



| Araştırma Makalesi / Research Article |

## The Mediation Role Of Empathy In The Relationship Between Parents' Attitudes And Altruism

Anne Baba Tutumlarının Özgeçicilik ile Olan İlişkisinde Empatinin Aracılık Rolü<sup>1</sup>

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### Keywords

1. parental attitude
2. empathy
3. altruism
4. high school students
5. structural equation model

### Anahtar Kelimeler

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### Abstract

*Purpose:* This study aims to test the models established for the mediating role of empathy in the relationship between parental attitudes and altruism in high school students.

*Design/Methodology/Approach:* The study was carried out with 401 participants [224 (55.9%) girls and 177 (44.1%) boys, age-range: = 14-20, Mage = 16.46 years] who are students from various Anatolian/Science High Schools in Elazığ. As a measurement tool, the "Empathy Tendency Scale," "Parenting Attitude Scale," and "Altruism Scale" were used. The data of the study were analyzed with structural equation modeling (SEM). In addition, the bootstrapping process was used to test the significance of the indirect effect.

*Findings:* Two models were determined within the framework of the structural equation model. It is determined that the model which states empathy as the partial mediation role between democratic, full mediation role between protective, authoritarian, attitudes of parents and altruism is the best model. After bootstrapping process, the indirect effects were seen as significant. The findings were discussed in the related literature, and suggestions were made for future researchers and educators.

### Öz

Çalışmanın amacı: Bu araştırmanın amacı, lise öğrencilerinde anne-baba tutumları ile özgeçicilik arasındaki ilişkide empatinin aracı rolüne yönelik oluşturulan modelleri test etmektir.

*Materyal ve Yöntem:* Çalışma, Elâzığ ilinde çeşitli Anadolu/Fen Liselerinde öğrenim görmekte olan 401 [224'ü (%55,9) kız ve 177'si (%44,1) erkek, Yaş<sub>ranjı</sub> = 14-20, Yaş<sub>ort</sub> = 16.46] öğrencinin katılımı ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Ölçme aracı olarak; "Empati Eğilim Ölçeği", "Anne Baba Tutumları Ölçeği" ve "Özgeçicilik Ölçeği" kullanılmıştır. Çalışmanın verileri, yapısal eşitlik modeliyle (YEM) analiz edilmiştir. Ayrıca dolaylı etkinin anlamlılığını test etmek için bootstrapping işlemi kullanılmıştır.

*Bulgular:* Yapısal eşitlik modeli kapsamında iki model belirlenmiştir. Empatinin; lise öğrencilerinin anne baba tutumlarından demokratik ile özgeçicilik arasında kısmi, koruyucu-istekçi ve otoriter anne baba tutumu ile özgeçicilik arasında tam aracı role sahip olduğunu belirten modelin en iyi model olduğu saptanmıştır. Bootstrapping işlemi sonrasında da dolaylı etkilerin anlamlı olduğu sonucu görülmüştür. Bulgular ilgili alanyazında tartışılmış ve gelecekte yapılacak olan çalışmalara ilişkin araştırmacılara ve eğitimcilerle önerilerde bulunulmuştur.

<sup>1</sup>This study is based on a master dissertation (mentored by the second author) presented to İnönü University

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## INTRODUCTION

Parents (mothers and fathers) are the first and most influential figures to influence the understanding of the outside world of the individual. It is seen that children who were constantly scolded by their parents in childhood, or who were overprotected and sheltered by their parents and not allowed to take the initiative, joined the society as individuals who were shy, timid, fearful, unable to make independent decisions, unable to take risks, and who had difficulty forming positive social relationships (Yüksel, 2002). However, in families where a democratic parental attitude prevails, parents show unconditional respect and love for their children. However, they also supervise their children and allow them to meet their individual needs. The behaviors of parents who use this attitude are consistent, decisive, and reassuring (Yavuzer, 2000). To better understand what parental attitudes correspond to in real life, it is necessary to consider their relationship to some concepts such as empathy and altruism, which are becoming increasingly important in modern times. Empathy is one of the concepts whose importance in social life is increasing day by day. Empathy is a frequently mentioned concept in many fields, from psychology to human resources, sociology to political science, from bilateral relations to a social phenomenon. In this sense, it is a well-known fact that it is not possible to start with a specific definition of empathy. Because both the meaning attributed to empathy has changed over time, and it is seen that the descriptions of empathy by researchers differ from each other (Dökmen, 1988). Empathy (Hoffman, 2000), defined as the ability to have feelings that reflect the emotional dynamics of a person's situation, is considered a multidimensional concept and emotional and cognitive processes (Zaki & Ochsner, 2012). Until the 1950s, the concept of empathy was considered mainly as a mental concept. Here it is emphasized that a person tries to understand the other by putting himself in his place to understand him. In the 1960s, it was understood that empathy had an emotional side, and it was emphasized that it was essential to feeling the other person's emotions, unlike its cognitive aspect (Dökmen, 1988). To better understand the specific gravity of empathy in social life, it is necessary to examine its relationship with some prosocial behavioral models such as altruism.

Although it is expressed in different words and phrases in relation to its importance in social life, altruism is one of the concepts explained in principle. When examining the literature on the conceptual definitions of altruism, the common focus is on "behavior without material or moral interest and pleasure." In this context, Batson, Duncan, Ackerman, Buckley and Birch (1981) emphasize that in altruistic behaviors, it is necessary to distinguish between positive social behavior to attract attention, being popular, being appreciated or respected by someone, and helping behavior without any financial reward or expectation of appreciation. For a behavior to be considered altruistic, a person should not expect any compensation. In this context, it can be seen that the concept of altruism, which is regarded as an essential concept in interpersonal relationships, greatly facilitates relationships for both individual and social life (Tekeş & Hasta, 2015).

### Parental Attitudes-Empathy Relationship

Parental attitudes and attitudes in the family influence children's social relationships in adulthood. In fact, according to Ayan (2007), children of parents who exhibit violent attitudes towards their children have been found to practice violent behavior in the school environment. At this point, there are different approaches to the extent to which parental attitudes should be assessed. However, it can be treated under three headings as democratic, authoritarian and protective-willing? In democratic parenting, the parents show a typical attitude towards the child. Here, not only the children but also the parents follow the family's rules and all family members are seen to have equal rights (Kulaksızoğlu, 2011). In an authoritarian parental attitude, it is seen that children do not have the opportunity to express themselves, and they are controlled from outside (Yavuzer, 2000). In this family attitude, parents expect their wishes to be fulfilled by the child without question as they have a strict and dogmatic view (Kuzgun, 1972). In the attitude of the protective-willing parent, children are highly protected and supervised by their parents. Since many of the things children want to do or are responsible for are done by their parents, children are prevented from learning through experience. Children are found to have problems in self-esteem and self-confidence later in life because they interfere in every matter more than necessary. As a result, individuals who grow up in this family mindset become dependent individuals who cannot make their own decisions or take risks (Baumrind, 1966).

Most of the studies emphasize that there is a relationship between parental attitude and empathy. Although the form and degree of this relationship vary, it is noted that the direction and importance of the association are broadly constant. At this point, a study conducted by Trommsdorff (1991) indicates that the empathic tendency of children of mothers who have a democratic parenting approach and a vital communication skill is also high. It has been seen that children in families who are role models for a child to develop a sense of responsibility and who do not use punishment as a mediator in behavior change have higher empathic tendencies (Krevans and Gibbs, 1996). In Hower and Edwards' (1979) study, it was observed that empathic tendencies were high among university students who were accepted by their parents and who operated with relatively few control mechanisms. Similarly, Yavuzer (2000) states that empathic tendency is low in authoritarian parental attitudes, dominated by strict rules and a culture of pressure and obedience.

In the recent past, studies conducted in the United States of America have found empathy to be a leading and dominant factor in cognitive and emotional developmental processes. In most of these studies, it is found that the development of empathic tendency in children is favored by warmth, affection, and parental support in the family environment (Barnett, King, Howard, & Dino, 1980; Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989; Henry, Sager, & Plunkett, 1996). It is observed that the children of parents who are sensitive to their children's emotional and psychological needs have more skilled communication, warm relationships and show a developed empathic tendency (Strayer & Roberts, 2004). In addition, children who grow up in strict and emotionally neglectful families have difficulty describing the emotions of others and have fewer empathic tendencies (Cohen & Strayer, 1996). In the

research conducted by Hastings, Zahn-Waxler, Robinson, Usher, and Bridges (2000), it is emphasized that children of parents who are strict and punitive, do not set consistent rules and do not respond to their children's emotional needs have difficulty in perceiving the emotional intensity of others.

### **Parental Attitudes and Altruism Relationship**

Until recently, there have been very few studies on the relationship between parental attitudes and altruism, and it is seen that these studies are mostly conducted with experimental economic paradigms (Guo & Feng, 2017). In studies on the relationship between parental attitudes and altruism, it can be seen that democratic parental attitudes and altruism have a positive relationship. For example, in Kuncze and Shaver's (1994) study, it is observed that individuals who grow up in a democratic parental attitude are more sensitive to the needs of their romantic partners and have a higher sensitivity in providing emotional support. In a study examining parental attitudes separately for each parent, overprotective attitudes were negatively correlated with altruistic behavior in both parents (Guo & Feng, 2017). In Elmas' (1998) research on the relationship between parental attitudes and altruism, the democratic parental attitude has a positive relationship with altruism, and there is no significant relationship between authoritarian and indifferent parental attitudes and altruism.

### **Empathy-Altruism Relationship**

It is seen that there are many studies on the relationship between empathy and altruism within the framework of the "Empathy and Altruism Hypothesis" title. The first study on the Empathy and Altruism Hypothesis is seen in Batson's study on "Social Psychological Theories" in the 1980s. The Empathy and Altruism Hypothesis emphasizes that an entirely altruistic behavior often takes place in social life and interpersonal relations, but this situation usually does not involve a direct, empathic tendency for potential helpers. At this point, it is emphasized that altruism can be defined as a prosocial behavior that occurs as an indirect response to the emotional experience of empathy (Batson, 1990).

In the study of Bethlehem, Allison, van Andel, Coles, Neil, and Baron-Cohen (2017), which is considered one of the modern studies investigating the relationship between empathy and altruism, it is found that heart mediates the concept of altruism in helping others. The heart is considered to pave the way for moral development, and it is found that children with high levels of empathic tendency show less aggression, exhibit social behaviors by analyzing the habitat and needs of others, and have higher levels of moral judgment (Mehrabian, Young, & Sato, 1988). Although people with high empathic tendencies are distant from the physical environment in which they suffer, and thus empathic arousal is reduced, it has been observed that motivation to help is high in these people (Fultz, Batson, Fortenbach, McCarthy, & Varney, 1986). In other words, it is found that in individuals with high empathic tendency, although biological arousal is reduced in a controlled manner, there is no decrease in helping behavior without benefit-that is altruistic behavior. In this study, based on the above theoretical framework, the following hypotheses were tested:

Hypothesis 1: Democratic parental attitude has a significant positive relationship with empathic tendency and altruism.

Hypothesis 2: Authoritarian and protective willing-parents attitudes have a significant negative relationship with empathic tendency and altruism.

Hypothesis 3: Empathic tendency has a significant positive relationship with altruism.

Hypothesis 4: Empathic tendency positively mediates the relationship significantly between democratic parental attitude and altruism.

Hypothesis 5: Empathic tendency has a significant negative mediation in the relationship between authoritarian and protective parental attitudes and altruism.

## **METHOD**

### **Model of the Study**

This correlational study tries to reveal the full and partial mediation effect of the concepts of parental attitudes, altruism, and empathy in high school students. Within the framework of the models created to be tested in the study, the extent to which the proposed conceptual models for determining the relationships between parental attitudes, altruism, and empathy among high school students will be tested through SEM analyzes. Two models were identified as part of the hypotheses generated in this study:

The first modal is empathy has a fully mediating role in high school students between democratic, protective-willing and authoritarian attitude and altruism.

The second modal, in high school students, empathy has a partial mediating role in democratic parental attitude and altruism while it has a fully mediating role between protective-willing and authoritarian parental attitude and altruism.

## Study Group

The sample group of the study was determined by using the appropriate sampling method in Elazığ province (Büyüköztürk, Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz and Demirel) with 401 (55.9% female) high school students from three different secondary education institutions that were considered to be at low, medium and high socioeconomic levels [Yaşranjı = 14-20, Myaş = 16.46, SD: .97; Msinıf: 10.62, SD: .84]. From all, 51 of the students (% 12.7) 9. grade, 92 (% 22.9) 10. grade, 214 (% 53.4) 11. Grade and 44 (% 11) 12. grade students.

## Data Collection Tools

### Empathic Tendency Scale (ETS)

ETS was developed by Dökmen (1988), and it consists of 20 items. It was developed to measure people's empathy potential. As the sample item in the scale, "The problems of others concern me as much as my problems." in the form. The scale was applied twice at three-week intervals to a group of 70 students by Dökmen (1988), and the relationship between the scores obtained from both applications was found to be  $r = .82$ . In this study, Cronbach Alpha's internal consistency coefficient was found to be .67.

### Parental Attitude Scale (PAT)

PAT scale, which Kuzgun and Eldeklioğlu (1999) developed, consists of three sub-dimensions as "Democratic," "Authoritarian," and "Protective/willing" and consists of 40 items in total. As an example of the items in the scale for the democratic parental attitude, "My parents always give me a sense of trust and make me feel loved"; for the authoritarian parental attitude, "My parents see the flaws and criticize me, not the positive aspects of everything I do"; "My parents always try to protect and watch over me as if something bad will happen to me" for the protective willing parent attitude. Regarding the reliability of the scale, the internal consistency coefficient of the democratic sub-dimension was determined as .89, the internal consistency coefficient of the Protector / Willing sub-dimension as .82, and the internal consistency coefficient of the authoritarian sub-dimension as .78 (Kuzgun & Bacanlı, 2005). Regarding the data collected in this study, the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient of the democratic sub-dimension was .90, the Cronbach Alpha, internal consistency coefficient of the protective-willing sub-dimension, was .81, and the authoritarian sub-dimension was found to have a Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient of .77.

### Altruism Scale (AS)

The adaptation of AS, developed by London and Bower (1968), into Turkish was made by Akbaba (1994). It consisted of 20 items; AS was designed to determine the altruistic tendency levels of individuals. The scale consists of four sub-dimensions of family, sociability, helpfulness and responsibility. The scale consists of 20 items. The sum of the scores obtained from all four dimensions determines the level of altruism (Akbaba 1994, 2001). The sample item on the scale, "To what extent do you believe that many people can take care of themselves?" in the form. The validity study of SL, adapted into Turkish by Akbaba (1994), was found to be .92 by the test-retest method (Akbaba, 1994). In the reliability study of AS, the relationship between single and double-digit items was .81.

Regarding the data collected in this study, the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient was .72. In the present study, the family sub-dimension was not used because it aimed to reach more findings of the individual's social relations in the outside world with PAT and ETS.

## Data Analysis

A total of six mediation tests were performed for both models. AMOS 24.0 (Analysis of Moment Structures) statistical program for analysis on SEM; SPSS 23.0 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) statistical program was used for descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation and correlation.

The following criteria are generally taken into consideration regarding the fit index value range in SEM: (a) The value of  $\chi^2/sd$  in the Chi-square Fit Test is equal to, or less than 5; (b) Comparative Fit Index (CFI) is .90 or greater ; (c) Root-Mean-Square Error of Approximation- RMSEA value should be less than .08 ; (d) Normed Fit Index-NFI value should have a value above; (e) Goodness of Fit Index-GFI and Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index-AGFI values should be greater than .90 (Byrne, 2012; Çokluk, Şekercioğlu and Büyüköztürk, 2010; Bollen, 1989; Tabachnick and Fidell, 2012; Kline, 1998).

## Findings

### Correlation Analysis

As expected, the democratic parental attitude has a positive relationship with empathy and altruism. Authoritarian parental attitude has a negative relationship with empathy and altruism. Protective-Willing Parental Attitude has a negative relationship with empathy but no significant association with altruism. There is also a positive relationship between empathy and altruism.

**Table 1. Correlation Coefficients of Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness, Kurtosis and Research Variables**

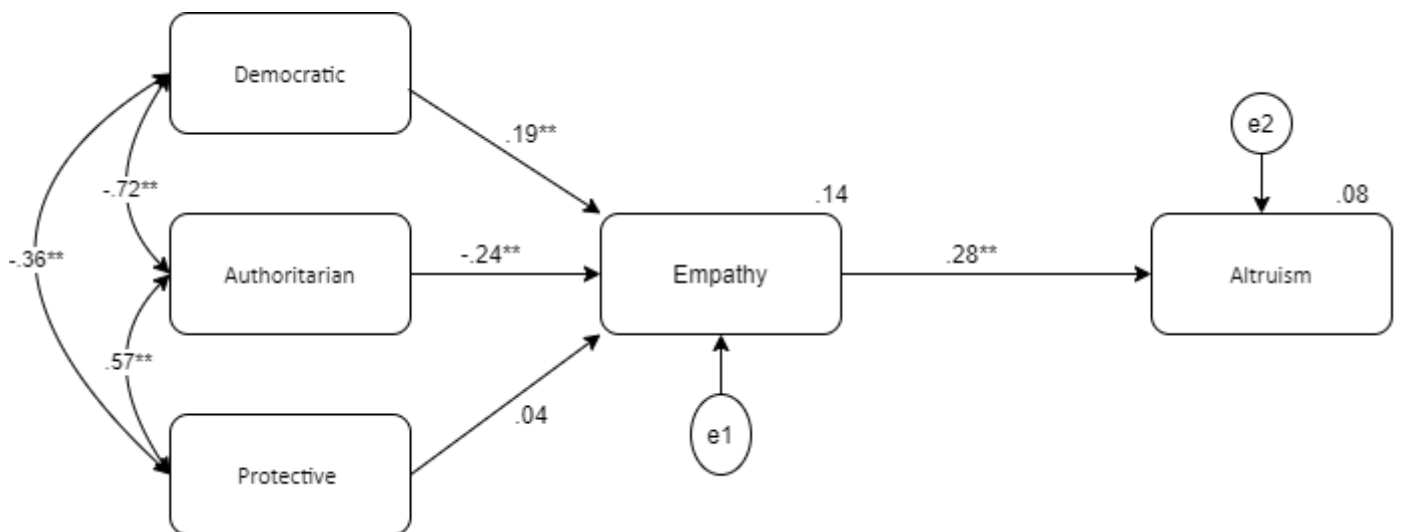
	1	2	3	4	5
Democratic	1				
Protective	-.35**	1			
Authoritarian	-.72**	.57**	1		
Altruism	.26**	-.03	-.15**	1	
Empathy	.34**	-.16**	-.35**	.28**	1
Mean	57.65	42.33	23.37	48.37	16.13
SD	11.99	10.76	7.59	3.90	7.71
Kurtosis	.58	-.49	.46	.10	.70
Skewness	-.96	.19	.79	-.01	-.50

Note. SD: Standard deviation

\*\* $p < .01$

### Structural Equation Model (SEM)

When the GIF indices of Model 1 are examined, it can be said that except  $\chi^2/sd$  and RMSEA values, other goodness of indices values are at acceptable levels ( $\chi^2 (N = 401) = 18.491, p < .001; \chi^2 /sd = 6.174; CFI = .97; AGFI = .91, GFI = .98; NFI = .96$ ). Analysis results of Model 1 show that democratic parental attitude directly predicts empathy in positive way ( $\lambda = .19, p < .01$ ), while it directly predicts the empathy negatively in authoritarian parental attitude ( $\lambda = -.24, p < .01$ ). It is seen that protective-willing parental attitude do not predict empathy indirect significant level ( $\lambda = .04, p > .05$ ). Analysis results also show that empathy predicts altruism in a positive way ( $\lambda = .28, p < .01$ ). When the indirect effects are examined, democratic parental attitude predicts altruism in the mediation of empathy. In contrast, the mediation is negative in authoritarian parental attitude ( $\lambda = -.06, p < .01$ ), and there is not any prediction in protective-willing parental attitude with the mediation of empathy ( $\lambda = .01, p > .05$ ). Parental attitudes explain 14% of the total variance in empathy, and parent attitudes and empathy together explain 8% of the total variance in altruism.



**Figure 1. The model created for the effect of parental attitudes on altruism through empathy. Note. N = 401; \*\*  $p < .01$**

To provide additional evidence on whether the direct and indirect effects of Model 1 are significant, as a result of the bootstrapping procedure performed by 2,000 resampling, the lower and upper bounds of the bootstrapping coefficient and the 95% confidence intervals (C.I.) are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. Bootstrapping results for Modal 1**

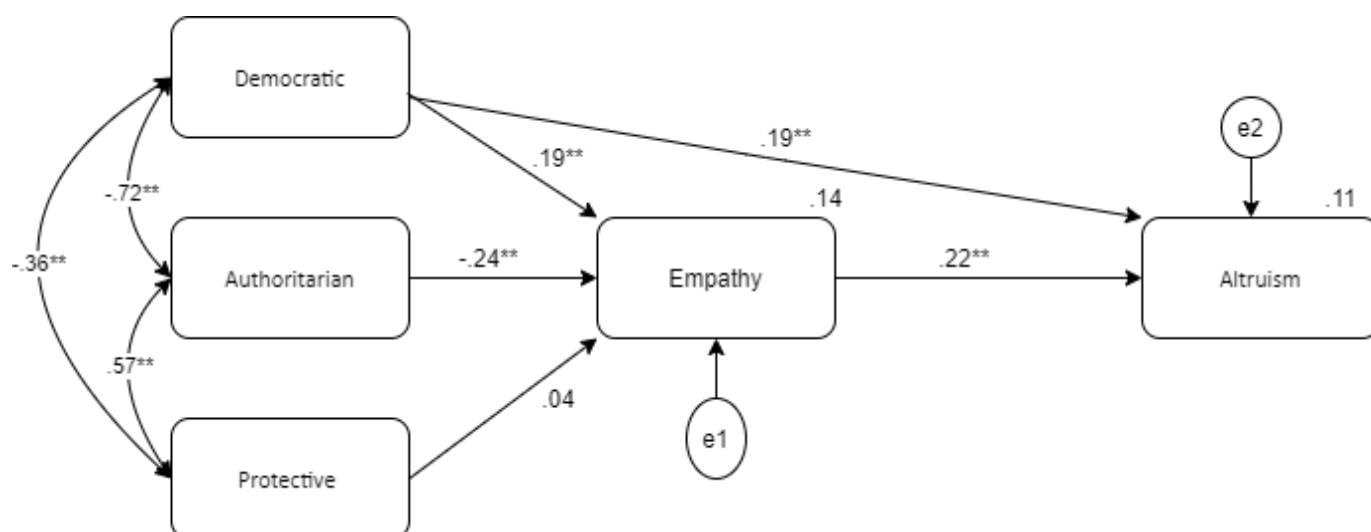
Model paths	Coefficient	% 95 C.I.	
		Lower Bond	Upper Bond
<b>Direct effect</b>			
Democratic → Empathy	.148	.041	.258
Authoritarian → Empathy	-.292	-.491	-.084
Protective → Empathy	.031	-.085	.135
Empathy → Altruism	.233	.149	.311

	% 95 C.I.		
Indirect effect			
Demokratik → Empathy → Altruism	.035	.009	.064
Protective → Empathy → Altruism	.007	-.020	.033
Authoritarian → Empathy → Altruism	-.068	-.128	-.021

In the bootstrapping process, when the lower and upper limits in 95% confidence intervals do not include zero, it can be said that direct and indirect effects are significant (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). As can be seen in Table 2, it can be said that the mediation effect studied is significant because the confidence intervals of the other paths, except for the path from the attitude of the protective-willing parent to empathy, do not include zero in the path analysis with direct effect. Likewise, in the path analysis with indirect impact, the confidence intervals of the other paths, except the path from protective-willing parents to altruism, do not include zero, so it can be said that the investigated mediation effect is significant.

When the indices of GIF values of Model 2 are examined, it can be said that the goodness of indices are mostly acceptable ( $\chi^2$  (N = 401) = 3.950,  $p > .05$ ;  $\chi^2 /sd = 1.975$ ; CFI = .99; AGFI = .97, GFI = .99; NFI = .99; RMSEA = .049). Analysis results of Model 2 show that democratic parental attitude directly predicts empathy positively ( $\lambda = .19$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and empathy is predicted directly in negative way at the authoritarian parental attitude ( $\lambda = -.24$ ,  $p < .01$ ). It is also seen that there is not a direct prediction of empathy in protective-willing parental attitude ( $\lambda = .04$ ,  $p > .05$ ). Analysis of the results shows that empathy is also positively predicted altruism ( $\lambda = .28$ ,  $p < .01$ ). When the indirect effects are examined, it is found that democratic parental attitude predicts altruism with the partial mediation of empathy ( $\lambda = .04$ ,  $p < .01$ ), authoritarian parental attitude predicts altruism with the mediation of empathy negatively ( $\lambda = .05$ ,  $p < .01$ ). At the same time, there is no prediction of empathy with the mediation of protective-willing parental attitude ( $\lambda = .008$ ,  $p > .05$ ). Parental attitudes explain 14% of the total variance in empathy, and parent attitudes and empathy together explain 11% of the total variance in altruism.

In addition, unlike Model 1, the overall fit value of Model 2 is not significant. At this point, according to Schermelleh-Engel, Moosbrugger and Müller (2003), it is desirable for a model with a high level of fit index values that the overall fit value ( $\chi^2$ ) is not significant. It follows that Model 2 is preferable because the general fit value is not as substantial as desired, and the goodness-of-fit index values are more acceptable than for Model 1.



**Figure 2.** A model for authoritarian and protective willing parental attitude through full mediation of empathy, and democratic parental attitude to affect altruism through partial mediation of empathy. *Note.* N = 401; \*\*  $p < .01$

Regarding the determination of whether the indirect effects are significant in the more preferable model 2, the bootstrapping coefficient and the lower and upper limits of the 95% confidence intervals (C.I.) as a result of the bootstrapping process performed through bootstrapping 2.000 resampling are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Bootstrapping results for the preferred model (Modal 2)

Model paths	Coefficient	% 95 C.I.	
		Lower Bond	Upper Bond
Direct effect			
Democratic → Empathy	.148	.041	.258
Authoritarian → Empathy	-.292	-.491	-.084
Protective → Empathy	.031	-.085	.135
Empathy → Altruism	.233	.149	.311
Indirect effect			
Democratic → Empathy → Altruism	.026	.007	.056
Protective → Empathy → Altruism	.005	-.015	.026
Authoritarian → Empathy → Altruism	-.052	-.103	-.016

According to Preacher and Hayes (2008), a significant effect can be mentioned when the values in the lower and upper limits do not include zero with a 95% confidence interval. As it can be seen in Table 3, it can be said that the mediating effect examined is significant, since the confidence intervals of other ways, except the path from protective-willing parents to empathy, do not include zero in direct effect path analysis. Likewise, in the indirect effect path analysis, except the path from protective-willing parents to altruism, confidence intervals of other paths do not include zero, so it can be said that the mediating effect examined is significant.

## Results and Discussion

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationships between parental attitudes, empathy, and altruism in high school students (a) and to test the mediating relationship between empathy and altruism (b). The first hypothesis formed in this context is that Democratic parental attitudes are positively related to empathy and altruism. This first hypothesis was confirmed; As the democratic parental attitude increased, empathic tendency and altruistic behaviors were significantly increased. Second hypothesis: authoritarian and protective-willing parents' attitudes lead to negative relationships leading to negatively and altruism. The second hypothesis is partially confirmed. Indeed, as authoritarian parental attitudes increased, a significant increase in empathic tendency and altruistic behaviors was observed. However, no significant relationship was observed between protective-willing parental attitude and empathic tendency and altruistic behaviors. Third hypothesis: empathic ten—third as a significant positive relationship with altruism. The third hypothesis is confirmed: As empathic tendencies increase, a significant increase in altruistic behaviors is observed. Fourth hypothesis: empathic tendency mediates positively between democratic parental attitudes and altruism. The fourth hypothesis is confirmed. As a result, the tendency has a significant positive effect on the relationship between democratic parental attitude and altruism. The last hypothesis was that empathic tendency mediates significantly in the negative direction between authoritarian and protective parental attitudes and altruism. This hypothesis was partially confirmed. In fact, it was observed that emltted significantly in the negative direction in the relationship be trendhoritarian parental attitude and altruism. However, it was found that empathy did not significantly mediate the relationship between protective-willing parents' perspective and altruism.

Many studies show a significant relationship between parental attitudes and empathy and empathy and altruism. However, it was noted that no impact analysis shows exactly where this relationship originates from and to what extent the third concept mediates the relationship between the current research and the two concepts. In this study, empathy was observed to mediate the relationship between parental attitudes and altruism. The theoretical and practical implications for the preferable Model 2 are discussed below.

The first result of the study found that democratic parental attitude directly significantly and positively predicts empathy. Another result is that authoritarian parental attitude indicates empathy in a significantly negative way. However, it was found that protective willing parents' attitudes did not directly affect empathy and did not show a significant relationship. In the study by Krevans and Gibbs (1996), empathic tendencies of children of repressive and highly disciplined parents were low. However, it has been observed that both the emotional and cognitive dimensions of empathy are high in children of mothers who do not have authoritarian behavior and who are highly sensitive to their children's needs (Cotton, 2001; Schaffer, Clark, & Jeglic, 2009; Hoffman, 1970; Kim & Rohner, 2003). In a study conducted on individuals in the early stages of adolescence, it was observed that the children of authoritarian fathers have low levels of empathic tendency (Antonopoulou, Alexopoulos, & Maridaki-Kassotaki, 2012). In this study, it was observed that protective-willing parental attitude has no significant predictor of empathy.

In the present study, consistent with the literature, empathy was found to predict altruism at a high level. At this point, Maner and Gailliot (2007) found that empathy is an important psychological factor for altruistic behavior. There is a positive relationship between empathic tendency and altruism (Eisenberg, Lennon, & Roth, 1983). Bethlehem et al. (2017), in their study on the predictor of empathy in relation to altruism, emphasized that empathy can be a significant predictor of altruism. In the study by Feldmanhall, Dalglish, Evans, and Mobbs (2015), it was stated that an individual's departure from the hegemony of selfish impulses, i.e., an empathic tendency, is a factor that strengthens altruism at high levels.

It is understood that the indirect effects of Model 2 are significant. Empathy was found to have a positive and significant partial mediating effect on the impact of democratic parental attitudes on altruism. Similarly, it was found that empathy had a significant full mediating effect in the negative direction of the impact of authoritarian parental attitude on altruism. It was understood that empathy had no considerable effect on protective-willing parents' attitude on altruism.

The results in the path coefficients for the direct effect suggested that there might be a full mediation effect on the relationship between authoritarian and democratic parental attitudes and altruism. However, analyses (bootstrapping) were conducted to provide additional evidence for this fact and to show that it is possible to speak of a full mediating effect within the criteria established in the literature. In this context, when path coefficients between variables in the model are examined, it is found that as democratic parental attitudes increase, empathy increases and as empathy increases, altruism increases. As authoritarian parental attitude increases, empathy decreases, and as empathy decreases, altruism decreases. In the study of Punjvani (2015), it is observed that the children of parents with authoritarian parental attitudes have a low level of altruism. In a survey by Kuncce and Shaver (1994), it is observed that individuals who grow up with democratic parental attitudes are more sensitive to the needs of their romantic partners. In the study conducted by Guo and Feng (2017), it was found that overprotective attitude in both parents was significantly negatively related to altruistic behavior. In the present study, there is no significant predictive value between the attitude of protective willing parents and altruism. In the study of Elmas (1998), it was found that democratic parental attitude has a positive relationship with altruism, and there is no significant relationship between authoritarian and indifferent parental attitude and altruism. Based on the findings obtained as a result of the research, the following suggestions can be made:

### Suggestions and Limitations

In this study, the debilitating and strengthening effects of parental attitudes on altruistic behavior in high school students, as well as the direct and indirect effects of empathy at this point, were examined. Future studies can be conducted to determine the variables that may increase, protect, and decrease altruism in high school students. Once again, based on the study findings, it is believed that parental attitudes are highly effective in raising individuals who can implement high empathic tendencies and thus altruistic behavioral models. In this context, parents need to present a democratic living space where an unconditional understanding of love prevails, and a measuring mechanism of control is exercised, rather than being authoritarian or overprotective of their children. Finally, in the context of raising altruistic and self-sacrificing individuals by the normative values of society, educators can conduct studies that strengthen the empathic tendencies of individuals to support the development of altruism and work to raise awareness among parents.

The results of the study should be evaluated within its limitations. Since this study was conducted on SEM analysis, it is impossible to discuss complete causality between variables, and experimental studies can reveal a complete causal relationship between the variables in the study. Secondly, this study was the first time the treated variables were examined together in a holistic approach. Therefore, longitudinal studies can be conducted on different age groups with similar concepts to ensure the generalizability of the proposed models.

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### Researchers' contribution rate

The study was conducted and reported with equal collaboration of the researchers.

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