

Meryem Şeyda Özcan

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Education

2019 – 2025

Integrated Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology

Koç University, Istanbul, Türkiye

(100% English Instruction - QS Ranking: 401)

Ph.D. dissertation topic: The role of technology in the cognitive development of children

(Advisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yasemin Kisbu)

2012 – 2017

B.A in Psychology

Bilkent University, Ankara, Türkiye

(100% English Instruction - QS Ranking: 477)

Undergraduate thesis: Do educational apps enhance learning in cardinality and number magnitude comparison abilities?

(Advisor: Assoc. Prof. Hande Ilgaz)

Positions and Affiliations

September 2025-
PRESENT

Presidential Postdoctoral Fellow at Virginia Tech

Department of Human Development and Family Science

(PI: Assoc. Prof. Koeun Choi)

January 2024 –
August 2025

Visiting Scholar at Virginia Tech

Department of Human Development and Family Science

(Advisor: Assoc. Prof. Koeun Choi)

February –
June 2022

Visiting Scholar at Georgia Southern University

Project GAME: Developing and piloting a game design-based computer science curriculum (NSF #2027948)

(Advisor: Prof. Mete Akcaoglu)

Teaching Experience

Spring 2023

Part-time Lecturer at Koç University

PSYC 206: Life Span Development (Taught entirely in English - Hybrid)

Summer 2022

Part-time Lecturer at Koç University

PSYC 206: Life Span Development (Taught entirely in English - Online)

Fall 2022

Statistical Workshop Instructor at Koç University

Structural Equation Modelling (Conducted a four halfday workshop in English held at the graduate level, focusing on SEM using MPlus)

Fall 2021

Teaching Assistant at Koç University

PSYC 301: Research Methods in Psychology (Taught the lab component entirely in English; supervised multiple student research groups through the entire research process, from study design to final report, including data collection and analysis)

Spring 2019

Teaching Assistant at Koç University

PSYC 201: Scientific Methods in Behavioral and Social Sciences (Taught entirely in English; guided students in using SPSS to conduct statistical analyses)

Spring 2018

Teaching Assistant at Koç University

PSYC 301: Research Methods in Psychology (Taught the lab component entirely in English; supervised multiple student research groups through the entire research process, from study design to final report, including data collection and analysis)

2017 – 2024

Other Teaching Assistantships at Koç University

(Responsibilities included such as engaging with 50–100 undergraduate students each semester through course organization, exam grading, and teaching select components of the course.)

- PSYC 206: Life Span Development
- PSYC 302: Psychological Testing and Measurement
- PSYC 501: Research Methods I (Graduate level)
- PSYC 502: Research Methods II (Graduate level)

Statistical Analysis Programs

Analysis Methods

SPSS (advanced)

Structural Equation Modelling

MPLUS (advanced)

Latent Profile Analysis

R (intermediate)

Meta-analysis

Experimental data analysis

Qualitative data analysis

(content analysis, focus group)

Research Experience

2024 – Present

**Lab Member at Cognitive Developmental Science (CoDeS) Lab,
Virginia Tech <http://kchoi.org/>**

2017 – Present	Lab Member at Independent Evaluation Laboratory (IEL), Koç University www.evalresearchlab.com
2015 – 2017	Lab Member at Bilkent Development (Bil-Ge), Bilkent University http://web2.bilkent.edu.tr/bilge/
2015 – 2016	Child Development Lab, Middle East Technical University http://cdlab2.psy.metu.edu.tr

Research Interests

- Media and child development
- Designing and using technology to support development and education
- Cognitive development
- Executive functions
- Programming education / Computational thinking

Research Support

Current

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 2025-
2026 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supporting playful parent-child joint reading experiences through AI digital technology, Caplan Foundation for Early Childhood
- <i>Hired as a graduate research assistant</i>
- Awarded: \$58,320
- Koeun Choi (PI); Caroline Hornburg, Sang Won Lee (Co-PIs)• Reimagining early learning through AI-enhanced parent-child playful joint reading, Institute for Creativity, Arts, and Technology (ICAT) SEAD Mini-Grant
- <i>Hired as a graduate research assistant</i>
- Awarded: \$6,000
- Koeun Choi (PI); Caroline Hornburg, Sang Won Lee (Co-PIs) |
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Pending

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 2025-
2027 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A behavioral and neural investigation of young children's attention and comprehension on interactive video viewing platforms, National Institutes of Health (R03)
- <i>Hired as a postdoctoral fellow</i>
- Awarded: \$150,803
- Koeun Choi (PI); Martha Ann Bell, Sang Won Lee (Co-PIs)• Children's Engagement with YouTube in Real-World Contexts
- <i>Listed as the designated trainee</i>
- Requested \$50,000
- Koeun Choi (PI); Sang Won Lee (Co-PI) |
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Awards, Funding, and Other Supports

- 2024
 - Cognitive Development Society 2024 Diversity Travel Award (\$750)
 - TUBITAK 2214 - International PhD Research Scholarship (\$22,800)
- 2023
 - TUBITAK 2250 - Performance-Based Scholarship for PhD Students (\$2400/yr; 2023-2024)
 - TUBITAK 2247 - National Outstanding Researchers Program Doctoral Bursary
 - Best Poster Award at the II. International Adolescence and Youth Research Congress
- 2020
 - TUBITAK 1003 - Priority Areas R&D Projects Support Program Doctoral Bursary
- 2017
 - Koç University Graduate School Scholarship
 - TUBITAK 2211 - National Ph.D. Student Scholarship
- 2016
 - TUBİTAK 2209 - Scholarship for Undergraduate Senior Thesis (\$300)
- 2012
 - Bilkent University Comprehensive Scholarship: based on entrance exam score (\$14,500)

Service to the Profession

- Ad hoc reviewer, *Journal of Children and Media* (Taylor & Francis)
- Ad hoc reviewer, *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* (Springer Nature)
- Ad hoc reviewer, *BMC Pediatrics* (Springer Nature)
- Ad hoc reviewer, *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research* (Taylor & Francis)
- Student reviewer (with Dr. Koeun Choi), *Journal of Children and Media* (Taylor & Francis)

Publications

1. **Özcan, M. Ş.**, & Kisbu, Y. (2025). Exposure to interactive media, but at low levels, is associated with better executive functioning in children: A meta-analysis. *Media Psychology*. 1–33. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15213269.2025.2471583>
2. Oksuz, I., **Özcan, M. Ş.**, Dost-Gözkın, A., & Kisbu, Y. (2024). Health risk behaviors of adolescents in Europe: A latent profile analysis of HBSC data from 43 countries. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 76, 115-121. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2024.08.001>
3. **Özcan, M. Ş.**, Goksun, T., & Kisbu Sakarya, Y. (2024). The impact of learning to code on higher-order executive functions: A systematic review of the literature. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*. 1–29. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15391523.2024.2381231>
4. Kisbu, Y., **Özcan, M. Ş.**, Kuşcul, G. H., Bozok, M., Kaya, M., & Fişek, G. (2023). Fathering styles in a traditional culture and its association with marital relationship: A latent profile analysis with a nationally representative sample. *Family Process*, 00, 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1111/famp.12948>
5. Akcaoglu, M., **Özcan, M. Ş.**, & Hodges, C. B. (2023). Exploring the relationship among motivational constructs and preservice teachers' use of computational thinking in classrooms. *Computers in the Schools*, 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07380569.2023.2172987>

6. Akcaoglu, M., **Özcan, M. Ş.**, & Dogan, S. (2023). What keeps teachers engaged during professional development? The role of interest development. *Education Sciences*, 13, 188. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13020188>
7. **Özcan, M. Ş.**, Çetinkaya, E., Goksun, T., & Kisbu Sakarya, Y. (2021). Does learning to code influence cognitive skills of elementary school children? Findings from a randomized experiment. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 91, 1434-1455. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjep.12429>

Manuscripts Under Review

1. **Özcan, M. Ş.**, Hong, Y., & Choi, K. (revised & resubmitted). Early media use predicts later executive function difficulties through problematic media use: a cross-lagged panel model in middle childhood with an early childhood media use predictor. *Media Psychology*.
2. **Özcan, M. Ş.**, & Akcaoglu, M. (under review). Development and validation of the multidimensional interest development survey (MIS): An interest survey measuring phases and components. *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment*.

Manuscripts in Preparation

1. Sabuncuoglu, A., **Özcan, M. Ş.**, Kisbu, Y., & Sezgin, M. (in preparation). Developing an open-source middle school programming environment and its curriculum for an affordable education. *ACM Transactions on Computing Education*.
2. Rajadhyaksha, U., Aycan, Z., Rantanen, J., Feldt, T., Cinli, D., **Özcan, M. Ş.**, & Baskurt, A. B. (in preparation). Work-family interface during COVID-19: Gender and gender role ideology perspectives. *Journal of Family and Economic Issues*.
3. Beers, C., Yu, S., **Özcan, M. Ş.**, Smith, C. L., & Choi, K. (in preparation). Understanding media guilt among mothers of young children.
4. **Özcan, M. Ş.**, & Choi, K. (in preparation). The role of digital media on young children's executive functions: Testing potential moderating and mediating effects.
5. Gürdal, M.S., **Özcan, M. Ş. (co-first author)**, Smith, C., & Choi, K. Media use and effortful control in young children: a meta-analytic review.

Conference Presentations

1. **Özcan, M. Ş.**, & Choi, K. (2025, May 1-3). *Exploring the role of child temperament, parenting stress, and parental disruptive phone use in preschoolers' problematic media use* [Poster presentation accepted]. The Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) Biennial Meeting, Minneapolis, MN.
2. **Özcan, M. Ş.**, & Akcaoglu, M. (2025, April 23-27). *Development and validation of the multidimensional interest survey (MIS)* [Paper presentation accepted]. American Educational Research Association (AERA) Annual Meeting, Denver, CO.
3. **Özcan, M. Ş.**, & Kisbu, Y. (2024, March 21-23). *Exposure to interactive media, but at low levels, is associated with better executive functioning in children: A meta-analysis* [Poster presentation]. Cognitive Developmental Society (CDS) Biennial Conference, Pasadena, CA.

4. Oksuz, I., **Özcan, M. Ş.**, Sunmaz, N., & Kisbu, Y. (2023, September 6-8). *Health risk behaviors among European adolescents: A latent profile analysis* [Conference presentation abstract]. II. International Adolescence and Youth Research Congress, Kapadokya, Türkiye.
https://www.egad2023.org/downloads/kongre_ozet_kitabi.pdf
5. Turunç, G., & **Özcan, M. Ş.** (2023, September 6-8). *Bullying and adolescent well-being: Insights from Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory* [Paper presentation abstract]. II. International Adolescence and Youth Research Congress, Kapadokya, Türkiye.
https://www.egad2023.org/downloads/kongre_ozet_kitabi.pdf
6. **Özcan, M. Ş.**, Turunç, G., Çetinkaya, E., & Kisbu, Y. (2022, September 8-9). *Cognitive functions and academic skills in children living under conflict: Investigation of mediation mechanisms using UNICEF MICS Palestine data* [Poster presentation]. Third Development Symposium in Türkiye, Istanbul, Türkiye.
7. **Özcan, M. Ş.**, Çetinkaya, E., Goksun, T., & Kisbu Sakarya, Y. (2021, April 7-9). *Does learning to code improve cognitive skills of elementary school children?* [Poster presentation]. The Society for Research in Child Development Biennial Meeting (SRCD), virtual.
8. **Zayim, M. Ş.**, & Kisbu-Sakarya, Y. (2019, March 21-23). *Fathering styles in Turkey: A latent profile analysis based on a representative sample* [Poster presentation]. The Society for Research in Child Development Biennial Meeting (SRCD), Baltimore, MD.