

Summary

Turkish Adaptation of Maternal Gatekeeping Scale: Validity and Reliability Study

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Although mothers are still being considered to be the primary caregivers for children in family structure, over the past four decades, father involvement researches have showed that active paternal involvement contributed to the positive development of children (Lamb, Pleck and Levine, 1985; MacDonald, 2009, Tu, Chang and Kao, 2014). Moreover, substantial literature presents that children whose fathers are involved are more likely to be securely attached to them, have more positive peer relations, experience more life satisfaction and have less behavioral problems. (e.g. Caldera, 2004; Dubowitz at all., 2001; Kennedy, Betts, Dunn, Sonuga-Barke and Underwood, 2015).

However, the researchers who investigate the variables that play a role in father involvement emphasized that maternal behaviors effect the interaction between father and his child (Coley and Morris, 2002; Dauber, Paulson and Leiferman, 2011). De Luccie (1995) first defined the concept of gatekeeping to express the role of mothers in the father-child relationship. Then Allan and Hawkins (1999) conceptualized maternal gatekeeping as some beliefs and behaviors that inhibit a collaborative effort between mothers and fathers in family work. In Fagan and Barnett's (2003) study, the scholars suggest that, mothers play a significant role in deciding how much time fathers spend with their children as well as their participation in house works. In this respect, the concept of maternal gatekeeping is defined as maternal behaviors that limit the interaction between father and his child, rather than maternal attempt that restrict father's involvement in family works (Gaunt, 2008; Fagan and Barnett, 2003). Maternal gatekeeping was known as maternal behaviors that negatively effect father-child interaction until 2000's then Walker and McGraw brought a new insight to the concept and stated that in addition to some negative effects, maternal behaviors may have some facilitative effects too. Some subsequent studies supported this point of view (e.g. Roy and Dyson,

2005; Sano, Richards and Zvonkovic, 2008). Puhlman and Pasley (2013) tried to explain this change in the concept together with the view of family system theory and feminist perspective. The researchers defined the maternal gatekeeping as a set of complex behavioral interactions between parents, where mothers affect father involvement by using control, restriction, and facilitation on father's caring behaviors and relationship with their children on a regular and consistent basis. Puhlman and Pasley's (2013) new model of maternal gatekeeping has three different dimensions (control, encouragement, and discouragement) and eight possible types (traditional gate blockers, passive gate snubbers, facilitative gate openers, and passive gate welcomers, confused gate managers, apathetic gate managers, opinionated gate watchers, invisible gate ignorers). In the literature, there are some studies that examined maternal gatekeeping in terms of parental and child characteristics. Karabulut and Şendil (2017) found that maternal gatekeeping was not related to the child's gender, economic status of the family, and the way parents work. Moreover, they reported that highly educated fathers are less exposed the gatekeeping behaviors by mothers.

Allen and Hawkins (1999) may have been the first researchers to develop an instrument, Maternal Gatekeeping Measure, designed to specifically measure maternal gatekeeping based on their three-dimensional approach. Another measurement tool is the Maternal Gatekeeping Scale (MGS), which is developed by Fagan and Barnett (2003) and examines the behavior of the mother directly on the father-child relationship. The adaptation study of the MGS for our country was carried out by Karabulut and Şendil (2017). In the adaptation study, unlike the original study, the scale items were applied not to mothers but to fathers in order to evaluate the maternal gatekeeping behaviors that they were exposed from the fathers' perspective. The newest scale that is called

Maternal Gatekeeping Scale was developed by Puhlman and Pasley (2013). The main aim of the present study was to adapt of the scale in to Turkish and examine the psychometric properties. In addition, the relationship between maternal gatekeeping and the related demographic characteristics was investigated.

Method

Participants

This study included 210 parents with children (104 girls, 106 boys) aged 4-6 years who attend preschool in Mersin. Participants' ages ranged between 24-47 ($M = 34.8$, $SD = 4.8$) for mothers and, 28-61 ($M = 38.8$, $SD = 6.1$) for fathers.

Measurements

Demographic Information Form

Participants were asked to answer the questions about their education level, age, working hours, duration of marriage, sex of children, and child's order of birth.

Father Involvement Scale

Father Involvement Scale, a self-report scale, was developed by Simsıkı and Şendil (2014) to evaluate the father participation of children aged 3-6 years. This scale is a 5-point Likert type scale that consists of 37 items and three subscales (arbitrary occupation, primary care, attention and closeness). Cronbach's alpha was measured of .89 for arbitrary occupation, .83 for primary care, .85 for attention and closeness, and .92 for total in the original study.

Maternal Gatekeeping Scale

Maternal Gatekeeping Scale was developed by Puhlman and Pasley (2017) to evaluate the encouraging, controlling and restrictive behaviors of mothers on fathers. This scale consists of 42 items with three subscales (encouragement, discouragement, control) and each item is evaluated on a 7-point Likert type scale. In the original study, the Cronbach alpha values of the sub-dimensions were .82, .72 and .77 respectively.

Procedure

The analyses include the validity and reliability studies of the MGS-M, as well as the relationship of the scale with some demographic characteristics and the classified of subcategories of maternal gatekeeping based on intersection of subscales. SPSS 20 was used for descriptive analyses, reliability coefficients and correlation analysis and R packet program was used for confirmatory factor analysis.

Results

According to confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), the overall model was fit the data with the remaining 29 items after removal of substances with a low level of substance load ($\chi^2 [374, N=210] = 604.592$, $\chi^2/df = 1.61$, $RMSEA = .05$, $GFI = .89$, $AGFI = .87$, $CFI = .86$).

Father Involvement Scale was used for the criterion validity. The scale was found to be positively correlated with the encouragement ($r = .20$, $p < .05$), and a negatively correlated with the discouragement ($r = -.32$, $p < .001$) and a negatively correlated with the control ($r = -.14$, $p < .05$).

Cronbach's Alphas were calculated in order to examine the internal consistency of the MGS-M. The values were found as .81 for encourage, .66 for discourage and .74 for control. In order to determine whether the answers to the scale were free from random errors, an equivalent halves method was used. The results show that the Guttman reliability coefficients were .79 for the encouragement, .60 for the discouragement, and .74 for the control.

MGS-M was examined according to some demographic characteristics. The results showed that subscales of MGS-M were not correlated with the age of the parents and the duration of marriage. Similarly, mothers' encourage, discourage and control levels were not differed according to parents' educational level.

T-test analyses showed that mothers had higher control behaviors for daughters. In addition, as the number of children increases, mothers' encouraging behavior also increases. Similarly; mothers who have long working hours encourage their partners more, and fathers who have long working hours are encouraged more by their partners.

As in the original study, maternal gatekeeping was classified in 8 sub-categories by crossing 3 sub-dimensions and frequency values were examined. The most common maternal gatekeeping type is 19.5% of the sub-categories were found to be facilitative gate opener.

Conclusion

The findings of the current study show that the Turkish version of the MGS-M has acceptable levels of reliability and validity. However, the Turkish adaptation of fathers' self-report form of the Maternal Gatekeeping Scale and combined use of these scales together may make our knowledge, regarding the concept of maternal gatekeeping, more meaningful. For future studies, it is considered to be worthwhile to develop scales that can assess both gatekeeping behaviors of mothers and fathers' perceptions about gatekeeping behaviors of the mothers'.