27.18	40	216.35	16.17

The ANCOVA results of the children in the EG and CG's corrected post test scores according to pre-test averages of the sub-dimensions and sum of the SSAS shown in Table 4. When it is examined, there is a statistically significant difference between EG and CG in the sub-dimensions and sum of the SSAS. According to these findings, it can be said that children in EG have more social skills like interpersonal skills, anger management and adaptability skills, peer resistance skills, verbal explanation skills, self-control skills, ability to accept results, listening skills, goal creation skills, task completion skills than children in CG. It can be said that they have higher level social skills after FTP according to SSAS measurements. This

finding implies that FTP increases the social skills development of children in the EG, so they have higher scores on the SSAS compared to children in the CG.

Table 4. The ANCOVA results of the children in the EG, and CG post test scores corrected according to pre-test averages of the sub-dimensions and sum of the SSAS.

Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	P
Pre-test (IS)	861.420	1	861.420	6.998	.000
Group (Experimental / Control)	**324.000**	**1**	**324.000**	**2.632**	**.000*** **
Error	9478.155	77	123.093		
Total	11827.387	79			
Pre-test (AMAS)	1281.887	1	1281.887	58.656	.001
Group (Experimental / Control)	**288.082**	**1**	**288.082**	**13.182**	**.000*** **
Error	1682.788	77	21.854		
Total	4284.988	79			
Pre-test (PRS)	488.058	1	488.058	20.810	.015
Group (Experimental / Control)	**560.732**	**1**	**560.732**	**23.908**	**.000*** **
Error	1805.917	77	23.453		
Total	3007.987	79			
Pre-test (VES)	90.262	1	90.262	48.633	.000
Group (Experimental / Control)	**227.341**	**1**	**227.341**	**122.489**	**.000*** **
Error	142.913	77	1.856		
Total	533.487	79			
Pre-test (SCS)	94.257	1	94.257	24.493	.000
Group (Experimental / Control)	**269.018**	**1**	**269.018**	**69.906**	**.000*** **
Error	296.318	77	3.848		
Total	618.388	79			
Pre-test (GCS)	46.416	1	46.416	7.440	.009
Group (Experimental / Control)	**7.590**	**1**	**7.590**	**1.217**	**.000*** **
Error	480.384	77	6.239		
Total	531.800	79			
Pre-test (LS)	311.335	1	311.335	25.904	.000
Group (Experimental / Control)	**419.640**	**1**	**419.640**	**34.916**	**.000*** **
Error	925.440	77	12.019		
Total	2461.387	79			
Pre-test (TCS)	30.460	1	30.460	7.245	.020
Group (Experimental / Control)	**105.910**	**1**	**105.910**	**25.192**	**.000*** **
Error	323.715	77	4.204		
Total	466.987	79			
Pre-test (AAR)	10.781	1	10.781	3.479	.011
Group (Experimental / Control)	**26.081**	**1**	**26.081**	**8.417**	**.000** **
Error	238.594	77	3.099		
Total	279.388	79			
Pre-test (SSAS)	1740.274	1	1740.274	11.041	.012
Group (Experimental / Control)	**2038.821**	**1**	**2038.821**	**11.220**	**.000*** **
Error	128673.476	77	1671.084		
Total	138333.950	79			

***p<.01

In addition, the extent to which social skills dimension affected the EG and CG's post test scores corrected according to pre-test averages of the sub-dimensions and sum of the SSAS was evaluated with the eta-squared value (η2=) and shown in Table 5.

Table 5. The eta-squared value of ANCOVA results

SSAS	η2	Effect size
Interpersonal Skills (IS)	0,027	Small
Anger Management and Adaptability Skills (AMAS)	0,067	Small
Peer Resistance Skills (PRS)	0,186	Small
Verbal Explanation Skills (VES)	0,426	Small
Self-Control Skills (SCS)	0,435	Small
Ability to Accept Results (AAR)	0,093	Small
Listening Skills (LS)	0,170	Small
Goal Creation Skills (GCS)	0,014	Small
Task Completion Skills (TCS)	0,226	Small
Sum of the SCALE (SSAS)	0,014	Small

According to Table 5, it was determined that there was a small effect between the corrected pretest scores and posttest scores of the participants in EG and CG from SSAS and all sub-dimensions. According to this results the social skills of the children of EG fathers who participated in FTP were higher than those of the children of CG fathers who did not participate. However, the effect of this increase was small according to Cohen analyzes.
In Table 6, the results of the t-test of the posttest and retention test (applied after four weeks) on the sub- dimensions and the sum of the SSAS of the children in the experimental group is shown. These findings show that children in the EG maintain their scores in the sub-dimensions and sum of the scale after four weeks. In this respect, it can be said that the effect of the implemented FTP on the social skills of the children continues.

Table 6. The t-test results of the posttest and the retention test of the sub-dimensions and sum of the SSAS of the children in the experimental group

Sub-dimensions/SSAS	**N**	**Test**	$\bar{X}$	**S**	**SD**	**t**	**p**
IS	40	Post-test	75.13	11.02	39	.420	.323
		Retention test	76.85	11.98			
AMAS	40	Post-test	46.52	6.17	39	.723	.163
		Retention test	47.24	5.88			
PRS	40	Post-test	41.25	4.99	39	.356	.183
		Retention test	40.82	4.93			
VES	40	Post-test	27.32	3.43	39	.838	.262
		Retention test	28.02	3.37			
SCS	40	Post-test	16.25	2.24	39	.433	.160
		Retention test	15.87	3.17			
GCS	40	Post-test	13.02	1.27	39	.356	.183
		Retention test	12.65	2.22			
LS	40	Post-test	21.85	1.15	39	.425	.323
		Retention test	22.01	2.25			
TCS	40	Post-test	13.02	1.34	39	.120	.803
		Retention test	12.86	2.28			
AAR	40	Post-test	16.02	2.27	39	.082	.604
		Retention test	16.12	3.22			
SSAS	40	Post-test	270.38	32.12	39	.746	.789
		Retention test	272.44	33.21			

p> .05

The Cohen's d (effect size) was calculated for each dimension and SSAS of posttest and the retention test scores of EG and CG. The effect size was found for IS d= 0.149; for AMAS d= 0.119; for PRS d = 0.086; for VES d= 0.205; for SCS d= 0.138; for AAR d= 0.035; for LS d= 0.089; for GCS d= 0.204; for TCS d= 0.085 dimensions, and for sum of SSAS d= 0.063. According to these results, considering the effect size of the SSAS scores of the children in

EG compared to the children in CG, it can be said that it has a small effect in all dimensions and in the sum of SSAS.

Conclusion and Discussion

In this study, it was determined that the father's education has a positive effect on the social skills of the children. In addition, it can be said that the different materials and visual presentations prepared in the program process in the development of the social skills of the fathers in the experimental group have been effective. Various activities performed with their children outdoors were found to contribute to the socialization of their children. Paquette (2004) argued that children's attachment relationships with fathers serve more of a secure base function to promote children's exploration of the environment and thus the competencies (i.e., emotion regulation, social skills) that are developed from experiencing challenges and interacting with the world outside the family. In addition, the fathers also stressed that they would spend more time with their children in outdoor settings such as parks, zoos, cinemas, sports halls etc. Furthermore, the FTP led parents to enter a new social environment, which in turn contributed to their own socialization. Parents sharing facts about their children stated that they carried out activities together outside of school and home. As a matter of fact, some fathers whose children were in the same class and who met each other because of their participation in the FTP paid mutual home visits with their spouses. In this study, it was found that the FTP applied to the fathers had a positive impact on their children's social skills such as relationship skills, regulation of anger, adjustment to changes, coping with peer influence, verbal self-explanation, self-management, determining an aim, listening, completion of given tasks, acceptance of results. This finding is consistent with previous studies conducted with the fathers and parents of normally developing children, with autism and lymphoma (Bearss, 2015; Khanjari, 2014; Kim et al., 2011; Lau, Rapee & Coplan, 2017; Major, Seabra-Santos & Martin, 2020; O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014; Scahill et al., 2016; Tonge et al., 2014;).

Adult training programs like the FTP help fathers to participate in new social environments and develop their own social skills. It can be concluded that the children who learn through the medium of role models are influenced from their fathers. Morris (2002) noted that parents are real models for their children in terms of behavior and play an important role in their children's social development by directly demonstrating how to behave, and children care what their parents behave rather than what they say, and parental behavioral models are more influential. Some studies reveal that fathers' role as playmates of their children contributes to the child's social skill of inviting others to play (Alakortes et al., 2017; Mayfield et al., 2018; Xiao et al., 2020).

Ekinci-Vural and Gürşimşek (2009) reported that the conduct of instructions that are given to parents increase the verbal explanation skills of pre-school children. Furthermore, it can be noted that, instructions such as *"I feel happy because ...", "I am very upset because ...", "I am very angry because ..."* which were used at home helped children control their anger and adjust to changes. Along with results of the present study, Arslan et al., (2011) revealed significant relationship between the self-expression skills of children and parental involvement. Social skills such as peer relations, self-control, empathy, cooperation, responsibility, academic, compliance and assertiveness are the most basic skills that children should acquire. These skills are critical skills that children will use throughout their lives. It is known that in early ages of their lives, social skills enable children to have a good rapport with others, to provide peer acceptance, and in later ages, they indirectly contribute to academic achievement, and to being a more harmonious and balanced individual (Avcıoğlu,

2005; Karaca et al., 2011; Laugeson et al., 2014; Merrell & Gimpel, 2014; Çetin et al., 2003). While the preschool education supports the social adaptation of the children to a large extent, it is also known that the quality of the education regarding social skills is also of great importance. As a matter of fact, in the studies carried out on the development of social skills, it was observed that the program applied was able to initiate and maintain the interpersonal relationship of the sample group, such as listening to other individuals, waiting for their turns, expressing their feelings and thoughts comfortably, understanding the feelings of others, developing empathy, using verbal and non-verbal communication techniques, exhibiting harmonious behaviors in conflict situations, problem solving skills (Hu et al., 2017; Merrell & Gimpel, 2014; Yazejian et al., 2015; Xiao, 2020). Holmes et al., (2010) stated that education programs for fathers, such as FTP both support fathers; parenting beliefs and improves outcomes for children such as improved language and social skills. In addition, these programs indirectly have a positive impact on maternal employment, and dyadic mother-child interaction quality each additively and significantly contribute to positive father-child interaction.

This study has potential limitations. This research is limited to 80 fathers and their children because of the experimental design. Only kindergartens are included in the process. Within the framework measured by the SSAS, the development of children's social skills could be evaluated. It was assumed in this research that the results obtained are the effect of FTP and that environmental effects do not affect children.

Based on the study findings; researchers can investigate the social skills relationship between fathers and children in different age groups living in different regions, teachers can promote family involvement activities including the fathers that will develop the father-child social skills relationship for preschool children, and educational programs or activities can be organized for the primary school or upper levels to improve the social skills of their children.

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