

## **"I WANTED TO GROW UP TO BE STRONG ENOUGH TO DO ALL THE WORK AND HELP MY MOTHER": WHY DO CHILDREN WANT TO GROW UP RAPID?**

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### **ABSTRACT**

A supportive environment is critical for individuals to protect their developmentally bio-psycho-socio-emotional health. This research was carried out to determine the possible causes of "desire for rapid growth", which is frequently seen in childhood, and the emotional states caused by "desire for rapid growth" in children, were carried out in a basic qualitative research design. The research participants are 60 undergraduate students who are preschool pre-service teachers. Within the scope of the study, data were collected through focus group discussion and documents, and the study's results were reached through content analysis, one of the qualitative analysis methods. Based on the study findings, participant showed long-term effects such as emotional emptiness, nostalgia, permanent emotional and social impact, and lastly, the "desire for rapid growth" is experienced. It was concluded that they had feelings of worthlessness, inferiority, anger, stuckness, and insecurity. In addition, among all participants, 56 has at least experienced once in their childhood the "desire for rapid growth".

**Keyword:** Preschool education, early childhood education, negative childhood experiences, unwanted childhood experience

### **INTRODUCTION**

Development is contextual and takes place in an environment (Kayman et al., 2021). The supportive environment is critically important for individuals to protect their developmentally bio-psycho-socio-emotional health (Miller, 2016; Santrock, 2019; Yavuzer, 2017). Most theorists have stated the early childhood period as a period that shapes the later years of development (Hall & Lindzey, 1978). Freud mentioned that personality development is completed in the first six years irreversible (Corey, 2000). On the other hand, according to Erikson, personality development and adaptation are affected by previous development and adaptation. The first experiences facilitate or jeopardize the future identity of the individual as a critical stage (Gardiner & Gander, 2010). Erikson (1963, 1968) reported that in the first six years, children's basic feelings of trust (0-1.5 years), autonomy skills (1.5-3.5 years), and entrepreneurial desires (3.5-6 years) stated that it should be developed in a way that should be developed (Miller, 2008; Santrock, 2014). If some features in the development stages are not supported in their period, it is very difficult to develop these features in the future (Trawick-Swith, 2013). In human life, the family is located in the closest environment. In Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Theory, the family is located in the microsystem. The individual can affect the family in the system, and the family can affect the individual. Growing

up in a family where the child's individuality is respected, accepted unconditionally, loved, valued, and his development is supported forms the basis for them to be healthy adults in the future. Despite that, the current and future health of, who grows up in a family where his developmental needs are neglected and abused, and his individuality and existence are not taken into account, may be negatively affected (Miller, 2016; Santrock, 2019).

The problems and situations that may arise in early childhood and the issues that may occur in the later life of individuals have been a subject that is highly emphasized today (Gluckman, et al., 2007; Gilbert, et al., 2003). Adverse experiences in early childhood (parental indifference-inconsistency, constant feeling of shame, and psychological pressure) are associated with different stress reactions. They may affect the psycho-biological development of individuals (Schoore, 2001). Such negative situations that can be experienced in early childhood can be manifested by substance addiction, alcohol addiction, violence and bullying and similar problems in the later life of individuals (Önder & Gülay, 2007). Since it is a critical period in terms of development, observing and evaluating children's behaviour in early childhood and supporting their product is of great importance in preventing possible problems (Weisz & Eastman, 1995).

Development is complex, and it is generally not possible to talk about a single cause or risk factor that causes a problem (Baykara and Miral, 1998). However, considering the risk factors in the context of psychosocial development, it may be possible to classify them under the headings of neglect and abuse (emotional, physical, sexual and economic). In this regard, children's "desire for rapid growth" may be related to the above-mentioned risk factors. Low socioeconomic level, narrow living space, large family structure, immigration phenomenon, education level, single-parent family, adverse family climate, inconsistent parental attitudes, marital quality, presence of parent-child relationship can be counted among the factors that cause neglect and abuse towards children (Armağan, 2007; Black, 2004).

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), also known as unwanted childhood experiences, refers to possible traumatic events experienced by children and young people in the family (Lester et al., 2020). Among these traumatic events, There are issues such as neglecting the physical and emotional needs of the child, being exposed to psychological, physical and sexual violence in the family. However, growing up in a dysfunctional family for children can also be expressed as ACEs. In this context, dysfunctional family characteristics, families' limited knowledge and skills regarding the child's developmental needs, poverty, violence, conflict, divorce and arrests can be cited as examples (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2014; Danese & McEwen, 2012).

In studies conducted in the United States (USA), adults exposed to ACEs four or more times during childhood had twice as many unhealthy eating habits, consumed twice as much alcohol, smoked three times more, and five times more prematurely. It has been concluded that they experience sexuality and adolescent pregnancy six times at the age of five, are involved in violence seven times more, are arrested eleven times more, and use addictive substances (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2014; Chen & Lacey, 2018). However, it is stated that one out of every six people has been exposed to ACEs four or more times during childhood. These data are very important in showing how common ACEs are (Kayman et al., 2021).

Considering the long-term effects of ACEs (chronic illness, substance abuse, mental health problems, etc.), it is very costly economically and socially for the family, society and countries. In this context, prevention studies are currently being conducted in the USA for ACEs (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2022).

Odom (2000), sees the early childhood period is a critical stage for development, communication with the environment, social interaction, language skills, and the development of self-worth. When considered in this context, it can be said that situations encountered, especially in early childhood, can have a critical effect on the psychosocial development of children. It is precious to be aware of the risk factors that may arise psychosocially, especially from early childhood, and to know that some problems that may occur in this period may affect the future lives of children, strengthening the principle of equal opportunity qualitatively. In this respect, one of the tasks that should be implemented to standardize the quality of education that each child will receive and to maintain this quality is undoubtedly to consider psychosocial risk factors.

This study focuses on the "desire to grow up quickly", which is frequently encountered in childhood. The study was carried out to determine the possible reasons individuals want to grow up quickly during childhood and the emotional states of "*desire for rapid growth*" in individuals.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research was carried out to determine the possible causes of "desire for rapid growth", which is frequently seen in childhood, and the emotional states caused by "desire for rapid growth" in children, was carried out in a basic qualitative research design. Basic qualitative studies are one of the most widely used forms of research in all disciplines, especially in education. Data in basic qualitative studies; can be collected through interviews, observation and document review (Merriam & Grenier, 2019; Merriam, 2013). The data of this study were collected through interviews and document analysis. Within the scope of the study, instead of one-on-one interviews with the participants, focus group interviews were preferred in terms of both saving time for the research and having a researcher-participant, participant-participant interaction and in a discussion atmosphere (Glesne, 2013). It was desired to reach more information quickly in the process that the discussion environment created.

### **Participants**

The research participants are 60 undergraduate students who are preschool pre service teacher. Demographic information of the participants is given in Table 1.

Table 1. *Demographic information of the participants*

<b>Age</b>	<b><i>f</i></b>
22	19
24	12
20	11
26	10
23	8
<b>Gender</b>	<b><i>f</i></b>
Girl	47
Boy	13
<b>Place of childhood (village, town, city)</b>	<b><i>f</i></b>
Village	20
Town	17
City	23
<b>Childhood family structure (Nuclear / Extended / Diffused)</b>	<b><i>f</i></b>
Extended family	23
Nuclear family	36
Broken family	1
<b>Number of siblings</b>	<b><i>f</i></b>
2	17
3	18
4	13
5	8
6	4

*continued*

<b>Mother Education Status</b>	<b><i>f</i></b>
Primary school	12
Middle School	17
High school	28
University	3
<b>Father Educational Status</b>	<b><i>f</i></b>
Primary school	8
Middle School	17
High school	31
University	4

### **Data collection tools**

Before starting the data collection process, an "informed consent" form was obtained from the participants. In addition, by creating a demographic information form, detailed information about the participant group was obtained with questions about the age, gender, the number of siblings, place of residence during childhood (village, city), family structure during childhood (large, nuclear family).

The tools used in data collection can be listed as follows:

- 1- Focus group interview form
- 2- Research diary
- 3- Demographic information form

Each data collection tool is explained separately below.

### **Focus Group Interview**

The interview is a qualitative research method that allows researchers to reach unobservable information about the participants' intentions, attitudes, mental perceptions and reactions about the subject and their knowledge, experience, feelings and thoughts (Bengtsson, 2016; Seidman, 2006). The purpose of the interview is to reach the inner worlds of individuals, discover their unique perspectives, and help discover the essence of the event. The interview is also called data collection technique, in which the participants in the research actively explain their thoughts, feelings and attitudes about the study subject.

Within the scope of the study, only one trigger question was asked to the participants. Then, drilling questions were asked in line with the answers from the participants. In this context, the researcher said to the participants, "Please remember your childhood years. Did you have a moment in your childhood when you wanted to grow up quickly? If so, can you explain why?" question was asked as a trigger question. According to the continuation of the process, the trigger question was deepened with sounding questions ("How did it feel to experience this situation?").

## **Research Diary**

Undoubtedly, one of the most important data collection techniques in qualitative design studies is researcher diaries (Ekiz, 2013). The researcher kept a research diary about the study, starting from the pre-application of the survey until the data were collected and analysed. In qualitative research, diaries and observations try to describe the research process as naturally as possible, instead of less structured and predetermined categories and classifications (Punch, 2011). In this study, the researcher kept a diary on subjects such as positive-negative opinions of the participants, if any, towards the study, attitudes and behaviours of the participants towards the data collection process, and special situations that would contribute to the study during the data collection process.

The notes of the diaries recorded by the researcher throughout the research were used to support the data by making direct quotations necessary for the findings, conclusion and discussion section of the study.

## **Demographic Information Form**

Another data collection tool in this study is the demographic information form. Demographic information of the study group participants was collected with the demographic information form. In the demographic information form, the question "Would you write your memory of wanting to grow up quickly in your childhood" was added, with the thought that they might forget during the focus group interview or have memories that they did not want to tell during the interview. Except for three participants, none answered this question in writing or told their memories over the demographic information form.

## **The Role of The Researcher in This Study**

Researcher \*\* \*\* \* University \*\*\* \*\* Department of Preschool Education, Faculty of Education, \*\*\* \*\* works as a lecturer. The researcher conducted all the interviews. After the talks; Transactions such as transferring the interviews to the computer environment, analysis and reporting were carried out. Although many years have passed since the childhood memories of the participants (average 15-21 years), the information they shared is essential. For this reason, the study was designed so that participant information and data would not be revealed, and pseudonyms were used in direct quotations. Therefore, another role of the researcher is to protect the confidentiality of the information and data of the participants. Protection of data privacy is among the top priorities in this study.

## **Data Collection Process and Data Analysis**

To establish the theoretical basis of the research, besides the information obtained as a result of scanning domestic and foreign sources, data were collected from pre-service teachers with the interview technique in the application process in line with the purpose of the research.

Interviews can be conducted through different methods such as structured, semi-structured, unstructured or focus group interviews (Marshall, 1996). In this study, a focus group interview, in which researcher-participant and participant-participant interaction and more data will be collected in the natural environment, was preferred instead of a group interview with researcher-participant interaction. In this study, in which data were collected through focus group interviews, the trigger question (Glesne, 2103) was directed to the participants by the researcher, and the data collection process began. The data collection process lasted for two sessions (40 minutes each) and a total of 80 minutes.

With the participants' permission, the focus group interview process was recorded with a voice recorder. In this way, possible data loss is prevented. By the researcher, "Please remember your childhood years. Did you have a moment in your childhood when you wanted to grow up quickly? If so, can you explain why?" question was directed to the participants as a trigger question. The trigger question was deepened with sounding questions ("How did it make you feel to experience this situation?") according to the continuation of the process. In addition, the research data was collected by adding the question "Would you write your memory of wanting to grow up quickly in your childhood" in the demographic information form, with the thought that they may forget during the focus group interview or they may have memories that they did not want to tell during the interview. The research findings were obtained by making content analysis from qualitative analysis methods of all the data obtained.

### **Validity and Reliability in Qualitative Research**

In this study, various methods were used to increase the validity and reliability. First of all, permission from the Ethics Committee and an "informed consent" form were obtained from the participants to initiate the study. The researcher kept a "research diary" during the data collection process. In addition, the researcher described the study process in an unbiased, clear and detailed manner. The reliability of the study was increased by explaining the demographic information of the participants in detail. Other factors that increase reliability are that the findings and results obtained from the data collected in the research are compatible with the study's theoretical framework and that the results are supported by similar results of related studies (Golafshani, 2003; Maxwell, 2008). In this context, the study results were supported by the findings of similar studies in the literature and the reliability was increased.

On the other hand, several studies have been carried out to contribute to the internal reliability of this study. These; systematically reflect the data obtained with qualitative data collection techniques to the research, supporting the qualitative data with interviews and diaries, including data diversity and participant confirmation and expert opinion, and determining the data collection and analysis method by adhering to the theoretical framework before the implementations in the study (Baltacı, 2017; Baxter et al. Jack, 2008; Merriam and Grenier, 2019; Neuman and Robson, 2014; Silverman, 2016). These processes can be listed as essential steps that will contribute to internal reliability in this study.



Figure 1. Reliability and credibility studies

In this study, to increase reliability and credibility, necessary corrections were made in line with the feedback by taking expert opinion while creating data collection tools. In addition, data collection tools are given in detail in the data collection tools section of the study. However, the accuracy of the interview data was ensured by obtaining participant confirmation in the focus group interview. In addition to these, the study results were supported by making direct quotations with the data obtained from the interview and research diaries. In addition, the data collection and analysis stages are explained in detail.

## RESULTS

In this part of the study, the interviews were transferred to the computer environment, content analysis was made, and codes and themes were created in line with the purpose of the research. The memories of pre-school teacher candidates about the "desire for rapid growth" they experienced during their childhood are given in Table 2.

Table 2.  
*Childhood memories of the participants regarding the "rapid growth desire"*

	Theme	Category	Code	<i>f</i>
			Economic reasons	36
Desire for rapid growth	Possible causes	Block	environmental factors	22
			cultural factors	27

*continued*

	Oppression	Neglect	12
		Violence	3
Instant effect	Subjective Experience	feeling of worthlessness	51
		Insecurity	34
		feeling of inferiority	26
	Behavioral Response	Anger	25
		stuckness	12
Long-term effects	Subjective Experience	Nostalgia	37
		emotional emptiness	13
		Persistent emotional and social effects	3

In this study, the data obtained from the interviews with the participants and the documents collected from the participants in order to determine the possible causes of the "desire for rapid growth" and the emotional states of the "desire for rapid growth" in children were created by content analysis, and these codes were collected under themes. As a result of the content analysis, possible reasons for the "desire for rapid growth"; inhibition and pressure, emotional states caused by the "*desire for rapid growth*", The long-term effects of subjective experience and behavioural response, and finally, the desire for rapid growth are examined under the headings of subjective experience and observable behaviours.

Regarding the possible reasons for the "desire for rapid growth" to prevent pressure, one of the participants, Elif, said, "*We couldn't go out much because my father didn't want us to meet with my mother's family. We always watched the children from the balcony, and when we said why we couldn't go out, it was said that you would leave when you grow up. That's why I always asked when and how much. They used to say that the neck will grow, and I would like to go out by wearing the high heels of the adults in the house and saying that I grew up. I always wanted to grow up and go out, play and think that I could do whatever I wanted.*" Zeynep said, "*In our time, children did not have a say in society. I was never asked for my opinion on anything. They do it all the time, and we warned him. This made me very sad. I would love to grow up so I can have a say.*"

On the other hand, Fatma said, *"In the society, I live in, children are loved only in words, but in no way were these children felt. For example, my grandparents loved me very much, but they always spoke sarcastically and condescendingly. When we visited them, I would not leave my mother's side, and I would not talk. I could not even raise my voice. Because for them it was "shameful", "spoiled". As a result of speaking little, not being given the right to speak, and being seen as worthless in my childhood, I encountered situations such as insecurity, introversion, and social phobia when I grew up. Now the university is over, but I am still trying to overcome these problems."* as Ayşe said, *"When we were children, our financial situation was not good. For this reason, my mother and father used to work daily jobs for the expenses of the house. Three brothers aged 7, 6, 4, stayed at home alone. I can't describe my feelings at that moment. I was confused, and I was experiencing feelings of anger, sadness, and greed simultaneously. I'm mad at my parents for leaving us at home. I felt sorry for my parents because they worked under very difficult conditions, and on the other hand, I was ambitious that I had to go through this and study to save my parents from this life. While I was feeling all these, I thought that I had to grow up fast, but I could do these things if I grew up. Many of my brothers and I have been neglected now that I think about it. Children at that age cannot even fulfil their basic needs such as nutrition and self-protection, let alone fulfil their normal needs. We have been deprived of our basic needs."*

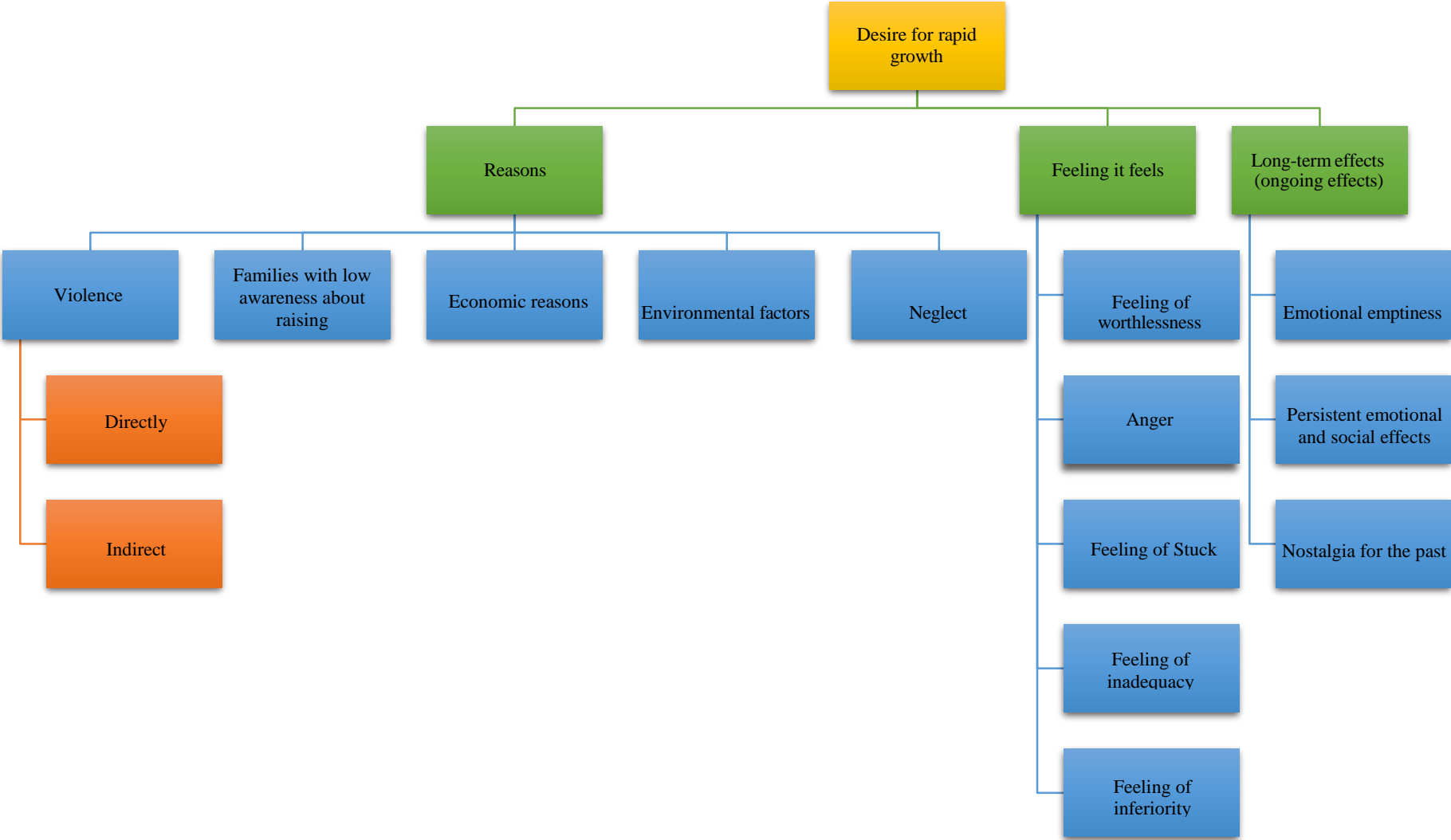
Similarly Kübra said, *"My parents were a bit strict about raising children. We had the biggest problem while playing games or watching cartoons or a children's program on TV. My mother would always open her TV series or movies by saying, "they are not real, you are deceiving them, don't watch them", referring to cartoons. And he wouldn't let us watch. My father used to say, "What are you playing like a child? Come home outside". The thing they missed is that we were already children. Unfortunately, we had no say. Now I have grown up, but not being able to live my childhood to the fullest has always remained a vice in me."* Leyla, on the other hand, said, *"One of the things I remember is that there is nothing in the house, so it is called dry mouldy chicken bread because there was nothing in the house with my mother. We were not very close to my father at that time, so we cleaned and ate them many times. There were so many difficulties outside of it that I can't explain. I had the feeling that I wished I had grown up, incapable of being incapable or taking the position of a saviour. Back then, I wished I had grown up".* When we look at the participants' statements, it is clearly understood that the freedom of children to be children has been taken away, they are prevented from playing games, and they are neglected. They expressed their memories. Looking at the participants' statements, it is clearly understood that the freedom of children to be children is taken away, they are prevented from playing games, and they are neglected.

The emotional states of "desire for rapid growth": Regarding the topics of subjective experience and behavioural response, one of the participants, Gülcan, said, *"I grew up in the village, my father was an only boy, my grandparents were always guests, and my mother had to do all the work alone. She was taking care of my brothers. Water was not in the houses at that time, and my mother had to go and bring water from wells from a distant place by carrying it. I could not help my mother because I was little, so I wanted to grow up as soon as possible to help my mother grow up to be strong enough to do all those jobs. This situation was tough for me. I would always go prepared and make comments on the subject in the lesson. One day, I got the right to speak to express my opinion in the lesson. After expressing my opinion, my teacher said my comment was ridiculous. At that moment, I was shocked and saddened. I did not attend his next lecture and was extremely embarrassed to face such a situation in front of all my friends."* Fatma said, *"When I was in the first grade, our teacher was going to organize a reading festival, and she was going to do an activity about the seasons. He did not involve*

everyone in the class in that activity. Later, a girl from the class cried a lot. When she saw that the girl was crying, her mother told the teacher, and they took me out of the event and took that girl. I was distraught too. I felt so insignificant, worthless, that they kicked me out of the event so that she could shut up. I was very angry with both the teacher and the girl and her mother at that moment. I remember these." On the other hand, Zeynep said, "When I was five years old, I wanted to ride a bike very much. For this reason, I asked my family to buy me a bicycle. When I went down to the garden and got on my bike, our neighbours immediately reacted to this situation and exaggeratedly said to my mother, 'You cannot ride a bike here. We cannot make this sound. We are old people,' he replied. In the face of this situation, my mother put my bike in the cellar to not offend people and did not allow me to ride a bike again. At that moment, I thought, 'I wish I could grow up as soon as possible and ride a bike as my heart desires,' and the feeling I felt was a complete disappointment. It was a pity for me as a child that I had dreamed of it for a long time and that this dream did not last even a day. In addition, the years passed, and I grew up. The children of those neighbours got married and had their children. After I came from school, I witnessed many times in the garden that the grandchildren of all the people who reacted to me play games, ride bicycles in a deafening way, and people say, 'Children should have fun, they will not play at this age, but when will they play? Moreover, their voices sound like festivity to us too.' they responded in kind. This made me feel angry. The situation I was angry about was both the attitude of our neighbours and my mother's failure to explain to people that this was a natural thing at that moment and prevented me from riding a bicycle. I would also like to state that the fact that I have not been able to live my childhood in this environment since I was a child has caused me sadness." Habibe said, "My uncle had two sons. We were three sisters. She said that my aunt was constantly comparing us to them and that their financial situation was better than us, and that in the following days, we would be a burden to my father because we were girls and that my uncle's children would support their father. Since my sister was older, she perceived the humiliation in the conversation better than us and cried." Elif said, "When I was going to primary school, our neighbour's son had a mild mental disability. He had trouble doing what he was told. And his family did not understand this situation or did not want to understand it; unless he understood it, they used physical violence. And when this moment lived, the whole neighbourhood would go out to the balcony and watch. The only reaction our mentally disabled neighbour can give at this time is shouting, but with an intensity that I cannot explain. People around, including my family, would just watch. I used to say to myself, 'Why don't they prevent his father, and when I grow up, I will prevent this, I will save him, I would say from that family.'" In his words, İclal said, "When I was little, I would love to grow up feeling helpless due to the difficulties that existed at home at times and thinking as if I would be my mother's saviour. I wanted to grow up a lot in the constant violent fights in the house and the situations that followed." expressed his memories. When we look at the emotional states caused by the "desire for rapid growth", it is clearly understood that children experience emotional states such as guilt, anger, worthlessness and disappointment. Considering the memories of Zeynep, one of the participants on the subject, Zeynep feels anger towards her mother and other people around her, as well as the feeling of sadness, bitterness and regret caused by not being able to live her childhood. The reason seems pretty obvious. It can be seen that there are environmental and moral dimensions of the event, such as personal reasons such as the mother's lack of awareness about child-rearing, not being bad towards neighbours, avoiding arguments with neighbours, and the "good child tendency" in Kohlberg's moral theory. Whatever the reason may be, a neglected child is deprived of play, and neglect creates a desire to grow up quickly. Because the child thinks that growing up can solve the problem, anger and sadness.

Finally, regarding the long-term effects of the "desire for rapid growth", subjective experience and observable behaviours, one of the participants, Ahmet, said, *"I spent my childhood in the village. I used to get together with my friends and go to the wedding. We would like to participate in the wedding dance, but every time we were children, they would take us out of the halay (a kind of traditional dance) and would not take us to the halay. I wanted to grow up back then. I hate weddings right now; I don't want to attend."* Kübra said, *"My parents were a bit strict about raising children. We had the biggest problem while playing games or watching cartoons or a children's program on TV. My mother would always open her TV series or movies by saying, "they are not real, you are deceiving them, don't watch them", referring to cartoons. And he wouldn't let us watch. My father used to say, "What are you playing like a child? Come home outside". The thing they missed is that we were already children. Unfortunately, we had no say. Now I have grown up, but not being able to live my childhood to the fullest has always remained a vice in me."* Gülcan said, *"When we were small guests, the hosts only welcomed older people, how are you? Even when a plate of treats came, it was not brought to me separately; my mother would share her plate with me. I used to think that I was an individual; why does no one welcome me? I wish they would take care of me like this if I was older. I always said that if I grow up and a child comes to our house, he is an individual, and I will say welcome to the adults, how are you, and I will deal with the child in the same way I deal with the adults because he is also an individual. I used to think that I didn't want other kids to feel as badly as I did."* Emine said, *"When my mom and dad are going somewhere, I would like to go with them. But they would often tell me that I was too young, unsuitable for their destination, or unsuitable for where they were going. I would usually either get offended or sit down and cry. They used to tell me that when I was a little older, my age would match where they were going, and then I could go with them. Then I would like to grow up as soon as possible. They told me that you couldn't come with us, it's not an age-appropriate place, which made me wonder where they were going. It made me very sad that they said that. Spending time with my babysitter at home was very boring to me. Because I spent almost the whole day with him. Then I would feel a little worthless."* Ayşe said, *"When I was a child, my mother always said that I was wrong in the slightest argument with my siblings. And that ingrained a lot into my personality. Although I tried to prove that I was right, I was taught to take my brothers from the bottom by using sentences such as "You are a big sister". I would have loved to grow up to get out of this situation back then. When I started school, I was always on the side of apologizing as if I was wrong in my social environment in primary and secondary school. At the moment, I still sometimes feel like I am constantly faced with a sense of guilt."* Aynur said, *"One day, we asked my cousin's father-uncle to buy us a bicycle. He is; "Okay, I'll get your bikes tomorrow night." he said. My cousin and I waited until the evening when my uncle would bring the bike. But my uncle didn't buy the bikes, and he gave us why he was late for work. The moment I learned that my uncle didn't bring our bikes, I felt like; I said, "I wish I was big and could buy my bike". Here, I experienced a great disappointment, distrust and how it felt when a promise made to you was not kept. Because my uncle was someone I trusted unconditionally. After that day, I also learned that; "If you make a promise and you do not keep it, you can destroy not only the trust of the other person in you, but also the trust of everyone. That's why you should tell people what you can keep up." After this situation, I went through, I tried to fulfil the promises I made to people."* Finally, Fatma said, *"In the society, I live in, children are loved only in words, but in no way were these children felt. For example, my grandparents loved me very much, but they always spoke sarcastically and condescendingly. When we visited them, I would not leave my mother's side; I would not talk, I would not even make a sound. Because for them it was "shameful", "spoiled". As a result of speaking little, not being given the right to speak, and being seen as worthless in my childhood, I encountered situations such as insecurity, introversion, and social phobia when I grew up. Now the university is over, but I am still trying*

to overcome these problems." expressed his memories. From the participants' statements, it is understood that the desire for rapid growth has long-term social and emotional effects.



Şekil 2. Concept map on the desire for rapid growth

## Discussion, and Implications

This study was carried out to determine the possible causes of "*desire for rapid growth*", which is frequently seen in childhood, and the emotional states caused by "*desire for rapid growth*" in children. Within the scope of the study, data were collected through focus group discussion and documents, and the study's results were reached through content analysis, one of the qualitative analysis methods.

Based on the study findings, the "*desire for rapid growth*"; has been stated that is caused by reasons such as economic, environmental, cultural, violence and neglect, and that the "*desire for rapid growth*" has long-term effects on the participants such as emotional emptiness, nostalgia, permanent emotional and social effects. Although these results are similar to other studies in the related literature (American Academy of Pediatrics. 2014; Danese & McEwen, 2012), these results can be determined with long-term and mainly longitudinal studies.

However, it is possible to summarize the above-mentioned possible causes of the "*desire for rapid growth*", one of the primary purposes of this research, as "*negative childhood experiences (ACEs)*" experienced by individuals. In other words, the negative childhood or unwanted childhood memories experienced by children cause them to have the desire and feeling of growing up quickly. In addition, which is another of the aims of this research, is experienced, it was concluded that they had feelings of worthlessness, inferiority, anger, stuckness, and insecurity. Finally, to express descriptively, it was concluded that 56 (93%) of the 60 participants in this study experienced "*desire for rapid growth*" at least once.

The study of Wu, Yuan, and Kou (2020) concluded that as negative childhood experiences increase, these individuals show less prosocial behaviour during adolescence (Wu et al., 2020). Kelifa et al. (2020) stated that negative childhood experiences directly and indirectly hurt depression and other psychological well-being. Ross et al. (2020) concluded that with the increase in the frequency of negative childhood experiences, health problems (physical and psychosocial) in adulthood increase. Boyes et al. (2016) stated that as negative childhood experiences increase, psychological stress increases, and psychological and emotional well-being decreases. In addition, it is stated that one out of every six people (16%) in the USA was exposed to ACEs four or more times during childhood (Kayman et al., 2021). The findings of this research are similar to the research results in the related literature (Kayman et al., 2021; Kelifa et al., 2020; Kim, 2017; Ross et al., 2020; Thai et al., 2020; Wu et al. 2020).

Similarly, Beck et al. (2004) state that children feel inferior and worthless when self-confidence is threatened. Children who receive the message that their parents or caregivers make them feel worthless in early childhood may exhibit narcissistic tendencies by showing a tendency to overcompensate in their future lives (Uçar, 2021). As stated in the findings section of this study, it is observed that the "*desire for rapid growth*" seen in children generally arises in situations such as inhibition and pressure. From this point of view, the study of Beck et al. (2004) supports the results of this research. In the study where the childhood (3-12 years old) memories of the participants constitute the basis of the research, we can also look at the subject in the context of Erikson (1963,1968) psychosocial development theory when it comes to inhibition and pressure. According to Erikson, children who are prevented or punished excessively in early childhood most likely develop a sense of suspicion and shame (Miller, 2008; Öztürk, 2002; Santrock, 2014).

Similarly, if a high level of anxiety is created in the child, the child may have a sense of guilt (Miller, 2008; Öztürk, 2002; Santrock, 2014). As a result, negative childhood experiences (anxiety, pressure and inhibitions, etc.) created by parents or the social environment during childhood may have pushed children to a "desire for rapid growth". Children may have developed a kind of defence mechanism, namely "desire for rapid growth", to eliminate the pressure above, inhibition and anxiety, that is, negative childhood experiences.

As a result, it seems that children identify growth to get rid of negative childhood experiences (ACEs). Because his social environment and his experiences accordingly taught him that the adult individual is more valuable and necessary than the child. In this direction, the primary and essential condition for the child to be able to do new things and achieve new things is to grow up, and it is of great value and importance. On the other hand, the child is the one who does not know, cannot do, the little one, in short, the unimportant.

### **Suggestions**

As can be seen from the research findings, the desire for rapid growth in children is directly related to negative childhood experiences (ACEs). In this context, parents can give relevant training so that children do not experience such negative experiences or are least affected.

In addition, it seems from the study's findings that not only the parents but also the people or people with whom most of them interact can push the children to the desire for rapid growth. In this context, inclusive education policies can be implemented to raise society's awareness as a whole.

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### **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this study.

### **AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS**

The author was responsible for the conception and design of the study, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of the findings, and preparation of the manuscript.

### **DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI USE**

No generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used in the design, data collection, analysis, interpretation of the findings, or writing of this manuscript.

### **DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT**

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the author upon reasonable request.

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