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## RELATIONSHIP WITH PARENTAL PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTROL AND STRESS LEVELS IN NATIONAL SPORTS

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### Abstract\*

*Aim.* This study was conducted to examine the relationship between parental psychological control and perceived stress level in national sports.

*Methods.* The study is planned in a descriptive relational type. The research was conducted with national sports who are interested in Taekwondo sports. The population of the research is national sportsmen who are in Taekwondo sports in Turkey and 15-18 age groups. A total of 114 sportmen agreed to participate in the survey and returned with the questionnaire. In gathering the data; "Parental Psychological Control Scale" and "Perceived Stress Level Scale" were used as information form prepared by researchers questioning socio-demographic information of adolescents.

*Results.* When the distribution of the scores according to subscales of parental psychological control levels of the sportmen was examined, the mean score of the guiltiness sub dimension was  $26.04 \pm 4.15$  perceived by the mother and  $22.24 \pm 3.76$  perceived by the father. The mean score of the level of thumbs were  $32.24 \pm 3.25$  perceived by the mother and  $34.17 \pm 2.74$  perceived by the father. When the sportmen perceived Stress Scale scores were examined, it was determined that 55.26% of them had a low level of stress, 30.70% of them had medium stress and 14.04% had low stress level. In addition, as the parental guiltiness increased and the love level of the lover was increased, the level of stress perceived by the sportmen was increased ( $p < 0.05$ ).

*Conclusions.* In terms of psychological control, gender and age group of the sportmen are important. The work status and income level of the parents can be said to be effective at the stress level that the sportmen perceive.

*Key words:* National sports, parental psychological control, stress level

### Introduction

According to psychoanalytic theory, the adolescence period, seen as a transition from childhood to adulthood, is a more problematic period than other periods of life. According to other developmental periods, the biopsychosocial changes that the adolescent individual has to deal with during this period are increasing. Some of the adolescents can cope effectively with these changes, while others cannot cope and some psychological problems can be seen (Öztürk 2001). It is also known that adolescence is most needed for appropriate parental guidance, and therefore appropriate control should be shown. In this period, due to the increased need for autonomy, the nature and intensity of control over the puberty has significant effects on the functioning of the adolescent. Parental control includes parental behaviors that will help the adult individual regulate their pants and their desires and help them to adapt their behavior to social rules (Kakihara and Tilton-Weaver, 2009).

Two fundamental presuppositions about human development justify the distinction between psychological control and behavioral control. Developing children require that they are (1) an adequate degree of psychological autonomy, that is, that they learn through their social interactions that they are effective, competent individuals with a clear sense of personal identity; and (2) sufficient regulation of behavior to enable them to learn that social interaction is governed by rules and structures that must be adhered to in order to be recognized and a competent member of society. (Barber, Olse, Shagle, 1994).

In defining the concept of parental control, Barber (1996) focuses on issues such as parents' control and regulation of their children's activities and habits, their commitment to their parents, and their thinking and feelings, and defines parental control as a set of behaviors that encompass these areas. Conger, Conger and Scaramella (1997) stated that psychological control by both parents and by siblings contributes to increased adolescents'

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adjustment problems and diminished self-confidence. Perceived parental control positively or negatively affects adolescents' sense of psychological well-being, especially self-esteem, self-evaluation, and peer relationships. Parenting style greatly influences children's development as well (Cripps & Zyromsk, 2009).

Psychological over control is an environment that intrudes on the psychological and emotional development of a child, either through the forced inclusion of others in the child's definition of self, or through manipulation of the child's emotions. Psychological control refers to parental interference in the psychological autonomy of the child. Thus children who are over controlled psychologically may lack the confidence and the very impulse to deal with the external world and may withdraw to fend for themselves psychologically. Such children appear to be at greater risk for internalized problems (Barber, 1992).

Authoritative parents, for example, are characterized as being warm and accepting, generally promoting of psychological autonomy, yet firm in establishing behavioral guidelines. In contrast, authoritarian parenting is marked by high levels of demands on accompanied by low levels of warmth and psychological autonomy. In a study of parental control, it has been reported that high level parental control can impair children's perceived personal competence and mental health that can go up to adulthood as a result of diminishing control and desperation (Dwairy and Achoui, 2010).

In contrast to monitoring and behavior regulation, psychological control refers to control attempts that inhibit or interfere with children's development of independence and self-direction by keeping the child emotionally dependent on the parent. It is speculated that what may link proactive, preventive parenting in early childhood with psychologically controlling parenting in early adolescence is consistency over time of a tendency to over manage children's expressions of assertiveness and independence (Pettit et. Al. 2001).

Stress and coping are also important for adolescence, as adolescence, cognitive, social, physical and psychological changes are many changes and developments are experienced. The causes of stress in adolescents are considered in two groups as school-based stressors, academic (academic performance and achievement expectancy etc.) and social (relations with teachers and peers) (Eryilmaz 2009). During adolescence, the individual is confronted with various life stressors at home and at school. Behavioral problems and impaired mental health can occur if the adolescence cannot cope effectively with the

stress it is experiencing. (Suldo, Shaunessy, Hardesty, 2008). Stressful life experiences are potential threats to adolescents' subjective well-being and healthy development. In this context, it can be said that the control behaviors perceived from the parents in adolescents from early on and their relationship with the parents may be related to the stress of the adolescent, which affects the ability of the child to regulate herself. This study was conducted to investigate the relationship between parental psychological control in national sportsmen and psychological control perceived stress level.

### Methods

Research is planned in a descriptive relational type. The research was conducted with national sportsmen who are interested in Taekwondo sports. The universe of the research is national sportsmen who are in Taekwondo sports in Turkey and 15-18 age group. A total of 114 sportsmen agreed to participate in the survey and returned with the questionnaire. In gathering the data; "Parental Psychological Control Scale" and "Perceived Stress Level Scale" were used as information form prepared by researchers questioning socio-demographic information of sportsmen.

#### Parental Psychological Control Scale

The Parental Psychological Control Scale is a 32-item scale compiled by Harma (2008) that measures the level of psychological control that parents have on their children and has two forms, adolescent and parental. Scale items are of the likert type going from 1 (never) to 4 (always). There are two sub-dimensions of your scale: "guilt loading" and "loving care". The first dimension, guilt loading dimension, contains 11 items. The second dimension, the spousal of the lover, contains 14 items, and it is understood that the psychological control level applied by the parents' increases in these dimensions as the scores obtained in these dimensions increase. Points taken from the scale are calculated separately for two dimensions; between 11 and 44; between 14 and 56 points. When measuring the level of psychological control behaviors of the parents of the adolescents in the form of ergene, The subject of the questions asked on the parent-created form has been modified to provide parental self-evaluation (Harma, 2008).

#### Perceived Stress Scale

The Perceived Stress Scale was developed by Cohen, Kamarck and Mermelstein (1983). The Perceived Stress Scale, consisting of a total of 14 items, is designed to measure how stressful a situation is in a person's life. Participants evaluate each item on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from "Never (0)" to "Very often (4)". A positive



expression of 7 points is given for reversed. Scales with a positive expression of 7 are scored reversed. The standardization studies for the use of the scale in Turkey were carried out by Baltaş et al. (1998). The total score from the scale indicates the stress level of the person. Scores ranging from 11 to 26 indicate low levels of stress, 27-41 indicate moderate stress levels, and 42-56 high stress levels.

#### Data Collection

The data of this study were collected from national sportsmen in Taekwondo and 15-18 age groups in Turkey. It started after the ethics approval for the search. Sportsmen who agreed to participate in the survey during the data collection were informed by the researchers that the prospectus form had been read and that they agreed to participate in the survey with the understanding of the purpose and extent of the research. Before the forms to be used in the research were given, necessary explanations were made orally and care was taken to create a silent environment with little stimulation during application.

#### Analyzing the Data

After the data were collected, the option that each individual indicated for each item on the scales was entered into the SPSS program by the researchers and the total scores of the individuals from the scales were calculated. In order to evaluate the relation between socio demographic characteristics and the Parental Psychological Control Scale and the Perceived Stress Scale, the

relationship between the chikare and the Parental Psychological Control Scale and the Perceived Stress Scale was used to assess the demographic data of the study. Pearson Correlation analysis was used. The results were evaluated at 95% confidence interval and  $p < 0.05$  significance level.

#### Limitations of the Study

This research; In Turkey, in the age group of 15-18 years Taekwondo is limited to national sportsmen who are engaged in sports, communication is open and they agree to participate in the survey.

#### Results

The average age of the participating sportsmen was  $14.23 \pm 2.64$ , 54.3% were male, 65.3% mother's housewife, 36.3% mother's were primary school graduates, 41.3% father's were official and 63.2% father's were high school and above education level. The number of siblings is  $2.23 \pm 1.75$ , monthly average income is  $2405,25 \pm 125,65$  and 69.3% of them are living in the core family.

When the distribution of the scores according to subscales of parental psychological control levels of the sportsmen was examined, the mean score of the guiltiness sub dimension was  $26.04 \pm 4.15$  perceived by the mother and  $22.24 \pm 3.76$  perceived by the father. The average score of the level of the level of thumb was  $32.24 \pm 3.25$  perceived by the mother and  $34.17 \pm 2.74$  perceived by the father (Table 1).

**Table 1. Distribution of Points Average of Parental Psychological Control Levels by Subcontractors**

Parental Psychological Control	Mother $\bar{x} \pm SD$	Father $\bar{x} \pm SD$
Loading Guilt (11-44)	$26.04 \pm 4.15$	$22.24 \pm 3.76$
Love withdrawal (14-56)	$32.24 \pm 3.25$	$34.17 \pm 2.74$

Psychological control for guiltiness was found to be statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) for the girls, whereas for the 14-16 year old group the difference was found to be statistically significant when the sportsmen scoring scores were examined. Psychological control for love withdrawal was found to be the highest among males, those aged 17-18 ( $p < 0.05$ ). The sportsmen's educational status,

the number of siblings (2 and more), and the level of monthly income (low) and the guiltiness of the mother (high school and high school graduate) There was no statistical significance ( $p > 0.05$ ).

When the perceived stress score of the sportsmen' were examined, it was found that 55.26% were high, 30.70% were medium and 14.04% had low stress level (Table 2).

**Table 2. Distribution of Score Average of Perceived Stress Scale of sportmen**

Perceived Stress Scale	n	%
High	63	55.26
Medium	35	30.70
Low	16	14.04
Total	114	100.00

When the stress level perceived by the socio-demographic characteristics of the sportsmen' participating in the research was examined, it was

found that girls had higher stress than the ones with low income level, and those who did not work with



father had statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.05$ ).

When the relationship between the psychological control of parents and the level of perceived stress was examined, it was found that there was a strong correlation between guilt loading and perceived stress ( $r: 0.724$ ). As parental guilt increased, the level of stress experienced by the

sportsmen was increased and the difference was found to be statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). There was a strong correlation between love withdrawal and perceived stress in the positive direction ( $r: 0.865$ ). The level of stress experienced by parental love withdrawal sportsmen was increased and the difference was statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) (Table 3).

**Table 3. Relationship Between Parental Psychological Control and Perceived Stress**

	1	2	3
Loading Guilt	1.00		
Love withdrawal	$r: 0.865, 0.015^*$	1.00	
Perceived Stress	$r: 0.724, 0.001^*$	$r: 0.373, 0.021^*$	1.00

\*  $p < 0.05$

### Discussion

In this study, the relationship between the level of perceived stress of parental psychological controls and the level of national sportsmen was examined. The girl in the 14-16 age groups appeared to be at a significant level of blame for the psychological control that their parents perceive in the sportsmen. Through the use of guilt-induction, shaming or love withdrawal, parents activate the internal pressures that reside in children's functioning and that have the potential to regulate behavior (Soenens and Vansteenkiste, 2010). 14-16 years age coincides with adolescence. The development of problems of internalization such as depression and anxiety, which can be confronted during adolescence, can be related to psychological control rather than psychological control (Silk, Morris, Kanaya, & Steinberg, 2003). For this reason, parents' psychological control of guiltiness can cause psychological problems in girls of this age group. In a study conducted by Mandara and Pikes (2008), it was also found that parental psychological control strongly correlated with depressive symptoms of girls in the positive direction. This can be explained by the negative psychological control perceived by the parent and the inability to deal with it.

When we examined the relationship between the level of psychological control and perceived stress level of sportsmen in our study, it was found that there was a strong positive relationship between guilt loading and perceived stress. As parental guilt increased, the level of stress experienced by the sportsmen was found to increase significantly. In addition, perceived psychological control at the level of loving care increased the level of stress perceived by the sportsmen and the difference was found to be statistically significant. Wang, Pomerantz & Chen (2007) also point out that guilt induction and love withdrawal, such as guilt and love, can lead to undesired developmental consequences such as negative emotional stress

self-view. Because stress can impair athletes' enjoyment of sports and the quality of their performance, it is important to help them cope with it.

In the work done by Putnick et al. 2008, mothers' perceived acceptance and psychological control may be most affected by stress attributed to the adolescent behavior, and fathers' perceived acceptance and psychological control may be more affected by their own distress and stress attributed to difficulty in the parent-adolescent relationship, respectively. In this study, no difference was found between mother and father in terms of psychological control.

Another important finding from our study is that psychological control of boys aged 17-18 years is significantly related to parents' love withdrawal subscale. This may be due to cultural background. Showing love and assisting adolescent to feel better or to feel important, as examples, can be accomplished in many more specific ways that may, or may not, have particular salience to how a child feels in response to them. (Barber et al., 2005).

Psychological control can be defined as the desire to control what an individual feels and thinks about. Psychological control, which is a multidimensional parental behavior, usually includes parental behaviors such as excessive intervention, guilt, withdrawal of love, and disproportionate behavior for discipline. While behavioral control is often associated with positive behavioral and developmental outcomes, psychological control has been found to be associated with adverse outcomes, primarily internalization behavior (Barber, Olsen and Shagle, 1994). For this reason, parents can be trained on how to provide psychological control by providing behavioral control and by explaining the differences. Wang, Pomerantz, and Chen (2007) state that parents' behavioral control (eg, monitoring children's activities and behaviors) is



desirable for developmental outcomes (eg, increased academic competence and decreased delinquency).

### Conclusion

When the level of psychological control perceived by parents of national sportsmen is examined, parents and children are given psychological control by giving their children love and guilt. In addition, the gender and age group of the sportsmen are also important in the psychological control. The level of stress perceived by sportsmen is influenced by the parents' working status and income level. The relationship between parental psychological control and the level of stressors of the sportsmen can be explained as the parental guiltiness and the level of stress perceived by the sportsmen as the love has escalated.

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