

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 , <i>with magna cum laude</i> Özyeğin University, Istanbul, 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. Özyeğin Foundation (\$3,000)	2022
High Honor Degree , Özyeğin University	2022
Dean's High Honor List , Özyeğin University	2019 – 2022
Full Scholarship for Bachelor's Degree , Özyeğin 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

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, Özyeğin University (€650) 2022
2. **Conference Attendance Grant**, College of Social Sciences, Özyeğin University (\$25) 2021
1. **Internship Grant**, Department of Psychology, Özyeğin 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/joqie.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. Ş., 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. Ş. (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 Çiğdem Kağıtçıbaşı Psychology Research Festival, Istanbul, 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 (Özyeğin 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*. Özyeğin 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	November 18, 2025
<i>Childhood and Adolescence (HD 1004), Virginia Tech (Instructor: Dr. Koeun Choi)</i>	
Self-regulation in Early Childhood	October 28, 2025
<i>Childhood and Adolescence (HD 1004), Virginia Tech (Instructor: Dr. Koeun Choi)</i>	
Real-World Applications of Attention Research	April 3, 2025
<i>Special Topics in Developmental Psychology (PSYC 4034), Virginia Tech (Dr. Tae-Ho Lee)</i>	

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)