

FOR REFERENCE

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED  
CHILD-REARING ATTITUDES, EGO - STRENGTH, AND  
SOCIO-ECONOMIC-STATUS

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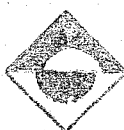
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## INTRODUCTION

The results of extensive research have suggested that parental child rearing practices have a definite influence on adequately developed ego functions (McCandless, 1967).

Freud was one of the first to consider the motivational effects of child rearing patterns (i.e. dynamic approach) in the life of the infant which shaped his developing personality. Well grounded in biology, Freud nevertheless believe that the influence of learning in infancy upon the developing organism, profoundly affects the well-being or the ill-being of the older child and adult. For him, all behavior is determined, none is random or meaningless; and in order to understand later behavior, one must first understand the nature of development in infancy and in early childhood.

1) Ambivalent parental attitudes toward their children find expression in the emergence of the separation of the ego functions (Livson, 1966). On the Contrary, well-organized, calm, and self-controlled parents engender in children tendencies toward effective regulative power and control. Both excessive indulgence and overstrict discipline weaken

the ego, while the main source of a strong ego, is the security of love and protection and a sense of belonging and status in the family (Slavson, 1952). Thus, it can be said that education and developmental opportunities may strengthen or weaken the ego. 2) In considering the effects of child rearing practices, the ego would seem to be one of the most directly influenced aspects of the personality. Since the functions of the ego develop and mature in interaction with the environment (Hartmann, 1958), parents as key figures in the environment are bound to be very important. According to the statements made above, ego strength may be defined as the ability of the individual to use constructive defenses in reality testing and in dealing with actual situations for his adjustment to the environment. Among the characteristics which are generally referred to as ego-strength are "physiological stability and good health, a strong sense of reality, feelings of personal adequacy and vitality, permissive morality, lack of ethnic prejudice, emotional outgoingness, spontaneity and intelligence" (Barron, 1952).

The present study is concerned with the relationships between adolescents' perceptions of the child-rearing attitudes of their parents and their ego-strength, in two different socio-economic groups. Its principal differences from other studies in this area lie (1) in relying on the adolescents' perceptions of parental attitudes and behavior rather than on the parents' reports or observers' ratings and (2) in relati

these perceptions of parental attitudes and behavior to such characteristics as ego-strength and socio-economic status.

The reasons for using perceived child-rearing patterns are the following. Although parent behavior is an objective event in the real world, it affects the child's ego development only to the extent and in the form in which he perceives it. Ausubel et al. (1954) stated that perceived parent behavior is in reality a more direct, relevant and proximate determinant of personality development than the actual stimulus content to which it refers. Also it seems reasonable to suppose that children's perceptions of parent behavior and attitudes can be measured more validly than their parents. Generally, parents have a strong motivation to perceive their role behavior in a favorable light and to similarly impress others. Children's candid accounts may, in fact, be more valid than those which might be obtained from parental interviews.

The rationale behind the investigation of ego-strength in adolescents is the following. Seventeen or eighteen year old adolescent nearly finishing lycée, have already achieved a certain status. The adolescent is expected by his culture to begin assuming adulthood, in a formulated manner by all the cultures. As Erikson (1950) has pointed out, an adolescent is a person who has found his identity, that is a social role which enables him to match his early instinctual relationships within the family and within the society he lives in. Since, in the present study, adolescents were asked to rate their parents attitudes, it was thought that adolescents would be more

capable of giving reliable results than children. For, in young children, the core of the personality pattern is not well established yet, it is still in the process of development. By adolescence however, the personality pattern is less flexible, the self-concept is already well formed and the individual's qualities and attitudes are more numerous and more set. As the self-concept becomes more stable, the adolescent assigns himself a role related to his self-concept (Jersild, 1963).

In Turkish literature, the concept of ego strength has not been much scientifically investigated therefore, given the importance of this concept, an investigation seemed appropriate.

## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In order to provide a theoretical and an empirical background for the study of the relationships between perceived parental child rearing practices and ego-strength, the following areas will reviewed: adolescence, child-rearing practices and the development of ego-strength.

### Adolescence

The word "adolescence" comes from the Latin verb adolescence, which means "to grow" or to grow to ward achieving emotional maturity. The term adolescence denotes a period which the growing person makes the transition from

childhood to adulthood physically and psychologically. As Sorenson has pointed out: "Adolescence is much more than one rung up the ladder from childhood. It is a built-in, necessary transition period for ego development. It is a leave-taking of the dependencies of childhood and a precious reach for adulthood. An adolescent is a traveler who has left one place and has not reached the next... It is an intermission between earlier freedoms and subsequent responsibilities and commitments... a last hesitation before serious commitments concerning work and love" (1962 p.131-138).

A child cannot remain a child forever. The beginning of puberty brings rapid changes in body size and structure. When physical development reaches a certain point, the child is expected to grow up psychologically and give up certain childish trends. Next to the physical and physiological changes there are also changes in interest, for example childhood playmates or play activities no longer satisfy the adolescent. He finds himself taking a new interest in the other sex, in social activities, in books, movies etc. With time, new problems arise that the adolescent has never been able to solve. Looking like an adult, he is expected to behave like an adult. He has to learn to stand on his own feet and face the world without the help of his parents and his teachers. As in the childhood years, the development in adolescence follows an orderly pattern. Adolescence may roughly be divided into two periods: early adolescence and late adolescence.



The behavioral changes taking place in early adolescence are various and they parallel the rapid physical changes occurring in this period. But as physical development slows down in late adolescence, changes in behavior decrease, because the adolescents realize that adulthood is rapidly approaching, and this provides them with the necessary motivation to prepare te-mselves for their new status; as a result, they make greater strides toward the goal of maturity than they did in early adolescence. A certain level of maturity is reached and they try to keep it. Girls are more handicapped than boys in this transitional period to adulthood, specially in our country where parents tend to encourage their daughters dependency. Though boys from the middle and upper socio-economic groups may remain economically dependent while pursuing their education, they are permitted greater psychological independence than girls (Schaefer, and Bayley, 1963).

Generally, the young adolescent is more of a problem to himself than to others. If he does not adjust to his new role in life, he will become confused, anxious and unable to make decisions. Usually, parents' expectations of their adolescents' behavior is not commensurate with his psychological level of development. Consequently, the situation becomes more complicated, new problems arise and it leads to aggressive, disruptive behavior and to general unhappiness. These behaviors tend to be seen by adults as immaturity and the adolescent is

seen as an unpleasant person to deal with.

In the case of the adolescent making a successful transition into adulthood, problems will gradually diminish and he will adjust better to his environment. On the other hand, if the adolescent is not making a satisfactory transition, he will be seen as an immature and rebellious person. Successful transition into adulthood can be facilitated by unconditional positive regard from parents, by structuring his activities for socially approved conduct and also praise and encouragement of mature and autonomous behavior.

The psychological atmosphere in which the adolescent matures deeply affects his personal and social adjustments. According to Peck and Havighurst (1962) each adolescent is just about the kind of person that would be predicted from a knowledge of the way his parents treated him. It seems reasonable to say that, each child learns to feel and act psychologically and morally, as just the kind of person his father and mother have been in their relationships with him. When the home climate is characterized by affection, understanding and tolerance, the adolescent will develop a healthy self concept. If this climate is conflictful, the adolescent may develop a negative self-concept, especially if he/she is directly involved in the conflict. A pleasant atmosphere is conducive to the adolescent's enjoyment of his family. As a general rule, it can be said that the parent-child relationships is the most important influence in determini

the psychological climate of the home and the effect of this climate on the adolescent.

At the basis of the personality lies the concept that one has of his own individuality. Jersild has explained the self-concept in these terms: "...composite of thoughts and feelings which constitute a person's awareness of his individual existence, his conception of who and what he is" (1965, p.196-208). Other important components of the personality pattern are the specific traits characterizing the individual's typical manner of personal and social adjustment which are integrated in the individual's self-concept.

\* Parental attitudes and behavior, more than anything else, shape the adolescents developing personality. Strict, punitive and demanding parents encourage impulsiveness in the adolescent because they do not permit him to develop his inner controls. \* According to Bell (1970) warm and affectionate parents encourage the adolescent to be social, while cold and indifferent parents foster him to be sad, seclusive or socially withdrawn. Among the factors that influence the adolescent's self-concept, family influences are the most difficult to bring under control. The adolescent has no way to change the way his parents treat him, nor can he change the training methods they use (Bell, 1970).

## 2- Child-rearing Practices in Western Culture

This term refers to the interactions between parents and their children. These interactions include parental expressions of attitudes, values, interests, and beliefs as well as their caretaking and training behaviors (Sears, Maccoby, and Levin, 1957).

The earliest source of information about American child rearing methods is derived from books pamphlets, and magazine articles that gave suggestions to the parents. Stendler (1950) reviewed for 60 years from 1890 to 1950's child training practices by analyzing articles in three popular ladies' magazines. She stated that during this period, three different schools of thought prevailed with regard to children's rearing and development. For the period of 1890's and the first decade of the twentieth century a highly sentimental approach to child rearing was observed; in contrast, from 1910 through the 1930's a rigid disciplinary approach was prevalent; and the years of 1940's emphasized self-regulation and understanding of the child. This latter emphasis in child development was marked by the beginning popularity of the Freudian view. Followers of Freud thought that various aspects of infant care, especially those revolving around sucking and weaning, bowel training and bladder control, were a primary source of influence upon the adults' personality (Maloney, 1974). The most important study in this area was done by Sears, Maccoby, and Levin (1957). For the first time in the literature concerned

with child rearing and training, a statement was made about specific practices being antecedents of absolute child behavior patterns.

The most important factor in the continuation and stabilization of the children's characteristic is the way they are reared. The goal of child training is to mold him in such a way as to adjust him to the roles prescribed by the cultural group to which he belongs. It follows that training methods have the same aim i.e. to produce a well-adjusted person.

Among the different child-rearing patterns, the most prevalent method is the authoritarian method which is characterized by the use of strict rules and regulations for the enforcement of the desired behavior. Under this method, there is no consideration for the explanation of the causes of the imposed rules. Next, one can observe the democratic method which emphasizes the need for discussions, explanations and reasoning to help the young to understand the reasons of the parental expectations for a certain behavior. Punishment is used only when the young person willfully refuses to comply to the rules set by parents; generally, when punishment is used as a method of control, it is relatively mild and commensurate with the deviant behavior. The third method is the laissez-faire, which is not considered actually as child-training because the young person learns more by trial and error than by guidance (Hurlock, 1974).

It can be interesting to connect some ideas advanced by Alfred Adler (1930) to the above statements. Adler's analysis of environmental influences was largely concerned with the family group. Adler, like Freud, believed that the first years of life are crucial for personality structure. Adler based his psychology on the general attitude of the parents and the nature of intrafamily relationships. For him, major rubrics for parent-child relations are the spoiled and the hated child (Munroe, 1955). The spoiled child, pampered in every wish, develops difficulties for two reasons. First, he forms the expectation early in life that he will always be taken care of. Adler notes that many criminals were spoiled children. They quite honestly feel that society owes them a living without contribution from themselves. Their view of themselves is often grandiose, in consonance with the view taught by their adoring parents. Secondly, the spoiled child does not learn techniques of adjustment to real social situations because he is protected from the need for personal effort. The over protectiveness of the parents deprives the child of the opportunity to learn how to master and adapt, and inculcates attitudes of expectation of total support and unquestionable superiority. The hated child also receives erroneous training. As the world around him is essentially hostile, he early develops the attitude that people are against him and that he must fight for his rights. He is typically very difficult to live with or work with and may defeat his own ends by his uncooperative or actively hostile behavior. According to

Adler, ideally, parents must give loving support to the young child, with encouragement to initiative and self-confidence. The child must not be helped neither too much nor too little. Discipline and training have a positive character, never "breaking the child's will". In such a home, the child develops courage and social feelings.

Social-class differences in child-training are numerous, although variations may occur within every social class (McArthur, 1955). Member of the upper-classes put high value on family status and past accomplishments and low value on individual striving so it follows that this would lead to the development of self-confidence, feelings of adequacy, regardless of their own personal achievements. In addition, the use of permissive child-training methods reinforce the above characteristics (McArthur, 1955). Parents from middle class socio-economic backgrounds are more authoritarian, exert more control and are less tolerant than parents from lower classes. Generally, middle-class parents put high value on achievement and social acceptance also they have higher expectations than lower-class parents. They are stricter about control of aggression and respect for the property rights of others while lower-class parents are stricter about masturbation, modesty and the use of tabooed language (McArthur 1955). According to Lipsitz (1965), generally, lower-class parents tend to be inconsistent in their child-training methods, they oscillate between one extreme to another: permissiveness or authoritarianism. When they use the authoritarian method,

they oscillate between one extreme to another permissiveness or authoritarianism. When they use the authoritarian method, they give larsh punishments which develop feelings of inadequacy and loss of self-esteem in their children, and these youngsters learn to be sly, secretive and dishonest in order to avoid punishment. Furthermore, as the lower-class parents' value emphasize on aggressiveness, especially for men, boys tend to develop a "bully" personality (Lipsitz, 1965).

There are also social-class differences in the ways parents enforce the learning of the social and cultural values to their children. If the child do not obey, middle-class-parents, disapprove him or deprive him of some of his privileges or foster feelings of guilt and shame. Lower-class parents, generally use very severe physical punihshment; shame and ridicule to "toughen the child up", and rejection, or they try to show the child that they do not want to be "bothered with him" (Havighurst, 1953).

Another important component in child-rearing practices is the personality patterns of the parents. Mothers showing strong masculine tendencies exert more control over their children, while mothers showing more feminine tendencies exert smooth control (Henry, 1961). Inner-directed parents, do what they think is right in training their children, while outer-directed parents do what others think is right. Those holding conservative opinions about social matters are usually



more intolerant and authoritarian in the rearing of their children than those being less conservative and tend to have radical opinions about social matters and are permissive in their child-rearing (Henry, 1961).

Behaviors causing frustrations in a child are harmful. A child who is made to feel an outsider and who for one reason or another is not accepted by his parents and who feels he does not satisfy their expectations or if he is continually compared unfavourably with other children and also if he is subjected to sarcasm does not live in a healthy emotional home atmosphere. Furthermore, if to this is added corporal punishment, the child may develop an emotional strain causing grave injury (Sandström, 1979). Those children who have a satisfactory relationship with their parents, are able to develop healthy attitudes toward people and learn to function in group. Popular and active adolescents in social affairs of their schools, have a warm and friendly feelings toward their families (Duvall, 1965).

According to Sullivan (1953), if the child is praised and accepted by his parents, he will have a feeling of well-being or "euphoria". Unpleasant experiences resulting from parental disapproval or rejection will lead to early anxieties. Derived, or secondary, anxiety feelings may threaten and alter the self-system.

When parents are rejecting their adolescent son or daughter, these are reported to be glum, suspicious, timid,

insecure and introverted. In the contrary, when parents are loving their children, these become extroverted, warm and happy, neglectful parents' children, become serious, retiring and anxious (Siegelman, 1965).

To be happy and secure, a person must feel that he has a safe ground, a place where he can go with his joys and successes as well as with his sorrows and defeats. If he does not feel that way, he may become inadequate and unhappy.

According to Slater (1962), children and young adolescents tend to have similar patterns of behavior to those of family members. Living with parents who are nervous, anxious and lacking the sense of humor, makes children nervous and subject to outbursts of temper. In the contrary, children with warm, affectionate and interested parents, usually become social and gregarious (Slater, 1962).

One of the principal ways in which the family influences a person's self-concept is through a "mirror image" of himself or how he believes he is seen by them. The family then becomes the "looking glass" in which the person sees himself. Jourard and Remy, say the following about the "mirror image": "The self may be said to be made up of reflected appraisals. If these were chiefly derogatory... then the self dynamism will itself be derogatory... It will entertain disparaging and hostile appraisals to itself... It is, therefore, the parents and significant others who determine the nature of self-dynamism. The self tends very strongly to maintain the direction and

characteristics given to it in childhood (1955, p.364-66).

The kind of child training used by parents has a great influence on adolescents' social adjustment. Children brought up by democratic methods, for example make better social adjustment, than children brought up by authoritarian methods and those brought up by the laissez faire method who indulge them and permit them to do whatever they want, develop feelings of inadequacy about their abilities and tend to become inactive and to withdraw from social situations (Clifford, 1959). To summarize, authoritarian and laissez-faire child-rearing patterns tend to make children immature.

The effects of child-training methods on personality may also change according to the family member who is in control of the training (Strauss, 1962). Four kinds of family control are seen: "autonomic" or equalitarian, where control is shared by both parents; "wife-dominant" where control is in the hands of the mother; "husband-dominant" where the control is in the hands of the father; and "conflict-in-power" where husband and wife are in conflict over the methods of child-training. The lowest achievement and the highest anxiety take place when there is conflict within parents. On the contrary, the highest achievement and lowest anxiety are found among children from families of equalitarian control (Strauss, 1962).

As it is clearly seen, the role played by the family is of vital importance during the whole period of growth as

parents have a powerful influence on shaping the child's personality.

### Child-rearing Practices in Turkey

According to Kağıtçıbaşı (1977), the Turkish family can be defined as "traditional". Most of the population lives in rural areas, and even if the family is of the nuclear type, ties to the family are strong and functions are distributed traditionally. The type of the family is patriarchal and the oldest male is the head of the family. Respect for authority and for older people is a cultural value (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1972b, Stirling, 1965).

Sixty percent of the Turkish population lives in rural areas while forty percent lives in cities and there are approximately nine million young people living in rural areas. Among these, seventyfour percent stay at their birth place. These adolescents' identification takes its roots from the cultural group they live in. In this family type, the religious and economic power is held by the father, while the mother shows an indistinct and vague personality type. The adolescents that grow up in these conditions accept without argument the given values. Their thoughts are concrete and restricted, they are dependent and have a family responsibility at a very young age. In big cities (i.e. Istanbul, Ankara, İzmir) the change of socio-economic and cultural conditions affect both the family and the adolescent (Köknel, Özügürlü, 1980).

It has even been stated that, it is very difficult for the mother who leads a dependent and suppressed life herself, to contribute to the positive development of the personalities of her children (Köknel, 1970). Parallel to this viewpoint, it has been found that children perceive their father as more powerful and more capable in general than their mother (Fişek, 1980; Kandiyoti, 1978).

Discipline is maintained by inconsistent methods which depend on the mood of the adult at that moment, usually not involving much verbal explanation. This discipline, mostly involves the use of power by parents, and mostly being in the form of physical punishment (LeCompte, et al, 1979; Yörükoğlu, 1978). Recently some research has provided interesting empirical data on child-rearing practices in Turkish families. LeCompte, et al (1978) have adapted thePARI scale and have done research on low, middle and high SES mothers in Ankara. In this research, it has been found that child-rearing attitudes fall on five main factors and these being:

- 1) Extreme mothering and overprotection;
- 2) Encouraging Verbalization and Equality,
- 3) Rejection of the Housewife Role,
- 4) Parental Conflict,
- 5) Discipline and Obedience.

In summary, low SES mothers with extreme mothering and overprotection, want their children to be dependent and have an attitude where mother and father have absolute power Middle SES mothes have a democratic and equalitarian attitude. High SES mothers reveal a tendency to reject the housewife role and

have problems with their husbands in their attitudes. These factors are similar to the dimensions obtained in USA with the same scale.

### 3- Ego-Strength

Summarizing the litterature about ego-strength, this term can be defined as the ability of the individual to use constructive defenses in reality testing and the necessity of dealing with actual situations for his adjustment to the environment.

In order to understand ego-strength better, some knowledge must be given about ego and ego psychology.

The ego is defined by Freud (1937) as the cause of the learning process of the individual in his meeting with the external world of people and things. Ego is not inborn like the id is, it is rather an achievement of living, and its major function is a continued maintenance of the organism in the face of the demands made upon it by "three harsh masters"-external reality, the id and the superego. The functions of the ego are partly synthetic in that they operate to maintain the organism as a whole. Partly, they are directed toward more specific and more realistic adjustments as the child learns to relate external stimuli to his own needs. The external world of reality makes some demands which may be external to the personality but as the child learns to deal with the basic relationships existing in the world of "things" and people, he develops a model of his own self.

The classical Freudian position tends to assume that human behavior is derived from instinctual drives and the independent function of the ego arises out of the necessary conflicts between drives within the organism and between these drives and reality. The ego is seen as organizing the relations among drives and the outside world.

Hartmann (1956) defines the ego by listing its functions and by describing their manifestations. There are numerous lists and all are elaborations of what Hartmann calls the "powerful triad of functions: adaptation, control and integration." Here is Freud's list: "... in each individual there is a coherent organization of mental processes; and we call this ego. It is to this ego that consciousness is attached; the ego controls the approaches to motility - that is, to the discharge of excitations into the external world; it is the mental agency which superises all its own constituent processes and which goes to sleep at night, though even then it exercises the censorship of dreams. From this ego proceed the repressions, too, by means of which it is sought to exclude certain trends in the mind not merely from consciousness but also from other forms of effectiveness and activity" (1923, p.17).

According to Hartmann (1950), ego functions develop by identification and out of conflict situations. The role of conflict in the development of ego functions and their later manifestations has additional implications. Since human beings

have instinctual drives, expressed as needs and impulses which seek immediate gratification and which are forced to delay discharge, or limitation and distortion by reality then conflict is inevitable. Hartmann suggests that "conflicts are a part and parcel of human development, for which they provide the necessary stimulus" (1939b,p.229).

The individual copes with conflict by the energy of the ego, sometimes successfully, sometimes unsuccessfully. Generally, conflict serves in the development of ego functions, especially in the early stages of the development. In summary, ego functions are never independent from drives and reality, they operate in relation to them and facilitate drive discharge.

As Freud deals with ego, Freudians deal with the "self" in practice. Many years ago, James (1890) called the core of personality pattern, which provides its unity, the "self". Later Sullivan (1953) used the term "self-system". According to James (1890) a person's self is the "sum total of all that he can call his". How wide and expansive is the concept of self, has been stressed by Jersild: "The self, as it finally evolves, is made up of all that goes into a person's experiences of his individual, existence. It is a person's thoughts and feelings, strivings and hopes, fears and fantasies, his view of what he is, what he has been, what he might become, and his attitudes pertaining to his worth" (1965, p.196-208).

The concept of self has three major components: the perceptual, the conceptual, and the attitudinal (Hurlock,



1974). The perceptual component is the image the person has of the appearance of his body and the impression he makes on others. This component is often called "the physical self-concept". The conceptual component is the person's conception of his characteristics, his abilities and disabilities, his background and origins, and his future. It is called the "psychological self-concept". The attitudinal component includes the feelings a person has about himself, his attitudes about his present condition and future prospects, his feelings about his worthiness, and his attitudes of "self-esteem", "self-reproach", "pride" and "shame".

Sullivan (1947) is primarily concerned with human adaptability. According to him, this adaptability takes place not in some psychobiological empyreal but in relation to people. The individual must be seen in an interpersonal context. Sullivan insists up an essentially developmental-cultural view of the self-the self-dynamism. Indeed, the child whose self-dynamism has been too seriously distorted by special experiences in the home may difficultly develop a real competition and cooperation with his kind. Sullivan states that all the stages of development must be successfully accomplished before the person can become a fully mature adult.

Ego and self are not synonymous term, though Freud, in his early writings, used the word ego sometimes to indicate the self and sometimes to indicate an organization of functions.

Self is a complex concept including sense of identity, body sensations affective responses, self representation, all involving a number of ego functions. Ego functions are involved in the autonomy of the self and the two interact in the manifest behavior of the individual.

Freud himself was deeply interested in the structure and function of the ego and laid the ground for two parallel developments that can be called as "ego psychology". The first one concerns the elaboration of the concept of the defense mechanisms of the ego, the leader being Anna Freud. The second one led by Hartmann concerns further investigation of the ego.

Freud regarded the ego as the executive of the total personality, he never gave it an autonomous position; it always remained subservient to the wishes of the id. In contrast to Freud's position ego psychologists intensify the role of the ego in the total personality. Hartmann (1958, 1964) in this new ego theory not only includes such topics as the development of the reality principle in childhood, the ego's auxiliary processes of perceiving, remembering, thinking and acting, and the defenses of the ego but, more important, he has put forward the concept of the autonomy of the ego. According to Hartmann, there is an undifferentiated state early in life during which both the id and the ego are formed. The ego does not emerge out of an inborn id, but each system has its origin in inherent predispositions and each has its

own independent course of development. The aims of these ego processes can be independent of purely instinctual objectives. Furthermore, the new ego theory tends to place more emphasis on the rational, conscious, constructive aspects of human personality in contrast to the emphasis placed on the unconscious constructive aspects of human personality in contrast to the emphasis placed on the unconscious and irrational by classical psychoanalysis (Hall, Lindzey, 1978).

According to Slavson (1952), the ego is weakened by impaired libido development, frustration of autonomous drives, identification with faulty models such as weak and inadequate parents, ambivalence, neurotic conflicts and feelings of guilt and fear. The presence in the family of weak or domineering, fear-inspiring, in other words inadequate parents damages the progressive development of the child's ego toward effective, adaptive functions. To summarize, appropriate external controls strengthen the ego, rigid discipline and unquestioned submission inevitably weaken ego organization.

## HYPOTHESES

The specific hypotheses to be tested in the present study are listed below.

- 1- High SES adolescents will have higher scores on Ego Strength scale than low SES adolescents,

2- High SES adolescents will have lower scores in their perceived PARI scale than low SES adolescents.

3a) Adolescents having low scores in their perceived PARI factor of extreme mothering and overprotectiveness will have higher scores on Ego Strength scale.

b) Adolescents having high scores in their perceived PARI factor of equalitarianism will have higher scores on Ego Strength scale.

c) Adolescents having low scores in their perceived PARI factor of rejection of the housewife role will have higher scores on Ego Strength Scale.

d) Adolescents having low scores in their perceived PARI factor of parental conflict will have higher scores on Ego Strength scale.

e) Adolescents having low scores in their perceived PARI factor of discipline and obedience will have higher scores on Ego Strength Scale.

## METHOD

### SUBJECTS

The population from which the subjects were selected for this research consisted of boys and girls who were adolescents in the tenth and eleventh grade of high school (lycée) in Istanbul.

The subjects in the present study were chosen in groups from two different socio-economic classes; high and low. The high socio-economic class was composed of students from Robert Lycée which is attended by youngsters from prosperous business and professional families. In addition, for entrance into this school, students have to undergo a very competitive entrance examination and pay very high tuition. Each class, generally contains twenty-five students. Since a preparatory class is required for English, 22 boys and 28 girls from two different classes of the tenth grade were selected.

On the other hand, Davutpaşa Lycée was selected for the low socio-economic group. Davutpaşa Lycée is a state school which is situated in an area known as being representative of

working class neighborhoods. This school is free of charge, no entrance exam is needed, the only requirement is residency in the neighborhood. Each class in this school contains fifty students. As there is no preparatory English class, one eleventh grade section was randomly selected among six sections. This class was composed of 20 girls and 30 boys.

## MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENTS

Two kinds of scales have been utilized in the present research. The PARI scale was used to measure parent-child relationships as perceived by the adolescents. The Ego-Strength scale was used to measure adolescents' ego-strength.

### 1- Measuring Instrument for Parental Attitudes

The Parental Attitude Research Instrument, (PARI) was developed by Bell and Schaefer (1958). In its original form PARI had 23 subscales of 5 items each, making a total of 115 items. The items required that the respondent indicate her/his agreement or disagreement with statements bearing upon attitudes and practices relating to child rearing. PARI items were translated into Turkish and then backtranslated by Le Compte et.al., (1978). The authors' formulations, along with a Turkish version of some items was submitted to a jury composed of three psychologists to take its final form. Ambiguous items (numbers 34, 39, 40, 61) were eliminated. The PARI was then tested with five middle and five lower class mothers. Four of the lower-class mothers had difficulties in understanding some

of the items. An additional explanation of these items (1,2, 4,6,19,22,25) was worded, studied by the jury, and put on a separate sheet, to be read only to mothers who had difficulty comprehending the items.

The short form of PARI prepared by Le Compte (1978) contains 60 items under five factors describing attitudes and behaviors of parents. These factors are the following:

- Factor 1: Extreme Mothering and Overprotection of the child (EMO)
- Factor 2: Encouraging Verbalization and Equality (EVE)
- Factor 3: Rejection of the Housewife Role (RHR)
- Factor 4: Parental Conflict (PC)
- Factor 5: Discipline and Obedience (DO)

In a study done by Le Compte and Le Compte (1982), it has been shown that the PARI given to the parents and to their children as a perceived measure indicate clearly that the same pattern of results occurred between the children and the parents on the PARI factors (See Appendix 1).

## 2- Measuring Instrument for Ego-Strength

✓ This scale was originally designed to predict the response of psychoneurotic patients to psychotherapy. Consideration of the scale content suggests that a somewhat broader psychological interpretation to be placed upon it, making it useful as an assessment device in any situation where some estimate of adaptability and personal skillfulness is wanted.

It appears to measure the various aspects of effective personal functioning which are usually subsumed under the term "ego-strength" (Barron, 1952).

The scale consists of 68 items from the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, selected from a total MMPI pool of 550 items on the basis of significant correlation with rated improvement in 33 psychoneurotic patients who had been treated for six months in a psychiatric clinic. The test responses of the patients were obtained before psychotherapy began, so that the scale, so far as the logic of construction is concerned, is designed to predict whether or not after about six months of therapy the patient will have improved.

The characteristics of patients who improve in therapy might be summarized as follows: good physical functioning, spontaneity, ability in sharing emotional experiences, flexible morality, good contact with reality, feelings of personal adequacy and vitality. In this case, it is suggested that what is being measured is a general factor of capacity for personality integration, or ego-strength.

The correlation between Ego-Strength scale scores and the improvement of the patient in psychotherapy varied from +.28 to +.54. These findings indicate the validity of the scale (Dahlstrom et al., 1975). While the reliability findings are indicated by correlations ranging from +.63 to +.76 (Barron, 53b; Dahlstrom et al., 1975).



V The Ego-Strength scale was translated into Turkish by Fişek (1980). This translation was corrected by two psychologists very well versed in English. Then, the Turkish scale was back translated into English. The translations were compared and statements which better reflected the original meaning were chosen (See Appendix 2).

## PROCEDURE

Appointments were made with the counselors of Robert Lycée and Davutpaşa Lycée. In Robert Lycée, the administration was done in two different counseling hours as each class contained twenty-five students. In Davutpaşa Lycée, one session was enough as classes contained fifty students.

The PARI scale and the Ego-Strength scale were both administered by the investigator to the students of the tenth grade in Robert Lycée in their classrooms during the counseling period. In Davutpaşa Lycée, the counseling period was used also for the single administration to the students of the eleventh grade. After the necessary information given to the students, the whole administration took about 30 to 35 minutes. In all the three administrations the counseling period was used and the investigator herself was present in each of the sessions. Students were asked to write down their birth date and their sex on the first page of the PARI scale. A break was not given between the two scales because lack of concentration might have occurred. Students finishing the first scale continued immediately on the second scale.

## RESULTS

In this present study, the relationships between perceived child-rearing patterns, ego-strength, and socio-economic status have been investigated.

Results concerning hypotheses: Hypothesis 1 stated that, high SES adolescents would have higher scores on Ego-Strength scale than low SES adolescents.

Descriptive statistics and 2 way analyses of variance were done.

The mean scores and standard deviations for each SES level are presented on Table 1.

TABLE 1

Comparison of Means and Standard Deviations for each SES Level

SES Level	Mean	Standard Deviation
Robert Lycée (High SES)	42.04	8.42
Davutpaşa Lycée (Low SES)	38.36	8.42

The results of the Analyses of Variance is presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2

2 Way Analyses of Variance of School and Gender on Ego Strength

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	F	Significance of F
School	400.951	5.891	.016
Gender	135.098	1.985	.158
Way Interactions			
School Gender	16.179	.238	.999
Error	6534.192		

The above results indicate that the ego-strength level of high SES adolescents is significantly higher than that of the low SES adolescents ( $F = 5.89$ ,  $p < .01$ ). No significant difference was found between boys and girls. These results indicate that hypothesis one is supported.

Hypothesis two stated that, high SES adolescents will have lower scores in their perceived PARI factors than low SES adolescents.

Table 3 presents the means of SES levels for each factor.

TABLE 3

Means of the Five PARI Factors According to SES  
(High and Low Schools)

SES Level	PF1 EMO	PF2 EVE	PF3 RHR	PF4 PC	PF5 DO
Davutpaşa Lycée (Low SES)	47.96	26.54	34.68	15.98	36.44
Robert Lycée (High SES)	43.92	25.32	29.32	15.10	34.72

Five two way analyse of variance were performed and the five different factors were analyzed separately. The results are presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4

Two-Way Analyses of Variance of School and Gender on the Five PARI Factors

		F Ratios for Each PARI Factors				
Source of Variation	df	PF1 EMO	PF2 EVE	PF3 RHR	PF4 PC	PF5 DO
School	1	13.212**	2.029	16.375**	1.616	.741
Gender	1	2.024	2.891	.052	2.069	.689
Way interactions						
School Gender	1	.079	.452	2.700	.000	1.348
Error	96	32.575	12.596	43.520	17.411	72.994

\*\*  $p < .001$ .

The results indicate that PF1 the extreme mothering and overprotectiveness factor is significantly ( $p < .001$ ) different in high and low SES adolescents. The equalitarianism

factor PF2, did not show any significant difference in high and low SES adolescents. The rejection of the housewife role factor PF3, is significantly ( $p < .001$ ) different in high and low SES adolescents. The parental conflict factor PF4 and the discipline and obedience factor PF5 are not significantly different in high and low SES adolescents. Thus, it can be said that hypothesis two was partially supported.

Hypothesis 3a stated that adolescents having low scores in their perceived PARI factor of extreme mothering and overprotection will have higher scores on Ego Strength scale.

A coefficient of correlation was computed between PF1 and Ego Strength. It was found that they were inversely related, higher ego strength leading to lower overprotection. The correlation being  $-.18$  at  $p = .036$  level, thus hypothesis 3a was supported.

Hypothesis 3b stated that adolescents having high scores in their perceived PARI factor of equalitarianism, will have higher scores on Ego Strength scale.

The computed correlation between PF2 and Ego Strength was found to be non significant. Thus hypothesis 3b was not supported.

Hypothesis 3c stated that adolescents having low scores in their perceived PARI factor of rejection of the housewife

role, will have higher scores on Ego Strength scale.

A coefficient of correlation was computed between PF3 and Ego Strength. It was found that they were inversely related, higher ego strength reading to lower scores in rejection of the housewife role. The correlation being  $-.17$  at  $p = .04$  level. Thus, hypothesis 3c was supported.

Hypothesis 3d stated that adolescents having low scores in their perceived PARI factor of parental conflict, will have higher scores on Ego Strength scale.

The computed correlation between PF4 and ego strength was found to be  $-.16$  at  $p = .06$  level. Although a trend of significance was seen, hypothesis 3d was not supported.

Hypothesis 3e stated that adolescents having low scores in their perceived PARI factor of discipline and obedience, will have higher scores on Ego Strength scale.

The computed correlation between PF5 and ego strength scale was found to be  $-.14$  at  $p = .08$  level. Although a trend of significance was seen, hypothesis 3e was not supported.

PARI and SES are related to each other and both of them predict differences in school. Are they different or the same? To answer this question, five separate analyses of co-variance were done. Each of the PARI factors were separately extracted from the data matrix and the analyses of SES and sex on Ego Strength were repeated on the residual scores. In this way, if

the PARI factors predict the same difference as does the SES variable, there should be no difference remaining in Ego Strength.

The co-variance analyses results indicate that in extreme mothering and overprotection factor PF1, both SES and PF1 independently account for a significant amount of variance in Ego Strength, suggesting that there is more into SES-Ego Strength relation that can be accounted for by the child rearing pattern of the rejection of the housewife role. Ego Strength and the parental conflict factor PF4 are strongly related regardless of the SES. Co-varying out the discipline and obedience factor PF5, has no effect on the relationship between SES and Ego Strength.

In summary, it seems that, the SES effects on Ego Strength are not completely accounted for by child-rearing differences; however, strength of the relationship is decreased when the variance from PF1 (extreme mothering and overprotection) and PF3 (rejection of the housewife role) are taken out, where as PF2 (equalitarianism) and PF5 (discipline and obedience) have no effect on the SES. While PF4 (parental conflict) is strongly related to ego strength regardless of SES.

## D I S C U S S I O N

The present investigation was designed to compare the effects of stratification on the ego strength of eighteen year old high school students. It had been anticipated, on theoretical grounds, that students attending a private, expensive school, would have significantly higher scores on a standardized scale of Ego Strength than would students attending a public, relatively inexpensive school. This expectation was borne out by the analysis of the data, as reported in the results section.

Considering this basic finding, it can be said that members of different social classes experience different conditions of life and thus come to see the world differently. They develop distinctive conceptions of reality, different aspirations, hopes and fears. In summary, it can be said that high and low SES differences fall mainly in three categories, namely, 1) security, 2) stability of income, and 3) general social prestige. This complex social stratification variable may be defined in terms of the collection of individuals who occupy similar positions in the scale of prestige (Bronfen-



brennr, 1972). Socio-economic-status creates different basic conditions of life at different levels of the social order. It seems clear that being on one side or the other has profound consequences on parental child-rearing attitudes. Inequalities in social class have occurred historically in almost every country of the world, producing many behavioral consequences.

Bronfenbrenner (1957) in a study about social-class and parent-child relationships found that high social-class parents values focus on self-direction, and according to these parents, the child should govern himself; while low social-class parents' values center on conformity to external proscriptions, and for these parents, the child should not transgress externally imposed rules. It can be assumed that these differences are rooted in basic differences between high and low social classes' conditions of life McArthur (1955) stated that members of the upper classes put a high value on family status and past accomplishment, this leads to the development of self-confidence and feelings of adequacy. In addition, their child-training methods reinforce the above characteristics. According to Lipsitz (1965), lower class parents tend generally to be inconsistent in their child, training methods varying from permissiveness to authoritarianism. When they use the authoritarian method, they give harsh punishments which develop feelings of inadequacy and loss of self-esteem in their children, and these youngsters learn to

be sly, secretive and dishonest in order to avoid punishment. In summary, it can be said that social-class differences in child training are numerous. High socio-economic status parents blessed with greater economic security, can afford to concentrate on the motives and feelings of their children. They discuss child-rearing with friends, consult physicians on these matters, they regard child-rearing as more problematic than do lower-class parents.

On the other hand, occupational differences also affect child-rearing methods. Generally, high-class occupations require a greater degree of self-direction while low-class occupations, in larger measure, require that one follow explicit rules set by some authority and so they want their children to conform to external authority too. Thus, it can be said that, high class conditions of life allow and demand greater degree of self-direction than do low class conditions. ✓ Thus, these consequences of class differences are reflected in different child rearing practices, which function as an intervening variable to produce different levels of ego strength in children. This prediction was investigated in the present study by co-varying out the perceived parental attitudes from the SES-Ego Strength relationship. Results indicated that the strength of the SES-Ego Strength relationship is decreased when the variance from extreme mothering and overprotection factor (PF1) and the rejection of the housewife role factor (PF3) are taken out.

*but not better*

The interpretation of the findings of this second phase of the study (i.e., relationship between SES and perceived PARI scales) will be discussed by taking each factor independently. The extreme mothering and overprotection dimension is significantly different ( $p < .001$ ) between high and low SES adolescents with high class mothers being less overprotective and encouraging more independence than low class mothers. High SES mothers, want their husband to play a role facilitative of the child's development; they want to be supportive of the children, and most of the fathers were perceived as agreeing with their wives and sharing the responsibility in child rearing. Usually, in these families, the fathers tend to have a warm relationship with their children, mother's and father's roles are not sharply differentiated. Low SES mothers are generally left alone by their husbands in child rearing, fathers do not usually relieve their wives of the burden of caring for the children. Mothers have primary responsibility for child care, the job is theirs and fathers do not shoulder the responsibility, so mothers left alone in child rearing tend to be more overprotective and exercise extreme mothering playing, the dual roles of the father and mother. As the co-variance analyses results indicated that in the extreme mothering and overprotection factor (PF1), both SES and PF1 independently account for a significant amount of variance in ego strength. A second factor equates being a good mother with overprotection of the child. LeCompte et al. (1978) found that low SES mothers

exercise extreme mothering and overprotectiveness, it seems that this is a required role demand of a mother.

The equalitarianism dimension did not show any significant difference in high and low SES adolescents. The expected result was that high SES adolescents' perceived PARI equalitarianism factor would be significantly different from low SES adolescents. One explanation for this failure to differentiate may be that, Turkish mothers do not interpret being equalitarian as allowing the child to think and act independently. On the contrary, mothers may interpret equalitarianism as friendship and sharing which they perform as a continuation of protectiveness. In one study, Fişek (1982) found that children of parents who used democratic discipline were more field dependent. She interpreted this as possibly implying that middle class Turkish parents are accepting a form of authority based on closeness and friendliness and giving up their traditional formal and distant authority. In a similar study Erer (1983) found that children of equalitarian mothers tend to be more behaviorally dependent rather than more independent as expected. In a third investigation, Onur (1981) revealed that the relationship between parental child rearing practices and self-esteem is complex and does not follow the pattern found in Western studies. She found that, protectiveness on the part of the mother was related to high rather than low self-esteem. Consistent with this position, the present study found that co-varying out the

equalitarianism factor (PF2), had no effect on the relationship between SES and ego-strength.

The rejection of the housewife role dimension (PF3), is significantly different ( $p < .001$ ) in high and low SES adolescents as expected. Mothers in low SES families seem to reject their housewife role since all the responsibilities lay on her shoulders. She is expected to do all the houseworking, to look after her children and may be work outside the home trying to allay the economic burden. On the other hand, high SES mothers have many more opportunities, they generally have aid at home, they have all the facilities provided by their high-class status, and even if they work, their main occupation may be their child rearing which they share with their husbands, they have more time to spend with their children and they do not seem to reject their housewife role. Under these conditions, it is a pleasant role that they are happy to abide by. These results are contradictory to the findings of LeCompte et al.(1978), who found that high SES mothers revealed a tendency to reject the housewife role. The difference may lay in the structure of the studies, as LeCompte's was not investigating a measure of parental attitudes as perceived by the youngsters, but the parents' own attitudes. Although in LeCompte and LeCompte (1982) study, it has been shown that the PARI given to the parents and to their children as a perceived measure, indicate clearly that the same pattern of results have occurred between the

children's and parents' PARI dimensions. However, the children in the latter study were fourteen year old on the average and hence they may be young enough to accept their mothers' statements as being their own attitudes. While in older adolescents' perceived PARI, low socio-economic-status mothers' complaints about the general difficulty of life may be interpreted as the rejection of the housewife role. Co-varying out the rejection of the housewife role dimension, suggests, that like the extreme mothering dimension, it also accounts for a significant amount of co-variance in the SES-Ego Strength relationship.

The parental conflict dimension (PF4) did not show a significant difference in high and low SES adolescents. Co-varying out the parental conflict dimension suggests that this dimension and ego strength are strongly related regardless of socio-economic-status. Considering this result, it may be said that of all the conditions that influence personality development, relationships between the individual and the members of his family take the first rank. From the time he is born until the day he dies, the home is the person's primary environment. When the home climate is characterized by affection understanding and tolerance, the adolescent develop a healthy self-concept. If this climate is conflictful, the adolescent may develop a negative self-concept, especially if she/he is directly involved in the conflict. A pleasant atmosphere is conducive to the adolescents' enjoyment

of his family. Conflict always upsets family homeostasis and disturbs the emotional climate of the home view. It can be safely assumed that the relationship a person has with his family is unquestionably one of the most important factors in his personality development, regardless of social-class identifications..

The discipline and obedience dimension did not show any significant difference between high and low SES adolescents. It seems that in both types of families, older adolescents have matured, the salience of the discipline and obedience dimension is lessened. Most parents realize that seventeen or eighteen year olds adolescent can not be held by discipline and obedience anymore. These children, nearly finishing lycée, will soon choose their way of life, so parents may try to help them rather than apply discipline and obedience. Co-varying out the discipline and obedience dimension (PF5), has no effect on the relationship between SES and ego strength.

The findings of the third phase of the study (i.e. relationship between adolescents' perceived PARI scores and ego strength) will be discussed taking each factor independently.

Adolescents, perceiving their mother as less overprotective, tend to have high ego strength, as these adolescents, are able to develop more independency than before which leads

them to wider horizons of thinking and acting. They become more self-assertive and more self-directed in facing social environment and in dealing with different situations in life all of which results in higher ego strength.

Adolescents perceiving their mothers as not rejecting their housewife role, tend to have high ego strength thus, these adolescents seem to appreciate the traditional mothers' role. They may want their mother to be available any time they need her and without complaining about her role. When a mother has a negative attitude toward the role she is expected to fulfill, she will have little motivation and this may affect family members especially children. If the mother assumes her role in accordance with her duties, self-evaluations will be positive and the home climate will tend to be harmonious leading the children to develop a healthy self-concept.

The parental conflict dimension, as discussed above is directly related to ego strength, but has no relation to SES, the independent variable in the Study.

It was expected that adolescents having low scores in their perceived PARI dimension of discipline and obedience, would have higher scores on the Ego Strength scale. Here too, results were not significant. It may be conjectured perhaps that the issues of discipline and obedience to parental demands are less salient at that age than for earlier ages. If so, the effects of such perceived parental attitudes may



be felt in younger children, whose socialization is largely constrained to the home. Hence, the discipline-ego strength relation is attenuated by age.

What do these results imply? Freud was one of the first to emphasize the importance of infancy and childhood as determinants of adult personality. During the long period that man has been on earth, no one would say that he had discovered the best way to raise children. As all children are different; they differ not only in temperament, aptitude, and intelligence, but in their rates of physical and mental maturation. Child rearing attitudes that might be effective for one child might have a totally different effect on another. Beside this, parents also differ from one another, and methods, successfully used by some parents may be ineffective when used by another. But inspite of all these statements, it may be said that parental child-rearing attitudes in the different socio-economic-status affect adolescents' ego strength. The influence of the family is considerable at all ages, but this influence has its variations as parents are affected themselves by different life conditions. Maslow (1954) has described a person with a healthy personality as one who is "self-actualizing". By self-actualization Maslow understand the process of fulfilling the potentials inherent in the person. This is possible only if he can gratify certain basic needs, such as physical satisfactions, safety, esteem and love. When these basic needs are fully gratified, the person

can then turn his energies into tasks that will enable him to fulfill his potentials. As it is clearly seen, these statements can be related to Barron's (1952) characteristics of ego strength.

In the light of this limited research and bearing in mind that very little investigation has been conducted in Turkey on this subject, wide generalization would be misleading. On the other hand, this present investigation shades light on two possible directions for application.

It is clear that further research is needed for a more detailed Ego Strength scale. On the other hand extended research should be conducted on low ego strength adolescents with special emphasis on their families and environment. This kind of study would enable one to compare ego strength scores between parents and children.

Furthermore, the application of these findings would provide guidance to these involved in counseling and psychotherapy and also to open the way to family therapy which is not yet applied in Turkey.

Further research on this subject would be advisable with the hope that a wider investigation of parents education and parental attitudes would lead to better understanding of the personality and ego strength of Turkish adolescents.

## A B S T R A C T

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between SES and ego strength in late adolescence. It was hypothesized that there would be a direct relationship between these two variables, such that higher status should lead to higher ego strength and that this relationship was mediated through socialization practices used by parents. These socialization practices were measured by a parental attitude scale (PARI) as perceived by adolescents. The Ego Strength scale was to measure adolescents' ego strength, these scales were given to high and low SES students in two different lycées.

The general results suggest that there is a significant difference in child rearing patterns influencing adolescents' ego strength in high and low SES groups.

Significant differences were found in adolescents' ego strength in the different SES groups, with high SES adolescents having higher ego strength than low SES adolescents. No significant difference was found between boys and girls.

Significant differences were found in the extreme mothering and overprotectiveness dimension of parental attitudes scales such that less overprotective mothers being in high SES groups and positively associated with high ego strength in their children. The second significance was found in the rejection of the housewife role dimension of the PARI scale, high SES mothers do not reject their housewife role and foster their children to have high ego strength. No significant difference was found between the equalitarianism discipline and obedience dimensions while parental conflict dimension was found to be strongly related to ego strength regardless of the socio-economic group. This latter finding suggest that the home climate affects directly adolescents' personality in whatever group he belongs to.

These results suggest that the different basic conditions of life at different levels of the social order affects parental attitudes influencing their children's ego strength.

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61. Bazı hayvanlar beni tedirgin eder. D Y
62. Cildim dokunmaya karşı son derece duyarlıymış gibi geliyor. D Y
63. Çoğu zaman kendimi yorgun hissediyorum. D Y
64. Açık saçık filimleri seyretmekten elimden geldiğince kaçınırım. D Y
65. Ressam olsaydım çocuk resimleriyapmak isterdim. D Y
66. Bazen kendimi darmadağın hissediyorum. D Y
67. Geceyarısında sık sık korktuğum olmuştur. D Y
68. Ata binmekten çok hoşlanırım. D Y