

Study on Self-Concept Levels of Adolescents in the Age Group of 13-18 who Live in Orphanage and those who do not Live in Orphanage

By

*Figen Gürsoy, Müdriye Yıldız Bıçakçı, Emel Orhan, Sema Bakırcı,
Seyhan Çatak, Özlem Yerebakan*

Child Development Department, Health Sciences Faculty, Ankara University, Turkey

Abstract

This study aims at examining the self-concept levels of adolescents in the age group of thirteen – eighteen who live in orphanage and who do not live in orphanage and determining the factors which may have an impact on their self-concept levels and finally presenting suggestions considering the results of the study. The study covers a total of 126 adolescents including 63 adolescents living in orphanage and 63 adolescents who do not live in orphanage. “General Information Form” and “Self-concept Inventory” are used in this study. Mann-Whitney U Test and Kruskal Wallis Test are used to assess the data. Consequently, the study reveals that the self-concept scores of adolescents living and not living in orphanages differ. It's reported that gender of adolescents living in orphanage, the number of their close friends, the influence of the views of their friends, the attitude of the personnel towards the adolescents, the request for assistance from personnel and the attitude of the adolescents in their relationships with friends lead to difference in the self-concept scores of adolescents according to gender and according to the place they live in cases of adolescents not living in orphanage ($p < .01$, $p < .05$).

Keywords: *Adolescent, orphanage, self-concept.*

Introduction

Adolescence is an important period of physical, social, psychological, and cognitive growth (Stagman, Schwarz, and Powers, 2011). Adolescence is a period of growth and development bridging childhood and adulthood. The physical and emotional changes in this period influence behaviors (Yannakoulia, Karayiannis, Terzidou, Kokkevi, and Sidossis, 2004) in that adolescence is a time of risk taking and experimentation (Dowdell and Santucci, 2003). Also adolescence is a critical period of life in which abilities to express and understand emotions, to assign meaning to emotional experience, and to regulate feelings may be particularly helpful for psychological and social adjustment (Mavroveli, Petrides, Rieffe, and Bakker, 2007).

The family assists the child in establishment of healthy relationships with the environment by showing affection and creating an environment of trust in addition to covering the physical needs of the child. The child develops in social terms by learning the

social rules in the family and becomes an individual who is cherished and wanted in the society. Family support is needed in at different levels in each period. Support of the family is very important in the adolescence, which holds an important place in the life of an individual, in terms of development of personality and communication with the environment. Adolescents, who have an emotional tie with their family based on trust, are affected less by the problems created by the adolescence and although the adolescent is oriented towards the exterior in this period, knowing the presence of a family that can support them at all times results in a feeling of security and thus reduces the concerns related with life. However, because of the reasons like being left by parents, lost of parents, family disintegration etc., children live in orphanages (Anonim, 2009; Jacobi, 2009). Because of the physical conditions of orphanages, lack of personnel in orphanages, people's views about orphanages, lack of family support on children, orphanages may have negative effects on adolescences (Yıldırım 2005). However, when the adolescent is deprived of family environment, they can feel lonely and experience various concerns and fears, and thus, the self concept of the adolescent is affected adversely.

Self concept which means acceptance of the self, valuing self, self-confidence, and self-esteem has an important place in a person's life especially in adolescence. Starting with babyhood attachments during the period until adolescence including childhood, individual develops a sense of identity and self-esteem in parallel with the sense of identity (Cebe 2005). During this period, there are various factors having effect on the self. Among these factors, socio-economic conditions (Bilgin, 2001), working in the streets (Arnas, 2004), disability (Ersek, 1992), adolescents' physical appearance (Phillips and Hill, 1998), health situation, their perception of their parents as work-focused (Chamberlin, and Naijian, 2009), physiology (Song et al., 2007), friend relationships (Büyüksahin Çevik, 2007) and orphanage (Avdeeva,2009) can be counted. Among these factors living in an orphanage may have negative effects on self-concept and self-concept of adolescences through affecting all developmental areas of adolescents (Cebe 2005). Being brought up by an institution can affect children's development in a negative way (Sloutsky, 1997; Garland, Hough, McCabe, Yeh, Wood and Aarons, 2001; Üstüner, Erol, Şimşek, 2005; Jacobi, 2009). According to the studies, institution care have negative effects on children's psychological health (Şimşek and Erol, 2004), social development (Tharp-Taylor, 2003; Pantukhina, 2009; Shakhmanova, 2010), cognitive development (McCall, 1996; Sloutsky, 1997; MacLean, 2003), level of loneliness (Aral et al., 2006) and anxiety level (Gürsoy and Yıldız Bıçakçı, 2005). Studies also show that adolescences living in orphanages have low self-concept level. Aral, Gürsoy and Yıldız Bıçakçı, (2005) have determined that adolescents living in orphanage have less self –design level. Individuals with adversely affected self concept may be estranged from the society and the social relationships may be weakened. In time, said adolescents start to see themselves differently from the society and the process of social acceptance becomes difficult. In this study, it is aimed to investigate level of self-concept of adolescences who live in orphanages and those who do not live in orphanages and giving suggestions according to the results of the study.

Materials and Methods

Sample

Research was conducted on 126 adolescents including 63 adolescents living in orphanage and 63 voluntary adolescents between ages 13-18 attending sixth, seventh and eighth grades and first, second, third and fourth grades. Adolescents from orphanage and others participating the research are equal in terms of number, age and sex. Mentally disabled adolescents left out of the research since their self-concept level may be negatively affected.

Data Collection Tools

In this research, in order to collect some information about adolescents and their family "General Information Form" and in order to evaluate self-concept level of adolescents "Self-concept Inventory" have been used.

General Information Form; questions about the age of adolescent, education level of parents, frequency of meeting with parents, if there is a sibling in the institution or not, number of her/his close friends, if personnel in the institution respond to adolescent's request for assistance or not are included.

Self-concept Inventory was developed by Baymur (1968) in order to collect general information about individual's level of self-concept and it is a five point likert scale giving one point and including five answer choices of "Exactly like me", "Somewhat similar to me", "I am not sure", "Not like me". Inventory is developed referring to negative or positive ideas of the individual about her/himself and in this framework individual's value judgments, ideals, thinking and behaviors are considered.

Self-concept Inventory consists of 66 items including 33 straightly coded and 33 inversely coded items. Scores to be gotten from the inventory vary between sixty six and three hundred and thirty and higher score means higher self-concept level (Öner, 1997).

In the research conducted by Baymur and others (1978) in order to determine the factors that affect success of TUBITAK scholars attending to a university, relationship between scores of Problem Survey Inventory that is used by H.U. Psychological Counseling and Guidance Department and scores of the Self-concept Inventory was deliberated. Relationship between the scores of Problem Survey Inventory and scores of Self-concept Inventory is found $r=.50$. It was concluded that there is a relationship in $r=.63$ value between scores obtained from Self-concept Inventory and the scores of social and emotional life section of the Problem Survey Inventory. In addition, in a research conducted through test-retest reliability method by Baymur and friends (1978), inventory was conducted on a group of university students two times with three weeks apart; a

correlation in $r = .93$ value is found between the scores obtained from two implementations.

Data Analysis

Test of normality was conducted to identify which statistical analyses would be used to evaluate the data, self-concept level scores showed normal distribution ($p > .01$). Due to this, nonparametric statistical methods were chosen. Thus, in order to determine if living in orphanage or not has an effect Mann-Whitney U-test; in order to determine if self-concept level differs according to adolescents' sex Mann-Whitney U-test; and in order to determine if self-concept level differs according to the number of close friends Kruskal Wallis Test are used. In order to determine if personnel's attitude towards adolescents and their response to adolescents' request for assistance affect self-concept level of adolescents who live in orphanage, Kruskal Wallis Test was used. If a significant difference found at the end of the Kruskal Wallis Test, Mann-Whitney U test was used in order to determine the source of the difference (Green, Salkind and Akey 1997, Büyüköztürk, 2003).

Findings

Table 1 Results of Mann-Whitney U-Test Analysis of the Self-concept Scores of Adolescents According to their Condition of Living or Not-living in orphanage

Institution	N	Mean Rank	Rank Sum	U	P
Those Who live in Orphanage	63	56.11	3535.00	1519.000	.023
Those Who do not live in Orphanage	63	70.89	4466.00		

According to the Mann-Whitney U-Test results shown in the Table 1, there is a significant difference between scores of self-concept of adolescents who live in orphanage and those who do not live in orphanage according to their place of living ($U = 1519.000$, $p < .05$).

Table 2 Results of the Mann-Whitney U-Test Analysis of the Self-concept Scores of Adolescents Who Live in orphanage and Those Who Do Not Live in orphanage According to the Sex of the Adolescent

Institution	Sex	N	Mean Rank	Rank Sum	U	P
Those who live in orphanage	Female	29	26.86	779.00	244.00	.040
	Male	34	36.38	1237.00		

Those who do not live in orphanage	Female	28	35.63	997.50	360.500	.102
	Male	34	28.10	955.50		

According to the Mann-Whitney U-Test results shown in Table 2, there is a significant difference between self-concept scores of adolescents living in orphanage according to the sex ($U=344.00$, $p<.05$); while there is not any significant difference between self-concept scores of the adolescents who do not live in orphanage according to the sex ($U=360.500$, $p>.05$).

Table 3 Results of the Kruskal Wallis Test Analysis of the Scores of the Adolescents Who Live in Orphanage and Those Who Do Not Live in Orphanage According to the Number of the Close Friends

Place of living	Number of Friends	N	Mean Rank	sd	χ^2	p
Those who live in orphanage	1	7	21.79	4	10.649	.031
	2	13	22.15			
	3	8	28.63			
	4 and more	35	38.04			
Those who do not live in orphanage	1	8	17.31	4	7.930	.094
	2	11	40.09			
	3	15	34.87			
	4 and more	25	29.83			

According to the results of Kruskal Wallis test shown in the Table 3, while number of the friends cause significant difference between the self-concept level of adolescents who live in orphanage ($\chi^2 (2)=10.649$ $p<.05$), it does not cause a significant difference between the self-concept level of the adolescents who do not live in orphanage ($\chi^2 (2)=7.930$. $p>.05$). According to Mann Whitney U Test results, difference between the adolescents living in orphanage is arisen from those who have four or more friends.

Table 4 Results of Kruskal Wallis Test Analysis of Self-concept Scores of Adolescents Living in Orphanage According to Personnel's Attitude

Personnel's Attitude	N	Mean Rank	sd	χ^2	p
Very Well	24	36.77	3	11.321	.010
Well	23	36.18			
Moderate	11	30.35			
So bad	5	7.50			

According to the Kruskal Wallis Test results shown in Table 4, personnel's attitude causes a significant difference on self-concept levels of adolescents who live in orphanage

($\chi^2(2)=11.321$, $p<.05$). It is remarkable that those who mentioned about the bad attitude of the personnel have very low self-concept scores. According to Mann Whitney U test, difference between adolescents who live in orphanage is arisen from adolescents who stated that personnel have very bad attitude towards them.

Table 5 Results of Kruskal Wallis Test Analysis of Self-concept Scores of Adolescents who Live in Orphanage according to Personnel's Response to the Request for the Assistance

Frequency of the Response	N	Mean Rank	Sd	χ^2	P
Oftentimes	10	43.60	3	9.005	.029
Sometimes	27	33.93			
Seldom	14	29.57			
Never	12	20.83			

When Kruskal Wallis Test results given in Table 5 is considered, it is obvious that how often personnel give response to adolescents' request for assistance is effective on self-concept level of adolescents who live in orphanage ($\chi^2(2)=9.005$, $p<.05$). According to Mann Whitney U test, difference between adolescents is arisen from the scores of adolescents who declared that personnel often give response to request for the assistance.

Discussion

Considering Table 1, it is observed that self-concept scores of adolescents living in orphanage are lower than those of the adolescents not living in orphanage. It is suggested that not being with parents make adolescents living in orphanage feel lonely during the period called "storm and silence of adolescents" may reflect on self-concept scores of adolescents. At the end of the study on adolescents who live in orphanage and who do not live in orphanage conducted by Aral and others (2005), it was concluded that self-concept level of adolescents who live in orphanage is lower than that of the adolescents who does not live in orphanage.

According to the Table 2, while sex is effective on the self-concept scores of adolescents who live in orphanage and males have higher score; sex is not effective on self-concept scores of adolescents who do not live in orphanage and female adolescents have higher self-concept score. In a study on adolescents conducted by Ciğerci (2006) self-esteem was investigated and it was concluded that sex has not effect on self-esteem of adolescents. Cebe (2005), on the other hand, in a study on adolescents who live in orphanage and who live with their family found that self-esteem of male adolescents who live in orphanage is lower than that of male adolescents who live with their family, but not any significant difference between self-esteem of female adolescents who live in orphanage and that of female adolescents who live with their family was found.

According to the Table 3, number of friends affected self-concept score of adolescents who live in orphanage. Number of friends may affect self-concept scores of

adolescents. For the adolescents who live in orphanage, more number of friends means more sharing, which gives rise to higher self-concept score. During adolescent period, adolescence try to determine who he/she is, what he/she should appreciate, to whom he/she should latch on and believe and he/she needs social environment and friend relationships which gives him/her the chance to share his/her emotions, obtain a group identity (Çağdaş and Seçer Şahin, 2002; Pokhrel, Sussman, Black and Sun, 2010). Especially, this becomes more significant for adolescents who live in orphanage, since they live apart from their families. Predictably, adolescents who have many close friends and have good relationship with their friends have higher self-concept level.

In table 4, it is observed that personnel's attitude is effective on self-concept of adolescents. According to the Table 5, frequency of the response of the personnel is effective on self-concept of adolescents who live in orphanage. In other words, adolescents who can get assistance from the personnel in the cases of problem have higher self-concept scores. Adolescents who have difficulty in coping with the problems of adolescence need a supportive family. Lack of the family affects the social and emotional development and personality of adolescents in negative way (Alonzo, 1989). Consequently, it is supposed that adolescents who live in orphanage should be supported by experts as much as possible so that they can develop positive self-concept.

Suggestions

Together with the fact that self is the product of hereditary and environmental factors which shape the personality, interpersonal relationships has an important role in this production process. Adolescence is a period in which a person accommodate himself/herself to his/her physical development. Parallel with this development, he/she has to adapt the social developments in his/her life. In this period, conditions of the adolescent should be arranged in accordance with these social developments. During this period in which family is mostly needed, conditions of the institution should be arranged as similar as the family environment.

Girls who live with their family can handle with this period easier since their acceptance level is higher and they can develop higher self-esteem. Contrary to this, girls who live in orphanage have lower self scores. Conditions of the institutions could be rearranged regarding to facilitate the acceptance of adolescents, psychological support could be provided for the adolescents who need such kind of a support.

Interpersonal relations become crucial in adolescence. In this period, in order to develop coping mechanisms for the problems that are frequently faced with by the adolescents, personnel who are working in the institution should be informed about adolescents' development, should receive training about how to communicate with adolescents.

In this period, attitude of the personnel in the institution gains more importance. Personnel should not behave independently from the institutional rules. At the same time, they should not be so strict about the rules. Here, adolescents' benefit should be prioritized.

References

- Alonzo, A.A. (1989). Loneliness, Theory, Research and Applications. *Contemporary Sociology*, 18(3),437-438.
- Anonimous. (2009). Law on Social Services and Child Protection Institution (The Law no. 2828). Access: (<http://www.shcek.gov.tr>). Date of Access:05.04.2009). (In Turkish)
- Aral, N., Gürsoy, F. and Yıldız-Bıçakçı, M. (2005). Investigation of Self-Esteem Conception Levels of Adolescents Staying and Not Staying At Orphanage. *Education Research Journal*, 21; 24-34. (In Turkish)
- Aral, N., Gürsoy, F. and Yıldız-Bıçakçı, M. (2006). A Study on Loneliness Levels of Adolescents Staying and not Staying at Orphanage. *Elektronik Social Sciences Journal Dergisi* (www.e-sosder.com) ; 14; 10-19. (In Turkish)
- Arnas, Y. A. (2004). Investigation of Self-Concept Level of Children Working in the Streets. *Journal of Children and Youth Psychology*, 11(1):2-10.
- Avdeeva, N. (2009). Development of Self Image in Orphanage Children during the First Three Years of Life. *Psychological Science and Education*, 3, 13-23.
- Bilgin, Ş. (2001). Relationship between Anxiety and Self-Respect In Adolescents. Marmara University Institute of Educational Sciences, Department of Educational Sciences, Field of Counseling and Psychological Guidance, M.A. Thesis (Unpublished), İstanbul.
- Büyükköztürk, Ş. (2003). Data analysis handbook for the social sciences. Pegem Publications, Ankara.
- Büyükhahin Çevik, G. (2007). *A study on the friend relationships and self esteem of high school 3rd grade students with respect to certain variables*. Master's Thesis. Adana: Çukurova University.
- Cebe, F. (2005). Comparison of Ego, Respect, Depression, and Anxiety Scores of Children Who Live in Orphanage of Social Service and Child Protection Agency and Those of Children Who Live With Their Family. İstanbul University Institute of Legal Medicine, M.A. Thesis, İstanbul.

- Chamberlin, C. M. and Najjian Z. (2009). Workaholism, Health, and Self-Acceptance. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 87(2),159-169.
- Ciğerci, Z.C. (2006). Relationship between Self Respect, Conception of Others and Psychological Indication in Gifted Children and Others. Sakarya University, Institute of Social Sciences, M.A. Thesis, Sakarya.
- Çağdaş, A. and Seçer-Şahin, Z. (2002). Development of Social Ethics in Children and Adolescents. Ankara: Nobel Publications. (In Turkish)
- Dowdell, E. B., and Santucci, M. E. (2003). The relationship between health risk behaviors and fear in one urban seventh grade class. *Journal of Pediatric Nursing*, 18, 187-194.
- Erbil, N., Divan, Z., Önder, P. (2006). Impact of the Family Attitude and Behaviors on Self-Respect of Adolescents. *Education-Culture and Research Journal of Family and Society*.
- Ersek, İ. (1992). Investigation of Self-Concept of Deaf Students, Ankara University, M.A. Thesis, Ankara.
- Garland, A. F., Hough, R. L., McCabe, K. M., Yeh, M., Wood, P. A. and Aarons, G. A. (2001). Prevalence Psychiatric Disorders in Youths Across Five Sectors of Care . *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 40, 409-418.
- Gren, S.B., Salkind, N.J. and Akey, T.M. (1997). Using SPSS for windows: Analyzing and understanding data. Prentice Hall. New Jersey.
- Gürsoy, F. and Yıldız-Bıçakçı, M. (2005). A comparison on Anxiety Levels Of Adolescents Living and Not Living In Orphanage. *Contemporary Education Journal*, 323; 19-24. (In Turkish)
- Jacobi, J. (2009). Between Charity and Education: Orphans and Orphanages in Early Modern Times. *Paedagogica Historica*,45(1–2, February–April), 51–66.
- Maclean, K. (2003). The Impact of Institutionalization. *Development and Psychopathology*, 15,853-884.
- Mavroveli, S., Petrides, K. V, Rieffe, C, and Bakker, F. (2007). Trait emotional intelligence, psychological well-being and peer-rated social competence in adolescence. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 25, 263-275.

- Mccall, J. (1996). Research on the Psychological Effects of Orphanage Care: A Critical Review. Graduate School of Management, University of California, Irvine. www.gsm.uci.edu/~mckenzie/McCall.doc.
- Öner, N. 1997. Psychological Tests Used in Turkey. Boğaziçi University Publishing. 3. Edition, İstanbul.
- Pantiukhina, E. N. (2009). The Social and Pedagogical Protection of Orphans in Russia. *Russian Education and Society*, 51(9), 40–50.
- Phillips, R.G. and Hill, A.J. . (1998). Fat, Plain, but not Friendless: Self-Esteem and Peer Acceptance of Obese Pre-Adolescent Girls. *International Journal of Obesity* ,22, 287-293.
- Pokhrel, P, Sussman, S. , Black D. and Sun, P. (2010). Peer Group Self-Identification as a Predictor of Relational and Physical Aggression among High School Students. *Journal of School Health*, 80 (5), 249-28.
- Shakhmanova, A.Sh. (2010). Social and Pedagogical Problems of the Upbringing of Orphans in Russia. *Russian Education and Society*, 52(5), 71–78.
- Sloutsky, V.M. (1997). Institutional Care and Developmental Outcomes of 6 and 7 year old Children: A Contextualist Perspective. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 20(1), 131-151.
- Song; Y. H., Takeshi, T. and Nakamura, J. (2007). Type a Behaviour Pattern Is Associated with Cynicism and Low Self-Acceptance in Medical Students. *Stress & Health: Journal of the International Society for the Investigation of Stress*, 23(5), 323-329.
- Stagman, S., Schwarz, S. W., and Powers, D. (2011). Adolescent Substance Use in the U.S.: Facts for Policymakers. Fact Sheet National Center for Children in Poverty, 4 pp. (ED522774)
<http://ehis.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=4&hid=120&sid=117a55b7-adbc-4c51-81b7-82e55430940b%40sessionmgr115&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWlhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=eric&AN=ED522774> 21.11.2011.
- Tharp-Taylor, A. (2003). The Effects of Early Social Deprivation on Children Reared in Foreign Orphanages. Web Address: <http://ehis.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=16&hid=116&sid=do886897>
- Üstüner, S., Erol, N. and Şimşek, Z. (2005). Behavioral and Emotional Problems of Children Under The Care of Protecting Family. *Journal of Child and Youth Psychological Health*. 12 (3), 130-140. (In Turkish)

Yannakoulia, M., Karayiannis, D., Terzidou, M., Kokkevi, A., and Sidossis, L. S. (2004). Nutritionrelated habits of Greek adolescents. *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 58, 580-586.

Yıldırım, A. 2005. Investigation of the Relationship between Continuous Anger and Depression Levels in Children between ages 13-18 who are Under Institution Care and Those Who Live with Their Family. *Firat University, Institute of Health Sciences, Department of Public Health, M.A. Thesis, Elazığ.*