

The relationship between parental attitudes and school maturity of preschool children

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to determine the relationship between the attitudes of parents and school maturity of girls and boys aged between 48-72 months who attend private preschool education institutions. The study group of the research consists of a total of 339 people, 113 children attending private preschool education institutions in Bursa province, 113 mothers and 113 fathers. In the study, Parental Attitude Scale (PAS), which was developed by Karabulut Demir and Şendil and whose validity and reliability analyzes were performed, was used to determine mother and father attitudes. In addition, the Metropolitan School Readiness Test developed by Hildert et al. and adapted into Turkish by Oktay was used to determine the school readiness levels of children. As a result of the study, it is seen that most of the mothers and fathers adopt a democratic attitude. In the analysis of the relationship with maturity, there was a statistically significant difference between the total maturity status in terms of overprotective mother scores ($p < 0.05$). The overprotective attitude score of the mothers of children with high total maturity level is significantly lower than the overprotective attitude scores of the mothers of children whose total maturity level is above-medium, medium and below-average. There is no statistically significant difference between the total maturity status in terms of other scores ($p > 0.05$).

Keywords: Preschool education, parenting attitude, school readiness, readiness.

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INTRODUCTION

Pre-school education is a systematic education process in which the physical, emotional, language, social and mental development of children is supported with rich environmental stimulants, their creative aspects are revealed, parents and educators are active, taking into account the developmental characteristics, individual differences and abilities of children from birth to the age of compulsory education (Ministry of National Education [MEB], 2016, p. 4).

“The pre-school education program supports the healthy growth of children attending pre-school education institutions through rich learning experiences; it was developed with the aim of maximizing their development in motor, social and emotional, language and cognitive development, gaining self-care skills and being ready for primary school” (MEB, 2013, p. 14).

Being ready for primary school is the skill levels that

children have when they start primary school and will affect their success in the following years (Snow, 2006; as cited in Adagideli, 2018). There are four main factors that affect the readiness for primary school. These factors are: Physiological, emotional, mental and environmental factors. Physiological factors: hearing, vision, hand-eye coordination, health status and gender are discussed. The attitude of family members towards each other comes to the fore in emotional factors. Mental factors are generally studied within the scope of intelligence. Environmental factors include the entire environment of the child, especially the environment in which the child grows up and the family (Oktay, 2010). Especially in the first five years of a child's life, his family and environment are his main educational institutions. The child's natural environment, socioeconomic status, family's view of education, and the number of family members affect the

readiness for primary school (Emig, 2001; cited in Oktay, 2010). It is seen that the most important factor in all these factors is family.

Problem status

The effect of mother and father attitude is very important in adapting to school. The economic status and education level of the parents are reflected in both the child's school adaptation and success. In addition, the attitude of parents towards school determines the child's attitude towards school. Parents' expectations and demands from their children above the level they can do, and their efforts to direct their children create a negative effect on the child (Demiral, 1996). Children of mothers and fathers who are in stress are harmed and their school success is affected by this situation. The child, who is forced to learn before his time, experiences negative attitudes towards school and learning (Isenberg, 1987; cited in Çikrikçi, 1999).

Child rearing understanding and styles are determined by the lifestyle of the society (Yörükoğlu, 1993). At this point, attitude differences come to the fore. Although there are various groupings, parental attitudes can be examined under four main headings. Three of these are democratic, authoritarian and permissive attitudes as defined by Baumrind (1966). Later, in addition to these three dimensions, the overprotective attitude common in our culture was added (Kuzgun, 1991; Levy, 1966; Yavuzer, 1999). Parents with a democratic attitude are planned and organized. They have high maturity expectations, are child-centered, understand their children and help them solve their problems. They encourage their children to be independent but still set rules and limits for them (Santrock, 2007; cited in Şahin Zeteroğlu, 2014). Parents with an authoritarian attitude put pressure on their children, ignore the child's abilities, ignore the child's abilities, want to be fixed-minded, expect obedience, and do not allow verbal communication with the child (Bilal, 1984). This attitude negatively affects the child's relationships with friends and makes it difficult to have an independent personality in the future (Bayraktar, 1998). Parents with a permissive attitude give their children freedom, cannot control them, and tolerate negligently. On the other hand, children do whatever they want whenever they want, their impulse control is weak, their academic success is low, and they tolerate themselves (Baumrind, 1966). Parents with an overly protective attitude, on the other hand, take care of their children more than they should, protect and watch over them. Accordingly, they bring limitations to their children in every field, and they make every decision about them themselves (Demiriz and Teach, 2007). A child who is raised with this attitude can be a spoiled, self-confident and timid individual who cannot take responsibility (Ömeroğlu, 1996). Considering all this

information, it can be said that parental attitudes have an effect on children in every sense.

Purpose of the research

This study aimed to contribute to the literature at this point by examining the relationship between parental attitudes and school maturity of children attending private preschool education institutions. The purpose of the research is the comparison of parental attitudes and school maturity levels of 48-72 month-old girls and boys attending private preschool education institutions. Therefore, it was determine whether there was a difference between the school maturity levels of children with different parental attitudes.

Research problem

In Turkey, children 69 months to fill, individual differences and situations to get started primary school and receive pre-school education were being considered. Most of the time, when children start primary school, their parents and teachers do not know their school maturity, and this is diagnosed by the counseling service after some difficulties. A child who is put in an environment where he is not ready and is forced to learn to read and write may fail due to his negative attitude towards school (Yılmaz, 2003). Another aspect that has an impact on success in this process is the attitude of parents towards their children. Parents are the people with whom children communicate the most during early childhood. For this reason, parental attitudes have an important effect on the child's behavioral acquisition (Erkan, 2010). The effects of parental attitudes on the child and the measures that can be taken will be discussed with the studies to be done. Parents, non-parents, and those who are prepared to be can be made aware of positive attitudes. It is hoped that this study can be a basis for preschool teachers and administrators in directing students to primary school after preschool education, and will guide mothers and fathers to consider their behaviors and shortcomings while preparing their children for primary school. As a result of the findings, it is thought that revealing the effects of different attitudes and situations on children's readiness and raising awareness by sharing this situation with families is important for positive development.

Sub-problems of the research

In line with this general purpose, the following questions were sought:

1. Is there a relationship between children's school maturity and age values?

2. Is there a relationship between parents' attitude scores and age values?

METHODOLOGY

Research model

The study was conducted to reveal the relationship between parents' attitudes of children attending pre-school education and school maturity of children attending pre-school education. For this purpose, the research was carried out in relational scanning model to determine the change and degree of change of many variables. Relational screening model is a research model that aims to determine the existence or degree of change of two or more variables together (Karasar, 2014).

The universe and sample of the research

The study population of the study consists of children attending private pre-school education institutions in the central district of Bursa province in the 2018-2019 academic year and their parents. The sample of the study, on the other hand, was created by criterion sampling. This method is based on situations that meet a set of predetermined criteria. The mentioned criteria can be prepared by the researcher or it may be preferred to use any existing criteria list (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2008). The criteria for this research are the age of the children, the health status of their parents and their volunteering.

For the research, 113 children, the youngest 58 months old, the oldest 71 months old, average 64 months old; 113 mothers with an average age of 35, the youngest being 26 years old and the oldest being 44; data were collected from a total of 339 individuals, the youngest being 29 years old, the oldest 58 years old, and 113 fathers with a mean age of 37.

The data of the research were obtained with the help of two different tools. Firstly, the Metropolitan School Readiness Test, developed by Hildert et al. and adapted into Turkish by Oktay was applied to 113 children who were attending pre-school education. Parental Attitude Scale (PAS) developed by Karabulut Demir and Şendil (2008) was applied to the parents of the children. Demographic information of mothers and fathers was obtained with the personal information form. The data obtained in this study were analyzed with IBM SPSS Statistics Version 22 package program.

RESULTS

In this part of the study, which examines the relationship between school readiness and parental attitudes of 48-72 month-old children attending private kindergartens in

Bursa, school readiness and parental attitudes with other variables will be explained.

It was observed that the majority of 113 preschool children (46.9%) had above-intermediate reading readiness. This was followed by middle level (30.97%) and superior level (19.47%), while the lowest average was below middle level (2.65%).

It is noteworthy that more than half of the children (75.22%) have superior number maturity. The second was the upper-intermediate level (23.01%), while the lowest average was medium with 1.77%. There are no children whose number maturity is below middle level. In addition, it was concluded that more than half of the children (54.87) had upper-intermediate total maturity. This was followed by the superior level (28.32) and intermediate level (15.93), respectively, while the lowest mean was lower than 0.88%.

It was observed that the majority of 113 mothers (73.38%) adopted a democratic attitude. While the overprotective attitude (29.17%) came in the second place, the permissive attitude was in the third place (19.96%). Mothers with authoritarian attitude (18.04%) ranked last with the least average. The situation in fathers is also listed as similar to mothers. Fathers who adopted a democratic attitude (66.03%) took the first place. This was followed by overprotective attitude (26.96%), permissive attitude (18.7%), and the lowest average was again authoritarian attitude (16.53%).

There is a statistically significant difference between the total maturity status of the children in terms of overprotective mother scores according to the results of the Kruskal Wallis H Test ($p < 0.05$). The overprotective attitude score of the mothers of children with superior maturity level is significantly lower than the children whose total maturity level is above middle, middle and lower level. According to the Kruskal Wallis H Test results, there is no statistically significant difference between the total maturity status of the children in terms of other parental attitude scores ($p > 0.05$).

According to the results of Kruskal Wallis H Test, there is no statistically significant difference between the total maturity status of children in terms of age values ($p > 0.05$).

There is a statistically significant relationship between the age values of the child and the democratic attitude scores of the fathers. This relationship is weak and reverse ($r = -0.233$). As the age values of the child increase, the democratic attitude scores of the fathers decrease. There is a statistically significant relationship between the age values of the child and the overprotective attitude scores of the fathers. This relationship is weak and reverse ($r = -0.208$). As the age values of the child increase, the overprotective attitude scores of the fathers decrease. There is a statistically significant relationship between the age values of the child and the permissive attitude scores of the fathers. This relationship is weak and reverse ($r = -0.215$). Fathers' permissive attitude scores decrease as the

child's age values increase. There is no statistically significant relationship between other parental attitude values and scores ($p > 0.05$).

DISCUSSION

Preschool period is a period when the foundations of personality are laid (Kaya, 1997). During this period, parental attitudes affect the child's cognitive, physical, language, social and emotional development (Razon, 1987). In this study, the relationship between the attitudes of mothers and fathers of children attending pre-school education and the school maturity of the children was examined. In the light of the results obtained from the research and these results, suggestions for teachers and researchers were presented.

Öndegider (2013) states that the psychological health of the child depends on how he understands and interprets his parents' behavior. McElmeel (2002) also emphasizes the importance of the family in education of values with the statement that "The most effective way of good character for children is to be a model for their children in the best and right way". It is understood from these expressions that parental attitudes are effective on children. When the parental attitude scores are examined in the study, it is seen that the majority of the mothers (73.38%) adopt a democratic attitude. In the second place, there is an overprotective attitude (29.17%) and the third is permissive (19.96%). Mothers with authoritarian attitude (18.04%) are in the last place with the least average.

The situation in fathers is also listed as in mothers. Fathers who adopted a democratic attitude (66.03%) take the first place. This is followed by overprotective attitude (26.96%), permissive attitude (18.7%), and authoritarian attitude (16.53%) with the lowest average. In the study of Deniz (2019), when parents are evaluated in terms of their general attitudes towards children in pre-school education age, it is stated that their democratic attitude is at the highest level. As a parental attitude, the healthiest and most successful attitude is the democratic parental attitude. Democratic attitude is an attitude that aims to both supervise children and be sensitive to their needs. Parents are consistent, determined, and reassuring (Çağdaş and Seçer, 2006; Özyürek, 2004). In our study, parents also display a democratic attitude, which is a positive attitude towards preschool children.

There is a statistically significant relationship between the age values of the child and the fathers' democratic attitude scores, overprotective attitude scores and permissive attitude scores. This relationship is weak and reverse ($r = -0.233$). As the age values of the child increase, the democratic, overprotective and permissive attitude scores of the fathers decrease. It is thought that fathers may adopt a less democratic and less permissive attitude towards the child, considering that with the

increase in the age of the child, the child is at the age of starting primary school and in this sense, the responsibility of the child also increases. At the same time, fathers may tend to take a less protective attitude as they think that with the age of the child, they can take care of themselves, protect themselves and are more aware of the child's responsibilities. There is no statistically significant relationship between mother's age, father's age and parental attitude scores ($p > 0.05$).

Thackray (1971) defined school maturity as the period in which some knowledge and skills, which were hardly acquired until then, can be learned in sufficient amounts and easily for all learning (cited in Oktay, 1983). It is seen that the majority of children (46.9%) who attend pre-school education have above-intermediate reading readiness. This is followed by middle level (30.97%), superior level (19.47%), while the lowest average is below middle level (2.65%). It is noteworthy that more than half of the children (75.22%) have superior number maturity. Second is the upper-intermediate level (23.01%), while the lowest average is the middle level with 1.77%. There are no children whose number maturity is below middle level. In addition, it was concluded that more than half of the children (54.87) had upper-intermediate total maturity. This was followed by superior (28.32) and middle (15.93), respectively, while the lowest average was below the middle with 0.88%. Çıkrıkçı (1999) stated in his study that children have the highest number maturity. In this study, the fact that the number maturity of children aged 5-6 was superior may be an indication that today's children begin to recognize numbers earlier.

There is a statistically significant difference between the total maturity status of the children in terms of the overprotective attitude scores of the mothers ($p < 0.05$). The overprotective attitude score of the mothers of children with superior maturity level was significantly lower than the overprotective attitude score of the mothers of children with a total maturity level of above-medium, medium and below-medium levels. At this point, it is thought that the overprotection of mothers negatively affects the school maturity of the children. There is no statistically significant difference between the total maturity level of the children in terms of other parental attitude scores.

There is a statistically significant relationship between the total maturity status of the children and their reading readiness ($p < 0.05$). Reading maturity level of 5.26% of children with medium and lower level of total maturity and 62.9% of children with a total maturity of above medium level is above medium level. As the total maturity level of children increases, the reading maturity level also increases. There is also a statistically significant relationship between the total maturity status of the children and their number maturity ($p < 0.05$). The number maturity of 21.05% of children with average maturity level and below medium level, 79.03% of

children with above average maturity and 100% of children with superior total maturity, are at a superior level. As the total maturity level of children increases, the number maturity level also increases. The fact that the same situation was observed in both reading maturity and number maturity shows that maturity progresses at the same level in every field and that these progresses have an effect on each other.

There is no statistically significant difference between the total maturity of the children in terms of mother's age, father's age and child's age values ($p > 0.05$). Esaspehlivan (2006), Özarıslan (2014), Özcan (2014), McBryde et al. (2004), Gündüz (2013) and Güzel (2018) reported in their studies that school maturity increased as the age of starting school increased. However, Gullo and Burton (1992) studied academic readiness at the end of pre-school education; in their studies, which examined in terms of gender, starting age of education and the time spent in pre-school education, they found that the school maturity of children who started school at the age of three and four was higher than those who started school at the age of five, but no significant difference was found between success scores (cited in Özcan, 2014). These different results are thought to be due to the study group and the institution they work with. Considering that each sample can lead to different results; suggestions for studies that can have more information about the field are given in another section.

Seminars can be organized for the parents of children attending pre-school education institutions in cooperation with the National Education Directorates and the school administration, and family participation activities can be conducted. The seminars to be organized can provide information to parents about what they should expect from their children during the preparation process for primary school and how they can help their children to school readiness. Efforts can be made for these seminars to reach large masses. Parents can be informed about parental attitudes. Training programs can be arranged for parents to participate together. In this way, parents' positive attitude development is supported. In preschool education institutions, children should be subjected to school readiness tests and their school readiness should be evaluated. School readiness tests should be done for children starting the first grade. For children who have not reached school maturity, the adaptation period should be re-evaluated. When necessary, the development levels of these children can be evaluated and supported by different studies. Families can obtain information about their children's school maturity levels by consulting field experts. In this way, it can be decided whether the child is ready for school or not. It is thought that the findings obtained within the scope of the research can contribute to the studies to be carried out in the future. Accordingly, it is predicted that applying the research variables with a larger sample will yield more generalizable results. Other researchers who will work on a similar subject can examine the relationship between different demographic

data and the variables in this study. Finally, studies that are planned to be conducted in a similar way can be tested by comparing different age groups and private and public pre-school education institutions and using different measurement tools.

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