

THE IMPACT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD PARENTAL LOSS ON
CHILDREN'S SELF-CONCEPT, PEER RELATIONS, EMOTIONAL
AND BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS, AND SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT

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by

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ABSTRACT

The Impact of Early Childhood Loss on Children's Self Concept,
Peer Relations, Emotional and Behavioral Problems,
and School Achievement

by

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This causal-comparative research examined the effects of early childhood loss on self-concept, peer popularity, externalizing and internalizing problems and school achievement of children. Early childhood loss was defined as the death of either parent before the child is six years old.

Participants of this study were elementary school students from grades 3 to 5. They were 68 individuals (34 boys, 34 girls). Half of them had experienced early parental death while the remaining half came from intact families. Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale, a sociometric rating, teacher ratings of externalizing and internalizing problems, standardized cumulative grade point averages and a structured interview were used in the study.

In addition to effects of loss, effects of gender were investigated. Thus, two-way analysis of variance were utilized in comparison of the groups. Results indicated that the loss group had lower self-concept, peer popularity, school achievement and higher externalizing behaviours than the intact group. Effects of loss were equally detrimental for both gender.

Since the researcher found no study on direct effects of early loss on Turkish children, this study is an important step indicating the needs of bereaved children.

ÖZET

Erken Çocukluk Kaybının çocuklukların Öz-Kavramı, Duygusal ve Davranışsal Sorunları, Arkadaş İlişkileri ve Okul Başarısı Üzerindeki Etkisi

Bu nedensel-karşılaştırma desenli araştırma erken çocukluk kaybının çocukların öz-kavramları, arkadaş ilişkileri, içselleştirme ve dışsallaştırma sorunları ve okul başarısı üzerindeki etkisini incelemiştir. Erken çocukluk kaybı, altı yaşını doldurmamış çocuğun ebeveynlerinden birini ölüm nedeniyle kaybetmesi olarak tanımlanmıştır.

Araştırmanın örneklemini üç, dört ve beşinci sınıflarda okuyan ilkökul öğrencilerinden oluşmuştur. Bunlar 68 (34'ü erkek, 34'ü kız) kişidir. Örneklemin yarısı erken yaşta kayıp yaşamış öğrencilerden, geri kalanı da kayıp yaşamamış ailelerden gelen öğrencilerden oluşmuştur. Araştırmada, Piers-Harris Çocuklarda Öz-Kavramı Ölçeği, sosyometrik derecelendirme, içselleştirme ve dışsallaştırma sorunlarının öğretmenler tarafından derecelendirilmesi, standadize edilmiş yıl sonu ders notları ve yarı-yapılandırılmış bir görüşme kullanılmıştır.

Araştırmada, kaybın etkisinin yanısıra, cinsiyet etkileri de incelenmiştir. Bu yüzden grupların kıyaslanmasında iki yönlü değişkenlik analizleri kullanılmıştır. Sonuçlar, kayıp yaşamış çocuk grubunun diğer gruba göre daha düşük öz-kavramı, sosyal ilişkisi, okul başarısı, fakat daha yüksek içselleştirme ve dışsallaştırma sorunları olduğunu göstermiştir. Kaybın etkilerinin her iki cinsiyet için de eşit derecede olumsuz olduğu görülmüştür.

Araştırmacı, erken çocukluk kaybının Türk çocukları üzerindeki doğrudan etkisini inceleyen bir araştırma bulamadığından kayıp yaşamış çocukların gereksinmelerini gösteren önemli bir adımdır.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Loss is a very painful but common theme that people experience throughout their lives. Intensity of the emotional reaction to loss is governed by the functional importance of the lost theme for an individual. There are different kinds of loss which may disturb the individual's equilibrium. Physical loss, for example, is experienced when a child goes to college, or when a young adult gets married and leaves home. Functional loss is experienced when a family member has a long-term illness which prevents him/her doing the work on which the family depends. Emotional loss is experienced when there is absence of a person who lightens the mood of the family members (Walsh and McGoldrick, 1991).

Death is a kind of loss which occupies more of one's time than any other subject. Death is a biological event that terminates life. No other life event can evoke an equivalent emotional reaction. Man has developed philosophies and beliefs about the meaning of life and death and tried to cope with it. Death is followed by a period of mourning and grief. When individuals could not experience a healthy mourning stage, they suffer from depression and other clinical syndromes.

Death of a child can shake the family equilibrium for years. Death of a grandfather, who had some kind of decision making function in family affairs, can be followed by an intense grief reaction. But the death that is most likely to cause a serious and prolonged mourning is the death of either parent of a young child. This does not only disturb the emotional equilibrium, but it removes the function of the parent at a time when these functions are most important (Guerin, 1976).

People used to believe that the grief in childhood was short-lived and a healthy child could get over it rather quickly. However, research results show that this is not the case. Children who experience the loss of a parent are more likely to constitute a risk group than others. It is difficult for a child to understand the death concept and its finality. In adults, mourning is followed by an adaptation after a temporary pause of everything. In children, we can not expect that all development will stop for the mourning process to take place (Nagera, 1981).

There are several observations on responses of children between ages of twelve months to three years when they are removed from the mother figure to whom they are attached. The initial response is a protest and urgent effort to recover one's lost mother. Sooner or later, despair takes over. Longing for the mother's return does not diminish but the child does not search for the parent any longer. Eventually, s/he forgets his/her parent and becomes withdrawn and apathetic. In this phase when the separation is long, the child may remain detached. This prolonged period may damage the security of the attachment of the child (Bowlby, 1980).

Short and long-term effects of early loss have been observed in various areas of children's development. Psychoanalytically oriented theorists like A. Freud, Burlingham, Spitz, Robertson, Bowlby and Mahler had extensive clinical studies on effects of loss in children. There is empirical research indicating that compared to children from intact families, bereaved children show serious behavioral and emotional problems (Barry, 1960; Firınciođlu, 1982; Tolman, Diekman and McCartney, 1989), have poor relationships (Cohn, 1990; Park and Waters, 1989; Vandell and Wilson, 1987), self-esteem (Cassidy, 1988; Hetherington, 1972; Thomes, 1968) and academic achievement (Marcus 1991; Sugawara, 1991).

The first six years of life is thought to be critical ages for a child as the infancy period has a special significance in development. Environmental

influences in those ages have an overriding effect on what happens later, regardless of later experiences (Rutter, 1981). For these reasons the researcher chose to study the children who had experienced the loss of one of their parents before they were six years of age.

Unfortunately, despite the increased attention to this subject, empirical data regarding how individuals of different ages respond to losses of different kinds and in differing circumstances are still scarce. In Turkey, there has been very limited research on this subject. Therefore, the present study is one of the first attempts to understand the impact of loss in children.

This study attempted to investigate the effects of early parental loss on some emotional, behavioral and cognitive outcomes, namely self-concept, internalizing and externalizing problems, peer relations and academic achievement. The impact of loss in Turkish society has gone largely unexamined. So practice in the field has many untested assumptions about normal and abnormal bereavement.

One reason for lack of studies on this subject may be that this subject is a taboo in the society and it is denied even by psychologists. Loss is a painful experience but the society's denial of death compounds the difficulty of this experience. Indeed, two American family therapists, Walsh and McGoldrick (1991) claim that their society deals poorly with death and denies its impact. Mental health and social science disciplines' attention to death and mourning has lacked a systemic perspective. Few articles that contribute to the understanding of loss are scattered in journals and multi-topic texts and are unseen and unintegrated just like personal experiences of loss and mourning. However, the inescapable fact of death (of any relative or friend), relationships with dying or deceased members and the mourning period should be inquired. Walsh and McGoldrick (1991, p.25) state that " We must challenge the taboo that has silenced the field of family therapy and other professionals on the

subject of death, obscuring our recognition of loss issues and blocking our communication with families and our ability to help them."

This study is a step forward in confronting issues concerning death and loss. It may help all who are around and work with bereaved children like psychologists, counselors, family therapists, social workers, teachers and families to understand the experiences these children have, and encourage future researchers to continue studying loss.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter is arranged to include theories and studies that directly relate to research questions. It consists of two main sections; namely a theoretical background and a review of empirical research studies. The material in the theoretical section is organized in three parts. The first deals with the trauma of loss and grief in children, the second with the short-term and long-term effects of loss in children, and the third with the factors moderating the impact of early loss. The material in the review of empirical research studies is organized in four parts: studies on self-esteem and self-concept, studies on social relationships, studies on emotional and behavioral problems and studies on school achievement of insecurely attached and bereaved children.

Trauma of Loss and Grief in Children

"Loss of a loved person is one of the most intensely painful experiences any human being can suffer. To the bereaved, nothing but the return of the lost person can bring true comfort." (Bowlby, 1980, p.7) For an adult, the death of a loved person is a traumatic event. For a child, death of a loved person, especially of a parent, is a traumatic event; but more importantly, it has a serious developmental interference (Nagera, 1981).

There are several inquiries which have claimed that loss of a love object may cause pathological syndromes. First, there are numerous cases, like Freud's mourning and melancholia, that relate a psychiatric syndrome of relatively acute onset to a bereavement. These indicate that the clinical picture is best understood as a mourning that has taken a pathological course. Second,

there are studies that relate a more chronic psychiatric syndrome to a loss that occurred in the patient's adolescence or childhood. Third, there is extensive psychoanalytical literature that illustrates the link between prognoses to psychological illness and some developmental failure in early childhood. Fourth, there are papers that report a high incidence of childhood bereavement in the lives of people with psychological disturbances (Goodyear, 1990).

There is some disagreement in the literature about the age at which children are fully able to understand the concept of death. Wolf (1986) believes that children can not have a full comprehension of death before ages 10 or 11, while Furman states that a two to three year-old can comprehend the "death" concept, a three and a half or four year-old has the capacity to mourn. Bowlby (1980) believes that mourning in the adult sense is possible after six months of life.

Wolfenstein (1965) and Nagera (1981) have views parallel to Freud who stated that mourning in the adult sense is not possible until detachment from parental figures. Because "child is not a finished product like the adult. He is in the middle of a multiplicity of processes of development in all sorts of areas and directions that require, for their normal unfolding, the presence of the suddenly absent object." (Nagera, 1981, p. 366) Developmental needs of the child oppose to the normal mourning process. So this becomes a complicated situation for the child (Nagera, 1981).

Attachment and Loss

Understanding a child's response to the loss of his/her parent necessitates an understanding of the bond between the two. For a psychoanalyst child's first human relation is considered as the most important event in his/her personality. The importance of the strong tie developed between a mother and a child is accepted by all theoreticians (Bowlby, 1969).

Freud suggested that the early childhood relationship patterns could become prototype of all later social behavior (cited in Nagera, 1981). Bijoi and Baer (1965) claim that infants require warmth and affection as much as food and water. They hunger for love as well as for food. Too little love causes psychological starvation while a good supply of love produces expansion of intellect and personality. A mother provides a very close and nurturing relationship to the baby through her proximity, continuous attention and readiness for the signals of the baby. Her affection comes in forms of smiles, kisses, hugs, special tones of voice, loving words, nuzzling, hair-ruffling, tickling and similiar behaviors.

Bowlby (1969) studied children's responses to early loss within an ethological and psychoanalytical framework and through his well-known attachment theory which explains the strong tie between a mother and her infant. There is good evidence that most children develop strong attachments to their parents (Rutter 1981). The function of attachment behavior is to maintain a proximity between mother and infant for protection of the infant, since the infant can not live with his/her own resources. An infant's attachment to her/his mother means that s/he seeks closeness and contact with her/his mother, especially when frightened, tired, ill, etc.

Infants are attached to their primary caregivers through certain instinctual responses such as sucking, clinging, following, crying and smiling. These responses have an important place in the development of the infant and they emerge through specific developmental periods. During the early months of life, the infant learns to discriminate a particular figure, usually his/her mother, and develops a strong liking for her. After about six months s/he shows steady preferences to be in her company. From the latter half of his/her first year through third years, s/he is closely attached to his/her mother figure. S/he feels happy in her company and distressed in her absence. Even momentary separations result with frustration. After the third birthday the

strength of attachment begins to diminish, though it remains strong until six years of age. From about one year of age other figures also become important to him/her so that his/her attachment may not be only towards a single figure (Rutter, 1981).

The unchallenged presence of a bond between the two is a source of security for the child. The majority of children suffer little disruption of this primary attachment in their early years. They live with their mother figure and, during the relatively brief periods they are cared for by a familiar subordinate figure when the mother is absent. On the other hand, a minority experiences serious disruptions. Their mother may desert or die; they may be handed from one mother figure to another. Such a loss is resulted with the sudden absence of that bond and with a period of uncertainty for the child. Initial response of the child to such a separation is like a protest such as crying loudly, shaking his/her cot, throwing him/herself and looking eagerly towards any sign from his/her mother. Throughout this phase, the child demands his/her mother back and seems hopeful. This phase of protest may last several days. In the second phase, despair comes on the child. The search for the mother does not diminish, but his/her hope does. His/her noisy behaviors stop. Often these two phases alternate. Eventually, a greater change occurs. S/he seems to forget his/her mother and becomes withdrawn and apathetic. S/he is in a state of "grief" (as the term is used by Burlingham and Anna Freud in 1942, cited in Bowlby, 1980). This is the phase of detachment. In each of these phases the child may have tantrums and destructive behaviors. The length of such a separation is important. When separation is long or permanent, there is danger that s/he may remain detached. This period may damage the security of the attachment of the child and hinder his/her opportunity for developing stable emotional ties in the future.

The early specific attachment to father has not been studied so frequently as has the tie with the mother. The available data suggest that father

relationship is also significantly important in childhood. Goode (1959) stated that at every developmental phase of childhood, the child needs the father as an object of love, security, identification, or even as a figure against whom to rebel safely (cited in McCord, McCord, and Thurber, 1962). It would be surprising if the absence of the father had no effect on the child. McDevitt and Settlege (1971) reported that in father's absence, impairments similar to a mother's loss have been shown.

Studies on paternal-child transactions have been few, but they indicate that fathers participate in important parenting processes and can influence social-emotional development. The process by which fathers exert this influence and the similarities and differences between fathers and mothers is unclear (Parkes, 1985).

Bowlby (1980) states that in the case of a death, the bereaved person makes an angry effort to recover the lost object. One of the main characteristics of pathological mourning is an inability to overtly express these urges to recover and reproach the lost object with all the yearning and anger. Those unexpressed feelings continue as active systems within the personality. As these feelings are unable to find overt and direct expression, they become locked inside the child but are potentially active in influencing the child's feeling and behaviour. Unconsciously the child remains fixated on the lost mother and his/her urges to recover and reproach her, and the ambivalent emotions connected with them are repressed. Only the remainder of the child's personality would be left free for further development. In children the onset of defensive processes, repression and splitting with the resulting fixation is initiated more readily and pathological mourning takes place more easily. Another defensive process that occurs following loss, and closely related to repression, is the splitting of the ego. In such cases one part of personality, unconsciously denies that the object is really lost and thinks that there is still communication with it or it will soon be recovered. Simultaneously another

part of the personality shares with friends and relatives the knowledge that the object is dead and can not be recovered. These ego splits lead to psychological disturbances as in the case of repression.

Possible Short-Term and Long-Term Effects of Loss in Children

There can be no clear-cut line between short-term and long-term effects of early loss, as they blend into one another. Nevertheless, for the purposes of discussion it is useful to consider the consequences in this way. Effects are considered short-term when they refer to the immediate response to a death of a parent and to the behaviour shown over the next few months. Long-term effects are used to refer to the results seen some years later following a loss.

Short-term effects have been most studied with respect to children who were admitted to hospital or to a residential nursery. There is good evidence that many young children show an immediate reaction of acute distress and crying, followed by misery and apathy, and finally there may be a stage when the child becomes apparently content and seems to lose interest in his/her parents (Rutter, 1981).

The other syndrome seen as an early response to maternal loss is developmental retardation. There may be an impairment in language and social responsiveness as well as a global impairment of developmental progress (Rutter, 1981).

Long-term effects of loss are experienced more deeply. In situations where the relevant objects (i.e., mother) are absent, specially during the critical stages, a child tends to create that object. S/he makes them alive in his fantasies or gives important roles to any suitable and available figure who can be an alternative surrogate. But at the slightest disappointment with this surrogate they turn back to their idealized, fantasy parents. Anna Freud and

Dorothy Burlingham described how parentless children invent their mothers and fathers and live with them in their imaginations. Unfortunately, these fantasy parents do not accomplish parental functions (cited in Nagera, 1981).

The process of loss may create some serious difficulties in the emotional development of these children. They may feel that all these "unpleasant things in life" happen because they are not real children of their substitutes, and they are not loved. If their natural mothers or fathers had been alive, they would be much more loving and understanding. The child will tend to idealize the dead parent, cathecting all positive feelings to him/her (such as how caring, loving, protective, good, etc. he/she would be), while having a tendency to cathect the negative feelings to the substitute (such as how unloving, bad, cruel, etc. he/she is) as a result of splitting. Naturally, the child's development may be distorted and his/her future relationships may be harmed by these tendencies as he/she may continue to split in every new relationship (Nagera, 1981).

Longing for Approval and Love

Heinicke and Westheimer (1965) argue that individuals who have experienced abandonment by parents in their childhood years during which their self concepts are developing and are in need of approval, tend to have a strong wish to be loved and approved in future. In the nurseries, abandoned children initially resist attempts of intimate contact. But it is seen that they are actually very eager to any type of reassurance and affection from adults.

The absence of parents in the early critical periods results in the removal of the most important support of the child's approval. The child may be expected to be longing for love and approval throughout his/her life unless conditions are very favorable (Heinicke and Westheimer, 1965).

Impairment in Capacity to Love

Abandonment by the parents (mother, father, or both) during infancy or childhood severely impairs children's capacity to love (Bergmann, cited in McDevitt and Settlege, 1971). Early relationship, the tie built between the mother and the child is the model for future relationships of the child. Children who did not have the chance to be loved and cared by their mothers may have great difficulties in loving other people (Bowlby, 1980). Lowrey (1978), who conducted several studies with institutionalized children stated that they have problems in giving and receiving love in their future relationships (cited in Wolf, 1986).

Self-Esteem and Self-Concept

Psychoanalytically oriented theorists see personality as a product of an individual's interactions with key figures during childhood, especially of her/his interactions with attachment figures. In this view a child who has grown up in a ordinary good home will know people from whom s/he can expect support, protection, comfort and love. Her/his expectations are usually confirmed by these people. As a result of these gratifying experiences, a strong ego develops, capable of maintaining integration and self-regulation during the periods when no support is available. Therefore, s/he will approach the world with confidence. Other children who lived separation or loss of their attachment figures may have been much less fortunate. As the models of attachment figures and expectations from them are built up during childhood years and tend to remain unchanged, years later when such children are in trouble they might not have confidence that a caretaking figure will ever be available and dependable. The world is rather unpredictable for them. Furthermore, as the model of attachment figure and the model of self are likely to be

complementary and mutually confirming such children might feel worthless. Their mothers or fathers had left them without a reason they thoroughly understand. They believe that they are unwanted and good-for-nothing (Bowlby, 1980).

Mahler (1968) stated that self-confidence, self-esteem, and pleasure in independence develop out of trust and confidence in others. This trust is built during infancy and childhood through a child's experience of a mothering person. This figure acts as a reference point for the child's activities while at the same time giving him sufficient freedom to pass through the "separation-individuation" phase (cited in Mahler, Pine, Gergman, 1975). Fleming (1972) who spent many years studying the problems of adult patients with early loss agrees with Mahler (cited in Bowlby, 1980). He states that during childhood years, children build up expectations of how attachment figures are likely to behave towards them in various situations, and they build self expectations accordingly. Once developed, expectations tend to persist relatively unchanged throughout the rest of life.

Heinicke and Westheimer argued that "the child's feeling of well-being and self-esteem are highly dependent on the ever-present admiration and acknowledgement given in the context of basic acceptance, in the presence of parents." (1965, p.338) In an abandonment situation, the child will be in a desperate effort to overcome the feeling of being unloved and left which will seriously effect his self-concept and self-esteem.

Masterson, who has several studies about abandonment and its consequences, talks about several key capacities of the "real self," one of which is acknowledgement of self-esteem, i.e. "the capacity that allows a person to identify and acknowledge that he has effectively coped with a problem or crises in a positive or creative way." (1988, p.44) Self-recognition is more important than recognition by others, because we can not always rely on others to support our sense of self-esteem. The individual who had experienced early loss is

subject to create a "false self" which lacks the capacity of "acknowledgement of self-esteem." (Masterson, 1988)

Anger and Difficulties In Future Relationships

Anger is an immediate and common response to loss. Anger to the lost object is perhaps an invariable part of the grief reaction. In the case of death, before admitting a defeat, the bereaved adult as well as a young child makes an angry effort to recover the lost object. Although it's unrealistic and hopeless, the overt expression of this effort is a necessary condition for a healthy mourning. Only after every effort has been made to recover the lost object, an individual would be ready to admit defeat and to orient her/himself to the new conditions (Levy, 1943).

Like adults, infants and young children who have lost a love object experience grief and go through periods of mourning. Bowlby (1960) stated that there are only two interrelated differences: "One is that in the young the time scale is abbreviated, though much less so than has sometimes been thought. The other, in which lies the significance for psychiatry, is that in childhood the process leading to detachment are very apt to develop prematurely, in as much as they coincide with and mask strong residual yearning for and anger with the lost object, both of which persist, ready for expression, at an unconscious level." (cited in Sugawara, 1991, p.233) Because of this premature onset of detachment, the mourning process of childhood takes a pathological course. The child is not equipped well for a healthy mourning.

In the case of a loss, a child has a persistent longing for her/his parent and is covered with intense, generalized hostility. First, s/he shows a rejection of other adults, then in the next phase seeks new relationships. In that phase, if s/he can be provided with a figure who nurtures her/him lovingly, s/he can relate to that person and treat her as her/his real parent. But in situations, where

the child has no single person or when there is a succession of persons with whom s/he forms only brief relationships, s/he becomes increasingly "self centered." This may become a pattern of building hostile and shallow relationships in her/his future friendships. As hostility breeds hostility such people will be repeatedly rejected by others, which in turn will nurture their hostility (Bowlby, 1980).

Lowrey (1978, in Wolf, 1986) provided evidence on "hostility" in the behaviors of adolescents who have experienced early loss. Similarly, Heinicke and Westheimer (1965) noted that the separated child seeks affection and expresses hostility in his/her relationships. They cite that Anna Freud stressed the frequency of hostile behavior such as "senseless destruction of toys and furniture, attacks on other children, biting and soiling" in the lives of separated children. They reported Robertson and Rosenbluth (1961) who noted the separated child's tendency to break toys and tear books and Prugh who stated that the "open acting out of infantile wishes and aggressive impulses frequently appear in such children with wild outbursts of frantic aggression and attendant guilt and anxiety. In few children, marked inhibition of aggressive drive was observed, together with the turning inward of hostility." (cited in Heinicke and Westheimer, 1965, p.296)

Bowlby (1958) stated that during infancy and childhood, a child is dependent on his mother. Mother orients the baby in time and space, provides her/his environment, permits the satisfaction of some impulses, restricts others. She is the ego and the superego for the baby. Mother works as a psychic organizer for the undifferentiated psyche of the baby. So, the early social relationship between the mother and child must be both continuing and satisfactory for a child to develop healthy intrapsychic structures and object relationships. As the baby learns these arts, her/his mother transfers those roles to her/him.

The child's ability to take his/her mother's controlling and planning roles is dependent on the continuous and positive relationship between them. A child can learn a skill only if s/he has a friendly feeling towards mother, and is ready to identify her/himself with her and to incorporate her into him/herself. This affiliative relationship affects the child's developing interactive competence and flexibility with which to explore the peer social system. And it also serves as a prototypic template for future close relationships. Separated children who are deprived of a continuous, positive relationship would have impairments of ego development as well as disturbances in object relationships (Mussen, 1983).

Goodyear (1990) also talks about the existence of a coherence and continuity in certain qualities of relationships. Thus social-emotional processes at one age may predict similar processes at another despite changing social circumstances. This suggests that early secure attachments provide a learning experience through which individuals internalize relationships. This internalization of relations seems to be carried forward to influence relations in later social interactions. Thus the early sources of insecurity such as parental deprivation and separation may predict later difficulties in social relationships.

Vygotsky (1978 cited in Vandell and Wilson, 1987) stated that children first develop skills with more sophisticated partners such as parents and then apply these skills in other areas. So the early relationship of children with their parents are thought to be highly related to later peer relations. One might expect that children who are deprived of a healthy parent-child relationship because of loss will have difficulties in their social interactions with their peers

Suicidal Attempts

There is extensive literature on the relationship of parental loss and attempted suicide during later life. Bowlby (1980) cited some studies on

suicidal attempts after parental loss and stated that this is not surprising since many of the motives in the following statements below can lead to completed suicides: "a wish for reunion with the dead person; a desire for revenge against the dead person for leaving at a difficult time, in the form of redirecting murderous wishes towards the self; a wish to destroy the self against guilty feelings for having contributed to the death; and a feeling that life is not worth living without any hope of a loving relationship." (Bowlby, 1980, p.166)

Other motives that lead to an attempted suicide, could be: "a wish to see a caregiving response-cry for help, and a wish to punish live parent so as to make him/her more attentive." (Bowlby, 1980, p.167)

Other Possible Effects of Early Loss

Children who have experienced early loss seem to have a tendency for eating disorders. Bowlby (1980) talks about the occurrence of eating disorders in such children. Nagera (1981) explains this as the children's attempts to increase the feeling of well-being through manipulating oral intake.

Fleming and Altschul (cited in Nagera, 1981) who studied the effects of parental loss in childhood on adult personality structure stated its negative effect on impulse control as well as on material possessiveness. In addition, Heinicke and Westheimer (1965) noted that some of these children's psychic energy was directed toward the material goods. There is evidence supporting the view that stealing behavior of these children is explained by seeking punishment because of guilt feelings for having contributed to the death of the parent (Nagera, 1981). Bowlby (1980) states that a child is ready to easily blame someone, including him/herself, for the death of his/her parent. Because the child is not capable of understanding death and its reasons and s/he can not realistically appreciate what s/he sees and what s/he has been told (Bowlby,

1980). S/he can easily feel her/himself responsible of her/his parent's death and actively seek punishment.

Factors Moderating The Impact of Early Loss

Sugawara (1991) claimed that some selected child factors might moderate the impact of early loss on the behaviour and development of children. Some of these factors are child's age, sex, sex of the lost parent, temperamental style, cognitive abilities, self-esteem and self-efficacy, and personal social supports. While these factors may be described separately, in real life situations they are not mutually exclusive. They are not likely to occur independent of each other. Rutter (1987, cited in Sugawara, 1991) indicated that these factors interact with one another and create mechanisms which predispose a child to vulnerability. Although it may be difficult, an examination of the ways these factors interact is necessary. With these ideas in mind, let us look at each factor separately.

Age of Child

According to Maccoby (1986), the ability of children to respond to stressful life events, such as parental loss, and the amount of behavioral disorganization that can result are partly dependent upon the age of the child (cited in Sugawara, 1991). Perhaps one outcome which is crucially affected by the child's age of loss is "affectionless psychopathy," which is thought to develop as a result of lack of attachment during the first three years of life (Rutter, 1981).

Studies on hospital admissions and institutionalization point out that the age between six months and five years is the time of greatest risk for children. The vulnerability of the child decreases as the age of the child

increases. Distress occurs in some older children as well, but it tends to be less severe and less prolonged (Sugawara, 1991). Hetherington (1972) argued that the first six years of life represent a critical period for the impact of father absence on children, yet others argued that the middle childhood and adolescent years are the periods of greatest vulnerability (cited Sugawara, 1991).

Sex of the Child

Sugawara (1991) cites from Rutter that boys are more vulnerable to psychological stresses than girls, and that these sex differences are clear in studies of hospitalization, divorce and parental loss. Several factors may lead to these differences, in addition to biological susceptibility. Some of these include: (1) differences in the extent to which various risk factors impinge upon boys and girls, (2) incidence of placement of boys and girls in institutional care, (3) display of disruptive, oppositional behaviour, (4) the meaning of aggression and shyness among boys and girls, and (5) different parent-child interactions among the sexes.

Sex of the Lost Parent

Lynn and Sawrey (1991) stated that the sex of the lost parent is an important variable which moderates or influences the effects of early loss. Death of the father is frequently followed by economic and social deterioration and these may also constitute important negative influences on the child (Rutter, 1981).

Which parent dies seems of possible importance. The ill-effects of the death of a parent are observed more in the cases of the loss of a same-sexed parent (Rutter, 1981). Lynn and Sawrey (1991) reported that direct effects of

father absence per se would affect boys and girls differentially. The direct effects of father absence were hypothesized to be more damaging to the boy's development than to the girl's. The father absent girls still has the same sex parent with her as a model for identification, whereas the father-absent boy is without the same-sex parent to serve as a model.

Temperamental Style

Children show a wide range of individual differences in temperamental style. How temperament moderates the impact of stressful life events on children's behaviour and development is unclear. Furman (1971) indicated that a child's capacity to go through the mourning process is in part dependent on his/her personality structure. After a series of studies Rutter and colleagues (1979, cited in Sugawara, 1991) report that children with temperamentally adverse characteristics (e.g., negative mood, low malleability) are more likely to suffer from the ill effects of parental loss .

Cognitive Abilities

The cognitive abilities of children appear to play a role in moderating the impact of maternal absence on children's behaviour and development. Highly intelligent and scholastically achieving children show low rates of behavioral disorders when faced with a parental loss (Sugawara, 1991).

In addition, the ability of children to appraise their own circumstances proved helpful in dealing with family stress. Adolescents who were successful in coping with stress of parental loss had ability to monitor and think about life experiences. Conversely, children with maladaptive explanatory styles (i.e., habitually conceptualizing the causes of bad life events as stable, global and internal) were more likely to show depressive characteristics. Among women

with early loss, depression was positively related to their cognitive orientation of helplessness. Therefore, children's abilities to understand the meaning of an event can make them either more vulnerable or resilient (Sugawara, 1991).

Self-Esteem and Self-Efficacy

Rutter (1981) stated that researchers refer to the terms self-esteem and self-efficacy as a sense of independence, self-acceptance, self-concept, inner strength, personal regard, and ego-resiliency. The ability of children to cope successfully with life challenges is related to their self-esteem and self-efficacy. Children with a high sense of self-esteem have an optimistic view of life. They can tolerate external stress and recover from depression much more easily (cited in Sugawara, 1991). In Freud's and Dann's (1951) study, children who adapted well after being separated from their parents during the war were those who had a high sense of independence as individuals. It was suggested that a child's capacity to go through the mourning process was related to his/her sense of self-acceptance (cited in Sugawara, 1991).

Personal Social Supports

In times of loss, individuals near the bereaved person are relied upon for comfort. This is valid also for children with parental loss. The remaining parent, siblings, peers, other relatives and adults are those people who can either help or hinder children in their coping with the parental absence due to death (Sugawara, 1991). Kelly (1955) believed that any event or experience is open to reconstruction (cited in Sugawara, 1991). Depending upon how the death of the parent is dealt with by the survivor and other intimate friends and family, the effects of death of the parent may be mediated and mitigated (cited in Meshot and Leitner, 1993). Gray (1987) found that adolescents who had a

good relationship with the surviving parent reported less depression as measured by the Beck Depression Inventory (cited in Meshot and Leitner, 1993). Brenner (1984) states that siblings serve as caretakers, models, sources of emotional support and comfort, and intensely loyal friends in times of parental loss (cited in Sugawara, 1991).

Studies on Self-Esteem and Self-Concept

According to Bowlby (1980) child's early learning about the self occurs within the context of relationships with significant others. In the absence of significant others, child feels neglected and rejected, and as a result, worthless.

In a study Cassidy (1988) attempted to investigate the connection between attachment and self-esteem. Fifty-two children, ranging from 5.7 to 6.8 years in age, were used as subjects. Data were collected in two play sessions, one month apart. Quality of attachment was assessed in each session based on the system devised by Main and Cassidy. Aggregated attachment ratings and classifications were assigned based on child's behavior in both reunions. Self-esteem was assessed directly by interviewing the children. Results showed significant relationship between attachment and self-esteem. Securely attached children had higher self-esteem than the insecure ones.

Boy, Ernestina, Garcia and Torreblanca (1985) studied the effect of maternal deprivation on the child's development of sense of personal security. Two groups of 16 children who were 3-6-year-old, were studied via observational and interview methods. Experimental group consisted of subjects living in group homes or institutions who had been separated from mothers in their early childhood. Control subjects lived in stable homes with their natural mothers. All subjects were observed for one week prior to structured interview. There were significant differences between two groups. Experimental group

manifested more insecure behaviors, isolation and less affiliation than the control group.

Thomes (1968) investigated the role of the father in socializing children, by examining the effects of father absence on 9-to 11-year-old boys and girls. Forty-seven children in low socioeconomic-status, father-absent homes were compared with a matched control group with father present. Variables studied were the children's self-concepts, their peer-relationships, their concepts of parental roles and their attitudes and feelings about family members. Interviews were conducted with children and their mothers. Many similarities between the groups were found. The single difference found was related to the children's concepts of parental roles. When children were given statements and asked whether mother or father should do these things in a family, the bereaved children made significantly fewer choices of the father to carry out these parental role activities. Thomes suggested that matching the two groups on socio-economic level and the ages of the children were factors affected the results. She argued that the design of the study controlled socio-economic level in order to eliminate it as a possible cause of variation between groups. Other than that, the period between the ages 9 to 11 was considered to be a period of relative quiescence in personality development for most children. This is a time when they consolidated the adjustments of early childhood and not yet begun the adolescent transition to adulthood, so they might be expected to have lower adjustment problems. These carefully controlled conditions made it possible to compare groups without major crisis or change factors influencing the results. Some observations suggest that failure to recognize the specific influences of crisis may cause perception of high degrees of difficulty in personal adjustment of bereaved children.

Studies on Social Relationships

Parent-child relationship is the very first relationship of a child and it has marks in future social relationships of a child. The studies reviewed in this section indicate how the quality of that relationship affects the child's future relation with others.

Hetherington (1972) investigated the effects of father absence due to divorce or death on adolescent girls. The subjects were three groups of 24 firstborn girls between the ages of 13 and 17. The first group came from intact families, the second group from families in which the father was absent due to divorce, and the third group from families in which the father was absent due to death. California Personality Inventory Femininity Scale, the Internal-External Locus of Control Scale, the short form of the Manifest Anxiety Scale, Draw-a-Person Test and ratings based on interviews were used. Results showed that both groups of father-absent girls, who lacked the opportunity for constructive interaction with a loving, attentive father, had feelings of insecurity in interacting with male peers and male adults. They also had a general feeling of anxiety and powerlessness reflected in high scores on the Manifest Anxiety Scale and low scores on the Internal-External Locus of Control Scale which shows that they were externally controlled. They manifested deviant behaviors in attempting to cope with their anxiety and lack of skills in relating to males.

Vandell and Wilson (1987) investigated the effects of the mother-infant relationship in infant's sibling and peer relationships. Twenty-six second-born infants who had 3 to 6-year-old siblings participated in the study. Each infant was observed at 6 1/2 and 9 1/2 months of their lives during the free play sessions of mother-infant, sibling-infant and peer-infant interaction. Sessions were videotaped and coded by teams of observers. The infant's experiences with their mothers during play situations influenced the infants' subsequent

interactions with their siblings and peers. Results were consistent with Vygotsky's hypothesis that secure attachment provides children with emotional security which then frees them to interact with their peers.

In a study, Park and Waters (1989) tested whether security of attachment to mother is related to the quality of preschool friendships. Thirty-three 4-year-olds and their best friends participated in this study. Q-set data were collected to score security of mother-child attachment. Security data were used to classify the friend pairs as secure-secure or secure-insecure. Best friends were observed during a one-hour free play session. To describe each pair's behavior in dyadic-relationships, similar Q-set was used. Results showed that secure-secure pairs were more harmonious, less controlling, more responsive and happier than secure-insecure pairs. Results were consistent with other that securely attached children are more interactive with peers than insecurely attached ones. Several other researchers also reported securely attached toddlers to be more competent with peers.

Longitudinal studies using Ainsworth's Strange Situations consistently showed connections between the quality of infant-parent attachment and social interactions with peers. For example, securely attached infants engaged in more positive interactions with their peers. They were more likely to receive positive behaviors from an unfamiliar peer than a child who has insecure relationships (Cohn, 1990).

Cohn's study (1990) examined the association between attachment and peer social competence of 89 children (mean age 6.2). Quality of attachment was assessed by use of reunion episodes following a one-hour separation, during the summer following kindergarten. In the fall, measures of sociometric status, peer behavior nominations, and peer liking ratings were collected. Teachers completed liking ratings and ratings of competence. Consistent with other studies of infant attachment and peer relations, one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) on the peer and teacher liking ratings

revealed gender differences. Insecurely attached boys were less well liked by peers and teachers. There were no such findings for girls.

In Lynn and Sawrey's (1991) study 80 Norwegian mother-child pairs were the subjects. There were 40 father-absent mother-child pairs in the experimental group (21 boys and their mothers, 19 girls and their mothers) and 40 father-present mother-child pairs in the control group (20 boys and their mothers, 20 girls and their mothers). Children were between the ages of 8 and 9-1/2. The mothers were administered a semi-structured interview and the children were given a projective test called Structured Doll Play and were asked to draw a picture of the family. Results showed that compared to father-absent boys a higher proportion of control boys showed adequate peer adjustment. Father-absent boys showed poorer peer adjustment than father-absent girls and this was consistent with the some researchers' assumption that the loss of same sex parent has more detrimental effects. Father-absent girls showed a larger proportion of dependency than father-absent boys. This could be explained by the fact that unlike the boys, father-absent girls who still have a model for identification developed increased dependency for their mothers.

Meshot and Leitner (1993) conducted a study in which 20 people who had experienced the death of a parent between the ages of 12 and 18 were compared to 22 people whose parents had not been divorced, separated, or died. They used two measures of death threat, one based upon an Interpersonal Repertory Grid (IRG) and the second the provided form of the Threat Index (TI) as well as a measure of interpersonal style, the Fundamental Interpersonal Orientation-Behaviour (FIRO-B). The loss group scored higher on the Wanted-Inclusion Scale of the FIRO-B than the control group. Thus, the loss group could be characterized as having an oversocial interpersonal style in which they wanted others to include them. Loss group males tended to be overpersonal while females in the loss group were avoidant of close ties. In addition, the loss

group tended to have lower death threat scores than the control group as measured by the IRG. The reason may be that these children who experienced the loss of a loved one integrated the reality of death and mortality into their core constructs.

Tolman, Diekman and McCartney (1989) conducted two separate studies to test the relation between mother and the child and children's social connectedness which was defined as a sense of self in relation to others. In two correlational studies, they examined the relationship between maternal employment and maternal absence (because of death or divorce) and young adult's social connectedness as measured by the Interpersonal Orientation (IO) Scale. Although differences in maternal employment were not related, maternal absence was related to IO. Girls whose mothers were absent since their early childhood rated themselves low on IO which shows that they had poorer social relationships. This was especially true for daughters who did not have a mother substitute. The authors explained this finding as finding provides support for Chodorow's theoretical explanation which indicates that early loss and loss of the same sex parent have more negative effects on children than later loss and loss of opposite sex parent.

In a study done with 488 university students (280 men and 208 women), Megargee, Parker and Levine (1971, cited in Bowlby, 1973) reported a relationship between children's socialization and the state of the parent's marriage. The California Personality Inventory Socialization Scale was used as a measure of socialization. It was found that the gradient of socialization scores correlates positively with living with both natural parents. No relation was found between death of a parent and socialization. The authors argued that since only about seven percent of the sample had lost a parent, the absence of correlation may be due to the smaller proportion of bereaved adolescents as compared to that of non-bereaved.

Studies on Emotional and Behavioral Problems

Robins (1966, cited in Sack, 1977) conducted a 30-year follow up of children, in a St. Louis court clinic. She found father absence to be a potent predictor of whether or not the child was to grow up to be a sociopathic. Wolkind (1974, cited in Sack, 1977) also found in an institutional setting that lack of contact with the father was a powerful predictor for antisocial behavior in boys.

In Stolz's study (1954, cited in Earls, 1976) two small samples of families with young war-born children were studied intensively by means of a variety of interview techniques with mothers and play techniques with children. In all cases, children were the firstborn babies in their families. The only difference between the groups was father absence in one group. The results showed that the father absent children were seen to be less socially acceptable by their peers than other children and manifested strong feelings of aggression, although overt manifestations of aggression were not observed in these children.

In Cohn's study (1990) the association between attachment and behavior problems was examined with 89 children (mean age 6.2). Quality of attachment was assessed by use of reunion episodes following a one-hour separation, during the summer following kindergarten. In the fall, teachers completed ratings of behavior problems. Consistent with other studies, insecurely attached boys were less well liked by peers and teachers perceived as more aggressive and disruptive than their classmates. Teachers rated them as less competent and as having more behavior problems than the secure boys. There were no such findings for girls.

One related study was carried out in Turkey by Firincioğlu (1982). This study compared institutionalized and family reared children in terms of their emotional and cognitive development to observe the effects of

deprivation. Experimental group consisted of 70 institutionalized children while control group consisted of two groups of family-reared children from low and high levels of socio-economic status (SES). She used Koppitz' Human Figure Drawing test to measure emotional and cognitive development of children. The results showed an overall negative effect of low SES on both groups. In addition, the intellectual development of the institutionalized group was slower than both control groups, and they showed more emotional disturbance compared to the other two control groups.

Barry (1949) conducted a study in which he compared 1700 mental health patients who were 40 years old and younger when they were admitted to a mental hospital with a control group of subjects who were selected by using life insurance tables. Barry looked at the incidence and time of loss in the lives of his subjects. Results showed that loss of a mother through death incidence among patients both in the first and the second five years of life was as twice as that of the controls. For ages between 10-14, incidence was still higher for the patients, but was no longer significant. The incidence of the loss of father by death was also higher for the patient group, but it was less evident. Statistical significance existed for ages between only five and nine.

In 1960 Barry published another similar study. This time he investigated a group of 1000 outpatients with diagnosis of psychoneurosis or psychosomatic illness. He looked at the incidence and time of loss of a parent in the lives of these subjects. Results showed that such diagnosis is rather common in the patient group.

Dornbusch and his colleagues (1985) investigated the adolescent deviance in mother-only and two-natural-parents households by the data of Cycle III of the National Health Examination Survey. The sample consisted of 7514 subjects between the ages of 12 and 17. A trained interviewer obtained detailed information in the interviews with adolescents and one parent. The comparison of the the adolescents of the mother-only families with the

adolescents having both biological parents showed that absence of a father had contributions to adolescent deviance. Again, the impact of father absence on deviant behaviours of the adolescents was higher for boys than for girls.

In a study Marcus (1991) examined the quality of relationships between 52 foster children (aged 4.2-13.2) and foster parents. Results indicated that behavior problems were predictable from the quality of relationship with parents. Subjects' mean number of behavior problems were midway between clinical and nonclinical norm groups which means that they had more behavior problems compared to a psychologically healthy group, but not that much to be labeled as a clinical group.

McCord, Mc Cord and Thurber (1962) conducted a study to assess the effects of paternal absence. In this study, 205 boys between the ages of 10 and 15 were observed at home, school and at play, for an average period of five years. Fifty-five of those children had lost their fathers and were living with their natural mothers. The remaining 150 boys were the control group who were living with both of their natural parents. The results of the study suggested several conclusions. First, though feminine-nonaggressive behaviour of boys was not observed in paternal absence, feminine-aggressive behaviour of boys was observed in paternal absence if the child was between 6 and 12 when his father had died. Second, intense sexual anxiety was found among almost half of the boys who had lost their fathers. And third, gang delinquency was found to be unrelated to paternal absence by death. Criminality appeared to be largely a result of the general instability of homes rather than of paternal absence in itself.

Studies on School Achievement

Mulkey, Crain and Harrington (1992) analyzed the data of a longitudinal survey on 15,000 students who were sophomores in 1980 and

seniors in 1982. Results showed that subjects from one-parent households have significantly lower grades than subjects from two-households. Both mother and father absence seemed to reduce subject's grades by .17 and .28 standard deviation, respectively. Results indicated that both mother and father absence negatively effected the subjects' grades.

In Sugawara's study (1991) about 69% of 9000 families with school age children completed a questionnaire concerning family type and parental education. Eighty-two percent of children lived with both of their parents, 15% with their mother, and 2% with their father. Controlling for parental education, children at age 13 living with their mothers scored lower than those with two parents on various measures of educational aptitude and achievement. Differences were larger for girls than boys, and larger in mathematics than in verbal measures. At age 21, subjects who had lived only with their mothers less often selected and completed a theoretical course at secondary school and less often completed further education beyond compulsory school. Low achievement in the mathematical-technical sphere characterized subjects with no father in the home.

Marcus (1991) examined the quality of relationships (QOR) between 52 foster children (aged 4.2-13.2), and significant others who were the dominant factor that helped them to adjust to disruptions in their lives. Foster parents completed a parent child reunion inventory, and foster mothers completed the Child Behavior Checklist. Measures of adult empathy were collected from both foster parents. Foster care workers rated the quality and intensity of attachment between children and parents. Finally, foster children were interviewed concerning the social support perception of affection from adults and QOR with adults and friends. School achievement problems were predictable from the quality of relationship with parents.

Summary

Of all experiences loss poses the most painful adaptational challenges for the individual. For some it is the loss of a close relationship, for some it may be a physical attribute, it can be vanishing of any projection of the individual into the future -the sudden awareness that a dream will never come true, or into the past -discovering that an idealized figure of the childhood was corrupt. Other kinds of loss may be about a valued property, migration, or something else. Losses are the shadows of all possessions (cited in Walsh and McGoldrick, 1991, p. 13).

The death of a parent is another loss which was underestimated. Loss was thought to be short-lived in the childhood. However, research results showed the contrary. It seems harder to cope with loss and to have a healthy mourning period in the childhood.

Some of the theorists who claimed that the loss of a parent may lead to pathological syndromes are Bowlby (1980), Nagera (1981), A. Freud, Burlingham, Spitz, Wolf, Robertson, Mahler and Freud (cited in Nagera 1981) stated that sometimes a clinical picture is to be understood in terms of a pathological mourning. There is extensive psychoanalytical literature indicating a relationship between proneness to psychological illness and early childhood loss.

Bowlby is one of the most prominent theorists who studied the impact of early separation and loss. In his well-known attachment theory, he stated that infants develop strong attachments to their parents. This strong bond between parent and child is a source of security for the child. The sudden absence of this bond through death of the parent, when the child is still dependent on that person results in trauma. The child may not understand the reason of this separation and gets upset and angry with the lost parent. S/he

makes an unrealistic and hopeless effort to recover the loss object with all the yearning for and anger. The attachment theory predicts certain short and long term effects of loss. Longing for approval and love, impairments in capacity to love, low self-esteem and self-concept, hostility and difficulties in future relationships, suicidal attempts are some of the possible theorized effects of early loss.

Every child has different circumstances before and after the loss. There may be factors moderating the impact of early loss such as age, sex, sex of the lost parent, temperamental style, cognitive abilities, self-esteem, self-efficacy, personal and social supports. These factors interact with one another and may create unique conditions for each child. For example, if the economical conditions of the family of the bereaved children is high, then the death of the father will not be followed by an economic deterioration. And luckily, if this child has a male relative who can take some of the roles of the father, the child may be saved of many problems. Although it was not the aim of the study, this research included additional analyses to see if there are differences between the loss of a mother and a father, loss of the same sex and opposite sex parent, living with biological parent and with others, having a sibling and being an only child, having and not having the same gender adult at home.

Although limited in number the existing empirical data support the theorized relationship between parental death during childhood and low self-esteem, poor school success, weak peer relations and high levels of emotional and behavioral problems in those children. Empirical studies presented that children who experienced the loss of their parents face special circumstances and problems. The studies of Thomes (1968) and Hetherington (1972) investigate the effects of mother and father absence on security feelings and self-concepts. Megargee, Parker and Levine (1971, cited in Bowlby, 1973) reported a relationship between children's socialization and the living with biological parents. Dornbusch and his colleagues (1985) investigated the

adolescence deviance in mother-only and two-biological-parents households. Sugawara (1991) conducted a study investigating the relationship of family type and school achievement. All of these studies had results favoring the children living with their both biological parents.

Both theoretical and empirical studies indicate that bereaved children who live with a single parent in a two-parent society have more problems and are likely to have fewer access to social, psychological and economical resources than their peers. Based on these grounds the following questions were formed.

Research Questions

Four questions were written to examine the group differences between children who have experienced parental loss and children who live with both of their parents. Comparisons were made on children's self-concept, peer popularity and problem behavior ratings and school achievement. The first parts of the questions examine the main effect for group (loss or intact), while the second parts examine the interaction effect between group (loss or intact) and gender.

1) Is there any difference between the self-concept scores of students who have experienced early loss of their parents and their peers from intact families? Does gender make a difference on the self concept scores of students who have experienced early loss of their parents and their peers from intact families?

2) Is there any difference between the peer popularity ratings of students who have experienced early loss of their parents and their peers from intact families? Does gender make a difference on the peer popularity ratings of students who have experienced early loss of their parents and and their peers from intact families?

3) Is there any difference between the emotional and behavioral problem ratings of students who have experienced early loss of their parents and their peers from intact families? Does gender make a difference on the emotional and behavioral problem ratings of students who have experienced early loss of their parents and their peers from intact families?

4) Is there any difference between the school grades of students who have experienced early loss of their parents and their peers from intact families? Does gender make a difference on the school grades of students who have experienced early loss of their parents and their peers from intact families?

Although no directional hypothesis was written for any of the above questions, the expectation of the researcher was that findings would be in favor of the intact group. More specifically, the loss group would have lower self-concept scores, lower peer popularity ratings and school grades, but higher problem behavior ratings. There was no expectation formed regarding the interaction effect of gender.

CHAPTER IV

METHOD

This causal-comparative research was designed to examine the effect of parent loss on children's self-concept, peer-relations, emotional and behavioral problems, and school achievement. The following sections describe the participants, instruments, and procedures used in this study.

Sample

Several primary schools in Istanbul were contacted for this study. The school principals and teachers were asked if they had students from the fifth, fourth or third classes whose mothers or fathers had died when they were between the ages of 1 and 6. In eleven of the conducted schools there were children who met this condition. These schools were from different regions of Istanbul and seemed to represent Istanbul population from different socio-economic backgrounds. There were 17 male and 17 female students who experienced loss of their parents through death. Thirteen of these students had mother loss and 21 of them had father loss. Each student was randomly matched with a classmate from the same gender, but was from an intact family. Thus there were 68 students in the entire sample.

After permissions of the school principals were obtained, classroom teachers and students agreed to participate in the study. Students were from 23 different classrooms. Thus 23 classroom teachers participated in the study as raters of students in their classroom. Except one teacher who knew students only for 3 months, all teachers have known their students for at least one academic year. Of all the students, 47.1 % of them were from the 5th grade, 32.4 % of them were from the 4th grade and 20.6 % of them were from the 3rd

Table 1:
Demographic Characteristics of the Children.

Birth order	<u>f</u>	<u>%</u>			
single	13	19.1			
1	24	35.3			
2	19	27.9			
3	8	11.8			
4	3	4.4			
5	1	1.5			
Number of siblings					
none	13	19.1			
1	24	35.3			
2	20	29.4			
3	7	10.3			
4	3	4.4			
5	1	1.5			
Grade level					
3	14	20.6			
4	22	32.4			
5	32	47.1			
Age in months	<u>N</u>	<u>mean</u>	<u>median</u>	<u>mode</u>	<u>SD</u>
	68	129.84	131.50	138.00	11.69
Age of loss					
in year	34	4.07	5.00	6.00	1.94

grade. For the entire sample, students' age in months ranged from 110 to 168, with a mean of 131.5. More specifically, the youngest student was 9 years, 2 months and 13 days old, while the oldest was 14 years, 3 months and 9 days old. The average age for parental loss was 4.07 years. Table 1 provides a further description of the sample. Most of the students (35.3 %) had one sibling and were the first child of their families.

To have a better understanding of students' background, some demographic information on families were collected. Since a review of literature showed that some demographic variables play an important role in effects of parental loss, separate tables were prepared to illustrate some of the characteristics of the loss group. It should be noted, however, that since all the demographic information were gathered through an interview with the child, who sometimes did not know the answer, some portion of relevant information is missing.

Table 2 displays the information including the age, educational level and occupation of the parents. The mean ages of the students' mothers and fathers' were 35.50 and 39.39 respectively. Most parents were graduates of lycee. Fathers were generally more educated than mothers.

Table 2:

Demographic Characteristics of the Parents.

Parent age in year				
	<u>mean</u>	<u>median</u>	<u>mode</u>	<u>SD</u>
mother	35.500	36.500	33.000	4.253
father	39.389	39.000	35.000	5.106

Parent's educational level	<u>mother</u>		<u>father</u>	
	<u>f</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>f</u>	<u>%</u>
none	3	4.4	1	1.5
elementary	16	23.5	9	13.2
middle school	10	14.7	2	2.9
lycee	17	25.0	22	32.4
university	5	7.4	15	22.1
graduate	-	-	1	1.5
missing	17	25.0	18	26.4

Parent's job	<u>mother</u>		<u>father</u>	
	<u>f</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>f</u>	<u>%</u>
unemployed-housewife	39	57.4	1	1.5
unskilled worker	6	8.8	9	13.2
technician-skilled worker	5	7.4	5	7.4
lower-level civil servant	6	8.8	7	10.3
middle-level civil servant	4	5.9	7	10.3
small-scale business owner	1	1.5	22	32.4
large-scale business owner	1	1.5	8	11.8
professional	-	-	3	4.4
missing	6	8.7	6	8.7

As seen from Table 2, occupation of parents was categorized into eight groups. The first category of occupation was unemployed for men, and housewife for women. The second category included manual, unskilled jobs like workers, cleaners or gatekeepers. The third category was for technicians, and skilled workers such as electricians, mechanic, manicurist. Lower-level civil servant jobs were cashiers, clerks, accountants, while middle-level civil servant jobs included jobs like laboratorians, army officers and teachers. Small scale business included small market owners, furnishers, butchers, hairdressers, while large scale business jobs included tourism agencies, publishers and architects. And finally, professionals were university teachers, and doctors. Most of the mothers (39 %) were housewives, whereas most fathers (32.8 %) had a small scale business. These demographic characteristics of the families seemed to indicate that the sample had a typical middle class urban background.

Table 3 provides a description of the lost parents' gender. As can be seen from this table, in most cases (61.8 %) the lost parent was father. Of all the lost parents 58.8 % of them were of the same sex with the children, and 41.2 % of them were of the opposite sex.

Table 3:

Lost Parent's Gender

	<u>Females</u>		<u>Males</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	<u>f</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>f</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>f</u>	<u>%</u>
mother	7	20.6	6	17.6	13	38.2
father	8	23.5	13	38.2	21	61.8
					<u>f</u>	<u>%</u>
same sex					20	58.8
opposite sex					14	41.2

Table 4:

Adults At Homes of The Loss Group.

Adults living at home	<u>f</u>	<u>%</u>
biological parent only	15	44.1
biological+step parent	5	14.7
grand parents	1	2.9
biological parent+relatives	10	29.4
relatives	3	8.8
Number of adults at home		
1	12	35.3
2	14	41.2
3	4	11.8
4	3	8.8
5	1	2.9
Same gender adult available at home		
Yes	25	73.5
No	9	26.5

When the loss group was asked with whom they lived (see Table 4), their responses indicated that most of them (44.1 %) live only with their biological parents, 29.4 % with their biological parents and relatives, 14.7 % with their biological parent and a step parent, and the rest, 11.7 % of them, with

their grandparents or relatives. Table 4 also shows that, 41.2 % of the bereaved children had two adults living at home and 35.3 % of them had only one adult living at home. Of these children 73.5 % had a same gender adult available at home, whereas 26.5 % did not have. These variables are important as the living conditions and the characteristics of people at home are thought to be the moderating factors of the effects of early loss (Sugawara, 1991)

Instruments

A self-conceptscale, a sociometric rating, teacher ratings of internalizing and externalizing problems, Grade Point Averages (GPA) and a structured interview were used in the study.

Self-Concept Measure

Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale, or the Way I Feel About Myself (WIFAM) Scale was developed by Piers and Harris in 1964, was used to measure children's self-concept. It is a paper-pencil test. This scale contains 80 items in the form of simple descriptive statements answered by "Yes" or "No" responses. High scores in this score indicate adequate self concept, and low scores indicate inadequate self concept (Çatakli and Öner, 1986-87).

WIFAM was translated and adapted into Turkish by Çatakli and Öner (1986-87). The reliability of the Turkish adaptation is high with test-retest reliability coefficients between .72 and .91 for the elementary school sample, and .83 to .91 for the secondary school sample over one to seven day intervals. Kuder Richardson 20 reliability ($r=.87$) and biserial correlations of item-total score ($r=.09$ to $.50$) indicate satisfactory homogeneity and internal consistency of the scale. The construct validity of this form was determined by (1) significant negative correlations ($r=-.43$ to $-.56$) between self concept and test anxiety

scores; and (2) item total (item remainder) correlations. The factorial analysis of the original scale yielded 10 factors. Only six of these factors (behavior, intellectual and school status, physical appearance and attribute, anxiety, popularity, happiness and satisfaction) were large enough for interpretation (Öner, 1994). In this study the total score of the WIFAM was used. A copy of the scale is in Appendix A.

Sociometric Rating

A sociometric rating was used to measure peer popularity of students. Children were provided with a list of their classmates and were asked to rate every person in their classes on how much they would like to play with him or her, on a scale of 1 to 5. High scores indicate high popularity. A copy of this form is included in Appendix B.

Teacher Ratings of Internalizing and Externalizing Problems

In this study two broad kinds of emotional and behavioral problems were examined: internalizing and externalizing. Internalizing and externalizing problems were named by Achenbach and Edelbrock in 1978 after factor analyses of specific syndromes (cited in Albayrak-Kaymak, 1994). Internalizing problems refer to inhibited acts, shy-anxious and socially withdrawn behaviors, and personality disorders, while externalizing problems refer to aggressive, disruptive and inappropriate behaviors, and conduct disorders. These ratings can be used by peers, teachers or children themselves. It has been largely accepted in the literature that these two kinds of problems together represent most of the specific problems (Albayrak-Kaymak, 1993). Therefore, for the purposes of the present research their overall ratings were found sufficient to capture problem behaviors.

Teachers were provided with a class list and were asked to rate their students on a scale of 5 (1-5) on these descriptions. High scores indicate high problems.

Interrater reliability of the measure obtained from three pairs of teacher ratings of three small groups of students was satisfactory. There were no significant differences between different raters, and their ratings were significantly correlated ($r=.58$) for internalizing and externalizing dimensions. Its validity was determined by the intercorrelations among teacher, peer and self ratings (Albayrak-Kaymak, 1993).

Teacher ratings of internalizing problems were significantly correlated with peer ratings of internalizing problems ($r=.35$), but not with peer ratings of externalizing problems ($r=.10$). Similarly, teacher ratings of externalizing problems were significantly correlated with peer ratings of externalizing problems ($r=.66$), but not with peer ratings of internalizing problems ($r=.12$). Teacher ratings of internalizing problems were significantly correlated with self ratings of internalizing problems ($r=.17$) but not of externalizing problems ($r=.09$). Both correlations between teacher and self ratings of externalizing problems were significant, but within correlation (internalizing and internalizing) was larger ($r=.44$) than the between correlation (internalizing and externalizing) ($r=.14$). Interestingly, teachers' ratings of internalizing and externalizing problems were significantly correlated ($r=.25$) indicating that teachers may be perceiving a general problem dimension rather than a particular type of problem. These data provided some support for convergent and divergent validity of the ratings.

In addition, there was some support for concurrent validity of the externalizing ratings which correlated with Delinquent Behavior ($r=.39$), Aggressive Behavior ($r=.39$) and Total Externalizing Scores ($r=.39$) of the Youth Self Report (YSR). However, the similar support was not obtained for the internalizing ratings indicating that teachers were relatively poor raters of

internalizing problems than of externalizing problems (Albayrak-Kaymak, 1993).

Teacher ratings were translated into Turkish by three bilingual individuals and translations were compared with one another. There were some items that did not have exact correspondence in Turkish and were translated differently by the translators. These were discussed with other bilingual people. Since no agreement was reached these few items were omitted. The ratings used in this study were in experimental form (Appendix C & D).

Cumulative Grade Point Averages

By the end of the academic year student's cumulative school grades or Grade Point Averages (GPA) were calculated by use of the grades they received for each course which were obtained from the school records. GPAs were standardized (t scores) within the school to prevent differences in teachers' grading practices across schools. To obtain more reliable estimation of school success, GPA calculations were based on means and standard deviations of the entire class within each school, not just those of students in the sample.

Structured Interview for Demographic Information

A structured interview was developed to obtain demographic information on student's current age and age at loss, sex, family's educational and occupational background, family members living together, presence of parental substitutes, and gender of the lost parent. These interviews were individually conducted by the researcher herself within the students' school environment outside the classroom. Each interview took approximately 10 minutes. Appendix E includes a copy of the structured interview format.

As stated earlier, there were disadvantages of conducting interviews with the children. First, bereaved children could be hurt to be separated from the class and inquired about their families. To avoid this, the researcher chose eight other names except for the target child(ren) from the class list. Students were told that names were chosen randomly. The researcher approached each child, especially the bereaved ones sensitively not to hurt them in any way. The second disadvantage was the fact that interviews had some missing information since children did not necessarily know their parent's age, job, education, and their age at loss. Teachers were not interviewed since the researcher did not want to pull their attention onto these children and thought that they were not likely to have adequate information to answer the interview questions.

Procedure

The data were collected by the researcher in students' regular school settings. The classroom teachers introduced the researcher to the class. The researcher gave brief explanation of the study and directions on how to fill out the instruments. To avoid making the loss group children target in class, and to prevent any possible psychological harm, the directions and explanation in class were general and did not include any statement that the study concentrated on bereaved children. After the researcher gave directions on how to fill out the instruments sociometric ratings were applied to the entire class where at least one child with early loss was located. At the same time, classroom teachers filled out problem behavior ratings. Again, to avoid any kind of bias, classroom teachers were not informed that the focus was target (i.e., loss group) students and their matched peers, but instead they were asked to rate everybody in class.

The sociometric and problem behavior ratings were collected for the whole class in order not to separate the subject group from other students.

Then, the researcher told to the class that she would choose 10 random names from the class list for the second part of the study. These names actually included the name of the target student, but names of other students who were indeed randomly selected to match with the target student. If at least one of the randomly selected students was not from the same gender as the target student, the selection procedure was repeated. The structured interview and WIFAM scale were applied to these students in an empty classroom in the school.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

In this section the results of this study are organized in the same order of the research questions. These questions were examined by two-way analyses of variance (loss and intact group vs. male and female). Findings of main effects for group these analyses answer the first part of each question, while interaction effects answer the second part of each question. All the data analyses of this study was conducted by use of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS-PC) program.

Table 5 gives the descriptive statistics for all the dependent variables. They were calculated separately for each gender and for the loss and intact groups. WIFAM means obtained from our intact group were higher than WIFAM mean (62.21) for primary school (fourth and fifth grades) population in Öner's study (1994). Similiar to Çataklı's study (1985) no gender differences was observed (Table 5 and Table 6). On the other hand, gender differences were found for externalizing behaviors (Table 5 and Table 9) and GPAs (Table 5 and Table 10). As one can observe from these tables boys had higher externalizing behavior ratings, but lower GPAs than girls. These results are similiar to the ones observed in the literature. Females had lower externalizing mean scores than boys (cited in Albayrak-Kaymak, 1994).

Research Question 1

Is there any difference between the self-concept scores of students who have experienced early loss of their parents and their peers from intact families? Does gender make a difference on the self concept scores of students who have experienced early loss of their parents and and their peers from intact families?

Table 5 presents the means and standard deviations of WIFAM scores for the loss and the intact group. As seen in Table 6, there was a significant main effect for group ($F(1,64)=37; p=.001$). Examination of Table 5 indicates that this group difference was in favor of the intact group. Students in the intact group received higher WIFAM scores than the loss group students.

Table 5:

Means and Standard Deviations For WIFAM, Peer Ratings, Internalizing Ratings, Externalizing Ratings and Standardized GPAs.

Outcome Variable	Gender	<u>Intact</u>			<u>Loss</u>		
		n	Mean	S.D.	n	Mean	S.D.
WIFAM scores	Female	16	69.56	3.18	18	59.50	7.37
	Male	18	69.67	5.43	16	59.94	9.28
Peer ratings	Female	16	3.39	.57	18	3.04	.69
	Male	18	3.29	.67	16	2.99	.60
Internalizing ratings	Female	16	1.94	1.00	18	2.33	1.46
	Male	18	2.28	1.09	16	2.69	1.45
Externalizing ratings	Female	16	1.50	.82	18	1.72	1.02
	Male	18	2.28	1.23	16	3.38	1.59
Standardized GPAs	Female	16	55.60	1.44	18	51.89	7.80
	Male	18	50.42	9.81	16	44.92	11.16

As to the second part of the first question, there was no interaction effect for gender (Table 6). These findings indicate that regardless of gender, the loss group's self-concept was lower than the impact group. Thus, the answer to the first part of the question is "Yes," while it is "No" to the second part.

Table 6:

Two-way Analysis of Variance for the Wifam Scores According to Group and Gender.

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p
Sex	1.24	1	1.24	.03	.861
Group	1659.01	1	1659.01	37.00	.001
Sex x Group	.47	1	.47	.01	.914
Residual	2869.38	64	44.83		

Research Question 2

Is there any difference between the peer popularity ratings of students who have experienced early loss of their parents and their peers from intact families? Does gender make a difference on the peer popularity ratings of students who have experienced early loss of their parents and their peers from intact families?

As it can be seen from Table 5, peer popularity ratings were higher for the intact group. Indeed, Table 7 shows a main effect for peer popularity ($F(1,64)=4.44$; $p=.032$).

Table 7:

Two-way Analysis of Variance for the Peer Popularity Ratings According to Loss and Sex.

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p
Sex	.10	1	.10	.24	.623
Group	1.81	1	1.81	4.44	.032
Sex x Group	.02	1	.02	.04	.831
Residual	26.05	64	.41		

The table shows no significant interaction effect for gender indicating that gender was not an important variable in peer popularity of either loss or intact group students. In summary, the first part of the question receives an affirmative answer, but the second parts receives a negative one.

Research Question 3

Is there any difference between the emotional and behavioral problem ratings of students who have experienced early loss of their parents and their peers from intact families? Does gender make a difference on the emotional and behavioral problem ratings of students who have experienced early loss of their parents and their peers from intact families?

Table 5 shows the loss group tended to have higher internalizing (emotional) problems than the intact group and it can be seen from Table 8, this difference was a significant one ($F(1,64)=5,723; p=.022$).

Table 8:

Two-way Analysis of Variance for the Internalizing Ratings According to Loss and Sex.

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p
Sex	.00	1	.00	.00	.961
Group	9.18	1	9.18	5.72	.022
Sex x Group	1.96	1	1.96	1.22	.272
Residual	102.65	64	1.60		

As one can observe from Table 5 males in both groups had somewhat higher internalizing ratings, but Table 8 did not show any main effect for gender or an interaction effect between gender and group. These findings indicated that gender was not an important variable in the internalizing ratings of either groups.

As to the externalizing problems, a two-way ANOVA revealed significant main effects for group ($F(1,64)=5,19; p=.021$) and for gender ($F(1,64)=17,60; p=.002$) (Table 9). Table 5 shows that this difference as in favor of the intact group and in favor of girls. Boys had higher externalizing ratings than girls. Again, there was no interaction effect between group and gender. Thus, both for internalizing and externalizing problems, the first of the questions received a "Yes," and the second part received a "No" answer.

Table 9:

Two-way Analysis of Variance for the Externalizing Ratings According to Loss and Sex.

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p
Sex	25.02	1	25.02	17.60	.002
Group	7.37	1	7.37	5.19	.021
Sex x Group	3.24	1	3.24	2.28	.131
Residual	90.97	64	1.42		

Research Question 4

Is there any difference between the school grades of students who have experienced early loss of their parents and their peers from intact families? Does gender make a difference on the school grades of students who have experienced early loss of their parents and their peers from intact families?

As Table 10 shows two-way ANOVA revealed significant group differences of school grades for the loss and intact group. Examination of Table 5 indicates that standardized GPAs tended to be higher for the intact group and for females in both groups. Students in the loss group seemed to have lower GPAs than the intact group. And indeed, both main effects were significant, for group ($F(1,64)=5.03$; $p=.022$) as well as for gender ($F(1,64)=6.529$; $p=.003$). Finally, again there was no interaction effect (Table 10) between group and gender indicating that regardless of gender the loss group had lower GPAs than the intact group and regardless of group

females had higher GPAs than males. In sum, the first answer was "Yes", while the second was "No" as responding to this research question.

Table 10:

Two-way Analysis of Variance for the Standardized GPAs According to Loss and Sex.

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p
Sex	625.45	1	625.45	8.76	.003
Loss	359.08	1	359.08	5.03	.022
Sex x Loss	13.72	1	13.72	.19	.664
Residual	4567.97	64	71.37		

As a general summary of results, two way ANOVA results showed significant group differences for all the dependent variables; self-concept, peer popularity, internalizing and externalizing behaviors, and school achievement. All these differences favored the intact group. The loss group had lower self-concepts, lower peer popularity ratings, higher internalizing and externalizing problem ratings and lower GPAs. Since no interaction effect was not found in any of the analyses, we can state that parental loss was equally detrimental for males and females.

Although the research questions did not refer to main effects for gender effect, it is important to note that boys had higher externalizing behavior ratings, but lower GPA's than girls.

Additional Analyses

Studies summarized in the literature review section indicated that certain factors moderate the impact of loss. Although these factors were not within the scope of this study, some additional analyses were conducted for exploratory reasons. These analyses investigated “within the loss group” differences due to living with biological parent versus others, loss of mother versus father, having a sex model or not, having a sibling or not and the sex match with the lost parent. Possible effects of these factors in all the dependent variables of the study were analyzed with t-tests. However, of the 25 t-tests ran, only two of them yielded significant group differences.

Children who lived alone with biological parent had higher self-concept scores and sociometric ratings than children living with others. Since most of the group differences were not statistically significant, this significance could be due to chance. In addition, the number of children living with others were rather a heterogeneous group; some had biological parents with them, some did not. That is to say this was not a comparison of children who had and had not have their live biological parent with them. This was because we had very few children who did not live with a biological parent to allow such a comparison. Thus, these “significant” findings were not exactly significant for a better understanding of the impact of loss. Therefore, these additional analyses are not reported in this thesis. Indeed, our “loss” group was relatively small to allow a legitimate examination of moderating factors. Future studies are needed to investigate what personal and environmental factors influence the impact of loss on children.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The results of the present research provided support for all the expectations the researcher had for the questions of this study. Compared to children from intact families bereaved children had lower self-concept, peer popularity, school achievement and higher internalizing and externalizing behaviors.

These results are consistent with the theoretical and empirical research summarized in the previous sections (Bowlby 1980; Cohn, 1990, Firincioğlu, 1982; Nagera, 1981; Sugawara 1991).

Cassidy's study (1988) showed significant relationship between attachment and self-esteem. In contrast, Thomes (1968) found no differences in terms of self-esteem between children of 9-11 years old from absent and father present homes. He indicated that research done with adolescents may be misleading as adolescents might have adjustment problems in that transition period. Findings of the present research on self-concept indicated that sudden disappearance of one of the parents reduced children's feelings of self-worth. This contradicts with Thomes findings as these children were from the same age period. But Thomes's sample consisted of children whose fathers were absent for reasons other than death as well, like divorce and separation. So this difference in sample may be the cause of these contradictory results.

Bereaved children are thought to be less popular among their peers (Tolman, Diekman, McCartney, 1989). Hetherington (1972) who compared children from intact families and from families with absent fathers indicated that father absent children manifested lack of skills in relating to males and

behaviors. The studies of Park and Waters (1989), Cohn (1990), Meshot and Leitner (1993) were supporting the idea that bereaved and insecurely attached children are more likely to show poorer peer adjustment. In contrast, Megargee, Parker and Levine (1971, cited in Bowlby, 1973) found no relation between death of a parent and socialization. But they also stated that this may be due to the smaller proportion of the bereaved in their sample. The present study's findings on peer popularity indicated that bereaved children have lower popularity ratings. The researcher's observation during the interviews was that these bereaved children looked happier to be asked questions, and to be cared, but more timid and slower in building the first contact as compared to children from intact families.

Robins (1966, cited in Sack, 1977) stated that father absent children may grow up to be a sociopathic. Stolz (1954, cited in Earls, 1976) indicated that father absent children manifested strong feelings of aggression. Firincioğlu (1982) who compared institutionalized and family reared children stated that institutionalized children show more emotional disturbance. Similarly, findings of the present study on behavioral and emotional problems indicated that bereaved children have more internalizing and externalizing problem behaviors.

Studies of Sugawara (1991), Marcus (1991) and Mulkey, Crain, Harrington (1992) showed that children from one-parent households and foster children had lower school performance than children from intact families. The findings of the present study on school achievement supported these results. It was seen that bereaved children had lower GPAs. This may be due to the fact that these children have fewer people around who are interested in them and expect success from them.

Contrary to Rutter's claims (1970, 71, 86 cited in Sugawara, 1991) in our study gender was not found to be an important variable in influencing children's vulnerability towards loss. Findings indicated that parental loss was equally

detrimental for males and females. There was evidence that boys had higher externalizing behaviors and lower school achievement than did girls. This is consistent with the data from previous studies on externalizing behaviors (cited in Albayrak, Kaymak, 1993).

This study was one of the first attempts to understand the trauma and the following conflictual feelings, and the difficulties these children live after a loss. It may have preventive implications for counselors who work especially with children before school age. With a preventive outlook counselors could have a major role in helping these children, who may be regarded as a risk group. Counselors could also help families to cope with this situation in the best way, both following the loss and later on.

Limitations of the Study

Certain limitations restrict the generalization of the findings obtained in this study. The first limitation of the study is that size of the sample was relatively small. Several primary schools were contacted for this study, yet only eleven of them had children who had experienced loss before six years of age. Since we had limited time to complete data collection we could not reach a bigger sample. For the same reason of difficulty in obtaining a larger sample, the age range of the participants was relatively wide. We had to include children from grades 3 and 4, as well as 5.

Another limitation of the study was the fact that demographic information on families were obtained through interviews with children. This resulted in some missing information and some doubts about the description of the sample.

Most gathered information was based on group testing, rather than in-depth individual profiles. However, information gathered with in-depth individual

profiles could provide more detailed description of the impact of loss. For example, the teacher ratings were used in the study to assess the internalizing and externalizing behaviors were broad measures. These did not assess specific problems experienced by the loss group. In addition, since these ratings were in experimental forms, it is difficult to make reliable conclusions based on them.

Recommendations For Future Research

Future researchers are recommended to have a qualitative design with projective instruments, as it can add richer data to such kind of a study. In-depth individual profiles would be helpful to understand circumstances involved in loss and their effects on children. Play therapy, picture drawing and other projective techniques can be used to gather detailed information on feelings of children and the families after the loss. This information would be helpful for counselors and psychologists to work more effectively with these children and families. Similarly, interviews made with families as well as with children can be recommended for future studies to be able to get healthier and richer data.

It was stated before that, every child has his/her unique circumstances before and after the loss. Thus, the characteristics of children who had a healthy mourning process can be investigated as well as stages of mourning in children and adults after loss.

The age and cognitive abilities of the child may be important in his/her understanding the situation. If s/he can cognitively appraise the circumstances and understand the meaning of death s/he may not blame her/himself for the death. The age at which children are fully able to understand the concept of death and its finality could be investigated. This study investigated the effects of early loss at a period of 6 to 12 years after loss. Studies investigating those effects with differing

periods of life after loss and longitudinal studies across larger life span can be recommended for future studies.

It is important to remind that this research focused especially on loss of a single parent. Effects of loss of both parents and parental separation need to be investigated and compared. Another suggestion is the investigation of the differing effect of the cause of death of the parent, whether it is expected or sudden.

The capacity of the remaining parent and the relatives to cope with loss, presence of siblings and other adults who can help the child coping with this sorrow would be important variables. The quality of the relationship with the survivor parent and child may be important. The effects of presence of a step parent and the quality of the relationship between him/her and the child can be investigated.

And finally, despite all of the limitations, this study shows that bereaved children constitute a risk group for future problems in their lives. So, preventive programs should be designed to support these children and help them cope with difficulties brought by the loss of beloved parent(s).

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APPENDIX A

PIERS-HARRIS CHILDREN'S SELF CONCEPT SCALE

KENDİM HAKKINDA DÜŞÜNCELERİM

AÇIKLAMA: Aşağıda 80 cümle var. Bunlardan sizi tanımlayanları evet, tanımlamayanları ise hayır ile cevaplandırın. Bazı cümlelerde karar vermek zor olabilir. Ama lütfen bütün cümleleri işaretleyin. Aynı cümleyi hem evet hem hayır diye işaretlemeyin. Unutmayın, cümledeki ifade genellikle sizi anlatıyorsa evet, genellikle sizi anlatmıyorsa hayır şeklinde işaretleyeceksiniz. Cümlenin size uygun olup olmadığını en iyi siz bilebilirsiniz. Bunun için kendinizi gerçekten nasıl görüyorsanız öyle cevaplayın. Cevaplarınızı cevap kağıdına işaretlerken, cümle numarası ile cevap kağıdındaki numaranın aynı olmasına dikkat ediniz.

1. İyi resim çizerim.
2. Okul ödevlerimi bitirmem uzun sürer.
3. Ellerimi kullanmada becerikliyimdir.
4. Okulda başarılı bir öğrenciyim.
5. Aile içinde önemli bir yerim vardır.
6. Sınıf arkadaşlarım benimle alay ediyorlar.
7. Mutluyum.
8. Çoğunlukla neşesizim.
9. Akıllıyım.
10. Öğretmenler derse kaldırıncaya heyecanlanıyorum.
11. Dış görünüşüm beni rahatsız ediyor.
12. Genellikle çekingenim.
13. Arkadaş edinmekte güçlük çekiyorum.
14. Büyüdüğümde önemli bir kimse olacağım.
15. Aileme sorun yaratıyorum.
16. Kuvvetli sayılırım.
17. Sınavlardan önce heyecanlanıyorum, korkuyorum.
18. Okulda terbiyeli uyumlu davranırım.
19. Herkes tarafından pek sevilen biri değilim.
20. Parlak fikirlerim vardır.
21. Genellikle kendi dediklerimin olmasını isterim.
22. Birşeyden kolaylıkla vazgeçebilirim.
23. Müzikte iyiyim.
24. Hep kötü şeyler yaparım.
25. Evde çoğu zaman huysuzluk ederim.
26. Sınıfta arkadaşlarım beni sayarlar.
27. Sinirli biriyim.
28. Gözlerim güzeldir.

29. Sınıfta derse kalktığımda bildiklerimi sıkılmadan anlatırım.
30. Derslerde sık sık hayal kurarım.
31. (Kardeşiniz varsa) Kardeş(ler)ime sataşırım.
32. Arkadaşlarım fikirlerimi beğenir.
33. Başım sık sık derde girer.
34. Evde büyüklerimin sözünü dinlerim.
35. Sık sık üzülür, meraklanırım.
36. Ailem benden çok fazla şey bekliyor.
37. Halimden memnunum.
38. Evde ve okulda pek çok şeyin dışında bırakıldığımı sanıyorum.
39. Saçlarım güzeldir.
40. Çoğu zaman okul faaliyetlerine gönüllü olarak katılırım.
41. Şimdiki halimden daha başka olmayı isterdim.
42. Geceleri rahat uyurum.
43. Okuldan hiç hoşlanmıyorum.
44. Arkadaşlar arasında oyunlara katılmak için bir seçim yapılırken, en son seçilenlerden biriyim.
45. Sık sık hasta olurum.
46. Başkalarına karşı iyi davranmam.
47. Okuldaki arkadaşlarım iyi fikirlerim olduğunu düşünürler.
48. Mutsuzum.
49. Pek çok arkadaşım var.
50. Neşeliyim.
51. Pek çok şeye aklım ermez.
52. Yakışıklıyım (güzelim).
53. Hayat dolu bir insanım.
54. Sık sık kavgaya kaşırım.
55. Erkek arkadaşlarım arasında sevilirim.
56. Arkadaşlarım bana sık sık sataşırlar.
57. Ailem benle düş kırıklığına uğruyor.
58. Hoş bir yüzüm vardır.
59. Evde hep benle uğraşırlar.
60. Oyunlarda ve sporda başı ben çekerim.
61. Ne zaman birşey yapmaya kalksam herşey ters gider.
62. Hareketlerimde sakarım.
63. Oyunlarda ve sporda oynamak yerine seyredirim.
64. Öğrendiğimi çabuk unuturum.
65. Herkesle iyi geçinirim.
66. Çabuk kızarım.
67. Kız arkadaşlarım arasında sevilirim (popülerim)
68. Çok okurum.

69. Bir grupta birlikte çalışmaktansa tek başıma çalışmaktan hoşlanırım.
70. (Kardeşiniz varsa) Kardeş(ler)imi severim.
71. Vücutça güzel sayılırım.
72. Sık sık korkuya kapılırım.
73. Her zaman birşeyler düşürür ve kırarım.
74. Güvenilir bir kimseyim.
75. Başkalarından farklıyım.
76. Kötü şeyler düşünürüm.
77. Kolay ağlarım.
78. İyi bir insanım.
79. İşler hep benim yüzümden ters gider.
80. Şanslı bir kimseyim.

APPENDIX B

SOCIOMETRIC RATING

ARKADAŞ İLİŞKİLERİ

ADI, SOYADI :
OKULU :
SINIFI :

Aşağıda sınıf listeniz var. Sınıfınızdaki her öğrenciyi onunla okul dışı saatlerde ne kadar oynamak isteyeceğinize göre puanlayın.

hemen hemen her zaman ise, ona 5 verin;
oldukça sık ise, ona 4 verin;
bazen ise, ona 3 verin;
çok seyrek ise, ona 2 verin, ve
hiçbir zaman ise, ona 1 verin

Teşekkürler.

ÖRNEK:

(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)
hemen	oldukça	bazen	çok	hiçbir
her	sık		seyrek	zaman
zaman				

Ayşe Mutlukız ().....(X)..... ().....()..... ()
Osman Osmanoğlu ().....()..... (X).....()..... ()

APPENDIX C

TEACHER RATINGS OF INTERNALIZING PROBLEMS

Öğretmen Değerlendirmesi - I

İsim ve Soyadınız: _____

Okul: _____

Sınıf/Şube: _____

Ne kadar zamandan beri bu sınıfta tanınıyorsunuz? _____

Burada sınıfınızdaki her bir öğrenci için "içselleştirme davranışları" üzerine genel bir değerlendirme yapmanızı rica ediyoruz. İçselleştirme davranışları kendine yönelik ya da sosyal olarak içe kapanık olarak kabul edilen bir grup davranışı kapsar. Aşağıdaki paragrafta bir öğrenciyi tanımlayabilecek içselleştirme davranışları örnekleri vardır:

düşük enerji ya da etkinlik düzeyi ve sosyal kaçınma, içe kapanma ya da yalnızlaşma davranışları, haklarını aramayan, utangaç ya da sıkılgan, sinirli, sakar, korkulu veya kaygılı, sık sık kuruntu yapar, depresif görünür, şaşkın davranır, hayale dalar ve kendine zarar verir.

Bu genel tanımlamayı aklınızda tutarak, lütfen sınıfınızdaki herbir öğrenciyi 1 ile 5 arasındaki bir sayı ile değerlendirin. Eğer bir öğrenci bu içselleştirme davranışlarını

hemen hemen her zaman gösteriyorsa, ona 5 verin;
oldukça sık gösteriyorsa, ona 4 verin;
bazen gösteriyorsa, ona 3 verin;
çok seyrek gösteriyorsa, ona 2 verin, ve
hiçbir zaman göstermiyorsa, ona 1 verin

Teşekkürler.

ÖRNEK:

(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)
hemen	oldukça	bazen	çok	hiçbir
her	sık		seyrek	zaman
zaman				

Ayşe Mutlukız ().....(X)..... ().....()..... ()

Osman Osmanoğlu ().....()..... (X).....()..... ()

APPENDIX D

TEACHER RATINGS OF EXTERNALIZING PROBLEMS

Öğretmen Değerlendirmesi - D

İsim ve Soyadınız: _____

Okul: _____

Sınıf/Şube: _____

Ne kadar zamandan beri bu sınıfta tanıyoruz ? _____

Burada sınıfınızdaki her bir öğrenci için "dışsallaştırma davranışları" üzerine genel bir değerlendirme yapmanızı rica ediyoruz. Dışsallaştırma davranışları okulda uygunsuz ya da rahatsız edici olarak kabul edilen bir grup davranışı kapsar. Aşağıdaki paragrafta bir öğrenciyi tanımlayabilecek dışsallaştırma davranışları örnekleri vardır:

bir etkinliği uzun zaman sürdüremez, kolayca kontrolünü yitirir ve sinirlenir, çok tartışmacıdır, diğerlerine sözel hakarete bulunur, uygunsuz dil kullanır, diğerlerini rahatsız eder, kavga eder, insanlara ve nesnelere karşı saldırgan ve zorbadır, hırsızlık yapar, mala zarar verir, söz dinlemez ya da öğretmenin yönerge ve kurallarına uymaz.

Bu genel tanımlamaları aklınızda tutarak, lütfen sınıfınızdaki herbir öğrenciyi 1 ile 5 arasındaki bir sayı ile değerlendirin. Eğer öğrenci bu dışsallaştırma davranışlarını

hemen hemen her zaman gösteriyorsa, ona 5 verin;
oldukça sık gösteriyorsa, ona 4 verin;
bazen gösteriyorsa, ona 3 verin;
çok seyrek gösteriyorsa, ona 2 verin, ve
hiçbir zaman göstermiyorsa, ona 1 verin

Teşekkürler.

ÖRNEK:

(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)
hemen	oldukça	bazen	çok	hiçbir
her	sık		seyrek	zaman
zaman				

Ayşe Mutlukız ().....(X)..... ().....()..... ()
Osman Osmanoğlu ().....()..... (X).....()..... ()

APPENDIX E

STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

Öğrenci Görüşme Formu

Numara:

1) Adınız Soyadınız:

2) Cinsiyetiniz:

3) Doğum tarihiniz:

4) Okulunuzun adı:

5) Öğretmeninizin adı:

6) Annenizin adı:

7) Annenizin en son bitirdiği okul:

8) Annenizin mesleği:

9) Anneniz hayatta mı ?

10) Eğer hayatta değilse siz kaç yaşındayken vefat etti ?

11) Babanız adı:

12) Babanızın en son bitirdiği okul:

13) Babanızın mesleği:

14) Babanız hayatta mı ?

15) Eğer hayatta değilse siz kaç yaşındayken vefat etti ?

16) Annenizle babanız birlikte mi yaşıyorlar ? Evde kaç kişi yaşıyorsunuz ? Bunlar kimlerdir ?