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THE EFFECT OF ADULTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR PARENTS' EMOTIONAL AVAILABILITY AND PAST INTERPARENTAL CONFLICTS ON THEIR CURRENT EMOTION REGULATION DIFFICULTIES

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The Effect of Adults' Perceptions of Their Parents' Emotional Availability and Past Interparental Conflicts on Their Current Emotion Regulation Difficulties

Yetişkinlerin Ebeveynlerine Dair Duygusal Erişilebilirlik Algıları ve Ebeveynlerinin Arasında Geçmişte Yaşanmış Çatışmalara Dair Algılarının Duygu Düzenleme Güçlüklerine Olan Etkisi

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Abstract

The main aim of this study is to explore whether adults' emotion regulation difficulties are predicted by their perceptions of interparental conflicts while growing up and their perceptions of emotional availability of their parents. In addition, the effects of the interactions between different dimensions of these constructs on emotion regulation difficulties were also aimed to be investigated.

Through convenient sampling, 824 people over the age of 18 were reached, and 553 of them completed the battery of the study instruments. Participants filled in the Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale, Lum's Emotional Availability of Parents Scale, and Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict Scale in random order. Finally, the Demographic Information Form was completed by the participants.

In this study, it was hypothesized that the emotional availability of each parent would separately predict difficulties in emotion regulation. In addition, it was hypothesized that all dimensions of the interparental conflict scale, the conflict properties, perceived threat, and self-blame would separately predict difficulties in emotion regulation.

The results of the stepwise regression analysis showed that perceived threat about interparental conflict was the strongest predictor of difficulties in emotion regulation. As threat that individuals perceived about past interparental conflict increases, emotion regulation difficulties increase. After perceived threat, age became the second powerful predictor. As the age of the participants increases, their reported difficulties in emotion regulation decrease. Psychological support background appeared as the third important predictor. Individuals who reported receiving any psychological support once in their lives reported more difficulties in emotion regulation. Another significant predictor was perceived emotional availability of fathers. As perceived emotional availability of the fathers increases, reported emotional regulation difficulties decrease. The last predictor was self-blame about interparental conflicts. As the participants' appraisals of self-blame about their parents' marital

discords increase, their reported difficulties in emotion regulation increase. It was also found that the interactions between the dimensions of emotional availability of parents and interparental conflict had no predictive power on emotion regulation difficulties.

The results of the present study were discussed with respect to theoretical models and past research. Considering the study findings, clinical implications and recommendations for future studies were made.

Keywords: Emotion regulation difficulties, emotional availability of father, emotional availability of mother, interparental conflict, perceived threat, self-blame

Özet

Bu tez, yetişkinlerin yaşadıkları duygu düzenleme güçlüklerinin, onlar büyürken ebeveynleri arasındaki çatışmalara ve ebeveynlerinin duygusal erişilebilirliklerine dair algıları tarafından yordanıp yordanmadığını araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Ayrıca bu iki bağımsız değişkenin alt ölçeklerinin birbirleriyle etkileşimlerinin duygu düzenleme güçlüklerine etkisinin olup olmadığı da keşfedilmek istenmiştir.

Uygun örnekleme yoluyla, internet üzerinden yayılan anket paketi 18 yaş ve üzeri 882 kişiye erişmiş ancak 553 kişi tarafından tamamen doldurmuştur. Katılımcılar rastgele karşılarına çıkan Duygu Düzenlemede Zorluklar Ölçeği, Ebeveyn Duygusal Erişilebilirlik Ölçeği ve Çocukların Evlilik Çatışmasını Algılaması Ölçeği'ni doldurmuştur. En son sırada tüm katılımcılar Demografik Bilgi Formu'nu tamamlamıştır.

Bu çalışma kapsamında anne ve babalara dair duygusal erişilebilirlik algılarının ayrı ayrı duygu düzenleme güçlüğünü yordayacağı tahmin edilmiştir. Ayrıca, Evlilik Çatışmasını Algılama Ölçeği'nin alt ölçekleri olan çatışma özellikleri, algılanan tehdit ve kendini suçlama kısımlarının ayrı ayrı duygu düzenleme güçlüğünü yordayacağı tahmin edilmiştir.

Çalışmada evlilik çatışmasına dair algılanan tehdit en güçlü yordayıcı olarak bulunmuştur. Kişilerin anne-babalarının geçmiş evlilik çatışmalarına dair tehdit algıları arttıkça şimdiki duygu düzenleme zorlukları artmaktadır. Tehdit algısının ardından, yaş ikinci güçlü yordayıcı olarak belirmiştir. Bireylerin yaşı arttıkça yaşadıkları duygu düzenleme zorlukları azalmaktadır. Diğer önemli bir yordayıcı ise kişilerin daha önce psikolojik desteğe başvurmuş olup olmamalarıdır. Kişilerin yaşamlarında bir kez de olsa psikolojik destek için başvurmaları daha fazla duygu düzenleme zorluğu yaşadıklarını göstermiştir. Başka bir önemli yordayıcı da babaların duygusal olarak erişilebilirlik algısı olmuştur. Babalara dair duygusal erişilebilirlik algısı arttıkça yaşanan duygu düzenleme güçlüğü azalmaktadır. Son önemli yordayıcı ise anne-

babanın çatışmalarına dair suçlu hissetme değişkenidir. Kişilerin anne-babalarının geçmiş evlilik çatışmalarına dair kendilerini suçlu hissetmeleri arttıkça, yaşadıkları duygu düzenleme güçlükleri artmaktadır. Ebeveynlerin duygusal erişilebilirliği ve ebeveynler arası çatışmanın farklı boyutlarının arasındaki etkileşimlerin duygu düzenleme güçlüğünü yordamada bir etkisinin olmadığı gözlemlenmiştir.

Çalışmanın bulguları uygun teorik modeller ve geçmiş çalışmalar bağlamında tartışılmıştır. Elde edilen bulgular ışığında klinik çıkarımlarda ve gelecek çalışmalar için önerilerde bulunulmuştur.

Anahtar kelimeler: Duygu düzenleme güçlükleri, babanın duygusal erişilebilirliği, annenin duygusal erişilebilirliği, ebeveynler arası çatışma, tehdit algısı, kendini suçlama

INTRODUCTION

Emotion regulation is a fundamental aspect of everyday life since people, surrounded by emotion-eliciting stimuli, need to regulate their emotions almost all the time according to both situational demands and their personal goals. At first glance, it might seem not to be a very daunting task; however, emotion regulation is sometimes achieved with considerable difficulty depending on various factors. More importantly, whether people are capable of regulating their emotions appropriately and flexibly in a given context, or not, yields important social, cognitive, and affective consequences for them (Gross, 2001; 2014). That is, being regarded as a major developmental achievement, emotion regulation competency is argued to play a vital role in understanding long-term life outcomes including people's socialization processes, their psychological well-being, and various internalizing and externalizing problems they experience (Bridges & Grolnik, 1995; Cole et al., 2004; Thompson, 1994; Thompson et al; 2008).

Given that emotion regulation might index some important life-long phenomena in individuals, it merits further investigation with a special reference to the questions of what it is composed of, how and when it is developed, and, of particular importance, what factors contribute to its development. Not surprisingly, a vast amount of theoretical and empirical research has attempted to answer these questions over the last decades. Emotion regulation is defined as "the processes by which individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express these emotions" (Gross, 1998, p. 275). As highlighted even in this simple definition, emotion regulation is commonly addressed as a multi-componential construct including a set of relational abilities/strategies ranging from simple awareness of emotions to regulating them flexibly and context properly (Aldao, 2013; Gratz & Roemer, 2004; Gross & Thompson, 2007). With regard to the development of emotion regulation, it is a well-accepted notion that emotion regulation starts to develop during the very early stages of life, as early as three months of age, and keeps

developing throughout a whole lifespan (Greenberg & Paivio, 2003; Gross & Munoz, 1995; Kopp, 1989; Thompson, 1990).

Thus, as in many other developmental phenomena, the early familial context is also important for exploring the factors contributing to the development of emotion regulation. Family members are those who we first encounter with the birth, and their effects on our development is much beyond the effect of others we will later encounter. This might be the reason that the impact of family environment on children's emotional regulation is among widely studied issues in the literature. It is suggested that the emotional climate of the family and early familial processes provide the basis for children to develop social and emotional capacities (Perry, 2002). Important to note, both the quality of the child-parent relationship (Kogan & Carter, 1996; Morris et al., 2007; Sroufe, 2005) and the quality of the relationship between parents (Harold et al., 2004; Harrold & Sellers, 2018) are argued to have an important influence on the development of children across various domains including emotional functioning. Herein, as being two key elements of the early family atmosphere, parents' emotional availability (Biringen et al., 2014; Emde, 2000; Little & Carter, 2005) and interparental conflict (Grych & Fincham, 1990, Davies & Cummings, 1998; Harold & Sellers, 2018) are worth being discussed in relation to emotion regulation competency.

To begin with, emotional availability is simply defined as "the capacity of a dyad to share an emotionally healthy relationship" (Biringen, et al., 2014, p. 114); here the "dyad" involves the child and the parent, who is mostly the mother. Emotional availability is referred to have a multidimensional nature including both parent- and child-related aspects, thus it is argued to attach importance to not only the parents' but also the child's contributions to the relationship (Bringen et al., 2014). In addition to emphasis on the child's contribution, several researchers also attempt to highlight the importance of both parents' contributions to the relationship, instead of only the mother's. It has been reported that not only the mother's but also the father's presence/absence and parental quality serve as a determining factor for various

psychological and emotional outcomes (e.g, Biringen, 2000; Bretherton, 2000; Easterbrooks & Biringen, 2000; Little & Carter, 2005; Lum & Phares, 2005; Spinrad & Stifter, 2002). As for the link between emotional availability and emotion regulation, it is argued that early healthy parent-child interactions enable a child to gain primary knowledge of emotions and develop adaptive regulatory strategies (Morris, et al., 2007; Parke, et al., 1992; Sroufe, 2005). Despite the accumulated evidence showing that early parent-child relationships and the quality of these interactions exert considerable influence on the development of the child's regulatory capacities (Kogan & Carter, 1996; Leerkes, et al., 2009; Spinrad & Stifter, 2002; Sroufe, 1996), past research has mostly remained limited to the studies of infants or young children (e.g., Din et al., 2009; Kim et al., 2014; Martins et al., 2012; Racine, et al., 2012). Only a few studies have examined these respective relations with adolescents (e.g., Clay et al., 2017; Karaer & Akdemir, 2019) but almost no study has involved older age groups as far as it is known.

Referred to as another key aspect of family environment, interparental conflict is also argued to affect children's emotion regulation development. It is defined as "any major or minor interparental interaction that involved a difference of opinion, whether it was mostly negative or even mostly positive" (Cummings et al., 2004, p. 194). To explain the link between interparental conflict and emotion regulation, two theoretical perspectives are widely cited and tested through empirical studies: cognitive-contextual model (Grych & Fincham, 1990) and emotional security hypothesis (Davies & Cummings, 1998). Rather than being considered contrasting theories, these two frameworks are recognized as complementary to each other by suggesting different pathways for explaining the interparental conflict-emotion regulation association (Harold & Sellers, 2018). In brief, the cognitive-contextual model suggests that the impact of interparental conflict on children's emotion regulation is based on how the conflict is expressed as well as how children perceive its meaning and cause (Grych & Fincham, 1990; Grych et al., 1992). On the other hand, the emotional security

hypothesis explains that children's emotion regulation is adversely affected by interparental conflict since their feeling of emotional security is damaged or threatened in the face of conflict (Davies & Cummings, 1994; Davies & Martin, 2013).

Both theories regard interparental conflict as a multidimensional construct exerting influence via its several aspects rather than as a categorical one affecting via its presence or absence. As such, it is highlighted that conflictual relations between parents constitute a natural and even normal part of each family; and it is not their simple occurrence, but their different dimensions shape their effects on children (Harold et al., 2004). These dimensions could be either related to children's appraisals of conflict (i.e., their cognitive attributions) as suggested by the cognitive-contextual model or related to children's emotional processing of conflict as explained by emotional security hypothesis. As noted earlier, a great deal of past research has indicated the negative effects of interparental conflict on emotion regulation development drawing upon the abovementioned theoretical models' tenets (e.g., Cummings & Davies, 2010; Davies et al., 2002; DeBoard-Lucas et al., 2010; El-Sheikh et al., 2009; Harold et al., 2004; Siffert & Schwarz, 2011). However, as in the literature of parental emotional availability, this line of research has also mostly remained limited with the studies focusing on younger age groups such as children and young adolescents.

To sum up, it is apparent that both parental emotional availability and interparental conflict appear as two key elements of the early family context which might exert considerable influence on emotion regulation capacities of individuals. However, as noted above, there is scant research which investigates these relations with older age groups including young adults and beyond. Indeed, the effects of these early experiences involving parents, either children's relations with each parent, or the relations between the parents themselves, might continue to exist in subsequent years of life through internalized working models as suggested by the attachment theory (Bowlby, 1989) or object relations constellations claimed by the object relations theory

(Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983). Hence, it is quite promising to explore the effects of parents' emotional availability and their past conflictual relationships on their children's emotion regulation capacities in children's adulthood. It is also claimed that to explore these two issues from children's perspectives, rather than depending on the parents' self-reports or the researchers' observations, provide a better understanding of their effects on children since these effects are shaped by how children perceive them or are emotionally affected from them.

Taken together, the present study aims to investigate whether individuals' perceptions of each of their parent's emotional availability and their parents' past conflicts while they were growing up predict their current emotion regulation difficulties. To do so, the study involved people who are all above the age of 18 and assessed their perceptions regarding these two potential predictors and their current emotion regulation difficulties. In this regard, the present study aims to contribute to a gap in the respective literature by simultaneously investigating the relations between the given constructs through involving a Turkish adult sample. It is expected to see whether the effects of these two constructs, whose developmental progress start with early parental relationships, can be traced in later years of life. In addition, in the present study, both emotional availability of parents and interparental conflict are taken as multidimensional constructs as suggested in the literature; thus, this approach is also believed to highlight their dimensions' differential effects on predicting the emotion regulation difficulties experienced by adults.

In this section, a brief introduction has been provided with respect to the major concerns of the present study. The following chapter presents a comprehensive review of the theoretical and empirical literature regarding the major study concepts. In the successive chapters, the methodology, results, and discussion of the findings of this study are presented respectively.

CHAPTER 1
LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, the theoretical and conceptual background of the main study variables, namely emotion regulation, emotional availability of parents, and interparental conflict, are presented as well as the review of the relevant previous research studies in these fields. Following the background and review of the pertinent literature, the aims and significance of the present study are introduced in the final section of this part. Hence, this chapter consists of four main sections in total.

1.1. EMOTION REGULATION

Emotions have essentially permeated almost every aspect of our lives, thus making them a widely-studied phenomenon in social sciences for a long time. That is to say, people who are surrounded by potentially emotion-eliciting stimuli feel various emotions every day; however, the way they perceive or react to the almost same stimuli varies depending on certain personal factors. In one case, for example, a man who yells at you may lead you into extreme anger, while in another case, the same occasion may lead you into laughter. This observed individual variability is where the notion of emotion regulation often enters in.

Thus, it is argued that emotions, as subjective and disputable concepts (Lakoff, 2016), are constantly regulated by people who experience them, either intentionally or unintentionally (Davidson, 1998). Since every emotion undergoes regulation to some extent, some scholars have even considered emotion and emotion regulation two indistinguishable concepts (Campos et al., 1994; Frijda, 1986). Moreover, it is suggested that this process of emotion regulation, rather than emotions by themselves, leads people to act, or not to act, in particular ways (Gross, 2002). Herein, it takes us to the further discussion of the concept ‘emotion regulation’ which is a frequently

addressed and investigated phenomenon in the literature as well as the main focus of the present study.

1.1.1. Definitions and Theoretical Conceptualizations of Emotion Regulation

Although it has been a very common and intriguing theme, there is no consensus on the conceptualization and definition of the concept of emotion regulation among scholars (Cole et al., 2004; Koole, 2009), and so, there has been an everlasting call for further research on providing a clear and inclusive definition to this concept (Bridges, et al., 2004; Cole, et al., 2004; Thompson, 1994). Similar to the phenomenon of emotion, numerous perspectives have been adopted to understand the notion of emotion regulation, which in turn has led to the emergence of changing definitions and conceptualizations over time. Although a common definition has not been agreed upon yet, it has been well-accepted that emotion regulation is a major developmental attainment; it has a complex, multi-componential nature; and it is important for understanding several life-long outcomes (Bridges & Grolnik, 1995; Campos et al., 1994; Desiatnikov, 2014; Thompson, 2011).

Considering its multi-componential and complex nature, Thompson (1994) attempted to propose one of the earliest definitions for emotion regulation as "emotion regulation consists of the extrinsic and intrinsic processes responsible for monitoring, evaluating, and modifying emotional reactions, especially their intensive and temporal features, to accomplish one's goals" (pp. 27-28). In line with this conceptualization, Thompson (1994) pointed to the adaptive and constructive characteristics of emotion regulation and associated them with effective use of social strategies, increased cognitive performance, and ability to cope with stressful home experiences. Moreover, he suggested that emotion regulation plays a key role in the socialization process through providing people with adaptive, strategic, and flexible behavioral and emotional strategies (Thompson, 1994).

Another influential contribution to this line of research was made by Gross (1998) who also provided a definition for emotion regulation as "the processes by which individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express these emotions" (p. 275). Similar to Thompson's (1994) earlier definition highlighting flexibility in applying the strategies of emotion regulation, Gross (1998) indicated that emotion regulation involves implementing strategies to alter or modulate emotional experiences according to the demands of the context in which they arise. Drawing upon this initial conceptualization, Gross (1998, 2002) further suggested a model which classifies emotion regulation strategies into two main groups as follows: *antecedent-focused* strategies and *response-focused* strategies. The *antecedent-focused* strategies are further divided into four sub-categories as situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, and cognitive change, all argued to be adopted prior to the generation of the emotions. Situation selection involves efforts put into changing the occurrence of a particular situation which is believed to evoke certain emotions. Mostly, it refers to the strategy of choosing the situations, which will likely result in favorable emotions rather than unfavorable ones. As for situation modification, it includes actively changing the current situation such as asking for someone's help to feel safer in an anxiety-evoking situation. On the other hand, attention deployment enables emotion regulation through directing attention in certain ways according to a given situation. It mostly appears as distraction or concentration. While distraction includes diverting attention from the affect-eliciting stimuli, concentration includes focusing attention on affects. The last strategy in the antecedent-focused group is the cognitive change, which implies the reappraisal or reinterpretation of the emotion-provoking stimuli. Finally, response modulation, the only *response-focused* strategy, refers to altering emotional responses after they are already generated. The response modulation strategy, such as suppression, is mostly used to change or alleviate the experiential, behavioral, or physiological effects of emotions (Gross & Munoz, 1995). For instance, experiencing grief after a loss of a beloved person, people tend to suppress this negative emotion by drinking alcohol or

using drugs. Among all the antecedent-focused and response-focused strategies mentioned above, cognitive change is reported to be a very effective strategy for emotion regulation, particularly when it is implemented considering the characteristics of the situational context (Webb et al., 2012).

This early categorization of emotion regulation strategies (Gross, 1998) has tended to emphasize two opposites, namely reappraisal (cognitive change) and suppression (response modulation). Furthermore, while reappraisal is mostly suggested as an effective and adaptive strategy, suppression is instead considered ineffective and maladaptive (Gross, 2014). Drawing upon this distinction, previous research has revealed that lower levels of negative and higher levels of positive emotions are expressed by people who implement the strategy of reappraisal (Feinberg et al., 2012; Gross & John, 2003). On the contrary, it has been found that people who implement the strategy of suppression feel the vice versa, lower levels of positive and higher levels of negative emotions, along with suffering from depression (Gross & John, 2003).

However, recent studies have challenged this distinction among emotion regulation strategies by pointing to the utmost importance of the given context and personal goals in evaluating whether an emotion regulation strategy is adaptive or maladaptive (Aldao & Nolen-Hoeksema, 2012; Paul et al., 2013; Zimmermann & Iwanski, 2014). It means that even though it is a strategy having positive connotations such as using reappraisal, implementing this same strategy in all occasions do not necessarily refer to being capable of regulating emotions. Instead, as mentioned above, the proper evaluation of the contextual and individual requirements, and the flexible implementation of strategies are to be involved in the emotion regulation processes (Cicchetti et al., 1991; Cole et al., 1994; Thompson, 1994). Aldao (2013) also stated that emotion regulation aims to change or affect the dynamics of emotions to be able to respond adaptively to the characteristics of the given environment rather than just eliminating or replacing maladaptive emotions.

Along similar lines, researchers have argued that emotion regulation, as a complicated process, is far beyond solely involving the immediate elimination of negative emotions (Cole et al., 1994; Gross, 2002; Thompson, 1994). That is to say, emotional control or modification only addresses one aspect of the emotion regulation construct. However, it is emphasized that the conceptualization of adaptive emotion regulation should include a particular reference to the awareness, acceptance and evaluation of emotions and emotional responses (Thompson & Calkins, 1996). Research studies showed that avoidance of negative emotions and thoughts, namely inhibiting or suppressing them, are linked to various psychological disorders as well as escalated emotional arousal (Hayes et al., 1996; Gross & John, 2003; Gross & Levenson, 1997). On the other hand, being aware of undesirable feelings, and being able to accept and evaluate them are found to enhance adaptive emotion regulation (Berking et al., 2008; Gratz & Roemer, 2004; Salovey et al., 1995; Thompson & Calkins, 1996). Similarly, the ability to recognize and manipulate the levels of negative emotions, instead of entirely diminishing them, is suggested to be beneficial for individuals to achieve their goals in specific social contexts (Aldao, 2013). For instance, a certain level of anxiety might boost one's performance in an exam or in a presentation, whereas higher and lower levels of anxiety could result in disastrous outcomes for the same occasion, pointing to the importance of regulation over the course of an emotion that is commonly considered negative such as anxiety.

In their model of emotion, Gross and Thompson (2007) attempted to address all these crucial aspects of emotion regulation as abovementioned. To provide a comprehensive understanding of the concept of emotional regulation, they inclusively explained the construct of emotion through adopting a sequential approach. According to their model, first it is necessary for emotions to emerge that the situation, either internal or external, should be mentally relevant or at least meaningful to the person. Second, after the situations are engaged, the attributions for them are constructed, which thus evokes particular emotional responses. According to specific contextual

demands and their individual goals in this particular context, people mostly tend to improve, maintain, or impede their emotional arousal. As a consequence, the situations or the emotional tone might be changed by emotional responses as part of a feedback cycle. Once more, it is worth noting that such emotional responses have a flexible nature based on the given context. In addition to one's individual purposes, the expectations of the given social context and even the cultural norms are significant in the regulation of emotions (Aldao, 2013; Saarni, 1999). To sum up, one important index of ideal emotion regulation ability must include having awareness of individual goals and environmental requirements and behaving accordingly.

In parallel to the aforementioned changes in the conceptualization of emotion regulation, the measures used to assess people's capacity of regulating their emotions have also undergone some changes. As such, initial measures were argued not to emphasize the contextual-dependency and flexibility aspects of emotion regulation (Gratz & Roemer, 2004; Mennin et al., 2002). For instance, the measure Generalized Expectancy for Negative Mood Regulation Scale (NMR) developed by Catanzaro and Mearn (1990) focused on the ability to avoid and eliminate negative emotions without referring to the ability to act accordingly and flexibly in the presence of these emotions. Similarly, another measure, developed by Salovey and colleagues (1995) to assess the emotion regulation construct, is called Trait Meta-Mood Scale (TMMS). Unlike the NMR (Catanzaro & Mearns, 1990), the TMMS addressed some important aspects of the construct such as being aware of and understanding emotions; however, this measure still puts a particular emphasis on emotional avoidance.

In a relatively recent attempt, building upon the new conceptualizations of the construct, Gratz and Roemer (2004) developed a measure called Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS) with special reference to the awareness, flexibility and context-dependency of emotion regulation strategies (Thompson, 1994; Thompson & Calkins, 1996). Considering the multi-dimensionality and complexity of emotion

regulation, Gratz and Roemer (2004) aimed to cover different aspects of the construct in their assessment, summarized as follows:

> (a) awareness and understanding of emotions, (b) acceptance of emotions, (c) ability to control impulsive behaviors and behave in accordance with desired goals when experiencing negative emotions, and (d) ability to use situationally appropriate emotion regulation strategies flexibly to modulate emotional responses as desired in order to meet individual goals and situational demands (pp. 42-43).

In this respect, the researchers defined emotion dysregulation, or having difficulties in emotion regulation as "the relative absence of any or all of these abilities" (p. 43). Needless to say, as in all other developmental phenomena, the other side of the emotion regulation is emotion dysregulation which simply refers to being incapable of handling negative emotion-provoking situations by evaluating their density and modulating their results flexibly.

1.1.2. Development of Emotion Regulation from Infancy to Adulthood

As noted earlier, there is a widely-accepted recognition that regulation of emotions is one of the main developmental tasks whose progress starts during the early stages of life and keeps going for a lifetime (Gross & Munoz, 1995; Kopp, 1989; Paivio & Greenberg, 1998; Thompson, 1990). More specifically, it is suggested that from birth onwards, the child starts being incrementally exposed to emotion-provoking stimuli, thus experiencing emotions and needing to regulate them (Thompson, 1990). The early forms of emotion regulation were reported to start developing in infancy as early as the age of three months when the child starts to raise an awareness of what is happening around him/her (Kopp, 1989; Rothbart et al., 2000). Further, the period following the

first three months is considered the beginning of the child's emotional life since the child begins to make basic conscious attempts to modulate his/her affective responses like getting closer to the mother in the face of a repelling stimuli (Harman et al., 1997; Spitz et al., 1970).

During the following months, improvements in memory also get involved in this process, thus enabling intention and expectation to be involved in the child's emotional reactions (Nelson, 1994). Also, this increased memory capacity helps the child to associate mental images with various affects (Hoffman, 1985). For instance, as a consequence of repeated encounters with the caregiver, the child differentially reacts to the caregiver such as making more positive gestures towards him/her compared to other people around (Sroufe, 1996). Through the end of the second year, children are observed to use certain emotion regulation strategies to control their emotions, and they start to manage their emotional responses based on the demands of the social environment (Rueda et al., 2004).

As Thompson (1994) states, with increasing age, children's emotion regulation processes also get more complicated and more psychologically-oriented. That is to say, in the presence of an unpleasing and threatening situation, children's strategies of attachment orientations change over time, moving from the external redirection of attention such as closing their eyes or ears, to the internal redirection like trying not to think about this specific situation or even trying to think something more pleasant (Band & Weisz, 1988). In brief, it is seen that emotion regulation follows a gradual developmental route starting with the child's initial physiological, external states and moving to his/her subsequent emotional, internal reactions.

Arguably, attachment theory (Ainsworth, 1979; Ainsworth et al., 1978; Bowlby, 1969, 1982) has been among the most cited conceptual frameworks employed to understand and explain the development of emotion regulation (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2014). According to this line of research, emotion regulation is established

in the primary learning environment in which very early caregiver-infant relationships take place (Field, 1994). In other words, the child has a fundamental need to gain and maintain a sufficient proximity to the attachment figures, namely people supposed to provide the child with sufficient care, protection, guidance, and support regarding emotions. Emotion regulation simply emerges from the child's very basic need of managing proximity to the primary caregiver during the very beginning of life (Bowlby, 1982). Cassidy (2008) pointed out that the caregiver's sensitive responses to the alarming signals given by the child alleviate the child's adverse feelings, thus in turn helping the child to show greater tolerance towards similar unpleasing situations later. Through numerous caregiver-child interactions, the child gradually becomes capable of choosing appropriate emotional responses among various others in order to fulfill his/her aim (Cassidy, 2008). Along similar lines, Stern (1985) earlier regarded this cyclic interaction as "affective attunement," through which the sensitive caregiver first notices and reads the child's signals, then accepts them, and more importantly reflects them back to the child. This process as a whole gives the child the message that emotions can be shared and accepted as part of social relationships. In addition, the caregiver is important in providing the child with the modeling of behaviors, either simplifying the appropriate behavior or just imitating the child's own behavior (Field, 1994). Therefore, it is apparent that early interactions between the child and caregiver play an essential role in emotional development of children.

Unfortunately, if the primary caregiver does not recognize or misreads the child's early signals, and fails to regulate his/her negative emotions through the interactional cycle discussed above, the child develops and resorts to other maladaptive strategies such as minimizing or heightening his/her emotions to keep his/her closeness to the attachment figure (Cassidy & Kobak, 1988; Main & Solomon, 1990). Then, establishing insecure attachments in the early years of life could interfere with the development of adaptive emotion regulation in infancy, which might also have a

negative impact on subsequent functioning throughout the rest of the childhood into the adulthood.

As for the emotion regulation in adulthood, the attachment literature is once more addressed with the aim of explaining how emotions are regulated in adult people who are now capable of actively using various regulatory functions. In the attachment behavioral system developed by Bowlby (1982), the main goal of maintaining proximity to the attachment figures is enabled through the regulation of cognitive, behavioral, and emotional functions, particularly in the face of stressful situations. Drawing upon this system, Mikulincer and Shaver (2007) suggested a control systems model to explain how the attachment system is activated in adulthood and leads to certain attachment orientations, primary or secondary ones, for emotion regulation. According to their model, when people have secure early attachment relationships, they are likely to implement primary strategies. These are constructive regulatory strategies including reappraising, problem-solving, and asking for others' help. And this is argued to reflect to their awareness and acceptance of adverse situations and emotions rather than their denial or suppression (Cassidy, 1994; Fonagy, 1991).

On the other hand, when people have insecure, unavailable attachment figures in their childhood, they develop and implement secondary strategies instead of adaptive regulatory ones (Cassidy, 1994; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2014). These secondary attachment styles are assessed with regard to two separate dimensions such as attachment anxiety and attachment-related avoidance (Brennan et al., 1998). Being either anxious-type or avoidant-type, they are also developed through early interactions with significant others, or attachment figures, during early childhood; however, they are argued to be flexible and to change, either slightly or even drastically, by means of the specific context and current relations (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2014).

That is to say, people having avoidant attachment orientations mostly seek to keep their attachment system deactivated by down-regulating their emotional reactions (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). In line with this purpose, they are most likely to suppress or inhibit threat-related emotions or feelings of vulnerability such as fear, anger, anxiety, sadness, guilt, and shame. While doing so, avoidant people do not worry about maintaining a relationship or establishing communication, but they only trust themselves and take the risk of damaging relationships. Secure people also sometimes down-regulate emotions, but they do not rigidly adhere to the strategy at the expense of relations (Cassidy, 1994).

As for people with anxious attachment styles, it is documented that they tend to overestimate threat-related emotions or a change in the environment, and to attract the attention of the primary caregiver, they act more vigilantly using hyper-activation as a common strategy (Kobak et al., 1993; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2014). Further, these anxiously attached people consider constructive regulatory strategies such as reappraising or problem-solving irrelevant since they always need to be seen vulnerable and helpless to keep their attachment figure's attention and protection (Mikulincer & Florian, 1998).

Taken together, previous research on both child and adult attachment patterns has shown that early relationships between the child and the primary caregiver lead to different attachment styles, which have in turn various consequences for the development of emotion regulation. However, as also emphasized in the attachment literature, despite being crucially important, attachment security is not the only factor associated with the development of emotion regulation which does not remain limited with the early years but lasts across the lifespan. Briefly, emotion regulation is a multi-faceted concept whose development takes several years of practice under the influences of various external and internal factors. Previous studies investigating the relation between age and emotion regulation also suggest that people become increasingly more effective at both identifying and regulating their emotions as they get older through

changing biological, psychological, emotional, and social factors (Charles & Carstensen, 2014; Gross, 2002). Nevertheless, past research has mostly focused on early years of emotional development, and there is scant research investigating emotion regulation in later years of life (Gullone et al., 2010)

All in all, emotion regulation, as a multi-dimensional and complex construct having various life-long consequences for individuals, merits further investigation with special reference to its potential precursors, especially with underestimated populations such as young adults or elderly. Given that early family atmosphere has a fundamental impact on the development of emotion regulation, it is important to explore the key elements of the primary family context. Herein, emotional availability of parents (Little & Carter, 2005) and interparental conflict (Davies & Woitach, 2008; Houltberg et al., 2012) appear as two crucial aspects of this early family environment, thus is worth being pursued in relation to emotion regulation. The next two sections respectively address these two constructs.

1.2. EMOTIONAL AVAILABILITY OF PARENTS

Emotional availability appears as a significant construct to be discussed in relation to emotion regulation considering the theoretical and empirical links between the two. There is a wealth of studies indicating that early parent-child relationships and the quality of these primary interactions exert considerable influence on the development of the child's regulatory capacities (Kogan & Carter, 1996; Leerkes et al., 2009; Spinrad & Stifter, 2002; Sroufe, 1996, 2005). Indeed, it is widely argued that healthy parent-child interactions enable a child to gain primary knowledge of emotions and develop adaptive regulatory strategies (Morris et al., 2007; Parke et al., 1992).

1.2.1. Definitions and Theoretical Conceptualizations of Emotional Availability

Despite being conceptualized in a more complex way, emotional availability is basically defined as "the capacity of a dyad to share an emotionally healthy relationship" (Biringen et al., 2014, p. 114). In practical and specific terms, these authors refer to the construct of emotional availability as a tool which can be employed to "take the temperature" of the parent-child relationships (p. 115). However, since its first appearance as a novel term in this context in 1970s (Mahler et al., 1975), several scholars and researchers have contributed to the conceptualization and definition of the construct emotional availability through either elaborating on it, or bringing new perspectives to its components, function, and assessment (e.g Biringen et al., 1998; Biringen et al., 2000; Emde, 1980, 1983, 2000; Emde & Easterbrooks, 1985; Lum & Phares, 2005).

As stated above, the term 'emotional availability' was first used by Mahler et al. (1975) in the context of the parent-child relationship to address the mother's physical presence and support during the child's initial explorations. It was stated that healthy mother-child interactions encourage the child to explore and develop autonomy as well as to notice the significance of physical proximity and emotional charging in a social relationship. Mahler and colleagues' (Mahler et al., 1975) emphasis on the mere presence of an available trusted figure out there, around the child, was considered one important aspect of emotional availability, thus regarded as a valuable contribution to its conceptualization (Biringen et al., 2014).

Further, within the scope of the same context, the parent-child interaction, Emde (1980, 1983) referred to the concept of emotional availability as the parent's perception and acceptance of the child's various emotional cues ranging from negative ones to positives. In the words of Emde (1980), emotional availability means "an individual's emotional responsiveness and 'attunement' to another's needs and goals; key is the acceptance of a wide range of emotions rather than responsiveness solely to

distress" (p. 80). It is believed that Emde's (1980, 1983, 2000) work has also made major contributions to the emotional availability framework, highlighting its two major tenets (Biringen et al., 2014). First, emotional availability encompasses a wide range of emotions, thus the child's both negative and positive emotional expressions, ranging from sadness, anger, disgust to joy, interest, satisfaction, are to be attuned by the parent. Second, emotional availability considers the child's emotional feedback to the parent to be as important as the parent's to the child, since their relationship requires a mutual emotional exchange. That is, through the feedback coming from the child, parents get to know whether and how their responses are received by the child and further behaves accordingly. Moreover, it is put forward that beyond involving sole behavioral responsiveness, emotional availability also serves as an affective barometer of the parent-child relationship, thus signaling varied aspects of a mutual relationship including love, interest, or anger (Emde, 1980; Emde & Easterbrooks, 1985).

In addition to valuable theoretical contributions mentioned above, it was indeed the attachment theory (Ainsworth, 1979; Ainsworth, et al., 1978; Bowlby, 1969, 1973) argued to have provided an initial basis, a starting point, for the concept of emotional availability (e.g., Biringen, 2000; Biringen et al., 2005; Bretherton, 2000; Emde, 2000; Emde & Easterbrooks, 1985). As previously mentioned, the notion of sensitivity to the child's emotional signals, namely reading the child's messages appropriately and responding them accurately, forms the backbone of the attachment theory (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Bowlby, 1969, 1973). The construct of emotional availability embraces this hallmark notion of sensitivity; however, it goes beyond explaining the attachment of the child to the parent and expands this concept through adding different emotional and dyadic dimensions to it (Bretherton, 2000).

By emphasizing the child's contributions to the relationship as well as those of the parent, emotional availability is argued to provide new insights into the understanding of the child's side in a relational interaction, which is not always in line with the parent's though (Biringen et al., 2014). Unlike the view of sensitivity focusing

on the parent, the view of emotional availability draws upon a relational or dyadic stance by attaching importance to both parent and child in the relationship. Furthermore, it is stated that through its multidimensional nature, the concept of emotional availability enables researchers with new tools to assess various relational features of the parent-child relationship along with its overall quality (Biringen et al., 2014). Within the scope of the emotional availability framework, the affective characteristics of a relationship, the parent-child relationship in this case, are addressed through several dimensions, four of which are related to the parent, while two are related to the child. Below there is a summary of these six dimensions following the work by Biringen and colleagues (2014): (1) adult sensitivity, (2) adult structuring, (3) adult non-intrusiveness, (4) adult non-hostility, (5) child responsiveness to the adult, and (6) child's involvement of the adult.

The first of the four parental dimension of emotional availability is *adult sensitivity* which primarily refers to the parent's accurate perception of and appropriate responsiveness to the child's expressions of emotions. Besides, this dimension covers other qualities such as attunement, flexibility, and creativity in the parent-child interactions along with the parent's acceptance of the child. There are two things worth being highlighted here. First, sensitivity in the view of emotional availability is a dyadic concept focusing on the emotional presence and expressions of the parent rather than merely behavioral sensitivity. Second, this view of sensitivity is not a dichotomous construct reflecting good or bad parenting, but it is multifaceted ranging across a wide spectrum.

The second parent-related dimension is *adult structuring* which mainly addresses the question how sufficiently the parent guides, mentors, and scaffolds the child's activities. It is important for the parent to provide modelling and guidance in addition to providing a consistent framework for the child's actions. While doing so, the parent should not deny or underestimate the child's autonomy through over-guidance, over-modelling or over-protection. This caution takes us to the third parental

dimension, *adult non-intrusiveness*. It is described as the parent's ability to support the child without intruding into the child's independency. Finally, the fourth dimension concerning the parent is *adult non-hostility*. This dimension also reflects a continuum ranging from non-hostile responses, to covert/implicit hostile responses, to overt hostility. Non-hostility is suggested as the optimal, where no signs of hostility, either covert or overt, exist.

As for the child-related dimensions, the first is called as *child responsiveness to the adult*, which underlines social and emotional responsiveness of the child to the parent. Two aspects of the child's actions, namely affect and responsiveness, are important in observing this dimension. As such, the evaluation of this dimension is conducted according to both whether the child responds to the parent's invitation or not, and if so, how the quality of the child's emotional response is. On the other hand, the second child-related dimension is the *child's involvement of the adult*. It refers to the ability of the child to engage the parent in his/her activities such as plays. It is observed that the child accomplishes this task of involving the adult in various ways including engaging the parent as a playmate, asking him/her questions, telling stories, or merely looking at him/her. By doing so, the child is also expected to keep a balance between being autonomous in his/her actions and engaging the parent's attention.

It is important to note that since emotional availability evolves from a dynamic perspective (Beebe et al., 2000), highlighting the dyadic and emotional features of the parent-child relationship, the parental and child-related components of the construct should be evaluated complementarily rather than separately (Biringen et al., 2014). Biringen et al. (2014) also emphasized that the key aspect of "the emotional feedback loop" in parent-child relations is its mutual and dyadic nature; therefore, it does not make any sense to look at only one partner's, either the parent or the child, components of the emotional availability as long as the complementary features of the other are not evaluated (p. 116).

1.2.2. Assessment of Emotional Availability

Building upon the aforementioned theoretical foundations, to assess the emotional availability in the parent-child relationship, Biringen et al. (1998, 2000) developed the emotional availability scales and worked further on these scales throughout the subsequent years (Biringen, 2005, 2008). Addressing all the above-mentioned parent and child dimensions of the emotional availability, these scales are argued to assess the affective quality of the parent-child relationship from a dyadic perspective which takes into consideration both parties' (i.e., the primary caregiver and the child) contributions to the relationship (Biringen et al., 2014). The scales, having two versions, one for young children and the other for school-aged children and youth, have been validated with various age groups ranging from 0 to 14 years of age (Biringen et al., 2010; Easterbrooks & Biringen, 2009).

With regard to the assessment of the parental emotional availability, another attempt has been made by Lum and Phares (2005) who developed a new measure of the construct called the Lum Emotional Availability of Parents (LEAP). In their paper, the researchers pointed to some limitations in the assessment of this construct as the underlying motivation for their newly created measure. For instance, as previously noted by other scholars (Biringen et al., 1998; Field, 1994), Lum and Phares (2005) claimed that using observational assessment techniques for emotional availability are always subject to bias, thus requiring other ways of measuring the construct. Unlike the emotional availability scales discussed above, the LEAP measure does not depend on the researcher's observation and evaluation of the parent and the child. Instead, it depends on the children's reports, assessing children's perceptions of their parents' emotional availability, separately for the mother and the father (Lum & Phares, 2005).

In addition, they touched upon another criticized situation that this line of research has mostly focused on the mother-child relationship, hence underestimating the father's role (Ducharme et al., 2002; Phares et al., 2005; Silverstein, 2002).

However, the LEAP measure (Lum & Phares, 2005) attaches equal importance to both parents through addressing the children's perspectives of their emotional availability. This decision has been indeed supported through the findings of previous studies. It has been documented that not only the mother's but also the father's presence/absence and parental quality serve as a determining factor for various psychological and emotional outcomes (e.g, Biringen, 2000; Bretherton, 2000; Chang et al., 2003; Easterbrooks & Biringen, 2000; Little & Carter, 2005; Spinrad & Stifter, 2002; Ziv et al., 2000). Thus, irrespective of which parent is addressed as the primary caregiver, both parents' contributions to the relationship should be taken into consideration while assessing parental emotional availability and its consequences. Although their number is relatively less compared to mother-focused research, some studies, adopting the emotional availability framework, have involved the father as an important variable in their research designs (e.g., Duacherme et al, 2002; Kerns et al., 2000; Kim et al., 2014; Lieberman et al., 1999; Lovas, 2005; Lum & Phares, 2005; Phares & Renk, 1998; Silverstein, 2002; Steinberg et al., 1994).

Furthermore, Lum and Phares (2005) highlighted that the majority of the previous studies addressing emotional availability has been conducted with infants or young children but much less with older age groups. Drawing upon the finding that age does not necessarily lead into a decline in the impact of parental emotional availability as young children move towards adolescence and adulthood (Steinberg, 1994), the LEAP (Lum & Phares, 2005) originally targeted older adolescents and young adults, but then it was extended to younger age groups including minimally the age of 9.

Taken together, the LEAP measure is reported to be an invaluable tool to examine emotional availability since it paves the way for studies with older people, such as adolescents and young adults, through their perceptions rather than biased-prone observation techniques, and it has the capacity to highlight differential maternal and paternal contributions to the relationship (Babore et al., 2014). This measure is also

of particular importance and relevance for the present study since it was herein adopted as an instrument to assess the construct of the parental emotional availability.

1.2.3. Previous Studies on Emotional Availability and Emotion Regulation

Over decades, emotional availability has been investigated across various contexts in relation to a wide array of developmental constructs spanning psychological, behavioral, social, and emotional domains (see Biringen, 2000; Biringen et al., 2014; Lum & Phares, 2005; Schaefer, 1965). However, as discussed above, past research on emotional availability has mostly remained limited to the early years of life, mostly including infants and toddlers irrespective of the variable it has been investigated together (e.g., Biringen et al., 1995; Biringen et al., 1999; Biringen et al., 1994; de Falco et al., 2009; Vliegen et al., 2009). Only a small number of studies have involved school-aged children or young adolescents (Biringen et al., 2010; Dolev et al., 2009; Howes & Obregon, 2009; Lawler, 2008; Lok & McMahon, 2006).

Of particular relevance to the current study, one of the constructs investigated in relation to the emotional availability is emotion regulation. Although the links between parental emotional availability and emotion regulation have been well established; these studies mostly involved infants or young children (e.g., Din et al., 2009; Kim et al., 2014; Little & Carter, 2005; Martins et al., 2012; Racine et al., 2012). Only a few studies have examined these respective relations with adolescents (e.g., Clay et al., 2017; Karaer & Akdemir, 2019), and no study has been found with older populations such as older adolescents or adults in the review of the literature.

In the primary context, two studies with large samples (i.e., Din et al., 2009; Racine et al., 2012) examined the relations between maternal emotional availability and infants' pain expressions during vaccinations in the first year of life. In Din et al.'s study, emotional availability was operationalized as maternal non-intrusiveness and maternal sensitivity while the latter operationalized it as maternal verbal reassurance.

As for the results, Din et al. (2009) found that non-intrusiveness of mothers was linked with decreasing levels of immediate infant pain, while maternal sensitivity and the overall composite score for emotional availability were related to decreasing levels of infant pain both during and after the inoculation. On the other hand, Racine et al.'s (2012) study pointed to a significant association between maternal verbal reassurance and infant's pain expressions during the immunization while the composite score of emotional availability did not appear as a significant predictor in this context.

In addition, a U.S.-based study by Little and Carter (2005) was conducted in a laboratory context to examine the relationship between the emotional control levels of infants and both the mother's and the infant's emotional availability in the face of an emotional challenge. The mother-infant dyads having higher emotional availability were found to be significantly linked with better infant emotional control in the context of a challenge. More specifically, it was found that there is a significant association between greater maternal hostility and infants' difficulties in emotion regulation in the course of a challenge condition.

Similarly, Martins and colleagues (2012) investigated the association between maternal emotional availability and emotion regulation of infants, focusing on the dyadic qualities of the parent-child interaction. However, their study was conducted in the natural home context rather than a laboratory. Also, in this study, the researchers used emotional availability scales (Biringen et al., 1998) to measure emotional availability, and preferred using a composite score addressing all the dimensions (i.e., parent- and child-related), hence called it 'dyadic emotional interaction'. More interestingly, they focused on emotion over-regulation as an understudied aspect in comparison with emotion under-regulation, which are both considered emotion dysregulation indeed. In line with previous studies, their results also highlighted significant associations between infants' emotional dysregulation and the low quality of dyadic emotional interaction.

In another natural context study with infants, Kim and colleagues (2014) looked at the links between infant emotion regulation, maternal emotional availability during bedtime, and infant attachment security. Their findings showed that although emotional availability of mothers was not directly associated with emotion regulation strategies of infants in the regulation of frustration in this case, it significantly interacted with infants' temperament to predict their regulative strategies.

As for the studies with older age groups including adolescents, there are two relatively recent studies (Clay et al., 2017; Karaer & Akdemir, 2019) which investigated both or either of the respective constructs, namely parental emotional availability and children emotion regulation. Although these two studies do not have direct links with the present study, they are reviewed since they are amongst the very few studies addressing the present study's constructs in relatively older groups.

To begin with the study by Clay et al. (2017), the researchers investigated the relation between parent's emotional availability and adolescents' behavioral and emotional functioning. In brief, it was found that emotional availability of the parents, as measured by abovementioned LEAP, was negatively related to maladaptive functioning in adolescents. In the study by Karaer and Demir (2019), emotional availability as also measured by the LEAP and emotion regulation as measured by the DERS were assessed with regard to their relation to Internet addiction in a group of adolescents. It was found that both constructs were significantly related to the problem of the Internet addiction for the study group.

As understood, there is scant research which investigates the issue of emotional availability with young adults and/or beyond in relation to their emotion regulation capacities. That is, to our best knowledge, the present study is among the first to investigate the associations between perceived emotional availability of parents and emotion regulation within the context of adulthood.

1.3. INTERPARENTAL CONFLICT

Interparental conflict appears as another important construct to be addressed in relation to emotion regulation since it is an almost inevitable aspect of each family context. That is, marital conflict is a widely observed phenomenon which occurs even in most harmonious family contexts. Despite having mostly negative connotations, conflict between parents can take various forms, including not only negative but also positive elements, and it could be even beneficial for children if it is properly managed and successfully resolved (Cummings & Davies, 2010; Grych & Fincham, 1990). However, when it is poorly managed and remains unresolved, interparental conflict can pose various problems for children who are witnessing and more commonly being part of such quarrels between their parents.

Previous studies widely report that exposure to interparental conflict is linked to various indices of subsequent psychological, emotional, and behavioral problems in children's development, including both externalizing problems such as conduct disorder and aggression, and internalizing problems such as anxiety and depression (e.g., Amato & Sobolewski, 2001; Dadds & Powell, 1991; Davies & Cummings, 1994; Grych & Fincham, 1990; Katz & Gottman 1993; Lindahl & Malik; 1999; Schiff et al., 2014). Since there is accumulated evidence showing that marital conflict, as an inevitable aspect of marriages, might have a wide array of consequences for children's development, and more importantly, its effects might differ depending on the context, it is worth investigating what it is and what gives rise to its differential impacts on future outcomes.

1.3.1. Theoretical Conceptualizations and Definitions of Interparental Conflict

According to a relatively recent definition stated by Cummings et al. (2004), interparental conflict is described as "any major or minor interparental interaction that involved a difference of opinion, whether it was mostly negative or even mostly

positive" (p. 194). As this definition signals, interparental conflict appears as a multifaceted construct encompassing a wide range of dimensions which are argued to be differentially associated with the occurrence of maladjustment in children (Fincham & Osborne, 1993; Grych & Fincham, 1990). Among various dimensions of the marital discord, frequency, intensity, and resolution are mostly addressed in past research and reported to be particularly related to the observed problems in childhood (Atkinson et al., 2009; Grych & Fincham, 1990).

In simple terms, frequency refers to how often parents quarrel with each other about different issues. It has been reported that being more frequently exposed to conflicts between parents leads to more occurrences of problematic child functioning (e.g., Davies & Cummings, 1994; Grych & Fincham, 1990). More recently, Cummings and Davies (2010) have found that children exposed to more frequent interparental conflict could also get more sensitized to potential subsequent arguments. Intensity is another aspect referring to the extent or density of the situation that might range from minor discussion to heavy fighting. Several experimental studies have shown that marital conflicts including physical violence might result in more negative child behaviors (e.g., Cummings et al., 1989; Laumakis et al., 1998). Atkinson et al. (2009) reported that the frequency and intensity dimensions of the interparental conflict are mostly combined in recent studies, and this combination is called "conflict severity," higher degrees of which are found to result in increased adverse effects on children (p. 283).

Lastly, resolution appears as an aspect of the marital conflict which refers to the way it is handled or resolved by parents. As previously mentioned, Cummings and Davies (2010) state that ineffective conflict resolution or unresolved conflicts could often bring about negative child outcomes, while effectively resolved conflicts could be beneficial for children, and even help them to cope with future conflicts.

In addition to its multidimensional nature, interparental conflict could also take two different forms, overt and covert. While an overt conflict is described as hostile acts and emotions between parents which directly show negative interparental relations, a covert conflict is described as hostile acts and emotions between parents which do not directly show but implies negative interparental relations (Buehler et al., 1997). For example, the former includes hitting or insulting, whereas the latter includes scapegoating or unspoken tension. Overt interparental conflict has been documented by various studies as more harmful than the covert with regard to observed child maladjustment (e.g., Cummings & Davies, 2002; Grych & Fincham, 1990; Grych et al., 1992; Harold et al., 2007; Krishnakumar & Buehler, 2000; Nikolas et al., 2012).

Although the line of research on interparental conflict initially focused on the direct effects of the marital discord on children as described above, further studies, both theoretically- and empirically-oriented, have shifted this emphasis to the investigation of the processes and mechanisms that might underlie this association (Cox et al., 2001; Fincham, 1994; Harold & Sellers, 2018). To this respect, several theoretical models and hypotheses were developed by scholars to explain the association between discordant parental relationships and child outcomes. Amongst, two primary theoretical frameworks, both with a particular emphasis on children's cognitive/attributional and emotional processing in understanding the marital conflict-child outcomes relation, have attracted great attention among researchers in the field (Harold & Sellers, 2018): "Cognitive-Contextual Model" (Grych & Fincham, 1990) and "Emotional Security Hypothesis" (Davies & Cummings, 1994).

1.3.1.1. Cognitive-Contextual Model

To begin with, according to the cognitive-contextual model proposed by Grych and Fincham (1990) in their seminal work, children's appraisals and attributions of interparental conflict play a crucial role in shaping its impact on their adjustment. Based

on this model, children who are exposed to a conflictual interparental relationship first try to understand what it means for them, and later they think about its potential causes and how to cope with it. In more specific terms, it is argued in this model that children undergo two different stages of cognitive processing over the course of an interparental conflict: primary processing and secondary processing (Fosco et al., 2007; Grych & Fincham, 1990; Grych et al., 1992). During primary processing, children just evaluate how the interparental conflict might affect them, and the emotions aroused at that stage influence the secondary processing. That is, if children regard the conflict as threatening at the first stage (i.e., appraisal of threat), they are thought to be involved in the secondary processing, in which they think about why it is occurring (i.e., their attributions) as well as what they should and can do (i.e., their coping efforts).

Children's cognitive processing, particularly their coping efficacy, is argued to be affected by various dimensions of interparental conflict including content, intensity, duration, and resolution in addition to contextual factors such as the parent-child relationship quality, gender and temperament of the child, and the child's conflict exposure history (Grych & Fincham, 1990; Grych et al., 2003). Atkinson and colleagues (2009) further noted that children are sometimes not allowed to perform secondary processing due to either the lack of well-developed cognitive capabilities, or extreme level of perceived threat, which caused them to get stuck in the primary processing. According to the researchers, this attaches a particular importance to children's appraisals of threat in this line of research.

Given the significance of children's appraisals of interparental conflict proposed by the cognitive-contextual framework, Grych and colleagues developed a scale called Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict Scale (CPICS) to measure interparental discord from the children's point of view with a special reference to its properties, children's perceptions of threat, and attributions of self-blame besides their coping behaviors (Grych et al., 1992). Besides, in a theoretical paper, Fosco and colleagues (2007) pointed out that children's appraisals of marital conflict play a

mediating role in the links between their marital discord experience and their immediate and long-term functioning. More specifically, children's appraisals of the conflict change according to the conflict intensity, representing either violent or non-violent interactions between parents, and this changing in their appraisals lead into differential outcomes for them.

Drawing upon the cognitive-contextual model, a large amount of empirical studies has investigated how children's perceptions of interparental conflict are linked to diverse outcomes observed in their social and psychological behaviors (e.g., Atkinson et al., 2009; DeBoard-Lucas et al., 2010; Grych et al., 2003; Grych et al., 2004; Harold & Sellers, 2018; Oh et al., 2011; Shelton & Harold, 2008). For example, the study conducted by Shelton and Harold (2008) showed that children who perceived the marital discord as threatening tended to exhibit avoidant behaviors, while those who put the blame on themselves got more involved in discordant interactions of their parents. Thus, it was observed that these two groups of children perceiving the conflict in different ways displayed changing levels of internalizing or externalizing problems.

Some studies have taken this discussion further by focusing on the multidimensionality of children's appraisals and investigating differential effects of each dimension. For instance, Atkinson and colleagues (2009) put particular emphasis on the perceived threat experienced by children in the context of interparental conflict, and they explored the relative impacts of four different types of threat such as fear of increased parent conflict, fear of being involved in the conflict, fear of family separation due to the conflict, and fear of having damaged relationships with their parents. It was found that children who expressed worries about being part of the marital conflict showed more internalizing problems compared to others expressing different dimensions of perceived threat. Building upon the cognitive-contextual model (Grych & Fincham, 1990), the researchers suggested that the interparental conflict poses differential problems to children according to the way how they perceive and interpret it.

In another study, Oh et al. (2011) exposed Korean children to hypothetical conflictual parent interactions in cartoon format and assessed their appraisals of the conflict and psychological adjustment. The results demonstrated that children, who reported more perceived threat, especially the threat of being involved in the conflict, also reported more adverse effects of the conflict. In addition, it was found that children were more negatively affected by child-related conflictual situations, which pointed to the role of the content dimension of the conflict in children's appraisals. This study was also regarded as significant by the researchers since it draws attention to potential cross-cultural differences by involving children from an under-studied context, Korean in this case.

Besides highlighting the importance of the children's appraisals in shaping the interparental conflicts' effects on them, the cognitive-contextual model (Grych & Fincham, 1990) points to the parent-child relationship, also defined as the family environment, as a factor which might affect the consequences of the interparental conflict for children. According to the model, supportive and warm relationships between the parents and the child tend to prevent children from the adverse effects of the interparental conflict, whereas unresponsive and cold parent-child relationships aggravate these adverse effects. Several other studies have provided supporting evidence for this hypothesis of the model (e.g., Davies et al., 2002; DeBoard-Lucas et al., 2010; Doyle & Markiewicz, 2005; El-Sheikh & Elmore-Staton, 2004; Grych et al., 2004; Skopp et al., 2007).

For instance, Skopp and his colleagues (2007) found that children's warm relations with their mothers weakened the association between interparental discord and externalizing problems in children, while El-Sheikh and Elmore-Staton (2004) reported magnified links between marital conflict and child maladjustment. In addition, the findings of a longitudinal study involving children from early to middle adolescence demonstrated that parenting behaviors and parent-child relationships affected the connection between marital conflict and various child outcomes (Doyle &

Markiewicz, 2005). More specifically, in this study, positive aspects of parenting such as parental warmth appeared to be linked with decreases in adolescents' subsequent externalizing behaviors.

Furthermore, Grych et al. (2004) found that warmth and support dimension of the child-parent relations could shape the marital conflict's impacts on child outcomes through initially affecting children's appraisals of the conflict. That is, it was found in this study that adolescents having supportive, close relationships with their parents expressed lower levels of perceived threat and self-blame in face of interparental discord, which led to less problematic behaviors. In a similar vein, DeBoard-Lucas and his colleagues (2010) reported that mothers' unsupportive and harsh parenting increased the association between the marital discord and children's self-blame, while their supportive and warm parenting alleviated this link. Also, children's close and secure relations with fathers appeared to be associated with less self-blame and perceived threat. Considering the findings of both studies just reviewed, it could be stated that parent-child relationships, or parenting styles, play a role in shaping the impacts of interparental conflict on children by affecting their parental discord appraisals and attributions.

Taken together, it is seen that assessing the dimensions of the interparental conflict separately is important to study its differential impacts on children development. As such, Grych and colleagues (2000) argued that examining more particular aspects of children's appraisals could result in a better understanding of the processes and pathways which underlie the links between interparental conflict and child outcomes. That's why, in the present study, Grych et al.'s (1992) scale of interparental conflict was theoretically and methodologically adopted to be able to address and measure different aspects of interparental conflict in relation to emotion regulation.

1.3.1.2. Emotional Security Hypothesis

The second major theoretical framework to be discussed herein is the Emotional Security Hypothesis (ESH) proposed by Davies and Cummings (1994) to explain the interparental conflict–child functioning connection. In this complementary perspective, it is simply suggested that the child's feeling of emotional security in the family is threatened by interparental conflict, which in turn leads to various negative child outcomes (Harold & Sellers, 2018). The notion of emotional security is indeed taken from the attachment literature (Bowlby, 1982) and expanded by the researchers within the scope of the ESH framework. Furthermore, according to this framework, children might get worried about at least two major things in the context of parental discord: their own well-being and their family's well-being or unity (Davies & Cummings, 1994; Cummings & Davies, 1996). In other words, it is suggested that children witnessing interparental conflict may be afraid of not only the breakdown of their relationships with their parents, namely for themselves, but also the breakdown of their parents' relationships, namely their family. These fears might cause them to exhibit various behaviors in response.

More specifically, the ESH (Davies & Cummings, 1994; Davies & Martins, 2013) proposes that interparental conflict negatively affects three interrelated areas of children's functioning, and emotional security plays a mediating role in shaping these impacts by means of affecting behavioral, affective, and cognitive processes. First, children who are exposed to repeated conflictual situations in the family show elevated negative feelings such as anger, sadness, or fear, as a result of emotional reactivity. It means that they get more frequently and easily distressed in the face of various adverse situations. Second, as noted previously, children's representations of familial relations are likely to be affected in that children tend to generalize the outcomes of the conflict between parents to the other family relationships. Third, children might get motivated to intervene in or abstain from the ongoing conflict, which also motivates them into

regulating their exposure to interparental conflict. With regard to these explanations of the ESH (Davies & Cummings, 1994, 1998), several researchers pointed out that the effect of interparental conflict on children's adjustment, or maladjustment, is determined by how much these aspects of emotional security is negatively affected by the conflict, and how successfully children handle the regulation of this emotional disruption (e.g., Cummings & Davies, 2010; Davies & Martin, 2013; El-Sheikh & Elmore-Staton, 2004; Harold & Sellers, 2018).

One of the initial support for this hypothesis came from the Davies and Cummings' own study in which they found that children with greater histories of conflictual parental interactions tended to appraise parental discord significantly more threatening to their own well-being and the unity of their family (Davies & Cummings, 1998). Moreover, in this study, insecurity in family appraisals of children was found to be linked with internalizing adjustment problems in particular. They pointed that perceived potential influence of interparental conflict on the family by children played a role in understanding how they would react over the course of conflict (Davies & Cummings, 1998).

Further studies also provided supporting evidence for the mediational role of emotional security proposed by the ESH in explaining relations between interparental conflict and children's problems (Buhler et al., 2007; Cummings et al., 2006; Davies et al., 2002; Harold et al., 2004; Siffert & Schwarz, 2011; Sturge-Apple et al., 2008). Although most of these previous studies did not address emotion regulation as a separate variable, they indeed included it as one of the three interrelated elements of emotional security as explained through the ESH (Davies & Cummings, 1994). For instance, in their study analyzing emotional security as a composite construct including emotion regulation as one aspect along with the other two, Davies and his colleagues (2002) demonstrated that emotional security served as a mediator role in the association between interparental conflict and children's behavioral problems, both externalizing and internalizing. Similarly, studying the same issue in older children, Mann and

Gilliom (2004) documented mediational effects of college students' emotional security and their self-reported conflict appraisals on the relation between conflictual parental relationships and their adjustment.

Among these studies, two of them indeed examined emotion regulation distinctly from the other two aspects of emotional security, namely children's internal representations and conflict regulation (Buehler et al., 2007; Harold et al., 2004). For example, Buehler and his colleagues (2007) investigated the mediational role of emotional dysregulation in the association between interparental conflict and problematic child behaviors. Their findings also provided evidence for this mediation by showing that emotion dysregulation mediated the link between marital discord and internalizing problems of children.

Therefore, this well-recognized mediating role of emotional security, and particularly emotion regulation as a separate construct, in the literature could be signaling the potential adverse effects of interparental conflict on children's ability to regulate their emotions. Along these lines, Siffert and Schwarz (2011) argued that children's constant exposure to conflictual parental relationships may diminish children's regulation capacities of negative emotions such as anger, sadness, and fear. Over time, it starts to be more difficult for children to keep emotion regulation, which in turn leads into maladjustment behaviors.

In the literature, there are more suggested links between interparental conflict and emotion regulation such as insufficient modelling of emotion regulation in the context of interparental conflicts, or indirect associations of interparental conflict on emotion regulation through certain family processes including parenting or wider family functioning.

1.4. THE PRESENT STUDY

In the light of the reviewed literature, it was revealed that emotional availability of parents and interparental conflict are two important constructs which are related to children's emotion regulation development. As already noted, these relations have mostly remained limited to child studies; and they have been much rarely studied with adult populations. However, many theories claim that internal models formed in childhood predict adult regulation capacity, although it has not been studied directly. For example, the classical psychoanalytic theory claims that the contents of the early experiences were repressed; and their effects appeared in adulthood (Freud, 1915/1961). Object relations theory, on the other hand, claims that the baby transforms its experiences with the significant others into representations and repeated object relations are rigidized and create object relations constellations (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983). That is, this theory argues that these rigidized object relational constellations constitute the main determinants of personality in adulthood. Finally, attachment theory, by internalizing the relationship with the caregiver through the internal working model and mentalization capacity, claims that early experiences are related to affect regulation in adulthood (Fonagy & Target, 1997). Considering these theoretical claims, it seems promising to study the effect of certain early family processes on emotion regulation in adulthood, which might enable to see whether these early periods of life have carryover effects on later periods.

Therefore, the present study aims to investigate how adults' current emotion regulation difficulties are affected by (1) their perceptions of each parent's emotional availability, and (2) their perceptions of past conflictual relationships between their parents they were exposed to while growing up.

In line with these purposes, in the present study, emotion regulation is regarded as a multi-dimensional and complex construct including a set of abilities ranging from the awareness and understanding of emotions to the flexible use of contextually

appropriate emotion regulation strategies (Gratz & Roemer, 2004). As for the potential predictors of this phenomenon, on the one hand, emotional availability of each parent is explored through the perceptions of their adult children. Unlike past research addressing only one parent's emotional availability, which is mostly the mother's, the present study focuses on both parents' emotional availability by assessing them separately. This is expected to enable to see the comparative predictive power of each parent's perceived emotional availability on their children's emotion regulation. On the other hand, interparental conflict is examined as a potential predictor of emotion regulation, based on the children's retrospective perceptions. Similar to the other constructs, interparental conflict is approached as a multidimensional construct with a special reference to the conflict properties and appraisals of conflict, perceived threat and self-blame. This multidimensionality is argued to reveal differential effects of each dimension on emotion regulation difficulties. Additionally, given that each construct has a multidimensional nature, the study also aimed to explore their potential interrelationships. Building upon these stated aims of the study, the following hypotheses were expected:

1) The perceptions of adults on the emotional availability of their parents will separately predict the difficulties experienced by them in emotion regulation.
2) The perceptions of adults on the conflict properties of their parents' conflicts while they were growing up will significantly predict the difficulties experienced by them in emotion regulation.
3) Perceived threat of adults in their parents' conflicts while they were growing up will significantly predict the difficulties experienced by them in emotion regulation.
4) Self-blame perceptions of adults in their parents' conflicts while they were growing up will significantly predict the difficulties experienced by them in emotion regulation.

CHAPTER 2
METHOD

This chapter explains the methodology that have been adopted and implemented throughout the present study. It consists of four sub-sections which respectively provide information about the participants, data collection instruments, procedures, and data analyses.

2.1. PARTICIPANTS

The present study aimed to collect data from people whose ages are above the age of 18 in order to ensure they are authorized to consent for their own participation. Hence, all the participants involved in the study were aged 18 and above. Apart from the age restriction, there were no other participation criteria.

According to GPower 3.1 (Faul et al., 2009), the minimum sample size for the current study was suggested to be 196 to get a power of .80 with an effect size of .05. In this study, it was aimed to exceed the minimum number of 196 considering the potential of having missing data. The data collection process was stopped after the number of participants reached to 826. Since 2 out of 826 participants were younger than 18 years of age, they were excluded from the analyses, and 271 out of 826 were also excluded from the analyses because they did not complete one or more of the relevant measures in the study. In the end, 553 participants' data were included in the analyses.

To begin with, the age of the participants varied between 18 and 57 (M = 26.68, SD = 7.36). As to their gender, 22.8% of the participants were male, and 75.6% were female, and 1.6% did not specify their gender.

As for their relationship status, while 52.3% of the participants stated that they were not in a relationship, 45.6% noted that they were in a relationship. The remaining

2.2% did not indicate whether they had a relationship or not. When looking at their marital status, 74.1% of the participants were reported to be single, 23.7% were married, 0.7% were divorced, and 1.4% left this question unanswered.

When the distribution of participants was checked according to their educational background, it was seen that 1.4% of the participants had primary education degree, 29.1% had high school degree, 51.9% had 2-year college or bachelor's degree, and 15.9% had graduate degrees. It was also seen that 1.6% of the participants left this question unanswered.

When the participants were asked whether they were students or not at the course of data collection, 59.1% of the participants reported that they were students. While 39.1% stated that they were not students, this question was not answered by the rest 1.8%. Another demographic variable was about the participants' current job status. For this question, 8.1% of respondents stated that they worked in a part-time or full-time job, while 48.5% of them reported that they did not work in any job. The remaining 3.4% did not answer to this question.

In addition, the participants were asked to describe their socio-economic levels. Nearly half of the participants (41.6%) described their socio-economic levels as middle, 18.1% as middle-lower, 16.3% as upper-middle, 10.5% as lower level, and 1.4% as upper level. Finally, with regard to receiving any psychological support up until now, 62.2% of the participants reported that they received no psychological support (from a psychological counselor, psychologist or psychiatrist), while 35.8% stated that they received psychological support, even if at least one session.

2.2. INSTRUMENTS

The instruments used to collect the study data were as follows: Demographic Information Form, Lum Emotional Availability of Parents (LEAP; Lum & Phares,

2005) to measure perceptions of participants about their parents' emotional availability, Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict Scale (CPIC; Grych et al., 1992) to measure participants' perceptions about interparental conflict when they were growing up, and Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS; Gratz & Roemer, 2004) to measure their current emotional regulation difficulties.

2.2.1. Demographic Information Form

In the demographic information form (See Appendix A), participants were asked about basic background characteristics including their age, gender, marital status, number of siblings, order of birth, whether their father and mother is alive or not. Six general questions about their inter-parental relations were also included in this form to provide the researcher with an overall picture (i.e., How was the relationship between your parents when you were child? How is the relationship between your parents now?).

2.2.2. Lum Emotional Availability of Parents (LEAP)

Lum and Phares (2005) created the scale of Lum Emotional Availability of Parents (LEAP) to measure perceptions of children about their parent's emotional availability. As noted earlier, this measure originally targeted older age groups including adolescents and young adults. Further, the use of the measure was extended to varying ages of adults. In this scale, participants are asked to respond to the same 15 items by thinking about their mothers and fathers separately. The range of their responses was 1 (never) to 6 (always). According to the results of their studies in clinical and non-clinical samples, the scale shows a single factor structure which is defined as emotional availability of the parent. Internal reliability of the scale as indicated by Cronbach alpha is excellent for both clinical (α = .92 for the mother form; α = .93 for the father form) and non-clinical (α = .96 for the mother form; α = .97 for

the father form) samples. Test-retest reliability was reported as .92 for the mother form and .85 for the father form. The high scores on the scale indicate high emotional availability of the parent to whom the relevant form is related.

Turkish adaptation of the LEAP was conducted by Gökçe (2013) in her unpublished master thesis (See Appendix B). As in the original study, Gökçe (2013) also found one-dimensional factor structure for the mother and father forms in Turkish with the same number of items. Cronbach's alpha, internal consistency coefficient, was .95 for the mother form and .97 for the father form. When the item-test correlation was evaluated, the values of the mother form varied between .65. and .83; and the values of the father form ranged from .76 to .86.

2.2.3. Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict (CPIC) Scale

The CPIC scale was developed to measure perceptions, interpretations, and reactions of adolescents about the conflicts between their parents (Grych, et al., 1992). There are also studies in which the CPIC scale was used to measure perceptions and responses of adults about past conflicts between their parents (Herzog & Cooney, 2002; Cusimano & Rigs, 2013; Moura et al., 2010; Ross & Fuertes, 2010). The CPIC is a three-factor scale consisting of 48 items and nine subscales: Conflict Properties with 18 items (resolution, frequency, intensity), Threat to Self with 16 items (threat to self, coping efficacy, triangulation), and Self-Blame with 14 items (self-blame, content, stability). For each item, participants indicated what they think about that statement is on a 3-point scale with the response options of false (0), sort of true (1) and true (2). Getting higher scores on the CPIC indicates that the participant has more negative retrospective memories about his/her parent's conflicts. In detail, high score from the sub-scale of "Conflict Characteristics" indicates that the child perceives conflict more often as well as perceiving its content more severe and insolvable. Similarly, high score from the sub-scale of "Perceived Threat" represents that the child perceives more

threats due to the conflict while high score from the sub-scale of "Self-Blame" shows that the child blames himself/herself more. Internal reliability coefficients for Conflict Properties, Perceived Threat and Self-Blame were .90, .84, and .83, respectively. Test-retest reliability scores were .70, .68, and .76 for Conflict Properties, Perceived Threat and Self-Blame, respectively (Grych et al., 1992). In the same study (Grych et al., 1992), the researchers supported the validity of the CPIC through the correlations between CPIC scores and parent's self-reports on their marital conflicts.

Ulu and Fışıloğlu (2004) adapted the CPIC scale to Turkish. The structure of factors in the Turkish version were found the same as in the original, but the number of items were reduced to 35. The items related to frequency, severity, and solution of conflict constitute the sub-scale of "Conflict Properties," the items related to perceived threat and coping mechanisms constitute the sub-scale of "Perceived Threat," and finally the items related to content and self-blame constitute the sub-scale of "Self-Blame." Internal reliability coefficients for Conflict Properties, Perceived Threat and Self-Blame were .84, .78, and .77, respectively. Two-week test-retest reliability scores obtained in the Turkish version were .88, .77, and .77 for Conflict Properties, Perceived Threat and Self-Blame, respectively.

It is noteworthy that in the present study, the Turkish version of CPIC was used with a minor change in the instruction by leading the participants into thinking their experiences while they were growing up. Also, as done in the study of Mann and Gilliom (2004), the tenses of the items have been accordingly changed into the past form rather than present as in the original (See Appendix C).

2.2.4. Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS)

Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS) was a six-factor self-report measure developed to assess difficulties in different dimensions of emotion regulation (Gratz & Roemer, 2004). Six subscales of the DERS as follows: (a) non-acceptance of

emotional responses (non-acceptance); (b) difficulties in engaging goal-directed behavior (goals); (c) impulse control difficulties (impulse); (d) lack of emotional awareness (awareness); (e) limited access to emotion regulation strategies (strategies); (f) lack of emotional clarity (clarity). The DERS includes 36 items rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale. In this scale, higher scores represent more difficulties in emotion regulation. Cronbach alpha for the whole scale was .93 which indicates high internal reliability. Cronbach alpha for the subscales varied between .80 and .89. Test-retest reliability was found as .88 with the total number of 21 participants.

Rugancı and Gençöz (2010) adapted the DERS into Turkish and conducted reliability and validity studies (See Appendix D). Cronbach alpha for the whole scale in this Turkish version was found as .94 which indicated high internal consistency. Cronbach alpha for the subscales ranged from .75 to .90, and test-retest reliability coefficients was .83 with the total number of 59 participants. Also, Guttman split-half coefficient was found as .95. The structure of factors in the Turkish version were found the same as in the original except for the omission of just one item (item 10 in the original scale) from Awareness subscale.

2.3. PROCEDURE

After obtaining the approval of institutional human studies ethics board, an online questionnaire which includes the primary study instruments; Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict Scale (CPIC), Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS), Lum Emotional Availability of Parents (LEAP), as well as the demographic information form and consent form (See Appendix E), was created on an online survey platform. Data collection was launched by sharing the questionnaire link through social media accounts and email groups.

After clicking the questionnaire link, the volunteers first encountered an informed consent form. Upon confirming that they were informed and willing to

participate in the study, study instruments (CPIC, DERS, and LEAP) were presented in a random order. After completing the instruments, all participants encountered demographic information form as the last set of questions. It took approximately 15 minutes for all questions to be answered by the participants. In the end, participants were thanked, and contact information of the researcher was given to them for any concerns and further questions about the study. Participation in the research was absolutely voluntary, and they had the right to discontinue participation at any point. Identifying information was not asked and all data were kept confidential.

2.4. DATA ANALYSIS

The data were initially controlled for missing values, and all the participants with missing values of exceeding 5% were excluded from the analyses. Further, the descriptive analyses were conducted to check whether there was any problematic situation within the data set. In addition, before any main analyses were conducted, all required assumptions for these analyses were checked and validated. As part of the preliminary analysis step, it was also checked whether the dependent variable of the study, emotion regulation, differed according to demographic variables by ANOVA analyses. Then, a set of correlational analyses were conducted among main variables and some continuous demographic variables. Following the preliminary correlational analyses, the initial data analytic plan was to run a stepwise regression analysis with emotion regulation as dependent (outcome) variable to examine the differential predictive power of each independent variable. In this analysis, the independent variables (predictors) included perception of parents' emotional availability (father's and mother's emotional availability as two distinct variables), perceptions of past inter-parental conflict (including three distinct variables; conflict properties, perceived threat, and self-blame), and the interactions of the availability and conflict variables. On the basis of preliminary analyses, it was decided to include 3 demographic variables into the stepwise regression analysis as independent variables (i.e., participant's age,

sex, and psychological support experience). IBM SPSS Statistics V25 (IBM Corp., 2017) was used for all statistical analyses.

CHAPTER 3
RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the study. Initially, the findings related to the preliminary analyses, which respectively include the reliability scores of the scales used in the study, the descriptive statistics of each study variable, and the assumptions of the main analysis are reported. Then, the results of the correlation analysis are given to show the relations between all the study variables. Finally, the results of the main analysis, the stepwise regression, were presented at the end of the chapter.

3.1. PRELIMINARY ANALYSES

As explained above, after screening and cleaning of the data, preliminary analyses were performed to explore the nature of the data. Firstly, reliability scores were calculated by using Cronbach Alpha (See Table 4.1). All internal consistency scores of the measures were high and ranged from .77 to 97. In the current study, internal consistency for the whole DERS scale and its 6 subscales was found to be high as in the original (Gratz & Roemer, 2004) and Turkish version of the scale (Rugancı & Gençöz, 2010). Also, internal reliability of the LEAP was so high as they were in both the original (Lum & Phares, 2005) and Turkish version of the LEAP (Gökçe, 2013). Finally, internal consistency coefficients of the subscales of CPIC were higher than both the values of the original scale (Grych et al., 1992) and the values of the Turkish version (Ulu & Fışıloğlu, 2004). Therefore, all scales and subscales were found to be reliable.

Table 4. 1. Reliability Scores of All Scales

	Cronbach's α
Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS) Total	.94
Non-acceptance	.89
Goals	.89
Impulse	.87
Awareness	.77
Strategies	.89
Clarity	.87
Childrens' Perception of Interparental Conflict Scale (CPIC)	
Conflict Properties	.95
Perceived Threat	.87
Self-Blame	.83
Lum's Emotional Availability of Parents Scale (LEAP)	
Mother Form	.96
Father Form	.97

Given that all subscales were reliable; scores were calculated as instructed by the developers of the scales. Next, the descriptive statistics were calculated (see Table 4.2). In brief, the mean scores of the emotional availability for both parents were above the mid-point. Also, the emotional availability of the mothers was higher than the fathers', t (552) = 14.091, $p < .001$. As for the perceptions of interparental conflict, all three dimensions' mean scores (i.e., conflict properties, perceived threat, and self-blame) were below the mid-point. However, in particular, the mean score of self-blame aspect was quite low.

Table 4. 2 Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables

	M	*SD*	Min.	Max.
Emotional Availability Mother	4.83	1.12	1	6
Emotional Availability Father	4.08	1.36	1	6
CPIC Conflict Properties	15.78	9.33	0	34
CPIC Perceived Threat	8.27	4.97	0	18
CPIC Self Blame	1.35	2.29	0	14
DERS Non-acceptance	12.65	5.38	6	30
DERS Goals	15.89	4.69	5	25
DERS Impulse	12.64	4.75	6	30
DERS Awareness	12.21	3.60	5	25
DERS Strategies	19.22	7.00	8	40
DERS Clarity	11.15	3.79	5	25
DERS Total	83.76	21.82	39	148

The distributions of main variables were checked, and all of them could be accepted as normal except for Self-Blame subscale of the Childrens' Perception of Interparental Conflict. In Self-Blame subscale, 58.2% of the participants had a total score of 0, which resulted in a floor effect. Therefore, a dummy variable was created for the Self-Blame subscale. According to that, those having a self-blame score of 0 were coded as 0 and those having a self-blame score of 1-14 were coded as 1. Hereinafter, for the Self-Blame subscale, this newly created dummy variable was included in the analyses. In addition, Emotional Availability of Mother and Father were found to be slightly negatively skewed, meaning that participants piled up around higher scores. Skewness and kurtosis scores of all variables (except for Self-Blame subscale) were between the acceptable range of ± 2 (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2013). Also,

there was no violation of assumptions of homoscedasticity and multicollinearity so all assumptions for the analyses were validated. There were no outliers for any variable.

3.2. RELATIONS BETWEEN DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS AND DIFFICULTIES IN EMOTION REGULATION

The relationships between the dependent variable of emotion regulation difficulties and some demographic variables were examined because some of the demographic variables are known to be related to the dependent variable from the literature review, and some others are thought to have unforeseen relationships with it.

Based on the current literature, it was considered that the age of the participants could have a significant relationship with emotion regulation difficulties. According to the correlational analyses, although a weak negative correlation was found between age and emotion regulation difficulties, this relation was significant, $r(535) = -.238$, $p < .001$. That is, as the age of the participants increase in this sample, the level of the emotion regulation difficulties they reported decrease. As age was found to be significantly associated with emotion regulation, it was controlled in further analyses.

To test whether there is a gender difference on the scores of emotion regulation or not, an ANCOVA was conducted with age as the covariate. Men ($M = 77.69$, $SD = 20.30$) reported significantly less difficulties in emotion regulation than women ($M = 85.58$, $SD = 22.07$), $F(1, 531) = 7.62$, $p < .01$.

In addition, to understand if receiving psychological support even once in their lives has an impact on their emotion regulation or not, an ANCOVA was run by assigning participants' age as a covariate. Those who have received psychological support even once in their lives ($M = 90.75$, $SD = 23.23$) had significantly more emotion regulation difficulties than those who have not ($M = 79.84$, $SD = 20.13$), $F(1, 529) = 35.679$, $p < .001$.

All other demographic variables (i.e., relationship status, marital status, parental loss experience, education level, and perceived income) lost their main effects after controlling the effect of age by ANCOVA, so none of them, except for age, sex, and psychological support, was included into the main analysis.

3.3. RELATIONS BETWEEN EMOTIONAL AVAILABILITY, INTERPARENTAL CONFLICT, AND EMOTION REGULATION

In order to see the relations between all the main variables, correlation analyses were conducted (See Table 4.3). The results revealed that participants' perceptions about their mother's emotional availability were significantly correlated with their emotional regulation difficulties, and this correlation was negative, r (553) = -.225, p < .001. Similarly, a negative significant correlation between participants' perceptions about their father's emotional availability and their emotional regulation difficulties was found, r(553) = -.289, p < .001.

Also, significant positive correlations were found between interparental conflict subscales, conflict properties, perceived threat and self-blame, and emotion regulation difficulties. As can be seen in Table 4.3, moderate, significant positive correlation between conflict properties and emotional regulation difficulties was found, r(553) = .323, pc< .001. It means that as people's perception about the severity and frequency of interparental conflicts increases, problems they experience in emotion regulation increase. In addition, another moderate, significant positive correlation between perceived threat and emotion regulation difficulties was found, r (553) = .328, p < .001. It means that as the children's feelings of being under threat by interparental conflict when they were growing up increase, their current difficulties regarding emotion regulation increase. Finally, self-blame and emotion regulation difficulties also appeared to have a weak, yet significant, correlation, r_{pb}(553) = .194, p < .001. That is,

if the children had feelings of guilt about their parent's conflicts when they were growing, their current difficulties in regulating their emotions increase.

Table 4. 3 Correlations Between Main Variables of the Study

	Emotional Availability Mother	Emotional Availability Father	CPIC Conflict Properties	CPIC Perceived Threat	CPIC Self Blame[a]
DERS Non-acceptance	-.169**	-.235**	.198**	.228**	.209**
DERS Goals	-.144**	-.127**	.225**	.253**	.094*
DERS Impulse	-.151**	-.236**	.326**	.288**	.218**
DERS Awareness	-.163**	-.225**	.142**	.114**	.045
DERS Strategies	-.182**	-.233**	.286**	.307**	.146**
DERS Clarity	-.197**	-.235**	.226**	.217**	.118**
DERS Total	-.225**	-.289**	.323**	.328**	.194**

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

[a]. Correlation coefficients between Self-Blame and other variables were point-biserial correlation coefficients due to dichotomic structure of the Self-Blame in the present study.

3.4. FACTORS THAT PREDICT DIFFICULTIES IN EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Following the correlational analyses, a stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted to see comparative predictive power of different dimensions of each variable (i.e., emotional availability of mother, emotional availability of father, conflict properties, perceived threat and self-blame) on emotion regulation difficulties. It was also considered appropriate to put the other three variables of age, gender, and psychological support, into the analysis since they were found to be related to emotion regulation difficulties in the preliminary analyses. In addition, six interaction terms between independent variables were created to be Included in the analysis (Mother's Availability x Conflict Properties, Mother's Availability x Perceived Threat, Mother's

Availability x Self Blame, Father's Availability x Conflict Properties, Father's Availability x Perceived Threat, Father's Availability x Self Blame) to explore the potential effect of these interactions on emotion regulation difficulties. In the analysis, the total score of Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale was identified as the dependent variable. The scores of children's perceptions of their mothers' and fathers' emotional availability, the scores of the three subscales of the CPIC, which are Conflict Properties, Perceived Threat and Self Blame, six interaction terms, and three demographic variables were put into the model as independent variables.

The summary of the stepwise regression models is presented in the Table 4.4. As can be seen in the final step, the model explains 23.6% of the variance in emotion regulation difficulty. Five of the independent variables put into the model appeared as significant predictors: Perceived Threat, Age, Psychological Support, Father's Emotional Availability, and Self-Blame, $F(5,525) = 32.424$, $p < .001$. However, the interaction terms between the independent variables created to address the exploratory aim of the study did not get any significant predictive power on emotion regulation difficulties.

Among the variables in the model tested, Perceived Threat was found to have more predictive power than the others (See the Table 4.5). More specifically, a one-unit change in perceived threat when interparental conflict occurs resulted in an increase in reported difficulties in emotion regulation by .893. The second powerful predictor of the model was found to be age. As such, a one-unit increase in age decreased the expressed difficulties in emotion regulation by .664.

Table 4. 4. Model Summary of Stepwise Regression Analysis (N = 553)

Model	R	R^2	*Adjusted* R^2	*SE of the Estimate*	R^2 *Change*	*F Change*	*df1*	*df2*
1	.338[a]	.114	.112	20.67760	.114	68.114	1	529
2	.397[b]	.158	.155	20.18060	.044	27.377	1	528
3	.445[c]	.198	.193	19.71504	.040	26.231	1	527
4	.476[d]	.227	.221	19.36939	.029	19.977	1	526
5	.486[e]	.236	.229	19.27583	.009	6.118	1	525

a. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived Threat
b. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived Threat, Age
c. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived Threat, Age, Psychological Support
d. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived Threat, Age, Psychological Support, Emotional Availability of the Father
e. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived Threat, Age, Psychological Support, Emotional Availability of the Father, Self-Blame

The third predictor of the model was the psychological support. Receiving psychological support even once in the past could lead a higher level of emotional regulation difficulties by .8332. Following psychological support, father's emotional availability was found as the fourth predictor in the model. A one-unit increase in the emotional availability of the father would result in a decrease of emotional difficulties experienced by the participants by 2.885. The final and the weakest predictor of emotion regulation difficulty was self-blame. Having blaming themselves for interparental conflicts while growing up was observed to increase emotion regulation difficulty experiences as an adult by 4.349. by children.

Table 4. 5. Stepwise Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Emotion Regulation Difficulties (*N* = 553)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	B SE	β	*t*	*p*
(Constant)	101.211	4.983		20.312	.000
Perceived Threat	.893	.187	.202	4.783	.000
Age	-.664	.114	-.223	-5.807	.000
Psychological Support	8.332	1.769	.183	4.711	.000
Father's Emotional Availability	-2.885	.663	-.179	-4.351	.000
Self-Blame	4.349	1.758	.098	2.474	.014

In sum, perceived emotional availability of the father, but not the mother, was associated with lower levels of emotion regulation difficulty as an adult. Both perceived threat and self-blame aspects of perceived parental conflict during childhood were associated with emotion regulation difficulties in adulthood. Conflict properties on the other hand did not contribute to the model as a significant predictor. As to the background variables, age and psychological support were found to be significant predictors. However, gender did not appear as a significant predictor.

CHAPTER 4
DISCUSSION

4.1. DISCUSSION OF THE MAIN FINDINGS

The main aim of the study was to test whether adults' perceptions of their parents' past interparental conflict and each parent's emotional availability predict their

current emotion regulation difficulties. The finding regarding this main aim are discussed in detail below.

4.1.1. Emotional Availability of Parents and Emotion Regulation Difficulties

In the correlational analyses, to test whether there is a relation between perceived emotional availability of each parent and emotion regulation difficulties, it was found that both parents' emotional availabilities had significant negative relationships with emotion regulation difficulties. These findings were consistent with the existing literature to some extent (i.e., for mothers Little & Carter, 2005; for both parents Volling et al., 2002). As for the main analysis regarding the emotional availability construct, the first hypothesis of the current study was tested. It was expected that the perceived emotional availability of each parent would separately predict the current difficulties experienced by adult children in emotion regulation. This hypothesis was partially confirmed; that is, only the perceived emotional availability of the fathers, but not the mothers', appeared to be a significant predictor of emotion regulation difficulties experienced by adult children in the present study. To the best our knowledge, there is no study which directly links the fathers' perceived emotional availability to emotion regulation difficulties of children. In the emotional availability literature, there are no studies in which we could mention the involvement of the effect of fathers' emotional availability on the emotion regulation of their children. Only study we can mention here about the fathers' emotional availability is Volling et al.'s study (2002) in which they investigated the relationship between fathers' emotional availability and their infant's emotional competence, but not emotional regulation. They found a significant relationship between these two constructs and this relationship is consistent with the present study's finding. However, considering the relation of the mothers' emotional availability to children's emotion regulation difficulties, the literature offers relatively wider selection of studies (e.g., Field, 1994; Kim et al., 2014; Kogan & Carter, 1996; Little & Carter, 2005). Although

the hypothesis of the present study, suggesting a significant relationship between mothers' perceived emotional availability by their children and these children's emotion regulation difficulties, was in line with the findings of previous studies in the literature (e.g., Field, 1994; Little & Carter, 2005), it was not confirmed herein, and the present study produced inconsistent results with the existing literature.

At first glance, this might seem surprising; however, considering the scarcity of studies investigating the emotional availability of each parent separately, this finding could be regarded as promising. That is to say, unlike the previous studies, the present study used two separate scores for each parent's perceived emotional availability and separately examined the relationship between these two scores and emotion regulation difficulties experienced by children. This raised the question whether previous studies would have found similar results to those of the present study if they had also investigated the perceived emotional availability of the mothers and fathers as two separate constructs. Since it is not possible to make such methodological changes to previous studies, they could only be suggested for further studies. In addition, this finding does not mean that the emotional availability of mothers is not influential in emotion regulation development. Instead, this finding might be a result of the fact that the mothers in the present study were perceived highly emotionally available by most of the participants. Hence, it does not bring enough variance to see its effect on this sample. Further studies can be conducted with samples which might include larger variance regarding the mothers' emotional availability. Suggestions will be later discussed; however, a more detailed discussion will be now held on the current finding of the study.

In brief, the present study demonstrated that although fathers were considered less emotionally available than mothers by adult children, their perceived emotional availability, rather than the mothers', appeared as one of the factors explaining the adult children's current difficulties in emotion regulation. As abovementioned, there are

studies investigating the effect of only mothers' emotional availability on emotion regulation of children whereas there is almost no study looking at this issue by focusing separately or only on fathers' emotional availability. Although the emotional availability of fathers has not been directly related to emotion regulation difficulties of children by any study in the literature; there are still some studies which could be addressed for the purpose of supporting the finding of the present study. For example, some studies have stated that the emotional availability of fathers has a significant relationship with children's externalizing problems (e.g., Clay et al. 2017; Lum & Phares, 2005). It is worth noting that in these studies, the emotional availability of mothers was also associated with both externalizing and internalizing problems of children; however, they are still pointing to the significant role of fathers' emotional availability in the emotional development of children especially when we think the relationship between emotion regulation and externalizing problems (Mullin & Hinshaw, 2007).

Besides, it is suggested that there is an increase in the number of the studies investigating the roles of the father in the children development along with the fathers' changing and increasing roles in the present era (Lamb, 2010). The paternal play and father's involvement literatures offer two relatively recent lines of research that show how the father plays an important role in the emotional development of children.

As Parke (1994) states, physical play, in which children are mostly accompanied by their fathers, could provide them with the opportunity to learn how to regulate their stimulation levels according to those of a partner. This kind of father-child play, often described as father-directed, emotionally-loaded, intrusive, instable, and unpredictable, is expected to push children into develop adaptation skills which later appear in the shape of emotion regulation (e.g., Barth & Parke, 1993; Paquette, 2004). In theoretical terms, it is put forth that emotion regulation strategies are initially explored by virtue of mother-child relationships; however, what puts these initially

learned strategies into practice is the father-child interactions, mostly emerging as a result of the father-child play (Paquette, 2004; Paquette et al., 2003). In other words, it is believed that emotion regulation strategies, which are early practiced in a playful and exhilarating environment with fathers, form the basis of subsequent emotion regulation in children. Such attributes of the father-child play as being instable, unpredictable, challenging but excitatory in nature, encourage children, who do not want to miss the enjoyment of the play, to challenge safety borders, take risks and appropriate their emotional responses (Paquette, 2004; Paquette et al., 2003).

In addition, paternal dominance established through positive regard during the father-child play was also found to provide children to avoid aggressive behaviors and regulate their emotions through setting effective limits (Flanders et al., 2010). According to Paquette (2004) since the message of "I love you (affective component), I'm stronger than you (agonistic component)" (p. 208) is non-verbally given in an unthreatening, playful context through fathers, children are encouraged to regulate their emotions and resist to giving aggressive responses to unpredictable emotional stimuli. Regarding the significance of early healthy interactions with fathers, one study investigated the impact of early paternal depression on the further development of children (Fletcher et al., 2011). The results indicated that since depressed fathers were less likely engaged in physical plays with their children, these children became more prone to various subsequent behavior problems, and of particular interest, to difficulties in emotion regulation.

In addition to the paternal play literature, studies conducted within the framework of father involvement have also potential for providing explanations for the present study's findings regarding the importance of the fathers' perceived emotional availability in children's emotion regulation. In general terms, this line of research points out that while father involvement is positively associated with less child problems and more child well-being (e.g., Allgood et al., 2012; Carlson, 2006; Flouri

& Buchanan, 2003; Mischel et al., 1988; for a review, see Wilson & Prior, 2011), depriving of involved fathers leads to numerous negative consequences for children, psychological, behavioral or emotional (e.g., Carlson, 2006; Choi & Jackson, 2011; Easterbrooks & Goldberg, 1990).

Of particular relevance, Mischel and colleagues (1988) found that children having involved fathers had better problem-solving skills, adaptive capabilities, and greater tolerance towards stressful and frustrating situations compared to those whose fathers were not involved and available. In a similar vein, another study revealed that children of involved fathers exhibited better skills of managing their emotions in a flexible and adaptive manner as well as exhibiting lower levels of impulsivity (Easterbrooks & Goldberg, 1990). The findings of these two studies are in line with the present study's finding that adult children perceiving their father emotionally more available had less emotion regulation difficulties than those with fathers perceived as emotionally less available. While these studies pointed to a concurrent relationship between father's emotional availability and problems in childhood, the present study took it beyond by indicating that this association could be still observed in later years of life.

Last but not least, the study result regarding the father's perceived emotional availability could be discussed from a psychoanalytic perspective with special reference to the paternal function in the pertinent literature. As suggested in a recent conceptualization of the term, the paternal functionary has a multi-faceted nature, being composed of distinct but interrelated dimensions (Davies & Eagle, 2013). Two of these dimensions are particularly important to be discussed in relation to the study finding, "separating third" and "affect management facilitator".

To begin with, it is well acknowledged in the psychoanalytic literature that the father plays a crucial role in facilitating the separation of the infant from the primary caregiver, mostly the mother, and this separation is considered essential for the infant

to develop an independent existence, or the self (Mahler, 1972; Seligman, 1982; Winnicott, 1987). Important to note, while addressing the separating aspect of paternal functionary, contemporary scholars underline a distinction between physical and psychological aspects of this separation. That is, the paternal separating function is important not so much because it enables the infant to physically separate from the mother, but rather because it enables the infant to recognize that s/he can psychologically survive without being merged with the mother (Davies & Eagle, 2013; Miller, 2002). In a way, the separator presents the infant the existence of other systems which s/he can attend or engage in. Thus, the infant's early interactions with the father, his/her engaging third, seem vital that they provide "finding the right emotional distance at every moment" through encouragement and perversion (Maiello, 2007, p. 42). In addition, through helping the management of the emotional distance, the father, as a third, provides the child with protection against the potential negative feelings which could come from the mother during the primary maternal preoccupation (Winnicott, 1956). Taking up all these notions, it could be suggested the father, as a third, has an important role in supporting the child's psychological and emotional capacities.

Indeed, the second dimension of the paternal functionary, affect facilitator, is particularly more felicitous to provide explanations for the role of the father's emotional availability in children's emotion regulation. Several scholars have clearly pointed to the significant role of the father in enhancing the children's capacity for emotion management (e.g., Herzog, 1988, 2001; Lemche & Stockler, 2002). It has been suggested that there is a qualitative difference between the mother's and father's early interactions with the child, so it is the latter which enables the child to handle strong affect and tolerate frustration. Along similar lines, Tabin (2004) notes that the father helps the child to develop greater emotional flexibility towards various life situations. Lemche and Stockler (2002) state further "the father, particularly in his role as a

significant other who is not the mother, has central significance for the acquisition of competence in the regulation of emotions" (p. 144).

In brief, we can conclude that the father enables the child to experience, express, and regulate emotions by both being emotionally available, as an alternative third, and keeping a healthy emotional distance between him and the mother.

4.1.2. Children's Perceptions of Interparental Conflict and Emotion Regulation Difficulties

The last three hypotheses of the present study which were related to three dimensions of interparental conflict (i.e., conflict properties, perceived threat, and self-blame) were tested. Although these three dimensions were all expected to predict emotion regulation separately, only two of them, namely perceived threat and self-blame, were found to significantly predict emotion regulation difficulties. The other aspect, conflict properties, including the conflict frequency, intensity and resolution, did not appear as a significant predictor as expected. Although this aspect of conflict properties was significantly correlated with emotion regulation difficulties at a moderate level, the strength of its relationship considerably decreased after the entrance of the dimension of perceived threat into the model at the first step. Further, after the other four variables were respectively entered into the model, the conflict properties lost its significance to the last step of the model.

With respect to interparental conflict, it was seen that adult children's appraisals of their parents' past conflictual relationships, either as perceived threat or self-blame, predicted their current emotion difficulties, whereas the properties of these past marital discords did not have such a predictive power. Given that no equivalent study, including all the dimensions of interparental conflict in relation to emotion regulation, has been encountered in the review of the pertinent literature, the respective findings of the present study could not be directly linked to any previous findings. However,

there is an immense literature addressing all these constructs in related theoretical and empirical contexts into the current study.

To begin with, although almost no study has directly investigated the association between interparental conflict, including its all dimensions, and emotion regulation, there is a large number of studies looking at the links between child perceptions of interparental conflict and some other child-related issues such as adjustment problems, externalizing and internalizing behaviors, physical health problems, and academic problems which are all indeed closely related to emotion regulation (Gross, 2014). Amongst, one of the research areas, in which we could find supporting evidence for the present study's findings, includes research conducted in the framework of cognitive-contextual model (Grych & Fincham, 1990). As comprehensively explained in the literature review, this model simply points to the mediating role of children's appraisals of interparental conflict, namely perceived threat and self-blame, in the relationship between the conflict and its adverse consequences. To put it differently, it is clearly suggested that the relation between the conflict properties and child outcomes significantly disappears after controlling perceived threat and self-blame, while these two continue to significantly predict the outcomes. The present study provided concrete evidence for the significance of children's appraisals in explaining the conflict-related consequences in a relatively novel domain, emotion regulation.

As for these studies focusing on the other children outcomes such as maladjustment, psychological disorders, and behavioral problems, a great deal of support was found for the model hypotheses and the findings of the present study. For instance, in his meta-analyses, Rhoades (2008) reviewed numerous studies, both longitudinal and cross-sectional, which indicated that children who feel threatened or guilty in the face of their parents' discords are more likely to have adjustment problems. Further, it is seen that some studies yielded empirical support for the mediational

effects of perceived threat and self-blame both internalizing and externalizing problems of children (e.g., Cummings et al., 1994; El-Sheikh & Harger, 2001; Grych et al., 2003; Shelton & Harold, 2008), while others found the mediational effect only for internalizing, rather than externalizing, problems of children (e.g., Gerard et al., 2005; Grych et al., 2000; Stocker et al., 2003). Of particular importance for the present study, in a recent research by Siffert and Schwarz (2011), it was even found that only perceived threat, but not self-blame, had a mediational role for internalizing problems. The researchers explained this non-significance link through the low variance for self-blame in their scale, in that, most of the participants in the study reported not to blame themselves in their parents' conflictual relationships.

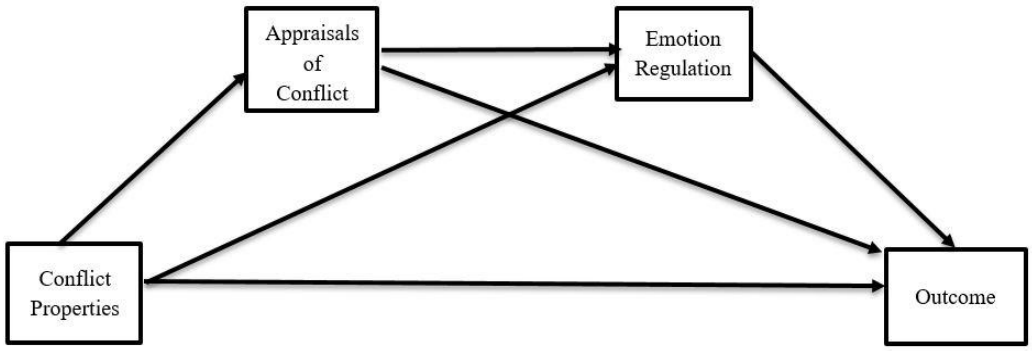
This particular finding and suggested explanation are particularly important for the present study in which although self-blame appeared as a significant predictor, its predictive power was found to be weaker compared to perceived threat. Similar to Siffert and Schwarz's study (2011), in the present study, the majority of the participants also reported not to blame themselves for the marital conflict they witnessed while growing up, so the same explanation could be valid for the present study, as well. Another possible explanation for the lower predictive power of self-blame in the study could be related to the age of the participants including young adults and beyond. That is, given that older people have more cognitive maturity, they might be more successful at recognizing their role in the past conflicts between their parents, which could enable them not to blame themselves (Grych & Fincham, 1990). This alternative explanation was also supported by the results of another recent study (Kim et al., 2008) in which the researchers found a partial, but not full, significant mediation role of self-blame in the link between interparental conflict and internalizing problems with a group of adolescents who are argued to be cognitively more mature. One final explanation for this observed difference between self-blame and perceived threat suggests that these two appraisals of interparental conflict have different developmental trajectories with threat always having primacy (McDonald & Grych, 2006).

Another research area, which provides supporting evidence for the present study's findings in this aspect, draws upon the emotional security hypothesis (ESH, Davies & Cummings, 1994), also aforementioned in detail. Unlike the present study, none of these studies focused on emotion regulation as an outcome. However, this line of research looked at the mediating role of emotion regulation in shaping the link between interparental conflict and its adverse impacts on children. First of all, according to this model, emotional security is composed of three interrelated processes, one of which is emotion regulation as well as internal representations of parents and efforts to regulate the marital conflict. Given that this model suggests that emotion regulation, despite mostly being analyzed as part of the compound variable, emotional security, has a mediating role for the negative impacts of interparental conflict on children's functioning, it is naturally implied that emotion regulation is first adversely affected by interparental conflict and then leads to conflicted-related problems. Indeed, in their seminal paper, Davies and Cummings (1994) clearly suggested that children's emotion regulation capacities are negatively influenced due to repeated exposure to conflicts between parents, which in turn increases children's maladjustment. Apart from the studies analyzing emotional security as a compound variable and confirming its mediational effect (e.g., Cummings et al., 2006; Davies & Cummings, 1998), two studies (e.g., Buehler et al., 2007; Harold et al., 2004) have checked the mediational effect of emotion regulation, as a separate construct, regarding the association between marital discord and negative child outcome. And their findings have revealed that emotion regulation has a unique mediating role in this association.

All in all, this line of research, conducted in the framework of ESH, has supported evidence for the present study's findings in terms of highlighting the effect of interparental conflict on emotion regulation. However, it is important to note that all these studies, except for one (Buehler et al., 2007), analyzed only the conflict properties rather than using them with the appraisals of the interparental conflict as in the present study. Buehler et al. (2007), and Mann and Gilliom (2004) suggested to use these two

theoretical models, cognitive-contextual model (Grych & Fincham, 1990) and emotional security hypothesis (Davies & Cummings, 1994) in an integrative way to see the unique connections of both cognitive (i.e., appraisals of the interparental conflict) and emotional (i.e., emotional security) processes with the interparental conflict and child adjustment link. Given that emotion regulation is affected by children's appraisals' of interparental conflict as seen in the present study, more complex models testing the micro-mediational chains could be suggested for further studies. That is, in such a model, the relation between the conflict properties and individual outcomes could be mediated by both individual's conflict appraisals and his/her emotion regulation, while individual's emotion regulation could be also mediated by his/her conflict appraisals. Suggested model sample is visually displayed in Figure 5.1.

Figure 5. 1 Suggested Model of Micro-Mediational Chains for the Relations between Study Variables



4.2. DISCUSSION OF FURTHER OBSERVATIONS

Although not hypothesized, the association of emotion regulation difficulties and background characteristics were examined to identify potential variables to be controlled while testing the hypotheses of the study. Age, gender, and psychological support were noted and these additional observations are briefly discussed below.

4.2.1. Age and Emotion Regulation

In the model tested, it was found that age was one of the significant predictors of emotion regulation difficulties for our sample. This finding is consistent with previous research showing that the emotion regulation capacities of the individual increase, rather than decrease, with aging (for review, see Charles, & Carstensen, 2014) despite the widely-observed linear decline in physiological, cognitive, and biological development across adulthood (e.g., McRae et al., 2012; Uchino et al., 2010; Westyle et al., 2010). Indeed, studies providing supporting evidence for the age-related finding of the present study are relatively recent in the literature. That is, considering that the widely-reported physiological, biological and cognitive decline with aging would parallel to emotion regulation capacities, early scholars did not even feel the need to test the relationship between the age and emotion regulation beyond young adulthood (Charles, & Carstensen, 2014). Hence, the role of aging in emotional processes has remained as an understudied issue in the latter half of the lifespan.

However, as already noted, there is recently a growing number of studies which reveal that increasing age is linked with increasing, or at least stable, emotional processes over the course of life (e.g., Charles, & Carstensen, 2014). More specifically, some of these studies looked at age-related changes in negative emotions (e.g., Carstensen et al., 2011; Kobau et al., 2004; Villamil et al., 2006), while others looked at age-related changes in positive emotions (e.g., Diener & Suh, 1998; Mroczek & Kolarz, 1998; Steptoe et al., 2015). Also, in some studies, both negative and positive affect were examined in relation to aging (e.g., Charles et al., 2001; Grühn et al., 2010; Mroczek & Kolarz, 1998; Stone et al., 2010).

To begin with negative affect, the examinations of people, whose ages ranged in 18 to 84, revealed no association between older age and high levels of distress (Kobau et al., 2004). Instead, in that study, it was found that depression-related feelings within a last 30-day period linearly decreased as the age increased. Other review studies

also reported similar findings that rates of anxiety and depression symptoms were lower across older age groups, 65 years old and beyond, compared to those younger (Piazza & Charles, 2006; Villamil et al., 2006). Furthermore, such age-related decrease in self-expressed negative emotions was also observed not only in longitudinal studies with non-symptomatic, normal aging populations (e.g., Cartensen et al., 2011), but also in cross-sectional studies (e.g., Grühn et al., 2010; Stone et al., 2010).

As for positive affect, there are relatively more inconsistent results regarding the relation between aging and emotional processes. However, it has been agreed upon that there is no certain negative aging effect on emotion regulation, but there is remarkable stability over time (Charles, & Carstensen, 2014). Overall, it could be stated that no change in positive emotions was observed from early adulthood to mid-adulthood as expected with physical decline, with a very small reduction seen only in those at the age of 65 and over (e.g., Charles et al., 2001; Diener & Suh, 1998). Moreover, some studies even found a linear increase in positive emotions rather than a decrease throughout the adulthood from the age of 25 to 74 (Mroczek & Kolarz, 1998). Also, two large-scale studies found that positive feelings such as enjoyment and daily happiness had a U-shaped pattern in relation to age; that is, despite a decrease observed in these feelings between the ages of 18 to 50; there was again an increase after that period between the ages of 50s to 70s (Grühn et al., 2010; Stone et al., 2010). Taken together, both decrease in negative emotions and slightly increase, or stability, in positive emotions highlighted that there was not a certain linear negative relationship between aging and emotion regulation capacities of people, which provides a good deal of supporting evidence for the present study's finding as noted above.

Furthermore, some scholars have also made theoretical attempts to explain for the aging-emotion regulation association discussed above. For instance, Socio-Emotional Selectivity Theory (Carstensen, 1991) claimed that changes in emotional regulation and well-being could come from changes in motivation with age. According to SST, as the time remaining in the world decreases, people change their focus to

present-oriented, emotion or pleasure-related goals from future-oriented success goals. It was also claimed by the SST that changes in motivation also affect cognitive processes. While the elderly focus more on positive emotions than younger ones, they stay away from negative emotions (Carstensen & Mikels, 2005; Mather & Carstensen, 2005). In addition, studies looking at brain activations while participants process emotional information found support for elderly people's bias towards positive emotions (Mather et al., 2004; Leclerc, & Kensinger, 2011). Some studies' results also suggested that positivity effect of older adults could be explained by the unconscious strategies in their attention and memory processes (for a review, Mather & Carstensen, 2005). For example, older adults recall more positively their autobiographical memories reported 14 years ago (Kennedy et al., 2004). A study, investigating attention of people by looking at their reaction time, found that the elderly gave more attention to positive stimuli and less to negative stimuli compared to young people (Mather & Carstensen, 2003). Based on these results, it could be said that people focus more on positive emotional experiences as they get older and limit negative emotional experiences, and so it could help them to regulate better their emotions.

As a consequence, it could be said that individuals develop some coping strategies against aging in relation to their emotional wellbeing, thus aging does not lead to negative consequences for emotional processes later in life. In this respect, the present study yielded a consistent result with both theoretical and empirical literature.

4.2.2. Gender and Emotion Regulation

A common finding in the literature that females report more difficulties in emotion regulation than males (e.g., Lafrance Robinson et al., 2014) was supported through the findings of the present study. Although it was found that women reported experiencing more difficulties in emotion regulation than men, being a woman could not be found as a significant predictor of emotion regulation difficulties in the study.

Thus, being a woman was not a risk factor for having increased levels of emotion regulation difficulties according to the tested model in the current study.

When looking at the final step of the regression model tested in the current study, it was seen that gender was very close to being a significant predictor. The fact that the number of female participants is 3 times more than the number of male participants might have affected our results. In addition, the self-report nature of the measure assessing emotion regulation difficulties might have an impact on the results. It is likely that women are more aware of their problems and better at expressing them. The same model can be retested with studies with a more equal number of female and male participants. It is an indisputable fact that gender is an important factor in the emotion regulation literature (Bender et al., 2012; Gratz & Roemer, 2004; Lafrance Robinson et al., 2014; Neumann et al., 2010), our study also partially supports this through significant difference between the ER scores of men and women. Although gender did not appear as a predictor of emotion regulation, the result of the study still highlighted the importance of gender in the emotion regulation field.

4.2.3. Psychological Support and Emotion Regulation

In the present study, it was found that the participants who reported to receive any kind of psychological support (i.e., psychiatric consultation, psychological support, or psychological counseling and guidance) at one point in their life exhibited more emotion regulation difficulties compared to those who reported not to receive such support in their life before. More importantly, this difference appeared to be a significant factor in the model, which means that receiving psychological support or not was a demographic variable having a significant predictive power for emotion regulation difficulties in the sample.

Considering the relationship between psychological support and emotion regulation difficulties, Werner and Gross (2010) noted that according to the diagnostic

criteria stated by the DSM-IV (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-IV), 75% of psychological disorders included an emotion or emotion regulation difficulty as a symptom. This statistical information reveals that emotion regulation difficulties are closely related to psychopathology (Kring & Sloan, 2010). It is possible to think that people who have applied for any psychological support at once could be at risk of having a psychological disorder, hence having more problems in their emotion regulation capacities, compared to those who have not. In furtherance of this, in one study, psychotherapy patients were found to have more limited skills of emotion regulation compared to the non-clinical control group (Berking et al., 2008). On the other hand, those receiving psychological support might be more aware of their emotions and emotion regulation-related problems. So, when they are asked to reflect upon them via self-report measure, they might have expressed more due to their awareness.

In addition, there are also studies highlighting that emotion regulation skills and strategies are mostly stable and difficult to change (e.g., D'Avanzato et al., 2013; Voon et al., 2014). Taking into consideration these studies, the psychological support, which the participants have received at one point in their life, might not be sufficient or effective for them to be able enhance their emotion regulation skills or to alter them to be used more flexibly. In addition, it might be that although they gained some benefit from the psychological support they have received in the short run, they might have lost its effect in the long run. Unfortunately, it is difficult to make further comments on that given the scarcity of research investigating the long-term effects of therapies (Voon et al., 2014). During the review of the literature, it was found that there are a few studies which examined therapy effects on emotion regulation difficulties maximally through 9-month follow-ups but not beyond (e.g., Gratz et al., 2014; Gratz et al., 2015).

4.3. LIMITATIONS OF THE PRESENT STUDY

The present study has several limitations which should be noted herein. First, although it was aimed to reach people in varying age groups, equally distributed across adulthood, the great majority of the participants were composed of people between the ages of 20 to 30, which might confide the representativeness of the participants, and the generalizability of the study findings. Since all the study constructs are understudied with later age groups, it would be interesting to be able to gather more data from later ages.

Another participant-related limitation to the study is that it involved considerably more female participants than males. Considering the importance of gender in this line of research, an equal distribution regarding gender would provide a better understanding of the given phenomenon. In addition, receiving psychological support appeared as a significant predictor of emotion regulation; however, due to the lack of detailed information about this experience of the participants, its analysis and discussion remained limited. Thus, further studies would involve more detailed instruments to address this construct to depict a better picture of the issue.

Further, using both online and self-report measures might aggravate the participants' emotional expressions, which might in turn affect the findings of the present study, primarily focusing on emotion-elicited constructs. Instead of applying such online and self-report instruments, face-to-face, mixed methods, including quantitative and qualitative research designs, would be adopted in further studies in order to investigate such sensitive issues.

Additionally, due to time concerns, the data were collected through a cross-sectional study design at a certain point in time. Instead, adopting a longitudinal design would provide the researcher to see the longitudinal relationships between the variables, hence better depicting the phenomena through showing developmental

trajectories. Also, longitudinal study designs would help to study mutual relationships among the constructs which might have overlapping developments as in the case of the present study.

Besides, in order to keep the original structure of the scale used for assessing emotional availability of parents intact, this construct was not assessed in a retrospective manner as it was done in the case of interparental conflict. Indeed, to use retrospective instruments for both constructs might provide new insights into the understanding of the respective relations in the study.

Finally, both the retrospective structure of one of the instruments, namely the interparental conflict scale, and its traumatic nature pose limitations to the present study. As such, retrospective designs and trauma-related questions are prone to several biases such as recalling bias, forgetting, or unwillingness to share (Lalande & Bonanno, 2011).

4.4. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

First of all, as noted earlier, the main variables of the present study, namely emotion regulation, interparental conflict, and parents' emotional availability, have not been studied together as it was done herein. Through finding significant relations among these constructs, the present study, however, highlighted the need for further studies to address them altogether and separately with each other. In addition, adult studies investigating these main variables are considerably less in the literature; therefore, it could be suggested for further researchers to involve older age groups as the present study did. Particularly, since the age appeared as a significant factor in the present study, targeting a large group of people in varying ages will be promising to depict a better picture. Even adopting a longitudinal design will provide the researcher to see longitudinal relations.

Moreover, with respect to parents' emotional availability, the present study presented a relatively surprising result that only the father's emotional availability, but not the mother's, significantly predicted children's emotion regulation difficulties experienced in adulthood. Considering the scarcity of the father-focused studies in this line of research, the present study indicated an urgent need for further research to focus on the role of the father in children's development. Indeed, there is a very limited number of studies focusing on the father in the local context of Turkey (e.g., Beyazıt & Ayhan, 2017; Seçer et al., 2011), so the scope of this line of research should be expanded through further studies both local and international context. Additionally, further studies can also take into consideration the gender of children while looking at the father's role, since the relationships of the father-child dyads might be prone to gender-specific differences.

4.5. CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of the present study have highlighted that individuals' early experiences in the family context continue to exert significant influences on them later in life. Given that these early experiences are mostly shaped in the family through relationships with parents, it is important to inform parents about their life-long effects on their children. To do so, collaborating with experts in this field, governmental and non-governmental organizations carry out free informing lectures, seminars and workshops open to public which parents can take benefit from.

Another important implication of the study could be that parents should be more careful to manage their marital discords, which children are naturally exposed to, since the results have clearly indicated that how children appraise these interparental conflicts has an important effect on their emotional development, even across adulthood. As noted earlier, conflicts are inevitable aspects of marriages, indeed relationships, and they are even beneficial if successfully resolved, so it is essential for

parents to find a way to resolve these conflicts not to harm their children. Clinical help, family therapy or individual therapy for the family members, including the child, could be beneficial for all and children's future life outcome.

Last but not least, the finding that the father's emotional availability has a significant effect on children's emotion regulation functions carries great importance. Particularly in a patriarchal society where mothers mostly exercise the responsibility of caring for children's needs alone, it is quite important to see how fathers' emotionally being there makes a significant difference in the emotional worlds of children. Apparently, children, even when they get older, need to have both parents emotionally available to them. Further clinical explorations which aim to provide benefits of children and parents can focus on the early child-parent and parent-parent dynamics. Additionally, father-training programs highlighting the vital role of the father in children's development should be implemented. In the context of Turkey, Mother Child Education Foundation (Anne Çocuk Eğitimi Vakfı; AÇEV) have been already organizing such father support programs since 1996; thus, they can serve as a model for further initiations.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the present study aimed to investigate the effects of adults' perceptions of their parents' emotional availability and adults' perceptions of their parents' past conflicts on their emotion regulation. The findings revealed that adults' perceptions of their fathers' emotional availability, and their appraisals of perceived threat and self-blame regarding their parents' past conflicts were three significant predictors of their current emotion regulation difficulties. In addition, the participants' age and their psychological support background appeared as other significant predictors. Nevertheless, the interaction terms between the different dimensions of

independent variables created to address the exploratory aim of the study did not significantly predict emotion regulation difficulties.

With respect to the parents' perceived emotional availability by their children, it was seen that only the father's emotional availability, but not the mother's, exerted a significant influence on their children's emotion regulation. As such, the participants who perceived their fathers emotionally more available exhibit less emotion regulation difficulties. This finding highlights the significance of the father in children's, even during their adulthood, emotional processes. As comprehensively discussed earlier, this finding was in line with the researcher's expectations, yet it was surprising not obtain the same significant result for the mothers, as well. Given that an immense literature on mothers in the field, it was expected to find even a stronger relationship between the mother's emotional availability and children's emotion regulation. Important to note, however, the present study is among very few studies examining both parents' emotional availability, and even it is the only one looking at their direct relations to emotion regulation. So, it is worth conducting further studies addressing this issue. Also, it should be borne in mind that this result does not necessarily mean that the mother's emotional availability is not important for children's emotion regulation, rather it highlights a unique contribution of the father to this picture.

As for the participants' perceptions of their parents' past conflicts, the results revealed that not the conflict properties, but the children's appraisals of these conflicts had a significant predictive power for their current emotion regulation. That is, the more children considered their parents' past conflicts threatening and blamed themselves for these conflicts, the more emotion regulation difficulties they had. That finding was no surprise for the researcher. What could be more interesting was that perceived threat's predictive power was found to be stronger than self-blame, which merits further attention to the differential effects of conflict appraisals on emotion regulation.

All in all, the present study touched upon the significance of the early interactions among both parent-child and parent-parent on children's subsequent outcomes, such as emotion regulation. Since emotion regulation has life-long consequences for individuals, it is important to study its potential predictors with different age groups by focusing on different life stages.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
DEMOGRAFİK BİLGİ FORMU

Bu bölümde size önce yaş, öğrenim durumu gibi genel demografik bilgiler ile ilgili sorular sorulacaktır. Belirtmek istemediğiniz soruları boş bırakabilirsiniz.

1) Yaşınız: _____

2) Cinsiyetiniz:

☐ Kadın ☐ Erkek ☐ Diğer

3) Romantik bir ilişkiniz var mı?

☐ Evet ☐ Hayır ☐ Diğer

3a) Evet ise ne kadar süredir?

____Yıl ____Ay

4) Medeni durumunuz:

☐ Evli ☐ Bekâr ☐ Diğer

5) Öğrenim durumunuz (lütfen en son bitirmiş olduğunuz okulu işaretleyin):

☐ İlköğretim

☐ Lise

☐ Üniversite (ön lisans/lisans)

☐ Lisansüstü (yüksek lisans/doktora)

☐ Diğer (Lütfen belirtiniz) _____

6a) Şu anda öğrenci misiniz?

☐ Evet ☐ Hayır ☐ Diğer

6b) Evet ise, okulunuz: _____

7) Şu anda çalışıyor musunuz?

☐ Evet ☐ Hayır ☐ Diğer

7b) Evet ise, mesleğiniz:_____

8) Gelir Düzeyiniz:

☐ Düşük ☐ Düşük-Orta ☐ Orta ☐ Orta-Yüksek ☐ Yüksek

9) Kardeş sayınız: _____

10) Kardeşleriniz arasında doğum sıranız: _____

11) Anne ve babanızın siz çocukken birbirleriyle nasıl geçindiklerini 1 (Çok kötü) ile 7 (Çok iyi) arasında değerlendirecek olsanız nasıl değerlendirirdiniz?

1 (çok kötü)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (çok iyi)

12) Anne ve babanızın şimdi birbirileriyle nasıl geçindiklerini 1 (Çok kötü) ile 7 (Çok iyi) arasında değerlendirecek olsanız nasıl değerlendirirdiniz?

1 (çok kötü)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (çok iyi)

12a) Eğer anne veya babanızdan biri ya da ikisi hayatta değilse:

1. Annem hayatta değil	2. Babam hayatta değil	3. İkisi de hayatta değil

13) Sizce genel olarak nasıl bir ilişkileri olduğunu 1 (Çok Kötü) ile 7 (Çok İyi) arasında değerlendirecek olsanız nasıl değerlendirirdiniz? (Yaşamlarını yitirmişlerse, hayatta oldukları zamanı düşünerek yanıt verin lütfen)?

1 (çok kötü)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (çok iyi)

14) Genel olarak yakınlıklarını 1 (hiç yakın değil) ile 7 (çok yakın) arasında değerlendirecek olsanız kaç verirdiniz?

1 (hiç yakın değil)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (çok yakın)

15) Genel olarak birbirlerine verdikleri desteği 1 (hiç) ile 7 (çok fazla) arasında değerlendirecek olsanız ne verirdiniz?

1 (hiç)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (çok fazla)

16) Genel olarak birbirlerine olan sevgilerini hissedişinizi 1 (hiç) ile 7 (çok fazla) arasında değerlendirecek olsanız ne verirdiniz?

16a) anneniz için

1 (hiç)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (çok fazla)

16b) babanız için

1 (hiç)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (çok fazla)

17) En yakın hissettiğiniz kardeşinizi düşünerek 1 (hiç yakın değil) ile 7 (çok yakın) arasında değerlendirecek olsanız kardeşinizle olan yakınlığınıza ne verirdiniz?

1 (hiç yakın değil)	2	3	4	5	6	7 (çok yakın)

APPENDIX B
EBEVEYN DUYGUSAL ERİŞİLEBİLİRLİĞİ ÖLÇEĞİ

Açıklama: Aşağıda anne ve babanızla ilgili çeşitli ifadeler yer almaktadır. Her bir ifade anneniz ve babanızın size nasıl davrandığıyla ilgilidir. Her bir ifadeyi dikkatlice okuyarak anne ve babanızın size yönelik davranışlarını 6 dereceli ölçek üzerinden değerlendiriniz. Bu ölçekte doğru-yanlış ya da verilmesi gereken bir yanıt söz konusu değildir. Bu nedenle, her bir ifadeyi lütfen kendi değerlendirmenize göre işaretleyiniz. Hem anneniz hem de babanız için işaretleme yapınız.

(Nadiren) (Sık sık) (Her zaman)
1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6
(Hiçbir zaman) (Bazen) (Çok sık)

		Annem						**Babam**					
1.	Bana destek olur.	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	Üzgün olduğumda beni teselli eder (örneğin, mutsuz olduğumda kendimi daha iyi hissetmemi sağlar).	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	Beni önemsediğini gösterir.	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	Benimle içten bir şekilde ilgilendiğini gösterir (örneğin, bana değer verir ve benim için endişelenir).	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	Benim için önemli olan şeyleri hatırlar.	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
6.	Onunla ne zaman konuşmak istesem uygundur.	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.	Bana ilgisini gösterecek şekilde sorular sorar.	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
8.	Benimle, gerçekten istediği için vakit geçirir.	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	Sorunlarım, sıkıntılarım konusunda benimle konuşmaya isteklidir.	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
10.	Sevdiğim şeylerle ilgili benimle konuşur.	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
11.	Düşüncelerimi önemser.	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6

12. Duygusal olarak erişilebilirdir (Varlığını duygusal olarak hissederim)	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. İstenen biri olduğumu hissettirir.	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. Beni takdir eder, över (örneğin, benimle ilgili olumlu şeyler söyler)	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. Anlayışlıdır.	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6

APPENDIX C
ÇOCUKLARIN EVLİLİK ÇATIŞMASINI ALGILAMASI ÖLÇEĞİ

Her ailede anne-babanın anlaşamadığı, tartıştığı zamanlar olur. Anne-babaları tartıştığı zaman çocukları çok farklı duygular yaşarlar. Biz de siz **BÜYÜRKEN** anne-babanız tartıştığında neler hissettiğinizi öğrenmek istiyoruz. Lütfen her soruyu dikkatlice okuyup, doğru, bazen/biraz doğru ve yanlış şıklarından uygun olanını işaretleyiniz.		**DOĞRU**	**BAZEN/BİRAZ DOĞRU**	**YANLIŞ**
1	Anne-babamın tartıştıklarını hiç görmedim.			
2	Anne-babam tartıştıklarında genellikle sorunu çözerlerdi.			
3	Anne-babam sık sık benim okulda yaptıklarım yüzünden tartışırlardı.			
4	Anne-babam tartışırken çıldırmış gibi olurlardı.			
5	Anne-babam tartıştıklarında korkardım.			
6	Anne- babamın tartışmaları benim suçum değildi.			
7	Anne- babam benim bildiğimin farkında değillerdi ama onlar çok tartışırlardı.			
8	Anne-babam tartışmaları bittikten sonra bile birbirlerine olan kızgınlıkları devam ederdi.			
9	Anne-babam bir anlaşmazlıkları olduğunda sakince konuşurlardı.			
10	Anne-babam tartıştıklarında ne yapacağımı bilemezdim.			
11	Anne-babam yanlarında ben olsam bile birbirlerine sık sık kötü davranırlardı.			
12	Anne- babam tartıştıklarında bana ne olacak diye endişelenirdim.			
13	Anne-babamın tartışmaları genellikle benim suçumdu.			
14	Anne- babamı sık sık tartışırken görürdüm.			
15	Anne-babam bir konu hakkında anlaşamadıklarında genellikle bir çözüm bulurlardı.			

16	Anne- babamın tartışmaları genellikle benim daha önce yaptığım bir şeyle ilgili olurdu.			
17	Anne-babam tartıştıklarında kötü bir şey olacak diye korkardım.			
18	Anne- babam tartıştıklarında söylemeseler bile benim suçum olurdu.			
19	Anne-babam çok az tartışırlardı.			
20	Anne-babam tartıştıklarında genellikle hemen barışırlardı.			
21	Anne-babam genellikle benim yaptığım şeyler yüzünden tartışırlardı.			
22	Anne- babam tartıştıklarında onları durdurmak için hiçbir şey yapamazdım.			
23	Anne-babam tartıştıklarında ikisinden birine bir zarar gelecek diye korkardım.			
24	Anne-babam evde sıkça birbirlerinden şikâyet ederlerdi.			
25	Anne-babam tartışırken çok az bağırırlardı.			
26	Anne-babam sık sık ben yanlış bir şey yaptığımda tartışmaya başlarlardı.			
27	Anne- babam tartışırken bir şeyler kırar veya fırlatırlardı.			
28	Anne-babam tartışmaları bittikten sonra birbirlerine arkadaşça davranırlardı.			
29	Anne-babam tartıştıklarında bana da bağıracaklarından korkardım.			
30	Anne-babam tartıştıklarında beni suçlarlardı.			
31	Anne-babam tartışırken birbirlerini itip kakarlardı.			
32	Anne-babam tartıştıklarında boşanabilirler diye korkardım.			
33	Anne-babam tartışmaları bittikten sonra birbirlerine kötü davranmaya devam ederlerdi.			
34	Anne-babamın tartışmaları genellikle benim hatam değildi.			
35	Anne-babam tartışırken benim söylediğim hiçbir şeyi dinlemezlerdi.			

APPENDIX D
DUYGU DÜZENLEME GÜÇLÜĞÜ ÖLÇEĞİ

Aşağıdaki cümlelerin size ne sıklıkla uyduğunu karşılarında belirtilen 5 dereceli ölçek üzerinden değerlendiriniz. Her bir cümlenin karşısındaki 5 noktalı ölçekten, size uygunluk yüzdesini de dikkate alarak, yalnızca bir tek rakamı işaretleyiniz.

Bazen (%11-%35) Çoğu zaman (%66-%90)

1----------2----------3----------4----------5

Hemen hemen hiç (%0-%10) Yaklaşık yarı yarıya (%36-%65) Hemen hemen her zaman (%91-%100)

1.	Ne hissettiğim konusunda netimdir.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Ne hissettiğimi dikkate alırım.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Duygularım bana dayanılmaz ve kontrolsüz gelir.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Ne hissettiğim konusunda hiçbir fikrim yoktur.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Duygularıma bir anlam vermekte zorlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Ne hissettiğime dikkat ederim.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Ne hissettiğimi tam olarak bilirim.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Ne hissettiğimi önemserim.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Ne hissettiğim konusunda karmaşa yaşarım.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Kendimi kötü hissetmeyi kabullenebilirim.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Kendimi kötü hissettiğimde böyle hissettiğim için kendime kızarım.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Kendimi kötü hissettiğim için utanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Kendimi kötü hissettiğimde işlerimi bitirmekte zorlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5

14.	Kendimi kötü hissettiğimde kontrolden çıkarım.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Kendimi kötü hissettiğimde uzun süre böyle kalacağıma inanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	Kendimi kötü hissetmenin yoğun depresif duyguyla sonuçlanacağına inanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Kendimi kötü hissettiğimde duygularımın yerinde ve önemli olduğuna inanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Kendimi kötü hissederken başka şeylere odaklanmakta zorlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	Kendimi kötü hissederken kontrolden çıktığım duygusu yaşarım.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	Kendimi kötü hissediyor olsam da çalışmayı sürdürebilirim.	1	2	3	4	5
21.	Kendimi kötü hissettiğimde bu duygumdan dolayı kendimden utanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
22.	Kendimi kötü hissettiğimde eninde sonunda kendimi daha iyi hissetmenin bir yolunu bulacağımı bilirim.	1	2	3	4	5
23.	Kendimi kötü hissettiğimde zayıf biri olduğum duygusuna kapılırım.	1	2	3	4	5
24.	Kendimi kötü hissettiğimde de davranışlarım kontrolüm altındadır.	1	2	3	4	5
25.	Kendimi kötü hissettiğim için suçluluk duyarım.	1	2	3	4	5
26.	Kendimi kötü hissettiğimde konsantre olmakta zorlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
27.	Kendimi kötü hissettiğimde davranışlarımı kontrol etmekte zorlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
28.	Kendimi kötü hissettiğimde daha iyi hissetmem için yapabileceğim hiçbir şey olmadığına inanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
29.	Kendimi kötü hissettiğimde böyle hissettiğim için kendimden rahatsız olurum.	1	2	3	4	5
30.	Kendimi kötü hissettiğimde kendimle ilgili olarak çok fazla endişelenmeye başlarım.	1	2	3	4	5

31.	Kendimi kötü hissettiğimde kendimi bu duyguya bırakmaktan başka çıkar yol olmadığına inanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
32.	Kendimi kötü hissettiğimde davranışlarım üzerindeki kontrolümü kaybederim.	1	2	3	4	5
33.	Kendimi kötü hissettiğimde başka bir şey düşünmekte zorlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
34.	Kendimi kötü hissettiğimde duygumun gerçekte ne olduğunu anlamak için zaman ayırırım.	1	2	3	4	5
35.	Kendimi kötü hissettiğimde kendimi daha iyi hissetmem zaman alır.	1	2	3	4	5
36.	Kendimi kötü hissettiğimde duygularım dayanılmaz olur.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX E
BİLGİLENDİRİLMİŞ ONAM FORMU

Sayın Katılımcı,

Bu araştırma, İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Klinik Psikoloji Yüksek Lisans Programı öğrencisi Hüseyin Yüksel tarafından, Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Alev Çavdar Sideris danışmanlığında, yüksek lisans tezi kapsamında yürütülmektedir.

Bu araştırmanın amacı Türkiye'deki yetişkin evlatların anne ve babalarına dair bazı algılarıyla kendi psikolojik durumları arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesidir. Yaklaşık 30 dakika sürecek çalışmada sizden doğru ya da yanlış cevapları olmayan kişisel fikir ve görüşlerinize dayalı bazı anketler doldurmanız istenecektir. Çalışmanın amacına ulaşabilmesi için sizden beklenen, bütün soruları eksiksiz ve içtenlikle cevaplamanızdır. Bu araştırmaya katılım tamamen gönüllülük esasına dayalıdır; bu nedenle de araştırmanın herhangi bir noktasında hiçbir gerekçe belirtmeden anketi doldurmayı bırakabilirsiniz.

Araştırmanın hiçbir bölümünde kimliğinizi ortaya çıkaracak herhangi bir soru bulunmamaktadır ve yanıtlarınız araştırmacılar dışında kimseyle paylaşılmayacaktır. Veriler toplu halde değerlendirilecek ve yalnızca bilimsel yayın amacıyla kullanılacaktır.

Eğer araştırmanın amacı ile ilgili belirtilenden daha fazla bilgiye ihtiyaç duyarsanız huseyinnyuksell@gmail.com e-posta adresinden dilediğiniz zaman araştırmacıya ulaşabilirsiniz.

Katılımınız ve katkılarınız için şimdiden teşekkürler.

☐ Yukarıda verilen bilgiler doğrultusunda, bu çalışmaya katılmayı ve bu çalışmanın verilerinin bilimsel amaçlı yayınlarda kullanılmasını kabul ediyorum.

ETİK KURUL DEĞERLENDİRME SONUCU/RESULT OF EVALUATION BY THE ETHICS COMMITTEE

(Bu bölüm İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurul tarafından doldurulacaktır /This section to be completed by the Committee on Ethics in research on Humans)

Başvuru Sahibi / Applicant: Hüseyin Yüksel

Proje Başlığı / Project Title: The Effect of Children's perceptions of parents' Emotional Availability and Past Interparental Conflicts on Their Current Psychological Wellbeing and Emotion Regulation Difficulties

Proje No. / Project Number: 2020-20024-18

1.	Herhangi bir değişikliğe gerek yoktur / There is no need for revision	XX
2.	Ret/ Application Rejected Reddin gerekçesi / Reason for Rejection	

Değerlendirme Tarihi / Date of Evaluation: 20 Ocak 2020

Kurul Başkanı / Committee Chair

Doç. Dr. Itır Erhart

Üye / Committee Member

Prof. Dr. Aslı Tunç

Üye / Committee Member

Prof. Dr. Turgut Tarhanlı

Üye / Committee Member

Prof. Dr. Hale Bolak Boratav

Üye / Committee Member

Prof. Dr. Koray Akay