

# ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL ADAPTATION AND FRIEND RELATIONSHIPS AMONG ADOLESCENTS LIVING IN ORPHANAGE AND ADOLESCENTS LIVING WITH THEIR FAMILY

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## ABSTRACT

In this study, it is intended to investigate social adaptation and friend relationships of adolescents living in orphanage and the ones living with their family; to determine if there is a relationship between their social adaptation and their relationships with friends and accordingly to offer suggestions for supporting adolescents' social adaptation and relationships with their friends in a positive way. The research has been conducted with 136 adolescents who voluntarily involved in the study including 68 adolescents living in orphanage and 68 adolescents living with their family between the ages 13-17. In order to evaluate the social adaptation of adolescents, Hacettepe Personality Inventory-Social Adaptation Subscale developed by Özgüven (1992) has been used. For analyzing adolescents' relationships with their friends Friend Relationship Scale developed by Kaner (2000) has been used. These scales have been tested in terms of validity and reliability. The research concludes that living in orphanage causes significant differences in adolescents' both social adaptation and friend relationships and there is a positive correlation between social adaptation and friend relationship ( $p < .05$ ).

## JEL CLASSIFICATION & KEYWORDS

■ H25 ■ M89 ■ I01 ■ Adolescent ■ Orphanage ■ Social Adaptation ■ Friend Relationship.

## INTRODUCTION

Families support their children for establishing healthy relationships with their environments. A child develops his/her social abilities through learning the rules of socialization in the family and turns into a welcomed individual in the society (Aral, Gürsoy and Yıldız Bıçakçı, 2006). However, not every child has the chance to live with their families (Şan 2008; Jacobi, 2009). A child might be brought up by an institution because of many reasons like being left by the family, death of the parents or familial break up (Anonim 2008; Jacobi, 2009). Being brought up by an institution may 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), self-concept (Aral, Gürsoy and Yıldız Bıçakçı, 2005), level of loneliness (Aral et al., 2006) and anxiety level (Gürsoy ve Yıldız Bıçakçı, 2005). These problems usually arise during the adolescence when adolescents experience intense transformations of cognitive, logical, social and emotional characteristics (Bayhan and Işitan, 2010; Kingery, Erdley and Marshall, 2011). During this period, adolescents try to determine who they are, what they should appreciate, to whom they should

latch on and believe. Moreover, they need social environment and friend relationships which give them the chance to share their emotions with other people and to obtain a group identity (Çağdaş and Seçer Şahin, 2002; Pokhrel, Sussman, Black and Sun, 2010). Meeting these requirements of adolescents is crucial for their social adaptation.

Social adaptation is defined as developing sensitivity towards social stimulants, pressures and problems of group culture, getting along well with others, being able to behave as others, developing behaviors sanctioned by others (Yapıcı and Yapıcı, 2005). Social adaptation is crucial for one's life (Grusec and Lytton, 1998). Academic success (Akay, 1990; Balabanlı, 1990; Nowicki, 2003), gender (Akay, 1990; Aslan, 1991; Pulkkinen and Tremblay, 1992), educational level of parents (Yılmaz, 1990), relationship with parents and friends (Alperden-Tanyıldız, 1993; Ögüt, 2002; Chen, He, Oliveria, Coco, Zappula, Kaspar, Schneider, Valdivia, Chi-Hang Tse and DeSouza, 2004), attitudes of parents (Boston, 1990), personality of the mother (Kochanska, Clark, and Goldman, 1997), economic conditions, moving to another place (Aonghas, 2002), attending or not attending to a boarding school (Balabanlı, 1990), type of the school (Erdoğan, Şimşek Bekir and Şanlı, 2005) and behavioral problems (Van Nieuwenhuijzen, Castro, Wijnroks, Vermeer and Matthys, 2004) might have effect on social adaptation of an adolescent. Besides these factors, another factor having a significant impact on social adaptation is intensity of the institutional care (Shakhmanova, 2010, Tharp-Taylor, 2003). Studies found out that adolescents who live in orphanages have difficulty in living independently (Jackson and Martin, 1998) and reaching to higher social status (Viner and Taylor, 2005).

It is emphasized that relationship with friends has significant effect on the process of developing social adaptation. Friend relationships have a more important place in adolescence than the previous developmental periods; adolescents need more support from their friends during this period (Koon 1997; Erol, 2000; Doğru and Peker, 2004; Allen, Porter, McFarland, Marsh and McElhaney, 2005). As a conclusion of his study, Phillipsen (1999) has determined that friend relationships established during pre-adolescence period are more permanent and regular than the ones established later on. Friend relationships established during adolescence period are effective on making them to establish social relationships, to display secure behaviors, express their own ideas and to learn tolerating others' opinions. In addition to these, thanks to friend groups, socialization process takes place faster and emotions of loyalty, courage and sharing can be developed easily (Dykas, Ziv, and Cassidy, 2008). Taysi (2000) has determined that for girls attending to university, friendship and relationships with friends have central importance. Moreover, compared to boys, they feel closer to their girl friends and emotional sharing is widespread among them. In their study, Gürsoy and Yıldız

Bıçakçı (2006) have emphasized that adolescents having negative friend relationships experience a deep feeling of loneliness.

It has been determined that sex (Burlingame, 1967; Goodenow and Grady, 1992; Moore and Boldere, 1991; Ünlü, 2001), socio-economical level, physical appearance, academic success, similarity of the features of the personality of adolescents, participation to social activities (Duck, 1973; Onur, 1976; Yıldız Bıçakçı and Gürsoy, 2007) are effective on relationships with friends. As the results of the studies have shown, adolescents may have difficulty in establishing and strengthening relationships with friends and they may experience loneliness. Especially, it is emphasized that adolescents living in orphanages have difficulties in establishing friend relationships and experience loneliness (Aral et. al.2006). Problematic relationships with friends, feeling of loneliness and not having a family negatively affect personality development and psychology of adolescents (Koon, 1997; Doğru and Peker, 2004; Çam Çelikel and Erkorkmaz, 2008). The studies conducted by Groark, Muhamedrahimov, Palmov, Nikiforova, and Mccall (2005) and Sparlin, Dragomir, Ramey, and Florescu (2005) have indicated that adolescents living in orphanage experience social and emotional problems. Moreover, Kesen, Deniz and Durmuşoğlu (2007) revealed that as the duration of orphanage life extends, aggressiveness and level of displeasure of adolescents increase. In their studies, Albayrak and Kutlu (2009) have determined that adolescents who state that their relationships with friends are "very good", have a lower level of aggressiveness and introversion. In their studies, Zarbatany, Conley and Pepper (2004) emphasized that close relationships during pre-adolescence period meet socialization needs of adolescents.

In a nutshell, there is a relationship between friend relationships and social adaptation. Friend relationship is an important component of social adaptation. Positive social relationships go hand in hand with successful social adaptation. Social adaptation has an important function in coping with the problems in life and adapting to life (Grusec and Lytton, 1998). Especially, adolescents without any family support and living in orphanage have problems in social adaptation (Shakhmanova, 2010, Tharp-Taylor, 2003). Because of these, it is crucial to investigate social adaptation and friend relationships of adolescents without a family and living in orphanage and to present some suggestions. From this point of view, in this study it has been aimed to investigate social adaptation and friend relationships among adolescents living in orphanage and those living with their family; to determine whether there is a relationship between social adaptation and friend relationship and in this direction, to present suggestions for supporting adolescents to develop their social adaptation and establish healthy friend relationships.

#### Material and Method

In this study it has been aimed to investigate social adaptation and friend relationships among adolescents living in orphanage and those living with their family; to determine whether there is a relationship between social adaptation and friend relationship and in this direction, to present suggestions for supporting adolescents to develop their social adaptation and establish healthy friend relationships.

#### Sample of the study

The study has conducted with adolescents living in orphanage and adolescents living with their family in the city of Kırşehir. Adolescents living with their family were selected

randomly among adolescents from low socio-economic status which has been determined by taking opinions of the school administration. The study is based on voluntariness. The research has been conducted on 136 adolescents voluntarily involved in the study including 68 adolescents living in orphanage and 68 adolescents living with their family between the ages 13-17.

#### Data collection instruments

In order to evaluate the social adaptation of adolescents Hacettepe Personality Inventory-Social Adaptation Subscale developed by Özgüven (1992) and in order to determine their friend relationships "Peer Relationships Scale" developed by Kaner (2000) have been used.

**Hacettepe Personality Inventory:** Hacettepe Personality Inventory is an inventory developed by Özgüven (1992) so that it corresponds to the need for psychological services in Turkey and it evaluates individual's personal and social qualities at the same time. Personality, behavioral patterns, ways of conduct, what he/she does in reality, reaction pattern of the individual are taken as the personality side; impression left on others by the individual as a stimulating system is taken as the social side of the individual. Under this framework, qualities about the individual's "personal" and "social" life constitute the two sections of Hacettepe Personality Inventory.

Hacettepe Personality Inventory can be applied to everybody who is at least third grade and literate. Each item in the scale is answered as "yes" or "no". For validity score, eight items were used. All of the scale includes 168 questions. Higher score means higher social adaptation. Social adaptation subsection includes eighty four questions (Özgüven 1992).

According to the reliability tests of Hacettepe Personality Inventory conducted in 1982, minimum coefficient of reliability has been determined as .58 for "Standard Norms" subscale and maximum coefficient of reliability has been determined as .92 for "General Adaptation" subscale; whereas average reliability and average of social adaptation subscales have been determined as .82 and .80, respectively. Correlation between general adaptation determined through Hacettepe Personality Inventory and personal adaptation has been determined as .83, and correlation between general adaptation determined through Hacettepe Personality Inventory and social adaptation has been determined as .93 (Özgüven 1992). At the end of the reliability test conducted by Kızıltan (1984), reliability coefficients were determined as .85 for personal adaptation and .80 for social adaptation.

**Peer Relationships Scale:** This scale was developed by Kaner (2000) in order to examine adolescents' peer relationships according to the Social Control and Social Learning Theory. Developed by Kaner (2000), this scale assesses the four subdimensions of friend relationship: commitment, trust and association, self-disclosure and loyalty.

**The commitment dimension** includes 8 items regarding mutual love and closeness between adolescents.

**The trust and association dimension** includes 4 items regarding mutual trust and association between adolescents.

**Opening oneself dimension** includes 3 items measuring sharing of problems between adolescents.

**Loyalty dimension** includes 3 items regarding lying to protect friends who are in trouble and standing by their side even if they may cause problems.

The items on the scale are scored in the following way: always (5 points), often (4 points), sometimes (3 points), rarely (2 points), and never (1 point). Higher score indicates positive relationships with friends. Overall score is also obtained from the scale. The factor analysis shows that the four factors of the 18-item scale accounted for 54.3% of the total variance. For reliability, internal consistency based on item analysis and test-retest methods were used. For internal consistency, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient was calculated and the reliability coefficient was obtained by using the Spearman Brown test. The test-retest reliability study yielded high values (.77-.93) (Kaner 2000).

#### Data analysis

Test of normality was conducted to identify which statistical analyses would be used to evaluate the data and the results have been presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics and normality test results of social adaptation and friend relationships scores

INST.	Scale	X	S	Med	Lowest score	Highest score	Test (p)
Those living in orphanage	Social Adaptation	53,21	7,55	54,36	31	72	0
	Friend Relationships	56,54	11,33	57,85	32	80	0
Those living with their family	Social Adaptation	57,21	7,55	56,36	33	75	0
	Friend Relationships	60,54	11,33	61,85	34	85	0

Source: Author

In Table 1, it is remarkable that data collected from adolescents living in orphanage and those living with their family indicate that both social adaptation and friend relationships scores do not have normal distribution ( $p > .01$ ). Since scores do not have a normal distribution, it is decided to use nonparametrical statistical methods. Accordingly, in order to determine both social adaptation and friend relationships of adolescents with respect to their place of living "Mann Whitney U Test" and in order to determine the relationship between social adaptation and friend relationships of adolescents "Pearson Correlation Test" were applied (Green, Salkind and Akey 1997, Büyüköztürk, 2003).

#### Findings and discussion

Data obtained from this study is presented by tables below and will be discussed on the basis of these tables.

As shown in Table 2, means of the scores of adolescents' social adaptation and friend relationships indicate that there is a significant difference between means of scores of both social adaptation ( $U=16359.000$ ,  $p > .005$ ) and friend relationships ( $U=14527.000$ ,  $p > .005$ ) according to the place they live in; it has been determined that adolescents living with their families have higher scores in both social adaptation and friend relationships.

During adolescence which is defined as one of the most crucial periods of life support of the family to the adolescent is very significant so that adolescent can have a positive social environment and cope with the problems of this period easily (Gürsoy and Yıldız Bıçakçı 2003). If adolescents live with their families, this reflects on their development in a positive way and accordingly problems of the adolescents in their friend relationships and social adaptation diminish. Studies conducted with adolescents who live in orphanage

indicate that lack of confidence is the primary reason of adolescents' problems about their socialization (%63.2) and this reason is followed by the will of having good relationship with everyone (%58.6) and shyness (%44.8) (Aşık, 2006). As shown in the table, the place of living of adolescents –whether they live in orphanage or not- has effect on both friend relationships and social adaptation. In their study with 187 adolescents under the care of an institution, Hutchinson and Tess (1992) have determined that adolescents have weak relationships with their peers. In the study conducted by Tekelioğlu (1993), it has been concluded that compared to the adolescents living with their families, adolescents living in orphanage cannot establish relationship with others, their friendships last shorter, they do not know how to behave in society, they do not trust in others and they wish everyone's attention in society. In the study on adolescents conducted by Koç (2000), it has been determined that attitudes of parents towards adolescents have effect on their social adaptation and social relationships and adolescents who have healthy relationship with their parents based on sharing can establish positive relationship with others in society. Erim (2001) compared adolescents living in orphanage and those living with their parents in terms of self-respect, level of depression and social support system and concluded that adolescents living in orphanage have lower level of self-respect, higher inclination to depression and lower social support. In a similar study, Çetin (2004) has determined that adolescents living in orphanage have more symptoms of anxiety, somatization and aggressiveness.

Table 2: Means, standard deviations and Mann Whitney U Test Results of adolescents' social adaptation and friend relationship levels with respect to their place of living

Social Adaptation Mean Scores	Mean scores		Mann Whitney U Test Results			
	X	S	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U Value	P
Those living in orphan age	53,21	7,55	164,32	36749,5	16359	0,003
Those living with their family	57,21	7,55	171,38	41460,5		
	Mean scores		Mann Whitney U Test Results			
Friend Relationships Mean Scores	X	S	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U Value	P
Those living in orphan age	56,54	11,33	184,23	42253,5	14527	0,004
Those living with their family	60,54	11,33	188,41	35956,5		

Source: Author

The relationship between adolescents' social adaptation and friend relationships was analyzed by using Pearson Correlation Coefficient and the results showed a meaningful relationship between social adaptation and friend

relationship of both adolescents living in orphanage ( $r=.124$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and adolescents who are not living in orphanage ( $r=.106$ ,  $p<.05$ ).

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Coefficient results of the relationship between adolescents' level of social adaptation and friend relationship

		Social Adaptation Mean Scores	
		R	P
Those living in orphanage	Friend Relationships Mean Scores	0,124	0,011
Those living with their family		0,106	0,032

Source: Author

Friend relationships during adolescence are crucial for socialization of the adolescent. During this period, an adolescent constitutes his/her own private peer environment and try to define himself/herself towards both himself/herself and towards the environment. In short, thanks to the positive relationships established during this period, adolescents prove themselves in their relationships with their abilities and accordingly develop personality. In addition to these, friend relationships support social adaptation of adolescents through contributing their ability of becoming members of a group (Bauman, 1998; Aşık, 2006).

By conducting studies which will positively affect the relationships adolescents established with their friends Allen et al (2005) conclude that positive relationships with friends improve adolescents' social adaptation. Many studies has concluded that good friend relationships diminish adolescents' negative behaviors like anger and aggressiveness (LevittWalcott, Upton, Bolen and Brown, 2005) and affect their social adaptation in a positive way (Levitt, Levitt, Bustos, Crooks, Santos, Telan and Silver; 1999). Pokhrel et. al. put emphasis on that social development of an adolescent is affected negatively or positively by his/her group friends.

### Conclusion and Suggestions

This study concludes that for adolescents, living in orphanage or not is an important variable which cause significant differences in their relationships with friends. Moreover, it has been contended that there is a positive correlation between friend relationship and social adaptation.

During adolescence, which is an unsteady period, adolescents are in a constant conflict with their environment. As expected, during this period, adolescents think and behave in conflictual manners. Accordingly, during this period it is significant to support adolescents for establishing solid friend relationships and social adaptation. When this idea and the consequences of this study are considered, in order to support social adaptation and friend relationships of adolescents, these can be suggested:

- Healthy family relationships contribute social adaptation and adolescents' friend relationships in a positive way. Considering this premise, parents can meet with adolescents' friends and create various social environments for their children. For parents, parent education programs on adolescence can be arranged.
- Activities related to the social development of the children living in the orphanage should be planned by the experts beginning with the childhood. Moreover, these children should be evaluated with respect to their social development and relevant activities should be planned according to the results of the evaluation.

- Children from the same age group can be invited to the institutions where children and adolescents live under the care of the institutions and different activities can be held together.
- Appropriate environment for social activities like sport, chess should be created so that adolescents living in orphanage can share more together and establish healthy friend relationships.
- For adolescents living in orphanages, support of the state and civil society is needed. Numbers of the experts from different occupational groups who are informed about adolescent development can be increased according to the number of the children in the institutions. Activities aiming social integration should be augmented.
- Counseling offices of the schools can inform adolescents about friendship, group effects, social adaptation and life conditions. They can arrange discussion meetings on the effects of social adaptation and friendship and different cases can be discussed in these meetings.

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