

Examining Turkish Adults' Recalled Experiences of Their Father's Presence

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Abstract

The father plays an important role in child development, including during adolescence, in many cultures. To date, research on the impact of father presence (in a household/family) on father–child relationships has been limited, especially in Eastern cultures due to the overwhelming influence of traditional gender role attitudes. The purposes of this study are to record and compare descriptions (i.e., profiles) of the father's presence, and to investigate Turkish adults' reported experiences of their father's presence during their childhood. A sample of 401 participants completed a Turkish version of the Father's Presence Questionnaire. The resulting profiles and analyses of reports of the father's presence show that perceptions of the fathers' involvements with the participants and the participants' feelings about their fathers are strongly correlated with their reported father–mother relationships as well as the mother's support for the relationship with the father. The profiles of the male and female adult participants were quite distinct regarding recollections of physical closeness with the father because of the less frequent physical interactions between males and their fathers compared with females.

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The role of mothers in child development, including adolescence, has been widely studied in the literature (e.g., Brand & Klimes-Dougan, 2010; Ferreira et al., 2016; Mallers, Charles, Neupert, & Almeida, 2010). Unlike mother–child relationships, father–child relationships have received less attention, partly due to different characterizations of fatherhood across various cultures, communities, and societies. In many cultures, fathers have been described as forgotten or shadow parents (LaRossa, 1997). Until the late 1970s, raising children in Western cultures was regarded mainly as a competence of mothers due to genetics; fathers were described by scholars as either ineffective/insufficient (Rohner & Veneziano, 2001) or instrumental (i.e., teaching and mentoring) parents (Rohner & Veneziano, 2001; Saracho & Spodek, 2008) in the family. This prejudiced and simple perspective not only diminished the importance of the father's role in raising children but also caused researchers to focus more on mother-centered topics. The resulting predominant focus on mother–child relationships in research studies has caused fathers to be depicted as *hidden*, *ghost*, *invisible*, and *ineffective* parents (Lamb, 2010; Rohner & Veneziano, 2001; Saracho & Spodek, 2008).

Krampe and Newton (2006) noted that previous studies on father–child relationships mostly addressed the father absence in the recollections of children, adolescents, and adults. More recently, researchers have shifted their focus in fatherhood studies toward understanding the role of fathers in children's lives through their presence (e.g., Blazei, Iacono, & McGue, 2008; Kalil, Mogstad, Rege, & Votruba, 2016; Lamb, 2002). The father presence is an inner psychological construct for both males and females; its conceptualization varies from person to person. Krampe and Newton (2006) used the attachment theory, the object-relations theory, sociology, anthropology, social history, and also Judeo-Christian theology to build a theoretical framework for the father presence. This framework provides a more detailed and comprehensive explanation of father–child relations. Krampe and Newton's (2006) father presence framework considers a child's experiences with the father figure as well as the other family influences, nonfamilial factors, and cultural and religious beliefs that may contribute to the meaning of what a father is in the child's life. In Krampe's (2009) formulation, the father presence refers to emotional closeness and the accessibility of the father to the child, rather than to paternal coresidency. Within this definition, the father

presence is regarded as the psychologically perceived presence of a father in the family, which is correlated with certain attitudes attributed to and behaviors undertaken by him.

Krampe (2009) postulated that the father presence consists of four concentric domains of influence, which contribute to the psychological existence of the father in the child's mind: (a) the inner sense of father in the child, (b) the child's personal relationship with the father in the family context, (c) intergenerational family influences, and (d) cultural and religious beliefs about the father. The first domain, which is genetically inherited, allows the child to orient toward his or her father and to construct a relationship with the father. Although the inner father is a psychological quality in the child, some important paternal behaviors and attitudes—such as physical togetherness, emotional closeness, and accessibility—may influence the shaping of the father presence. In addition, the quality of the parents' marriage, the mother's messages about the father, the parents' experiences with their own male parents, and external cultural and religious values may also directly or indirectly influence father presence.

The factor of the father presence can help us understand children's social and emotional development (Krampe & Newton, 2006). Previous research suggests that cognitive and noncognitive outcomes—such as achievement, happiness, self-esteem, and social relationships—are associated with the economic, psychological, and social support that a father can provide to his children (Cabrera, Tamis-LeMonda, Bradley, Hofferth, & Lamb, 2000). However, research on the presence of the father and related effects on children's lives is still limited in many cultures. One of the main reasons for this is the lack of measurement instruments that can be used to examine the presence of the father.

In Turkey, the effects that fathers in children's lives are often assessed in a holistic way as a part of overall parental attitudes. Therefore, the effects of father presence on children's lives is generally explained without its being distinguished from the mother's role. Although fatherhood and motherhood are described under one heading in the literature as "parenting," motherhood and fatherhood in Turkey are relatively different from each other. Parenting in Turkey cannot be explained by the concept of coparenting, as is frequently seen in Western societies. Family relationships and roles in a typical Turkish family are still shaped by the influence of traditional gender and generational hierarchy, even though the impacts of these social forces are decreasing in modern life (Ataca, 2009; Boratav-Bolak, Fişek, & Ziya, 2014; Sunar, 2009). For this reason, the roles of the mother and the father in a child's life differ within a Turkish context.

To obtain a deeper understanding of adults' experiences concerning their fathers in Turkey, this empirical study builds on previous research but focuses specifically on the impact of the father's presence. We investigate and develop descriptions (profiles) of father's presence based on the recollections of Turkish adults, and also analyze its elements (e.g., beliefs about the father, perceptions of the father involvement, and the participant's physical relationship with the father) based on our findings.

Literature Review

Prejudiced views about parenting led to ignorance about fathers in psychology in Western cultures until the late 1970s (Lamb, 2000; Saracho & Spodek, 2008). However, during the early 1980s and after, concepts of family and parenting in Western societies developed significantly. During these years, women who had gained their economic independence often would not tolerate men who did not adequately share in housework and child care. In addition, feminist ideology led to the expectation that fathers should be more involved in child care (Cabrera et al., 2000; Parke, 2002; Saracho & Spodek, 2008). These changes led researchers in Western societies to conduct more parent-related research, focusing on the role of fathers in child development.

Unlike Western scholars, most researchers in Turkey have continued to carry out research predominantly on mother-child relationships, though some studies have focused on paternity more generally by including both mothers and fathers. This difference is primarily due to the dominant concept of parenting in Turkey, which holds that this role is almost equivalent to motherhood. Fathers continue to be forgotten figures. Many factors contribute to this attitude. One of the most important is related to cultural dynamics. Compared with Western cultures, Turkish culture often is seen as collectivist in character; however, there actually is a blend of collectivist and individualist features in the culture (Fişek, 2018; Sunar & Fişek, 2005). Kağıtçıbaşı (1990) argued that the modern Turkish family, which is often characterized by the emotional interdependence of its members, embodies a combination of individuality and family loyalties; thus, she defined Turkish culture as a culture of relatedness. The typical Turkish family is said to be "functionally extended." We may observe a great deal of mutual support and interactions among close relatives, who also prefer to live close to each other (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2010; Sunar & Fişek, 2005).

Gender hierarchy, patriarchy, and generational hierarchy are the basic structural characteristics of the Turkish family, though their effects appear to be decreasing recently (Boratav-Bolak et al., 2014; Fişek, 2018). These cultural traits are also clearly observed in child-rearing practices (Ataca,

Kağıtçıbaşı, & Diri, 2005; Ayçiçeği-Dinn & Sunar, 2017; Sunar, 2002, 2009). Children are raised in an atmosphere of mutual emotional attachment and loyalty among family members. To maintain the harmonious functioning of the family, obedience, dependence, loyalty, and conformity are encouraged, whereas assertiveness and curiosity are discouraged for both sons and daughters (Kağıtçıbaşı, Sunar, & Bekman, 2001). The mother is responsible for household chores, child rearing, and maintaining family relationships in traditional Turkish families; also, male superiority is accepted as the norm because women are regarded as lower in value, prestige, and power than men within the gender hierarchy (Sunar, 2002). Mothers express their affections toward their children both verbally and nonverbally—such as by kissing, hugging, and embracing. Fathers, who are primarily responsible for providing the household's income, have a limited role in child care compared with mothers. They also are affectionate toward their children. But as their children grow up, fathers become the sole authority figure of the family, which prevents them from showing their affection openly toward family members, especially their children (Ataca et al., 2005; Sunar & Fişek, 2005). Because they believe that affections and closeness will lead to impertinence and disrespect, a distant relationship is typically initiated—which also limits communication between the father and his children. Utilizing this distancing, the father's expects obedience and loyalty in their relationship. Kissing his child while he or she is sleeping and not showing his love toward his children when other people are present are typical fatherly behaviors (Onur, 2012).

Despite major changes in Turkish society over the past 50 years, traditional values and practices have not changed at the same pace in Turkish culture. Fathers tend to maintain their traditional and authoritarian characteristics in the family (Ataca, 2009; Onur, 2012; Sunar & Fişek, 2005). However, observations of child-rearing practices do indicate some noteworthy changes in the maintenance of traditional family values (Ataca, 2009; Ataca et al., 2005; Boratav-Bolak et al., 2014). For example, a new parenting style involves caring about female children more than before, using more supportive parenting techniques (e.g., rewarding), and employing reasoning instead of physical punishment (Sunar, 2002; Sunar & Fişek, 2005). In Turkey today, especially within educated and modern-styled families, both parents are perceived as more affectionate, less controlling, less discipline-oriented, and more encouraging of autonomy. Previous studies show that the traditional and authoritarian fathering style has been replaced by an educating and cooperative fathering style (Anne Çocuk Eğitim Vakfı: Mother Child Education Foundation [AÇEV], 2017; Boratav-Bolak, Fişek, & Ziya, 2017; Boratav-Bolak et al., 2014). However, warm emotional expressiveness between fathers and their children still continues to be low compared with the

relationship between mothers and their children (Ataca, 2009; Ayçiçeği-Dinn & Sunar, 2017). For example, mothers are perceived as more affectionate, whereas fathers are perceived as more authoritarian and controlling (Ataca, 2009; Sunar, 2009). Also, the child care role of mothers is still more significant than for fathers presently, while the financial support role of fathers is more significant than for mothers (Ataca, 2009).

Though traditional conceptions of the family, parenting, and fatherhood are being deeply questioned in modern-day Turkey, there remains a need for important transitions and outcomes that Western societies have achieved since the 1980s regarding family interactions and parenting. The available research on fatherhood and father–child relationships is helpful. But more research is needed to provide a comprehensive and integrated picture of current parenting methods, family relationships, and the impact of fathers on child development. However, very few instruments exist to measure father–child relationships in Turkey. The majority of current instruments either measure the levels of father involvement as perceived by young children or fatherhood as perceived by the fathers themselves. From the point of view of adults and young adults, there are no instruments which can measure the father–child relationship while considering variables such as intergenerational influences, social perceptions about fatherhood, and parental relationships.

However, in our literature review, we discovered that the Father Presence Questionnaire (FPQ) does satisfy our desired measurements criteria. While examining the presence of fathers in modern Turkey, beyond our analyses of father–child relationships, we also wish to focus on maternity, intergenerational family factors, and cultural beliefs because these factors are likely to affect how father–child relationships are shaped. Krampe and Newton (2006) argued that the father presence as a psychological construct is shaped by the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral experiences of children with their fathers, rather than as a reference to paternal characteristics and/or behaviors. The FPQ provides a more comprehensive perspective of paternal roles as it takes into consideration the influences of cultural beliefs, intergenerational factors, quality of communication by parents, and messages sent to the child by the mother about the father, all of which are important contributions to the formation of the father presence. In addition, because it is applicable to adults and young adults, the FPQ can be used to gather data which will help explain the lifelong effects of the father–child relationship.

The FPQ can play an important role in building a comprehensive analytical framework for assessing parent–child relationships in Turkey, where parenting roles are still largely based on collectivist societal structures and gender hierarchy. We expect that many paternal roles that were ignored in prior research on parenting, the family, and psychological developments of

children will be found to be highly significant. We also believe that conceiving the father presence as a psychological will enhance our definition and valuation of the father's roles and his importance well beyond that of mere coresidence with a mother and child/ren in a family. The FPQ additionally can provide data for the development of new educational policies which emphasize the importance of fathers in their children's lives in Turkey.

The Father Presence Questionnaire

Krampe and Newton (2006) developed the FPQ by designing a model that would empirically examine the father's psychological presence in the child. The theoretical framework of the FPQ is based on Palkovitz's (1997, 2002) 15 category of parental involvement typology, and follows the basic assumptions of the attachment and object relations theory. Empirical examination of the psychological father presence is conducted by measuring the other three domains mentioned above: *the relationship with the father*, *beliefs about the father*, and *intergenerational family influences* (Krampe & Newton, 2006).

Relationship With the Father. This domain includes an evaluation of the father–child relationship from the child's perspective. According to Krampe (2009), a child can connect with his or her father through three dimensions. The affective dimension is based on the child's feelings for the father. The cognitive or perceptual dimension includes the child's view of the father's involvement. The physical dimension consists of direct body-based encounters and interactions with the father. In addition, Krampe (2009) emphasized that the messages sent by the mother relating to the father and also the parental marriage play very important roles in the father–child relationship. To measure the dimensions of the father–child relationship, Krampe and Newton (2006) defined five scales in the FPQ: (a) feelings about the father, (b) mother's support for the relationship with the father, (c) father–mother relationship, (d) physical relationship with the father, and (e) perception of the father involvement.

Feelings about the father. This domain focuses on the child's response to the emotional bond in the father–child relationship. Therefore, it cannot be measured only by the frequency of encounters, coresidence, or even general paternal involvement. At the core of the child's feelings for the father is whether the child feels emotionally close to the father. A warm, affectionate, and emotionally close relationship with the father is essential for the development of a positive father presence in the child. In order to build this emotional bond, there is a need for the father and child to be together and to actively encourage their relationship with trust, positive acceptance, sincerity, caring,

valuing, and appreciation (Krampe, 2009; Lamb, 2002). In addition, verbal and nonverbal communication, especially *talking* to the father and his listening to the child, also contribute to their bond formation. Quality two-way communication is a prerequisite. Their verbal and nonverbal messages ensure the development of trust between them (Nydegger & Mitteness, 1991).

Mother's support for relationship with the father. Mothers are referred to as gatekeepers in the bond between the father and the child (Pleck & Masciadrelli, 2004; Puhlman & Pasley, 2013; Seery & Crowley, 2000). A mother sends implicit and explicit messages to their children about what she thinks about the father. If the mother loves the father, feels close to him, and respects him, the child may be close to the father and love him. However, if the mother does not love the father, feels distant from him, and criticizes him, the child may pull away from the father and even fear him (Krampe, 2009).

The father–mother relationship. A satisfying relationship between the spouses facilitates the fulfillment of parental duties (Cowan & Cowan, 2000). A contentious and distant relationship between the spouses can lead to a decrease in the parenting performance of the father, which negatively affects the father–child relationship over time. However, a satisfying marriage based on intimacy and trust helps the father perceive himself as a good and sufficient parent. Many studies have reported that positive and strong marriages both increase the level of the father involvement and allow the father to be an emotionally accessible parent (Bouchard & Lee, 2000; Cummings, Goeke-Morey, & Raymond, 2004; Walters, 2011).

Physical relationship with the father. Spending time with the father and living with him allows children to trust and become close to him. Physical closeness between father and child emerges most in the play environment. In addition, close physical contact is established between the father and child during various parenting duties, such as feeding, hugging, lying on the bed, and bathing. Thus, the child becomes aware of the fact that he or she is loved by the father (Palkovitz, 2002). Krampe (2009) gives a detailed explanation of the physical relationship in the father–child relationship, focusing on the father's voice and touch. According to Krampe (2009), the father's voice tends to be deeper than the mother's—which may be a source of security and assurance for the child. Similarly, the father's touch can also express different meanings than the mother's touch. Having a more disciplinarian role than the mother, physical contact by the father (embracing, carrying the child on his shoulders, patting on the back, or alternatively, pushing, hitting, etc.) may have different meanings for the child.

Perception of the father involvement. This domain reflects the child's perception of how the father is involved in the child's life. Perceptions of father's involvement can be depicted in two ways: expressive and instrumental. The expressive dimension is related to the emotional displays by the father. An expressive father can openly show his affections toward the child. That is, he supports, approves, listens, and encourages the child in a positive manner. The child who has an expressive father can get emotionally close to the father with no fear of criticism, retaliation, or rejection. The instrumental dimension focuses on the father's teaching and mentoring roles as a parent. An instrumental father helps the child learn how to develop his or her talents, create an achievable academic and professional career, solve his or her social and general problems, and plan for the future (Krampe, 2009). In sum, the involved father is a parent who takes responsibility in child care, uses effective child-rearing methods, creates suitable opportunities for the child's well-being, and constructs a mutual and affectionate relationship while spending quality time with the child (Lamb, 2002; Pleck, 2010).

Beliefs About the Father. Every culture creates its own reality, and therefore, paternity is shaped according to the changes and transformations within the culture. Cultural beliefs provide a basis to establish standards and definitions that give meaning to parenting. They also regulate both the legal rights and responsibilities of the father as a parent and the obligations that should be fulfilled as a parent in daily life. An example is regarding the mother as more competent and skillful in child care, and the father as the breadwinner; this attitude is a reflection of cultural beliefs. These beliefs lead the child to form his or her own beliefs and values about the importance of his or her father (Cabrera, Fitzgerald, Bradley, & Roggman, 2007; Krampe, 2009; Lamb, 2010; Saracho & Spodek, 2008; Walters, 2011).

Intergenerational Family Influences. The father-child relationship cannot be evaluated independently from family relationships (Krampe & Newton, 2006). Men and women can only learn the role of parenting by experiencing it, but influences from their parents are an important component of their learning process. Parenting can be a cyclical repetition of the good and bad characteristics of people's own parents. The relationship of a father with his father is one of the most basic patterns that determine how he will likely behave as a man, and eventually, how he will act as a father (Walters, 2011).

Method

To address the objectives of this study, we first began with the translation, content validation, and adaptation procedures to develop a Turkish version of

the FPQ. The resulting instrument was administered to a representative sample of 401 young Turkish adults. After we examined the construct validity of the FPQ at the item and scale levels, we analyzed the data gathered with the Turkish version of the FPQ to examine Turkish adults' experiences about the father presence. Research involving human subjects reported in this article has been approved by the Marmara University, Faculty of Education Ethics Committee. The following sections describe the data collection procedures, the psychometric analysis to evaluate the reliability and validity of the Turkish version of the FPQ, and the statistical analysis to examine the recalled experience of the father presence by young Turkish adults.

Sample

The sample consisted of undergraduate students who were enrolled at Marmara University and graduate students who were enrolled in the Pedagogical Formation Program at Marmara University during the 2014-2015 academic year. Marmara University, which is located in Istanbul, is one of the largest higher education institutions in the country, with a culturally diverse group of students. This particular institution was selected as the primary sampling source to ensure a representative sample from different parts of the country, including the Northern, Southern, Eastern, Western, and Central regions of Turkey. There were 401 participants (302 females, 99 males) within the age range of 18 to 37 years. Of the students taking Pedagogical Formation, 51 students graduated from Ankara University, 24 students from Inonu University, 12 students from Cumhuriyet University, 10 students graduated from Harran University, 9 students graduated from Ege University, and 8 students graduated from Ataturk University. Regarding the socioeconomic status of the participants, 309 were middle class, 22 were upper class, and 11 were lower class. Indeed, 52 participants did not specify their socioeconomic status. The data were collected by the first author in accordance with the approval and permission received from the Ataturk Education Faculty at Marmara University. The first author informed the participants about the purpose and scope of the research by making an announcement within the faculty. The FPQ was applied to 465 students who agreed to participate in the study. The forms of 64 participants were not included in the final sample due to missing data.

In addition to this sample, a second sample of students ($n = 52$) enrolled in the English as a Second Language teacher training program at Marmara University was selected to study the linguistic equivalence during the translation process of the FPQ. Finally, a group of 69 students enrolled in the

Department of Psychological Counseling and Guidance at Marmara University was recruited to run a test–retest analysis of the FPQ.

Instrument

The FPQ was developed by Krampe and Newton (2006) to examine a child's experience with his or her father. The FPQ consists of 134 items based on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from *never* (1) to *always* (5). The items are grouped into 10 subscales, each of which measures a different aspect of young adults' perceptions of father presence. In addition to the individual subscales, the FPQ measures three more general domains (i.e., higher order factors) of father presence: relationship with the father, beliefs about the father, and intergenerational family influences.

The first domain, *relationship with the father*, contains the following subscales: feelings about the father (13 items), mother's support for relationship with the father (14 items), father involvement perception (14 items), physical relationship with the father (9 items), and the father–mother relationship (13 items). Altogether, these subscales measure the child's emotional, behavioral, and cognitive experiences in the family. Additionally, this domain examines how the child perceives his or her parents' marriage and messages sent from the mother to the child related to the significance of the father. The second domain, *beliefs about the father*, contains the following subscales: conceptions of God as father (seven items) and conceptions of father's influence (eight items). This domain evaluates the cognitive aspect of the father presence, focuses on social and religious views related to fatherhood, and illuminates how these views infiltrate one's personal views. The third domain, *intergenerational family influences*, contains the following subscales: the mother's relationship with her father (12 items) and the father's relationship with his father (13 items). This domain focuses on the mother's and the father's own experiences of their relationships with their fathers.

Translation of the FPQ Into Turkish. To translate the FPQ from English into Turkish, the researchers first contacted the corresponding author of the FPQ via e-mail and obtained permission for the translation and adaptation of the questionnaire. Then, the researchers examined the items in the FPQ and determined their adaptability to Turkish culture. Based on an initial review of the items, the subscale of "conceptions of God as father" was excluded with the permission of the authors of the FPQ, since nearly 90% of the population in Turkey are Muslim, and the concept of God is not explained in terms of fatherhood in the Muslim belief system. All of the remaining items in the FPQ were included in this study and were translated from English into Turkish.

During the translation process, the translation–back translation method was utilized (Brislin, Lonner, & Thorndike, 1973). First, the items in the FPQ were translated into Turkish by five content experts independently, and the translated items that were able to describe the original items most clearly were identified by the researchers. Second, the translated items were sent to two language experts for the back translation from Turkish into English. The language experts in cooperation with the researchers in this study reevaluated the translated items in terms of their similarity to the original FPQ items. Finally, the Turkish version of the FPQ was given to a sample of 25 undergraduate students. Using a think-aloud strategy, the students were asked to comment on the items in the Turkish version of the FPQ. From the think-aloud procedure, only one item was identified as unclear. After this item was modified by the researchers with the help of the language experts, the Turkish version of the FPQ was finalized for data collection.

Linguistic Equivalence. To examine the linguistic equivalency of the original FPQ and the Turkish version of the FPQ, the English and Turkish versions were given to senior undergraduate students ($n = 52$) in the Department of English Language Teaching at Marmara University with an 8-day interval. The correlations between the students' responses to the English and Turkish versions of the FPQ were as follows: $r = .96$ for feelings about the father; $r = .93$ for mother's support for relationship with the father; $r = .92$ for father involvement perception; $r = .87$ for physical relationship with the father; $r = .97$ for the father–mother relationship; $r = .79$ for the conceptions of father's influence; $r = .93$ for the mother's relationship with her father; and $r = .94$ for the father's relationship with his father.

The differences between the average subscale scores obtained from the English and Turkish versions of the FPQ were not statistically significant. The comparison results are as follows: for the feelings about the father, $F(1, 51) = 1.54, p = .13$; for the mother's support for the relationship with the father, $F(1, 51) = 1.91, p = .60$; for perceptions of the father's involvement, $F(1, 51) = 1.80, p = .08$; for physical relationship with the father, $F(1, 51) = .19, p = .85$; for the father–mother relationship, $F(1, 51) = 1.95, p = .06$; for conceptions of the father's influence, $F(1, 51) = 1.12, p = .27$; for the mother's relationship with her father, $F(1, 51) = 1.076, p = .29$; and for the father's relationship with his father, $F(1, 51) = 0.28, p = .78$. In addition, high correlations between the students' responses to the English and Turkish versions of the FPQ items and nonsignificant differences in the subscale scores from the two versions provided adequate evidence for the equivalence of the English and Turkish versions of the FPQ.

Data Analysis

Reliability of the FPQ. The reliability of the eight FPQ subscales was assessed using a coefficient alpha (α). According to Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), the coefficient alpha should be at least $\alpha = .70$ or higher for measurement instruments such as the FPQ. The test–retest reliability of the FPQ was examined by readministering the FPQ to 69 students from the sample of this study 11 days after the first administration. Correlations between the subscale scores from the first and second administrations were examined as an indicator of the test–retest reliability.

Construct Validation. To examine the construct validity of the FPQ, both item-level and scale-level analyses were conducted. For the item-level analysis, the item-total correlations of the items in each FPQ subscale were checked to determine whether any item was inconsistent with the remaining items in the subscales. Item-total correlation, which is also known as point biserial correlation (r_{pb}), is a measure of the association between a particular item and the rest of the items in a given scale. A small item-correlation provides empirical evidence that the item may not be measuring the same construct measured by other items in the same scale. An item-total correlation less than .2 typically suggests that the item does not correlate very well with the scale, and thus, it may be discarded (Everitt & Skrondal, 2010).

For the scale-level analysis, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to examine the factorial structure of the FPQ. Krampe and Newton (2006) proposed a higher order CFA with 10 first-order factors and three second-order factors. In their model, each of the 10 subscales was considered to be a first-order factor, and the three general domains were defined as second-order factors. The associations between the first-order factors (i.e., subscales) and the second-order factors (i.e., general domains) were described in the previous sections (also see Krampe & Newton, 2006, for a detailed description of the FPQ factor structure).

In this study, three modifications were made to Krampe and Newton's (2006) higher order CFA model. First, as aforementioned, the subscale of "conceptions of God as father" was not used in this study because of its incompatibility with Turkish culture. Therefore, the general domain "beliefs about the father" was only defined by the subscale of "conceptions of father's influence," which served as both first-order and second-order factors in the model. Second, although Krampe and Newton (2006) conceptually defined the general domain "intergenerational family influences," this domain was not included in their data analysis because most respondents in their study were unable to respond to the items from this particular domain, and this

resulted in an insufficient amount of data for the CFA model. In this study, the Turkish young adults completed all the items associated with the general domain “intergenerational family influences,” and so, this domain and its subscales were included in the CFA model. Finally, Krampe and Newton (2006) assumed that positively and negatively worded items in the subscale “the mother’s relationship with her father” should be considered separate subscales; however, they did not examine the validity of this assumption since the subscales associated with the domain “intergenerational family influences” were not included in the final data analysis as a result of insufficient data. In this study, responses for the negatively worded items were reverse-coded and combined with the positively worded items within a single subscale (i.e., the mother’s relationship with her father).

Figure 1 demonstrates the higher order CFA model used to define the factorial structure of the FPQ in this study. The higher order CFA model was estimated with the *Mplus* software program (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2015). A robust weighted least squares estimator (i.e., the weighted least squares means and variances adjusted estimator in *Mplus*) was used because this estimator does not assume normally distributed variables and provides more precise results than other estimators (e.g., maximum likelihood) when modeling either categorical or ordinal data (Brown, 2006). The second-order factors were correlated with each other within an oblique solution, as suggested by Krampe and Newton (2006). The fit of the higher order CFA model was evaluated based on factor loadings of the items and various model-fit indices, such as the comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker–Lewis index (TLI), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). CFI and TLI values greater than 0.90 are typically considered acceptable, and values greater than 0.95 are considered a good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). RMSEA values smaller than 0.05 are usually considered a close fit, while values equal to or greater than 0.10 are considered a poor fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1993).

Profiles of Father Presence. After reliability and construct validation procedures were completed, we turned our attention to developing general profiles that portray the young Turkish adults’ perceptions of father presence. The profiles of father presence are based on the subscale and general domain scores from the FPQ. To compute the subscale and general domain scores, item scores from the FPQ were summed within each subscale and each general domain, respectively. Because the subscales and the general domains in the FPQ consisted of different numbers of items, the range of computed scores differed across the subscales and general domains. For example, the subscale “feelings about the father” consists of 13 items.

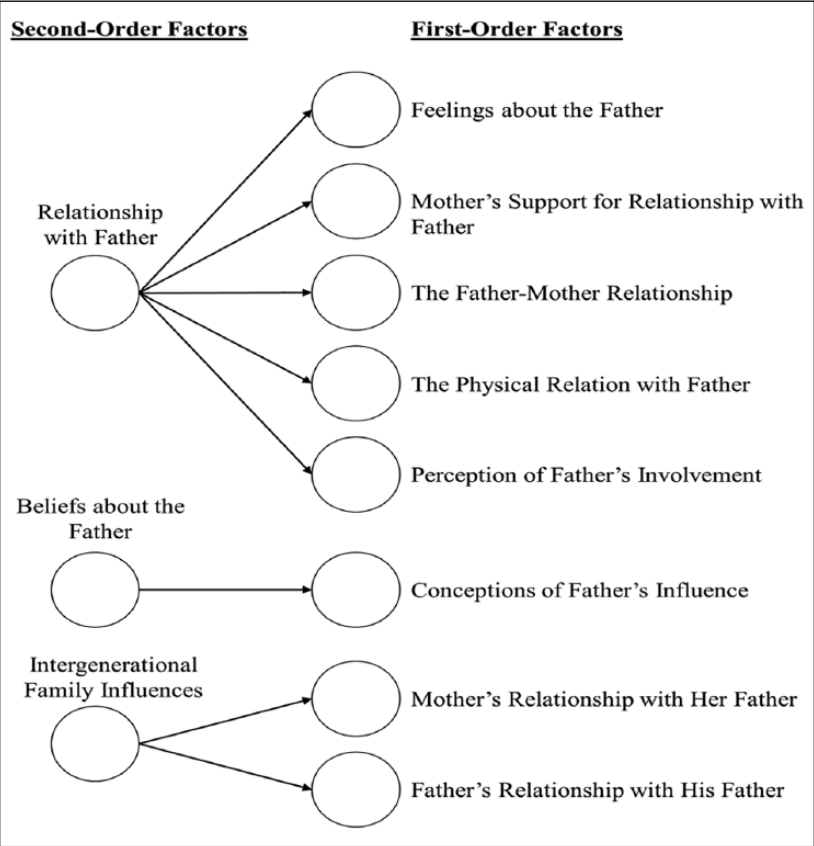


Figure 1. Higher order confirmatory factor analysis model for the FPQ.
Note. FPQ = Father Presence Questionnaire. The second-order factor “Beliefs about the Father” was identical to the subscale “Conceptions Father’s Influence.”

The range of possible scores for this particular subscale is from 13 points (i.e., if all responses are “1,” *never*) to 65 points (i.e., if all responses are “5,” *always*). Unlike the subscale of “feelings about the father,” possible scores for “physical relationship with the father,” which consists of nine items, range from 9 to 45 points. Therefore, it was necessary to create a common metric across the subscales and the general domains to facilitate comparison of the computed scores. The subscale and general domain scores were placed into a common scale with a minimum score of 0 and a maximum score of 100

through a linear transformation, and then the distributions of the transformed subscale and general domain scores were compared.

Results

Reliability and Construct Validity of FPQ

Table 1 presents the reliability coefficients and descriptive statistics for the eight FPQ subscales. As seen in Table 1, all of the FPQ subscales indicated an internal consistency of 0.90 or higher, except for the subscale of “Conceptions of the Father’s Influence” ($\alpha = .82$). In addition, Table 1 shows that the test–retest reliability of all the subscales was high (i.e., $\alpha = .91$ or higher). Therefore, it was concluded that the adapted FPQ subscales indicated high levels of reliability (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

The next phase was the investigation of construct validity for the FPQ. In the item-level analysis, item-total correlations of the items in the FPQ were examined. Table 1 shows the minimum, maximum, and average item-total correlations from the FPQ subscales. The results indicate that all of the items in the FPQ had high item-total correlations (ranging from .28 to .88), suggesting that all of the FPQ items had sufficient discrimination to distinguish between the participants with different levels in the domains measured by the eight subscales of the FPQ. Therefore, all of the FPQ items were included in the scale-level analysis of the FPQ.

For the scale-level analysis, the higher order CFA model demonstrated in Figure 1 was fit to the data. The model-fit indices for the higher order CFA were as follows: CFI = 0.953; TLI = 0.952; and RMSEA = 0.047. Based on the criteria explained earlier for interpreting the model-fit indices, the higher order CFA model indicated a good model fit. However, the review of factor loadings from the model indicated that Item 96 in the FPQ, “My father’s relationship with his father had a big effect on my life,” did not seem to have a significant association with its subscale “Father’s relationship with his father.” Therefore, this item was removed from the following analysis. The fact that this item does not fit in Turkish culture shows that the most important thing in the father–child relationship is the direct relationship that the children establish with their own father. The relationship that a father builds with his father plays an important role in how a man becomes a father. However, the performance of a father’s parenting is measured through the specific relationship that the child establishes with his or her father.

To examine the measurement invariance of the FPQ subscales across male and female participants in the sample, the higher order CFA model was estimated for the male and female participants separately. Although the higher

Table 1. A Summary of Item-Level and Scale-Level Analyses for the FPQ.

Subscale	α ($N = 401$)	r_{II} ($n = 69$)	Avg. r_{pb} ($N = 401$)	Min r_{pb} ($N = 401$)	Max r_{pb} ($N = 401$)
<i>Relationship with the father</i>					
Feelings about father	.95	.96	.76	.69	.86
Mother's support for relationship with father	.94	.94	.72	.28	.86
Perception of father's involvement	.93	.93	.68	.37	.80
Physical relationship with the father	.92	.99	.73	.53	.85
Father–mother relationship	.96	.97	.81	.69	.88
<i>Beliefs about the father</i>					
Conceptions of father's influence	.82	.99	.56	.24	.69
<i>Intergenerational family influences</i>					
Mother's relationship with her father	.94	.91	.72	.45	.84
Father's relationship with his father	.94	.93	.74	.51	.88

Note. FPQ = Father Presence Questionnaire; α = Cronbach's coefficient alpha; r_{II} = test–retest correlation; r_{pb} = point biserial correlation (i.e., item–total correlation). General domains are italicized.

order model indicated a good fit for both gender groups, one item (Item 64—“Girls need their fathers”) did not seem to fit the model for the female Turkish adults. One of the reasons why this item does not fit in Turkish culture might be related to the Turkish family structure. As previously emphasized, gender and generational hierarchies in Turkish families continue to

Table 2. Summary of the Model Fit for the FPQ.

Model	N	χ^2	df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
Only male	99	4815.867	4267	0.972	0.972	0.032
Only female	302	7036.904	4267	0.954	0.953	0.046
Full sample	401	7801.067	4267	0.954	0.953	0.045

Note. FPQ = Father Presence Questionnaire; df = degrees of freedom; CFI = comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker–Lewis index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation.

exist despite their decreasing impacts on daily life. Compared with fathers, mothers remain the primary caregivers for their children, and they take on more interpersonal parenting responsibilities in the family. Therefore, there is a weaker relationship between father and child as a result of the gender and generational hierarchies (Ataca et al., 2005; Sunar, 2002; Sunar & Fişek, 2005). Another reason might be that fathers prefer to show their affection toward their children less explicitly, whereas mothers are the primary identity figure in the family, especially for girls. Because of the misfit problem, Item 64 was also removed from the model. The revised model without items 64 and 96 was fitted to the complete sample, as well as to the male and female samples separately. The model-fit results from the revised model are presented in Table 2. According to the model-fit indices of CFI, TLI, and RMSEA, the revised model indicates a good model fit.

Profiles of Father Presence

Another purpose of our study was to develop a profile for the father presence. Correlational analysis revealed that both the subscales “feelings about the father” and “the perception of father involvement” had a strong linear relationship with the subscales “the father–mother relationship” and “the mother’s support for the relationship with the father,” and they had a small to moderate relationship with “the father’s relationship with his father.” It was also found that the subscales “the conception of father’s influence” and “the mother’s relationship with her father” had small relationships with the other subscales. These results empirically revealed the potential role of mothers and relationships between the spouses in father–child relationships in Turkey, where parenting roles based on traditional gender roles are practiced even today. Nevertheless, it was also found that “the beliefs about the father” domain, which measures the cognitive orientation of father presence and intergenerational family influences, was correlated with the other subscales at small to moderate levels.

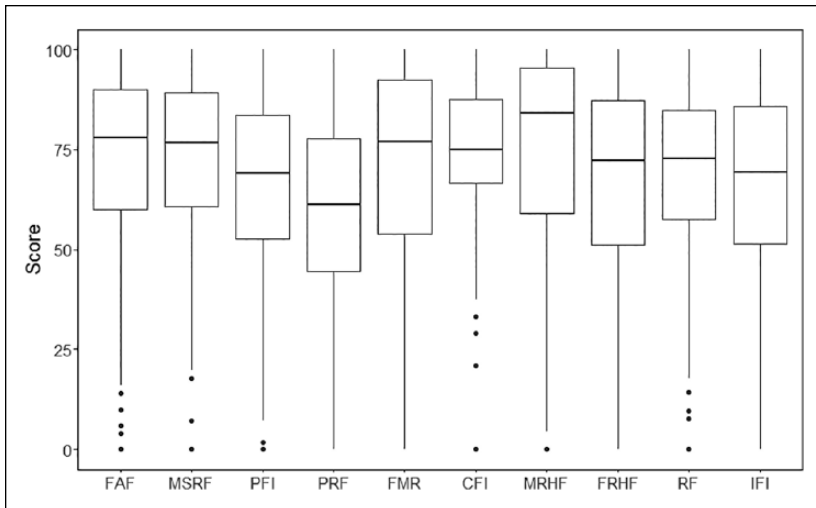


Figure 2. Distributions of the FPQ subscale and general domain scores.

Note. FPQ = Father Presence Questionnaire; FAF = feelings about father; MSRF = mother's support for relationship with the father; PFI = perception of father's involvement; PRF = physical relationship with the father; FMR = father-mother relationship; CFI = conceptions of father's influence; MRHF = mother's relationship with her father; FRHF = father's relationship with his father; RF = relationship with the father; IFI = intergenerational family influences.

Other important results of the profile of the father presence are presented in Figures 2 and 3. Figure 2 displays the distributions from the whole samples, and Figure 3 shows the profiles of male and female Turkish young adults based on the FPQ subscales and domain scores. The results show that mean and standard deviation values were close to each other both in general and by gender. The lowest average value belonged to “the physical relationship with father” subscale. However, a difference was found between the arithmetic mean values and distributions for the women and the men based on this subscale, as the men were found to have reported less physical contact with their fathers, as compared with the women.

Discussion

Our study indicates that the FPQ, which is capable of measuring the father presence within a multidimensional structure, is a valid and reliable measurement tool for the Turkish sample. The results indicate that the original factor structure of the FPQ proposed by Krampe and Newton (2006) was confirmed

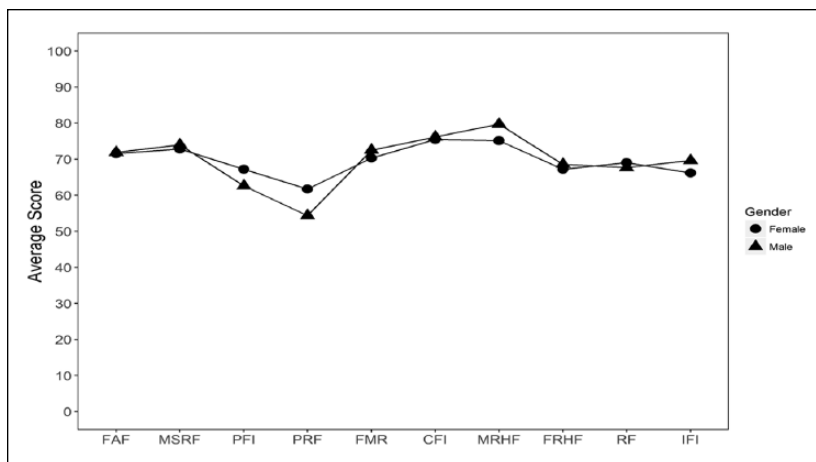


Figure 3. Profiles of the male and female Turkish young adults based on the FPQ subscale and general domain scores.

Note. FPQ = Father Presence Questionnaire; FAF = the child's feelings about the father; MSRF = the mother's support for the child's relationship with the father; PFI = the child's perception of the father's involvement; PRF = the child's physical relationship with the father; FMR = the father–mother relationship; CFI = the child's perceptions of the father's influence; MRHF = the mother's relationship with her father; FRHF = the father's relationship with his father; RF = relationship with the father; IFI = intergenerational family influences.

with the data obtained from Turkish adults. Due to a lack of sufficient data, Krampe and Newton (2006) could not include the intergenerational family influences domain in their study. In this study, we were able to include this domain in the data analysis and showed that the intergenerational family influences domain is also measured adequately by the FPQ.

In addition, our study reveals four important implications about the profiles of father presence in Turkey. The first implication is the importance of parental marriage in father–child relationships in Turkey. The FPQ results indicate that there is a strong relationship between the father–mother relationship and the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral aspects of father presence. As the positive perception of the parents' relationship increases, the feelings of the child toward his or her father, his or her perception of the father involvement, and the child's physical contact with the father also increase positively. This finding parallels those from earlier studies on fatherhood. Recent studies reveal that a romantic, warm, and satisfying marriage contributes positively to the father–child relationship. Walters (2011) found that involved fathers who play an active role in child care are more likely to

have a satisfying marriage—which positively contributes to paternity performance. Cummings and O'Reilly (1997) and Krampe and Newton (2006) emphasized that emotionally distant spousal relations lead to distancing in the father–child relationship as well. Sturge-Apple, Davies, and Cummings (2006) stated that marital conflict might affect the parent–child relationship. In AÇEV's (2017) national report in Turkey, it was stated that fathers who received adequate support from their wives tend to get more involved in their offspring's lives; and they spend more time with their children, play more games, and show more affectionate behaviors—such as kissing and hugging.

Children who have been raised in a functionally extended family environment develop an autonomous-related self (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1990). For this reason, in Turkey, the interdependence and priority of family needs are still more important than individual family members' personal goals. Harmony within the family is determined by the degree of emotional closeness that the family members feel toward each other (Ataca et al., 2005; Boratav-Bolak et al., 2014; Fişek, 2018; Sunar & Fişek, 2005). Therefore, the emotional closeness between the spouses may be reflected in the parents' interactions with their children.

The second implication of this study is the strong correlation between the mother's support for the father–child relationship and the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral aspects of father presence. The results show that as the support level of mother for the father–child relationship increased, the feelings of the child toward the father, his or her perception of father involvement, and the child's physical contact with the father also increased. Recent findings in family-focused research studies support this conclusion. Previous research shows that mothers play a facilitator or inhibitory role in the father–child relationship (Allen & Hawkins, 1999; Puhlman & Pasley, 2013). In particular, the mother's conscious and unconscious beliefs about fatherhood, and her expectations and values are the most powerful predictors of the parenting quality of the father (Makusha & Richter, 2016; Schoppe-Sullivan, Altenburger, Lee, Bower, & Dush, 2015). Puhlman and Pasley (2013) stated that social structure, gender hierarchy, traditional and nonegalitarian parenting roles, and parental expectations of both the mother and the father form the basis of this role.

Recent family studies in Turkey show that although the impact of the generational and gender hierarchies in modern and urban families have recently decreased, the responsibilities and roles of men and women are not fully equalized yet (AÇEV, 2017; Ataca, 2009; Boratav-Bolak et al., 2014, 2017). Fişek (1991, 1995) found that Turkish parents differ from each other in terms of their closeness to the child (Ataca, 2009; Sunar, 2009). Fişek (2018) also

emphasizes that in a family environment where there is a hierarchical separation between the spouses, the mother–child bond will be more important than the husband–wife bond, and a close emotional relationship will develop between the mother and the child. Recent studies found that Turkish youths feel more emotionally related to their mothers than to their fathers (Ataca, 2009; Boratav et al., 2017; Sunar, 2002, 2009). Ataca (2009) found that mothers were perceived as closest family members, followed by siblings, girl/boyfriend, and fathers, who were equally close; uncles/aunts, cousins, and grandfathers were the least close. Similarly, Sunar (2002) found that fathers were perceived as more authoritarian than mothers, while mothers were perceived as more closely controlling than fathers. This characteristic of Turkish families can be considered an outcome of the mothers' important role in the father–child relationship.

The third implication of this study is that physical relationship with the father has the lowest average score, and boys reported having less physical contact with their fathers compared with girls. This is a significant finding concerning the role of intrafamilial dynamics on the father–child relationship in Turkey. As mentioned earlier, the generational hierarchy and gender hierarchy recently have lost some influence, but they are still the norm in many families in Turkey (Boratav-Bolak et al., 2014, 2017; Kağıtçıbaşı, 2007; Sunar & Fişek, 2005). In AÇEV's (2017) study, the fathers did not want to take responsibility as much as the mothers in child care, and they were less involved in their children's physical care (e.g., changing diapers and preparing meals). In addition, controlling and punitive behaviors of the fathers increased, whereas involved parenting characteristics decreased as their perceptions of traditional masculinity increased (AÇEV, 2017). In her three-generation study, Sunar (2009) found that today's parents are perceived as more affectionate, less controlling, and less discipline-oriented than parents of the previous generation, and that parents differ behaviorally from each other (i.e., mothers are more affectionate, and fathers are more controlling and discipline-oriented). Sunar (2002, 2009) also argued that daughters perceive more affection and less discipline from their fathers compared with sons. Ayçiçeği-Dinn and Sunar (2017) concluded that fathers apply more psychological control to their sons than their daughters; namely, they intervene more in their sons' inner worlds and are more threatening. In addition, earlier research indicates that father–son relationships are less affectionate than mother–son or mother–daughter relationships (Floyd, 2000; Floyd & Morman, 2000; Morman & Floyd, 1999). All these results suggest that fathers who show love and affection toward their children in infancy eventually become more authoritarian, protective, and controlling when the children enter adolescence (Ataca, 2009; Sunar, 2002).

In our study, the last point we reached regarding the profiles of the father presence was that the intergenerational family influences and the conceptions of father influence were less correlated with the relationship with the father domain than expected. Many studies have reported that the parents' (especially fathers') relationship experiences with their own fathers affect their own parenting behaviors (Pleck, 2010; Pleck & Masciadrelli, 2004). However, this study reveals that the main priority in evaluating the performance of the father in the Turkish sample is that the child has an individual relationship with his or her father. Furthermore, mothers and spousal relations are also important. Our results show that the role of intergenerational family influences and conceptions of father influence in assessing parental performance may only implicitly affect the father–child relationship.

Limitations

This study has three primary limitations. First, the study was conducted using a sample of university students and graduate students. All of the individuals in this sample group have obtained a pedagogical education. In Turkey, many lessons on parental and child relationships are taught in pedagogical education. This training increases their level of awareness about parenthood and shapes their expectations concerning parenting. Many young people and adults have not benefitted from this education in Turkey. Second, this study includes young adults aged 18 to 37 years. The data thus represents only middle-aged and older fathers. Third, findings related to the fatherhood profiles are arranged according to correlation and distribution values. No profiles could be developed regarding the predictive roles of mothers, the parental relationships, the intergenerational influences, or cultural beliefs about father presence.

Conclusion

This study reveals that the FPQ is a highly valid and reliable measurement tool for Turkish culture. The FPQ measures father presence in terms of parenting performance, and it considers variables such as mothers, parental relations, and intergenerational effects that contribute to the development of parenting performance. This tool facilitates the development of a more comprehensive and accurate description of father presence. In Turkey, the FPQ can be used to fill an important gap in research on fatherhood, father–child relationships, and family dynamics. The use of the FPQ in research on families and parenting will help us more accurately understand the roles of fathers

in Turkey. In this way, it will be possible to produce improved policies and education programs about individual and family mental health.

In this study, we found that the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral aspects of father presence are strongly related to both parental marriage and perceived maternal support for the child's relationship with the father. Although the role of family relations and the role of mothers on the father-child relationship are frequently emphasized, scholarly efforts to empirically examine these roles are relatively recent and are as yet limited. As novel findings, our study revealed that the physical relationship with the father is not a strong indicator of father presence, and boys report having less physical contact with their fathers compared with girls. In addition, we found that beliefs about the father domain and intergenerational family influences are positively correlated with the relationship with the father domain at small to moderate levels. These results appear to be related to cultural characteristics, gender hierarchy, and generational hierarchy in Turkish culture. However, it is clear that traditional parenting practices based on gender and generational hierarchies are beneficial neither for the child nor for the family. Family policy—including social programs, legislation, and public directives—needs to be rearranged in a way that will enable parental practices and intra-familial roles to be more equal in Turkish society, as is commonly observed in Western cultures. In order to realize these changes, future studies should focus on explaining the importance of the father-child relationship by taking these cultural dynamics into consideration, and by including both parents and their children as participants. Furthermore, future studies focusing on the predictive effects of mothers' roles, spousal relationships, and intergenerational influences on father presence can provide a more comprehensive picture of parenting and the father presence in Turkey as well as in similar cultures.


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