

Mahmut Sami Gürdal

Department of Human Development and Family Science, Virginia Tech
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Education

Ph.D. in Human Development Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA	Expected 2027
M.S. in Human Development Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA	2024
<i>Thesis:</i> Emotion regulation and screen use among parents of toddlers: A moderating role of parental personality <i>Advisors:</i> Dr. Koeun Choi & Dr. Cynthia L. Smith	
B.A. in Psychology, with magna cum laude Özyegin University, İstanbul, Türkiye	2022

Honors, Fellowships, & Awards

Outstanding Master's Student Award , Virginia Tech Graduate School	2024
Membership Offer , Phi Kappa Phi	2023, 2024
Academic Fellowship , Hüsnü M. Özyegin Foundation (\$3,000)	2022
High Honor Degree , Özyegin University	2022
Dean's High Honor List , Özyegin University	2019 – 2022
Full Scholarship for Bachelor's Degree , Özyegin University	2017 – 2022
Member , Psi Chi - The International Honor Society in Psychology	2021
First Place Prize in Undergraduate Level , 3rd Çiğdem Kağıtçıbaşı Research Festival	2020
First Place Prize in Paper Presentations , 2nd Çiğdem Kağıtçıbaşı Research Festival	2019

Grants

Funded External Grants

3. **Travel Grant**, Children and Screens: Institute for Digital Media and Child Development (\$350) 2025
2. **Research Grant**, The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye 2021 – 2022
 - Investigation of Moderator Role of Psychological Resilience on the Relationship Between Social Media Use and Depression (4,000.00 TRY)
 - PIs: **Mahmut Sami Gürdal**, Tunahan Aktay, Aleyna Akkan, Ekin Kızıldaş
 - Advisor: Dr. İbrahim H. Acar
1. **Research Grant**, The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye 2020 – 2021
 - Investigation of the Relationship Between Foreign Language Anxiety and Beliefs About Foreign Language Learning (3,980.00 TRY)
 - PI: **Mahmut Sami Gürdal**
 - Advisor: Dr. İbrahim H. Acar

Funded Internal Grants

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| 11. Travel Grant , Department of Human Development and Family Science, Virginia Tech (\$630) | 2025 |
| 10. Travel Grant , Graduate & Professional Student Senate, Virginia Tech (\$300) | 2025 |
| 9. Travel Grant , Department of Human Development and Family Science, Virginia Tech (\$561) | 2025 |
| 8. Travel Grant , Graduate & Professional Student Senate, Virginia Tech (\$300) | 2025 |
| 7. Travel Grant , Department of Human Development and Family Science, Virginia Tech (\$500) | 2024 |
| 6. Travel Grant , Graduate & Professional Student Senate, Virginia Tech (\$300) | 2023 |
| 5. Travel Grant , Department of Human Development and Family Science, Virginia Tech (\$850) | 2023 |
| 4. Travel Grant , Graduate & Professional Student Senate, Virginia Tech (\$500) | 2022 |
| 3. Travel Grant , College of Social Sciences, Özyegin University (€650) | 2022 |
| 2. Conference Attendance Grant , College of Social Sciences, Özyegin University (\$25) | 2021 |
| 1. Internship Grant , Department of Psychology, Özyegin University (5,000 TRY) | 2021 |

Research Experience

- Graduate Research Assistant** 2024 – Present
 Children's Emotions Lab
 Department of Human Development and Family Science, Virginia Tech
 PI: Dr. Cynthia L. Smith
- Graduate Research Assistant** 2023 – Present
 Cognitive Developmental Science Lab
 Department of Human Development and Family Science, Virginia Tech
 PI: Dr. Koeun Choi
- Graduate Research Assistant** 2022 – 2025
 Child Development Center for Learning and Research
 Department of Human Development and Family Science, Virginia Tech
 PI: Dr. Isabel Bradburn

Publications

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

2. **Gürdal, M. S.**, & Acar, İ. H. (2025). Self-regulation profiles and social competence in early childhood: A person-centered approach. *Early Education and Development*, 1-17.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2025.2559429>
1. **Gürdal, M. S.**, & Acar, İ. H. (2024). Foreign language anxiety and language learning beliefs: A comparative study of six language learner groups. *The Journal of Quality in Education*, 14(23), 44-60.
<https://doi.org/10.37870/joqe.v14i23.430>

Manuscripts Under Review

2. Walker, A., Quesenberry, E., Morris, K., **Gürdal, M. S.**, Yu, S., Choi, K., Katz, B., & Jeon, M. (under review). False memories: Subjective and objective responses to an “accented” voice assistant.
1. **Gürdal, M. S.**, Choi, K., Shin, E., & Smith, C. L. (under review). Suppress or reappraise? Differential roles of maternal emotion regulation strategies in mothers' and toddlers' interactive and non-interactive screen media use.

Manuscripts in Progress

1. **Gürdal, M. S.**, Özcan, M. S., Choi, K., & Smith, C. L. (in progress). Effortful control and media use from birth to age 5: A meta-analysis.
2. Chen, J., **Gürdal, M. S.**, Hong, Y., & Choi, K. (in progress). The interplay between problematic smartphone use, depression, and creative personality in adolescents: A longitudinal cross-lagged model.
3. **Gürdal, M. S.**, Smith, C. L., Choi, K., & Bell, M. A. (in progress). Temperament pathways to child and maternal problematic media use: A longitudinal study from middle childhood to adolescence.

Chapters in Progress

1. Choi, K., Chen, J., **Gürdal, M. S.**, & Özcan, M. S. (in progress). Infants, infancy, and what we know about what they see.

Reports

1. Bradburn, I., **Gürdal, M. S.**, & Velez, A. (2024). *+Policy Network policy impacts: An assessment of member policy impacts from 2017-2023*. Virginia Tech +Policy Network.
<https://policy.isce.vt.edu/research.html>

Presentations

Peer-Reviewed Oral Presentations

8. **Gürdal, M. S.**, Ozcan, M. S., Chen, J., Colbert, M., Hornburg, C., Lee, S. W., Choi, K. (submitted). *The impact of AI support on preschoolers' learning during parent-child shared e-book reading: Lab-based evidence* [Paper presentation]. The 28th Biennial Meeting of the International Society for the Study of Behavioral Development, Incheon, South Korea.
7. **Gürdal, M. S.**, Smith, C. L., Shin, E., & Choi, K. (2025, November 6-8). *When temperaments align: Toddler temperament as a moderator between parental personality and media use motivations* [Paper presentation]. The 25th Occasional Temperament Conference, College Station, TX, USA.
6. **Gürdal, M. S.**, Smith, C. L., Choi, K., & Bell, M. A. (2025, July 13-16). *From early temperament to later problematic media use: The mediating role of adolescent temperament* [Paper presentation]. The 2025 Digital Media and Developing Minds International Scientific Congress, Washington, DC, USA.
5. Morris, K., Quesenberry, E., Walker, A., Choi, K., **Gürdal, M.**, Yu, S., Jeon, M., & Katz, B. (2025, April 10-12). *Shaping interaction: The impact of voice assistant dialects on user experience* [Paper presentation]. The Southeastern Conference on Linguistics (SECOL), Boca Raton, FL, USA.
4. Walker, A., Quesenberry, E., Choi, K., **Gürdal, M.**, Jeon, M., Katz, B., Kebede, L., Morris, K., Odom, C. & Yu, S. (2024, April 4-7). *The impact of voice assistant accent on user experience* [Paper presentation]. The Southeastern Conference on Linguistics (SECOL), Athens, GA, USA.
3. **Gürdal, M. S.**, & Acar, İ. H. (2021, July 7-10). *Üniversite öğrencilerinin yabancı dil kaygısı ve yabancı dil öğrenimine yönelik inançları arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesi (En: Examining the relationship between university students' foreign language anxiety and their beliefs about foreign language learning)* [Paper presentation]. The 8th International Eurasian Educational Research Congress, Aksaray, Türkiye.
2. Karakoç, D., **Gürdal, M. S.**, Sezen, N., & Acar, İ. H. (2019, May 3). *Preschool children's coping strategies during self-regulation tasks* [Paper presentation]. The 2nd Annual Çığdem Kağıtçıbaşı Psychology Research Festival, İstanbul, Türkiye.

1. **Gürdal, M. S.**, Karakoç, D., Sezen, N., & Acar, İ. H. (2019, April 25-27). *Çocukların ve öğretmenlerin çocukların öz düzenlemesi için kullandıkları stratejiler* (En: *Strategies used by children and teachers for children's self-regulation*) [Paper presentation]. The 14th National Preschool Teaching Student Congress, Istanbul, Türkiye.

Peer-Reviewed Poster Presentations

8. Smith, C. L., **Gürdal, M. S.**, Ozcan, M. S., Shin, E., & Choi, K. (submitted). *Understanding the role of maternal emotion regulation profiles in mother and child screen use* [Poster presentation]. XXV International Congress of Infant Studies, Panama City, Panama.
7. **Gürdal, M. S.**, & Smith, C. L. (2025, May 1-3). *Longitudinal investigation of self-regulation related to changes in internalizing and externalizing behaviors across early childhood* [Poster presentation]. The Society for Research in Child Development 2025 Biennial Meeting, Minneapolis, MN, USA.
 - Invited to the Student and Early Career Council (SECC) Poster Competition
6. Smith, C. L., Ozcan, M. S., **Gürdal, M. S.**, Shin, E., & Choi, K. (2025, May 1-3). *Children's regulation starts with the parents: A latent profile analysis of parent emotion regulation strategies* [Poster presentation]. The Society for Research in Child Development 2025 Biennial Meeting, Minneapolis, MN, USA.
5. **Gürdal, M. S.**, Choi, K., Shin, E., & Smith, C. L. (2024, March 21-23). *Understanding parental factors associated with toddlers' video viewing: A chained mediation model investing the roles of parental emotion regulation, media use, stress, and media use motive* [Poster presentation]. The 2024 Biennial Meeting of the Cognitive Development Society, Pasadena, CA, USA.
4. **Gürdal, M. S.**, Choi, K., Shin, E., Kim, J., Yu, S., & Smith, C. L. (2023, March 23-25). *Associations of maternal emotion regulation and mothers' and toddlers' screen use* [Poster presentation]. The Society for Research in Child Development 2023 Biennial Meeting, Salt Lake City, UT, USA.
3. **Gürdal, M. S.**, & Acar, İ. H. (2022, June 19-23). *Associations among foreign language anxiety, self-regulation, and beliefs toward foreign language learning* [Poster presentation]. The 26th Biennial Meeting of the International Society for the Study of Behavioral Development, Rhodes, Greece.
2. Aktay, T., Kızıldaş, E., **Gürdal, M. S.**, Akkan, A., & Acar, İ. H. (2021, April 7-9). *The contributions of teacher-child relationships to children's social competence* [Poster presentation]. The Society for Research in Child Development 2021 Virtual Biennial Meeting, Virtual.
1. Akkan, A., Aktay, T., Kızıldaş, E., **Gürdal, M. S.**, & Acar, İ. H. (2020, June 29). *Exploring Turkish and American children's reactions to a disappointing situation* [Poster presentation]. The 3rd Annual Çiğdem Kağıtçıbaşı Psychology Research Festival, Istanbul, Türkiye.

Invited Presentations

5. **Gürdal, M. S.** (2025, November 14). *Role of child temperament and maternal personality on maternal media use motivations*. Hokie Highlights, Blacksburg, VA.
4. **Gürdal, M. S.** (2025, April 11). *Early predictors of behavioral and media use outcomes: A longitudinal perspective*. Hokie Highlights, Blacksburg, VA.
3. **Gürdal, M. S.** (2024, December 5). *Graduate talks*. Psi - Chi: The International Honor Society in Psychology (Özyegin University Chapter), Virtual.
2. **Gürdal, M. S.** (2024, February 16). *How do maternal factors affect toddlers' video viewing?*. HDFS Brown Bag Series, Blacksburg, VA.
1. **Gürdal, M. S.** (2023, July 26). *Pathways in psychology: A conversation with prospective college students*. Özyegin University, Virtual.

Teaching Experience

Instructor of Record	2026 – Present
Department of Human Development and Family Science, Virginia Tech <i>Course:</i> Childhood and Adolescence (Spring 2026)	
Graduate Teaching Assistant	2022 – 2025
Department of Human Development and Family Science, Virginia Tech <i>Courses:</i> Childhood and Adolescence (Fall 2025), Curriculum in Early Childhood (Spring 2024, Spring 2023), Infancy and Early Childhood (Fall 2023, Fall 2022)	
Guest Lectures	
Schooling and Choosing an Occupation in Adolescence <i>Childhood and Adolescence (HD 1004), Virginia Tech (Instructor: Dr. Koeun Choi)</i>	November 18, 2025
Self-regulation in Early Childhood <i>Childhood and Adolescence (HD 1004), Virginia Tech (Instructor: Dr. Koeun Choi)</i>	October 28, 2025
Real-World Applications of Attention Research <i>Special Topics in Developmental Psychology (PSYC 4034), Virginia Tech (Dr. Tae-Ho Lee)</i>	April 3, 2025

Outreach Experience

Service to the Profession

- **Reviewer**, *Travel Fund Program*, Virginia Tech Graduate and Professional Student Senate 2024

Service to the University

- **Senator**, Virginia Tech Graduate and Professional Student Senate 2026 – Present
- **Board Member**, Virginia Tech HDFS Graduate Student Association 2025 – Present

Service to the Community

- **Organizer**, *AI and Robots for Young Children's Learning* [Hands-on Booth] 11/2025
 - Science Festival, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA
 - Earned the Flip the Fair Rockstar Award
- **Organizer**, *Let's Take Turns in Playful Reading with AI Voices!* [Hands-on Booth] 05/2025
 - ICAT Day, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA
- **Participant**, *Conversational AI for Children's Learning* [Hands-on Booth] 07/2024
 - Back to School Resource Fair, Wonder Universe: A Children's Museum, Christiansburg, VA
- **Organizer**, *Research on Conversational AI Agents* [Hands-on Booth] 02/2024
 - STEM Family Night, Belview Elementary School, Radford, VA
- **Participant**, *Conversational AI and Social Robots for Storytelling* [Hands-on Booth] 11/2023
 - Science Festival, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA
- **Participant**, *Conversational AI for Children's Learning* [Hands-on Booth] 10/2023
 - Humanities Week, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA
- **Participant**, *Robot Musical Theater* 06/2023
 - Summer Camp, Valley Interfaith Child Care Center (VICC), Blacksburg, VA

Memberships

Cognitive Development Society (CDS)	2024 – Present
The International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development (ISSBD)	2023 – Present
International Congress of Infant Studies (ICIS)	2023 – Present
Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD)	2022 – Present
Psi Chi - The International Honor Society in Psychology	2021 – Present

Computer Skills

Statistical Analysis: SPSS, R Studio, Lisrel, HLM, *Mplus*

Experimental Design and Data Collection: PsychoPy, E-Prime, Qualtrics, QuestionPro

Document Preparations: LaTeX, Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint)