



The Mediating Role of Adolescent Emotion Regulation in the Relationship between Parental Marital Conflict Resolution Styles and Adolescent Conflict Resolution Behaviors*

Tuğba BOZYİĞİT**, Nihal MAMATOĞLU***

Makale Bilgisi	ABSTRACT
<i>Geliş Tarihi:</i> 19.09.2019	The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between parents' marriage conflict resolution styles and the adolescent conflict resolution behaviors, and to test the mediator role of the adolescent emotional regulation in this relationship. The study sample consisted of 186 students aged between 11 and 14 who were educated in secondary schools attached to the Ministry of National Education and their parents. "Conflict Resolution Styles Scale" for parents, "Conflict Resolution Behavior Scale" for adolescents and "Emotion Regulation Scale for Adolescents" were used for collecting data in the present study. The research findings show that there are significant relationships between some subscales of parent marriage conflict resolution styles and adolescent conflict resolution behaviors. According to this, the positive conflict resolution style of the mother is significantly related to the problem solving behavior of the adolescent, and the negative conflict resolution style of the mother is significantly related to the aggression behavior of the adolescent. On the other hand, the father's submissive conflict resolution style was found to be significantly correlated to the adolescent aggression behavior. Further, it has been found that internal functional emotion regulation has a partial mediating role and external dysfunctional emotion regulation has a fully mediating role in the relationship between mothers' negative marriage conflict resolution style and adolescent aggression behavior. Keywords: Marital conflict, conflict resolution styles, emotion regulation
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1. INTRODUCTION

One of the basic elements of society, the child grows up, and is prepared for social life, in the family (Erel & Burman, 1995). Relationships of family members with each other, especially the marital relationship of the parents, constitute an essential part of the environment that has a direct influence on the child (Fincham, 1998). In this regard, parents' marital relationship is an important determinant in the development of the child.

The deterioration of relationship within the family that may arise for various reasons can lead to conflicts within the family or between spouses, which may negatively influence the development of the child. Children having observed conflicts between parents have been shown to experience various adjustment problems (Cummings & Davies, 1994), which is supported by other studies that have revealed the association between marital conflict and the emergence of diverse adjustment issues in children (Erel & Burman, 1995; Grych & Fincham, 1990; Grych & Fincham, 2001; McCoy, Cumming & Davies, 2009). According to Cummings and Davies (1994), children from families with high conflict have a higher risk of developing a variety of adaptational and behavioral problems. Otherwise, it is also evident that the family influences the development of social skills required for children to maintain and protect relationships with their peers (Vairami & Voria, 2007). Hence, marital conflicts may negatively affect children's social and interpersonal adaptation skills. Destructive marital conflicts (e.g., frequent, intense, and unresolved conflicts) increase children's risk of developing various problems such as aggression, behavioral problems, anxiety, and social withdrawal in their peer relationships (Grych & Fincham, 1990).

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** Res. Asst., Batman University, Faculty of Science and Literature, Department of Psychology, Division of Developmental Psychology, Batman-TURKEY. e-mail: tugba.bozyigit@batman.edu.tr (ORCID: 0000-0002-4000-313X)

*** Prof. Dr., Bolu Abant İzzet Baysal University, Faculty of Science and Literature, Department of Psychology, Division of Applied Psychology, Bolu-TURKEY. e-mail: mamatoglu_n@ibu.edu.tr (ORCID: 0000-0003-1375-6782)

Various models and approaches have been proposed to explain how marital conflicts influence the child, one of which is Engfer's (1988) "spillover hypothesis", in which spillover mention to the direct transfer of emotions and behaviors in one system to other systems. This approach suggests that higher marital relationship quality is related with positive parent-child relationship quality, whereas lower marital relationship quality is correlated with negative parent-child relationship quality (Engfer, 1988; Erel & Burman, 1995). To put this theory to the test, Buehler, Benson, and Gerard's (2006) study on 2346 adolescents and their families showed that hostility between parents in marital relationship is linked with adjustment problems in adolescents.

Another approach that aims to explain the effects of the quality of marital relationship on the child is the Cognitive and Contextual Framework Model of Grych and Fincham (1990), which put forward that children's perception of conflict is influenced by several aspects of marital conflicts such as the frequency, severity, and content of the conflict, as well as the methods employed for conflict resolution (Kızıldağ & Şendil, 2006). The present study focuses on the aspect of the methods for conflict resolution. According to the Cognitive Contextual Framework Model, parents who are able to successfully resolve their conflicts serve as positive problem-solving models for their children. Studies show that the positive resolution of conflicts between parents reduces the negative effects of conflict on children and is associated with child adaptation (Cummings, Goeke-Morey, Papp, & Dukewich, 2002; Cummings, Goeke-Morey, & Papp, 2003).

According to Social Learning Theory, children learn how to behave in interpersonal relationships by observing their parents' interactions (Fincham, 1998). When children witness aggressive behaviors between their parents and take them as a model, they may exhibit aggressive behaviors as well (Bandura, 1973). Children who learn about aggression from conflict situations between their parents may behave aggressively towards younger children or their peers (Şendil & Kızıldağ, 2005). According to Bandura (1977), children who observe their parents in their efforts for marital conflict resolution model their parents' behavior on their own conflict situations. Based on the aforementioned reports, the current purposed to investigate the relationship between parental marriage conflict resolution styles and adolescent conflict resolution.

Even though relationships with peers and friends during childhood and adolescence are known to be crucial in child development, there are relatively few studies investigating the effects of parents' marital conflicts and conflict resolution methods on adolescents' peer and friend relationships. The relevant literature on the subject has mainly focused on the relationship between parental conflict resolution methods and the social adaptation and skills of the child (Cummings et al. 2002; Cummings et al. 2003, 2004; Goeke-Morey, Cummings, Harold & Shelton, 2003; Katz & Gottman, 1993; Schudlich & Cummings, 2007; Siffert & Schwarz, 2011; Stone, 2000). However, there are very few studies directly examining how parental marriage conflict resolution styles correlate with adolescent conflict resolution behaviors. For example, the study by Goodmann, Barfoot, Frye, and Belli (1999) on 57 children aged 10 to 13 years and their parents found that children whose parents experience marital conflicts more frequently and whose mothers use aggressive tactics during conflicts have poorer problem-solving skills, whereas children in families where marital conflicts are less frequent and spouses use constructive tactics to deal with the conflict have better problem-solving skills. Similarly, a longitudinal study conducted on 256 children by Underwood, Beron, Gentsch, Galperin, and Risser (2008) showed that the mother's negative conflict resolution style was associated with manifestation of social and physical aggression by their daughters at school. Due to the relatively little amount of research on this topic, this study aimed to provide empirical findings and conclusions on the correlation between parents' marriage conflict resolution styles and adolescent conflict resolution.

Previous studies have come up with varying classifications and definitions of marriage conflict resolution styles (Burman, Margolin, & John 1993; Kurdek, 1994; Özen, 2006; Vuchinich, 1987). The present study is based on the classification made by Özen (2006), according to which marriage conflict resolution styles are categorized as positive, negative, withdrawal and submission. The positive conflict resolution style is about handling the conflict in a constructive way and reaching a consensus on the best solution. Negative conflict resolution style is associated with handling the conflict in destructive ways and often includes verbal and physical aggression. Withdrawal style is associated with refusing to discuss the conflict, avoiding it, or remaining silent and putting the discussion off for later. Finally, in the submission style, one of the spouses complies with the wishes of the other party (Özen 2006).

Another variable of this study, adolescent emotion regulation, is thought to be related to both parents' marital conflict resolution styles and adolescent conflict resolution behaviors. According to the "Emotional Security Hypothesis" by Davies and Cummings (1994), children's emotion regulation is related with their internal representations of family relationships and the way parents deal with their conflicts. Parents' ability to manage their negative emotions in the face of conflict situations and methods they employ for coping with the conflict in a constructive way contribute to the development of the child's sense of confidence and emotion regulation skills (Zeman & Perry-Parrish, 2006). Emotion regulation is essential for social interactions as it has a direct influence on emotional expressions and behaviors (Lopes, Salovey, Cote, & Beers, 2005). Children with a strong ability to regulate their emotions exhibit appropriate behaviors in a social environment, whereas the behaviors displayed by those who lack in emotion regulation tend to be non-constructive (Eisenberg, Spinrad, & Smith, 2004). The resources used in emotion regulation strategies are classified as internal (personal) and external (environmental). Both internal and external resources may be functional or dysfunctional. Whereas internal functional emotion regulation involves re-evaluating the thoughts, goals and plans related to the situation; external functional emotion regulation encompasses sharing feelings and thoughts about the situation with others and seeking support from one's social environment. While internal dysfunctional emotion regulation includes suppression of negative emotions, focusing on negative emotions and thoughts, self-punishment and self-harm,

external dysfunctional emotion regulation involves the inability to control negative emotions and thoughts, and the taking of intense anger and sadness out on the surrounding people or things. The use of internal dysfunctional and external dysfunctional emotion regulation strategies is associated with emotional, behavioral, and psychosomatic problems in adolescents (Phillips & Power, 2007).

In the light of the relevant literature, the positive conflict resolution style of the parents is thought to help improve the functional emotion regulation skills of the adolescent, which may, in turn, aid the development of the problem-solving skills of the adolescent. On the other hand, it is predicted that the negative conflict resolution style of the parents may foster the dysfunctional emotion regulation skills of the adolescent, and this may lead to aggressive conflict resolution behaviors in adolescents. Hence, this study examined the mediating effect of adolescent emotion regulation in the correlation between parental marriage conflict resolution styles and adolescent conflict resolution behaviors.

Previous research on the subject has mainly focused on examining the relationships between emotion regulation and social interaction quality, social skills, and positive social behaviors (Eisenberg, Fabes, Nyman, Bernzweig, & Pinuelas, 1994; Eisenberg et al., 1997; Garnefski, Karaaij, & Spinhoven, 2001; Zalewski, Lengua, Wilson, Trancik, & Bazinet, 2011). However, there are no studies investigating either the impacts of adolescent emotion regulation skills over conflict resolution behaviors or the mediating role of adolescent emotion regulation in the relationship between parental marriage conflict resolution styles and adolescent conflict resolution behaviors. Therefore, this research can be considered important as it encompasses data from all the three parties, namely the mother, the father, and the child. Another important aspect of the present study is that it makes important contributions to the relevant literature as it is the first of its kind in Turkey in terms of the variables evaluated. It is therefore hoped that the findings obtained will be useful for mothers, fathers and experts working in the field.

This study also investigated whether adolescents' conflict resolution behaviors and emotion regulation skills differ according to the adolescent's gender and the grade level at school. Studies conducted in Turkey have reported that in conflict resolution, male students resort to aggression more often whereas female students make use of problem solving more frequently (Rehber & Atıcı, 2009; Türnüklü & Şahin, 2004; Yavuzer, Karataş & Gündoğdu, 2013). In the study of Yavuzer, Karataş, and Gündoğdu (2013), it was determined that as children's class levels at school increases, they tend to show less aggression and employ problem solving skills more often. However, Rehber and Atıcı (2009) reported no significant difference in terms of class level.

Based on the aforementioned reports, this research aimed to explore the relationship between parents' marital conflict resolution styles and their adolescent child's conflict resolution behaviors, and to test the mediating role of the adolescent's emotion regulation in this relationship, by seeking answers to the following research questions:

- Is there a significant correlation between parental marriage conflict resolution styles and adolescent conflict resolution behaviors?
- Is there a significant correlation between parental marriage conflict resolution styles and adolescent emotion regulation skills?
- Is there a significant correlation between adolescent emotion regulation skills and adolescent conflict resolution behaviors?
- Do adolescent conflict resolution behaviors and emotion regulation skills differ with the adolescent's gender and class level at school?
- Do emotion regulation skills of the adolescent play a mediating role in the correlation between parental marriage conflict resolution styles and adolescent conflict resolution behaviors?

2. METHOD

In this section, we present the details about the research model, participants, instruments and the methods employed for data collection and analysis.

2.1. Research Model

We used relational screening model for the purposes of this quantitative study aiming to reveal whether adolescent emotion regulation plays a mediatory role in the correlation between parent marriage conflict resolution styles and adolescent conflict resolution behaviors. Relational survey models are research models that seek to reveal the existence and level of any covariance among multiple variables (Karasar, 2016).

2.2. Participants

The study sample consisted of 186 students aged between 11 and 14 ($x = 11.99$, $ss = 1.00$) studying in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades of six public secondary schools in Bolu and Batman provinces, and their parents. The schools in Bolu and Batman provinces were determined by using stratified and easily accessible sampling methodology in terms of socio-economic level, classified as low, middle, and high-level. All of the parents participating in the study were married and lived together at the time the study was conducted. Average length of marriage for parents was calculated as 17.85 years. The age range of the mothers was between 28 and 62 with an average age of 38.69 ($sd = 5.46$), whereas fathers were aged between 30 and 64, with an average

age of 42.56 (sd = 5.74). The average age difference between spouses was calculated as 4.03 years. In terms of educational background, 4.3% of the mothers were only literate, 44.1% were primary school graduates, 32.3% completed high school, 18.8% had university degrees and 0.5% had postgraduate degrees, whereas 0.5% of the fathers were only literate, 27.4% were primary school graduates, 35.5% completed high school, 34.9% had university degrees, and 1.6% had postgraduate degrees.

2.3. Instruments

2.3.1. Demographic information form

Two separate demographic information forms that included questions about the gender, date of birth, class level, and number of siblings of the participating adolescent, as well as the ages of the adolescent's parents, their educational status, occupations, duration of marriage, marrying ages, age difference between spouses, and total income level of the family were created for adolescents and parents in order to collect data on the demographics of the participants.

2.3.2. Conflict resolution styles scale

The scale was developed by Özen (2006) and aims to determine parents' marital conflict resolution styles. Consisting of 25 items, the scale measures four conflict resolution styles: *positive conflict resolution style*, *negative conflict resolution style*, *submission*, and *withdrawal*. Participants provide their answers in a Likert scale between 1 (I completely disagree) and 6 (I strongly agree). The study by Özen (2006) to measure the reliability of the scale found internal consistency coefficients of the scale consisting of four sub-scales to be between .75 and .81. In our study, the scale was applied to both the mother and the father. The Cronbach alpha coefficients of the scale were found to be between .43 and .69 for the mothers, and between .50 and .66 for the fathers. Accordingly, it can be said that the scale is of low reliability for sub-dimensions with internal consistency coefficients below .60 (Büyüköztürk, 2015).

2.3.3. Conflict resolution behavior determination scale

The Scale was developed by Koruklu (1998). Consisting of 24 items with 5-point Likert-type ratings (1 = not suitable at all, 5 = very suitable), the scale evaluates conflict resolution behaviors under two subscales: aggression (i.e., swearing, fighting, threatening) and problem solving (i.e., reconciliation, cooperation), with Cronbach alpha coefficients of .85 for aggression and .83 for problem solving (Koruklu, 1998). In the current study, the Cronbach alpha coefficients of the scale were showed to be .84 and .80 for aggression and problem solving, respectively. Accordingly, the measurement tool can be said to be reliable (Özdamar, 2004).

2.3.4. Emotion regulation scale for adolescents

The "Emotion Regulation Scale for Adolescents" developed by Phillips and Power (2007) was used to determine the emotion regulation skills of participating adolescents. The scale consists of a total of 19 items and four sub-dimensions, namely internal functional, external functional, internal dysfunctional, and external dysfunctional emotion regulation. Scale items are scored between "1 = never" and "5 = always". The scale was adapted to Turkish and analyzed for validity and reliability by Duy and Yıldız (2014), who showed that the consistency coefficient was .74 for internal functional, .59 for external functional, .76 for external dysfunctional and .68 for internal dysfunctional emotion regulation. In our study, we found Cronbach alpha values of the dimensions of the scale to be .76, .58, .57, and .76 for internal functional, external functional, internal dysfunctional, and external dysfunctional, respectively.

2.4. Procedure

After the necessary permissions are obtained, with the help of teachers, for the students to reach their parents; Closed envelopes containing the consent form, demographic information form and scales were distributed in the classroom environment. After a three-four day period for the parents to answer the forms and questionnaires, the envelopes returned from the parents were examined one by one. The children of the parents who accepted to participate in the study with their children and answered the research scales were administered at appropriate class hours. The application took approximately 15-20 minutes.

2.5. Data Analysis

The data collected was analyzed on SPSS statistical package software. Extreme values were removed, and the data was controlled to determine if the distribution was normal before the analyses were conducted. After this procedure, it was confirmed that the necessary requirements were met for analysis. The data was analyzed through Pearson correlation to determine the relationships between research variables, multivariate variance analysis (MANOVA) to reveal the effects of gender and class level, and hierarchical regression analysis techniques to determine the mediating role of adolescent emotion regulation.

3. FINDINGS

In this section, we explain the findings related to the correlations among variables, the multi-directional variance analysis regarding the effects of gender and class level, and the regression analysis for the mediatory role of adolescent emotion regulation.

3.1. Correlation Findings Regarding Research Variables

Table 1 shows the results of the correlation analyses made to reveal the relationships between variables. We found the mother's positive conflict resolution style and the adolescent's problem-solving behavior ($r = .17, p < .05$), and the mother's negative conflict resolution style and the adolescent's aggressive behavior ($r = .15, p < .05$) to be positively correlated. Among paternal traits, it was only the father's submission style that showed a significant positive relationship with the aggressive behavior of the adolescent ($r = .16, p < .05$). The analysis of the relationship between adolescent emotion regulation skills and conflict resolution behaviors showed that internal functional emotion regulation negatively related with aggression behavior ($r = -.29, p < .01$) and positively related with problem solving behavior ($r = .44, p < .01$). On the other hand, there was positive correlations between external functional emotion regulation and problem-solving behavior ($r = .18, p < .05$), between internal dysfunctional emotion regulation and aggression behavior ($r = .28, p < .01$). Furthermore, external dysfunctional emotion regulation was showed to be positively related with aggression behavior ($r = .49, p < .01$), and negatively related with problem-solving behavior ($r = -.24, p < .01$).

Table 1.
Correlation Analysis Results Regarding Research Variables

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
Parental Conflict Resolution Styles	Mother	1. Positive	1													
		2. Negative	-.12	1												
		3. Submission	.23**	-.24**	1											
		4. Withdrawal	.20**	-.11	.51**	1										
	Father	5. Positive	.31**	-.07	.26**	.10	1									
		6. Negative	.01	.33**	.09	.22**	-.03	1								
		7. Submission	.18*	.03	.30**	.13	.45**	-.20**	1							
		8. Withdrawal	.12	.20**	.15*	.36**	.14	.13	.44**	1						
Adolescent Emotion Regulation	9. Internal Functional	-.03	-.17*	-.05	-.08	-.06	-.02	-.14	-.11	1						
	10. External Functional	-.02	.03	.02	.04	.03	-.07	-.02	-.01	.20**	1					
	11. Internal Dysfunctional	.10	.14	-.02	.11	.16*	.06	.15*	.10	-.16*	.06	1				
	12. External Dysfunctional	-.12	.15*	-.04	.01	-.04	.05	.06	.07	-.24**	.09	.34**	1			
Adolescent Conflict Resolution	13. Aggression	-.08	.15*	.03	.03	.05	.06	.16*	.06	-.29**	-.06	.28**	.49**	1		
	14. Problem Solving	.17*	-.02	-.02	.04	.06	-.01	.05	.08	.44**	.18*	.04	-.24**	-.19**	1	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

3.2. Findings Regarding the Effects of Gender and Grade Level

Multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA) was carried out to investigate the effects of gender (girl, boy) and grade level (6th, 7th, and 8th grades) on adolescent conflict resolution behaviors and emotion regulation skills. The analyses showed that gender did not significantly influence adolescent conflict resolution behaviors or emotion regulation skills scores, while the effect of grade level on these variables was significant ($\lambda = .84, F(12,352) = 2.59, p < .01, \eta^2 = .08$). Gender and class level did not have a significant joint effect.

Analysis of the sub-dimensions of adolescent conflict resolution behaviors and emotion regulation skills revealed that gender had a significant influence on aggression behavior only ($F[1,180] = 4.74, p < .05, \eta^2 = .03$). Average values calculated indicated that the mean of aggression behavior of boy students ($M = 2.32, SD = .08$) was higher than that of girl students ($M = 2.06, SD = .08$) (see Table 2).

Analysis results showed that grade level had a significant effect only on aggression behavior ($F[2,180] = 4.91, p < .001, \eta^2 = .10$) and external dysfunctional emotion regulation ($F[2,180] = 2.06, p < .01, \eta^2 = .05$). Games-Howell test results revealed that 8th grade students' aggression behavior scores ($M = 2.49, SD = .77$) were significantly higher than students in 6th grade ($M = 1.86,$

$SD = .64$) level. Otherwise, the results showed that students in 7th grade ($M = 1.86, SD = .78$), had higher external dysfunctional emotion regulation scores than 6th grade students ($M = 1.50, SD = .58$) (see Table 2).

Table 2.

Adolescent Conflict Resolution and Emotion Regulation Score Means and Standard Deviations by Gender and Grade Level

Grade Level	Gender	Adolescent Conflict Resolution Behaviors				Emotion Regulation Skills							
		Aggression		Problem Solving		Internal Functional		External Functional		Internal Dysfunctional		External Dysfunctional	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
6 th grade	Girls	1.86	.64	4.22	.57	4.19	.69	3.15	.89	2.51	.76	1.55	.64
	Boys	2.05	.74	4.10	.61	4.26	.64	3.30	1.03	2.53	.68	1.45	.52
	Total	1.95	.69	4.16	.59	4.22	.67	3.22	.95	2.52	.72	1.50	.58
7 th grade	Girls	2.00	.51	4.14	.68	4.07	.98	3.37	.86	2.62	.74	1.82	.81
	Boys	2.26	.92	4.12	.71	3.72	.86	3.32	.84	2.69	.85	1.90	.76
	Total	2.13	.74	4.13	.68	3.90	.92	3.34	.84	2.66	.78	1.86	.78
8 th grade	Girls	2.34	.81	4.07	.56	4.22	.70	3.03	1.01	2.71	.95	1.61	.52
	Boys	2.66	.71	4.04	.63	3.90	.97	3.46	.78	2.62	.86	1.88	.78
	Total	2.49	.77	4.06	.59	4.06	.85	3.24	.92	2.67	.90	1.74	.66
Total	Girls	2.06	.08	4.14	.07	4.16	.09	3.18	.10	2.16	.09	1.66	.07
	Boys	2.32	.08	4.08	.07	3.96	.09	3.36	.10	2.16	.09	1.74	.08
	Total	2.19	.06	4.11	.05	4.06	.06	3.27	.07	2.61	.06	1.70	.05

3.3. Findings Regarding the Mediator Role of Adolescent Emotion Regulation Skills

The mediating role of adolescent emotion regulation in the correlation between parental marriage conflict resolution styles and adolescent conflict resolution behaviors was examined according to Baron and Kenny's (1986) criteria, which stipulate that there should be significant correlations between the predictor and the predicted variables, between the mediator variable and the predicted variable, and between the mediating variable and the predicted variable when both of them are simultaneously put into the regression analysis, and lastly, when the mediator and predictor variables are analyzed by hierarchical regression analysis, the previous relationship between the predictor and the predicted variable should either cease to be significant or the previous level of significance should decrease.

Correlations that met these conditions were examined for hierarchical regression individually. In the first stage of the analysis, age was taken as the control variable. The mediator variables were parental marriage conflict resolution styles in the second stage, and adolescent emotion regulation skills in the last stage. Findings that supported the mediator role investigated are presented in Table 3.

Table 3.

Regression Analysis Results on the Mediator Role of Adolescent Emotion Regulation Skills

Predictive Variables	Aggressive Behavior						
	<i>B</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>R</i> ²	<i>R</i> ² <i>deg.</i>	<i>F</i>	
Stage 1 Age	.19	.26	3.60**	.07	.07**	13.01**	
Stage 2 Age	.19	.25	3.57**	.09	.02*	8.62**	
Mother negative conflict resolution style	.15	.15	2.01*				
Stage 3 Age	.13	.18	2.90*	.28	.20**	24.12**	
Mother negative conflict resolution style	.08	.08	1.23				
External dysfunctional emotion regulation	.52	.45	7.10**				
Stage 1 Age	.19	.26	3.60**	.07	.07**	13.01**	
Stage 2 Age	.19	.25	3.57**	.09	.02*	8.62**	
Mother negative conflict resolution style	.15	.15	2.01*				
Stage 3 Age	.17	.22	3.30*	.15	.06**	10.41**	
Mother negative conflict resolution style	.10	.10	1.43				
Internal functional emotion regulation	-.24	-.25	-3.58**				

As a consequence of the regression analysis, it was observed that the mother's negative conflict resolution style significantly predicted both the adolescent's aggressive behavior ($\beta = .15, p < .05$) and external dysfunctional emotion regulation ($\beta = .14, p < .05$). Moreover, external dysfunctional emotion regulation significantly predicted aggressive behavior ($\beta = .49, p < .001$). When external dysfunctional emotion regulation was added to the analysis, we found that the previous finding of the significant relationship between the mother's negative conflict resolution style and the adolescent's aggressive behavior was no longer valid ($\beta = .08, p > .05$). This decrease was shown to be significant ($Z = 2.09, p < .05$) by the Sobel test, revealing that external dysfunctional emotion regulation had a full mediator role in this relationship (see Figure 1).

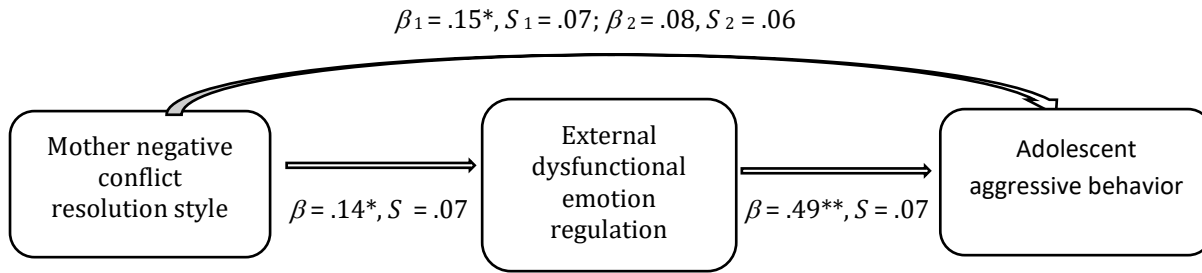


Figure 1: Model of the mediating role of external dysfunctional emotion regulation

Similarly, our findings indicated that the mother's negative conflict resolution style significantly predicted both the adolescent's aggressive behavior ($\beta = .15, p < .05$) and internal functional emotion regulation ($\beta = -.17, p < .05$). At the same time, it was observed that internal functional emotion regulation significantly predicted aggressive behavior ($\beta = -.29, p < .001$). With the addition of internal functional emotion regulation to the analysis, it was found that the previously significant relationship shown between the mother's negative conflict resolution style and the adolescent's aggressive behavior was no longer true ($\beta = .10, p > .05$). According to the results of the Sobel test, this decrease was significant ($Z = 2.25, p < .05$) and therefore internal functional emotion regulation had a partial mediator role in this relationship (see Figure 2).

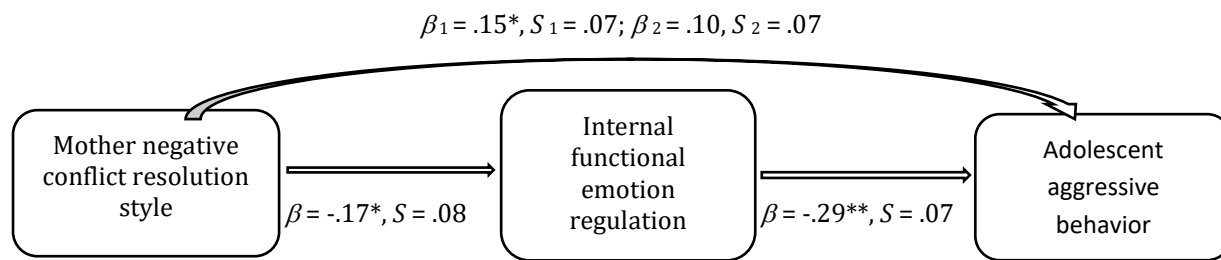


Figure 2: Model of the mediating role of internal functional emotion regulation

4. RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The present study examined the relationships between parental marriage conflict resolution styles, adolescent emotion regulation skills and adolescent conflict resolution behaviors, and then analyzed the mediating role of adolescent emotion regulation in the relationship between parental marriage conflict resolution styles and adolescent conflict resolution behaviors.

Our analyses on the relationship between gender, age and class level variables and research variables indicated that there was a significant difference between aggressive conflict resolution behaviors according to gender, as boy students' aggressive conflict resolution behavior mean scores were significantly higher than those of girl students, which is in line with last research carried out in Turkey. In their study on 320 students aged between 13 and 14, Türnüklü and Şahin (2004) found that girls use cooperation solution styles more frequently than boys, while boys frequently resort to violence. Similarly, Yavuzer, Karataş, and Gündoğdu (2013) and Rehber and Atıcı (2009) revealed that male students had higher aggression behavior scores than girls and that girls had greater problem-solving scores than boys. Past research has reported that aggressive behavior score averages differ by gender, and this was the case in the present study, which may be due to the differences in the upbringing and socialization of boys and girls and parents' tendency to show greater tolerance to aggressive behavior in boys in Turkish society. In the socialization process, while emphasis is placed on raising males to be more competitive and aggressive, it is the opposite for females (Steinberg, 2007). According to the Social Role Theory, which is one of the theories explaining gender differences in aggression, gender differences observed in aggressive behavior are based on gender roles (Eagyl, 1987). While male as a gender is based on power, dominance, and aggression, being female is associated with characteristics such as caregiving and protection. Boys are more frequently encouraged by the society to resort to aggression, with deeply ingrained sayings such as "a man does not escape from a fight" (Archer, 1992; Archer & Lloyd, 2002). Thus, while the socialization process tends to reinforce aggressive tendencies in males, it restricts those of women.

The present study also sought to define whether the students' conflict resolution behaviors and emotion regulation mean scores differed by grade level. Findings showed that grade level had a significant effect on students' aggressive conflict resolution behavior and external dysfunctional emotion regulation scores. It was found that the mean scores of aggressive conflict resolution behavior of the 8th grade students were higher than those of the 6th-graders. Similarly, the external dysfunctional emotion regulation mean scores of 7th grade students were found to be greater than those of students in the 6th grade. In line with our findings, Yavuzer et al. (2013) found that 9th grade students resorted less to aggression and more to problem solving in conflict resolution compared to 10th and 11th grade students in terms of grade level. There may be various reasons for the increase in aggressive behavior of students along with the grade level. First, the students become physically stronger with age. Secondly, after each year at school, students become more experienced in the school environment. This increase in the psychological as well as physical strength of the students may explain why the average score of aggressive conflict resolution

behavior of 8th grade students is higher than the 6th grade students. Another factor for the increase in aggressive behavior may be the exam anxiety experienced by 8th grade students. Intense exam anxiety experienced by 8th-graders while preparing for high-school entrance exam can lead to various behavioral problems. In this respect, it is thought that this finding may be related to increasing exam anxiety in students as they advance towards the 8th grade.

Our findings on the correlation between parent marriage conflict resolution styles and adolescent conflict resolution behaviors revealed significant positive correlations between the mother's positive conflict resolution style and the adolescent's problem-solving behavior, and between the mother's negative conflict resolution style and the adolescent's aggressive conflict resolution behavior. Even though there have been no reports in Turkey on the relationship between parental marital conflict resolution styles and adolescent conflict resolution behaviors, the international literature on the subject indicates that negative conflict resolution forms, such as verbal and physical aggression, used by parents in marital conflicts and the aggressive behaviors observed in the child's social relationships are correlated (Schudlich, Shamir, & Cummings, 2004; Underwood et al., 2008). In a study conducted by Goodmann et al. (1999) on 57 children between the ages of 10 and 13 and their parents, it was found that children of mothers who used aggressive tactics during conflict had worse problem-solving skills, while children of parents who used constructive tactics during conflict had better problem-solving skills, which is in line with the findings of the current study. Consequently, it can be said that it is especially the mother's positive or negative conflict resolution style that is taken as a model by the child, and children who cannot manifest positive conflict resolution behavior tend to adopt an aggressive attitude.

As opposed to the findings on the mother's style of conflict resolution, we found no significant relationship between the father's positive conflict resolution style and the adolescent's problem-solving behavior, nor did the father's negative conflict resolution style positively correlate with the adolescent's aggressive conflict resolution behavior. A review of the literature shows the lack of a consensus on this issue. In a study conducted by Underwood et al. (2008), the mother's negative conflict resolution style was found to be significantly related to the verbal and physical aggression of the child in the school environment, whereas the father's negative conflict resolution style did not correlate with the child's verbal and physical aggression, which is consistent with our findings. On the other hand, Schudlich et al. (2004) found that the negative conflict strategies and aggressive behaviors of children towards their peers were related to the open and secret conflict behaviors of the parents, especially to the open conflict behavior of the father. We did not find a significant relationship between the father's positive or negative conflict resolution styles and the adolescent's problem solving or aggressive conflict resolution behaviors. This could be explained by the greater and more active role mothers play in rearing children in Turkish society.

An interesting finding of the present study was that the father's submission style served as a predictor for the aggressive conflict resolution behavior of the adolescent, which can be explained by the authoritarian role expected from the father in Turkish society. It could be said that a father who adopts the submissive style in conflict situations cannot take an active role but remain passive in domestic issues. A father that does not become actively involved in domestic issues and child rearing or fulfil his responsibilities is likely to display an indifferent, non-controlling, and excessively permissive attitude toward the child. The literature on the subject suggests that children of parents with an inconsistent and indecisive approach to discipline and an extremely permissive attitude have more difficulty controlling their impulses and tend to exhibit aggressive behaviors (Yıldız, 2011). A father assuming an active role, on the other hand, is said to contribute to emotional control in children, and children with greater control over their emotions are better able to cope with the problems they encounter, and to come up with solutions (Hortaçsu, 2003).

Our analyses on the correlation between parent marriage conflict resolution styles and adolescent emotion regulation skills showed that the mother's negative conflict resolution style and the adolescent's internal functional emotion regulation were negatively correlated, while a positive significant relationship was found between the mother's negative conflict resolution style and the adolescent's external dysfunctional emotion regulation. This finding is consistent with the "Emotional Security Hypothesis", which suggests that children who are constantly exposed to negative conflict resolution styles have difficulty in maintaining emotion regulation and that these difficulties increase their risk of adjustment problems (Davies & Cummings, 1994). With regard to the relationship between adolescent emotion regulation skills and conflict resolution behaviors, we found that internal functional and external functional emotion regulation positively predicted problem-solving behavior, whereas internal dysfunctional and external dysfunctional emotion regulation were correlated with aggressive conflict resolution behavior. This finding is also consistent with previous reports showing that children with higher functional emotion regulation skills tend to use non-aggressive language in coping with conflict situations, and children with low emotional regulation skills exhibit more aggressive behaviors in peer relationships (Eisenberg et al., 1997; Eisenberg et al., 1994).

When the mediating role of adolescent emotion regulation skills in the correlation between parent marriage conflict resolution styles and adolescent conflict resolution behaviors was tested, the adolescent's external dysfunctional emotion regulation was found to play a full, and internal functional emotion regulation a partial, mediating role in the relationship between the mother's negative marital conflict resolution style and the adolescent's aggressive behavior. These findings show that the mother's negative marital conflict resolution style may increase the external dysfunctional emotion regulation of the adolescent and decrease the internal functional emotion regulation, which may, in turn, increase the aggressive behavior of the adolescent. In other words, the greater the mother's negative marital conflict resolution style, the less the child is able to control and regulate negative emotions. The mother's negative conflict resolution style fosters the child's negative emotions and use of external dysfunctional emotion regulation methods that lead these emotions to be expressed in inappropriate ways. Therefore, children

who fail to control and regulate their emotions and use dysfunctional methods for emotion regulation tend to resort to aggressive conflict resolution behaviors more frequently in conflict situations. Based on all these findings, it can be said that adolescent emotion regulation plays an important role in the correlation between parental marriage conflict resolution styles and adolescent conflict resolution behaviors. While these findings have not been reported previously, there is research in the connected literature supporting the mediating role of emotional security related to emotion regulation in the correlation between marital conflict and child adaptation (Cummings et al., 2006; Harold, Shelton, Goeke-Morey, & Cummings, 2004; Sakız, 2011). There are also other studies that show the mediating role emotion regulation plays in the correlation between marital conflict and adolescent friend relationship quality (Schwarz, Stutz, & Ledermann, 2012), and between parent conflict resolution styles and child adjustment problems (Siffert & Schwarz, 2011).

This study is important in that it is the first one of its kind that examines the relationship between parental marriage conflict resolution styles and adolescent conflict resolution behaviors and tests the mediating role of adolescent emotion regulation skills in this relationship. Another important aspect of the study is that it collected data from three different sources: the mother, the father, and the child. We revealed the important role played by parental marriage conflict resolution styles in conflict resolution behaviors experienced by adolescents in their friendships. Hence, this research is thought to prove beneficial for parents and professionals in the field. Educational curricula to strengthen conflict resolution skills for parents and adolescents may be developed based on these findings and these can provide significant gains. Future studies can investigate the effectiveness of education programs aiming to develop conflict resolution skills of parents and children.

Despite all contributions it makes to the relevant literature on the relationship between parental conflict resolution styles and adolescent conflict resolution behaviors, the present study has some limitations. Firstly, because the forms were sent to parents by teachers and the scales contained questions about marital conflicts, the respondents may have refrained from providing accurate information regarding their families, which could put the reliability of the scale findings into question. For future research, one-on-one interviews with parents may provide more reliable data for measurement. Another limitation of the study was that the age range studied was limited to 11-14 years and the study was cross-sectional. Therefore, it is thought that longitudinal studies with wider age ranges could make important contributions to the field in the future. Finally, the low internal consistency coefficients of some sub-dimensions of the Conflict Resolution Styles Scale may indicate an important limitation regarding the reliability of the scale.

Research and Publication Ethics Statement

This research was carried out by obtaining the necessary permissions from Bolu Abant İzzet Baysal University Scientific Research Ethics Committee, Bolu Provincial Directorate of National Education and Batman Provincial Directorate of National Education. Ethical principles and rules were taken into consideration in the collection, analysis and reporting of data.

Contribution Rates of Authors to the Article

This research is a master thesis research conducted under the supervision of the second author, and it was applied and written by the first author.

Statement of Interest

There is no conflict of interest between the authors and with other institutions, organizations or persons.

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