UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL ANXIETY THROUGH ADOLESCENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF INTERPARENTAL CONFLICT AND PARENTAL REJECTION

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BOĞAZİÇİ UNIVERSITY
2007

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Thesis submitted to the
Institute for Graduate Studies in the Social Sciences
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
in
Educational Sciences

by
Başak Yılmaz

Boğaziçi University
2007

Thesis Abstract

Başak Yılmaz, "Understanding Social Anxiety through Adolescents' Perceptions of Interparental Conflict and Parental Rejection"

The aim of the present study was to understand the possible relation of social anxiety to adolescents' perception of intense, frequent and unresolved interparental conflict and parental rejection. The effect of gender on these relations and on social anxiety was also investigated. Additionally, the relationship between adolescents' perceptions of interparental conflict and parental rejection were examined.

The sample consisted of 406 students from five high schools in Istanbul. All were from intact families with moderate SES levels. For data collection, "Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale", "Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict Scale", and "Parental Acceptance- Rejection Questionnaire/Child Short Form" were used. The reliability study of the Turkish version of PARQ/Child Short Form was carried out by the researcher and it was shown that it has sufficient reliability.

The findings indicated that intense and frequent perception of interparental conflict and parental rejection were associated to social anxiety whereas unresolved interparental conflict was not related to social anxiety. Although no difference was found between females' and males' social anxiety levels, the findings showed the importance of the parents' and the child's gender in understanding social anxiety; it was found that perception of interparental conflict and parental rejection were predictive factors for only males' social anxiety levels and perceived paternal rejection plays more important role than perception of mother rejection in understanding social anxiety. Furthermore, it was shown that there is a significant positive correlation between perception of interparental conflict and perception of paternal and maternal rejection for both males and females.

Özet

Başak Yılmaz, "Sosyal Kaygıyı, Ergenlerin Algıladıkları Ebeveynler Arası Çatışma ve Ebeveyn Reddi ile Anlamak"

Bu araştırmanın amacı ergenlerin sosyal kaygı düzeylerinin, algıladıkları sık, yoğun ve çözümlenmemiş ebeveynler arası çatışma ve ebeveyn reddi ile olası ilişkisini anlamaktır. Cinsiyetin sosyal kaygı düzeyine ve bu ilişkiler üzerindeki etkisine de bakılmıştır. Buna ek olarak ergenlerin algıladıkları ebeveynler arası çatışma ve algılanan ebeveyn reddi arasındaki ilişki de incelenmiştir.

Örneklem İstanbul'da ki beş lisede okuyan 406 öğrenciden oluşmaktadır. Tüm öğrenciler, ebeveynlerin birlikte yaşadığı ve orta sosyo-ekonomik duruma sahip ailelerden gelmektedir. Veri toplamak için, "Sosyal Durumlarda Kendini Değerlendirme Ölçeği", "Çocukların Evlilik Çatışmasını Algısı Ölçeği" ve "Ebeveyn Kabul-Red Ölçeği/Çocuk Kısa Formu" kullanılmıştır. "Ebeveyn Kabul-Red Ölçeği/Çocuk Kısa Formu"nun Türkçe'sinin güvenirlik çalışması araştırmacı tarafından yapılmıştır ve formun yeterli güvenirliğe sahip olduğu gösterilmiştir.

Bulgular, algılanan sık ve yoğun ebeveynler arası çatışma ve ebevyn reddinin sosyal kaygı ile anlamlı olarak ilişkilendiğini gösterirken, algılanan çözümlenmemiş ebevyenler arası çatışma ve sosyal kaygı arasında anlamlı bir ilişki çıkmamıştır. Sosyal kaygı seviyeleri cinsiyetler arası fark göstermezken, bulgular ebeveynlerin ve çocukların cinsiyetlerinin sosyal kaygıyı anlamakta önemli olduğunu işaret etmektedir; algılanan ebeveynler arası çatışma ve baba tarafından red, sadece erkeklerde sosyal kaygıyı belirleyen faktörler olarak çıkarken, algılanan baba reddinin sosyal kaygıyı anlamakta, algılanan anne reddinden daha önemli olduğu bulunmuştur. Ayrıca algılanan ebeveynler arası çatışma ve algılanan ebeveyn reddi arasında da her iki cinsiyet için anlamlı pozitif korelasyon bulunmuştur.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First of all, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my thesis advisor, Assoc. Prof. Fatoş Erkman, who have guided and supported me since the beginning of my graduate studies. I felt her guidance with me all the time. Her optimistic and positive approach motivated me during my thesis and my graduate years. She helped me to realize that each problem has a solution. Thank you very much for everything.

I would like to thank Assist. Prof Z. Hande Sart Gassert for her support, sincere interest and valuable reviews she gave me during this research. She enriched my thesis with her precious ideas and contributions. I am thankful to her for her understanding, smiling face, warmth and for always being there for me.

I wish to express my thanks to my committee member Dr. Nevin Dölek who has provided me valuable ideas, suggestions and feedback about my research. She was more than kind and understanding. Her presence was quite motivating for me.

My special thanks for Assoc. Prof. Deniz Albayrak Kaymak, for her support and trust in me. Her contributions helped me establish the basics of my research, and her excitement and encouragement increased my motivation during my graduate years. It was very good to know that she was there to listen to me and share.

I am also grateful to Assist. Prof. Özlem Ünlühisarcıklı and Ayşe Sim Diri for their special contributions through this thesis processes.

I want to thank the administrators, teachers, school counselors and students of the high schools which cooperated in data collection.

I would like to thank Nurşah Erkaplan and my cousin Ceren Külhaşoğlu for their efforts during the data collection and process. I am thankful to Ceren not only

for her helps in data process period but also for being with me in difficult and stressful times. I am also grateful to Selda Koydemir and Suna Eryiğit for their help.

Beyond my research, I would like to recall the role of my friends from the MA class, Şengül Hafızoğlu, Simge Kırcan, Semra Yıldırım, Melisa Sayar, Özlem Yıldırım, Hande Bakır and Erkan Uğuzalp for their limitless encouragement and support during my research and grad years. I am particularly grateful to Simge and Semra, who were always there for me, and to Özlem who helped me whenever I needed.

I would like to thank my assistant friends, Soner Şimşek, Gökçe Bulgan, Pınar Yavuz, Onur Seçkin and Aslı Sezen, for their emotional and practical support. I am thankful to Gökçe and Pınar especially for their close friendship. Without them, everything would be so hard.

Also, I want to thank all the faculty members and staff of the Department of Education and BÜREM for their emotional and professional support during my grad studies.

I would like to express special thanks to my Baran Atmanoğlu and my best friend Tuğçe Çiftçi for their love, care, patience, understanding, encouragement and belief in me.

Last but not least, I would like to present my gratitude to my parents Serap Yılmaz and Ömer Faruk Yılmaz, and to my brother Burak Yılmaz for always being there, for believing in me, for loving me unconditionally and for supporting me in everything I do. I am grateful to them for everything. I love you all.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Almost every individual, whether an adult or a child, experiences a certain amount of anxiety in her/his daily life. This amount of anxiety may be triggered by several different stressors of everyday living. There are many individuals who have some problems related to their interpersonal functioning. They might feel nervous when making a speech or anxious when meeting other people and initiating conversations. Some might have excessive fear that their performance or social interaction will be viewed as inadequate. Anxiety experienced in social situations may vary from a feeling of distress in the presence of others to significant collapses in daily life functioning (Beidel & Turner, 1998). It may even hinder the enjoyment derived from an educational process, normal relationship with peers and partners. Because of extreme and persistent distress people may completely avoid the "feared" social setting and social encounters (Beidel & Turner, 1998; Akyıl, 2000).

Forms of anxiety experienced in social situations have in common a basic fear of the negative evaluation of others and it has been discussed under various labels including social anxiety, social phobia, interpersonal anxiety, shyness and more specifically; audience anxiety, speech anxiety, cross-sex anxiety, test anxiety, and performance anxiety. Social anxiety is a generic term and it is defined as a persistent fear of negative evaluation in social situations in which the person is exposed to unfamiliar people or situations (Nietzel, Speltz , Dauglas, & Bernstein,1998). Social anxiety is likely to occur along a continuum of severity and social phobia is its extreme point. Thus, the difference between social anxiety and social phobia is

related to the degree of functional impairment and the extent of the avoidance conditions necessary for living (Kashdan & Herbert, 2001).

Epidemiological studies suggest that the prevalence of social anxiety varies due to differences in the definition of the problem across studies (from 2% to 20% in general population) (Kearney, 2005). In general, research has shown that social anxiety is one of the most common mental health problems and it can affect people of all ages (Kashdan & Herbert, 2001). Social anxiety is also common among children and especially among adolescents. In contrast to most other anxiety and mood disorders, there is considerable evidence that the onset of the social anxiety problem occurs at a relatively early age, with a mean onset of 15.5 years and children are diagnosed as early as at age eight (Ollendick & Hirshfeld-Becker, 2002; Kearney, 2005).

Because of the prevalence and severity of the problem, it is important to understand the etiology of social anxiety. There has been various etiological theories and explanations developed for social anxiety. Although the details vary, most etiological models of social anxiety posit an interaction between genetics, neurobiology, cognitive factors, environmental factors, life events and familial factors. Familial factors are especially important to understand social anxiety since the mean age of the onset of social anxiety is early (during the years when the family has an important influence) and the family is the first place where people learn social behavior and where they develop schemes about themselves as social beings. Additionally, family relationships play an important role in the development of children's interpersonal skills (Beidel & Turner, 1998). Several empirical studies have been conducted to obtain individuals' perceptions of their parents' child-rearing attitudes, their family relationships and environments in relation to social anxiety.

Researchers have found that socially anxious individuals perceive their parents as having been more overprotective during their childhood (Bruch & Heimberg, 1994), more rejecting and less emotionally supportive compared to non anxious peers (McKeown, 1997; Bögels, Oosten, Muris & Smulder, 1999). Research also showed that disruptive/hostile family relations are associated with interpersonal deficits during social interactions (Johnson, Interbitzen-Nolan, Schapman, 2005; Stocker & Youngblade, 1999).

One of the family characteristics that is important in understanding adolescents' feelings of social anxiety is perceived interparental conflict. Studies on interparental conflict showed that the perception of intense, frequent and unresolved interparental conflict is related with the difficulties in social and personal development for children and adolescents (Grych, Harold & Miles, 2003). It is stated that perception of interparental conflict interferes with the healthy child socialization process (Goodman et. al.,1999). Research indicated that interparental conflict is associated with problematic sibling and peer relationships, problems in children's and adolescents' social interactions, and can ultimately lead to social withdrawal or disengagement of the child (Johnsom, LaVoie & Mahoney, 2001).

In the research literature, two mechanisms underlying the operation of interparental conflict and negative child outcomes are discussed; direct influence on child behavior through modeling and exposure to stress and the indirect effects operating via parent-child relationships. The indirect effect is the most frequently supported mechanism in the literature (Gyrch & Finchman, 1990). It is stated that high levels of marital conflict may decrease the quality of parenting behaviors and it is known that the perception of disruptive parenting behaviors interfere with normal

child development and socialization (Howes & Markman, 1989; Neighbors, Forehnad & Bau, 1997).

Based on the relevant literature, the current study aimed to understand the relation of social anxiety to adolescents' perceptions of frequent, intense, unresolved interparental conflict and their perceptions of experienced parenting behaviors. Since it has been revealed worldwide in many studies that parental warmth plays an important role in children's psychosocial development to define and assess the perception of parenting behaviors, the warmth dimension of parenting was used, Rohner, 2005). Parental warmth has to do with the quality of the affectional bond between the children and parents and it is composed of the continuum of parental acceptance and rejection (Rohner, 2005).

Additionally, in this study, the effect of gender on these relations and on social anxiety was investigated, since the review of the literature showed that there are different views and inconsistent findings about the impact of gender on social anxiety (Kerig, 1997; Johnsom, LaVoie & Mahoney, 2001; Akyıl, 2000) Therefore, it is important to examine gender as a factor which might affect social anxiety among Turkish adolescents.

Although the prevalence and importance of social anxiety is well established, empirical research on this topic is limited (Liebowitz, et. al., 1985). The vast majority of the existing studies on social anxiety have focused on adult samples although social anxiety is quite common among children and especially among adolescents (Kashdan & Herbert, 2001). A review of the literature on Turkish population has also revealed that research of social anxiety among both adults and adolescents is limited (Akyıl, 2000; Öztaş, 1996). Thus, the present study was an

attempt to understand the association between social anxiety and the family factors through the perception of interparental conflict and parental rejection.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, social anxiety among adolescents and the familial factors that are related to social anxiety, specifically, interparental conflict and parental rejection are reviewed. The literature review about the gender distribution in social anxiety is also stated. Finally, the statement of the problem and research questions of the study are presented.

Social Anxiety among Adolescents

Social anxiety is common among children and especially among adolescents. It is argued that the onset of the social anxiety problem occurs at a relatively early age, with a mean onset of 15.5 years (Kashdan & Herbert, 2001). Although the course of social anxiety is relatively stable across the lifespan, there are significant stages in life when the individual is more vulnerable to the effects of social fears. Social anxiety occurs mostly during adolescence at a time when adolescents experience heightened self consciousness, doubts and worries about their appearance, social prowess and what others may think about them. Although such transitory social anxiety and self-consciousness are a part of normal development, adolescents with high levels of social anxiety experience persistent and inappropriate distress through their lives (Mash & Wolfe, 2002).

Because social situations are essential throughout the lifespan and being an active participant is necessary to achieve goals that are both social and personal (e.g. development of relationships, job interview, participating in classes or meetings), it is not surprising that social anxiety leads to a significant level of distress and

impairment. Thus it is important to understand the possible causes of social anxiety among adolescents. However, little is known about the correlates of social anxiety. Most of the available studies of potential etiological factors rely on epidemiologic studies of familial risk, longitudinal studies of infants and young children, self-reports of adolescents or on retrospective self-report methodologies using adult samples (Caster, Inderbitzen & Hope, 1999). Although the details vary, most etiological models about the development and maintenance of social anxiety posit an interaction between genetics, neurobiology, life stress or traumatic events, cognitive behavioral factors and familial factors (e.g., Bruch & Heimberg, 1994; Boer, 2001).

So, various etiological theories and explanations have been developed for understanding the development and maintenance of social anxiety. One of them is about the role of familial factors. The familial factors are especially important in understanding social anxiety since the mean age of the onset of social phobia is early; so many socially anxious individuals develop social phobia during the years when their family still has an important influence on them. Additionally, the family is the first setting where people learn social behavior and where they develop schemes about themselves as social beings, based on their interactions with their primary caretakers (Bögels, Oosten, Muris & Smulder, 1999).

Familial Factors in Social Anxiety

Although there is considerable evidence for the genetic transmission of social anxiety and shyness, the evidence for familial environmental influences is also thought to be strong. A full adoption study of Daniels and Plomin (1985) showed that social anxiety seems to be mediated by both genetic and environmental influences.

Mothers' self-reports of their shyness and sociability were significantly related to infant shyness, not only in non-adoptive homes (both genetics and family environment are shared), but also in adoptive homes (only family environment is shared). It is argued that lack of exposure to novel social situations might be the mechanism; shy and unsociable mothers expose neither themselves nor their infants to such experiences. In the same study, environmental factors associated with the social anxiety of children were lack of family cohesion, and lack of involvement of the family in social activities.

Along the same lines, Bruch (1989) proposed three parental practices that may trigger social fears. These are parents' concern with other people's evaluation; parents' social isolation of the child; and lack of family sociability. In 1994, Bruch and Heimberg used a retrospective approach and they obtained individuals' perceptions of their parents' child-rearing attitudes and their family environments. They found that socially anxious adults perceived their parents as seeking to isolate them, as overemphasizing the opinions of others, and as de-emphasizing family sociability. Moreover, socially anxious individuals perceived their parents as having been more protective during their childhood. They posited that parental anxiety may be associated with the tendency to isolate the child and discourage family socialization which could then cause restricted social opportunities and increased social anxiety for the child. They also reported that parenting practices which convey rejection to a child may result in preoccupation with other people's evaluations, and fear of negative evaluation may cause social anxiety.

Evidence for the family sociability and parental attitudes of being overly concerned about other people's evaluation in relation to social anxiety also came out from the study of Caster, Inderbitzen and Hope in 1999. Unlike Bruch and Heimberg

(1994), they examined the relationship between adolescents' perception of their parents' child rearing styles and family environments and their levels of social anxiety concurrently; they did not use retrospective methodology. Participants of the study were junior high and high school students and the sample size of the study was large (n=2708). Results of the study indicated that socially anxious adolescents perceived their parents as being more socially isolating, overly concerned about what others think and less socially active than did adolescents reporting lower levels of social anxiety. Results also indicated that socially anxious youths perceived their family environments differently than youths who reported lower levels of social anxiety. So, these results were consistent with the study of Bruch and Heimberg (1994) and supported a modeling causal explanation of the development of social anxiety among adolescents.

Johnson, Interbitzen-Nolan and Schapman (2004) made a comparison between socially anxious and depressive symptomatology in youth in terms of the perceived family environment. They compared groups of socially anxious, depressed, mixed socially anxious and depressed youths in their perceptions of the family environment. Results showed that although both socially anxious and depressed symptoms were related to family environment variables, associations were stronger for the depressive than the socially anxious symptoms. The mixed and depressed groups rated their parents as being overly concerned with others' opinions, as being ashamed of their performance, and restricting family sociability more than the socially anxious and nondepressed control groups. However, socially anxious group rated their family environment more negatively than the normal group and that was supportive of the previous research in this area. Moreover, the results indicated that the socially anxious group perceived greater parental shame and overconcern

with others' opinions, as well as more restriction of family sociability, than the comparison group, again supporting the previous literature.

Mc Keown et.all. (1997) studied social acceptance in relation with family environment. Like Johnson, Interbitzen-Nolan & Schapman (2004) and Caster, Inderbitzen &Hope (1999), they reported that adolescents' perceptions of negative family environments were highly related with social withdrawal. They stated that low family cohesion were associated with a heightened feeling of rejection and reduced social acceptance. In this study it is also reported that disruptions of the closeness and cohesion within the family is associated with higher levels of social and personal distress. Further, Peleg and Dar (2001) studied marital quality, family patterns in relation to children's fears and social anxiety. They found that children from rigid, fused families or low quality marriages may be under the risk of high levels of fears and social anxiety.

Being exposed to negative feedback might make children hypersensitive to the negative evaluation of others. Thus, parental evaluation is another parenting behavior that may foster social anxiety. Alessandri and Lewis (1993) produced evidence for this idea. They studied the relationship between parents and their 3-year-old children during performance tasks. Lack of positive evaluations and the existence of negative evaluations by the parents were associated with the children's expression of shame. Furthermore, a longitudinal study of Allaman, Joyce and Crandell (1972) showed that parenting practices which convey rejection may instill a preoccupation with others' evaluative remarks (cited in Bögels, Oosten, Muris & Smulder, 1999).

Other parenting behaviors that may foster social anxiety are lack of emotional warmth, rejection and overprotection. Bögels, Oosten, Muris and Smulder (1999)

studied familial correlates of social anxiety in children and adolescents and they examined whether socially anxious children perceive their current parental rearing as rejecting, overprotective, and lacking emotional warmth. They also investigated whether socially anxious children perceive their parents as emphasizing the importance of other's opinion and de-emphasizing family sociability. Subjects were 190 children aged between 8 and 18 years. They used regression analysis and extreme group comparisons. The regression analysis revealed that parental emotional warmth and rejection were unrelated to social fears in children. However, the extreme group approach showed that socially anxious children judge their parents as less emotionally warm and more rejecting than normal control children. In terms of overprotection, results were mixed; parental overprotection, as perceived by the child, predicted childhood social anxiety in the regression analysis, but socially anxious children did not differ from control groups in overprotection. With respect to social rearing practices, the lack of family sociability predicted social anxiety significantly. Results also indicated that socially anxious children perceived their family as less sociable than normal children. Inconsistent with the findings of Bruch and Heimberg (1994) and Caster, Inderbitzen and Hope (1999), the results revealed that parents of socially anxious children stress the importance of others' opinion less than parents of normal control children and social encouragement was not related to social anxiety. The researcher explained this unexpected finding with the possible social desirability of the parents and with the possible parental compensation for the social sensitivity of the child.

Eastburg and Johnson (1990) reported that a lower level of maternal acceptance coupled with a high level of maternal control was associated with increased levels of shyness among adolescents. Arrindell, Emmelkamp, Monsma and

Brilman (1983) found that socio phobic adults perceived their parents as rejecting and as lacking in emotional warmth (cited in Rork, 2004).

In Turkey, Akyıl (2000) studied the effects of perceived parental child-rearing practices and birth order on social anxiety among Turkish adolescents. The sample consisted of 284 high school students either 13 or 16 years old. The results of the study showed that perceived overprotection by the mother and emotional warmth of the father were the parental rearing attitudes that had most contribution to social anxiety. Moreover, adolescents who perceived their mothers as high care-low protection were more likely to have low level of social anxiety than those who perceived their mothers as high care-high protection and low care-low protection. In terms of birth order and social anxiety level, no relationship was found. In this study, the effects of sociodemographic variables on social anxiety were also investigated. Results showed that the only effect that sociodemographic variables had on social anxiety in adolescents was the effect of the mothers' occupation. Male adolescents whose mothers were retired showed higher levels of social anxiety, but the sample size for this group was only from high socioeconomic status families, therefore these findings should be interpreted with caution (Akyıl, 2000).

In fact, some studies on social anxiety showed that the socioeconomic status of the individuals may also affect social anxiety. It is stated that the highest rates of social anxiety are found among the lowest socioeconomic groups (Schneier et. al.1992). In 1996, Öztaş studied the effect of SES on the social anxiety levels of university students in Turkey and he indicated that only female students from low SES show higher social anxiety levels when compared with other students.

Related to these, Erkan (2002) studied social anxiety among Turkish adolescents in relation to familial variables such as the democratic attitudes of the

parents, parental authority, and parental overprotection, divorce of parents, family sociability and the socioeconomic status of the family. Participants of the study were 782 high school students. The study results indicated that those adolescents who perceived their parents as having been more authoritarian, overprotective, and less sociable and less democratic showed higher levels of social anxiety. Further, it is reported that adolescents from divorced families and from low SES families are at risk for social anxiety.

Overall, research on the familial factors on social anxiety among adolescents indicated that parental attitudes and family environment are important in terms of understanding the development and maintenance of social anxiety. There seems to be considerable evidence that familial environmental factors like social rearing behaviors, general parental rearing practices and family relations are all associated with social anxiety. Socially anxious individuals perceive their parents as having been more overprotective during childhood, more rejecting, less sociable, less emotionally supportive, as emphasizing the importance of others' opinions, as evaluating negatively, and disruptive/hostile family relations are associated with interpersonal deficits during social interactions, as well. One such family characteristic which might be important when attempting to understand social anxiety is perception of interparental conflict.

Interparental Conflict

Family system theorists suggested that the family is a social system composed of the marital, parent-child and sibling subsystems, and these subsystems are affected by each other. However, the marital subsystem is the core of the family solidarity and

plays a central role in determining the quality of family life (Hall & Cummings, 1997). It is suggested that disturbances in the marital relationship of parents may affect the functioning of the whole family and that distress in this subsystem has a crucial negative influence on children (Gassner & Murray, 1969; Hall & Cummings, 1997). Consistently, recent studies showed that distress in marital relationships is related to some deficits in the social and personal development of both children and adolescents (Frosch, Mangelsdorf, 2001; Grych, Raynor, & Fosco, 2004)

Research indicated that interparental conflict is typical for distress in marital relationships. Interparental conflict has been defined as disagreement between parents about various issues in family life (Cummings & Davies, 2002). It is suggested that perceptions of interparental conflict may be more damaging to child and adolescent development than the act of witnessing conflict (Cummings & Davies, 2002). Research in this area showed that adolescents' reports of an awareness of conflict were associated with problems across various domains of functioning (Neighbors, Forehand & Bau, 1997).

Studies of adolescents have linked interparental conflict with deficits in grade point averages, problem-solving skills, social competence, interpersonal skills and self-esteem (Grych, Raynor, & Fosco, 2004; Neighbors, Forehand & Bau, 1997). Additionally, exposure to high levels of parental conflict increases the likelihood that adolescents will display both internalizing problems (i.e., depression/withdrawal) and externalizing problems (i.e., aggression/oppositional, antisocial behavior) (Katz & Gottman, 1993). Children exposed to high levels of parental conflict also demonstrated marked physiological arousal, higher levels of blood pressure and heart rate activity (Gottman & Katz, 1989; El-Sheikh, 1994; El-Sheikh, Harger & Whitson, 2001, cited in Ashaboğlu, 2005).

In fact, all marriages are characterized by some degree of conflict but these are not necessarily seen as dysfunctional. Therefore, it is important to identify the conflict properties that interfere with normal child development and socialization (Grych & Finchman, 1990). It was suggested that the frequency, intensity and resolution may affect the level of stressfulness of parental conflict for children. Consistently, research on this showed that perception of intense, frequent and unresolved interparental conflict is associated with difficulties in social and personal development for children and adolescents (Grych, Harold & Miles, 2003).

The frequency of parental conflict is an important factor to consider in assessing the impact of interparental conflict on children's behavior problems. More frequent interparental conflict appears to sensitize children to conflict rather than desensitize them, and is associated with higher levels of child behavior problems (Kerig, 1996). Cummings et al. (1981) found that children exposed to more frequent interparental conflict reacted more intensely when they witnessed a later episode of parental conflict than children who were exposed to less frequent interparental conflict (cited in Öz, 1999).

The intensity of parental conflict may range from calm discussion to physical violence (Grych & Finchman, 1990). It is stated that more intense conflict may be distressing to children because of the displays of anger and hostility that are involved in such conflict (Cummings, Pellegrini, Notarius, & Cummings, 1989, cited in Tschan, et. al., 2002). Consistently, empirical evidence confirms that physical aggression is more upsetting than lesser forms of conflict and children who perceive their parents' conflict as intense are more likely to show behavioral problems (Grych & Fincham, 1990; Kerig 1996). O 'Brien et al. (1997) reported that aggressive marital conflict was highly associated with children's feelings of low self-worth,

mothers' report of children's externalizing problems and teachers' reports of children's internalizing problems. In addition to that, children exposed to physical aggression between their parents showed greater adjustment problems than those exposed to verbal aggression (Fantuzzo, et.al., 1991). Children who experienced verbal aggression between their parents also exhibited poorer adjustment than children who were not exposed to interparental aggression (Fantuzzo, et. al., 1991).

Parental conflict that is poorly resolved may lead to persistent tension in the household and heightened arousal of the child (Cummings & Davies, 2002). So, poor conflict resolution produces continued tension and this situation leads to more frequent conflict (Grych & Fincham, 1990). Cummings and his colleagues (1991) found that children react most angrily to unresolved fights between parents and least angrily to fully resolved fights. Similarly, Camara and Resnick (1989) reported that some conflict tactics such as verbal attacks, physical violence or avoidance were associated with poorer child adjustment (cited in Goodman, et al., 1999). On the other hand, parents who successfully resolve their conflicts provide positive problem solving models for their children and that may lead to increased social competence and social problem solving skills. Furthermore, such patterns of parental conflict and resolution of conflict provide a supportive emotional environment in the family, which may facilitate children's development of the capacity to regulate their own behaviors and emotions (Goodman, et al., 1999; Joshi, 2001). So, it is shown that children perceive resolved anger as a less negative event and resolution reduces the negative effects of observing parental aggression (Cummings, Vogel, Cummings, & El-Sheikh, 1989, cited in Kerig, 1996).

As seen, frequent, intense and unresolved marital conflict is associated with a broad range of negative child outcomes, however, little is known about the

mechanisms through which marital conflict affects children. Some researches emphasized the direct effects of marital conflict on children's behaviors through modeling and exposure to stress. Other researchers argued that the impact of marital conflict on children is indirect and operates via parent-child relationships (Gyrch & Finchman, 1990).

Researchers emphasizing the direct impact of marital conflict on children's behaviors argued that marital conflict is itself upsetting and stressful for children and may be directly responsible for negative emotional and behavioral outcomes in children. It is argued that marital conflict affects children by exposing them to a potential stressor (Gyrch & Finchman, 1990). Experiencing intense stress can lead individuals to rely on well-learned and dominant coping responses that are less adaptive. And this may result in reliance on behaviors such as aggression or withdrawal among children or adolescents (Cummings, et al., 1989, cited in Kerig, 1996). Consistently, studies indicated that exposure to parental conflict is stressful for most children. Also it is noted that children as young as one and two years of age exhibit distress when observing hostile parental interaction (Cummings, et al., 1981, cited in Gyrch & Finchman, 1990).

Because of their salience and importance to their children, parents can be powerful models for their children. Children can learn a great deal about interpersonal relationships from watching their parents. Thus, parents' hostile and aggressive behaviors during conflicts may provide children with maladaptive models of problem solving or conflict resolution. Children can learn that aggression is an acceptable way for dealing with disagreements. Also, exposing children to aggressive models may give children permission for aggression (Grych & Fincham, 1990). It is found that after experiencing interadult aggression, children showed

increased psychical aggression toward their peers (Cummings, 1985, cited in Buehler, et al., 1994). Similarly, in 1997 Demir reported that children who were exposed to increased levels of interparental violence tended to exhibit violent and hostile behaviors toward others.

Discussion of the direct mechanism is not the whole picture. As noted above, there are also hypotheses proposing the indirect impact of interparental conflict. In fact, the indirect impact is the most frequently supported mechanism in the literature. Researchers interested in the indirect effects focused on alterations in parent- child interactions and parenting practices which are primary process variables related to children's emotional and social development (Gyrch & Finchman, 1990; Cummings, et al.2002; Krishnakumar & Buehler, 2000).

Interparental Conflict and Parenting

Interparental conflict can have an impact on parent-child relationships, which in turn affect child adjustment (Kitzmann, 2000; Krishnakumar & Buehler, 2000). The mechanisms underlying the association between marital conflict and parenting behavior can be understood with the help of several theoretical paradigms including the social learning theory, family system theory and the theory of family stress (Krishnakumar & Buehler, 2000). Three hypotheses that have their basis in these theories and have dominated the literature in this area include; the spillover hypothesis, compensatory hypothesis and compartmentalization hypothesis.

The spillover hypothesis is one of the most frequently offered explanations in the literature. It accounts for the positive correlation between marital quality and quality of parent-child relationships. So, spillover hypothesis suggests that the affect,

emotions and mood generated in the marital realm transfers to the parent-child relationship (Erel & Burman, 1995). A healthy marital relationship creates an atmosphere of positive affect and mood which allows parents to engage in optimal parenting practices. On the other hand, disrupted marital interactions generate frustration and anger that lead to dysfunctional parent-child relationships (Krishnakumar & Buehler, 2000; Grych, 1998). One of the perspectives which discuss the mechanisms behind the spillover hypothesis is the social learning perspective. The social-learning perspective suggested that parents lack basic interpersonal skill and that this basic deficit negatively affects both marital and parent-child interactions. So, the behavior modeled by parents within their marriage mirrors the kinds of interactions they model with their children (Emde & Easterbrooks, 1985, cited in Krishnakumar & Buehler, 2000). Additional explanation for spillover comes from the family stress and role strain theory. This mechanism proposes that both marital and parent child problems are stress factors which may result in additional difficulties for the marital and parent-child interaction. Three possible directions of influence between the marital and parent-child interactions are reported; from the marital to the parent-child relationships, from the parent-child to the marital relationship, and from a third factor coming outside of the family to the entire family relations. The first direction proposes that parents may not be able to be sensitive to their children's needs when they have to deal with marital stress. The second direction suggests that child rearing is a strain on marital satisfaction as it reduces the time spouses spend for each other or necessitates additional financial resources. The third direction of influence comes from outside the family (e.g., unemployment or chronic illness) and puts stress on both the marital and parent-child relationship. Taken together, these directions of influence imply a correlation

between marital and parent-child interactions (Emde & Easterbrooks, 1985; Marhgolin, 1981, cited in Erel & Burman, 1995).

The compensatory hypothesis suggests that parents in conflictual marital relationship may counteract their feelings of dissatisfaction and rejection in their marriage by being highly involved and invented in the parent-child relationships. So, the compensatory hypothesis portrays the primary pathway of influence as an inverse relation between interparental conflict and parenting practices (Engfer, 1988, cited in Krishnakumar & Buehler, 2000).

The compartmentalization hypothesis has received less attention than the spillover and compensatory hypotheses. It proposes that, in the face of marital conflict, parents are able to compartmentalize their marriage and parenting roles. So, parents are able to keep the negativity created by a conflictual marriage within the boundaries of their marital subsystem and there is no transfer of the negativity into their role as parents. As a result, they continue to be effective parents even under the most conflictual and difficult marital circumstances (Krishnakumar & Buehler, 2000).

Literature in this area suggests that the "spillover" hypothesis has more explanatory power in describing the relation between destructive marital conflict and child adjustment (Erel & Burman, 1995; Krishnakumar & Buehler, 2000). This conclusion is supported by an important meta-analysis conducted by Erel and Burman (1995) on the relationships between marital functioning and parenting. Following the procedures for meta-analysis, the authors calculated mean weighted effect sizes for the 68 included studies and found a relation of .46 between marital quality and the quality of parent-child relationships. The findings of this study suggested strong support for the "spillover" hypothesis and no support for the

"compensatory" hypothesis. So, it is reported that in conflictual marriages, there is a strong likelihood that the troubled dyadic relationship will negatively impact parenting behaviors.

Marital conflict has been associated with changes in a host of specific parenting behaviors. Such experiences may affect the consistency of disciplinary practices, conflict resolution strategies, the use of aggression, emotional negativity, parental consistency and parental involvement (Krishnakumar & Buehler, 2000; Robinson, 2003). With regard to parental involvement, Davies and Cummings (1994) examined the link between interparental conflict and the emotion-oriented dimension of parenting and they pointed to associations between parental rejection and children's passivity, low self-esteem, reduced social competence and aggression. There is also growing evidence that a low level of parental warmth is implicated in child externalizing and internalizing behaviors (Katz & Gottman, 1993). A recent meta-analysis showed that interparental conflict is moderately associated with diminished support in parents, poor parental monitoring and behavioral control, and increased verbal criticism and physical punishment by parents. Further, the parenting behavior most impacted by interparental conflict was parental acceptance-rejection (Krishnakumar & Buehler, 2000). Based on these findings, to define and measure the quality of parenting, the current study uses the warmth dimension (acceptance-rejection) of parenting.

Parental Rejection

Parental warmth is an important dimension of parenting. Parental acceptance and rejection form the warmth dimension of parenting, which is a continuum, and every

individual can be located somewhere on this continuum since everyone has received, more or less, love from their major caregivers in childhood. At the other end of the continuum, there is parental acceptance that refers to all kinds of love that children can receive from their major caregivers which include warmth, affection, care, concern, comfort, nurturance and support. On the other hand, there is parental rejection at the other end of the continuum. Parental rejection refers to the absence or significant withdrawal of these loving feelings and behaviors and the presence of psychologically and physically hurtful behaviors (Rohner, 2005).

Parental rejection can be experienced by any combination of the following expressions: cold and unaffectionate (lack of affection), hostile and aggressive, indifferent and neglecting, and undifferentiated rejecting (Rohner, 2003). Coldness refers to deficiencies in emotions, enthusiasm and warmth towards the child. When parents act on their feelings of coldness, they may show lack of affection in their verbal and physical behaviors. Not hugging, kissing or complimenting are examples of unaffectionate expressions. Hostility refers to being resentful and angry toward the child and its behavioral indication is psychological or physical aggression. Indifference refers to a lack of concern for the child and neglecting child's physical, emotional and social needs are its behavioral indicators. Undifferentiated rejection refers to individuals' beliefs that their parents do not really care about or love them even though there might not be clear behavioral indicators that parents do so (Rohner, 2003).

Parental acceptance- rejection theory (PARTheory) is an evidence based emotional abuse theory that undertakes to explain and predict the principal causes, consequences, and other correlates of parental acceptance-rejection for behavioral, cognitive, and emotional development of children. It is a theory of socialization and

lifespan development and postulates that all humanbeings around the world, irrespective of culture, ethnicity, gender or social class, have a need to receive warmth from the people who are important for them. (Rohner, 2005; Erkman, 1992). PARTheory suggested that individuals' sense of emotional security and well-being are likely to be dependent on the amount of warmth they received from their parents. Not receiving this necessary warmth in an acceptable manner results in negative outcomes. That is, deprived children and adults are more likely to become dependent individuals. They tend to report negative mental representations of themselves, others and the world in general. They also tend to have impaired -self esteem and self-adequacy and they are more likely to be aggressive, emotionally unstable and unresponsive (Rohner, 2005).

Worldwide empirical studies on PARTheory revealed that the experience of parental acceptance is to a large extent indicative of psychological adjustment while perceived rejection tends to be associated with different forms of maladjustment. A meta-analysis of 43 studies indicated that perceptions of parental acceptance-rejection explain 26% of the variability in children's psychological adjustment (Khaleque & Rohner, 2002, cited in Rohner, 2005, Erkman 1992, 2007). Moreover, results of many studies on this area documented that parental rejection appears to be an important predictor of depression, anxiety, social withdrawal, behavior problems including conduct disorders, externalizing behavior and delinquency (Al-Falaij, 1991; Chen, Rubin, & Li, 1997; Farrington & Hawkins, 1991; Saxena, 1992; Pedersen, 1994; Marcus & Gray, 1998; Whitbeck, Hoyt, & Ackley, 1997; Simons, Robertson, & Downs, 1989; Parker, 1983; Fattah, 1996; Hassab-Allah, 1996; cited in Rohner, 2005). As discussed before, studies on perceived parental rejection and social anxiety also showed that social anxiety and its dispositional correlates such as

social phobia and shyness are highly related to parental rejection. It is stated that socially anxious individuals perceive their parents as having been more rejecting and less emotionally supportive (Bögels, Oosten, Muris & Smulder, 1999).

Rohner (2005) states that parental acceptance-rejection can be studied from two perspectives; it can be studied as perceived by the individual (phenomenological perspective), or it can be studied as reported by an outside observer (the behavioral perspective). Although these two perspectives generally lead to similar conclusions, PARTheory research suggests that if it is not so, one should generally trust the information derived from individuals' own perceptions (Rohner, 2005; Rohner, Khaleque, & Cournoyer, 2005). This is true because the outside observers may fail to detect any behavioral indicators of rejection even if the child feels the opposite way or vice versa. This is in line with the logic that emphasized the investigation of children's appraisals of interparental conflict.

Interparental Conflict, Parental Rejection and Social Anxiety

Investigation of the negative impact of interparental conflict and parent-child interactions on children's social adjustment is important because social relationships play a crucial role in children's social and emotional development (Stocker & Youngblade, 1999). The developmental theory suggested that parents provide the needed skills and support for children to expand and explore their social world (Rubin, Stewart, & Chen, 1995, cited in Robinson, 2003). Indeed, relationships formed with parents form "inner working models" of interpersonal interactions (Stocker & Youngblade, 1999). Similarly, the emotional security hypothesis of Davies and Cummings (1994) suggests that a child develops internal representations

of interpersonal relationships based on parental examples and then uses these models to evaluate future interpersonal situations. Parenting behaviors that are associated with negative marital conflict situations include emotional negativity towards children and rejection. These parenting behaviors are also associated with the formation of distorted interpersonal models and are indicated in the prediction of subsequent social withdrawal in children (Davies & Cummings, 1994). So, disturbances in marital and/or parent-child relationships can disrupt children's social development by creating interpersonal insecurity or by reducing opportunities for interaction by restricting exploration (Stocker & Youngblade, 1999).

In assessing the role of destructive marital conflict on parenting and children's sibling and peer relationships, for instance, Stocker and Youngblade (1999) found clear associations between experiences of marital conflict and parental hostility towards children. These disturbed parenting behaviors were highly related to impairments in the children's sibling and peer relationships. They reported that maternal hostility toward the children mediated the impact of marital conflict and sibling conflict whereas paternal hostility toward the children mediated the relationship between marital conflict and problematic peer relationships. The indirect mechanisms elucidated in this study clearly demonstrated a process by which interparental conflict spills over into parent –child relationships and influences children's social adjustment.

Johnsom, LaVoie and Mahoney (2001) examined the association between late adolescents' perceptions of interparental conflict, family cohesion and their reports of loneliness related to social anxiety and social avoidance. They suggested that decreased family cohesion and increased interparental conflict can result in family environments which are associated with loneliness and with deficits in social

interactions. Study results showed that feelings of loneliness were related to perceived levels of interparental conflict and decreased family cohesion. Further, late adolescents' feelings of social anxiety and social avoidance were related to their feelings of loneliness. Findings of the study also showed how deteriorated family systems might result in contexts that are associated with adolescent's ability of engagement in social interactions outside the family system.

Further evidence for this comes from the study of Gottman and Katz (1989). Research with 4-5 year old children suggested that exposure to marital conflict negatively affected children's social relationships in two ways. First, it was found that these children tended to have difficulty regulating emotions. As a result they chose play behaviors with low levels of interactions (more solitary play) with peers, perhaps in an attempt to maintain harmonious relationships. Second, couples experiencing marital conflict tended to manifest unresponsive, cold and hostile parenting behaviors with poor limit setting. Children from such families were observed to play with best peer friends at lower levels of interaction than did children from non-conflictual families. Results also indicated that child behaviors tended to persist over time.

Recently, Robinson (2003) studied a mediation/moderation mixed model to examine the direct and indirect links between marital conflict and children's asocial and excluded behaviors as rated by the teachers of the children. Results supported a direct effects model in which interparental conflict predicted 5% of the variance in children's asocial behavior. Specifically, some children who are exposed to marital conflict exhibit a desire to withdraw from social interaction. Unlike Gottman and Katz (1989) and Stocker & Youngblade, (1999) findings of this study did not suggest that parenting was a mechanism which influenced children's social withdrawal. The

explanation for this finding might be that parent child interactions observed in the laboratory did not effectively simulate the stressful and busy environment in the home but instead, provided an opportunity for relaxed interaction not otherwise available (Robinson, 2003).

Although a growing body of research has repeatedly documented evidence supporting the negative effects of perceived interparental conflict on Turkish adolescents (Öz, 1999; Kunt, 2004; Ashaboğlu, 2005), studies on the relationship between interparental conflict and social anxiety among Turkish adolescents is very limited. As stated before, Erkan (2002) studied social anxiety among Turkish adolescents in relation to different familial risk factors. In this study participants were also asked whether they were exposed to frequent interparental conflict or not. The study results indicated that perception of frequent interparental conflict is a risk factor for social anxiety. However, this study provides limited information about the relationship between these two variables and the mechanisms behind this association remain unknown. Therefore, the current study is an attempt to highlight the possible relation between the perception of interparental conflict and social anxiety among Turkish adolescents.

Gender Distribution in Social Anxiety

There are some inconsistencies about the gender distributions in social anxiety among adolescents. In 2001 Peleg and Dar tested in their study gender differences among children and they showed that there was no difference. Similar results were indicated in the study of Caster, et.al., (1999), they found that there was no gender difference between low socially anxious and high socially anxious adolescents. In

2000 Akyıl also examined in her study gender difference in social anxiety among Turkish adolescents and she reported that there was no relation between gender and social anxiety.

On the other hand, some studies reported that social anxiety is affecting slightly more females than males (Mash & Wolfe, 2002). Bögels et.al., (2001) indicated in their study that gender contributed significantly to social anxiety of the adolescents; girls reported higher social anxiety than boys. They reported that girls may experience more social anxiety because they are more concerned with social competence than are boys and attach greater importance to interpersonal relationships.

Because of these different views and findings in the literature, it is important to reexamine gender differences in social anxiety among Turkish adolescents. Additionally, it is crucial to investigate the relation of social anxiety to perceived interparental conflict and perception of parental rejection by considering the possible gender differences.

Statement of the Problem

The family is the first setting in which children experience and learn about relationships. So, familial influences are especially important in understanding the development of social anxiety. An extensive body of research makes it obvious that disruptive marital relationships and/or parent-child relationships interfere with the development of children's and adolescents' interpersonal skills and their socialization. Based on the literature, in this study, the relation of social anxiety to

perceived family relationships in terms of perception of interparental conflict and perceived parental rejection among adolescents was investigated.

The aim of the present study was to understand the relation of social anxiety to adolescents' perception of intense, frequent and unresolved interparental conflict and perceived maternal and paternal rejection. The effect of gender on these relations and on social anxiety was also investigated. Additionally, the study aimed to investigate the relationship between adolescents' perceptions of interparental conflict and their perceived maternal and paternal rejection.

The research questions of the study are;

1. Do females and males differ in their social anxiety levels?

2. a) Is there a relationship between female adolescents' perception of intense, frequent, and unresolved interparental conflict and their level of social anxiety?

b) Is there a relationship between male adolescents' perception of intense, frequent, and unresolved interparental conflict and their level of social anxiety?

3. a) Is there a relationship between female adolescents' perception of maternal and paternal rejection and their level of social anxiety?

b) Is there a relationship between male adolescents' perception of maternal and paternal rejection and their level of social anxiety?

4. a) Is there a relationship between female adolescents' perception of interparental conflict and their perceived maternal and paternal rejection?

b) Is there a relationship between male adolescents' perception of interparental conflict and their perceived maternal and paternal rejection?

5. a) Is there a relationship between female adolescents' perception of intense, frequent and unresolved interparental conflict and their level of social anxiety when controlling for the perception of maternal and paternal rejection?

b) Is there a relationship between male adolescents' perception of intense, frequent and unresolved interparental conflict and their level of social anxiety when controlling for the perception of maternal and paternal rejection?

6. a) Is there a relationship between female adolescents' perception of maternal and paternal rejection and their level of social anxiety when controlling for the perception of interparental conflict?

b) Is there a relationship between male adolescents' perception of maternal and paternal rejection and their level of social anxiety when controlling for the perception of interparental conflict?

7. Do high socially anxious females, low socially anxious females, high socially anxious males, and low socially anxious males show any significant difference in their perceptions of interparental conflict?

8. Do high socially anxious females, low socially anxious females, high socially anxious males, and low socially anxious males show any significant difference in their perceptions of paternal and maternal rejection?

9. Which if any of the factors; namely gender, perceived interparental conflict, and perception of maternal and paternal rejection do additively and uniquely predict social anxiety levels of adolescents?

10. a) Do perceived interparental conflict and perception of maternal and paternal rejection additively and uniquely predict social anxiety levels of female adolescents?

b) Do perceived interparental conflict and perception of maternal and paternal rejection additively and uniquely predict social anxiety levels of male adolescents?

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Participants

Participants for the study were chosen from a total population of students from five high schools in Istanbul. All the schools were public schools with moderate socioeconomic status so that the SES levels of the subjects that might have different effects on social anxiety could be controlled. The socioeconomic levels of the schools were estimated depending on the location of the schools and the information that was obtained from the principals of the schools about the demographic characteristics of the students.

The selection of these schools was also based on a convenience basis in terms of willingness to cooperate with the researcher and to participate in this study

In the eleventh grade, students have to take the OSS exam and because of the potential effects of the OSS exam on the students, only the ninth and tenth grade students were asked to participate in the study.

Due to potential differences in the dynamics of divorced families or single-parent families, only data gathered from participants with intact families was included in the study. Based on the information on the demographic questionnaire, students from single-parent (14 students) and divorced families (34 students) were identified and excluded from the study. So, the final sample consisted of 406 students (209 females and 197 males) coming from intact families with moderate SES levels. The age range was 13-18, with a mean age of 15.34.

Table 1 presents the distribution of the adolescents' characteristics in terms of their gender, age and grade level.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics

Characteristics	*n*	%
Gender		
Female	209	51.5
Male	197	48.5
Total	406	100
Age		
13	1	.2
14	70	17.2
15	184	45.3
16	95	23.4
17	52	12.8
18	4	1.0
Total	406	100
Grade Level		
9^{th} grade	287	70.7
10^{th} grade	119	29.3
Total	406	100

Instruments

The instruments which were used in this study are: The Demographic Information Sheet, the Turkish forms of; Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale (LSAS), Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict Scale (CPIC) and Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire /Child short form father version and Child short form mother version (Child PARQ short form).

Demographic Information Sheet

The demographic Information Sheet was constructed by the researcher and in the questionnaire the participants were asked about their school, grade level, age, gender,

their family structure (biological/step), and parental marital status, experience of parental divorce and experience of parental loss.

Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale (LSAS)

Social anxiety was measured by a self-report version of the Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale (LSAS)-Turkish Form. The Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale was developed by Liebowitz in 1987. The LSAS was originally developed with separate social interaction and performance subscales by Liebowitz. The LSAS assesses a wide range of both social interaction and performance/ observation situations, which are rated for the degree of fear/anxiety and frequency of avoidance. So, it assesses fear and avoidance in 24 situations that are likely to elicit social anxiety. Thirteen of the items investigate performance situations (1,2,3,4,6,8,9, 13,14,16,17, 20,21) while the remaining eleven items assess social interaction situations (5,7,10,11,12, 15,18, 19,22, 23,24). The response items are rated separately on scales for fear/anxiety and avoidance. The response format range, from no fear/anxiety (0) to severe fear/anxiety (3) and never avoids (0) to usually avoids (3). Six subscales can be derived from the ratings: Fear of Social Interaction, Fear of Performance, Avoidance of Social Interaction, Avoidance of Performance, Total Fear and Total Avoidance. An overall total score may also be derived by summing up the fear and avoidance ratings for all items. The internal consistency of the LSAS Total Score and subscale scores was evaluated with Cronbach's alpha and for each subscale, Cronbach's alphas were high, ranging from .81 to .96. Among the LSAS subscales, correlations ranged from .75 to .98. The LSAS showed a high degree of convergent validity with the Social Interaction Anxiety Scale and with the Social Phobia Scale.

The Turkish adaptation of LSAS was carried out by Eren-Gümüş in 1997 and in 2002 (*Sosyal Durumlarda Kendini Değerlendirme Envanteri, SDKDE*). Based on expert judgments some changes were made in terms of the instructions and items of the scale. In SDKDE, the scales range from no fear/anxiety (a) to severe fear/anxiety (d), and never avoids (a) to usually avoids (d), where "a" corresponds to 1 point (no fear/anxiety- never avoids), and "d" corresponds to 4 points (severe fear/anxiety - usually avoids). A total score can be derived by summing the fear and avoidance ratings for all items. Like the original scale, the cut off point for the scale is said to be the mean score of the test administered group. So, a score which is lower than the mean score is stated to indicate a low level of social anxiety whereas a score higher than the mean is stated to indicate a high level of social anxiety.

The factor analysis of SDKE yielded two-factor structure for the 24 items. Thirteen items cluster around Factor I whereas eleven items cluster around Factor II. The items of Factor 1 belonged mainly to the social interaction subscale and accounted for 19.28 % of the total score variance while the second factor was mainly performance and accounted for 15.70 % of the total variance. Evidence for validity also came from the results of the relation between SKDE and "Rathus Assertiveness Scale". A negative correlation of -.78 was found between the two scales. For the SDKE, for all subscales Cronbach's alpha values were also high, ranging from .80 to.90. Additionally, the overall test-retest reliability level of SDKE for two weeks interval was .94 (Eren-Gümüş, 2002). Further evidence for validity for the high school students came from the results of the correlation studies between SKDE and "Shyness Scale" and the results indicated a positive correlation of + .62 (Koçak, 2003). The overall test-retest reliability level of SDKE for the high school students was also sufficient, which was .81 (Koçak, 2003).

Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict Scale (CPIC)

The scale was developed by Grych, Seid, and Finchman in 1992 to assess school-aged children's perception of interparental conflict, however in 1997 Bickham and Fiese showed that this scale was also applicable to adolescents (cited in Kunt, 2004). The latest version of the scale has 48 items and it assesses children and adolescents' perception of the 9 dimensions of interparental conflict (frequency, intensity, resolution, stability, threat, coping efficacy, content -child related or not-triangulation and self-blame). For the scale, with factor analysis, a three-factor solution was found; "Conflict Properties" (frequency, intensity, resolution subscales), "Perceived Threat "(threat and coping efficacy subscales) and "Self-Blame" (content and self-blame). The present study focused on the Conflict Properties Scale which assesses the subjects' awareness of the frequency, intensity and resolution of interparental conflict. The subscales of the CPIC have good internal consistency (.78 for the Conflict Properties Scale). The CPIC also has good test-retest reliability over a 2-week period (.70 for the Conflict Properties scale). The CPIC was found to have satisfactory concurrent and criterion validity.

The original scale was translated and adapted into Turkish by Öz in 1999. Then, in 2004 Kunt adapted the latest version of the scale *(Çocukların Evlilik Çatışmasını Algısı Ölçeği)*. In the Turkish form of the scale, children or adolescents respond to each item on the scale by circling either "false", "sometimes true", "sort of true" or "true" and higher scores indicate negative forms of conflict or appraisal. For the Turkish form of the scale, the three factors were also labeled as Conflict Properties, Threat and Self-Blame. Reliability studies indicated that the alpha coefficient for the total scale was .85. The Turkish form of the Conflict Properties

scale (frequency, intensity and resolution) has 19 items; 6 for the frequency subscale, 7 for the intensity subscale and 6 for the resolution subscale. The alpha coefficient for the Conflict Properties scale was .84 and the reliability coefficients for each subscale ranged from .75 to .83 (for frequency subscale, .83; for intensity subscale .75 and for resolution subscale .80). Additionally, the test-retest reliability of the Conflict Properties scale was .78 over a 2 week interval.

Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (Child PARQ/ Short Form)

Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ) was developed by Rohner in 1971. The PARQ is a self-report instrument which was designed to measure children's or adults' perceptions of their experiences of maternal/paternal acceptance and rejection. PARQ has three versions, namely Adult PARQ, Parent PARQ, and Child PARQ. Other than differences in tense and referent all three forms are identical. The present investigation used the child short form (Child PARQ/short form) which asks children to assess the way they feel that their mother or father treat them at the present. (Rohner, 2003). Two copies of the PARQ short form were given; one for assessing maternal parenting and one for assessing paternal parenting.

The Child PARQ is made up of four subscales with a total of 60 items. These subscales are as follows; Parental warmth and affection subscale, parental aggression and hostility subscale, parental neglect and indifference subscale, and undifferentiated parental rejection subscale. The concurrent validity studies of the PARQ child form were carried out by using The Acceptance, Hostile Detachment and Rejection subscales of Schaefer's Child Report of Parental Behavior Inventory (CRPBI) and the physical Punishment Scale of Bronfenbrenner's Parental Behavior

Questionnaire (BPB). The correlations between PARQ and the validation scales ranged from .55 to .83. The construct validity of the PARQ was computed by factor analysis and two primary factors were found for 58% of the variance. These were the factors of rejection and acceptance. A negative correlation of .50 was found between these two primary factors. The reliability of the child PARQ was studied by using Cronbach alpha coefficients and the results indicated that the reliability coefficients are ranged from .72 to .90 (for warmth-affection subscale .90; for aggression – hostility subscale .87; for neglect-indifference subscale .77 and for undifferentiated rejection subscale .72) (Rohner, 2003).

In Turkey, Polat (1988) carried out the translation study of Parental Acceptance Rejection Questionnaire (*Ebeveyn Kabul-Red Ölçeği, EKRÖ*). The reliability studies indicated that the alpha coefficients of the subscales of PARQ ranged from .76 to .89. The Cronbach alpha coefficient of the total scale was .80 (Polat, 1988). Erdem (1990) studied the construct validity of the Turkish PARQ child form. Factor analysis was used and it yielded two factors (warmth and rejection) as in the original study of Rohner (1980). Erdem (1990) also studied the internal consistency of the scale and reported that the Cronbach alpha coefficients of the subscales ranged between .78 to .90 while the subscale total correlations were found to range between .85 to .90. Additionally, she reported that the test-retest reliability coefficient of the subscales with an interval of two or three weeks ranged between .85 to .90 (Erdem, 1990).

The Child PARQ-short form contains 24 items. The warmth/affection scale on the short form contains 8 items, the hostility/aggression and indifference/neglect scales contain 6 items, and the undifferentiated rejection scale contains 4 items. All items are scored on a four point Likert-like scale ranging from (4) Almost always

true to (1) Almost never true. In Child PARQ/short form only one item (13) is reverse scored. To compute the total PARQ score, scores of the scales of Warmth/affection, Hostility/aggression, Indifference/neglect, and Undifferentiated rejection are summed with the entire warmth scale reverse scored.

The Child PARQ/short form is newly created. Therefore there is little information about its validity. But because this form is based on a subsample of items from the long form, the psychometric status is expected to be excellent (Rohner, 2005). The reliability study of the Child PARQ/short form was carried out by the present researcher with a sample of eight, ninth, tenth and eleventh grade students from Istanbul. The age of the students ranged between 13 and 18 years (with a mean age of 15.2). Sixty-one students completed both the mother and father versions of the Child PARQ/short form. The reliability data in terms of the internal consistency of the Turkish Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ) Child Short Form was identified by computing the corrected item-total correlations and the Cronbach Alpha coefficients for the warmth/affection, hostility/aggression, indifference/neglect and the undifferentiated rejection subscales of both the mother and father versions.

The results showed that the Cronbach Alpha values for the warmth/affection, hostility/aggression, indifference/neglect and the undifferentiated rejection subscales of the mother version were .88, .69, .66, and .53, respectively. The item total correlations for PARQ Child Short Form Mother Version ranged between .20 (item 11) and .72 (item 22) with a mean value of .57 and the Cronbach alpha coefficient was .89.

The Cronbach Alpha values for the warmth/affection, hostility/aggression, indifference/neglect and the undifferentiated rejection subscales of the father version

were .88, .66, .70, and .65, respectively. Also, the range of item-total correlations of the Child PARQ/short form father version was from .24 (item 4) to .71 (item 24) with a mean value of .59 and the Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the scale was .90. Additionally, the Pearson product moment correlation was calculated to examine the correlation between Child PARQ/short form mother version and father version. The results indicated that there was a significant correlation between these two forms (r = .53, p <.01).

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the Turkish Parental Acceptance -Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ) Child Short Form ,both mother and father versions are made up of homogenous items that have sufficient internal consistency and these two scales are moderately correlated with each other.

Procedures

Initially, permission was obtained from the ministry of education and the school principals. Then, with the help of the school principals and school counselors, students from the ninth and tenth grades were asked to participate in the study during the counseling hours in their regular classrooms.

All participants were asked to complete the demographic questionnaire, the Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale (LSAS)-Turkish form, the Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict Scale (CPIC)-Turkish form and the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Scale -Turkish form. On the first page of each instrument, instructions of the instruments about how they were to be answered were written.

The data was collected by the researcher. The administration was completed in one class hour. The participants were given standard instructions on filling the instruments. They were also informed about the confidentiality of the study.

Data Analyses

Data analysis was done through the SPSS 14.0 (Statistics Packages of Social Sciences) computer program. As indicated before, for the reliability study of the Parental Acceptance rejection Questionnaire Child Short Form, the Cronbach alpha technique was used. Demographic characteristics were presented as percentages. They consisted of descriptive statistics including the mean, standard deviation, maximum and minimum scores of the measures. Additional analyses regarding the research questions were conducted to examine the relations among the selected variables. Depending on the levels of measurement, appropriate methods of relational analyses were applied (Pearson Product-Moment correlation, partial correlation, regression, Analyses of Variance-ANOVA and t-test).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables

The sample consisted of 209 females (51.5 %) and 197 males (48.5 %) comprising a total of 406 adolescents between the ages of 13-18 (with a mean of 15, 34). There were ninth grade (287) and tenth grade (119) students in the sample (see Table 5).

Table 2 shows the means, standard deviations, observed ranges, and minimum and maximum scores for the PARQ Child Short Form Mother Version and Father Version; for both sub-test and total scores of the CPIC and for the total scores of the SDKDE, separately for females and males.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables

	Female (*n*=209)				Male (*n*=197)			
Measures	Min	Max	*M*	*SD*	Min	Max	*M*	*SD*
PARQ Mother	24	73	37.08	11.74	24	78	36.82	9.83
PARQ Father	24	96	37.12	13.34	24	81	37.57	11.35
CPIC Total	19	73	37.19	11.46	19	64	35.34	9.50
Intensity	7	28	13.72	4.25	7	23	13.50	3.50
Frequency	6	24	11.88	4.43	6	22	10.90	3.56
Resolution	6	23	11.59	4.09	6	22	10.93	3.86
SDKDE	48	180	100.32	23.71	48	156	95.05	22.01

Note: PARQ (Parental Acceptance Rejection Questionnaire-Short Form), CPIC (Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict Scale), SDKDE *(Sosyal Durumlarda Kendini Değerlendirme Envanteri)*

According to the results, the mean scores of perceived Maternal Rejection and Paternal Rejection for females were 37.08 and 37.12, respectively (higher score is the sign of more rejection). The minimum and maximum scores of the females for the PARQ Mother were 24 and 73 while the minimum and maximum scores of the females' PARQ Father were 24 and 96. The mean scores of the males for the perceived Maternal Rejection and Paternal Rejection were 36.82 and 37.57,

respectively. The minimum and maximum scores of males for the PARQ Mother were 24 and 78 whereas their minimum and maximum scores of PARQ Father were 24 and 81.

The total mean score of CPIC for the female adolescents was 37.19 and for the male adolescents' was .35.34 (higher score indicates higher perception of interparental conflict). The minimum score for total CPIC was 19 and the maximum score was 73 for females while the minimum score for total CPIC was 19 and the maximum score was 64 for males. The mean scores of females for intensity, frequency, and resolution subscales of CPIC were 13.72, 11.88 and 11.59, respectively (higher scores indicates perception of more intense, more frequent and more unresolved conflict). On the other hand, males' mean scores for intensity, frequency, and resolution subscales of CPIC were 13.50, 10.90 and 10.93, respectively.

As seen in Table 2, the total mean score of SKDE for female adolescents was 100.32 (higher score is the sign of more social anxiety), with a minimum score of 48 and a maximum score of 180, whereas the total mean score of SKDE for male adolescents was 95.05 with a minimum score of 48 and a maximum score of 156.

Results of the Research Questions

Before analyses were done for each research question, independent sample t-test statistics were calculated to examine whether there were differences between female and male adolescents in terms of their perceptions of intense, frequent and unresolved interparental conflict and maternal-paternal rejection. The results indicated no significant differences between females and males (see Table 3).

Table 3. T-test results for perception Interparental Conflict and Maternal-Paternal Rejection by Gender

	M (SD)	*df*	*t*
Interparental Conflict		404	1.766
Female (*n*=209)	37.19 (11.46)		
Male (*n*=197)	35.34 (9.50)		
Intensity		404	.568
Female (*n*=209)	13.72 (4.25)		
Male (*n*=197)	13.50 (3.50)		
Frequency		404	2.120
Female (*n*=209)	11.88 (4.40)		
Male (*n*=197)	10.90 (3.59)		
Resolution		404	1.656
Female (*n*=209)	11.59 (4.10)		
Male (*n*=197)	10.93 (3.86)		
Maternal rejection		404	.245
Female (*n*=209)	37.08 (11.74)		
Male (*n*=197)	36.82 (9.83)		
Paternal rejection		404	-.368
Female (*n*=209)	37.12 (13.34)		
Male (*n*=197)	37.57 (11.39)		

The first research question examined whether there was a difference between female and male adolescents in terms of their social anxiety levels. In order to investigate this question, independent sample t-test statistics was conducted. As seen in Table 4, a significant difference was found between females and males in terms of the social anxiety level. (t = 2.32, df = 404, $p < .005$). Females' social anxiety levels (n = 209, M = 100.32, sd = 23.71) were higher than males' (n =197, M = 95.05, sd = 22.01) social anxiety levels.

Table 4. T-test Results for Social Anxiety Levels of Adolescents by Gender

	M (SD)	*df*	*t*
Social anxiety		404	2.319***
Female (*n*=209)	100.32 (23.71)		
Male (n=197)	95.05 (22.01)		

***$p < .005$

The aim of the second research question was to investigate the relationship between adolescents' perception of intense, frequent, and unresolved interparental conflict and their social anxiety levels. For that purpose, Pearson Product-Moment correlations among these variables was calculated for females and males separately.

As it is seen in Table 5, there was a significant positive relationship between perception of interparental conflict and social anxiety, both for female (r = .14, p < .05) and male (r = .21, p < .01) adolescents. When the subscales of perceived interparental conflict were examined, it was observed that perceived intensity of interparental conflict was significantly related with social anxiety both for females (r = .20, p < .01) and males (r= .16, p < .05). However, perceived frequency of interparental conflict was significantly correlated with social anxiety for male adolescents (r = .31, p < .01) but not for the females. On the other hand, no significant relationship between perception of unresolved interparental conflict and adolescents' levels of social anxiety was found (r = .04, p > .05).

Table 5. Correlations between Social Anxiety and Interparental Conflict Properties

	Social Anxiety	
	Females	Males
	r	*r*
Interparental conflict	.14*	.21**
Intensity	.20**	.16*
Frequency	.13	.31**
Resolution	.04	.10

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed) *p < .05
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) **p < .01

The third research question of the study was about the relationship between adolescents' perception of maternal and paternal rejection and their levels of social anxiety. Pearson Product Moment correlations were conducted for females and males

in order to examine the associations between perceived maternal- paternal rejection and social anxiety.

Table 6 demonstrates that male adolescents' perception of both maternal and paternal rejection were positively associated with social anxiety (r = .16, p < .05; r = 23, p < .01, respectively). However, the results indicated that the correlations between social anxiety and maternal rejection, and social anxiety and paternal rejection for female adolescents were not significant (r = .07, p > .05; r = 13, p > .05, respectively).

Table 6. Correlations between Social Anxiety and Maternal -Paternal Rejection

	Social Anxiety	
	Females	Males
	r	*r*
Maternal Rejection	.07	.16*
Paternal rejection	.13	.23**

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed) *p < .05
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) **p < .01

The fourth research question of the study was about the relationship between adolescents' perception of interparental conflict and their perception of maternal and paternal rejection. Pearson Product Moment correlations were conducted in order to examine the associations between perceived maternal rejection, paternal rejection and interparental conflict. The correlations were calculated separately for female and male participants.

Table 7 presents that both female and male adolescents' perception of maternal rejection were positively associated with their perceptions of interparental conflict (r = .42, p < .01; r = .51, p < .01, respectively). When analyses were done for the perception of paternal rejection, the findings indicated that perceived paternal

rejection was also positively correlated with perception of interparental conflict both for female and male adolescents (r = .54, p < .01; r = .40, p < .01, respectively).

Table 7. Correlations between Interparental Conflict and Maternal-Paternal Rejection

	Interparental Conflict	
	Females	Males
	r	*r*
Maternal rejection	.42**	.51**
Paternal rejection	.54**	.40**

***Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) ** p< .01*

The fifth research question was about the relation between perceived interparental conflict and social anxiety when perceptions of maternal and paternal rejection were controlled. For that purpose, partial correlations were conducted. As seen in Table 8, there was no significant relationship between females' and males' perceptions of interparental conflict and their social anxiety levels after controlling perceived maternal and paternal rejection (r = .08, p > .05; r = 13, p > .05, respectively). However, females' perception of intense interparental conflict and males' perception of frequent interparental conflict were found to be significantly related with social anxiety after controlling their perceived maternal and paternal rejection (r = .15, p < .05; r= .25, p < .01, respectively).

Table 8. Partial Correlations between Social Anxiety and Interparental Conflict after controlling for Maternal-Paternal Rejection

	Social Anxiety	
	Females	Males
	r	*r*
Interparental conflict	.08	.13
Intensity	.15*	.09
Frequency	.07	.25**
Resolution	.02	.01

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed) *p < .05
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) **p < .01

The sixth question was about the relation of social anxiety to maternal and paternal rejection when perception of interparental conflict was controlled. In order to examine this question, partial correlations were calculated. Table 9 demonstrated that there were no significant relations between females' and males' social anxiety levels and their perception of maternal rejection after controlling perceived interparental conflict *(r* = .02, *p* > .05; *r* = 06, *p* > .05, respectively). Also, the relation of females' perception of paternal rejection and the social anxiety was not significant when the perception of the interparental conflict was controlled *(r* = .07, *p* > .05). However, the correlation between males' perception of paternal rejection and the social anxiety was significant after controlling the perception of interparental conflict (*r* = .16, *p* < .05).

Table 9. Partial Correlations between Social Anxiety and Maternal -Paternal Rejection after controlling for Interparental Conflict

	Social Anxiety	
	Females	Males
	r	*r*
Maternal Rejection	.02	.06
Paternal rejection	.07	.16*

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed) **p* < .05

The aim of the seventh and eight research questions was to examine whether high socially anxious females, low socially anxious females, high socially anxious males and low socially anxious males differ in their perceptions of interparental conflict, maternal rejection and paternal rejection. For that purpose, One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistics were calculated. Before the analyses, adolescents were defined as low and high socially anxious according to their SKDE (*Sosyal Durumlarda Kendini Değerlendirme Envanteri)* scores. So, adolescent's who were below the mean of SKDE were defined as low socially anxious whereas

adolescent's who were above the mean of SKDE were labeled as high socially anxious. Table 10 display descriptive characteristics of these four groups concerning perceptions of interparental conflict, maternal rejection and paternal rejection.

Table 10. Means and Standard Deviations for perceptions of interparental conflict, paternal, and maternal rejection.

		N	*M*	SD
Interparental conflict	Low socially anxious females	111	36.04	11.35
	High socially anxious females	98	38.49	11.50
	Low socially anxious males	116	33.31	8.94
	High socially anxious males	81	38.23	9.58
Father rejection	Low socially anxious females	111	35.92	12.19
	High socially anxious females	98	38.48	14.46
	Low socially anxious males	116	34.95	9.43
	High socially anxious males	81	41.33	12.78
Mother rejection	Low socially anxious females	111	36.01	11.40
	High socially anxious females	98	38.30	12.06
	Low socially anxious males	116	35.62	9.59
	High socially anxious males	81	35.62	9.97

The ANOVA results indicated that there is a significant difference between the four groups (high socially anxious females, low socially anxious females, high socially anxious males and low socially anxious males) in terms of perceived interparental conflict ($F = 5.59$, $p < .001$), and perceived parental rejection ($F = 5.16$, $p < .005$) (see Table 15). In terms of the perceived conflict, this difference is between the high socially anxious females and low socially anxious males and between high socially anxious males and low socially anxious males. According to Scheffe analysis, high socially anxious females and males ($M = 38.49$, and $M = 38.23$, respectively) perceive more interparental conflict than low socially anxious males ($M = 33.31$). Similarly, the follow- up analyses about the perception of the paternal rejection showed that high socially anxious females and males ($M = 38.48$,

and M = 41.33, respectively) perceive more paternal rejection when compared to the low socially anxious males (M = 34.95). On the other hand, no difference was found between the high socially anxious females, low socially anxious females, high socially anxious males and low socially anxious males in terms of their perceived maternal rejection (F = 1.95, p > .05) (see Table 11).

Table 11. One-Way ANOVA of perceived interparental conflict, paternal, and maternal rejection by the low and high social anxiety groups of females and male

	high socially anxious females, low socially anxious females, high socially anxious males, low socially anxious males				
	SS	df	MS	F	p
Interparental Conflict					
Between	1817.57	3	605.86	5.59***	.001
Within	43543.72	402	108.32		
Total	45361.28	405	—		
Father Rejection					
Between	2306.67	3	768.89	5.16**	.002
Within	59938.41	402	149.10		
Total	62245.09	405	—		
Mother Rejection					
Between	683.22	3	227.74	1.95	.121
Within	46914.89	402	116.70		
Total	47598.11	405	—		

***Significant group difference at p < .001
**Significant group difference at p < .01

The aim of the ninth question was to determine the factors that additively and uniquely predict social anxiety in adolescence. For that purpose, Simultaneous Multiple Regression Analysis was conducted. Gender, perceived interparental conflict and perception of father rejection and mother rejection were entered into the equation. It was found that perception of interparental conflict, perceived paternal rejection and gender were significant predictors for social anxiety (interparental conflict: β = .12, t = 1.93, p < .05; paternal rejection: β = -.12, t = 2.0, p < .05; gender: β = -.11, t = -2.19, p < .05). As a result, these predictors additively accounted

for approximately 5.2 % of the variance of the social anxiety levels of adolescents (see Table 12).

Table 12. Summary of Simultaneous Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Social Anxiety

Variable	β	R^2
Gender	-.11*	
Interparental Conflict	.12*	
Mother Rejection	-.01	
Father Rejection	.12*	.052

Note: Dependent variable: Social Anxiety *$p < .05$.

In order to obtain the best predictors of the social anxiety levels of adolescents among the chosen variables for the purposes of the present study, stepwise regression analysis was used. Gender, perceived interparental conflict and perception of maternal and paternal rejection were entered into the equation.

Table 13. Summary of Stepwise Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Social Anxiety

Model	β	R^2	ΔR^2
1. Interparental conflict	.18	.031	.031*
2. Interparental conflict	.16		
Gender	-.10	.041	.010*
3. Interparental conflict	.11		
Gender	-.11		
Father Rejection	.12	.052	.011*

Note: Dependent variable: Social Anxiety *$p < .05$.

In terms of the results, perception of interparental conflict (interparental conflict: $\beta = .11$, $t = 1.98$, $p < .05$), gender ($\beta = -.11$, $t = -2.19$, $p < .05$) and perceived father rejection ($\beta = .12$, $t = 2.13$, $p < .05$) were significant predictors of adolescents' social anxiety levels. Table 13 shows the contributions of each variable in explaining

the social anxiety scores of adolescents. According to this, the three variables, namely; perceived interparental conflict, gender and perception of paternal rejection additively explained approximately 5.2 % of the variance of the social anxiety levels of adolescents. Separately, perception of interparental conflict predicted 3% of the social anxiety scores of adolescents. Additionally, gender and perceived father rejection, both explained 1% of the model.

The aim of the tenth question was to examine whether perceived interparental conflict and paternal and maternal rejection additively and uniquely predict social anxiety among female and male adolescents. For that purpose, Simultaneous Multiple Regression analysis was conducted. Perceived interparental conflict and perception of father rejection and mother rejection were entered into the equation separately for female and male adolescents. It was found that none of these factors were significant predictors for social anxiety in female adolescents (see Table 14).

Table 14. Summary of Simultaneous Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Social Anxiety among females

Variable	β	R^2
Interparental Conflict	.09	
Father Rejection	.08	
Mother Rejection	.01	.023

Note: Dependent variable: Social Anxiety

Table 15. Summary of Simultaneous Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Social Anxiety among males

Variable	β	R^2
Interparental Conflict	.15*	
Father Rejection	.19*	
Mother Rejection	-.02	.071

Note: Dependent variable: Social Anxiety *$p < .05$.

However, perception of interparental conflict and perceived paternal rejection were found to be significant predictors for social anxiety in male adolescents (paternal rejection: $\beta = .19$, $t = 2.14$, $p < .05$; interparental conflict: $\beta = .15$, $t = 1.86$, $p < .05$). These predictors additively accounted for approximately 7.1 % of the variance of the social anxiety levels of male adolescents (see Table 15).

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Discussion in Relation to Research Questions

The aim of the present study was to examine the relation of social anxiety to perception of intense, frequent and unresolved interparental conflict and perceived maternal and paternal rejection among Turkish adolescents. Additionally, the effect of gender on these relations and on social anxiety was also investigated. The current study also aimed to investigate the relationship between adolescents' perceptions of interparental conflict and their perceptions of maternal and paternal rejection.

The first question investigated whether female and male adolescents differ in their social anxiety levels. The results indicated that there was a significant difference between females and males adolescents' social anxiety levels ($t = 2.32$, $df = 404$, $p<.005$). Females' social anxiety levels ($n = 209$, $M = 100.32$, $sd = 23.71$) were found to be higher than males' ($n = 197$, $M = 95.05$, $sd = 22.01$) social anxiety levels. This finding is inconsistent with the findings of the other studies conducted in Turkey. Akyıl (2000) reported in her study that there was no gender difference in social anxiety levels of Turkish adolescents. Additionally, in their study Erkan, Güçray and Çam (2002) examined gender difference in social anxiety among 782 Turkish high school students and they stated that there was no gender difference. On the other hand, consistent with the findings of the current study, some researchers reported that social anxiety is affecting slightly more females than males (Mash & Wolfe, 2002). For instance, Bögels, Oosten and Muris (2001) indicated in their study that gender contributed significantly to social anxiety of the adolescents. So, it is

reported that girls showed higher social anxiety levels than boys. One reason for this finding might be that girls may experience more social anxiety since they are more concerned with social competence than are boys (Bögels, Oosten & Muris, 2001; Mash & Wolfe, 2002). Another reason might be that girls give greater importance to interpersonal relationships and that makes them more sensitive to social interactions (Peleg &Dar, 2001; Bögels, Oosten & Muris, 2001).

The second research question examined the relationship between adolescents' perception of intense, frequent and unresolved interparental conflict and their level of social anxiety. The results showed that there was a significant positive relationship between perception of interparental conflict and social anxiety, both for female (r = .14, $p < .05$) and male (r = .21, $p < .01$) adolescents. In terms of the conflict properties, the perception of the intensity of interparental conflict was also found to be significantly related with social anxiety both for females (r = .20, $p < .01$) and males (r = .16, $p < .05$). However, perceived frequency of interparental conflict was significantly associated with social anxiety for male adolescents (r = .31, $p < .01$) but not for the females. On the other hand, no significant relationship between perceived unresolved interparental conflict and female and male adolescents' levels of social anxiety was found.

In terms of perception of interparental conflict, these findings are consistent with the literature. As stated in the review of literature, studies reported that children exposed to marital conflict exhibit emotionally aroused responses including anxiety, fear and a desire to withdraw from social interactions (Cummings & Davies, 1994; Kitzman 2000). Considerable research showed that exposure to high levels of interparental conflict increases the likelihood of social withdrawal (Grych, Raynor, & Fosco, 2004; Katz & Gottman, 1993; Neighbors, Forehand & Bau, 1997).

Gottman and Katz (1989)'s study results showed that feelings of loneliness were related to perceived levels of interparental conflict. In 2003, Robinson reported that some children who are exposed to marital conflict exhibit a desire to withdraw from social interaction. In Turkey, Ulu and Fışıloğlu (2002) showed that there was a significant relationship between children's perceptions of marital conflict and their internalizing and externalizing problems. Sirvanlı-Özen (2004) examined whether adolescents coming from families with high marital conflict display any differences when compared to the adolescents belonging to families with low marital conflict. The findings of this study showed that adolescents coming from families with high marital conflict displays more problematic behavior and possesses a lower level of self-esteem.

When the relation of different dimensions (intensity, frequency, resolution) of perceived interparental conflict to social anxiety was considered, the results were mixed. The findings showed that perception of intense interparental conflict was positively related to social anxiety levels of both female and male adolescents. Although no empirical study was found about the relation of perceived intense interparental conflict to adolescents' social anxiety levels, empirical evidence confirms that children who perceive their parents' conflict as intense are more likely to show behavioral problems (Grych & Fincham, 1990; Kerig 1996). It is indicated that more intense conflict may be distressing to children because of the displays of anger and hostility that are involved in such conflict (Cummings, Pellegrini, Notarius, & Cummings, 1989, cited in Tschan, et. al., 2002). Exposure to intense marital conflict might foster feelings of insecurity in the child that may become manifest as anxiety. These feeling may also give rise to perceptual schema in the child that increase the likelihood of processing future interpersonal interactions as

threatening as well (Chorpita & Barlow, 1998). So, these findings and views are in the same line with the findings of the current study.

In terms of the frequency of the interparental conflict, the present study results indicated that perception of frequent interparental conflict was significantly associated with male adolescents' social anxiety levels. This result is consistent with the previous literature. Results from the research on this area suggest that chronic exposure to marital conflict can cause aggressive child responses and aggressive or anxious emotional responses to conflict may be generalized to other interpersonal interactions (O'Brien, Margolin, & John 1995). In Turkey, Erkan (2002) investigated whether adolescents with high social anxiety levels were exposed to frequent interparental conflict and the study results showed that perception of frequent interparental conflict was a risk factor for social anxiety. On the other hand, the results of the current study indicated that there was no significant relationship between female adolescents' social anxiety levels and their perception of frequent interparental conflict. One reason for this might be that girls attach greater importance to social relationships and that makes them more sensitive to social interactions (David & Murphy, 2004; Bögels, Oosten & Muris, 2001). Therefore, they might be also more affected by social factors rather than familial ones. Perhaps, females may have enjoyed social support outside of the family that buffered them from the destructive effects of interparental conflict (David & Murphy, 2004; Rork, 2004). This result was also supportive of the male vulnerability hypothesis. According to this hypothesis, males may exhibit significantly greater vulnerability than females to family stressors such as interparental conflict (Cummings & Davies, 1994; Davies & Lindsay, 2004). Some studies have shown that the association between marital conflict and child maladjustment is more pronounced for males than

females, especially in the prediction of externalizing and internalizing problems (Davies, Myers, Cummings, & Heindel, 1999; Davies & Lindsay, 2004).

As mentioned above, in this study no significant relationship was found between perception of unresolved interparental conflict and adolescents' social anxiety levels. In fact, research on this area suggests that parents who successfully resolve their conflicts provide positive problem solving models for their children and that may lead to increased social problem solving skills and social competence. Moreover, it is indicated that resolution reduces the negative effects of observing interparental conflict since children perceive resolved anger as a less negative event (Cummings, Vogel, Cummings, & El-Sheikh, 1989, cited in Kerig, 1996). In the light of the literature, it was expected to find a significant relation of social anxiety to perceived unresolved conflict. Yet this expectation was not supported by the present findings. This finding could be considered as supportive of the idea that perceived frequent and intense interparental conflict might result in negative outcomes in children even if the conflict is resolved. So, parents whose conflicts are less frequent and more constructive might model more adaptive ways of handling social issues (Goodman et. al., 1999).

The third question investigated the relationship between social anxiety and adolescents' perception of maternal and paternal rejection. The results demonstrated that male adolescents' perception of both maternal and paternal rejection were positively correlated with social anxiety ($r = .16$, $p < .05$, $r = .23$, $p < .01$, respectively). However, the correlations between social anxiety and maternal rejection, and social anxiety and paternal rejection for female adolescents were found to be not significant. Previous research showed that adolescents who perceived more parental rejection are more likely to develop behavior problems and specific forms of

psychological maladjustment regardless of gender differences (Rohner, Khaleque, & Cournoyer, 2005). For instance, Eastburg and Johnson (1990) reported that a higher level of parental rejection was associated with increased levels of shyness among adolescents. Lieb and his colleagues (2000) also indicated that parental rejection was found to be associated with social phobia. On the other hand, the different results for females and males might be explained again with the male vulnerability hypothesis and the gender differences in providing social support and socialization processes (Davies & Lindsay, 2004; Rork, 2004).

The fourth question of the study examined the relationship between perception of interparental conflict and maternal rejection and paternal rejection. The study results showed that both female and male adolescents' perception of maternal rejection were positively associated with their perceptions of interparental conflict (r = .42, $p < .01$; r = .51, $p < .01$, respectively). The findings indicated that perceived paternal rejection was also positively correlated with perception of interparental conflict both for female and male adolescents (r= .54, $p < .01$; r = .40, $p < .01$, respectively). These results are supportive to the spillover hypothesis which accounts for the positive correlation between marital quality and quality of parent-child relationships. Spillover hypothesis suggests that the affect, emotions and mood generated in the marital realm transfers to the parent-child relationship (Erel & Burman, 1995). So, disrupted marital interactions generate frustration and anger that lead to dysfunctional parent-child relationships (Grych, 1998). Consistent with the current finding, a recent meta-analysis also showed that interparental conflict is moderately associated with diminished warmth and support in parents (Krishnakumar & Buehler, 2000).

The fifth research question investigated the relationship between perceived interparental conflict and social anxiety when perceptions of maternal and paternal rejection were controlled. The results showed that there was no significant relationship between females' and males' perceptions of interparental conflict and their social anxiety levels after controlling for perceived maternal and paternal rejection. This finding seems to support again the spillover hypothesis and also the indirect effect of marital conflict on children via parental rejection since the relationship between interparental conflict and social anxiety was found to be not significant when the perception of parental rejection was not controlled. The indirect effect model of interparental conflict suggests that the high levels of marital conflict may decrease the quality of parenting behaviors and the perception of disruptive parenting behaviors interfere with normal child development and socialization (Cummings & Davies, 2002).

However, females' perception of intense interparental conflict and males' perception of frequent interparental conflict were found to be significantly related with the social anxiety even after controlling their perceived maternal and paternal rejection (r=.15, p<.05; r=25, p<.01, respectively). These findings showed that intense interparental conflict is directly related with females' social anxiety levels while frequent interparental conflict directly associated with males' social anxiety levels. In that sense, findings of this study seemed to support direct effects models of the impact of marital conflict on child social development; specifically, that some children who are exposed to marital conflict exhibit a desire to withdraw from social interactions (Rork, 2004). Potential explanations for this finding not measured in this study included the hypothesis that exposure to intense and frequent interparental conflict may influence adolescent's social behavior as they model avoidant problem

solving behaviors witnessed in the home. In subsequent interactions with peers, adolescents may reproduce the behaviors they have learned through observation (Krishnakumar & Buehler, 2000).

Although the primary analyses of the present study indicated that there were no gender differences in terms of perceived interparental conflict and parental rejection, like the previous findings, these results also showed differences for females and males. In that sense, it might be proposed that females seem to be more likely to be affected by intense marital conflict whereas males seem to be more likely to be affected by frequent marital conflict. However, there is no doubt that investigating the role of gender in understanding the effects of interparental conflict is crucial for further research.

The sixth research question investigated the relation of social anxiety to maternal and paternal rejection after controlling perception of interparental conflict. The results indicated that only the correlation between males' perception of paternal rejection and the social anxiety was significant after controlling the perception of interparental conflict (r =.16, p <.05). Some researchers stated that the emergence of shyness and social anxiety is influenced by the interaction between the parent's and the child's gender (Eastburg & Johnson, 1990; Neal, Edelmann, 2003). Consistent with them, this finding shows the importance of considering the interplay between the parent's and the child's gender as a potential factor for social anxiety. Moreover, this finding is also supportive to the idea that father love (acceptance) explains an independent and unique portion of variance in specific child outcomes over and above the portion explained by mother love. Some studies also indicated that father love is sometimes the sole significant predictor of specific child outcomes (Rohner & Veneziano 2001, cited in Rohner, Khaleque & Cournoyer, 2005; Veneziano, 2003).

As stated before, Akyıl (2000) examined the effects of perceived parental warmth and rejection on social anxiety among Turkish adolescents and consistent with this finding, she indicated that only emotional warmth of the father have effects on social anxiety.

The seventh question of the study investigated the difference between high socially anxious females', low socially anxious females', high socially anxious males' and low socially anxious males' perceptions of interparental conflict. The results indicated that there was a significant difference between these four groups in terms of the perception of interparental conflict ($F = 5.59$, $p < .001$). It is showed that high socially anxious females and males perceived more interparental conflict than low socially anxious males. Again, this finding is parallel with the studies on perception of interparental conflict which suggested that exposure to interparental conflict increases the likelihood of social withdrawal (Grych, Raynor, & Fosco, 2004; Katz & Gottman, 1993; Neighbors, Forehand & Bau, 1997). However, the results indicated that high and low socially anxious female adolescents did not differ in their perceptions of interparental conflict. This result was in the same line with the previous findings of the current study; the association between interparental conflict and social anxiety is more pronounced for males than females. The finding supports the idea that the relation between marital conflict and child maladjustment is more stressed for males than females, especially in the prediction of externalizing and internalizing problems (Davies, Myers, Cummings, & Heindel, 1999; Davies & Lindsay, 2004).

The eight research question examined the difference between high socially anxious females', low socially anxious females', high socially anxious males' and low socially anxious males' perceptions of maternal and paternal rejection. The

results indicated that these four groups significantly differ in terms of perceived paternal rejection ($F = 5.16$, $p < .005$), but no significant difference was found in terms of maternal rejection ($F = 1.95$, $p > .05$) Similar with the findings of seventh question, it is showed that high socially anxious females and males perceive more paternal rejection when compared to the low socially anxious males. This finding was consistent with the study of Bögels, Oosten, Muris and Smulder (1999). They made extreme group comparisons and reported that socially anxious children judge their parents as less emotionally warm and more rejecting than normal control children. Even though the comparison made in the present study was not between the extreme groups, a significant difference between high and low socially anxious males in terms of parental rejection was found. This was supportive of the idea that parental rejection plays a role in understanding social anxiety. On the other hand, no significant differences were found between high and low socially anxious females in terms of their perceptions of both the maternal and paternal rejection. Again, this finding could be explained by the male vulnerability hypothesis and the gender differences in socialization processes and getting social support (Davies & Lindsay, 2004; Rork, 2004). And it supports the theory that the emergence of shyness and social anxiety is influenced by the child's gender (Neal & Edelmann, 2003).

The ninth question of the study examined the factors that additively and uniquely predict social anxiety in adolescence. It was found that perception of interparental conflict, perceived paternal rejection and gender were significant predictors for social anxiety. So, these predictors additively accounted for approximately 5.2 % of the variance of the social anxiety levels of adolescents. In order to obtain the best predictors among the chosen variables of social anxiety levels of adolescents, stepwise regression analysis was used. In terms of the results, again

perception of interparental conflict, gender and perceived father rejection were significant predictors for adolescent's social anxiety levels. According to this, these three variables, additively explained again approximately 5.2 % of the variance of the social anxiety. Separately, perception of interparental conflict predicted 3% of the social anxiety scores of adolescents; gender and perceived father rejection, both explained 1% of the model. This finding was consistent with the previous findings of the study; perception of interparental conflict, paternal rejection and gender are related to social anxiety. Similarly, Robinson (2003) studied the link between marital conflict and child social withdrawal and reported that the marital conflict predicted 5% of the variance of children's social withdrawal. In terms of father rejection, this finding is consistent with Akyıl's (2000) study which indicated that emotional warmth of the father was one of the parental rearing attitudes that had most contribution to social anxiety among Turkish adolescents. On the other hand, it should be considered that the perception of interparental conflict predicted 3% of the social anxiety scores of adolescents whereas perceived father rejection explained 1% of the model.

The regression analyses revealed that the perception of maternal rejection was unrelated to social anxiety. The reason for this might be the moderately strong correlation between perceived maternal rejection and paternal rejection. In the regression analyses, when two factors are highly correlated, one of these factors with relatively less contribution to the model could be eliminated (Cramer, 2004). Still, this finding is supportive to the idea that paternal love explains an important portion of variance in specific child outcomes over and above the portion explained by maternal love (Rohner & Veneziano 2001, cited in Rohner, Khaleque & Cournoyer, 2005; Veneziano, 2003).

The tenth question examined whether perception of interparental conflict, and perceived maternal and paternal rejection were significant predictors for social anxiety among females and males. It was found that these predictors additively accounted for approximately 7.1 % of the variance of the social anxiety levels of males. On the other hand, it was shown that none of these factors were significant predictors for social anxiety in females. These results are supportive of the other findings of the current study; paternal rejection, rather than maternal rejection, is associated with social anxiety and the relation of perceived interparental conflict and paternal rejection to social anxiety is more pronounced for males than females. So, it can be said that reexamining the role of gender in understanding adolescents' social anxiety in relation to marital conflict and parental rejection in future research is very important.

Implications of the Study

The current study is important because it was a preliminary study. So, it was one of the first attempts to understand the relation of adolescents' perception of intense, frequent and unresolved interparental conflict and maternal and paternal rejection to social anxiety among Turkish adolescents. The study results showed that the perception of interparental conflict and paternal rejection had contribution to social anxiety. Despite some mixed results for females and males, it can also be said that perception of intense and frequent interparental conflict and maternal and paternal rejection were associated with social anxiety. Study results also indicated that high socially anxious males perceived more interparental conflict and parental rejection than their peers with low social anxiety levels. So, the findings are supportive to the idea that perception of intense and frequent interparental conflict and parental

rejection are important factors in understanding the development and maintenance of social anxiety. In that sense, this study may help us in designing counseling programs for parents in order to inform them about the negative effects of perception of intense and frequent marital conflict on their children and about the importance of parenting practices in terms of healthy development of their children. Development of such informative programs might be useful for preventing adolescents from negative effects of disruptive family relationships. If parents can be identified as behaving in certain ways (i.e., paternal rejection, interparental conflict) that have been shown to significantly relate with higher levels of social anxiety, educational efforts may be used with these parents to decrease the chances that the children will develop clinical levels of social anxiety or social phobia. Additionally, to explain to parents that their behaviors may actually be facilitating and maintaining the levels of social anxiety in their children is important since involving parents in therapy has shown to prove effective in the treatment of anxiety disorders (Kearney, 2005).

With respect to prevention, these results may help in the screening and therefore the identification of adolescents with social anxiety disorders. Rork (2004) and Kashdan and Herbert (2001) note the importance of screening procedures in risk-factor assessment as preventive measures. If adolescents can be identified as being at a higher risk for social anxiety, prevention efforts may be useful to decrease the chances of those adolescents developing a clinical level of social anxiety.

Additionally, in terms of both prevention and intervention, it may be important to recognize the gender differences that were revealed in the current study. It may be true that different parental behaviors may impact males more than females, or vice-versa. This might be important to consider when treating a child who is presenting for any form of social anxiety.

Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Further Research

The selection of the participants in the present research was based on a convenience basis in terms of willingness to cooperate with the researcher and participate in this study. So, the results may not be generalized to all adolescents in Turkey. Therefore, further research is recommended to cover more schools from different cities in order to increase the generalizabiltiy of the study. Yet it is important to note that once the school cooperated, the students volunteered easily to participate to the study.

The participants of the study were from moderate socioeconomic levels. Studies with different SES groups can be beneficial for comparison among SES levels because SES level might be an important factor for predicting social anxiety. Additionally, participants from divorced and single-parent families were not included in this study. Future research might be conducted with adolescents' from divorced and single-parent families in order to compare and see the possible effects of these factors on social anxiety. Moreover, it would be also useful to perform this study in a sample of clinical versus non-clinical adolescents.

In this research, only the frequency, intensity and resolution dimensions of the perception of interparental conflict were studied. Future research might be conducted by considering other dimensions of the interparental conflict, such as stability, threat, coping efficacy, content -child related or not- triangulation and self-blame, because these dimensions are also important for understanding children' outcomes in reaction to the interparental conflict (Davies & Cummings 1994).

As mentioned in the literature review part, there seems to be considerable evidence that many familial environmental factors like social rearing behaviors, general parental rearing practices, family relations and family environment are all

associated with social anxiety (Johnson, Interbitzen-Nolan, Schapman, 2005; Stocker & Youngblade, 1999; Ollendick & Hirshfeld-Becker, 2002; Kearney, 2005). However, this study emphasized only the perception of interparental conflict and parental rejection in relation to social anxiety. Further research might be done by examining different familial factors that are likely to relate with social anxiety.

Furthermore, it is important to consider cultural differences in evaluating the findings of the current study. Turkish family is often described as patriarchal, authoritarian and coercive. Submissive and dependent behaviors are rewarded, whereas independence and curiosity are punished. Also Turkish family often fosters passive and dependent behaviors (Fisek, 1982, Kağtçıbaşı, 1970). It is assumed that these cultural characteristics of Turkish family can affect social anxiety among Turkish adolescents (Akyıl, 2000; Öztaş, 1996). Since certain socialization practices play a role in development of adolescents' perception of social evaluation and socialization practices are largely determined by culture, especially by child-rearing practices of that culture (Buss, 1980, cited in Öztaş, 1996). Therefore further research in this area is necessary in order to understand the cultural factors that influence social anxiety among Turkish adolescents.

This research highlights the importance of considering the interplay between the parent's and the child's gender as a potential factor for social anxiety. In that sense, reinvestigating the role of gender in understanding adolescents' emotions and behaviors in response to marital conflict and parental attitudes is an important direction for future research.

Through future research, utilizing a large heterogeneous sample, considering other familial and cultural factors and several methods of data-gathering, researchers

may come closer to developing a more precise model for the etiology, treatment, and eventually prevention of social anxiety.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The aim of the present study was to examine the relation of social anxiety to adolescents' perceptions of intense, frequent and unresolved interparental conflict and maternal and paternal rejection, in a sample of 406 high school students between the ages of 13-18 coming from intact families with moderate socioeconomic levels. Additionally, the effect of gender on these relations and on social anxiety was investigated. This study also aimed to examine the relationship between adolescents' perceptions of interparental conflict and their perceptions of maternal and paternal rejection.

The study findings indicated that intense and frequent perception of interparental conflict and paternal rejection are associated with social anxiety whereas unresolved interparental conflict was found to be not related to social anxiety. In fact, research on this area suggests that parents who successfully resolve their conflicts provide positive problem solving models for their children and that may lead to increased social problem solving skills and social competence. It is also indicated that resolution reduces the negative effects of observing interparental conflict because children perceive resolved anger less negatively (Cummings, Vogel, Cummings, & El-Sheikh, 1989, cited in Kerig, 1996). In the light of the literature, it was expected to find a significant relation of social anxiety to perceived unresolved conflict but this expectation was not supported by the present findings. This finding could be considered as supportive to the idea that perceived frequent and intense interparental conflict might result negative outcomes in children even if the conflict is resolved. Future research might be done in order to reexamine the association

between unresolved interparental conflict and social anxiety. Moreover, other dimensions of the interparental conflict, such as stability, threat, coping efficacy, content -child related or not- triangulation and self-blame might be studied in relation to social anxiety among adolescents.

The findings of the current study also show the importance of considering the interplay between the parent's and the child's gender as a potential factor for social anxiety. The results were supportive of the male vulnerability hypothesis. According to this hypothesis, males may exhibit significantly greater vulnerability than females to family stressors (Cummings & Davies, 1994; Davies & Lindsay, 2004). One reason for this might be that girls give greater importance to social relationships and that makes them more sensitive to social interactions (David & Murphy, 2004; Bögels, Oosten & Muris, 2001). Additionally, the results of the present study are supportive to the idea that father love (acceptance) explains an independent and unique portion of variance in specific child outcomes over and above the portion explained by mother love. Based on these findings it can be said that reexamining the role of gender in understanding adolescents' emotions and behaviors in response to marital conflict and parental attitudes in future research is very important.

Furthermore, the results of the present study are supportive of the spillover hypothesis which accounts for the positive correlation between marital quality and quality of parent-child relationships. In terms of the mechanisms behind the operation of interparental conflict and negative child outcomes, the results pointed both direct and indirect influences on adolescents, however direct effect seems to be more dominant. Further research might be conducted in order to reexamine the mechanisms behind the operation of interparental conflict and social anxiety. Also

different familial factors that are likely to relate with social anxiety should be studied.

The present study was the first attempt to understand the relation of adolescents' perception of intense, frequent and unresolved interparental conflict and maternal and paternal rejection to social anxiety among Turkish adolescents. So, this study provided valuable information about the relation of perceived interparental conflict and parental rejection to social anxiety. The study may also help us also in designing counseling programs for parents in order to inform them about the importance of parenting practices and about the negative outcomes of children's perception of intense and frequent interparental conflict. Development of such informative programs might be useful for preventing adolescents from negative effects of such disruptive family issues. Additionally, with respect to prevention, the results of the present study may help in the screening and therefore the identification of adolescents with social anxiety. It is known that the screening procedure in risk-factor assessment is very important in prevention. As a result, despite its limitations, the current study provided valuable information and implications. Further research is recommended in order to provide more information and increase the contributions to this area.

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