

THE EFFECTS OF MARITAL SATISFACTION ON COPARENTING IN
TURKISH FAMILIES: A DYADIC PERSPECTIVE

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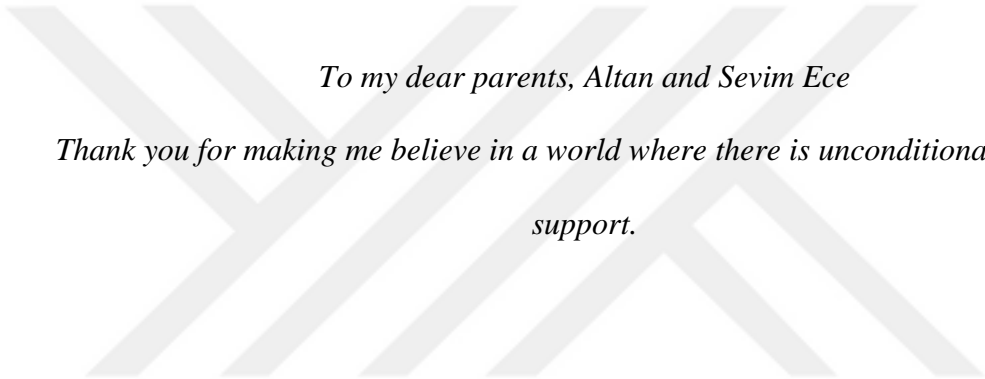
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DEDICATION



To my dear parents, Altan and Sevim Ece
Thank you for making me believe in a world where there is unconditional love and
support.

ABSTRACT

Coparenting is an executive relationship in a family and refers to how parents interact with each other regarding child-rearing issues. Coparenting relationship is associated with many factors in family system including child and parent characteristics; parent and child adjustment; and relationships such as marital relationship. Dyadic-level overall interparental relationship is one of the most important factors in terms of quality of coparenting relationship (Kitzmann, 2000). Therefore, it is important to examine the association between marital and coparenting relationship. Although there are many studies that shows the association between marital and coparenting relationship, these are different concepts. According to family systems theory (Minuchin, 1985; Minuchin, 1974), it can be concluded that coparenting is an executive subsystem and interconnected with marital subsystem. However, less is known about the association between marital and coparenting relationship in Turkish families. Therefore, current study aimed to investigate the effects of marital satisfaction on coparenting relationship from a dyadic perspective in Turkish families with preschool age children.

The participants comprised 249 married co-parent dyads (249 mothers and 249 fathers) having a child between the ages of 3 and 7 ($M = 56.96$, $SD = 15.16$). Both parents reported their marital satisfaction on Couples Satisfaction Index (Funk & Rogge, 2007) and coparenting relationship as three dimensions (cooperation, conflict and triangulation) on Coparenting Inventory for Parents with Preschoolers (CI-PA) (Pinquart & Teubert, 2015). Three different the actor-partner interdependence model (APIM) including marital satisfaction and coparenting cooperation; marital satisfaction and coparenting conflict; and marital satisfaction and coparenting triangulation were conducted to clarify the interdependence between partners and to

test for possible actor and partner effects (Cook & Kenny, 2005). Results from actor partner interdependence models revealed that (1) marital satisfaction influenced coparenting cooperation positively for both parents (actor effect). Also, father's marital satisfaction had a positive effect on mother's coparenting cooperation (partner effect from father to mother). (2) marital satisfaction influenced coparenting conflict negatively for both parents (actor effect). (3) marital satisfaction influenced coparenting triangulation negatively for both parents (actor effect). Also, father's marital satisfaction had a negative effect on mother's coparenting triangulation (partner effect from father to mother). Finding actor and partner effect on these associations was consistent with both Family System Theory (Minuchin, 1988) and previous works. Clinical implications were discussed.

Keywords: Actor-partner interdependence model; Coparenting; Dyadic; Marital satisfaction, preschool children.

ÖZET

Ortak ebeveynlik, ebeveynlerin çocuk yetiştirme konusunda nasıl etkileşimde olduklarını içeren yönetsel bir ilişki türüdür. Ortak ebeveynlik, aile sistemi içerisinde çocuk ve ebeveyn özellikleri, ebeveyn ve çocuk uyum problemleri ve evlilik ilişkisi gibi bir çok kavram ile ilişkilidir. Kaliteli bir ortak ebeveynlik ilişkisi için en önemli parçalardan biri çift düzeyinde anne baba arasındaki ikili ilişkidir (Kitzmann, 2000). Dolayısıyla evlilik ilişkisi ile ortak ebeveynlik arasındaki bağlantıyı araştırmak önemlidir. Mevcut araştırmalar evlilik ilişkisi ve ortak ebeveynlik ilişkisi arasında bağlantı olduğunu göstermesine rağmen, bu kavramların birbirinden farklı olduğu vurgulanmıştır. Aile sistemleri teorisine (Minuchin, 1985; Minuchin, 1974) göre, ortak ebeveynlik yönetsel bir alt sistemdir ve evlilik ilişkisi alt sistemi ile birbirine bağlıdır. Tüm bu bilgilere rağmen, Türk ailelerinde evlilik ilişkisi ve ortak ebeveynlik arasındaki ilişkiye dair çok az şey bilinmektedir. Buradan yola çıkarak, bu araştırmanın amacı okul öncesi çağda çocuğu olan Türkiye'deki ailelerde evlilik memnuniyetinin ortak ebeveynlik ilişkisine etkisini çift perspektifi ile araştırmaktır.

Araştırmanın örneklemini 3 ve 7 yaş arasında ($M = 56.96$, $SD = 15.16$) çocuk sahibi olan 249 evli çift (249 anne, 249 baba) oluşturmaktadır. Hem anne hem de babalar evlilik memnuniyetlerini ve 3 boyutlu (iş birliği, çatışma, üçgenleşme) ortak ebeveynlik ilişkilerini değerlendirmişlerdir. Üç farklı Aktör Partner Karşılıklı Bağımlılık Modeli (APKM) yürütülerek eşler arasındaki karşılıklı bağlılık ve olası aktör ve partner etkiler test edilmiştir (Cook & Kenny, 2005). Aktör Partner Karşılıklı Bağımlılık Modeli (APKM) sonuçlarına göre (1) her iki ebeveyn için evlilik memnuniyeti ortak ebeveynliğin iş birliği boyutunu olumlu yönde etkilemektedir (aktör etkisi). Buna ek olarak, babaların evlilik memnuniyetinin annelerin ortak ebeveynliklerinin iş birliği boyutu üzerinde olumlu etkisi vardır

(partner etkisi) (2) her iki ebeveyn için evlilik memnuniyeti ortak ebeveynliğin çatışma boyutunu olumsuz yönde etkilemektedir (aktör etkisi) (3) her iki ebeveyn için evlilik memnuniyeti ortak ebeveynliğin üçgenleşme boyutunu olumsuz yönde etkilemektedir (aktör etkisi). Buna ek olarak, babaların evlilik memnuniyetinin annelerin ortak ebeveynliklerinin üçgenleşme boyutu üzerinde olumsuz etkisi vardır (partner etkisi).

Anahtar Kelimeler: Aktör Partner Karşılıklı Bağımlılık Modeli; Evlilik Memnuniyeti; Ortak Ebeveynlik; Okul Öncesi Dönem Çocukları



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"The best security blanket a child can have is parents who respect each other."

- Jane Blaustone

1.1 General Introduction

The concept of coparenting can be defined as “the ways that parents and/or parental figures relate to each other in the role of parent” (Feinberg, 2003, p. 96).

Coparenting includes interactions of parents regarding negotiating, sharing, and managing parenting responsibilities. It includes only decisions and practices relating to children (Feinberg, 2003; Margolin et al., 2001). Effective coparenting can take place when both parents are mutually involved in child-rearing and supportive in their parenting roles (Katz & Woodin, 2002; Teubert & Pinquart, 2010).

Co-parenting relationship is related with many factors in family system. For example, it was positively related with marital relationship (Morrill et al., 2010), parenting quality (Scrimgeour et al., 2013) and child’s social competency while it was negatively associated with child behavior problems including externalizing and internalizing behaviors (Johnson et al., 1999; Kolak & Vernon-Feagans, 2008; Schoppe et al., 2001; Teubert & Pinquart, 2010) and social competence (Adler-Baeder et al., 2018). Being associated with many factors in the family system indicates that coparenting is an important part of the family system and better coparenting functioning could be associated with better family functioning while problems in coparenting could be associated with many problems in different parts of the family. Especially, in terms of its negative and positive consequences on child adjustment, investigating the factors associated with coparenting is important to

make successful interventions to increase coparenting functioning. Regarding familial factors, one of the most important factors that has been associated with coparenting is marital satisfaction (Van Egeren, 2004). It is possible that when partners experience dissatisfaction and conflicts in marital relationship, these experiences may spillover and affect coparenting relationship. Coparenting relationship is different than the spousal or partner relationship although the body of research has shown a high correlation between them. (Kollak & Volling, 2007; Van Egeren, 2004). More specifically, when partners have a satisfying romantic relationship, they are better at coparenting functioning (Bonds & Gondoli, 2007; Christopher et al., 2015; Don et al., 2013; Pedro et al., 2012). It is possible that dissatisfaction and conflicts in spousal relationship may spillover and affect coparenting relationship. Thus, this study examined the association between marital relationship quality and coparenting functioning among families with preschool age children for both mother and father.

In addition to research, *family systems theory*, which is theoretical framework of this study, described marital relationship as spousal subsystem; and coparenting relationship as mother-father subsystems. The theory posits that they are interrelated with one another. Also, family systems theory posits that individuals within the same dyad are interdependent naturally. Therefore, it can be said that one's experience of the marital satisfaction is related with not only one's own coparenting experience (actor effects) but also other partner's experience of coparenting (partner effect). Thus, to clarify the interdependence between partners and to test for possible actor and partner effects, this study used the actor-partner interdependence model (APIM) (Cook & Kenny, 2005) to examine the link between marital relationship quality and coparenting functioning for both mother and father. More information about the

family systems theory as a theoretical framework is provided in the following sections.

The current study focused on coparenting and marital relationship of parents with preschool age children because of two main reasons. First, it is revealed that father involvement in parenting is higher in preschool ages than infancy (Bailey, 1994; De Luccie, 1996). Therefore, likelihood of interrelatedness of marital relationship and coparenting may increase in these ages (Schoppe-Sullivan et al., 2004). Also, it is hypothesized that establishing coparenting relationship for preschool-age children is more difficult than for infants and elementary school-aged children because preschool-age is the period in which children develop autonomy and self-regulation (Stright & Bales, 2003). Thus, coparenting can be considered as an important task for parents in preschool ages. Due to importance of coparenting in preschool age period and increased level of relatedness between coparenting and marital satisfaction, this study focused on the association between marital satisfaction and coparenting in preschool age period.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

Salvador Minuchin (1974) founded the Structural Family Theory and proposed that family is a complex system that is composed of different subsystems including spousal subsystem, parent-child subsystem, sibling subsystem or mother-father subsystem (coparenting relationship). Each member of a family has different roles in different subsystems (Nichols & Schwartz, 2004, p.179). For example, an individual can be both mother in mother-father subsystem (coparenting relationship) and be wife in spousal subsystem which means they have multiple roles in the family systems. Also, there are boundaries between individuals, subsystems and whole families to separate them from each other. Interactions between individuals and

subsystems regulated by these boundaries (Nichols & Schwartz, 2004, p.179). For example, if the subsystems separated from each by enmeshed boundaries, conflicts in mother-father subsystem (coparenting relationship) may affect parent-child subsystem and then may result in triangulation of a child including communicating over a child rather than direct communication between parents. Being triangulated child in a family is linked with psychological adjustment problems (Amato & Afifi, 2006).

One of the important theories that conceptualize coparenting is family systems theory (Feinberg, 2003). Systemic perspective argues that the whole is different than the sum of its parts (Minuchin, 1985). According to systems theory, family subsystems are interconnected and interdependent with one another and mother-father subsystem is defined as executive subsystem including sharing and managing parenting responsibilities (Minuchin, 1985; Minuchin, 1974). Although Minuchin did not use the coparenting as a term, it was implied that the definition of mother-father subsystem corresponds to the term “coparenting” which is that both partners should support each other in childrearing and give a commitment to parenting to have better coparenting functioning (Mchale, 1995; Salman-Engin, 2014).

Regarding interdependence within the family system (Minuchin, 1988), it is expected that there is an interrelatedness between marital relationship quality which is spousal subsystem and coparenting quality which is mother-father subsystem in two-parent families. In other words, it is possible that dissatisfaction and conflicts in spousal relationship may spillover and affect coparenting relationship.

In addition to interrelatedness between spousal and coparenting relationship, family systems theory posits that individuals within the same dyad are

interdependent naturally (Minuchin, 1988). Therefore, it can be said that one's experience of the marital satisfaction is related with not only one's own coparenting experience (actor effects) but also other partner's experience of coparenting (partner effect). For example, if a mother perceives her romantic relationship as satisfactory, she may engage more in supportive and cooperative coparenting (actor effect); as a result, her husband then may perceive their coparenting relationship as a satisfied (partner effect). Therefore, based on the systemic perspective, problems in marital relationship may affect coparenting relationship if boundaries between subsystems are not clear and also experiences of a partner in spousal subsystem may affect other partner's experiences in mother-father subsystem which is coparenting.

Taking into account the interdependence of subsystems and individuals within the subsystem, this study examined the association between marital satisfaction and coparenting functioning for both mothers and fathers of preschool-age children through using the actor-partner interdependence model (APIM) to clarify the interdependence between partners and to test for possible actor and partner effects (Cook & Kenny, 2005). In the next sections, the concept of coparenting and its role in the family system were explained. Later, methods and results of this study were provided. In the final part, the current study results and its relatedness with existing literature were discussed.

1.3 Coparenting

As mentioned earlier, coparenting can be defined as “the ways that parents and/or parental figures relate to each other in the role of parent” (Feinberg, 2003, p. 96). Similarly, Margolin et al. (2001) stated “Parents negotiate their respective roles, responsibilities, and contributions to their children. This relationship is characterized by the extent to which parents either support or undermine one another's parenting

efforts” (p. 3). The common view is that coparenting is a multidimensional construct. However, researchers have described conceptual framework of coparenting differently. For example, Margolin et al. (2001) have argued that coparenting consists of three dimensions which are cooperation between coparents, conflict between coparents, and triangulation. Feinberg (2003) has suggested that coparenting consists of four dimensions including childrearing agreement; division of labor regarding childrearing; support / undermining; joint family management. Furthermore, McHale (2007) has proposed that coparenting consists of three dimensions such as solidarity and support between coparents; dissonance and antagonism, and mutual engagement between coparents.

Although researchers have described conceptual framework of coparenting differently, the coparenting dimensions that are used more in research on the link between coparenting and child outcomes are *cooperation, conflict, triangulation* and *child-rearing agreement* (Teubert & Piquart, 2010). Margolin et al.’ conceptual framework (2001) consists of three of these dimensions, that are cooperation, conflict and triangulation and also it can be said that conflict dimension cover child-rearing agreement in some degree. Therefore, the present study focused on Margolin et al.’ (2001) model of coparenting in terms of covering the frequently used dimension of coparenting. Contents of the dimensions were explained in the next section.

1.3.1. Conceptual Framework

As mentioned earlier, conceptual framework of this study was based on Margolin et al.’s (2001) coparenting dimensions. Therefore, conceptual framework of coparenting consists of 3 domains which are cooperation, conflict and triangulation. These dimensions are used more frequently in research studies on the

association between coparenting and child outcomes than others (Teubert & Pinquart, 2010). These three dimensions are explained below.

Cooperation dimension corresponds to degree of support, respect and being helpful in parenting issues in between mother and father (Frank et al., 1986; Weissman & Cohen, 1985; Margolin et al., 2001). Cooperative parents approve that both have responsibilities on childrearing and guarantee that both are available to child physically and emotionally. *Conflict dimension* corresponds to the degree of conflict between mother and father in childrearing issues. More specifically, it includes the amount of agreement or disagreement in parenting, the amount of hostile attitudes toward each other in childrearing issues, whether they engage in undermining or supporting and the degree of agreement with each other on overall standards in raising children (Gable et al., 1992; Maccoby et al., 1993; Margolin et al., 2001).

Triangulation dimension can be described as the degree of damaging parent-child boundaries via forming coalition with the child against the other partner and then undermining and excluding the other partner. Triangulation of a child including communicating over a child rather than direct communication between parents and then results in drawing a child into interparental conflict (Margolin et al. 2001).

In the current study, these 3 domains of coparenting including cooperation, conflict and triangulation were assessed to determine the coparenting quality of parents. Although these dimensions were used more in research, sometimes researchers used other specific terminologies for coparenting. I would explain these specific terminologies of coparenting types to clarify the study findings in the introduction part. Firstly, *cooperative coparenting* refers high cooperation, communication, harmony between parents. These coparents make collaboration in

childrearing issues (Schoppe et al., 2001). Secondly, *hostile-withdrawn coparenting* and *competitive coparenting* refers to parents who engage in negative attitude towards each other and have lower level of interaction including physical and emotional withdrawing regarding childrearing. These coparents are competitive in coparenting and have discrepancy between parental issues and lack of harmony (Katz & Low, 2004; McHale & Rasmussen, 1998; Murphy et al., 2016). Also, hostile-withdrawn coparenting and competitive coparenting includes engaging in competition to be dominant parent, showing no respect to other parent's authority and being in competition to be favorite parent (Murphy et al., 2016). Thirdly, *parenting alliance* refers to cooperation, communication and respect between parents regarding child-rearing issues (Abidin & Brunner, 1995).

When taking the family systems theory (Minuchin, 1974) and Margolin et al.'s (2001) coparenting model into consideration, it can be concluded that coparenting functioning be approached as 3 different dimensions including cooperation, conflict and triangulation; and then marital relationship is associated with these dimensions of coparenting in married couples. It is possible that dissatisfaction and conflicts in marital relationship may spillover and affect cooperation among coparents, conflict in childrearing issues and triangulation in mother-father-child triad.

1.4 The Role of Coparenting in Family System

Co-parenting relationship is related to many factors in family system. More specifically, co-parenting is affected by and affects other familial factors. Regarding characteristics of coparenting, coparenting was associated with parent characteristics such as educational level (Stright & Bales, 2003), occupational and socioeconomic status (Schoppe-Sullivan & Mangelsdorf, 2013; Van Egeren, 2003), personality

adjustment (Stright & Bales, 2003), parents' psychological security and well-being (Elliston et al., 2008; Lindsey et al., 2005; Van Egeren, 2003), coparenting quality in family of origin (Stright & Bales, 2003), parent age (Van Egeren, 2003), parent's emotion expression (Kolak & Volling, 2007), gender of parents (Lindsey et al., 2005). Also, coparenting was associated with child characteristics including age, gender and temperament of children (Stright & Bales, 2003). In addition, marital relationship which is one of our main study variables predicts coparenting (Van Egeren, 2004). How these characteristics were associated with coparenting was explained in detailed in the "characteristics of coparenting" section.

Coparenting is associated with child adjustment including externalizing and internalizing problems of children (Teubert & Pinquart, 2010) and social competency of children (Adler-Baeder et al., 2018). Also, coparenting is associated with parent adjustment (Feinberg et al., 2010) such as parenting stress and postpartum depression (Abidin & Brunner, 1995; O'Hara & Swain, 1996). Furthermore, dyadic relationships among families including marital relationship (Van Egeren, 2004), and parent-child relationship (Holland & McElwain, 2013) was associated with coparenting. How these family variables were influenced by coparenting was explained in detailed in the "outcomes of coparenting" section.

This study explains research findings of coparenting based on Feinberg's (2003) ecological model which explains association between coparenting and individual, family and extra-familial factors in detail. Because of the fact that this model focuses mainly on 2-parent nuclear (mother-father) family systems and researchers widely cite Feinberg's (2003) ecological model in coparenting studies (Salman-Engin, 2014). In Feinberg's (2003) ecological model, individual such as parent and child characteristics, family such as marital relationship and extra-familial

factors such as socioeconomic status is associated with coparenting. Family processes and variables both influence and are influenced by coparenting.

In the next section, research findings on the link between individual, family and extra-familial factors and coparenting were provided in detail. Firstly, characteristics of coparenting including the association between parent and child characteristics and coparenting; and the effects of marital relationship on coparenting relationship were explained. Then, outcomes of coparenting including parent and child adjustment and dyadic relationships in family were explained.

1.4.1 Characteristics of Coparenting

Existing literature shows that coparenting was associated with other familial factors. For example, coparenting was found to be associated with parent characteristics including educational level (Stright & Bales, 2003), occupational and socioeconomic status (Schoppe-Sullivan & Mangelsdorf, 2013; Van Egeren, 2003), age (Van Egeren, 2003), gender (Lindsey et al., 2005). Furthermore, child characteristics including age and gender (Stright & Bales, 2003) were associated with coparenting. Furthermore, marital relationship (Van Egeren, 2004) is associated with coparenting. Study findings on how these factors affect coparenting are explained in this section.

1.4.1.1 Parent and Child Characteristics

Studies demonstrated that parent characteristics including educational level (Stright & Bales, 2003), occupational and socioeconomic status (Schoppe-Sullivan & Mangelsdorf, 2013; Van Egeren, 2003), age (Van Egeren, 2003) and gender (Lindsey et al., 2005) are associated with coparenting.

Studies show that *educational level* of parents play a role in coparenting quality. For example, Stright and Bales (2003) showed that there is a positive

association between both parents' educational level and supportive coparenting in families with preschool-age children. In other words, when parents are highly educated, they engage more in interactions with children and promoting the other partner's parenting experiences. Furthermore, findings from Van Egeren (2003) showed that when mothers were older and had husbands with higher education levels, mothers were more likely to have satisfied coparenting relationship in families with infants. Similar findings were found by Salman-Engin (2014) in Turkish sample. They showed that older and highly educated parents engage more in coparenting cooperation compared to less educated parents. Therefore, these findings imply that education level and older ages are positively associated with coparenting relationship. More findings on the link between age and coparenting are provided later.

Van Egeren (2003) indicated that for fathers, higher *occupational status* was associated with higher satisfaction in coparenting relationship. Likewise, Schoppe-Sullivan and Mangelsdorf (2013) revealed that lower level of family socioeconomic status and higher levels of negative emotionality of fathers of infants are associated with engaging more in undermining coparenting behavior. Similarly, Lindsey et al. (2005) revealed that mothers who have dual-earner families engage in more supportive coparenting behavior than mothers who have single-earner families. These findings indicate that in addition to educational level and age, occupational and socioeconomic status are linked with coparenting.

Studies on the association between *age* of parents and coparenting showed that there are contradictory findings. For example, older and married with highly educated husbands reported high satisfaction in coparenting relationship in families with infants (Van Egeren, 2003). This finding is consistent with the previous

research conducted by Lindsey et al. (2005). They showed that younger mothers who had 1-year-old child were more likely to engage in intrusive behaviors than were older mothers. Intrusive behaviors including speaking to child and attracting attention of child during father-child interaction and undermining coparenting of fathers. However, Mack and Gee (2018) showed that for fathers, there is a negative association between their age and coparenting quality, as reported by fathers. As a conclude, there seems no consensus on how parental age affects coparenting quality (McHale & Lindahl, 2011, p.48).

Studies on the association between *parent's gender* and coparenting showed that there are contradictory findings. For example, Lindsey et al. (2005) revealed that fathers engaged in more supportive coparenting behaviours than mothers during mother-child-father triadic free play interaction session. This result is consistent with previous findings (Belsky et al., 1995; Gordon & Feldman, 2008). However, Margolin et al. (2001) showed that mothers engaged in cooperative behaviors more than fathers according to self-report measures. Therefore, it can be said that no clear conclusions about how gender affects coparenting. The current study findings provide information about the association between gender and coparenting functioning.

This study only includes the gender of the children in terms of child characteristics. Previous studies demonstrated that child gender (Margolin et al., 2001) associated with coparenting functioning. Existing literature about the links between child characteristics and coparenting has shown mixed findings about the effects of *child's gender*. For example, Margolin et al. (2001) showed that mothers who have sons were more likely to engage in triangulation than mothers who have girls according to their husbands' report. Elliston et al. (2008) showed that fathers of

girls feel less respected by mothers as parents and have higher levels of disengagement and lower level of warmth than fathers of boys. However, Stright and Bales (2003) revealed no association between child gender and coparenting among families with preschoolers. Research findings on the child characteristics and coparenting has demonstrated that there is no consensus on the direct effects of child gender on coparenting (McHale & Lindahl, 2011).

1.4.1.2 Marital Relationship

The association between individual factors including parent and child characteristics and coparenting functioning were explained in the previous part. In addition to individual factors, familial factors such as marital relationship was associated with coparenting (Kollak & Volling, 2007). Now, the association between marital satisfaction which is the one of the most important predictors of coparenting will be explained.

Marital satisfaction has been linked to coparenting quality (Kollak & Volling, 2007; Van Egeren, 2004). For example, Margolin et al. (2001) revealed that marital conflict is negatively associated with coparenting quality. Similarly, Kollak and Volling (2007) supported the notion that marital satisfaction is associated with coparenting behavior among families with young children. They showed that there is a positive association between supportive marital relationship and coparenting cooperation and there is a negative association between supportive marital relationship and coparental triangulation. It is possible that dissatisfaction and conflicts in marital relationship may spillover and affect coparenting relationship. For example, when a woman in the marital relationship perceived dissatisfaction as a wife may spillover her dissatisfaction into her other role which is mother in

coparenting relationship; as a result she might engage more in conflict and triangulation and less in cooperation.

In addition to correlational studies, longitudinal studies showed that marital satisfaction emerges as a predictor of coparenting quality (Christopher et al., 2015; Liu & Wu, 2018; Van Egeren, 2004). For example, Van Egeren (2004) revealed that both actor and partner effect on the link between marital satisfaction and coparenting relationship. Their study findings showed that mothers' positive feelings about their marriage emerge as a predictor of positive experiences on coparenting. For fathers, in addition to their own positive feelings, mothers' positive feelings are associated with their positive experiences on coparenting. More detailed information on the link between marital relationship and coparenting is provided in the following sections.

1.4.2 Outcomes of Coparenting

Coparenting have an effect on other family variables. For example, coparenting is associated with adjustment of children such as externalizing and internalizing problems (Teubert & Pinquart, 2010); parent adjustment such as parenting stress and postpartum depression (Abidin & Brunner, 1995; Feinberg et al., 2010; O'Hara & Swain, 1996). Also, dyadic relationships among families including marital relationship (Van Egeren, 2004), and parent-child relationship (Holland & McElwain, 2013) were influenced by coparenting relationship. Although this study did not test the outcomes of coparenting in the family system, previous study findings on how coparenting affect other family variables are explained in detailed in this section to make clear picture of the significance of coparenting in the family system.

1.4.2.1 Child Adjustment

Existing research has shown that coparenting plays a vital role in a *child's psychological adjustment* (Teubert & Pinquart, 2010). Cooperative coparenting produces the best results for psychological adjustment of children (Kolak & Vernon-Feagans, 2008). On the other hand, hostile-withdrawn coparenting and competitive coparenting result in children's psychological adjustment problems including internal and external behavior problems (Katz & Low, 2004; Murphy et al., 2016).

1.4.2.1.1 Effects of Cooperative Coparenting on Child Adjustment

Studies related to cooperative coparenting and child adjustment show cooperative coparenting is associated with lower level of internalizing problems in children. For example, Kolak and Vernon-Feagans (2008) revealed that there is a negative correlation between cooperative coparenting and internalizing problems of 2-years-old children. Similarly, when parents give emotional support to each other, find watching the interaction between the other parent and their child enjoyable and make collaboration with the other parent in childrearing, their children show fewer externalizing problems (Schoppe et al., 2001). Similarly, Solmeyer, Feinberg, Coffman and Jones (2014) revealed that attending to the preventive intervention program at pregnancy is linked with less coparenting competition at age 1, which in turn is linked with fewer child adjustment problems at age 3. Therefore, children whose parents engage in high communication, cooperation and low competition and conflict show lower level of adjustment problems.

In addition to decreased negative effects, study findings (Adler-Baeder et al., 2018; Scrimgeour et al., 2013) show that cooperative coparenting has the positive effects on children's prosocial behavior and social competency. For example, Adler-Baeder et al. (2018) tested the effects of Relationship and Marriage Education

Program and revealed that there is a positive association between coparenting agreement and teachers report preschool-age children's social competence over 1 year. Similarly, Scrimgeour et al. (2013) concluded that there is a positive association between cooperative coparenting and children's prosocial behavior including sharing, helping, and empathy-related behaviors. Therefore, agreeing on each other on childrearing, cooperating and communicating well as parents supports children's prosocial behavior and social competency.

1.4.2.1.2. Effects of Hostile-withdrawn and Competitive Coparenting on Child Adjustment

Hostile-withdrawn coparenting and competitive coparenting are linked with psychological problems of children. In other words, being competitive in coparenting, having negative attitude toward the other parent (Katz & Low, 2004; Murphy et al., 2016) and discrepancy between parental issues and lack of harmony (McHale & Rasmussen, 1998) were associated with internalizing and externalizing problems of children. For example, Katz and Low (2004) revealed that there is a positive relationship between hostile-withdrawn coparenting and children's anxiety and depression by observing preschool aged children and their families. Furthermore, Murphy et al. (2016) revealed that competitive coparenting emerges as a unique predictor of externalizing symptoms of children at 7 age. Similarly, competitive coparenting at age 2 found as a predictor of children's symptoms of attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), oppositional defiant disorder (ODD) at age 7 (Umemura et al., 2015). Therefore, study findings show that when parents engage in hostile-withdrawn coparenting, competitive coparenting and are less in harmony with each other, their children show more externalizing and internalizing symptoms.

When coparenting functioning is taken into consideration, cooperative and supportive coparenting which is high cooperation, communication, emotional support, harmony and low conflict between parents is the most appropriate type of coparenting for the healthy development of children. It results in fewer psychological problems (Kolak & Vernon-Feagans, 2008; Schoppe et al., 2001) and higher prosocial behavior and social competency (Scrimgeour et al., 2013). On the other hand, hostile-withdrawn coparenting and competitive coparenting which is having negative attitude towards other parent, lower level of interaction, competing to be dominant parent, showing no respect to other parent's authority are associated with internalizing and externalizing behavior problems of children (Katz & Low, 2004; Murphy et al., 2016; Umemura et al., 2015). Therefore, when the effects of coparenting on children taken into consideration, investigating the predictors of coparenting gains importance. So, this study focused on the effects of marital relationship which is one of the predictors of coparenting on coparenting.

1.4.2.1.3 Parent Adjustment

There is limited research on the association between coparenting and parental adjustment. Correlational studies have shown the association between coparenting and adjustment of parents including parenting stress and postpartum depression (Abidin & Brunner, 1995; O'Hara & Swain, 1996). They showed that the higher degree of support, respect, and trust that parents show to each other's parenting competencies and authorities is associated with lower parenting stress and depression after birth (Abidin & Brunner, 1995; O'Hara & Swain, 1996). Furthermore, there are intervention studies that shows the link between parental adjustment and coparenting. For example, couples expecting their first child attended to Family Foundations program aiming at improving coparenting functioning. Assessments demonstrated

that the intervention program has positive impacts on parents' stress and self-efficacy for all families; and mothers' depression for cohabiting couples (Feinberg et al., 2010). Similarly, Doss et al. (2014) conducted the intervention program with couples and they revealed that intervention program has effects on decreasing perceived stress for mothers during the first year after birth.

To conclude, there is limited evidence that coparenting is linked with parental adjustment, further research is needed to better understand the impact of co-parenting on parental adjustment. Although there is limited research on this topic, the link between parental adjustment and coparenting implies that enhancing coparenting relationship will affect parents' individual well-being. So, investigating the predictors of coparenting to enhance it will make contribution to individual well-being of each parent.

1.4.2.1.4 Dyadic Relationships Among Families

Coparenting is related with other type of relationships in the family system such as marital relationship and parent-child relationship (Don et al.2013; Holland & McElwain, 2013). Better coparenting functioning is associated with better marital relationship (Le et al., 2016). As mentioned earlier, there is a significant association between coparenting and marital satisfaction (Kollak & Volling, 2007; Margolin et al., 2001). Although it was stated that marital relationship predicted coparenting relationship in the section of "predictors of coparenting"; longitudinal studies showed that coparenting relationship also predicted marital relationship (Don et al., 2013; Durtschi et al., 2017). In addition to marital relationship, better coparenting functioning is associated with better parent-child relationship (Holland & McElwain, 2013).

Coparenting relationship emerges as a predictor of marital relationship (Don et al., 2013; Durtschi et al., 2017). For example, Durtschi et al. (2017) revealed that supportive coparenting predicts marital quality in later years for both mothers and fathers. Regarding fathers, in addition their perception of supportive coparenting from mothers, mother's perception of supportive coparenting from the father predicted father's relationship quality. Similarly, Don et al. (2013) revealed that both mother's and father's parenting agreement predicted marital satisfaction of mothers. More detailed information on the link between marital relationship and coparenting is provided in the following sections.

Coparenting functioning is related with parent and child relationship in divorced (Amato et al., 2011) and intact families (Holland & McElwain, 2013). For example, Holland and McElwain (2013) revealed that for mothers, positive perceptions on coparenting is linked with better mother-son relationships; whereas, for fathers, positive perceptions on coparenting is linked with better father-son and father-daughter relationship. Similar findings have revealed among divorced parents by Amato et al. (2011). They investigated that when divorced parents engaged in cooperative coparenting, their children were more likely to report positive father-child relationship than other groups. On the other hand, recent findings extended the literature by showing the reciprocal association between parent-child relationship and coparenting (Peltz et al., 2018). It is revealed that positive parent-child relationship, as reported by fathers emerge as a predictor of both parents' coparenting cooperation. Therefore, parent-child relationship both affects and affected by coparenting.

In the previous sections, characteristics and outcomes of coparenting were explained in detailed. Regarding characteristics of coparenting; the associations between parent and child characteristics and coparenting were explained. Also,

effects of marital relationship on coparenting relationship were explained. Regarding outcomes of coparenting effects of coparenting relationship on parent and child adjustment and dyadic relationships in family including marital and parent-child relationship were explained.

1.5. Marital Satisfaction and Coparenting

As it was mentioned in the earlier sections, existing literature showed that coparenting is linked with marital satisfaction both as a predictor and as an outcome (Durtschi et al., 2017; Liu & Wu, 2018). Longitudinal studies showed that marital satisfaction predicted coparenting (Christopher et al., 2015; Van Egeren, 2004); on the other hand, it was shown that coparenting predicted marital satisfaction (Don et al., 2013; Durtschi et al., 2017). Therefore, literature showed that there is a bidirectional association between coparenting and marital satisfaction. Furthermore, some studies revealed that marital satisfaction and coparenting interacts at the dyadic level. In other words, they found both the actor and the partner effect on the link (Durtschi, et al., 2017; Liu & Wu, 2018).

There is a reciprocal association between two marital satisfaction and coparenting (Christopher et al., 2015; Don et al., 2013; Durtschi et al., 2017; Van Egeren, 2004). Longitudinal studies showed that marital satisfaction emerge as a predictor of coparenting. For example, Christopher et al. (2015) found that decreases in fathers' perception in marital satisfaction emerge as a predictor of fathers' higher competitive coparenting and lower involvement in parenting and also increases in fathers' perception of marital conflict emerge as a predictor of engaging in lower level of cooperation in coparenting for fathers. However, mother's marital satisfaction and conflict do not emerge as a predictor of coparenting. In addition, Van Egeren (2004) extended the literature by showing the predictor role of marital

relationship on coparenting for both mothers and fathers. Specifically, mothers' and father's positive feelings about their marriage emerge as a predictor of own positive experiences on coparenting. These findings indicate that marital satisfaction and marital conflict emerge as a predictor of coparenting.

There are also longitudinal studies that showed that coparenting emerges as a predictor of marital satisfaction. For example, Durtschi et al. (2017) examined the relationship quality and supportive coparenting across the first 3 years of parenthood and revealed both actor and partner effects. More specifically, supportive coparenting predicts marital quality in later years for both mothers and fathers. Regarding fathers, in addition to their perception of supportive coparenting from mothers, mothers' perception of supportive coparenting from the father predicted father's relationship quality. As another example, Schoppe-Sullivan et al. (2004) showed that coparenting behavior of parents when their children were 6 months old predicted parents' marital quality when their children were 3 years old but marital behavior at the infancy phase did not emerge as an important predictor of later coparenting behavior. Similarly, Don et al. (2013) found that both mothers' and fathers' perception of parenting agreement emerges as an important predictor of mothers' relationship satisfaction. However, there is no actor and partner effect for fathers. These findings indicate that supportive coparenting and parenting agreement predicted later marital relationship quality.

Some studies (e.g., Le et al., 2016) revealed a bidirectional association between coparenting and marital satisfaction. For example, Le et al. (2016) revealed a reciprocal association between marital relationship and coparenting relationship. They revealed that couples' marriage quality before they have a child emerges as a predictor of coparenting functioning after birth. On the other hand, mothers'

perception of coparenting support and undermining when their child was 6 months old predicted mothers' perception of marriage quality when the child was 3 years old. So, this study showed that marriage quality and coparenting functioning reciprocally associated for mothers. Another study (Le et al., 2019) revealed bidirectionality for both parents. They found bidirectional link between two concepts at the daily level within the first year of parenthood. They revealed that marital satisfaction and supportive coparenting are prospectively and bidirectionally linked for both mothers and fathers based on their daily feelings. More specifically, when a person feels close to his/her partner in terms of romantic relationship, the person more engages in supportive coparenting in the next day and also when a person experience supportive coparenting, s/he feels close to his/her partner in the next day. These finding indicate that there is a prospectively bidirectional association between coparenting and marital satisfaction.

1.5.1. Partner Effects on the Association Between Marital Satisfaction and Coparenting

It is important to consider that marital relationship and coparenting interact one another at a dyadic level. It means that one's experience of the marital satisfaction is related with not only one's own coparenting experience (actor effects) but also other partner's experience of coparenting (partner effect). So, dyadic studies are important in terms of showing both actor and partner effects on the association between marital and coparenting relationship.

Existing literature shows that there is gender difference in partner effects on the association between marital satisfaction and coparenting. While some studies revealed partner effect from mothers to fathers on this association, some studies showed partner effect from fathers to mothers. Regarding partner effect from fathers

to mothers, Liu and Wu (2018) showed that fathers' marital satisfaction not only related with their own coparenting functioning, but also related with their wives' coparenting functioning. In contrast, Don et al. (2013) found that both mother's and father's parenting agreement emerge as a predictor of mother's marital satisfaction. These finding indicate that there is a partner effects from fathers to mothers on the link between marital relationship and coparenting.

Some dyadic studies found partner effect from mothers to fathers on the association between marital satisfaction and coparenting. For example, Durtschi et al. (2017) showed that both father's perception of supportive coparenting from mothers and mother's perception of supportive coparenting from the father predicted father's relationship quality. In contrast, Van Egeren (2004) found that regarding fathers, in addition to their own positive feelings about their marriage, mothers' positive feelings about marriage are associated with their positive experiences on coparenting. These finding indicate that there is a partner effect from mothers to fathers on the link between marital relationship and coparenting. To conclude, the pathways by which marital satisfaction links to coparenting may be different for mothers and fathers in terms of partner effect.

To our knowledge, there is only one study that investigating the link between marital satisfaction and coparenting in Turkish families. They focused on different child age group which is infancy. As a first study, Salman-Engin (2014) conducted a dyadic study with the sample of both Turkish and American families having a 3-month-old baby. The study findings showed that parents who rated themselves as having higher marital adjustment shows higher level of cooperation during the 'mother-father-baby' triadic interactions. In addition, marital adjustment was linked with parenting alliance for both American and Turkish parents. In both cultures,

partners' own marital adjustment was associated with parenting alliance. Also, there was a partner effect on marital adjustment in American parents while there is no partner effect in Turkish parents. In sum, although there is evidence for partner effect in the association between marital relationship and coparenting, the only study on this issue in Turkey did not find partner effect.

As a conclude, the growing body of research has shown that coparenting emerged as a both predictor and outcome of a marital satisfaction (Christopher et al., 2015; Don et al., 2013; Durtschi et al., 2017; Van Egeren, 2004). Furthermore, regarding dyadic level interaction, both actor and partner effect on the link between marital satisfaction and coparenting were shown (Durtschi, et al., 2017; Liu & Wu, 2018). Regarding gender differences, some studies found partner effect from mothers to fathers while some of them found from fathers to mothers.

1.6 Turkey as a Social Context

In terms of interpreting the results of the current study, it is important to mention briefly about the Turkish culture and parenting roles in the culture. As it is known, regarding geographic position of Turkey, it serves as a bridge that connects East and West; and accordingly, Turkish culture includes both Eastern and Western characteristics. Both traditional features and highly modern or western features can be seen at the same time in Turkish culture (Sunar & Fisek, 2005).

It can be said that collectivism is more dominant in Turkey when followings are taken into account: interdependency and interrelatedness between family members and giving more emphasis family than individuals. However, there are sub-cultural differences. For example, it is known that Turkish people who live in urban areas in Turkey see themselves as neither strongly collectivistic nor individualistic (Goregenli, 1997; Salman-Engin, 2014).

Although economic and social changes in Turkey have resulted in increases in economic independence of modern urban Turkish families, strong traditional values in emotional interdependence within and between generations remains stable (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2007). This type of interdependency may be considered as a ‘culture of relatedness’ according to Kağıtçıbaşı (2007). Also, the traditional emotional intimacy and expectations of closeness and sensitivity to the needs of others continues or are even increased in the urban middle class (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1996; Sunar, 2002; Sunar & Fişek, 2005).

Regarding social roles of mother and fathers, it can be said that there was inequality in distribution of child-related issues among mothers and fathers. For example, statistics shows that mothers generally make decisions regarding issues related to children in the Turkish families (fathers: 70%, mothers: 86%). Also, statistics shows that mothers are usually the primary caregivers in Turkish families (Uslu, 2011). These differences in parenting role might results in finding gender differences in the association between marital satisfaction and coparenting functioning.

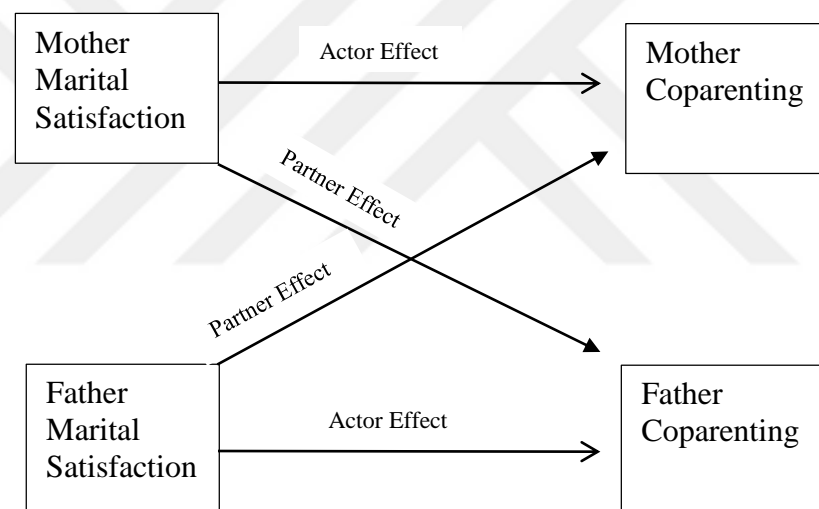
1.7. The Goal of the Study and Hypotheses

Existing literature on coparenting was generally composed of Western families. There are few studies examining coparenting in Turkish families (Çetin, 2020; Karataş, 2019; Salman-Engin, 2014). Among them, only one study has directly examined the link between coparenting and marital satisfaction as a dyadic study in Turkish culture (Salman-Engin, 2014). Therefore, coparenting relationship needs to be investigated in Turkish culture. To my knowledge, this is the first study examined marital satisfaction and coparenting as three dimensions including cooperation, conflict and triangulation in Turkey at dyadic level. Due to dyadic-level overall

interparental relationship is the most important factor that affect coparenting (Kitzmann, 2000), the current study aims to examine the association between marital satisfaction and coparenting functioning for both mother and father having preschool age children in Turkish culture through using the actor–partner interdependence model (APIM) to clarify the interdependence between partners and to test for possible actor and partner effects (Cook & Kenny, 2005).

Figure 1

Theoretical Model of Actor-Partner Interdependence Model of Marital Satisfaction and Coparenting in Families



Following research questions and hypotheses were addressed in the current study:

Q1: Do partners' marital satisfaction have direct effect on their own coparenting cooperation (actor effect)? Do partners' marital satisfaction have partner effect on their partners' coparenting cooperation (partner effect)?

H1: Mothers' marital satisfaction would be positively associated with their own Coparenting Cooperation (actor effects) and their partners' Coparenting

cooperation (partner effects). Also, fathers' marital satisfaction would be positively associated with their own Coparenting cooperation (actor effects) and the partner's Coparenting cooperation (partner effects).

Q2: Do partners' marital satisfaction have direct effect on their own coparenting conflict (actor effect)? Do partners' marital satisfaction have partner effect on their partners' coparenting conflict (partner effect)?

H2: mothers' marital satisfaction would be negatively associated with their own Coparenting Conflict (actor effects) and their partners' Coparenting conflict (partner effects). Also, fathers' marital satisfaction would be negatively associated with their own Coparenting conflict (actor effects) and the partner's Coparenting conflict (partner effects).

Q3: Do partners' marital satisfaction have direct effect on their own coparenting triangulation (actor effect)? Do partners' marital satisfaction have partner effect on their partners' coparenting triangulation (partner effect)?

H3: mothers' marital satisfaction would be negatively associated with their own Coparenting triangulation (actor effects) and their partners' Coparenting triangulation (partner effects). Also, fathers' marital satisfaction would be negatively associated with their own Coparenting triangulation (actor effects) and the partner's Coparenting triangulation (partner effects).

CHAPTER 2

METHODS

2.1 Participants

Sample of this research is consisted of 249 co-parent dyads having a child between the ages of 3 and 7 ($M = 56.96$, $SD = 15.16$). 119 couples reported that they have at least a girl and 124 couples reported that they have at least a son. The mothers' age is varied from 25 to 49 ($M = 34.43$, $SD = 4.09$). The fathers' age is varied from 24 to 57 ($M = 37.24$, $SD = 4.82$). Most of the couples reported their marital status as married and living together with their partner ($n=246$) while 3 couple reported as married and living separated from partner. Couples duration of marriage is varied from 36 months to 264 months ($M = 106.83$, $SD = 42.35$). Among couples, 44.6% ($n=111$) of them reported that they have one child, 46.2% ($n=115$) of them reported that they have two children, 8.4% ($n=21$) couples reported that they have 3 children and 0.8% of them ($n=2$) couples reported that they have four children. The employment status of the mother participants is that 50.6% of them were working in a full-time job ($n=126$), 11.6% of them were working in a part-time job ($n=29$), 14.9% of them were unemployed/looking for a job ($n=37$), 22.9% of them were unemployed/not looking for a job ($n=57$). The employment status of the father participants is that 94% of them were working in a full-time job ($n=234$), 2.4% of them were working in a part-time job ($n=6$), 2.8% of them were unemployed/looking for a job ($n=7$), 0.8% of them were unemployed/not looking for a job ($n=2$).

The sample consists of well-educated fathers and mothers. The educational level of mothers is that 8% of them were secondary school graduated ($n=2$). 14.1% of them were high school graduated ($n=35$). 62.2% of them were university

graduated ($n=155$). 20.1% of them had master degree and doctor of philosophy (MA-PhD) degree ($n=50$). The educational level of fathers is that 1.6% of them were primary school graduated ($n=4$). 2% of them were secondary school graduated ($n=5$). 14.9% of them were high school graduated ($n=37$). 62.2% of them were university graduated ($n=155$). 18.5% of them had MA-PhD degree ($n=46$). Regarding monthly income of families, 18.1% of them reported their income as “1000 - 3999 TL” ($n=45$). 31.7% of them reported as “4000 – 6999 TL” ($n=79$). 20.5% of them reported as “7000 – 9999 TL” ($n=51$). 29.3% of them reported as “above 10000 TL” ($n=73$).

2.2. Measures

2.2.1 Demographics

Participants were asked demographics questions including gender, age, income, education level, employment status, marriage status, duration of marriage, the number of children they have, child(ren)’s age and gender.

2.2.2. Marital Satisfaction

Couples Satisfaction Index was used to assess relationship satisfaction of parents. It is self-report measure and has three version including 32-item, 16-item and 4-item scale (Funk & Rogge, 2007). Couple Satisfaction Index has developed by using item response theory. It was revealed that the CSI scales showed convergent validity with other measures that assess relationship satisfaction such as Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS; G. B. Spanier, 1976), Marital Adjustment Test (MAT; H. J. Locke & K. M. Wallace, 1959). It was demonstrated that the CSI scales can make discrimination between being satisfied and dissatisfied in a romantic relationship (Funk & Rogge, 2007). Internal consistency of the CSI scales was high, and Cronbach's Alpha of the 32-item scale was .98, Cronbach's Alpha of the 16-item

scale was .98, Cronbach's Alpha of the 4-item scale was .94. For this study, we concluded that because of the fact that the 16-item scale has same properties with the long version and has less item than long version, using the 16-item version of CSI scale was seemed to be parsimonious way. So, 16-item version of CSI scale was used for this research. Sample items of CSI (16) scale includes “I have a warm and comfortable relationship with my partner”, “In general, how often do you think that things between you and your partner are going well?” and “To what extent has your relationship met your original expectations?”. There are six possible responses ranging from “1” to “6” except the first question that has possible responses ranging from “1” to “7”. Explanations of possible responses vary from item to item. Getting higher scores in the scale indicates that the participant has high level of satisfaction in his/her romantic relationship. Items were averaged to create composite score for CSI. Turkish version of Couples Satisfaction Index was translated into Turkish by Gurmen. The translated version of the CSI was checked by 2 bilingual professionals. Pilot study was conducted for this study. Cronbach's Alpha's of the scale for mothers and fathers for this sample showed satisfactory internal consistency (for mothers & fathers: $\alpha = .97$) (see Table 2).

2.2.3. Quality of Coparenting

Coparenting Inventory for Parents with Preschoolers (CI-PA) (Pinquart & Teubert, 2015) was used in order to assess coparenting quality of parents. CI-PA is a reliable measure to assess multi-dimensional index of coparenting quality. CI-PA is comprehensive self-report measure and consists of 12 items (Pinquart & Teubert, 2015). It includes 3 subscales which are cooperation, conflict and triangulation. CI-PA demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency for all subscales. Cronbach's alpha of the cooperation for mother was .84, for father was .77; Cronbach's alpha of the

conflict for mother was .83, for father was .87; Cronbach's alpha of the triangulation for mother was .75, for father was .79 (Pinquart & Teubert, 2015).

Sample item for the cooperation subscale includes “My partner and I talk about child-rearing”. Sample item for the conflict subscale includes “My partner and I disagree on the rules, goals, and demands of childrearing”. Sample item for the triangulation subscale includes “My partner and I discuss our problems regarding childrearing in front of our child”. Items had four possible responses from 0 = not at all true to 4 = completely true. Target items were averaged to create composite score for coparenting cooperation, conflict and triangulation. Turkish version of Coparenting Inventory for Parents with Preschoolers (CI-PA) was translated into Turkish by Acar (I. Acar, personal communication, February 17, 2020).

Confirmatory factor analysis for Turkish sample showed that CI-PA is a reliable and valid measure for Turkish sample and used by Saral (2020). Cronbach's Alpha's of the scale for mothers and fathers for this sample showed satisfactory internal consistency for all dimensions (for mothers; cooperation: $\alpha=.84$ & conflict: $\alpha=.83$ & tri: $\alpha=.77$; for fathers; coop: $\alpha=.80$ & conflict $\alpha = .74$ & tri: $\alpha = .79$) (see Table 2.

2.2.4 Pilot Study

Pilot study was conducted before the main study to test the reliability of Turkish version of Couple Satisfaction Index. The sample of the pilot study included 71 participants (59 mothers, 13 fathers). The measurement model for Couple Satisfaction Index was tested via confirmatory factor analysis using *the Mplus* (Muthén & Muthén, 1998) and showed adequate model fit, $\chi^2(103) = 161.913$, $p < .05$, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 0.94 (CFI > .90), Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) = .04 (SRMR < .08), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = .08 (90% C.I. [0.062, 0.115]; Browne & Cudeck, 1992;

MacCallum, Browne, & Sugawara, 1996). Standardized loadings ranged from 0.61 to 0.95, indicating acceptable loading values.

2.3. Procedure

Data was collected as both online and as hardcopy and different recruitment strategies were employed. Online data was gathered by using Qualtrics which is a platform for internet surveys. Snowballing techniques were used in social media to collect online data. Hardcopy data was gathered from the private preschools in İstanbul. The researcher contacted preschools and obtaining permission for sharing the survey with the parents. Then, surveys were distributed and then collected by preschool teachers and managers. To protect confidentiality, surveys were distributed with closed envelopes.

For both online and hardcopy data collection, a designated Couple ID was used to match the couples. Nick name including instruction (e.g., your nick name must include a word, a punctuation and a number), date of marriage and date of birth were asked to participants before questions of scales were presented. Informed consent was obtained from participants at the beginning of the survey. It is important to highlight that the study measures were reached by a lot couple from all over Turkey.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

3.1 Data Preparation and Preliminary Analysis

Regarding online data, after deleting the cases that do not meet the inclusion criteria (attending the study as a couple, being married and having a child between the age of 3 to 7) 504 participants remained for this study. Regarding hardcopy data, after deleting the cases do not meet the inclusion criteria, 36 participants remained for this study. To determine the use of both type of data together, independent sample t-test was conducted for main study variables which are marital satisfaction, coparenting cooperation, conflict and triangulation to compare mean differences. Results showed that there were statistically significant mean differences among online and hardcopy data type in terms of CSI, CI-PA Cooperation and CI-PA Triangulation. There was no statistically significant mean difference among online and hardcopy data type in terms of CI-PA Conflict dimension. T-test results are presented in table 1. Hardcopy data type group ($M = 5.29$, $SD = .5$) report higher than online data type group ($M = 4.6$, $SD = 1.13$) for marital satisfaction, $t(64.66) = 7.5$, $p = .000$ $d = .85$. Hardcopy data type group ($M = 3.56$, $SD = .49$) report higher than online data type group ($M = 3.38$, $SD = .67$) for coparenting cooperation, $t(45.15) = 2.09$, $p = .043$ $d = .30$. Hardcopy data type group ($M = 1.22$, $SD = .44$) report lower than online data type group ($M = 1.51$, $SD = .65$) for coparenting triangulation, $t(46.63) = -3.7$, $p = 0.001$ $d = .52$. There is no significant difference between hardcopy data type group ($M = 1.64$, $SD = .66$) and online data type group ($M = 1.86$, $SD = .74$) for coparenting conflict $t(41.6) = -1.86$, $p < .084$ $d = .094$. Therefore, hardcopy type data were not included to this study in terms of mean differences. It was decided that only online data will be included to this study.

Table 1

Results of the t-test and Descriptive Statistics for Comparison of Hardcopy vs.

Online Data Type Group

	Hardcopy			Online			<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Cohen's d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>				
Marital Satisfaction	5.29	.5	36	4.6	1.13	504	7.5	64.66	0.000	.85
Coparenting Cooperation	3.56	.49	36	3.38	.67	504	2.09	45.15	0.043	.30
Coparenting Conflict	1.64	.66	36	1.86	.74	504	-1.86	41.6	0.094	
Coparenting Triangulation	1.22	.44	36	1.51	.65	504	-3.7	46.63	0.001	.52

Preliminary analysis was done with 504 participants which means 252 couples. Firstly, mean scores for each study variable was calculated. As a second step, missing value analysis was conducted for four main variables and it was concluded there was no missing data in this study. Then, data was restructured from individual level to dyadic level. As another step, to check outliers and normality of the data Mahalanobis Distance methods was used, $X^2(8, N = 252) = 26.12, p = 0.001$. Chi square criteria was determined according to critical values of chi square table. P value was selected 0.001 to reduce margin of error (Tabachnick, Fidell, & Ullman, 2007). It was concluded that 3 couple's Mahalanobis Distance values is greater than Chi-square statistic value. So, these 3 cases were removed from the data. Also, skewness and kurtosis values of the data confirmed the normality assumptions in terms of being between +2 and -2 (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2014; Trochim & Donnelly, 2006). (see in Table 2). As a conclude, remaining analyses were conducted with the sample of 249 couples.

Bi-variate correlations were conducted for CSI, CI-PA Cooperation, CI-PA Conflict and CI-PA Triangulation (see Table 3). All bi-variate correlations are well below the .73 level. Although correlation coefficients did not sign the problem of multicollinearity, VIF value and tolerance were calculated to check it. It is concluded that there is no multicollinearity problem for this analysis according to criteria from Hair et al., (2010) which is $VIF < 4.0$ and $tolerance > 0.2$. (*For mothers; Coparenting Cooperation, Tolerance = .46, VIF = 2.18; Coparenting Conflict, Tolerance = .37, VIF = 2.69; Coparenting Triangulation, Tolerance = .54, VIF = 1.85*). (*For fathers; Coparenting Cooperation, Tolerance = .65, VIF = 1.54; Coparenting Conflict, Tolerance = .55, VIF = 1.81; Coparenting Triangulation, Tolerance = .71, VIF = 1.41*).

3.2. Descriptive Analysis

In Table 2, the descriptive analysis for Couple Satisfaction Index (CSI) and subscales of Coparenting Inventory for Parents with Preschoolers (CI-PA) is presented.

Table 2*Descriptive statistics for CSI and CI-PA Dimensions*

	Min-Max	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	Range	Cronbach Alpha (α)
<i>Mother</i>							
Couple Satisfaction Index	1.25-6.06	4.35	1.19	-.58	-.62	4.8	.97
CP Cooperation	1-4	3.31	.74	-1.08	.25	3	.84
CP Conflict	1-4	1.92	.8	.82	-.18	3	.83
CP Triangulation	1 - 3.75	1.52	.63	1.35	1.27	2.75	.77
<i>Father</i>							
Couple Satisfaction Index	1.19-6.06	4.76	1.04	-.91	.09	4.88	.97
CP Cooperation	1-4	3.46	.6	-1.21	1.04	3	.80
CP Conflict	1-3.75	1.79	.67	.69	-.43	2.75	.74
CP Triangulation	1-3.5	1.47	.61	1.45	1.55	2.5	.79

Note. CP = Coparenting

3.3 Correlation Analysis

Pearson bivariate correlation analyses were performed to examine the associations between marital satisfaction, coparenting (cooperation, conflict, and triangulation), and demographic variables including duration of marriage, child age, child gender, number of a children in the family, mother age and father age. Table 3 shows Pearson Bivariate Correlation results of all study variables.

Table 3*Intercorrelations Among Study Variables by Gender*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Marital Satisfaction												
1.Mother	-	.64**	.58**	.27**	-.56**	-.28**	-.47**	-.30**	-.12	.01	-.002	.05
2.Father			.46**	.46**	-.42**	-.46**	-.42**	-.44**	-.16*	.002	.07	-.03
CP Cooperation												
3.Mother				.45**	-.73**	-.40**	-.56**	-.27**	-.13*	-.01	.03	-.03
4.Father					-.44**	-.58**	-.39**	-.39**	-.02	.07	.02	-.09
CP Conflict												
5. Mother						.50**	.67**	.36**	.11	.001	.06	.01
6. Father							.49**	.53**	.13*	.09	-.09	.13*
CP Triangulation												
7.Mother								.52**	.06	-.04	.03	-.02
8. Father									.07	.02	-.01	-.01
Age												
9.Mother										.66*	.18**	.04
10.Father												
11.Child											.19**	-.004
												-.01
12. Child Gender												-

*p < .05. **p < .01.

Note. Child gender were coded as girls=1 and boys=0. CP = Coparenting

3.4. Gender Differences in Study Variables

Paired sample t-tests were computed to examine gender differences among main study variables. Results revealed that there were statistically significant mean differences among mothers and fathers in terms of marital satisfaction, coparenting cooperation and conflict. There was statistically significant difference between genders on marital satisfaction, $t(248) = -6.77, p = .000, d = .43$, with fathers and mothers scoring differently (for mothers $M=4.35, SD=1.19$, for fathers $M= 4.76, SD=1.04$). There was statistically significant difference between genders on coparenting cooperation, $t(248) = -3.32, p = .001, d = .18$, with fathers and mothers scoring differently (for mothers $M=3.31, SD=0.74$, for fathers $M= 3.46, SD=0.6$). There was statistically significant difference between genders on Coparenting conflict, $t(248) = 2.81, p = .005, d = .18$, with fathers and mothers scoring differently (for mothers $M=1.92, SD=0.8$, for fathers $M= 1.79, SD=0.67$). There was no statistically significant difference between genders on coparenting triangulation, $t(248) = -1.32, p = .188$, with fathers and mothers scoring similarly (for mothers $M=1.52, SD=0.63$, for fathers $M= 1.47, SD=0.61$).

3.5. ANOVA Results

3.5.1. Education Level

Multiple one-way ANOVA were computed to determine how main study variables differ in terms of education level of mothers and fathers. Regarding education level of mothers, A Tukey post hoc test showed that high school graduated mothers ($M = 4.74, SD = 1.12$) reported having more satisfied marital relationship than mothers with MA-PhD Degree ($M = 3.98, SD = 1.21$) ($F(4, 244) = 2.92, p = .02, \omega^2 = .03$). A Tukey post hoc test showed that fathers who married with high school graduated mothers ($M = 5.23, SD = .82$) reported higher level of marital

satisfaction than fathers married with university graduated mothers ($M = 4.67$, $SD = 1.03$) ($F(4, 244) = 3.12$, $p = .016$, $\omega^2 = .03$).

Regarding education level of fathers, Games-Howell post hoc test revealed that there was a statistically significant group difference in terms of father's coparenting cooperation of groups of primary school graduate ($M = 3.94$, $SD = .13$), high school graduate ($M = 3.14$, $SD = .69$), university graduate ($M = 3.52$, $SD = .56$) [Welch's $F(5, 7.98) = 7.91$, $p = .006$, $\omega^2 = .12$]. These results suggested that primary school graduated fathers reported the highest level of coparenting cooperation while high-school graduated fathers reported the lowest level of coparenting cooperation. Also, regarding education level of fathers, A Tukey post hoc test showed that mothers married with high school graduated husbands ($M = 2.99$, $SD = .75$), reported less coparenting cooperation than mothers married with university graduated husbands ($M = 3.41$, $SD = .69$), ($F(5, 243) = 3.27$, $p = .007$, $\omega^2 = .04$). Although results showed statistically significant group differences for father's education levels, it is important to note that results are negligible due to only 4 fathers in the primary school group.

3.5.2. Monthly Family Income

One-way ANOVA results showed that for mothers, there were no statistically significant differences between group means of marital satisfaction [($F(3, 244) = .94$, $p = .424$); coparenting cooperation [($F(3, 244) = 1.1$, $p = .349$); coparenting conflict [($F(3, 244) = .99$, $p = .398$); and coparenting triangulation [($F(3, 244) = .03$, $p = .994$)]. One-way ANOVA results showed that for fathers, there were no statistically significant differences between group means of marital satisfaction [($F(3, 244) = .32$, $p = .814$); coparenting cooperation [Welch's $F(3, 123.32) = 2.59$, $p =$

.056)]; coparenting conflict [$F(3, 244) = 1.5, p = .215$]; and coparenting triangulation [Welch's $F(3, 124.23) = 2.3, p = .081$].

3.6. APIM Analyses

To examine the association between marital relationship quality and coparenting functioning for both mother and father, the actor-partner interdependence model (APIM) was used in order to clarify the interdependence between partners and to test for possible actor and partner effects (Cook & Kenny, 2005). To test APIM model, structural equation model and the program lavaan (Rosseel, 2012) was used through web application for dyadic data analysis which is APIM_SEM (Stas et al., 2008) (see https://apimsem.ugent.be/shiny/apim_sem/). In this study, three different APIM model analysis were conducted to test three different hypotheses.

3.6.1. Hypothesis 1: Association between Marital Satisfaction and Coparenting Cooperation

The association between marital satisfaction and coparenting cooperation which is one of the subscales of coparenting was examined through APIM model using APIM_SEM (Stas et al., 2008).

As a first step, Test of Distinguishability was considered. As it was mentioned earlier, gender differences were found in terms of marital satisfaction and coparenting cooperation. There was statistically significant difference between genders on marital satisfaction, $t(248) = -6.77, p = .000$, with fathers and mothers scoring differently (for mothers $M=4.35, SD=1.19$, for fathers $M= 4.76, SD=1.04$). There was statistically significant difference between genders on coparenting cooperation, $t(248) = -3.32, p = .001$, with fathers and mothers scoring differently (for mothers $M=3.31, SD=0.74$, for fathers $M= 3.46, SD=0.6$). Therefore, gender was

selected as a distinguishable variable in the application. To test distinguishability, a model comparison was computed between a model with distinguishable members and a model with indistinguishable members. The test of distinguishability revealed a significant result, $X^2(8, N = 249) = 69.31, p < .001$. Based on statistically significant results of test of distinguishability, it was concluded that participants can be statistically distinguished based on the gender.

The actor effect was significant for mothers ($\beta = .29, p < .001$) and for fathers ($\beta = .29, p < .001$) between marital satisfaction and coparenting cooperation. These results suggested that mother's marital satisfaction had a positive effect on their own coparenting cooperation. Father's marital satisfaction had a positive effect on their own coparenting cooperation. Examining the partner effect, the partner effect was significant for from father to mother ($\beta = .11, p < .05$). This suggested that father's marital satisfaction had a positive effect on mother's coparenting cooperation. However, the partner effect from mother to father was not significant ($\beta = -0.03, p = .36$). APIM results is presented in Table 4. Standard model is presented in Figure 2.

As another step, the actor and partner effects' relative sizes were calculated. For this dataset, the standardized actor effects of both mother and father are greater than .1 in absolute value and they are statistically significant. So, k value was calculated through regular bootstrapping method with 500 samples. According to results, k value for mothers was 0.37, indicating that the model is in between the actor-only ($k = 0$) and the couple ($k = 1$) models (95% CI [0.01, 0.93]). For fathers, k value was -0.12, indicated that the model is actor-only ($k = 0$) (95% CI [-0.35, 0.23]).

Table 4

APIM Results Assuming Different Actor and Partner Effects for Both Roles

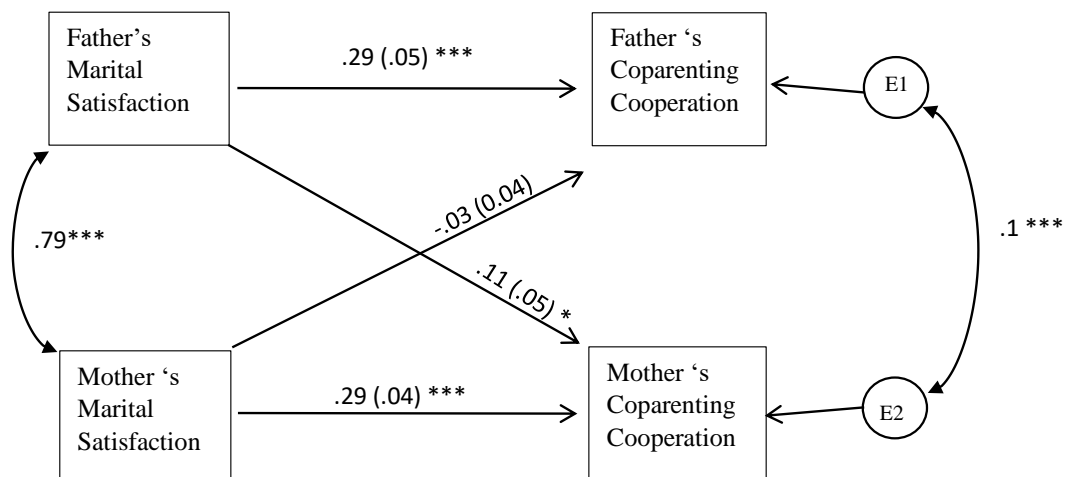
Effect	Role	Estimate	Lower	95% CI	Upper	p value	Beta (o)	Beta (s)	r
Intercept	Mother	1.26	.82	To	1.67	<.001			
Actor	Father	.29	.21	To	.38	<.001	.7	.47	.42
Partner	F to M	.11	.005	To	.21	.032	.18	.15	.14
k		.37	.01	To	.92				
Intercept	Father	1.93	1.5	To	2.37	<.001			
Actor	Father	.29	.18	To	.38	<.001	.48	.5	.39
Partner	M to F	-.03	-.1	To	.04	.36	-.06	-.07	-.04
k		-.12	-.35	To	.23				

Note: Result were obtained from APIM model with covariate: education level of fathers

M= mother, F= Father

Figure 2

Standard Model of APIM



Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Result were obtained from APIM model with covariate: education level of fathers with reference category as high school graduate

3.6.1.1. Covariates in the Model

Regarding covariates, three between-dyad covariates were added to model: mother's age, father's education level with reference category as primary school graduate and father's education level with reference category as high school graduate. To determine the potential covariate to add the APIM model, Pearson Correlation Coefficient results and ANOVA test results of study variables were considered.

For the first covariate, correlation analyses were considered. Results showed that mother age is negatively correlated with mother's coparenting cooperation ($r(249) = -.13, p = .04$). It was concluded that mother age can be added to model as a between-dyad covariate. Mother age was considered as a between-dyad covariate because there is single score within the same dyad and scores can vary between dyads in the sample. The effects of the mother age on coparenting cooperation for mothers and fathers were not significant (for mothers; $\beta = -.011, p = .215, 95\% \text{ CI} [-0.028, 0.009]$; for fathers; $\beta = .004, p = .635, 95\% \text{ CI} [-0.013, 0.022]$).

For the second covariate which is education level of fathers with the reference of primary school graduate, ANOVA test results were considered. These results suggested that primary school graduated fathers reported the highest level of coparenting cooperation [Welch's $F(5, 7.98) = 7.91, p = .006$]. It was concluded that father's education level can be added to model as a between covariate. Reference category was selected as primary school graduated fathers. Results showed that education level of fathers have no statistically significant effects on mother's ($p = .12$) and fathers ($p = .3$) coparenting cooperation.

For the third covariate which is education level of fathers with the reference of high school graduate, ANOVA test results were considered. A Tukey post hoc test

showed that mothers married with high school graduated husbands ($M = 2.99$, $SD = .75$), reported less coparenting cooperation than mothers married with university graduated husbands ($M = 3.41$, $SD = .69$), ($F(5, 243) = 3.27$ $p = .007$). It was concluded that father's education level can be added to model as a between covariate. Reference category was selected as high school graduated fathers. Results showed that mothers married with high school graduated husbands have, on average, a coparenting cooperation score that is .32 points lower than others ($p = .006$). Also, high school graduated fathers have, on average, a coparenting cooperation score that is .35 points lower than others ($p = .001$).

As a result, mother age and education level of fathers with the reference as primary school graduate were later removed in the final models because they did not make statistically significant difference on dependent variable. Final model was conducted with only covariate which is education level of fathers with reference as high school graduate.

Model with covariate which is education level of fathers and model without covariate were compared. It was revealed that there were very small differences between two model. For example, actor effect for mothers was 0.01 greater in the model without covariate ($\beta = -0.3$, $p < .001$). k value for mother was 0.02 lower in the model without covariate. K value for father was 0.03 higher in the model without covariate. Regarding effect size of the actor and partner effect, there was no differences between them.

Effect sizes of the model for the actor effects for mother (partial $r = .42$) are considered as small to moderate according to Ferguson (2009). Ferguson (2009) stated that the criteria of RMPE is .2, criteria of moderate effect is .5, and criteria of the strong effect is .8. Effect sizes of the model for the actor effects for father (partial

$r = .39$) are considered as small to moderate. Effect sizes of the model for the partner effects from father to mother (partial $r = .14$) are considered as small and less than the RMPE.

3.6.2. Hypothesis 2: Association between Marital Satisfaction and Coparenting Conflict

The effect of marital satisfaction on coparenting conflict which is one of the subscales of coparenting was examined through APIM model using APIM_SEM (Stas, Kenny, Mayer, & Loeys, 2008).

As a first step, Test of Distinguishability was considered. As it was mentioned earlier, gender differences were found in terms of marital satisfaction and coparenting conflict. There was statistically significant difference between genders on coparenting conflict, $t(248) = 2.81, p = .005$, with fathers and mothers scoring differently (for mothers $M = 1.92, SD = 0.8$, for fathers $M = 1.79, SD = 0.67$). There was statistically significant difference between genders on marital satisfaction, $t(248) = -6.77, p = .000$, with fathers and mothers scoring differently (for mothers $M = 4.35, SD = 1.19$, for fathers $M = 4.76, SD = 1.04$). Therefore, gender was selected as a distinguishable variable in the application. To test distinguishability, a model comparison was computed between a model with distinguishable members and a model with indistinguishable members. The test of distinguishability revealed a significant result, $X^2(8, N = 249) = 63.38, p < .001$. Based on statistically significant results of test of distinguishability, it was concluded that participants can be statistically distinguished based on the gender.

The actor effect was significant for mothers ($\beta = -.34, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [-0.43, -0.24]$) and for fathers ($\beta = -.3, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [-0.39, -0.2]$) between marital satisfaction and coparenting conflict. This suggested that mother's marital satisfaction

have a negative effect on their own coparenting conflict. Father's marital satisfaction have a negative effect on their own coparenting conflict. Examining the partner effects, there were no significant partner effect from father to mother ($\beta = -.07, p = .167, 95\%$ CI [-0.19, 0.03]) and from mother to father ($\beta = .004, p = .929, 95\%$ CI [-0.08, 0.09]). This suggested that father's marital satisfaction have no significant effect on mother's coparenting conflict. Mother's marital satisfaction have no significant effect on father's coparenting conflict. APIM results is presented in Table 5. Standard model is presented in Figure 3.

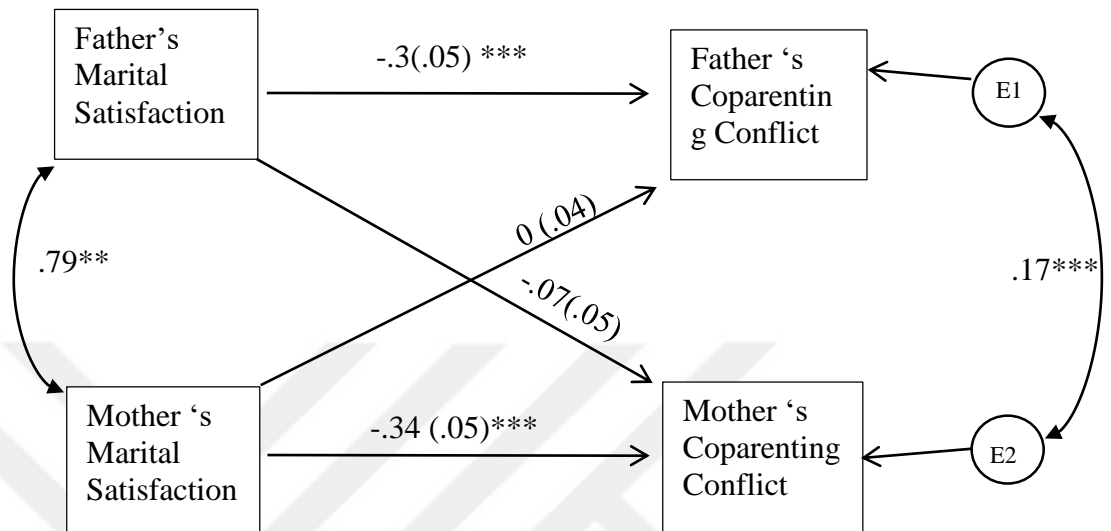
As another step, the actor and partner effects' relative sizes were calculated. For this dataset, the standardized actor effects of both mother and father are greater than .1 in absolute value and they are statistically significant. So, k value was calculated through regular bootstrapping method with 500 samples. According to results, k value for mothers was 0.22, indicating that the model is actor-only model ($k = 0$) (95% CI [-0.8, 0.77]). For fathers, k value was -0.01, indicated that the model is actor-only ($k = 0$) (95% CI [-0.25, 0.36]).

Table 5

APIM Results Assuming Different Actor and Partner Effects for Both Roles

Effect	Role	Estimate	Lower	95% CI	Upper	p value	Beta (o)	Beta (s)	r
Intercept	Mother	3.76	3.3	To	4.18	<.001			
Actor		-.34	-.43	To	-.24	<.001	-.64	-.5	-.42
Partner	F to M	-.07	-.19	To	.03	.167	-.11	-.1	-.09
k		.22	-.08	To	.77				
Intercept	Father	3.26	2.87	To	3.63	<.001			
Actor		-.3	-.39	To	-.2	<.001	-.45	-.46	-.38
Partner	M to F	.004	-.08	To	.09	.929	.005	.006	.02
k		-.01	-.25	To	.36				

Note: Results were obtained from the model with covariate: child gender
M= Mother, F= Father

Figure 3*Standard Model*

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Results were obtained from the model with covariate: child gender

3.6.2.1. Covariate in the Model

Regarding covariance, two different between-dyad covariate were added to model. To determine the potential covariate to add the APIM model, Pearson Correlation Coefficient results of study variables were considered. Firstly, correlation analyses results revealed that mother age is positively correlated with father's coparenting conflict ($r(249) = .13, p = .04$). It was concluded that mother age can be added to model as a between-dyad covariate. Mother age was considered as a between-dyad covariate because there is single score within the same dyad and scores can vary between dyads in the sample. Results revealed that the effects of the mother age on coparenting conflict for mothers were not statistically significant ($\beta =$

0.007, $p = .469$, 95% CI [-0.012, 0.029]). The effects of the mother age on coparenting conflict for fathers were also not statistically significant ($\beta = 0.01$, ($p = .286$, 95% CI [-0.008, 0.029]).

Regarding second covariate, correlation analyses showed that fathers having girls reported more coparenting conflict than fathers having boys ($r(243) = .13$, $p = .05$). It was concluded that child gender can be added to model as a between-dyad covariate. Child gender was considered as a between-dyad covariate because there is single score within the same dyad and scores can vary between dyads in the sample. As expected, child gender had effect on father's coparenting conflict. Results suggested that fathers having son have, on average, a coparenting conflict score that is -.15 points lower than fathers having girls ($p < .05$). However, there is no statistically significant differences among mothers having boys and mother having girls in terms of coparenting conflict ($p = .66$).

As a result, mother age was later removed in the final model because it did not make statistically significant difference on dependent variable. Final model was conducted with only covariate which is child gender.

Model with covariates which is child gender and model without covariate were compared. It was revealed that there were very small differences between two model. For example, actor effect for father was 0.01 lower in the model without covariate ($\beta = -0.31$, $p < .001$). Partner effect from mother to father was 0.01 higher in the model without covariate ($\beta = -0.01$, $p = .768$). Partner effect from father to mother was 0.01 lower in the model without covariate ($\beta = -0.08$, $p = .156$). k value for mother was 0.01 higher in the model without covariate ($k = 0.23$). K value for father was 0.03 lower in the model without covariate ($k = -0.04$). Regarding effect size of the actor and partner effect, there was no differences between them.

Effect sizes of the model for the actor effects for mother (partial $r = -.42$) are considered as small to moderate according to Ferguson (2009). Ferguson (2009) stated that the criteria of RMPE is .2, criteria of moderate effect is .5, and criteria of the strong effect is .8. Effect sizes of the model for the actor effects for father (partial $r = -.38$) are considered as small to moderate.

3.6.3. Hypothesis 3: Association between Marital Satisfaction and Coparenting

Triangulation

As a last dimension, the link between marital satisfaction and coparenting triangulation was investigated through APIM model using APIM_SEM (Stas, Kenny, Mayer, & Loeys, 2008).

As a first step, Test of Distinguishability was considered. Although paired sample t-test results showed that there are no significant gender differences on coparenting triangulation, a model comparison was conducted between a model with distinguishable members and a model with indistinguishable members to test distinguishability. The test of distinguishability revealed a significant result, $X^2(8, N = 249) = 64.856, p < .001$. Based on statistically significant results of test of distinguishability, it was concluded that participants can be statistically distinguished based on the gender.

The actor effect was significant for mothers ($\beta = -0.2, p < .001$) and for fathers ($\beta = -0.25, p < .001$) between marital satisfaction and coparenting triangulation. These results suggested that mother's marital satisfaction had a negative effect on their own coparenting triangulation ($\beta = -0.2, p < .001$). Father's marital satisfaction had a negative effect on their own coparenting triangulation ($\beta = -0.25, p < .001$). Examining the partner effect, the partner effect from father to mother was significant ($\beta = -0.11, p < .05$). Specifically, father's marital satisfaction had a negative effect on mother's

coparenting triangulation ($\beta = -0.11, p < .05$). However, the partner effect from mother to father was not significant ($\beta = -0.02, p = .69$). APIM results is presented in Table 6. Standard model is presented in Figure 4.

As another step, the actor and partner effects' relative sizes were calculated. For this dataset, the standardized actor effects of both mother and father are greater than .1 in absolute value and they are statistically significant. So, k value was calculated through regular bootstrapping method with 500 samples. According to results, k value for mothers was 0.58, indicating that couple model ($k = 1$) is plausible (95% CI [0.08, 1.64]). For fathers, k value was 0.06, indicated that the actor-only model ($k = 0$) is plausible (95% CI [-0.21, 0.63]).

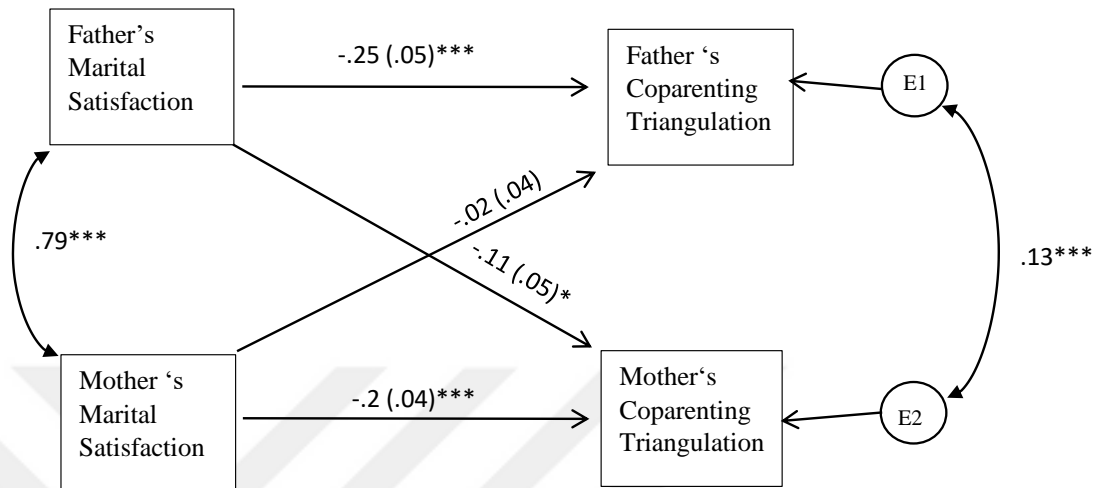
Table 6

APIM Results Assuming Different Actor and Partner Effects for Both Roles

Effect	Role	Estimate	Lower	95%	Upper	p value	Beta	Beta	r
				CI			(o)	(s)	
Intercept	Mother	2.66	2.21	To	3.03	<.001			
Actor		-.2	-.28	To	-.12	<.001	-.53	-.37	-.3
Partner	F to M	-.11	-.21	To	-.02	.021	-.21	-.19	-.17
k		.58	.08	To	1.64				
Intercept	Father	2.74	2.72	To	3.22	<.001			
Actor		-.25	-.34	To	-.14	<.001	-.45	-.42	-.34
Partner	M to F	-.02	-.1	To	.06	.69	-.03	-.03	-.03
k		-.06	-.21	To	.63				

Note: the results were obtained from the APIM model with a covariate: number of children

M= mother, F= father

Figure 4*Standard Model*

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

The results were obtained from the APIM model with a covariate: number of children

3.6.3.1. Covariates in the Model

To determine the potential covariate to add the APIM model, Pearson Correlation Coefficient results of study variables were considered. Results shows that number of child is positively correlated with mother's coparenting triangulation ($r(249) = .13, p = .047$). So, the number of children added to model as a between-dyad covariate. Results indicated that the number of children as a between covariate has a significant effect on mother's coparenting triangulation ($\beta = 0.16, p = .01$). Results suggested that when the number of a child in a family increase, mothers engage more in coparenting triangulation. However, there was no statistically significant effect of the number of children as a covariate on father's coparenting triangulation ($\beta = -0.02, p = .769$).

Model with covariate which is number of child and model without covariate were compared. It was revealed that there were very small differences between two model. For example, actor effect for mothers was 0.01 higher in the model without covariate ($\beta = -0.19$, $p < .001$). Partner effect from father to mother was 0.01 lower in the model without covariate ($\beta = -0.12$, $p = .013$). k value for mother was 0.06 higher in the model without covariate ($k = 0.64$). k value for father was 0.01 lower in the model without covariate ($k = 0.07$). Regarding effect size of the actor and partner effect, there was no differences between them.

Effect sizes of the model for the actor effects for mothers (partial $r = -.3$) are considered as small to moderate according to Ferguson (2009). Ferguson (2009) stated that the criteria of RMPE is .2, criteria of moderate effect is .5, and criteria of the strong effect is .8. Effect sizes of the model for the actor effects for fathers (partial $r = -.34$) are considered as small to moderate. Effect sizes of the model for the partner effects from fathers to mothers (partial $r = -.17$) are considered as small and less than the RMPE.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to examine the association between marital satisfaction and coparenting relationship in a dyadic context in Turkish culture. Consistent with previous studies (Liu & Wu, 2018; Salman-Engin, 2014; Van Egeren, 2004), this study revealed that marital satisfaction is directly associated with coparenting relationship for both fathers and mothers of preschool-age children. Direct associations (actor effect) were found in all dimensions of coparenting: cooperation, conflict and triangulation. Whereas, when we examined the partner effect on the association between marital and coparenting relationship, similar to existing findings (e.g., Liu & Wu, 2018) partner effect from father to mother were found only for cooperation and triangulation dimensions. These findings suggested that father's marital satisfaction is associated with their partner's coparenting relationship in terms of cooperation and triangulation. These findings are consistent with the existing literature in terms of finding actor effect (Liu & Wu, 2018; Pedro et al., 2012) and partner effect from father to mother (Liu & Wu, 2018). Similar to Pedro et al. (2012), the current study revealed the effects of marital satisfaction on coparenting cooperation, conflict and triangulation for both parents. Also, similar to Liu and Wu (2018)'s work, the current study investigated the partner effect from father to mother for coparenting cooperation and triangulation.

In the discussion section of the study, study findings for the association between marital satisfaction and coparenting were explained and discussed in terms of its relatedness with theoretical framework which is family systems theory and similarities with existing literature. As a second part of the discussion section, coparenting functioning and its relatedness with family demographics such as parent

and child characteristics and family size were explained and discussed in terms of consistency with existing literature. As a last part, the significance of the study, implications for practice and limitations of the study were explained.

4.1. The Association Between Marital Relationship and Coparenting

Actor effects were found for both parents and partner effects from father to mother was found on the association between marital satisfaction and coparenting. Specifically, there were actor effects on the association between parents' marital satisfaction and all dimensions of coparenting: cooperation, conflict and triangulation. In other words, marital satisfaction of parents was directly associated with coparenting cooperation, conflict and triangulation for both parents. These results suggested that when parents have a satisfactory marital relationship with their partners, they tend to cooperate more in childrearing, have less conflict about child-rearing issues and engage less triangulation in father-mother-child triad. Regarding effect sizes of the three model, Ferguson (2009) be taken as a basis for the interpretation of the effect sizes because their criteria was suggested for the social science data (Ferguson, 2009). Ferguson (2009) stated that the criteria of RMPE (recommended minimum effect size) is .2, criteria of moderate effect is .5, and criteria of the strong effect is .8. In this study, effect sizes of the actor effects for mother and father for all APIM Models are considered as small to moderate according to Ferguson (2009).

This finding is consistent with the systemic perspective in terms of revealing the interrelatedness between two type of relationship which are marital and coparenting (Minuchin, 1988). Family systems theory (Minuchin, 1974) argues that family is a complex system and composed of different subsystems including mother-father (coparenting), spousal (marital), siblings and parent-child subsystems. The

theory suggests that these subsystems are interconnected with one another and it is expected that experiences in one subsystem will affect the other subsystems (Minuchin, 1988). This expectation was confirmed by the study results in terms of revealing the effects of marital satisfaction on coparenting dimensions for both mothers and fathers. In addition to theory, findings were similar with the previous research revealing the direct effects of marital relationship on coparenting (e.g., Le. et al., 2016; Liu & Wu, 2018; Peltz et al., 2018; Pedro et al., 2012; Salman-Engin, 2014; Van Egeren, 2004). Pedro et al. (2012) revealed that both mother's and father's marital satisfaction is associated with coparenting cooperation, conflict and triangulation. Also, Salman-Engin (2014) showed that marital satisfaction and cooperation is associated positively in Turkish families. Therefore, it can be said that parent's own satisfaction in marital relationship spillover and affect their own coparenting functioning in terms of being cooperative, conflictual in childrearing issues and engaging in triangulation in mother-father-child triad. In terms of family system theory, parents role in marital subsystem which is wife and their role in coparenting subsystem which is mother are interdependent; as a result, being satisfied as a wife role spillover and have an effect on the mother role.

This study revealed partner effects on the association between marital satisfaction and coparenting, but with gender differences. Similar to findings from Liu and Wu (2018), this study revealed that there is a partner effect from father to mother on the association between marital satisfaction and coparenting cooperation and triangulation. These findings suggested that father's marital satisfaction not only related with their own coparenting, but also related with mother's coparenting cooperation and triangulation. On the other hand, there was no significant partner effect on the association between marital satisfaction and coparenting triangulation.

The reason behind not revealing partner effect for the coparenting conflict might be that the sample of the study was consist of non-clinical samples which means having higher level of coparenting cooperation and marital satisfaction and lower level of coparenting conflict.

Revealing partner effect on the association between marital satisfaction and coparenting was consistent with the previous works. Although Liu and Wu (2018) did not term as a triangulation, they found that when fathers have lower level of marital satisfaction, mothers tended to engage in disparagement behaviors (e.g. making negative comments about the other partner that causes negative feeling state in child) which is similar to triangulation. Revealing partner effects on the association between marital satisfaction and coparenting is also consistent with family systems theory in terms of revealing the interdependence between mothers and fathers. Family systems theory argues that there is an interdependency between individuals within the same dyad (Minuchin, 1988). Mother and father were in the same dyad and father's marital satisfaction influenced mother's coparenting according to study results. Although this study revealed the significant partner effect on the association between marital satisfaction and coparenting cooperation and triangulation; it is important to note that the effect size of the partner effect was small and less than the actor effect. Revealing lower level of effect size when compared to actor effect's effect size was consistent with the dyadic studies in terms of revealing the more powerful effect size for within-person effect than between-person.

Gender differences were found in partner effects on the associations between marital satisfaction and coparenting. Results showed that although there is partner effect from father to mother, there was no significant partner effect from mother to father for all dimensions of coparenting. It suggested that mother's martial

satisfaction did not have a significant effect on father's coparenting cooperation, conflict and triangulation. These findings were consistent with the Liu and Wu (2018)'s study in terms of finding gender differences on the partner effect.

Finding partner effect from father to mother might suggest that for mothers, family relationships may be less differentiated than for fathers. Also, fathers might tend to compartmentalize their roles better including father and husband role. Social roles may be responsible for gender differences in partner effect such as father's role and mother's role: Regarding social roles in Turkish culture, as is was mentioned earlier, mother are decision makers in the family regarding childrearing issues and they are usually the primary caregivers (Uslu, 2011). Because of the importance of the parenting role to mothers, mothers might place more emphasis and value on coparenting than fathers, and both their own and their partner's feelings of dissatisfaction may therefore have more of an influence on their coparenting. Also, being the primary caregiver may make difficult to differentiate the two types of relationships and they may suffer from role conflict. But for father, although his dissatisfaction influences his coparenting, he could not affected by mother's marital dissatisfaction because he might not as sensitive as mothers in parenting roles and he might not attributed himself as primary caregiver.

All dimensions of coparenting was significantly associated among fathers and mothers. For example, coparenting triangulation of mothers and fathers moderately and positively associated. Coparenting conflict of mothers and fathers moderately and positively associated. Coparenting cooperation of mothers and fathers moderately and positively associated. Marital satisfaction of fathers and mothers positively and strongly associated. Therefore, it might suggest that mothers and fathers have similar perspectives on coparenting dimensions and marital satisfaction.

Furthermore, regarding the association between dimension of coparenting among mothers, mother's coparenting triangulation was positively and strongly associated with coparenting conflict of mothers; while was negatively and moderately associated with coparenting cooperation of mothers. There is strong and negative correlation between mother's conflict and cooperation. Regarding the association between dimension of coparenting among fathers, coparenting triangulation was positively and weakly associated with coparenting cooperation of fathers and was positively and moderately associated with coparenting conflict of fathers. There is negative and moderate association between father's coparenting conflict and cooperation.

4.2. The Role of Demographics

As it was mentioned in the introduction part, parent and child characteristics were associated with the quality of coparenting. In this study, regarding demographic variables, educational level of parents, parents' age, family size, parents' employment status and child gender were found to be associated with coparenting. Some of the findings were consistent with the existing literature such as the relation between child gender and coparenting functioning whereas some of the study findings were contradictory with the existing literature such as educational level and occupational status. Study findings and comparison with existing literature were provided in this section of discussion.

Regarding educational level, although it was revealed that both parents' coparenting cooperation differ in terms of father's educational level, results are negligible due to only 4 participants in the primary school group. Results suggested that primary school graduated fathers reported the highest coparenting cooperation than other groups. Interestingly, this finding is contradictory with the previous

research. General trend was that there is a positive association between parents' educational level and supportive and cooperative coparenting (Salman-Engin, 2014; Stright & Bales, 2003). Finding contradictory results with the previous research might be associated with very small sample size of "primary school group". Regarding mothers, consistent with the previous research (Van Egeren, 2003), this study showed that mothers married with university graduated husbands reported more cooperating cooperation than mothers married with high school graduated husbands. Similarly, Van Egeren (2003) showed that when mothers had husbands with higher education levels, mothers were more likely to have satisfied coparenting relationship in families with infants. In brief, regarding education level of fathers, some part of the findings supported the existing literature while some part of the findings contradicted with previous works.

Our study findings revealed that mothers' age was associated with both their own coparenting and husband's coparenting functioning. Results suggested there is negative association between mother's age and their coparenting cooperation. Also, there was a positive association between father's coparenting conflict and mother's age. Although there is no consensus on how age of parents influences coparenting quality (McHale & Lindahl, 2011), this study revealed the effect of age on coparenting.

This study investigated that when the number of children in the family increases, mothers tended to engage in coparenting triangulation more. Although existing literature shows that there is no consensus on major effect of presence of another child in family on coparenting (McHale & Lindahl, 2011), this study revealed the association between the number of children in family and coparenting. One of the possible explanations is that when family members in the family

increases, childrearing tasks may also increase; as a result, it may be more difficult to keep children away from conflicts between parents for mothers because they are considered as a primary caregiver in Turkish culture.

Mother's employment status was associated with coparenting triangulation of mothers. Although existing literature showed that higher occupational status was associated with higher satisfaction in coparenting relationship (Schoppe-Sullivan & Mangelsdorf, 2013), this study revealed contradictory findings by showing that mothers who do not work and not look for a job reported less coparenting triangulation than full time employee mothers. One of the possible explanations is that due to the primary caregivers' roles of mothers in Turkey (Uslu, 2011), when the responsibilities of mothers decreases, they may be more effective in keep child away from interparental issues.

This study revealed that child gender was associated with coparenting conflict for fathers. This finding suggested that fathers having girls reported more coparenting conflict than fathers having boys. Although Stright and Bales (2003) revealed no association between children's gender and coparenting among families with preschoolers; and McHale & Lindahl (2011) stated that there is no consensus on the link between child gender and coparenting, this study revealed the association between coparenting functioning of fathers and gender of child. This association might be stem from the degree of father involvement in childrearing. Previous works revealed that fathers showed more involvement with sons than with girls (Lamb, 2000; Pleck, 1997). Lower level of involvement might complicate the being on the same page about child-rearing; as a result, fathers might report more coparenting conflict when they have a girl.

4.3 Significance and Limitations

This study had some limitations. Firstly, this study did not reveal the causality between the marital satisfaction and coparenting relationship. Bidirectionality in that association was known (Le et al., 2006). Therefore, longitudinal research is needed to make clarify that whether marital satisfaction predicts coparenting or coparenting predicts marital satisfaction. Another limitation was that the sample was consisted of well-educated fathers and mothers. Association between marital satisfaction and coparenting might be investigated later in more diverse sample in terms of education level of parents to clarify that how is the relationship between coparenting and education. Also, researchers may consider incorporating evaluating mothering and fathering roles in Turkish sample in terms of the explain the gender differences in partner effects. In addition, this study did not test a complex model with all the variables in the same model at one shot. Another one, you did not check the measurement invariance for both measures to see if there equally work for both parents.

This study contributed to the literature in terms of revealing the association between martial relationship and coparenting at dyadic level and clarifying the interdependence between partners. To our knowledge, only one study examined the association between coparenting and marital satisfaction in Turkish sample at dyadic level (Salman-Engin, 2014). They assessed coparenting cooperation both via observation of ‘mother-father-baby’ triadic interactions and the self-report scale which is focusing on only parenting alliance with the sample of 45 couples having a 3- month-old baby. The current study expanded the previous research (Salman-Engin, 2004) by revealing the partner effect on the association between marital satisfaction and coparenting. Possible explanations for finding partner effect in

Turkish sample differently from Salman-Engin's (2004) study could be due to using larger sample size in our study and focusing on different child ages groups. Our study focused on preschool age period while the other study focused on infancy period. Differences between developmental process of children and demands of childrearing might be responsible for the finding partner effect as distinct from Salman-Engin (2004)'s study. As a conclude, this is the first study revealing the partner effect on the association between coparenting and marital satisfaction in Turkish culture. Another importance of the current study is that coparenting was assessed with three different dimensions: cooperation, conflict and triangulation.

4.4. Clinical Implications

Our study findings supported the notion that marital relationship and coparenting relationship were different but related concepts. Like the family systems theory's argument (Minuchin, 1988), spousal (marital) and coparenting subsystems are interdependent in this study. The current finding might provide implications for clinical practices especially working with couple and families. Firstly, as a therapist, in addition to focusing on only co-parenting, by knowing the interdependency between marital satisfaction and coparenting in preschool age period, therapist could expand treatment plan by focusing on both concepts. Therapist could help them establishing healthy boundaries between marital and coparenting relationship. For example, therapist could focus on how marital satisfaction influence coparenting for the clients. Increasing their awareness about it could help them create new options/ways to better separate/compartmentalize these two roles: mother and wife; and father and husband. Even if they have in problem in marriage they successfully cooperate with their partner for childrearing.

Also, therapist could make intervention for marital satisfaction to enhance their coparenting. Interventions may include establishing healthier communication, increasing intimacy, increasing satisfaction in sexual life. When clients have changes in their romantic relationship in a positive way, therapist could help them create new ways to form better coparenting relationship. Also, as a therapist, it is important to give the client a logic of why we focus on marital relationships although they seek help for solve problems about parenting. Giving scientific based evidence could make the intervention more effective.

Secondly, although the effect size of the partner effect was small and not powerful as actor effect, revealing partner effect from father to mother emphasized the value of each partner's contribution to coparenting dynamics. So, in terms of promoting parents' coparenting practices, effective intervention is needed to increase the level of parent's marital satisfaction and their partner's marital satisfaction together. Therapist might make effort to invite the fathers to sessions and then make couple therapy. A therapist could help the couple recognize their coparenting problem is not the one's own problem, rather therapist could emphasize the value of working on relationship. Also, when working with the couples, therapist could help clients increase awareness on how their partner marital dissatisfaction influence their own coparenting functioning. Gaining awareness might help clients to find new ways to compartmentalize their roles better.

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