

To: Alli Paasikivi foundation

Letter of Progress

Asked by Alli Paasikivi foundation concerning my research progress “The Role of Family in Children’s Socio-Emotional Development: Mediating and Moderating Mechanisms: Antecedents and Consequences” I would like to make the following statement.

During the second grant from Alli Paasikivi foundation I have finalized my first “*Social withdrawal in children moderates the association between parenting styles and the children’s own socioemotional development*” and also second “Parenting Styles and Child’s Emotional Development During the First Grade: The Moderating Role of Child’s Temperament” PhD studies.

The first study examined the joint effects of children’s social withdrawal and mothers’ and fathers’ parenting styles on children’s socioemotional development. Based on diatheses-stress, vantage sensitivity, and differential susceptibility models, socially withdrawn children were assumed to be more prone to parental influences than others. Teachers rated 314 children on prosocial skills, and internalizing and externalizing behaviors at three points in time between grades 1–3. Mothers (n=279) and fathers (n=182) filled in questionnaires measuring their affection, and their behavioral and psychological control at the same points in time. Teacher reports on children’s level of social withdrawal were obtained at the end of kindergarten. Panel analysis showed that particularly those children who showed signs of social withdrawal were vulnerable to the negative effects of low maternal affection in terms of externalizing behavior. Moreover, among these children, mothers’ and fathers’ psychological control predicted high levels of internalizing problem but, at the same time, mothers’ psychological control predicted also a high level of prosocial behavior and low levels of externalizing problem.

The second study investigated the associations between parenting styles and children’s emotional development during the first grade of primary school, and the moderating role of children’s temperament (easy, difficult, and inhibited) in these associations. Both parents of 152 children responded to a questionnaire concerning their parenting styles and their child’s temperament at the beginning of their child’s first grade (Time 1). They also filled in a structured diary questionnaire concerning their child’s negative and positive emotions over seven successive days (diary) at the beginning (Time 1) and at the end (Time 2) of their child’s first grade. The results showed that mothers’ psychological control at the beginning of the first grade was associated with a subsequent high level of negative emotions among children independently of the child’s temperament. Mothers’ high affection, in turn, was associated with subsequent low levels of negative emotions particularly among children with inhibited temperament, whereas mothers’ behavioral control was associated with low levels of negative emotions among children with difficult temperament. Fathers’ psychological control was associated with subsequent high levels of negative emotions among children with difficult temperament. No associations were found between parenting styles and children’s positive emotions.

The first article is now published in highly recognized and high impact journal, i.e. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* and the second article will be sent for publication in early September. Once again I would like to greatly appreciate Alli Paasikivi foundation for supporting my PhD studies.

Sincerely

Maryam Zarra-Nezhad