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## **The Investigation of Future Family Concept in Pictures Drawn by Students Studying in Preschool Teaching**

### **Abstract**

The study comprised 200 teaching faculty students. It was expected from the students to depict a moment from the future family lives that they expect to have. After the pictures had been drawn, a half-structured group interview was performed with the students about their pictures. The content analysis of the pictures was inspected by 1 pediatric development expert, 1 psychologist and 1 psychological consultant in 5 different sub-contexts and reviewed against the answers given by the students. According to the findings of the study, while female students drew pictures depicting them spending time with their partners and children, male students tended to draw pictures in which they are spending time more individually (e.g., watching TV, soccer matches, etc.). Another finding of the study is that every student wants a family life except 2. Nearly everybody wants a child, but there can be differences concerning the number of children they want. One of the most important results of the study is that, while there are traditional attitudes about families, there can also be differences in modern attitudes.

*Keywords: family, family life, domestic roles, pictures*

### **Introduction**

Family is a social structure which the individual enjoys being a part of, feels safe in every possible way, and learns about life and living together with others. The basic needs that life brings are compensated by family. The first and most long-term

interaction is experienced in family. The basic behaviors and habits about life that create personality are gained via this interaction (Kayhan ve Yazıcıoğlu 2007).

According to Özgüven, family is a legal, social and economic institution that is created by two people of different sex interaction, choice of partners and marriage and constituted by individuals that are bonded with marriage and blood bonds, who interact with each other via various roles (Özgüven 2000).

Healthy and strong family surroundings include the areas in which the parents and children spend time together (play, talk or work together). These areas are efficient areas in which the parental structures are used to learn every kind of social and cognitive skill (Meadows 2010).

Concepts like marital relations, marital satisfaction, marital happiness and marital accord have been the subject of many studies. Many scientists of many different branches of science are interested in the subject. In the frame of different areas of expertise, many studies on these concepts are being done. Marital quality is defined as the subjective evaluation of the married couples' relations. It is thought that high marital quality is related to good harmony, enough communication, high satisfaction in marital relations and degree of happiness (Spainer 1979).

Fowers and Olson found four types of premarital couples, which they termed vitalized, harmonious, traditional and conflicted. Vitalized couples were found to have high overall premarital relationship satisfaction and expressed a very high level of comfort with their ability to discuss feelings and resolve problems together. Harmonious couples were found to be of an average degree of satisfaction and it was noted that this loss of satisfaction may be caused by unrealistic views of subjects like marriage and children. While the traditional couples are both the most unsatisfied group and the group that thinks about divorce the least, the conflicted couples are found to be tense and had a tendency to divorce (Fowers 1996).

Family is the most important unit of society. Nowadays, we can see that in our country and other countries, there is a crisis in the institution of family. How will families be in ten or fifteen years? Is the contemporary youth ready to be mothers, fathers and partners?

### **Types of Families**

*Traditional Family:* Traditional extended family is generally a result of traditional or rural societies (Liywak 1965). Some common features seen in traditional family types are:

Relations are not based on equality. The most important feature of an extended family is the difference of status inside the family. The elderly have a higher status

than the younger and so do the men as compared to the women and the adults vs. the children. The people with the lowest status are those that join the family later, like, e.g., a bride. The division of labor is made according to status.

The women do all the work in-house and the men work on farms or in workplaces. The daughters help the mother and the sons help the father. The husband-wife relations have a distance in themselves. Nobody is called by name. No emotional or fervid behaviors are permitted. The wife both respects and fears the husband (MEB 2011).

*Elementary family:* The elementary family is the type of family in which neither of the partners lives with their families and the family is created elsewhere (Erol 1992). According to Kandiyoti (1984), the elementary family is a family in which the mother, the father and the unmarried children live together. Elementary family is created by partners that choose each other freely and is isolated mostly from kinship relations. The most widespread form of family is the elementary family today.

*Extended family:* The extended family is, as defined by Budak (2000), “a family structure especially seen in traditional societies in which a few generations, a high number of people that are related via blood or marriage live together under one roof or in houses close to each other”. As a slightly narrowed version of this definition, Marshall (1999) defines the extended family structure as a family system in which more than one generation live in one residence together.

*The transitive family:* The family structure orientated towards the elementary family from the extended family can be called the transitive family. This family type can be seen in societies that are experiencing a fast transition from agricultural manufacturing to industrial manufacturing, a rapid increase in population, rapid development of the concepts of societal structure and lifestyle (Özgüven 2000).

*Broken family:* Defined as “the type of family in which one or both of the parents are not present for reasons like death, divorce or separation” by Adak (2005), Özcan (1994), Thornton & Fricke (1987).

In this study, family psychological situation, family size: one child, multi-children, roles of individuals in family, hierarchy in relations of partners, emotional relations, relations between partners and between children and parents, locations and those that do not expect marriage are categorized and the drawings are analyzed. At the same time, the composition of the drawings, the number of individuals in families, their hierarchical positions in the drawings, poses and the activities of individuals are inspected.

## **Method**

### **Sampling**

This study was done with randomly selected 105 female and 95 male, 200 in total, college students who are studying the Ağrı İbrahim Çeçen Üniversitesi Preschool Teaching Sciences.

### **Study Model**

Wenger's "Psychological Drawing Tests": Wenger (2003) provides many drawing technique sets proven in drawing applications. He provides the means to obtain information about the general intellectual characteristics of an individual, the private and emotional characteristics as well as other aspects of their lives like their family, sexual, social and interpersonal relations. This study, being the result of Wenger's 30 years of studies, includes drawing tests like "A Human Drawing", "Imaginary Animal", "Angry Animal", "Happy Animal", "Sad Animal" "Family Drawing" (with 3 different applications) and "Beautiful Drawing". The drawings are evaluated with respect to the use of the page, colors, drawing characteristics, the movement of the figures, interfigure relations, the video footage during the drawings and the expression of the drawings (Wenger 2003).

### **Data Gathering**

In this study, with respect to the L.A. Wenger's "Family's Dynamic Drawing" approach, the instruction "Draw your future family. Every member of the family should have an activity" was given. The drawings were made by providing students with colored pencils and A4 sheets of paper. Approximately 40 minutes were given to the students to draw the pictures. The drawings were analyzed with respect to the drawing analysis by L.A. Wenger (2003).

For the purpose of evaluating the drawings made by the students, family drawing evaluation questions were created, taking the opinions of experts in guidance and psychological consultancy. The created questions were shown to 1 pediatric development expert and 2 faculty members from the Guidance and Psychological Consultancy Department and with the use of their opinions, the drawings were analyzed. The findings about the student-drawn family drawings were evaluated and interpreted in 5 categories. The following questions were posed to evaluate concepts like marriage, children and family;

Questions asked:

1. Do you consider marriage?
2. What is the ideal age for marriage?

3. Would you marry someone of a different ethnic origin?
4. Is the social status of the person you will be marrying important for you?
5. Can there be marriage without love?
6. Is money important in marriage?
7. Are children important in marriage?
8. Is career important in marriage?
9. How can the problems in marriage be ranked?
  - a. House
  - b. Job
  - c. Salary
  - d. Country's economic situation
  - e. Country's political situation
  - f. Insecurity
  - g. The loss of freedom
10. Would you consider marriage without engagement?
11. Which mistakes of your parents would you not make in your marriage?
  - a. We would spend more time together
  - b. We would not live with mothers- or fathers-in-law
  - c. We would not argue in front of the kids
  - d. We would not use violence
12. Why do people get married?
  - a. To live with the people they love
  - b. To avoid being alone
  - c. To break free from the control of parents
  - d. To be free economically
13. What is the ideal number of children in family?
14. Does the sex of children matter in family?
15. Which sex would you like your children to be?

### Findings

According to the answers to the questions about family, marriage and children: 99% of the students considered marriage, 9% said you can get married without love, 62% thought the social status of their partners was important (58% of whom are females), 76% considered money and career important, 12% said they would consider marriage without engagement (all male), 99% considered children important in family. Also, in answer to the question of ranking the problems of marriage 77% said salary and 2% say insecurity; in answer to the question which

mistakes of parents should not be repeated, 46% stated they would not live with parents-in-law and 9% stated they would not use violence and lastly in answer to the question of why people get married, 81% stated they would live with the people they loved and 1% stated they would get married to avoid being alone. About the questions related to the children’s gender, the answer “The gender of the children is important” received 87% of the answers (81% male students) and when asked “Which sex would you like your children to be” while the number of children varied, it was important that the students always wanted a male child in their future families.

*Parent-Children Relationship in the Drawings.* It is interesting that in their drawings, some of our preschool teacher candidates depict families with many children. The situation in which the children are with their parents, the depiction of holding hands with them is a sign of strong emotional connection in the family. In these kinds of pictures, it can be seen that the composition is created around the children (Drawings 2, 4).

As well as families with multiple children, there are drawings of elementary families with one or two children, which are generally drawn by the male students. If there are two children in the drawings, one is male and the other is female whereas if there is only one child, it is male; this reflects the traditional point of view applied by the Turkish society towards gender. With different views, the residency ratio of children can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1.

Number of Children in Family	No Children	One Child	Two Children	Multiple Children
Percentage of drawings	1%	28%	48%	23%

One common concept in some drawings is that family members are drawn separately. As an example, every member of the family is in a different location. “Father” is watching TV 47%, “mother” is working in the kitchen 31% (ironing 2%, watching TV 9%, etc.), children are in their rooms – one studying while the other is sleeping or if there is only one kid, the child is playing on his own. When the pictures are analyzed, it can be said that the communication between the family members is lacking.

*Location in drawings.* The details of locations in the drawings are worth attention. As an example, the details of a household: the location of rooms, fireplaces, portraits, the carpet designs, furniture, color coordination, aquarium,

and vases. In these kinds of drawings we can see that even where there is no family, how important the comfort and household decoration are to the test-takers (Drawings 2,7,8).

Of the drawings drawn, 12% show a traditional family with the grandfather, grandmother, relatives and the children of the relatives. In the drawings that depict the traditional Turkish family, we can catch a glimpse of what we are used to. The adults are eating at the table, the children are playing in their rooms. We can accept the warm relations, emotional connections and hospitality in these pictures in combination with the smiles on the faces of individuals as signs of warm family relations (Drawing 3).

**Hierarchy in Family and the Distribution of Roles.** In the drawings by the male students, we can see the “father” as the patriarch of the family. In the drawings of the females, we can see that “father” is equal to the others. Then what are the “fathers” doing in the drawings of the females? They are playing with the kids (48%), setting the table (11%), spending time with their families (18%).

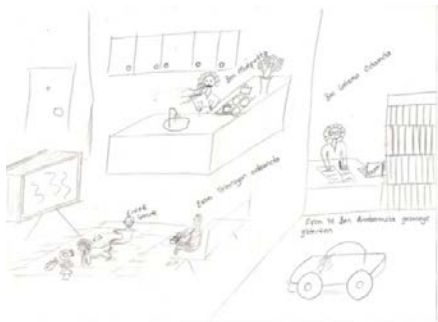
Generally, the “mother” in the drawings (in male pictures) is in the kitchen (washing dishes 39%, preparing fruit plates 5%, setting the table 15%, cooking 11%, etc.). Only in 1 drawing is the “mother” reading a book in the study room (a female drawing).

The children in the pictures are generally playing, some are studying (7%) and some are watching television (9%). In 4% of the drawings, there are also the grandparents.

**Families Drawn in Different Locations.** In a drawing drawn by a female student, the family lives in America, “mother” is a teacher in a Turkish-American school. The teacher is teaching Arabic to the children. She has a son. The “father” in the drawing is an imam, praying in a mosque.

In another drawing drawn by a male student, the “father” has a shovel, working on the farm and the “mother” is at home, talking to the child in the cradle. The drawing, showing that he can earn more by being both a farmer and a civil servant and so he can provide for his children in the big city more satisfactorily, is a good example of the transitive family type.

Those who do not consider marriage. 2 of the drawings are made by male students who do not consider marriage. In one of them there is a villa by a lake, a luxury car and a man looking at the lake, while in the other, there is a man sitting on a couch in a relaxing position, resting his feet in water. Also a musical instrument on the wall and a clipboard is of interest (Drawing 5).



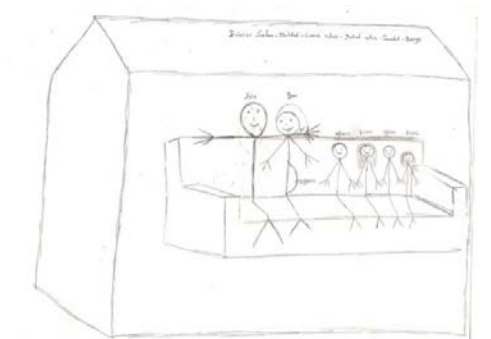
**Drawing 1: Female Student**



**Drawing 2: Female Student**



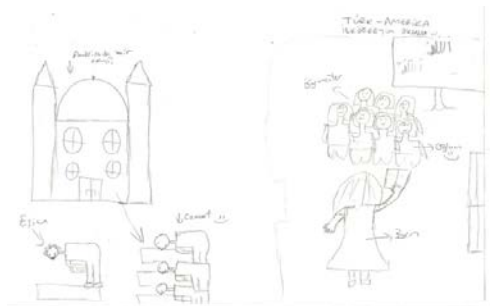
**Drawing 3: Male Student**



**Drawing 4: Female Student**



**Drawing 5: Male Student**



**Drawing 6: Female Student**



**Drawing 7: Female Student**



**Drawing 8: Male Student**





Drawing 9: Male Student



Drawing 10: Female Student

## **Results and Discussion**

The married couples that interact with each other can come to the same conclusion about subjects that relate to marriage and family and can solve their problems in a positive way is defined as a harmonious marriage. The harmony of marriage also defines the marital happiness and satisfaction as a result of the harmonious relationship of the couple. It is for the reason that in marital harmony it is important that each of the partners has a capacity to continue a good relationship (Kışlak, Çabukça 2002).

According to the findings of the research, most of our preschool teacher candidates (99%) expect a happy and harmonious marriage. But we can think that the students who answered that “Marriage without engagement is a possibility” are more inclined towards the “modern” or “European” family model instead of the “traditional Turkish family” model.

It is worth noting that the majority of the candidates that care about money and status in marriage are women (58%). At the same time, the answer given by the female students that “marriage can be considered as an option against loneliness” can show that women are concerned about money, status and loneliness in marriage. Also, the answer of “salary” given by 77% to the question of “How can the problems in marriage be ranked?” supports this statement.

We can see that the “elementary family” is chosen against the traditional Turkish “extended family” type, as seen in the answer of “we would not live with our parents-in-law” to the question of “Which mistakes of your parents would you not make in your marriage?” (46%).

The answer of the male students, “the gender of the children is important” and the general answer to the question of “Which sex would you like your children to

be?” which is while the number of children varies, a male child is always standard, are assumed to be caused by our society’s cultural structure and we can think that there is special importance of male children.

In most of the drawings by the preschool teacher candidates, most women see the household work as their responsibility; it comes to attention that they see themselves doing work like cooking, setting the table, ironing and caring for their children. This situation means that women think that household responsibility is theirs only, like their mothers’, and this means that they will continue the traditional model.

The location comes to attention in the drawings by the female students. When the harmony of the house decoration is inspected (furniture, carpet designs, color coordination, vases, clipboards), we can assume that they have more detailed and vivid imagination about marriage before marriage.

If we are to inspect the drawings of the students in a job-related fashion, we can see that the children of the teacher candidates do various activities and the mother-father-child relations are good; e.g., it can be seen that the students are trying to spend more quality time with their kids, setting the table together, watching TV together or playing together. Also, we can see that one female student sees herself as an Arabic teacher in America and her partner as an imam in a mosque, which is an indicator that she wants to serve her society as a religious instructor rather than a preschool teacher.

As a result, our preschool teacher candidates have a positive opinion about marriage. While there are some differences in role expectations from partners, we can still say that the traditional family model is preferred.

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