

THE PERCEPTIONS OF THE PARENTS OF CHILDREN WHO ARE VICTIMS OF NEGLIGENCE AND ABUSE IN TURKEY REGARDING THE CONCEPT OF MALTREATMENT

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ABSTRACT

In this study, it is aimed to determine the maltreatment behaviors of parents and the emotional outputs of these behaviors. The study is a qualitative research in the phenomenology pattern. In the research, extreme and deviant sampling, one of the purposive sampling methods, was used to determine the participants. The participants of the study are 14 parents of children who are victims of neglect and abuse and who receive service from the Ministry of Family and Social Services. Research data were collected by semi-structured interview technique. Participants were asked 12 demographic questions to get to know them and 25 questions to determine their training needs in order to specify the need for a training program for the protection of children's rights and the prevention of violence against children. The data obtained from the semi-structured interviews were analyzed by inductive analysis. Findings obtained from the parents of children who are the victims of neglect and abuse and who receive service from the Ministry of Family and Social Services reveal that maltreatment is conceptualized as "the situations applied, the reasons for its application, the forms of application, the feelings felt when it is applied". In the study, the fact that parents abuse their children to protect and discipline their children from the outside world indicates that they are ignorant and unconscious in this regard. Families are aware of the negative effects of their ill-treatment on both themselves and their children. This study emphasizes the importance of helping parents gain a deeper understanding, awareness and attitude in preventing child negligence and abuse.

Keywords: maltreatment, punishment, child abuse, child neglect, emotional abuse

INTRODUCTION

The meaning attributed to the concept of family in the historical process differs according to the life philosophies adopted in the society, cultures, era, and geographical location. The family is defined as a social network based on biological and marital relations that is responsible for

the production, distribution, and consumption of commodities, reproduction, and socialization of the next generation, co-dwelling, and transmission of property (Thornton & Fricke, 1989 cited by Waite, 2000). The family, which is the basic building block in the formation of societies, is of great importance in terms of providing cultural transmission in society. The family is also of great importance as a unit in which the biological, nutritional, and sexual needs of the individuals are met and protection against dangerous situations is provided. One of the most important functions of the family is to raise individuals who will contribute to the development of society by providing the child's physical, emotional, social, mental, and personality development. The individual characteristics of the individuals who make up the family as a unit, the environment they live in, the culture, and the characteristics of the era in which they live affect the way the family raises children. The individual characteristics of parents that affect the way they raise children are their sex, age, education, income, disability, psychological disorders, harmful substance use, and past life experiences, such as being attacked or abused (Bartolome, et al., 2017; Bronfenbrenner, 1986).

Another powerful factor that affects parents' child-rearing styles, individual characteristics and even the characteristics of society is the characteristics of the age in which they live. With the developments in industry and technology in the last half-century, and their potential to change the world, migration from rural to urban areas has increased, mothers have entered the working life, and nuclear families have replaced the extended family. In this process, it is seen that the basic life needs of the individuals who make up the society have improved and their education levels have increased, however, it is observed that the same societies are faced with serious social problems such as divorce, single-parent family, identity crises, sexual life before maturity, suicide, domestic violence, crime and murder (İşcan, 2007; Martin & Reigeluth, 1999; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2020). These developments and the problems encountered affect the lifestyle of many families and lead to the reshaping of their lives, their roles in the family, and their relationships with their spouses and children.

Another situation that affects the lifestyle of families and causes their lives to be reshaped is the Covid-19 epidemic that emerged in 2020. In order to prevent the spread of infection during the COVID-19 epidemic, several measures have been taken to maintain social distance and personal isolation at home in many countries. Flexibilities such as working from home and rotational shift working have been introduced to the work order of the public and private sectors, distance education has been introduced at all education levels, meetings and events have been postponed or canceled (Turkish Academy of Sciences [TUBA], 2020). As a result of the increase in the time spent at home due to the restrictions, the parents' starting to carry out their work from home, their children's being a stakeholder in the education process, the intensification of housework, and the increase in the dependence of children on their parents; alcohol and substance addiction increased in parents, tolerance and long-term thinking abilities of family members decreased, families began to experience psychosocial, economic and relational difficulties. Depending on the changes in living conditions and habits, the pandemic process has caused family members to experience moderate and severe psychological problems such as depression, anxiety, stress, and domestic violence has increased accordingly (Catalá-Miñana et al., 2017; Cluver et al., 2020; Godin, 2020; Sancili & Tugluk, 2021). Studies and researches have shown that children living in homes with domestic violence are 60 times more at risk of abuse and neglect than the normal population. In this process, it is observed that especially low-income, crowded families are at greater risk. It is stated that the measures taken to prevent the pandemic may cause a secondary hidden pandemic

due to the increased frequency of child abuse and neglect (Cluver et al., 2020; Green, 2020; Institute of Health Visiting, 2020).

In this process, knowingly or unknowingly parents may show abusive behaviors that will prevent or pause the development of the child because children do not do what they say or parents want to discipline their children, or parents are very busy, or they have physical or psychological problems (Tezel-Şahin and Cevher, 2007). One of these behaviors is physical abuse. Physical abuse is defined as a non-accidental injury of a child by an older adult (Aydın, 2005; Ünal, 2008; Yalçın, 2011; World Health Organization [WHO], 2002). Behaviors such as slapping, beating, pulling ears, injuring or bruising the child by using various objects, and poisoning the child by using various substances constitute physical abuse (Erol, 2007). In recent years, different types of physical abuse that cause child deaths have also been emphasized. The deliberate killing of her children as a result of the mother's use of alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs during pregnancy is also considered within the scope of physical abuse (Kozcu, 1990).

Another type of abuse that parents use as the most effective method to discipline their children is emotional abuse. Emotional abuse is defined as any behavior that makes the child feel unloved, worthless, and unwanted (Slep et al., 2011). Making expectations and requests from the child beyond their abilities and skills, or putting them into a competitive environment and an intense working environment without considering their interests, talents, and mental capacities; not meeting the attention and love needs of the child adequately, putting excessive pressure on him or taking him under excessive protection, threatening, shouting at the child, scolding, comparing, humiliating, mocking and naming are the types of emotional abuse (Ersanlı, Yılmaz & Özcan, 2013; Glaser, 2002; Paavilainen & Tarkka, 2003; Yavuzer, 1990; Yetiş, 2017). Although families today know much better that emotional and physical abuse will negatively affect the development of children, it is seen that they continue to use traditional education methods (Çalgı-Deveci, 2017).

During the child-rearing process, parents neglect their children for reasons such as unemployment, economic inadequacies such as going into debt, intense work schedule, alcohol, drug use, psychological problems, and insufficient education (Kozcu, 1990; Polat, 2007; Polat 2001). Child neglect is the failure of the individuals who are responsible for the child to meet their physical, emotional, and social needs such as health, education, protection, nutrition, dressing, cleaning, being loved, affection, and attention, which are necessary for the development of the child, or the ignorance of these (Öztürk, 2011; Polat, 2007; WHO, 2002). The child may be exposed to sexual abuse as a result of the neglectful behaviors of one or both of the parents towards their child. Sexual abuse is defined as the actions that adults apply to children to meet their sexual satisfaction. (WHO, 2002). Neglect and abuse behaviors implemented on children by parents can lead to symptoms of depression, behavior disorder, eating disorder, delay in speech, urinary incontinence, attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder, learning difficulties, addictive substance use, future violence against others and oneself (suicide), low self-esteem and self-perception, and low expectations for the future (Aktay, 2020; WHO, 2002).

In order to prevent neglect and abusive behaviors toward children, it is necessary to understand how families conceptualize the concept of maltreatment. In this context, it was aimed to determine the maltreatment behaviors of parents and the emotional outputs of these behaviors.

METHODOLOGY

Model of the Research

This study is a qualitative research in the phenomenology pattern. Phenomenology aims to reveal individuals' experiences, perceptions, and meanings about a phenomenon (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). In this study, it was tried to determine the maltreatment behaviors that families whose children were abused were conscious of or unwittingly practiced against their children, through their experiences and perceptions so this pattern was used.

Participants

In the research, extreme and deviant sampling, one of the purposive sampling methods, was used to determine the participants. In this sampling type, participants, situations, documents, events, etc. are taken into consideration (Patton, 2002). The research constitutes a part of the European Union Project (needs analysis), which aims to develop a digital education program for parents on the protection of children's rights and the prevention of violence against children. While developing a training program for the protection of children's rights and the prevention of violence against children, a need analysis was conducted first. In order to determine the educational needs of the parents on the relevant subject, the participants were determined by using extreme and deviant sampling to provide richer data than normal situations and to allow for an in-depth and multidimensional understanding of the education need. The participants of the research are the parents of children who are victims of neglect and abuse who receive service from the Ministry of Family and Social Services of a province in the Aegean Region. Patton (2002) stated that the use of extreme and deviant sampling in research will enable the development of more typical programs, since both the extraordinary and the typical can be reached, and extraordinary conditions or extreme results will be used. Ten of the participants in the study were female and four were male. Two of the participants are between the ages of 20 and 30, seven are between the ages of 31 and 40, four are between the ages of 41 and 50, and one is between the ages of 51 and 60. While three of the participants are individuals who have never been to school, four are primary school, one secondary school, four high school graduates, and two undergraduates. While three of the participants live in the village, six of them live in the district and five of them live in the province. While eight of the participants are housewives, four of them are workers, one is a technician and one is a cook. Six of the participants have adolescent children, while three have both adolescent children and babies. There are two participants who have only a baby, and three participants whose children go to primary school. Six of the participants have children who need special education. The children of three of the participants are working. Two of the participants meet their monthly income with government support, while the other participants live on minimum wage.

Data Collection Tool and Process

Research data were collected by semi-structured interview technique to obtain in-depth information and to provide a better understanding of the phenomenon. Participants were asked 12 demographic questions to get to know them and 25 questions to determine their training needs in order to determine the need for a training program for the protection of children's rights and the prevention of violence against children. Most of the questions consist of indirect questions used in the interview technique such as "How is your communication with your

children? For example, how do you behave towards your child when he/she exhibits behaviors that you do not like or does not fulfill his/her responsibilities?" Since the participants of the research are the families of the children who are victims of abuse, in order to observe sensitivity and ethical principles, the interviews were conducted by two experts of Ministry of Family and Social Services Provincial Directorate who received in-service training from many ministries in the field and who work in the field of child services for 11 years as a sociologist and work with children and their families, about whom protective and preventive measures have been taken by the relevant courts within the scope of the Child Protection Law. In order to confirm the clarity and comprehensibility of the interview questions, a victim family who would not participate in the research had the questions read beforehand and it was concluded that the questions were understandable as a result of the feedback received. Before starting the real interviews, the experts conducted a pilot study with a participant who was not a victim family, together with two faculty members who were experts in qualitative research and worked on the relevant subject. After the pilot implementation, the experts held interviews with the participants between March and August 2020. The interviews were held in the 'Interview Room' offered by the Provincial Directorate of Ministry of Family and Social Services where the participant could feel comfortable and the interview would not be interrupted. Before starting the interviews, the participants were first made to sign a form stating that they participated in the research voluntarily. The interviews were recorded with a voice recorder. The interviews lasted between 32 minutes and another 75 minutes.

Analysis of Data

After the data obtained from the semi-structured interviews were written down, it was analyzed by inductive analysis with the NVivo8.0. Package Program. The data obtained in this process were uploaded into the program, and read. Since most of the semi-structured interview questions consisted of indirect questions, the answers of the participants were coded to determine the training needs (eg, identifying the maltreatment of the participants and their spouses) and the codes were brought together and thematized. While presenting the findings, the themes were supported with direct quotations. For the reliability of the research, a researcher other than the researcher who made the analysis, examined each main theme, sub-theme, and codes with their citations. Later, the two researchers came together and tried to reach a consensus on the controversial codes and themes. The reliability of the study was calculated using the reliability formula of Miles and Huberman (1994). As a result of the calculation, a consensus of 92% was reached. A rate above 70% was accepted as reliable for this study (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Ethical Considerations

Researchers applied to Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Board at Kutahya Dumlupinar University to obtain the permissions for the research. The study was started just after getting the decision of Ethics Board (Decision Date: 05.03.2020, Decision Number: 16). Before starting the data collection procedure, participants were informed about the research aims. They were also kept informed in all stages, and anonymity was offered. Participants' opinions were the required ones. Therefore, researchers paid attention not to impose their beliefs.

RESULTS

Findings obtained from the parents of children who are victims of neglect and abuse who receive service from the Provincial Directorate of Ministry of Family and Social Services reveal that maltreatment is conceptualized as "the situations applied, the reasons for its application, the forms of application, the feelings felt when it is applied".

Situations of Maltreatment

It was determined that parents who participated in the study, whose children were at a relatively older age (12-18), abused their children when they "come home late" and "choose the wrong friend". One of the participants, K1 expressed this situation as follows:

“There are too many situations on which my child deserves punishment... for example when my daughter goes out, she doesn't come home at the time I want. She sends me messages “ok mum, I will come”. She rejects my calls when I call.”

It was also determined that one of the parents whose children were older, abused "when their child uses volatile substances". Participant K8 expressed this situation as follows:

“Since I know that U. is using drugs, I do not give pocket money and we are having an argument. I constantly think about whether he will buy substances with the pocket money I give. As an alternative to getting angry, I also say do whatever you want. We found a job for him; he used substances saying he was going to go to the toilet. I placed him in the Dormitory as a punishment, it didn't work either.”

It was determined that most of the parents, emphasizing the main problem of today's child, maltreated as a result of "their children spending a long time on the Internet" and "quarreling with their siblings". It was also determined that especially parents with young children maltreated when their children engage in behaviors that endanger them at home, such as using sharp tools or playing by the window, and not following the hygiene and cleaning rules such as not washing their hands before and after meals. K14, one of the participants, expressed this situation as follows:

“If he's playing by the window, and when he is told not to do, he'll want to play there, so he deserves punishment. When my child touches sharp objects, we hit his hand.”

One of the reasons why girls in particular face maltreatment by their parents is that they do not fulfill their expectations such as "tidying the house, helping their mothers".

Reasons for Maltreatment

Parents who participated in the research stated that they abused their children mostly because they wanted them to be “aware of the wrong behavior or action they did or correct the wrong

action they did". K6, one of the parents, emphasized that punishment is an effective method in changing behavior and said:

"Punishment is effective. Before the punishment, the child must be told about the wrong behavior or action. That's why it should be said that you are punished. Otherwise, the behavior can be repeated. I will explain the reason for the punishment".

The participant K7 said, and emphasized that punishment is an effective method for the child to realize his mistake and correct it:

"Should children be punished; yes, they should be, sometimes I think the dose of reaction in these children is effective in understanding the mistake the child made."

Another reason why parents maltreat their children is "obedience". K8, one of the participants, expressed the view that:

"If the child does not listen to the mother and father, if he is spoiled, he punishes his child to restrain him".

Another reason why parents impose punishment on their children is that "they have their own problems". One of the participants, K7, who stated that they maltreated their children because of their own problems and was aware of this, said:

"For example, let's say that the child normally gave a negative answer to his mother. He was rude. Normally, I might ask him; my son why are you doing this, but when I am unhappy, this question is in the form of shouting. Let's not call it an insult, let's say it high volume tone. When I feel unhappy, the reaction to the child is a little harsh."

One of the participants, K9, emphasized the difficulties he experienced at work and expressed his opinion as follows:

"There was a problem at work, there were problems with friends, when coming home also had a very serious problem with the child. When all these come together, that reaction explodes in the child. Because he is the weakest link. You can't be angry with your manager at work, you can't be angry with your friend outside, but you go home, there is a child you can get your teeth into. He can't do anything to you, he's weak. I think it's so harsh that all your anger, ambition, and stress is exploding at him. If I'm reacting so harshly to my child, what could he have done? What can a child do? How much damage can he do, what can he do, if he wants?"

Parents stated that they maltreat their children even though they showed behaviors such as obeying the rules and fulfilling their responsibilities.

Forms of Maltreatment

The main purpose of the parents who participated in the research to maltreat unintentionally is to protect their children from external harm, to enable them to fulfill their responsibilities, to prevent them from being physically harmed, and to ensure that they are raised in a good and qualified manner. In other words, it was determined that parents maltreated their children in order to discipline them. It was determined that parents mostly show "getting angry, shouting, raising their voice" reactions in the face of behaviors that they do not want their children to do for various reasons. K12, one of the participants, said:

"I will warn first. If not, I will shout, raise my voice. I will react so".

One of the participants, K3 also expressed opinion saying that:

"So., I have never hit either of my children. I showed my anger with my eyes or with my voice."

Some of the parents prevent their children from spending time on the Internet (mobile phone-PC) by depriving their children of the behaviors they want to do in order to make their children do the desired behavior. Again, parents who prefer the second type of punishment, in order for their children to fulfill the desired behavior, maltreat their children with behaviors such as not allowing them to go out, not buying what they want, not giving pocket money, preventing them from watching television, not giving food for a while. K13, one of the participants who tried to discipline their child by threatening at the same time by applying the second type of punishment, expressed opinion by saying that:

"If he hasn't studied today or is still playing ball; I say; my son please; otherwise, you will not be able to use the mobile phone again".

Again, related to the second type of punishment, one of the participants, K1 expressed opinion saying that:

"When my child does something he shouldn't do, I deprive him of something he loves. For example, I don't let him meet his friends".

K6, one of the parents who maltreated their children such as "offended, not speaking, emphasizing that it upsets herself" in order to make their children acquire the behaviors they want, said:

"The biggest punishment is my resentment towards my children. I think that resentment is effective".

It was determined that in cases where undesirable behavior is shown, some parents maltreated their children such as making them "wait in the toilet - wait in the room - wait at the door" as the common rule of the family. K6, one of the participants, expressed this situation as follows:

"When I was working, my children lit a fire in the house when they were kids. As punishment, they lock themselves in the toilet. We set a common rule when

the children were little. That whoever does something that should not be done will close himself in the toilet”.

Among the participants, for example, a parent who thinks that his child's homework, which is his responsibility, is not done well for him and wants to give his child the desired behavior in this regard, showed the behavior of "deleting the homework and asking him to do it again". Aware of this maltreatment, K9 expressed opinion saying that:

“I am very angry with myself for this. I think I have expectations for my child unwittingly, my expectation becomes a responsible behavior for him and I push him hard on these issues, sometimes I get very angry with myself. For example, if he is doing homework, if I don't like it, and if I understand that he did it uncaringly just to do it, I delete it (smiling). For example, he does not prefer to do his homework with me. But I persistently try to get it done, if necessary, with anger and perseveringly”.

Some of the participants stated that they abused their children, such as hitting their hands, in order to protect them from dangers that would harm them at home. K14, one of the participants, expressed this situation as follows:

“When my child touches sharp objects, we hit his hand. We do not do anything rather than this”.

Emphasizing that her husband abused their children by using physical violence, K2 said:

“I have never beat my children before. Their father mostly beats. He doesn't beat too hard either. He beats lightly. He does not beat children as fiercely as he beats me”.

Emotions Felt When Maltreated

When parents maltreated their children, they stated that “they regretted, were unhappy, questioned themselves, felt guilty, felt nervous and worried because the problem could not be resolved”. Emphasizing that she regrets treating her children badly, K9 expressed her opinion as:

"I regret it, I feel guilty".

Emphasizing that she was unhappy, K6 said:

“It is an indescribable feeling. It's a heart-breaking feeling. I feel very unhappy. If a drop of tear falls from my children's eyes, it makes me very unhappy and bad. I can't explain that feeling”.

Emphasizing that she felt guilty, P5 said:

“If it is about homework, yes, but usually there is guilt, regret. Otherwise, I'm not trying to convince myself. Sometimes I wish I had been a little more patient.

Should I have waited a little longer, had a little more tolerance, had I spoken for a longer time and tried to persuade?"

Unlike the other participants, K2 emphasized that maltreatment is an effective method to learn about life and that she does not feel uncomfortable when she mistreats her children and stated that:

"I don't feel sorry for the heavy and big punishments regarding my children. I think it's good for kids. I don't feel uncomfortable".

It was determined that parents who maltreat their children are aware of the negative impact of this on their children. Parents stated that when they maltreated their children, their children showed reactions like "crying, reciprocating, staying silent, upset, offended, irritable, apologetic, and realizing their mistake". For example, P5, one of the participants who emphasized that her daughter cried when she maltreated her child, expressed her opinion as follows:

"As soon as I raise my eyebrow, she creates a stink. For example, when she wants to hug me and if I am not available, I say to hug her two minutes later but she immediately starts crying. She tends to cry a lot; she immediately starts crying".

P12, one of the participants who believe that punishment is a means of understanding the child's own mistake, said:

"He realizes his mistake. He comes and apologizes, saying dad, I won't do it again. He sits next to me, hugs and kisses. I see this behavior as correct because he realized his mistake".

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The research constitutes a part of the European Union Project (needs analysis) which aims to develop a digital education program for parents on the protection of children's rights and the prevention of violence against children. The study aims to determine the maltreatment behaviors of parents and the emotional outputs of these behaviors. Data were collected from the parents of children who were victims of neglect and abuse, who received services from the Provincial Directorate of Ministry of Family and Social Services, to determine the educational needs of the parents in the relevant subject, to provide richer data compared to normal situations, and to provide an in-depth and multidimensional understanding of the education need. Findings reveal that maltreatment is conceptualized as "the situations applied, the reasons for its application, the forms of application, the feelings felt when it is applied".

In cases such as "coming home late, using volatile substances, spending much time on the internet, choosing the wrong friend, engaging in dangerous behaviors that will harm oneself at home, not helping parents with housework, not paying attention to hygiene, fighting in a way that disturbs the peace of family members", it was determined that parents maltreated their children. These findings are similar to those obtained in some previous studies. For example, in the study conducted by United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF, 2010) on child abuse and domestic violence in Turkey, it was determined that parents

maltreated their children for the behaviors like acting up, misbehaving, disobedience, not behaving as they wanted, and not studying.

The reasons for the maltreatment of the parents were determined as protecting their children from the factors or individuals that they think will harm their children, giving them responsibility, making their children aware of the mistakes they did, or correcting these and ensuring that they obey the rules. When the above reasons are examined, it is seen that the parents aim to raise their children as healthy, responsible, and qualified individuals. The fact that parents think that they will gain qualifications by maltreating their children shows that they have erroneous information about disciplining their children or they unconsciously use disciplining methods. Parents' approach to parenting is shaped by their values and belief systems (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2020). In the study, it can be said that the participants adopted authoritarian parenting attitudes to discipline and raise their children. Parents with an authoritarian child-rearing attitude maintain control through using force and withholding love. They want to shape their children in the direction they want without considering their personalities (Canatan et al., 2020). The literature states that parents with this attitude have children with the desire to have someone to love them. Therefore, they have great expectations from their children. When children are unable to meet their parents' wishes, parents may abuse them and force their children to behave as they wish (Özgentürk, 2014). Studies in parallel with the findings of the research have been found in the literature. For example, Akduman (2010) conducted a study to determine the behaviors of mothers to discipline their children and to evaluate it in terms of child abuse, and it was determined that mothers apply emotional and physical violence to their children on the grounds of increasing their children's positive behaviors or reducing their negative behaviors. In the research, one of the remarkable reasons for the maltreatment of their children by the parents is that they feel unhappy as a result of having problems with the adults around them (with their spouse, friends, and bosses), being very tired at work and having psychological diseases. In parallel with this finding obtained in the study, many studies in the literature have determined that there is a relationship between personality and behavioral characteristics of parents and child abuse and neglect. Many studies in the literature have emphasized that stress arising from job changes, loss of income, health problems, deteriorating social relationships, or other aspects of the family environment can increase child abuse due to lower tolerance (Klevens et al., 2000; Runyan et al., 2002; Rodriguez, 2010; Sidebotham et al., 2001).

It was determined that in order to discipline their children, parents mostly commit emotional (psychological) abuse/violent maltreatment, such as getting angry, offending and not speaking, threatening, and preventing a behavior they want to do by applying a second type of punishment. In addition, it was determined that by not giving food for a certain period of time, they showed neglect behaviors such as ignoring their most basic physiological needs, ignoring the need to eat and drinking and not giving pocket money, and physical abuse behaviors such as hitting their hands. However, attitudes and behaviors that make children feel bad, such as shouting, scolding, judging, disdain, and blaming, have no place in disciplining. The purpose of the discipline is to protect children, to inform them to make rational choices in life, and to enable them to reflect on the long-term consequences of their behavior (Solter, 2017). Abuse creates pressure and fear in the child. The child shows the desired behavior for a short time with fear and pressure. Because the deterrent of maltreatment/punishment ends when the person giving the punishment moves away from the environment. He is "punished", he's even, and now he's "free". A child threatened with punishment may be forced to obey or obey rules as long as the threat persists. When the threat is gone, the undesirable behavior is repeated. Therefore, punishment is ineffective in changing children's undesirable behaviors in the long

term. When punishment doesn't work, more is applied and the cycle goes on. In this study, the ignorant and unconscious behaviors of parents to discipline their children with maltreatment unfortunately coincide with the findings of many studies conducted in Turkish or foreign literature (Akduman, 2010; Meziane-Fourati, 2017; Onat et al., 2016; Ramiro et al., 2000; Runyan et al., 2002; Trickett et al., 2009; UNICEF, 2010-2014; Ünal 2017).

Another remarkable finding in the study is that one of the parents participating in the study defended that maltreatment is an effective method to "teach their children about life" and stated that she did not feel discomfort due to the maltreatment she applied. When this remarkable finding was reached, the answers of the participant to the other research questions were examined. As a result of the examination, it was concluded that the participant was subjected to violence by her husband and as a woman who was also a victim of violence, found emotional/psychological violence harmless when compared to physical violence.

In the study, it was determined that most of the parents who maltreated their children were aware of the negative effects of this maltreatment on their children. It was determined that when parents maltreat their children, their children show "crying, reciprocating, staying silent, upset, offended, irritable," reactions and behaviors. It was also concluded that some parents thought that maltreatment had a positive effect on their children, such as "apologizing and realizing their mistake". UNICEF (2010)'s study on child abuse and domestic violence in Turkey, it was concluded that abuse affects children emotionally and physically. This result is in parallel with the results of the research. Again in the study, in parallel with the results, it was concluded that, according to the parents, maltreatment has an effect on children out of which they can derive lessons and learn.

As a result, in the study, the fact that parents abuse their children to protect and discipline their children from the outside world indicates that they are ignorant and unconscious in this regard. Families are aware of the negative effects of their ill-treatment on both themselves and their children.

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