

Examining of the Relationship between Family Quality of Life, Parenting Stress and Marital Life Satisfaction of Mothers with Children with Special Needs

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Abstract: This study was conducted to examine the relationship between family quality of life, parenting stress and marital life satisfaction of mothers with children with special needs in early childhood. A total of 212 mothers with children with special needs aged 0-8 years participated in the study. The data were collected with "Personal Information Form", "Beach Centre Family Quality of Life Scale", "Parenting Stress Scale" and "Marital Life Satisfaction Scale". As a result of the study, it was determined that there was a negative and significant relationship between marital life satisfaction and parenting stress levels of mothers with children with special needs; a positive and significant relationship between marital life satisfaction and family life quality; and a negative and significant relationship between family life quality and parenting stress levels. In the study, it was concluded that family quality of life differed significantly in favor of working mothers according to their employment status; it did not differ significantly according to the age and education level of the mother. It was determined that the parenting stress of mothers differed significantly in favor of university graduates in the comparison of university graduates with secondary and high school graduates according to their educational levels; it did not differ significantly according to the age and working status of the mothers. It was concluded that marital life satisfaction of mothers differed significantly in favor of mothers in the 20-29 age range according to the age of the mothers; it did not differ significantly according to the mother's education level and employment status. The findings are discussed in the light of the literature and suggestions for further research are given.

Keywords: Special Needs, Early Childhood, Family Quality of Life, Parenting Stress, Marital Life Satisfaction

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1. Introduction

The human being is a social being who is born, grows up, and has to sustain his/her life in society, and his/her existence depends on the existence of family (Öztürk, 1987). The family is a social environment in which the child takes place from the moment he/she is born and in which the necessary care and support is provided for him/her to continue his/her life (Sayın, 1990). The child is the fruit and complementary element of the family, which is formed when a man and a woman come together in marriage. It is natural for two people who come together to become a family to want to have children and continue their lineage.

Under normal circumstances, it is known that spouses want to taste the feeling of motherhood and fatherhood by having a child, and they have various dreams about this. In cases of not being able to have a child despite the desire or having a child with special needs, some difficult processes may await the parents. The reactions of parents when they have a child with special needs vary according to the type of disability, the gender of the child, the economic status of the family, the level of belief, and the reaction to the environment (Bailey & Powell, 2005). These reactions are explained by different models (Ardıç, 2012; Kaner, 2009). The most well-known of these is the "Stage Model", which consists of five stages: shock, denial, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Having a child with special needs or learning that they will have a child with special needs is one of the most difficult life experiences for families and may cause them to go through five stages of grief (Gören, 2016). This grief is caused by the loss of the child of the parents' dreams (Kübler-Ross, 2010). It is known that some parents cannot pass the acceptance stage.

Initially, having a child with special needs can negatively affect the family's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, in short, their whole life, leading to conflicts between parents and consequently increasing the level of anxiety among parents (Aslanoğlu, 2004; Ceylan, 2004). One of the parents may have to leave work to take care of the child with special needs. If the child has other siblings, jealousy may occur because they cannot make sense of the special interests of the child with special needs. In order to create better opportunities for the child with special needs, money has to be spent on special courses, which may cause financial difficulties. Worse than that, when parents cannot cope with this situation, they may see divorce as a solution. Families with children with special needs need to cope with this unexpected situation healthily; they may need economic information, entertainment, self-confidence, love, sociability, daily life, and care support (Cavkaytar, 2010).

There are studies in the literature about the quality of family life of parents with children who have special needs (Alpgan & Alabay, 2021; Cho & Hong, 2012; Demiray, 2019; Kara, 2016; Karaduman, 2020; Mannan, 2005; Meral & Cavkaytar, 2015; Schlebusch, Dada, & Samuels, 2017), parenting stress (Çelimli, 2009; Gülaldı, 2010; Hoffman, Sweeney, Hodge, Wagner-Lopez, & Looney, 2009; Kaner, 2009; Lopez, Clifford, Minnes, & Quелlette-Kuntz, 2008; Kurşun, 2018; Zaidman-Zait, 2008) and marital life satisfaction (Dalkılıç, 2016; Dokuman, 2017; Eren-Kanbir, 2018; Güler, 2010; Hartley, Barker, Seltzer, Greenberg, & Floyd, 2011; Robinson & Neece, 2014; Santamaria, Cuzzocrea, Gugliandolo, & Larcana, 2012).

Family quality of life is considered as meeting the needs of family members, enjoying life, and being a family is important for family members (Park, Hoffman, Marquis, Turnbull, Poston, Mannan, Wang, & Nelson, 2003). Regarding the family quality of life of parents with children with special needs, Alpgan and Alabay (2021) pointed out the effect of family quality of life of parents of children with developmental disabilities on child-parent relationship; Cho and Hong (2012) focused on the quality of life of mothers of children with disabilities; Demiray (2019) suggested the family quality of life, resilience and hopelessness of parents with children with special needs; Kara (2016) mentioned the family quality of life, marital adjustment and subjective well-being of mothers with children with special needs and mothers with typically developing children; Karaduman (2020) examined the family quality of life of parents with typically developing children and parents with children with developmental disabilities; Mannan (2005) examined the effect of the support received by parents with children with developmental delay on family quality of life; Meral and Cavkaytar (2015) examined the family quality of life of mothers with children with autism; Schlebusch, Dada and Samuels (2017) examined the family quality of life of parents with young children with autism.

Regarding the parenting stress of parents with children with special needs, Çelimli (2009) noted the family functioning processes of mothers with children with autism between the ages of 2-7 in Turkey and the USA; Gülaldı (2010) examined the relationship between parental stress and life satisfaction of mothers with children with cerebral palsy and autism in preschool period; Hoffman, Sweeney, Hodge, Wagner-Lopez, and Looney (2009) concentrated on the parental stress and closeness of mothers with typically developing children and mothers with children with autism; Kaner (2009), stress level, life satisfaction and perceived social support of parents with children with special needs; Lopez, Clifford, Minnes, and Quелlette-Kuntz (2008), parenting stress and coping strategies of parents with children with special needs and parents with typically developing children; Kurşun (2018) investigated the stress levels and coping styles of parents with children with autism and parents with typically developing children; Zaidman-Zait (2008) investigated the stress level and life satisfaction of parents with hearing impaired children.

Regarding the marital life satisfaction of parents with children with special needs, Dalkılıç (2016) investigated the marital satisfaction, anxiety levels, relational resilience and psychological help attitudes of families with children with autism; Dokuman (2017) examined the marital satisfaction, anxiety levels

and marital adjustment of parents with disabled children and parents without disabled children; Eren-Kanbir (2018) explored the marital satisfaction of families with children with special needs; Güler (2010), marital satisfaction of parents with children with disabilities; Hartley, Barker, Seltzer, Greenberg, and Floyd (2011), marital satisfaction and parenting experiences of parents with children with autism; Robinson and Neece, (2014), marital satisfaction, parental stress and child behaviours in parents of children with developmental delay; Santamaria, Cuzzocrea, Gugliandolo, and Larcan (2012), marital satisfaction of parents of children with autism, Down syndrome and typical development.

Mothers are the primary caregivers in Turkish culture, and they experience more stress, and they may have low family quality of life and marital satisfaction. Based on the studies in the literature, it was decided to examine the marital life satisfaction, parenting stress, and family quality of life of mothers with children with special needs in early childhood together, and the following questions were sought for mothers with children with special needs:

1. Is there a significant relationship between family quality of life, parenting stress, and marital life satisfaction?
2. Does family quality of life differ significantly according to the mother's age, education level, and employment status?
3. Does parenting stress differ significantly according to the mother's age, educational level, and employment status?
4. Does marital life satisfaction differ significantly according to the mother's age, education level, and employment status?

2. Method

This research was conducted using the relational survey model. The correlational survey model is a survey approach that aims to determine the existence of change between two or more variables. The relational survey model tries to determine whether the variables change together and, if there is a change, how this change occurs (Karasar, 2011).

2.1. Research group

The research group of this study consists of the mothers of 212 students with special needs studying in rehabilitation centers in Adapazarı and Erenler districts of Sakarya province in the 2020-2021 academic year. The research group was selected using a criterion sampling method within the scope of purposive sampling from non-random sampling methods. Having a child with special needs and having this child between the ages of 0-8 years was taken as a criterion in the selection of the mothers included in the study (Büyüköztürk et al., 2012). It was found that 16.5% of the mothers with children with special needs are between the ages of 20-29 (n=35), 51.9% are between the ages of 30-39 (n=110), and 31.6% are between the ages of 40-49 (n=67). Regarding educational levels, 27.8% are elementary school graduates (n=59), 15.6% are secondary school graduates (n=33), 31.1% are high school graduates (n=66), and 25.5% are university graduates (n=54). Additionally, 17% of the mothers are employed in an income-generating job (n=36), while 83% are not employed in such a job (n=176).

2.2. Data collection tools

Four different data collection tools were used in this study. These are the Personal Information Form, the Beach Centre Family Quality of Life Scale, the Parental Stress Scale, and the Marital Life Satisfaction Scale.

Personal Information Form: The personal information form that includes questions such as the mother's age, education level, number of children, employment status, duration of marriage, birth order of the child, age of the child, and type of special needs were developed by the researchers.

Beach Centre Family Quality of Life Scale: The scale was developed by the Beach Disability Centre of Kansas University (Hoffman, Marquis, Poston, Summers, & Turnbull, 2006). It is a 5-point Likert-type scale (1=Not at all appropriate, 5=Fully appropriate) consisting of five sub-dimensions as family interaction quality, parenting quality, emotional competence quality, financial/physical/material competence quality, and quality of support for disability and 25 items in total. It was developed to determine the quality of life of parents with children with developmental disabilities. There are no reverse items in the scale. The highest score that can be obtained from the scale is 125, and the lowest score is 25. As the scores obtained from the scale increase, the family's quality of life increases. The internal consistency coefficients of the sub-dimensions are .81 for the family interaction quality sub-dimension, .80 for the parenting quality sub-dimension, .71 for the emotional competence quality sub-dimension, and .81 for the financial/physical/material competence quality sub-dimension. Meral (2011) conducted a Turkish adaptation study of the scale. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale was found to be .94. In this study, Cronbach alpha value was calculated as .94.

Parent Stress Scale: This scale is a 4-point Likert-type (1=Never, 4=Always) unidimensional scale, which consists of 16 items measuring the stress experienced by parents in their relationships with their children. It was developed by Kaymak-Özmen and Özmen (2012). The highest score that can be obtained from the scale is 64, and the highest score is 16. There are no reverse items on the scale. As the scores obtained from the scale increase, parenting stress increases. The internal consistency coefficient of the measurements obtained from the scale was examined by Cronbach's alpha and Spearman-Brown two-half reliability analyses, and the average Cronbach's alpha coefficient calculated for the measurements obtained was .85, and Spearman-Brown two-half test reliability was .82. In this study, Cronbach's alpha value was calculated as .87.

Marital Life Satisfaction Scale: This scale is a 5-item 7-point Likert-type (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree) that measures the satisfaction of spouses with marital life (Johnson et al., 2006). The highest score that can be obtained from the scale is 35, and the lowest score is 5. There are no reverse items in the scale. Çelik (2014) adapted the marital life satisfaction scale into Turkish and conducted validity and reliability studies. In the adaptation study, confirmatory factor analysis was performed to determine the validity of the scale. It was seen that the model gave acceptable fit indices. The Chi-square value ($X^2 = 7.08$, $N = 329$, $SD = 5$, $p = 0.21$) was found to be significant. Regarding the reliability of the scale, Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency coefficient was calculated and found to be $\alpha = .85$. In this study, this value was calculated as .83.

2.3. Data collection and analysis

After obtaining permission from the scale owners, ethics committee permission was obtained from Istanbul Medeniyet University Educational Sciences Ethics Committee with the letter dated 21/09/2020 and numbered 2020/01-01 regarding the ethical suitability of the implementation of the measurement tools, and then research permissions were obtained. After obtaining the necessary permissions, the measurement tools were delivered to the rehabilitation centers in the Adapazarı and Erenler districts of Sakarya province researchers. After meeting with the managers of the institutions, the scale was presented with the consent form to the mothers of the children with special needs in the 0-8 age group studying in the rehabilitation centers whose application permissions were obtained. The participants were informed that the study did not involve any discomfort and that they could leave it if they wished. In addition, it was confirmed by the researchers that the participant information would not be shared with anyone, and great care was taken to conduct the research within the framework of ethical principles. The data were analyzed using correlation analysis, regression analysis, independent sample t-test, and one-way analysis of variance in line with the sub-problems of the research. In this context, the relationships between the variables were determined by correlation analysis. Whether the independent variables, which were found to be related to the dependent variable because of correlation

analysis, predicted the dependent variable at a significant level was analyzed by regression analysis. The t-test was used for variables with two categories, and a One-Way Analysis of Variance was used to determine whether the dependent variable differed in terms of independent variables with more than two categories. In the analysis performed to determine whether the dependent variable differs in terms of independent variables with more than two category levels, the One-Way Analysis of Variance was used in cases of homogeneity of variances, and the Welch test was used in cases where variances were not homogeneous. The homogeneity of variances was determined by Levene's statistics. In cases where the results of the One-way Analysis of Variance were significant, the LSD test was used to determine which groups the difference was between, and the Welch test was used in cases where the variances were not homogeneous. The data collected within the scope of the research were analyzed with the IBM SPSS Statistics 22 package program, and the significance level was accepted as .05.

3. Findings

This section presents the findings in line with the research questions.

The Relationship Between Family Quality of Life, Parenting Stress, and Marital Life Satisfaction of Mothers with Children with Special Needs

Pearson correlation was run to analyze the relationship between the variables. As a result of correlation analysis, it is seen that there is a statistically significant negative relationship between marital life satisfaction and parenting stress level ($r = -.348$) and a statistically significant positive relationship between marital life satisfaction and family life quality ($r = .446$). Lastly, a statistically significant negative relationship exists between family life quality and parenting stress level ($r = -.435$).

Whether parenting stress level and family quality of life significantly predicted marital life satisfaction was examined by regression analysis. Before the regression analysis, the suitability of the data was examined. The suitability of the data for regression analysis was determined by examining the required assumptions, such as outliers with Mahalanobis distance values, normality with kurtosis and skewness values, multicollinearity with Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), and linearity. According to Mahalanobis distance values, it was understood that there were no outliers in the data. For normality assumptions, skewness and kurtosis values of three variables were checked, and Kline found that the values are in the acceptable interval, stated as -3 to 3 (2011). The skewness values of Marital Life Satisfaction, Stress Level, and Family Quality of Life were found to be -.278, .890, and -.823, respectively. The kurtosis values of Marital Life Satisfaction, Stress Level, and Family Quality of Life were found -.580, .656, and .317, respectively. For the multicollinearity assumption, the VIF value was checked and found to be 1.234, in the acceptable range (<5). After all assumptions of regression were met, multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine how much variance in Marital Life Satisfaction was explained by Stress Level and Family Quality of Life. According to multiple regression results, the parenting stress level ($\beta = -.178$) predicts marital life satisfaction negatively at a significant level; family quality of life ($\beta = .155$) predicts marital life satisfaction positively at a significant level. In line with this finding, it can be said that the regression model, including parenting stress level and family quality of life, predicts a 23% variance in marital life satisfaction.

Comparison of Mothers' Family Quality of Life with the Age of the Mother

In Table 1, the descriptive statistics of Mothers' Family Quality of Life based on Age of the Mothers were given.

Table 1*Descriptive Statistics for the Age of Mothers with Children with Special Needs*

Age of the Mother	N	\bar{X}	SS	95% Confidence Interval		Min.	Max.	Skewness	Kurtosis
				Lower	Upper L.				
20-29 years	35	102.09	13.90	97.31	106.86	70	125	-.518	.018
30-39 years	110	96.51	19.65	92.79	100.22	42	125	-.700	-.057
40-49 years	67	102.19	16.28	98.22	106.16	61	125	-.900	.478
Total	212	99.23	17.93	96.80	101.65	42	125		

The One-way ANOVA test was planned to be conducted to reveal whether the Mothers' Family Life Quality scores differed according to their age groups. Before the test, the assumptions required for the test were checked. For the normality assumption, skewness and kurtosis values for each group were checked, and it was seen that values ranged from -3 to 3 for each age group. Therefore, it was found that the data were normally distributed. For the homogeneity of variance, the Levene test was conducted. The result of the test showed that the variances among age groups were not homogeneous ($F(2, 209) = 3.380$; $p = .036$). Therefore, the Welch test, the nonparametric version of the One-way ANOVA test, was conducted to compare the age groups. The results of the Welch test showed that the family quality of life of mothers with children with special needs does not differ significantly according to the mother's age (Welch Test: $F_{(2, 101.915)} = 2.717$; $p = .071$).

Comparison of Mothers' Family Quality of Life with Mother's Level of Education

In Table 2, the descriptive statistics of Mothers' Family Quality of Life based on the Education Level of the Mothers were given.

Table 2*Descriptive Analysis Results Related to the Education Level of Mothers with Children with Special Needs*

Education Level of the Mother	N	\bar{X}	SS	95% Confidence Interval		Min.	Max.	Skewness	Kurtosis
				Lower	Upper				
Elementary	59	95.68	13.39	92.19	99.17	68	122	-.057	-.327
Middle	33	98.55	20.52	91.27	105.82	52	124	-.649	-.682
High	66	100.65	18.19	96.18	105.12	44	125	-.956	.708
University	54	101.78	20.02	96.31	107.24	42	125	-1.388	1.371
Total	212	99.23	17.93	96.80	101.65	42	125		

The One-way ANOVA test was planned to be conducted to reveal whether the Mothers' Family Life Quality scores differed according to their education level groups. Before the test, the assumptions required for the test were checked. For the normality assumption, skewness and kurtosis values for each group were checked, and it was seen that values ranged from -3 to 3 for each education level group. Therefore, it was found that the data were normally distributed. For the homogeneity of variance, the Levene test was conducted. The result of the test showed that the variances among education level groups were not homogeneous ($F(3, 208) = 2.753$; $p = .044$). Therefore, the Welch test, the nonparametric version of the One-way ANOVA test, was conducted to compare the education level groups. The results of the Welch test showed that the family quality of life of mothers with children with special needs does not differ significantly according to the mother's education level (Welch Test: $F(3, 96.676) = 1.641$; $p = .185$).

Comparison of Mothers' Family Quality of Life with Mother's Employment Status

The independent sample t-test was planned to be conducted to reveal whether the Mothers' Family Life Quality scores differed according to their study status groups. Before the test, the assumptions required for the test were checked. For the normality assumption, skewness and kurtosis values range from -3 to 3 for the two study status groups. Therefore, it was assumed that the data is normally distributed. For the homogeneity of variance, the Levene test was conducted. The result of the test showed that the variances among study status groups were homogeneous ($F(1, 209) = .001; p=.981$). After the assumptions were met, an independent t-test was conducted to detect whether there was a statistically significant difference between the two study status groups. The result of the test showed that there was a statistically significant difference between the two study status groups, $t(210)=2.38, p=.018$, with the working group ($M = 105.6, SD = 19.0$) scoring higher than the not-working group ($M = 97.9, SD = 17.5$).

Comparison of Mothers' Parenting Stress with Mother's Age

In Table 3, the descriptive statistics of Mothers' Parenting Stress based on Age of the Mothers were given.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for the Age of Mothers with Children with Special Needs

Age of the Mother	N	\bar{X}	SS	95% Confidence Interval		Min.	Max.	Skewness	Kurtosis
				Lower	Upper				
20-29 years	35	27.69	8.509	24.76	30.61	17	53	1.359	1.821
30-39 years	110	29.65	7.661	28.21	31.10	16	55	1.009	1.490
40-49 years	67	30.30	8.641	28.19	32.41	18	54	.598	-.292
Total	212	29.53	8.130	28.43	30.63	16	55		

The One-way ANOVA test was planned to be conducted to reveal whether the Mothers' Parenting Stress scores differed according to their age groups. Before the test, the assumptions required for the test were checked. For the normality assumption, skewness and kurtosis values for each group were checked, and it was seen that values ranged from -3 to 3 for each age group. Therefore, it was found that the data were normally distributed. For the homogeneity of variance, the Levene test was conducted. The result of the test showed that the variances among age groups were homogeneous ($F(2, 209) = 1.864; p=.158$). The results of the One-way ANOVA test showed that the parenting stress of mothers does not differ significantly according to the age of the mother ($F_{(2, 101.915)} = 1.215; p=.299$).

Comparison of Mothers' Parenting Stress with Mother's Level of Education

In Table 4, the descriptive statistics of Mothers' Parenting Stress based on the Education Level of the Mothers were given.

Table 4

Descriptive Analysis Results Related to the Education Level of Mothers with Children with Special Needs

Education Level of the Mother	N	\bar{X}	SS	95% Confidence Interval		Min.	Max.	Skewness	Kurtosis
				Lower	Upper				
Elementary	59	29.36	7.963	27.28	31.43	16	50	.576	-.113
Middle	33	27.73	6.007	25.60	29.86	17	47	1.058	2.204
High	66	28.32	8.545	26.22	30.42	16	54	1.170	1.196
University	54	32.31	8.404	30.02	34.61	18	55	.797	.573
Total	212	29.53	8.130	28.43	30.63	16	55		

The One-way ANOVA test was planned to be conducted to reveal whether the Mothers' Parenting Stress scores differed according to their education level groups. Before the test, the assumptions required for the test were checked. For the normality assumption, skewness and kurtosis values for each group were checked, and it was seen that values ranged from -3 to 3 for each education level group. Therefore, it was found that the data were normally distributed. For the homogeneity of variance, the Levene test was conducted. The result of the test showed that the variances among education level groups were homogeneous ($F(3, 208) = 1.669; p = .175$). The One-way ANOVA test results showed that mothers' parenting stress differs significantly according to the mother's education level ($F(3, 208) = 3.251; p = .023$). In the LSD test, it was determined that the significant difference in mean scores favored university graduate mothers ($M = 32.31, SD = 8.40$) over high school graduate mothers ($M = 28.32, SD = 8.54$) and middle school graduate mothers ($M = 27.73, SD = 6.01$). However, the effect size ($\eta^2 = 0.044$) shows a small difference between the averages.

Comparison of Mothers' Parenting Stress with Mother's Employment Status

The independent sample t-test was planned to be conducted to reveal whether the Mothers' Parenting Stress scores differed according to their study status groups. Before the test, the assumptions required for the test were checked. For the normality assumption, skewness and kurtosis values range from -3 to 3 for the two study status groups. Therefore, it was assumed that the data is normally distributed. For the homogeneity of variance, the Levene test was conducted. The result of the test showed that the variances among study status groups were homogeneous ($F(1, 209) = .143; p = .705$). After the assumptions were met, an independent t-test was conducted to detect whether there was a statistically significant difference between the two study status groups. The test result showed no statistically significant difference between the two study status groups, $t(210) = -.206, p = .837$, with the working group ($M = 29.28, SD = 8.49$) scoring and the not-working group ($M = 29.59, SD = 8.08$).

Comparison of Marital Life Satisfaction of Mothers with the Age of the Mother

In Table 5, the descriptive statistics of Marital Life Satisfaction of Mothers based on the Age of the Mothers were given.

Table 5

Descriptive Analysis Results Related to the Age of Mothers

Age of the Mother	N	\bar{X}	SS	95% Confidence Interval		Min.	Max.	Skewness	Kurtosis
				Lower	Upper				
20-29 years	35	24.83	7.513	22.25	27.41	5	35	-.465	-0.34
30-39 years	110	21.53	7.861	20.04	23.01	5	35	-.195	-.781
40-49 years	67	23.57	7.106	21.83	25.30	5	35	-.275	-.341
Total	212	22.72	7.650	21.68	23.75	5	35		

The One-way ANOVA test was planned to be conducted to reveal whether the Marital Life Satisfaction of Mothers scores differed according to their age groups. Before the test, the assumptions required for the test were checked. For the normality assumption, skewness and kurtosis values for each group were checked, and it was seen that values ranged from -3 to 3 for each age group. Therefore, it was found that the data were normally distributed. For the homogeneity of variance, the Levene test was conducted. The result of the test showed that the variances among age groups were homogeneous ($F(2, 209) = .768; p = .465$). The One-way ANOVA test results showed that the mothers' marital life satisfaction differs significantly according to the mother's age ($F(2, 209) = 3.140; p = .045$). In the LSD test, it was determined that the significant difference in mean scores favored mothers in the 20-29 age range ($M = 24.83, SD = 7.51$) over mothers in the 30-39 age range ($M = 21.53, SD = 7.86$). However, the effect size ($\eta^2 = 0.029$) shows a small difference between the averages.

Comparison of Marital Life Satisfaction with Mother's Level of Education

In Table 6, the descriptive statistics of Marital Life Satisfaction based on the Education Level of the Mothers were given.

Table 6

Descriptive Analysis Results Regarding the Education Level of Mothers

Education Level of the Mother	N	\bar{X}	SS	95% Confidence Interval		Min.	Max.	Skewness	Kurtosis
				Lower	Upper				
Elementary	59	22.73	8.174	20.60	24.86	5	59	-.246	-.657
Middle	33	22.27	8.438	19.28	26.26	5	33	-.401	-.379
High	66	22.79	7.470	20.95	24.62	5	66	-.347	-.590
University	54	22.89	6.946	20.99	24.78	8	54	-.075	-.742
Total	212	22.72	7.650	21.68	23.75	5	212		

The One-way ANOVA test was planned to be conducted to reveal whether the Marital Life Satisfaction scores differed according to their education level groups. Before the test, the assumptions required for the test were checked. For the normality assumption, skewness and kurtosis values for each group were checked, and it was seen that values ranged from -3 to 3 for each education level group. Therefore, it was found that the data were normally distributed. For the homogeneity of variance, the Levene test was conducted. The result of the test showed that the variances among education level groups were homogeneous ($F(3, 208) = .711$; $p = .547$). Thus, the One-way ANOVA test results showed that mothers' parenting stress does not differ significantly according to the mother's education level ($F(3, 208) = 2.816$; $p = .986$).

Comparison of Marital Life Satisfaction of Mothers with the Employment Status of the Mother

The independent sample t-test was planned to be conducted to reveal whether the Marital Life Satisfaction scores differed according to their study status groups. Before the test, the assumptions required for the test were checked. For the normality assumption, skewness and kurtosis values range from -3 to 3 for the two study status groups. Therefore, it was assumed that the data is normally distributed. For the homogeneity of variance, the Levene test was conducted. The result of the test showed that the variances among study status groups were homogeneous ($F(1, 209) = .001$; $p = .974$). After the assumptions were met, an independent t-test was conducted to detect whether there was a statistically significant difference between the two study status groups. The result of the test showed that there was no statistically significant difference between the two study status groups, $t(210) = 1.564$, $p = .119$, with the working group ($M = 24.53$, $SD = 7.71$) scoring and the not-working group ($M = 22.35$, $SD = 7.60$).

4. Discussion and Recommendations

In the study, it was concluded that there was a negative and significant relationship between marital life satisfaction and parenting stress level, a positive and significant relationship between marital life satisfaction and family life quality, and a negative and significant relationship between family life quality and stress in mothers with children with special needs. It was observed that parenting stress level and family quality of life predicted marital life satisfaction at a statistically significant level. This showed that mothers with high marital life satisfaction had low parenting stress and high family life quality.

In the study, it was concluded that family quality of life did not differ significantly according to the age and education level of the mother; however, family quality of life differed significantly in favor of mothers who worked in an income-generating job, and the family quality of life of working mothers was higher. This situation may be related to the fact that mothers who work in an income-generating job can

occupy their minds with different things outside the home and contribute to their families in matters related to care costs. Satisfaction with their work lives, feeling useful, and being busy with other things may have positively affected the quality of life of mothers with children with special needs. The study conducted by Alpgan and Alabay (2021) determined that the family quality of life of mothers with children with developmental delays differed significantly in favor of working mothers. In the study conducted by Shu and Lung (2005), it was concluded that the employment status of parents with children with autism was a determinant factor in their perceptions of family quality of life; and in the study conducted by Meral (2011), it was concluded that working or not working in an income-generating job did not affect family quality of life. Regarding the family quality of life of parents with children with special needs, Mannan (2005) determined that the quality of family life of parents with children with developmental delay increased in direct proportion to their socioeconomic and educational levels. Demiray (2019) found that the quality of family life of mothers with children with multiple disabilities decreased, the quality of family life decreased as the level of hopelessness increased, and the quality of family life increased as the level of resilience increased; Kara (2016) found that the quality of family life of parents with typically developing children was higher than parents with children with special needs; Karaduman (2020) determined that the family quality of life perceptions of parents with children with developmental disabilities were lower than those of parents with typically developing children, and the quality of life perceptions of fathers with children with intellectual disabilities were lower than those of fathers with typically developing children. Meral and Cavkaytar (2015) found that the family quality of life of mothers with children with autism increased in proportion to the amount of social support received by the mother. Schlebusch et al. (2017) concluded that the family quality of life of parents with young children with autism is affected by their income status and the degree of autism of the child.

In the study, it was determined that the parenting stress of the mothers did not differ significantly according to the age and employment status of the mothers; according to the level of education, it was determined that there was a significant difference in favor of university graduate mothers in the comparison of university graduate mothers with secondary school and high school graduate mothers. In other words, it was determined that the parenting stress levels of university graduate mothers were higher than those of secondary and high school graduates. It can be thought that the higher parenting stress levels of university graduate mothers compared to secondary school and high school graduate mothers may be related to their career goals and future expectations. It can be suggested that they may have had to devote a significant part of the time they dreamed of devoting to their professional development to their children; therefore, they may have had to abandon their career plans for their children with special needs. The fact that university graduate mothers could not reach the career they dreamed of due to their children having special needs and that they saw this situation as an obstacle to their careers may cause their parenting stress levels to increase. On the other hand, it is possible to encounter different research results in the literature. In the study conducted by Bakır (2020), it was determined that the parenting stress levels of mothers with elementary and secondary school graduates were higher than those of parents with high school and university graduates; in the study conducted by Koçhan (2019) and Gülaldı (2010), it was determined that the parenting stress levels of parents with elementary and secondary school graduates were higher than those of parents with high school and university graduates. This difference can be explained by the difficulties experienced by parents with children with special needs and low educational levels in coping with their children's special needs. The study conducted by Kaytez, Durualp, and Kadan (2015) concluded that the parenting stress levels of high school graduate mothers were the highest. In the studies conducted by Kanat (2020), Söğüt (2019), and Taşçı (2014), it was concluded that there was no relationship between education level and stress level. Regarding the parenting stress of parents with children with special needs, Çelimli (2009) found that mothers with children with autism experienced high levels of parental stress; Gülaldı (2010) found

that life satisfaction decreased as the stress level of mothers increased. Hoffman et al. (2009) found that mothers with autistic children experienced more stress than mothers with typically developing children; Kaner (2009) found that parents with mentally disabled children experienced more stress. Lopez et al. (2008) found that parents with children with developmental delays were more stressed than parents with typically developing children. Kurşun (2018) found that parents with children with autism were under higher levels of stress than those with typically developing children; Zaidman-Zait (2008) found that the level of parental stress increased depending on the age of the hearing-impaired child, and parents of children who were late in receiving the diagnosis experienced more stress.

In the study, it was concluded that the marital life satisfaction of the mothers did not differ significantly according to the mother's education level and employment status; according to the age of the mothers, in the comparison of the mothers between the ages of 20-29 and 30-39, it was found that the marital life satisfaction of the mothers between the ages of 20-29 differed significantly in favor of those between the ages of 20-29, and the marital satisfaction of the mothers between the ages of 20-29 was higher. It can be thought that this may be related to the fact that marital life satisfaction in the first years of marriage is at a better level despite everything. Depending on the progression of time, parents may be financially and emotionally tired and worn out due to the child with special needs. Similarly, the study conducted by Baş (2018) suggested that parents between the ages of 20-30 were more satisfied with marriage. In the study conducted by Güler (2010), parents between the ages of 20-35 were more satisfied with the marriage, and in the study conducted by Taşköprü (2013), it was noted that the marital satisfaction of individuals aged 21-30 was higher than those aged 41-50 and 51-60. On the other hand, in the study conducted by Karaman (2019), it was found that parents between the ages of 20-25 received less marital satisfaction. In the studies conducted by Özşenel (2017) and Güven (2005), no significant relationship was found between parental age and marital life satisfaction. Regarding the marital life satisfaction of parents with children with special needs, Dalkılıç (2016) found that children with autism affect the marital satisfaction of parents; Dokuman (2017) concluded that the marital satisfaction of parents with disabled children is higher than that of parents without disabled children. Eren-Kanbir (2018) found that having a child with special needs decreases marital satisfaction; Güler (2010) found that marital life satisfaction of parents with disabled children is affected by the age of the parent, duration of marriage and number of children; Hartley et al. (2011) found that parenting experiences of parents with children with autism were a significant determinant of marital satisfaction; Robinson and Neece (2014) found that parents with children with developmental delay who had lower marital satisfaction had higher parenting stress and behavioral problems in their children. Santamaria et al. (2012) found that the marital life satisfaction of parents with children with autism was lower than the marital life satisfaction of parents with Down syndrome and typically developing children.

5. Conclusion

As a result of the research, it was determined that there was a negative and significant relationship between marital life satisfaction and parenting stress levels of mothers with children with special needs; a positive and significant relationship between marital life satisfaction and family life quality; a negative and significant relationship between family life quality and parenting stress levels. In the study, it was found that family quality of life differed significantly in favor of working mothers according to the working status of the mothers; it did not differ significantly according to the age and education level of the mother; the parenting stress of the mothers differed significantly in favor of university graduate mothers in the comparison of university graduate mothers with secondary school and high school graduate mothers according to their education levels; It was concluded that the marital life satisfaction of the mothers differed significantly in favor of the mothers in the 20-29 age range according to the ages of the mothers; it did not differ significantly according to the educational level and employment status of the mother.

6. Recommendations

1. Since the quality of family life of mothers who work in an income-generating job is found to be higher than that of mothers who do not work, it should be ensured that suitable conditions are provided for mothers who want to work and that places where they can safely leave their children with special needs during working hours, are made widespread.
2. Since it was determined that university-graduate mothers had higher parenting stress than secondary school and high school graduate mothers, measures should be taken to reduce the stress levels of university-graduate mothers.
3. The fact that the marital life satisfaction of mothers between the ages of 20-29 is higher than that of other mothers shows that marital life satisfaction decreases with age. Therefore, psychological support should be given to families, and marital life satisfaction should be prevented from decreasing over the years.

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