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Comparative Analysis of Young Children's Pro-social Behaviors in the United States, Turkey, and Poland

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Abstract

The goal of this research project was to analyze emerging pro-social behaviors of young children in three different countries: the United States, Turkey, and Poland. Researchers from the three countries observed children by taking anecdotal notes and using previously constructed and validated checklists. An analysis of the data collected described which pro-social behaviors were the most or least present and a cross-cultural analysis compared the results and determined there were similarities regarding many specific behaviors, but each of the countries showed differences in the most common of the pro-social behaviors exhibited.

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Many behaviors can be classified as pro-social. Psychologists use the word *prosocial* to refer to any action that a person takes in order to benefit someone else. It is synonymous with the word *kind*, and its definitions include *sharing, helping, protecting, giving aid and comfort, befriending, showing affection, and giving encouragement* (Shulman & Mekler, 1985). To develop pro-social behaviors, children need to learn social referencing (awareness of facial expressions and gestures of other people) (Casper & Theilheimer, 2010). Other cultural factors are important in observing and understanding children's sociodramatic play. Cultural practices may gently influence how students communicate in school. Different cultural norms affect students' perceptions regarding punctuality, group work, authority, competition, and the importance of education. Nonverbal messages are expressed through facial expressions, eye contact, voice tone, touch,

gesture, etc. (Moore & Hansen, 2112). Emotions are embedded in the very concept of culture because they are part of behavior patterns such as art, beliefs, institutions, and human work and thought. Some emotions involve fear, hate, and anger, while others are based on love and compassion. Some of the emotions are related to the historical events that parents, movies, or books described to children and are most visible when cultural intersections are result of war, invasions, or forced dominations (Spring, 2004). Piaget (1962) stresses that, with the socialization of a child, play acquires rules or gradually adapts symbolic imagination into reality in the form of constructions which are still spontaneous but which imitate reality. Each individual symbol yields either to the collective rules, or to the objective or representational symbol, or to both.

Most children are naturally sociable, and isolation is even more irksome to them

than to adults (Dewey, 1997). Some empirical findings suggest that children are biologically predisposed to moral standards that are established through identification with others and some are unconscious. For example, for Wren (1991), morality involves self-regulation, and so moral motives relate to connotative dispositions such as kindness, courage, fidelity and piety. Moral motives function as mediators between thought and action.

Between the ages of 3 and 6, children begin to show more frequent prosocial behaviors (Eisenberg, Fabes, &, 2006). The increase is a result of cognitive development that helps them understand others' feelings as they gain experience with the social behaviors and experience expectations of adults (Coople & Bedekamp, 2009) Children's acquisition of prosocial behaviors is stressed in developmentally appropriate practices in early childhood programs (Coople & Bredekamp, 2009).

Mussen and Eisenberg-Berg note that "when children act prosocially, they voluntarily assist others' well-being--behavior that has been called 'caring, sharing, and helping' " (1977). According to Rogers and Sawyers (1990), children's fantasy play is often called *sociodramatic play*--make believe play that involves social interactions. However, to be able to engage in this type of play, children must have the necessary knowledge of social norms. Prosocial behavior is demonstrated in young children's play rules and behaviors, in their ability to communicate with social partners and to encourage participants to focus on others not just themselves, in their decontextualization to represent and transform objects, and in their action integration to portray complex events and actions.

Sterling-Honing (2007) suggests the relationship between play and learning is direct: play enhances dexterity and grace;

peer play promotes social skills, sharpens cognitive and language skills, help children to acquire number and time concepts, promotes spatial understanding, and helps establish cause and effect reasoning; sociodramatic play clarifies for children the world of pretend versus real, enriches their sensory and aesthetic appreciation, extends their attention spans, persistence and sense of mastery, helps them release emotions, and relieves their separation anxiety. According to Bodrova and Leong (2008), “Self-regulation is a deep, internal mechanism that enables children as well as adults to engage in mindful, intentional, and thoughtful behavior.”

American literature and curricular standards on prosocial behavior

Shulman and Mekler’s (1985) definition of a moral child is one who strives to be kind and just. They conclude that “moral behavior is indeed so crucial to human survival that processes to bring it about have evolved in

three major behavior systems: the action system, the reaction system, and the control system” (Shulman & Mekler, 1985, p.8). For Wren, (1991), moral motives relate to connotative dispositions such as kindness, courage, fidelity, and piety. Moral motives function as mediators between thought and action.

The code of ethics in the early childhood profession, as developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) calls for “helping children and adults achieve their full potential in the context of relationships that are based on trust, respect, and positive regard” (Baptiste & Reyes, p. 15).

According to developmentally appropriate practice, 3-year-old children are expected to: play well with others and to respond positively, to act cooperatively, to continue to engage in associative play, and to begin cooperative play. The 4 years old may begin spontaneously to offer things to

others, to want to please friends, and to compliment others; they know increasingly what self-regulation behaviors are expected but show difficulty following through on tasks, become easily sidetracked, and dress independently (Bredecamp & Coople, 1997). The Michigan early learning expectation for 3 and 4 year olds include *“children participate in activities that encourage self-motivation, emphasize cooperation, and minimize competition.* Children typically learn to cooperate with others through games and other activities and actions that show a growing knowledge of the rights of others” (MichiganECSQ, p56)

Turkish literature on pro-social behavior

The Turkish Ministry of National Education formal preschool education program’s (2006) description of socio-emotional development indicates children 48 to 60 months old show behaviors such as “sharing their toys” and being “willing to help

younger children,” Moreover, the program tells educators to expect children to achieve some gains in their pro-social behavior. The document includes the objectives of “becoming aware of others’ feelings,” of “expressing and sharing others’ feelings,” and of “taking care and protecting the living things” under the larger objective heading of “taking responsibility in improving and developing the life” as examples of desirable gains in the socio-emotional development area.

An intercultural study by Yağmurlu, Sanson, and Koymen (2005), in the national literature, examined the relationship between parental behavior in the preschool period and child temperament and positive social behavior of children. The researchers worked with Australian and Turkish children and their parents and teachers. Parental behavior was analyzed in line with the dimensions of explanatory reasoning, punishment, obedience expectance, and

warmth. Children's positive social behaviors were analyzed in terms of helping, sharing, comforting, and cooperating dimensions. The findings display that Australian and Turkish children show similar levels of positive social behavior. Yağmurlu, Sanson, and Koymen (2005) noted that mothers' warmth and interest were associated with the positive social behavior of the Australian children. In contrast, Turkish mothers' expectance of obedience was found to have a positive effect on the positive social behavior of the children and punishment to have a negative effect. Additionally, Altay (2007) studied the relationship between positive social behavior of girls and boys in state and private preschools and parental styles. Mothers of daughter have consistently judged their daughters' positive social behavior scores higher than mother of sons judged their sons' positive social behavior scores. In addition, children with democratic parents were judged by their

mothers to have higher positive social behavior scores than children with authorizing parents were rated by their mothers. Scores by teachers also rated girls as possessing more positive social skills than boys.

Polish literature on pro-social behavior

Polish literature explains pro-social behavior as the ability to understand a situation, to comfort others, to help others, and to take care of those who are younger and weaker. Pro-social behaviors are interactions with peers that require resignation from an egocentric approach, moving into behavior that will be accepted by other children, meaning that children must think about the interest of other members of the group (Makiello-Jarza, 1992). Kielar-Turska (2000) also emphasizes that prosocial behaviors such as showing empathy, helping others, sharing, and cooperating are beneficial for others.

Rościszewska-Woźniak (2010)

explains that, until 2000, a single compulsory program for preschool education had been developed and required by MEN (Ministry of National Education). After 2000, the program was modified for flexibility, and directors could write their own programs (authors' program) and seek approval from MEN. Analysis of the program in regard to pro-social behaviors demonstrated focus on cooperation and work for others. Even in Poland, the development of pro-social skills was always an aim of the Polish education system, and new programs show ever-increasing interest in the development of prosocial skills in children. An early childhood teacher's objective is to teach children to work in groups by guiding them towards cooperating, appreciating skills in others, and including others in planning activities. Children should be raised in the direction of goodness, meaning that they must know how to love, respect others and never

harming anyone. Children should be able to stimulate their own development and realize their own interests, health and happiness in accordance with the needs of others. Preschools must create environments that help them live and work in the society.

Methodology

Mixed method; a qualitative approach was employed, based on naturalistic inquiry of real-world situations as they unfolded naturally (Patton, 1990) based on non-participant observation of children and a quantitative analysis of data based on counting how many times the behavior occurred during 30 hours of observation.

Population

Three- and four-year-old children attending preschools: thirty-six from a laboratory in the United States; forty-nine from a preschool in Turkey; and twenty-five children in public preschool in Poland.

Data collection method

The researchers observed children for thirty hours during a four-month period (January-May) using checklist and anecdotal observation. The constructed checklist was based on Noddings' (1992), Charney's (2002) and Vogt's (2002) caring characteristics and was validated in previous research (Nowak-Fabrykowski, 2011). As recommended by Krash and Russell-Carter (2009), one data collection method that is both efficient and effective for monitoring expectations is a simple tally. This study used a tally for recording children's prosocial behaviors and also used some field notes/anecdotal observation collected while the children were arriving, playing, resting, dressing up for going out, and leaving preschool. The researchers counted tallies and reflected on the anecdotal notes taken during observations.

Results

The collected data were sorted and organized according to the categories of

behaviors from the checklists and then summarized and organized into a table demonstrating occurrences of behaviors as submitted by the co-researchers. The results focused especially on the similarities and differences in the demonstrated caring behaviors.

Analysis of data

In analysis of the data, we looked at the highest and lowest occurrence of caring behaviors of the children and we gave examples of narratives illustrating children's pro-social behaviors.

Mt.Pleasant, USA

The Michigan Child Development and Learning Center was inspired by the Reggio Emilia philosophy. All teachers at the center had been to Reggio preschools in Italy and were familiar with work on caring (Noddings,1991, Nowak-Fabrykowski, 2011).The centers included a variety of settings and care situations, such as a veterinary clinic, a green house, a for babies,

a house, and a hair care salon). The centers were evolving, but the message of care was always present.

Table 1. *Pro-social behavior, Caring behaviors of children* (N=36)

Observed behavior	How many times	%
Sharing toys or resources	67	19
Helping friends' complete tasks, meeting goals	35	10
Saying kind words	14	4
Helping teachers	72	20
Taking care of school pet		N/A
Watering flowers	4	1
Including all children in play	16	4
Helping ESL children	15	4
Helping disabled children	7	2
Hugging or showing appropriate physical affection	4	1
Solving problems in a peaceful way	10	2
Comforting a hurt or crying child	2	05
Encouraging	14	4
Showing affection towards teacher (hugging, kissing, and saying I love you or I miss you)	4	1
Caring for toys and other materials	81	23

American sample

One researcher observed 30 hours in one classroom. It was nonparticipant observation

from an observation booth. Usually there were 36 children in the class, but they were able to move between classes, so the number

varied daily from 10 to 36. The majority of time the same children were in the classroom, except during dismissal, when children from the class being dismissed mingled with children from the class which was about to commence. The group was diverse and included four children from families of different cultural background. Three of those families were from Europe and one was from Asia. Three of those four families spoke their native languages at home, and one did not. The population included 18 boys and 18 girls.

In the American sample, the highest numbers of pro-social behaviors were in the categories of caring for toys and other materials, helping the teachers, and sharing toys or resources. The lowest were comforting a hurt child and showing affection towards teachers or classmates.

Examples of children's pro-social behavior in Michigan

Children vigorously put things away and helped teachers clean when water spilled from the water table or clay got on the floor. They cleaned after painting and making collages. They shared crayons, glue, paint, clay, and toys playing with dolls or making projects.

They helped each other with projects that they worked on. "What do we need to finish our bridge?" "Maybe ropes, roads, cars?"

They included other children, asking, "Do you want to be a bus driver with me?" or, "Do you want to help me to make bridge?"

Boys "washing" clothes for their friends in pretend Laundromats asked if anyone needed their clothes or ties washed. They also helped with home chores, asking, "Do you want me to feed your baby?"

At the water table, girls allowed a boy to wash his "pet snake" by making space for him.

Children invited others asking:

“Do you want to be Yoda? We are playing ‘warrior,’ but we are not fighting.”

“If you help me to clean [the kitchen], it will be faster.”

“Would you like to help me?”

“Show them (other children) how to do it.”

“Are you done with the blocks?” “Yes. I am putting them away.”

Children reminded others to clean up before going out and encouraged them to put stuff away: “You cannot come if you forget to clean up.”

In the “flower shop” they asked:

“Do you need help with flowers?”

“To whom we can give the flowers?”

They were very respectful to children sleeping (taking naps) by going around them and never disturbing them. They “read” books very quietly and never talked loudly.

They respected others’ projects, toys, and materials and never took blocks from a

tower being built or a bridge another student had constructed.

When playing with babies, they asked for help in taking them for a walk or cooking for them.

In the “hairdressing salon,” they asked children if they needed haircuts. One boy asked, “What color do you think will be good on you?” and tried to convince the girl that a cinnamon color would be good for her hair. When she disagreed and wanted to make it pink, he agreed to do that.

While playing with cars, boys helped each other with pumping gas: “If you help me with the gas, we can fill up the tanks quicker.”

While playing with treasure boxes, children helped each other find treasures and offered, “You can take marbles.” They were concerned about others, asking, “Do you want a snack?” “What is it today?” “Pineapple and cheese.” Ankara, Turkey

Two researchers observed two different classes for a total of 30 hours. One class had 23 children. Of them, 14 children, 9 girls and 5 boys, demonstrated prosocial

behavior. The second class had 26 children. There, 18 children, 13 girls and 5 boys, demonstrated prosocial behavior.

Turkish sample

Table 2. *Pro-social behavior -Caring behaviors of children (N=49)*

Observed behavior	How many times	%
Sharing toys or resources	12	10.7
Helping friends' complete tasks, meeting goals	21	18.7
Saying kind words	21	18.7
Helping teachers	11	9.8
Taking care of school pet	N/A	
Watering flowers	N/A	
Including all children in play	8	7.1
Helping ESL children	N/A	
Helping disabled children	2	1.8
Hugging or showing appropriate physical affection	8	7.1
Solving problems in a peaceful way	6	5.4
Comforting a hurt or crying child	7	6.3
Encouraging	5	4.6
Showing affection towards teacher (hugging, kissing, and saying I love you or I miss you)	8	7.1
Caring for toys and other materials	3	2.7

The results demonstrated that the most frequently appearing prosocial behaviors in Turkish children were helping friends' complete tasks, saying kind words, and helping teachers. Those that occurred least frequently were helping children with disabilities and caring for toys and other materials. The class did not have a pet, flowers, or children speaking different languages, so their observers could not comment on these types of caring behaviors.

Examples of children's pro-social behavior in Ankara

Children shared pencils and scissors. One child asked, "I have a water-green crayon, who wants it?" and gave it to the child who asked for it. Another child spontaneously said during coloring, "If you do not have the grey color, you can borrow mine."

They included children in play, saying, "Come in front of me" as a fellow student stayed behind.

They helped each other. For example, one child realized that another was having a difficult time cutting the ladybird and handed his scissors saying, "You can use my scissors."

While one child was picking up crayons, another said, "I will clean the table" or "Shall I do a ribbon for you?" to the child who was having trouble coloring and helped her to complete the task. They helped in putting things together at the block corner.

"Can I come in?" by saying, "Sure, welcome."

They help teachers fill a glass with water and held the pitcher, distributed the pencils and papers, and combined all the dough on the table to organize the classroom materials. One child placed the dough roller in the box and put it on the shelf, moving the table by holding one side of the table.

They occasionally hugged and kissed each other. When a child came to the classroom during breakfast, another one hugged him. On another occasion, one child hugged

another child saying, “My dear friend.” When one girl was looking at books, another pinched her cheeks, kissed her, and showed care during the play.

Polish sample

Table 3. *Pro-social behavior -Caring behaviors of children (N= 25)*

Observed behavior	How many times	%
Sharing toys or resources	67	15.4
Helping friends’ complete tasks, meeting goals	39	9
Saying kind words	23	5.2
Helping teachers	34	7.7
Taking care of school pet	N/A	
Watering flowers	10	2.3
Including all children in play	25	5.6
Helping ESL children	N/A	
Helping disabled children	N/A	
Hugging or showing appropriate physical affection	64	14.7
Solving problems in a peaceful way	12	2.6
Comforting a hurt or crying child	14	3.2
Encouraging	56	12.8
Showing affection towards teacher (hugging, kissing, and saying I love you or I miss you)	43	9.5
Caring for toys and other materials	52	12

They also hugged the teachers, waved, and looked at the teacher lovingly. During a reading and question and answer session, one child approached a teacher who was unhappy, even sad and whiny, and hugged and kissed her. Warsaw, Poland

The preschool was inspired by the Dalton plan philosophy with the goal of developing responsibility in children, as well as independence and cooperation (Röhner & Wenke, 2011). There were 25 children, 18 boys and 7 girls.

In the Polish sample, the pro-social behaviors most often observed were sharing toys and resources, showing affection towards the teacher, and encouraging. The prosocial behaviors observed least were watering flowers, solving problems in a peaceful way, and comforting a hurt or crying child.

Examples of children's pro-social behavior in Warsaw, Poland.

Children often complimented the teacher and commented how beautiful her dress was. They expressed their feelings and told the teacher that they loved her, that she looked nice, that they liked her earrings or necklace or "I like when you tell us stories."

They often cuddled with the teacher and stroked her hair. Children helped teachers prepare materials or decorations. They also drew pictures for the teacher.

Regarding helping each other, they helped each other in dressing up, sharing toys, and helping in building structures. They also showed affection to each other, including cuddling, giving gifts for birthdays, and complimenting each other: "You have a beautiful blouse, skirt" etc.

They shared candies that they brought from home and often used kind words, addressing each other such as, "Please," "Thank you," "Sorry." They also occasionally hugged and

kissed the teachers and each other in greeting and saying goodbye.

and least present in each country and a cross-cultural analysis compared the results and discussed the differences and similarities in pro-social behavior of children in these countries.

Comparative analysis of pro-social behavior

An analysis of the data described which pro-social behaviors were the most

Table 4

Comparative analysis of pro-social behaviors in young children the USA, Turkey and Poland

Occurrences	American	Turkish	Polish
High	Caring for toys and resources	Helping friends	Sharing toys and resources
	Helping the teachers	Saying kind words	Hugging and showing appropriate affection towards children
	Sharing toys and other materials	Helping teachers	Encouraging others
Low	Comforting hurt and crying child	Helping children with disabilities	Water flowers
	Showing affection towards teachers	Caring for toys and materials	Solving problems in a peaceful way
	Hugging and showing affection towards children	Encouraging others	Comforting hurt and crying child

The results demonstrated some similarities and differences in pro-social behaviors in preschool children in the different countries. Similarities could be noticed in sharing toys and other materials as highly present behaviors in American

and Polish preschoolers. Helping teachers was often presented in American and Turkish preschools. Turkish and Polish children expressed more affection towards each other and the teachers than American children. Polish children hugged and kissed

teachers and other children. Polish children also helped each other to dress up. In the American sample, children asked the teacher to help with gloves, scarfs; ski pants, etc., but never asked their friends for help or helped them. Turkish children were very helpful towards their friends and teachers.

Discussion

Even though the tools for observation, such as the checklists describing pro-social behaviors were the same, there were other factors that could have influenced the differing results of this research project. For example the differences in the number of observers; in Turkey and Poland there were two observers taking anecdotal notes and in the United States just one. The number of observed children also varied: in the United States and Poland observation took place in one

preschool, but in Turkey two classrooms were the stage of observation. Therefore, our analysis and subsequent comparison of results is based on observation and the highest and lowest numbers of pro-social behaviors that occurred, rather than a comparison of numbers of occurrences of behaviors in three countries. The results demonstrated that, in each country, children exhibited pro-social behaviors a little differently. In the American preschool, children cared for toys, helped teachers, and shared toys and materials. In the Turkish preschool, the emphasis was on helping and saying kind words, and in Poland hugging, showing affection and encouraging were manifested more often than in the other countries.

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The Influences Of Male Early Childhood Education Teachers On Parental Involvement

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to examine male early childhood education teachers' perceptions on parental involvement in early childhood education. This study provides baseline for research by considering male teachers' responses in the southeastern part of the country using a sample of male ECE teachers. Data were gathered by questionnaires.

The first part of data collection survey includes questions regarding demographic information. The second part of the survey entitled "The Attitudes, Beliefs, and Implications of Teachers toward Parent Involvement" includes questions that measure male teachers' beliefs and implications about parental involvement. Male ECE teachers' perceptions about parental involvement differ in respect to their years of experience. Teachers with less experience consider gender, culture, and religion as a barrier. Results showed that male ECE teachers had different perspectives about the types of contact by mothers relative to their years of experience and majority of male ECE teachers agree that male teachers have a positive effect on father involvement.

Introduction

The increasing standards of education, changing roles of males and females in careers, and the number of male early childhood educators present in schools have changed the role given to parents in the school. By taking a closer look at the influences of male early childhood educators' on parental involvement; the increasing number of male ECE teachers in Turkey may develop a better understanding of parents' needs and learn more effective ways of getting them involved in education. According to Holloway, Yamamoto, Suzuki, and Mindnich (2008), parental involvement generally has a significant effect on parents, teachers, schools, and especially on children's academic success. Building high levels of parental involvement in schools is a necessary component for providing the best education for young children (Hornby, 2000).

Teachers obtain information about each child and their families to meet the needs of the students in appropriate ways. Parent interviews, panel discussions, or participation in home visits are the most effective ways to get information from parents directly (Baum & McMurray-2 Schwarz, 2004). Some experimental studies show strong relationships between high student achievement and parental involvement (Wong & Hughes, 2006). Parental involvement also has significant effects on children's social-psychological development (Gürsimsek, 2003). Parental involvement in Early Childhood Education (ECE) is a basic factor in terms of child development. Parents who do not get involved in their child's education put the future of their children at risk (Seligman, 2000). Gulec and Comert (2004) explained parental involvement as a kind of systematic approach to support and educate families to get them involved. Also, it is a kind of system that involves sharing information and setting up relationships. Parents believe they are supported when teachers show interest in them, share information related to the children, and get advice about child care (Gulec & Comert, 2004). For example, in some countries such as Turkey, large numbers of families do not have the personal and environmental resources to get involved in Turkey's schools (Seligman, 2000).

Souto-Manning and Swick (2006) suggested that "recognizing and valuing parent involvement from diverse perspectives has the potential to ultimately improve the overall

education being offered to all children" (p. 190). Each culture has different points of view and expectations from parents to get them involved. In Brazil, teachers are considered members of the family who have the right to make decisions related to the young children's education (Souto-Manning & Swick, 2006). Diverse student populations may present the teachers with challenges for engaging parents (Souto-Manning & Swick, 2006). Thus, countries' different cultural structures, points of view, beliefs, backgrounds, and expectations could affect parental involvement, but does not change the importance of parental involvement for children. It is very difficult to arrange parental involvement activities, especially when parents come from a different culture, race and language (Chen, Kyle, & McIntyre, 2008). In fact, Joshi, Eberly, and Konzal, (2005) indicate that it is very difficult to build strong and respectful relationships between families and teachers who share similar cultural backgrounds and languages. Such communication and relations between parents and teachers who come from different backgrounds is even more difficult (Joshi et al., 2005). Similarly, when parents do not share a common culture with teachers, it is more difficult to establish shared understanding and to build trust (Wong & Hughes, 2006).

Gender Differences in the ECE Field

Although, teaching children is a responsibility of females and males, teaching young children is considered the women's responsibility in New Zealand (Farquhar, 1998). Farquhar, (1998) stated that in New Zealand it is accepted that preschool and kindergarten teachers be called "girls" and that men are not considered to have any responsibility within the early childhood setting.

In the field of ECE, there is not a large amount of research that takes into account the gender of early childhood teachers and usually teachers are female (Sandberg & Pramling-Samuelsson, 2005). Evans and Brown (1995) indicated that there is a common understanding in the society that the men could not care and train young children better than women. Some social or cultural misunderstandings affect men, who work in the field of ECE negatively, because they are assessed, treated and evaluated differently than women workers (Sergent, 2002). This differential comparison

between men and women may explain why the ratio of male teachers is typically low in the field of ECE.

However, there are some studies that demonstrate that there is a significant difference between male and female teachers in terms of ECE implications. For instance, according to Sandberg and Pramling-Samuelsson (2005), who investigated male and female teachers' perspectives on play in Sweden, women generally focus on orderliness in play, while men focus on capability and intention in play. Men are more active in rowdy play and would rather engage in physical play. On the other hand, Swedish female teachers did not prefer to join children's play, but they liked quiet and calm play. This study revealed that Swedish female and male early childhood teachers may have different approaches in the early childhood classrooms.

The number of male ECE teachers, who work in the kindergarten and preschool classes in Turkey, is slightly different from other countries (Sak, 2012). In other countries, the number of male ECE teachers has not increased for many years, and in some cases has even decreased. For instance, in the United States the rate of male ECE teachers has remained steady at 2 % for many years (Eisenhauer, 2010). Conversely, the number of male ECE teachers is still increasing in Turkey (Sak, 2012). In 2004, the number of male ECE teachers in Turkey was 926 comprising 4.8 % of all kindergarten and preschool teachers. In 2009, the number of male ECE teachers in Turkey was 2069 which represented 5.1 % of all teachers. However, in 2011 there was a significant increase in the number of male ECE teachers. The number of male ECE teachers in 2011 is 3414 which is a 7.2 % of total teachers (Sak, 2012). Some studies that were conducted with ECE undergraduate students in various Turkish universities revealed that the number of male ECE teachers will increase in the future (Sahbaz & Kalay, 2010). For instance, a study that was conducted in the University of Mehmet Akif Ersoy ECE department shows that the percentage of male ECE teacher candidates is high because 12.1 % of participants were male in 2010 (Sahbaz & Kalay, 2010). Those undergraduate students will graduate within two or three years and they will join the field thus, demonstrating that the number of male ECE teachers will continue

to increase in the future. The ECE field needs more research regarding male ECE teachers, especially in the area of parental involvement. In Turkey, there is an expectation that teachers take a significant responsibility to get parents involved in education (Meb. 2006). The latest edition of the Turkish early childhood education program includes some important activities for families to get them involved in education. Through these activities parents can follow and support their child's development. In addition, this program aligns with Epstein's framework of the six types of involvement (Epstein, 2010).

The purpose of this study is to examine male ECE teachers' perceptions on parental involvement in their classroom. This exploratory study provides a general overview of ECE male teachers' perceptions from the southeastern part of the Turkey. According to Okten (2009), in the southeastern part of Turkey, the gender roles are more patriarchal and the position of men and women in power situations is relatively different from other regions of the Turkey. Okten (2009) argued that "In this region, there is a patriarchal system in which women behave in accordance with the tribal and social structure and its effects can be seen in many spheres of social life from traditions or customs to individual behaviors" (p.303). Specifically, this current study investigates male teachers' perception of parental involvement and explores what they perceive to be the main barriers that prevent parents from becoming involved when ECE teachers are male.

The primary purpose of this study is to examine the low rate of parental involvement where the ECE teachers are male in the southeastern part of the country. The study tried to provide an insight as to why parent involvement is consistently low and to increase parental involvement in the southeastern part of the country.

Research Questions

In this study, the researcher explored the following research questions with regard to male ECE teachers who work with young children in Turkey. The study seeks to answer these four questions using a quantitative research method. According to male ECE teachers:

1. What are some possible barriers that inhibit mother involvement with male ECE teachers?

2. What kinds of communication, relationships or contact do mothers prefer with male ECE teachers?
3. How do male ECE teachers influence the level of father involvement in education?
4. What is the perception of male ECE teachers about their parental involvement proficiency?

Methodology

Quantitative research design was used in this study and the data was gathered through a survey designed by the researcher. The study could promote better understanding about perceptions of male ECE teachers on parental involvement. The subjects for this study consisted of preschool and kindergarten teachers (n=54) who work in public schools of the Ministry of National Education in the southeastern part of Turkey. The list of public schools in different locations of the southeastern part of Turkey, which schools have male teachers in preschool or kindergarten, was obtained from the Ministry of National Education.

There are some reasons explaining why public schools were chosen for the study. First of all, in southeastern Turkey, the majority of male ECE teachers work in public schools because they do not have the opportunity to work in private schools. Private schools prefer to hire female ECE teachers because they need to take into account general expectations and understanding of families and society. According to Farquhar's (1998) study that took place in New Zealand, which has a similar culture to Turkey in terms of male and female gender boundaries, taking care of young children is accepted as a woman's responsibility and the society does not consider men as appropriate teachers for young children.

The scale entitled "The Attitudes, Beliefs, and Implications of Male ECE teachers on Parental Involvement" was designed by the researcher and was used in this study in order to collect data. The first part of this survey specifically solicited demographic information and includes questions regarding school type, age, educational level, and teaching experience of teachers were collected in the first part of the survey, which include four questions. The second part of the survey

entitled "The Attitudes, Beliefs, and Implications of Male ECE Teachers on Parent Involvement" includes 12 Likert-type questions that measure male teachers' beliefs and implications about parental involvement, what kinds of situations effect parental involvement with male ECE teachers, and the influences of male ECE teachers on the level of father involvement. Important to note, the instrument was translated and administered in Turkish language to ensure that the participants were able to read, comprehend, and respond to the items.

Teachers were asked their perceptions about barriers, contact types, father involvement, and their proficiency. Teachers' responses were on a Likert scale and ranged from 1='strongly agree' to 5='strongly disagree' Perceptions of teachers about barriers consisted of three items. For example "*The gender of an early childhood education (ECE) teacher can inhibit teacher-parent relationships.*" Four items asked parents about contact type with male ECE teachers. One of these was "*Mothers prefer to contact male teacher via telephone, newsletter, or e mail rather than face to face contact.*" Also, to assess perception of teachers about father involvement, teachers were asked how male ECE teachers affect father involvement.

Data Analyses

The aim of this study is to examine influences and perceptions of male ECE teachers, who work in public schools, on parental involvement. For the purpose of the study, the attitudes, beliefs and implications of male preschool teachers toward parent involvement working in public schools were compared in respect to the years of teaching in the field. Comparing male ECE teachers according to their years of experience would help to investigate differences within groups and determine how less or more experience affect teacher perceptions. In order to analyze the data, the SPSS 17.0 program was used. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data that related to demographic information. Descriptive statistics describe the basic features of the data in the study. These statistics provide simple summaries about the sample and the measures. It is appropriate to use a One-way ANOVA test to analyze the data in order to investigate significant differences within groups in respect to years of experience.

Findings

The survey was sent to 84 male ECE teachers and only a total of 54 teachers from public preschools (n=36), and kindergarten (n=18) filled out the survey and returned them. This resulted in a 64.8% response rate. This is an adequate response rate because the study was conducted in only part of the country;

however a 70% acceptance rate would have been preferred. ECE teachers in this research study work in the Southeastern part of Turkey. Cross tabulation table (Table 1) present results of descriptive statistics about demographics (age, experience, and education) information in respect to participants' school type.

Table 1

		School		Total
		Kindergarten 3-6 years old	Preschool 5-6 years old	
Age	22-25	0	7	7
	26-30	15	24	39
	31-40	4	4	8
Education	Technical/Vocational License	3	7	10
	Bachelors Degree	14	15	29
	Masters Degree	1	13	15
Experience	0-2 years	4	13	17
	3-5 years	10	11	21
	6 + years	5	11	16
Total		19	35	54

Table 1 represents age, education, and experience-schools cross tabulation. The majority (39) of teachers' age range was between 26- 30. Only 8 teachers' ages were between 31 and 40. The number of public preschool teachers was 35 and kindergarten teachers 15. More than half of teachers (29) had a bachelor's degree and 15 had a master's degree. The 13 ECE teachers who have masters' degree worked in preschool and two of them work in kindergarten.

Cross tabulation table shows that nearly one third of all teachers (17) had 6 years or more experience; slightly more than one third of teachers (21) had 3-5 years of experience; and nearly one third of teachers (16) had 0-2 years of experience.

Analyses

The aim of this study is to understand the perceptions and influences of male ECE teachers' on parental involvement. For the purpose of the study, the attitudes, beliefs, and implications of male ECE teachers about parental involvement were assessed by considering their years of teaching experience. The study tried to answer the question of perceptions of male ECE teachers on parental involvement.

In order to answer research questions, compute variables method was used and survey items were matched with each research question. Four variables were created which are barriers, contact, father involvement, and perceptions by using computing variables. To

compute barrier variable items numbered 5, 9, 11 responses were averaged; to compute contact variable items numbered 10, 12, 13 were averaged; to compute father involvement variable items numbered 15, 16 were averaged, and to compute perceptions variable item numbered 6 were averaged. This resulted in four mean scores.

To determine the reliability of each of the variables, Cronbach alpha was computed. The alpha coefficients for each of the variable are as follows: contact=.718, father involvement=.750, barrier=.710, and for perceptions=.754, suggesting that the items have adequate reliability.

One-way ANOVA was used to analyze these variables in respect to teachers' years of experience. If the difference was found within the groups, Tukey's post hoc test was used to find within group difference. Bonferroni's justification was applied to minimize possibility of Type I error because 4 one-way ANOVA were run. (Olejnik, & Supattathum, 1997). This justification ($p = .05$ divided by $n = 4$) resulted in a p value $< .001$. Findings were considered statistically significant. For each of the one way ANOVAs, findings will be discussed in the subsequent paragraphs.

One-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between male ECE teachers' years of experience and

types of barriers (dependent variable) that inhibit mother involvement with male ECE teachers. The factor was years of experience (independent variable) which includes three levels, respectively 0-2 years of teaching experience, 3-5 years of teaching experience and 6-years and above of experience. Each of these variables was coded. (0-2=1, 3-5=2, 6+=3) The Likert scale survey responses ranged from 1=strongly agree to 5=strongly disagree. Table 2 represents the mean score for teachers with 0-2 years experience ($M=1.7$, $SD= 0.35$), for teachers with 3 to 5 years experience ($M=1.8$ $SD= 0.34$), and for teachers with 6 years or more experience ($M=2.5$, $SD= 0.47$). Teachers with less experience (0-2 and 3-5) were more likely to agree that culture, religion, and gender are barriers for mother involvement. However, teachers with more experience (6+) were more likely neutral regarding this factor. significant differences were found among the teachers with different years of experience. ($F(2, 51) = 21.7$, $p < .001$). The assumption of variances for age groups was not significantly different. ($F(2, 51) = .512$, $p = .283$). Thus, the assumption of homogeneity of variance was met. The results of the one-way analysis of variance suggest that teachers who had different years of experience likely had different perceptions about barriers.

Table 2

(I) Experience	(J)experience	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
0-2 years	3-5 years	-.06069	.11674	.862
	6+ years	-.73529	.12463	.000
3-5 years	0-2 years	-.06069	.11674	.862
	6 + years	-.67460	.11874	.000
6 + years	0-2 years	.73529	.12463	.000
	3-5 years	.67460	.11874	.000

Tukey's HSD post hoc test was conducted to evaluate differences within groups. There was a significant difference in the means between the groups that have 0-2 and 6 + years of experience. ($p < .001$). A difference between teachers who have 3-5 and 6 + years experience was significant. ($p < .001$). Teachers who have 0-2 and 3-5 years

experience agree that gender, culture and religion are a significant barrier. On the other hand, teachers who have 6+ years experience are more likely to neither agree nor disagree. The result for the differences between 0 to 2 and 3 to 5 was not significant. ($p > .001$).

One-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between

male ECE teachers' years of experience and types of contact such as face to face, phone call, e mail, and news letter (dependent variable). The factor was years of experience (independent variable) which includes three levels, respectively 0-2 years of teaching experience, 3-5 years of teaching experience and 6-and above years of experience. Each of these variables was coded. (0-2=1, 3-5=2, 6+=3) The Likert scale survey responses ranged from 1=strongly agree to 5=strongly disagree. Table 5 represents that mean score for teacher with 0-2 years experience (M=1.9, SD= .50), for teachers with 3-5 years experiences (M=2.4, SD=.38), and for teachers with 6 or more years experience (M=4.09, SD=.51). Teachers with 0-2 years experience

were more likely agree, teachers with 3-5 years experience were more likely neutral, and teachers with 6 or more years experience were more likely disagree that mothers prefer written communication rather than oral or face to face. significant differences were found among the teachers with different years of experience. ($F(2,51) = 20.5, p < .001$). The assumption of variances for age groups was not significantly different. $F(2, 51) = 1.294, p = .283$. Thus, the assumption of homogeneity of variance was met. The results of one-way analysis of variance suggest that teacher who had different years of experience likely had different perceptions about mothers contact type.

Tablo 3

(I) Experience	(J)experience	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
0-2 years	3-5 years	-.48179	.15012	.006
	6+ years	-2.12316	.16027	.000
3-5 years	0-2 years	.48179	.15012	.006
	6 + years	-1.64137	.15269	.000
6 + years	0-2 years	2.12316	.16027	.000
	3-5 years	1.64137	.15269	.000

Tukey's HSD post hoc test was conducted to evaluate differences within groups. It was found that differences between teachers who have an experience 0-2 and 3-5 was not significant. ($p > .006$). A difference between teachers who have 3-5 and 6 + years experience was significant. ($p < .001$) Teachers who have 0-2 and 3-5 years experience agree that mothers prefer to contact via mail, telephone, and written communication rather than face to face or oral communication, but teachers who have 6 + years experience are more likely do not agree.

One-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between male ECE teachers' years of experience and the level of father involvement (dependent variable). The factor was years of experience (independent variable) which includes four levels, respectively 0-2, 3-5, 6-and above years. Each of these variables was coded. (0-2=1, 3-5=2,

6+=3) The Likert scale responses ranged from 1=strongly agree to 5=strongly disagree. Table 8 represents that mean score for teacher with 0-2 years experience (M=1.38, SD=.79), for teachers with 3-5 years experience (M=1.44, SD= .49), and for teachers with 6 or more years experience (M=2.44, SD= 1.71). Teachers with 0-2 and 3-5 years experience were more likely to agree that male ECE teachers influence the level of father involvement. However, teachers with 6 or more years experience were more likely neutral. Significant differences were not found among the teachers with different years of experience. ($F(2,51) = 5.295, p > .001$). The assumption of variances for age groups was not significantly different. $F(2, 51) = 1.294, p = .283$. Thus, the assumption of homogeneity of variance was met. The results of one-way analysis of variance suggest that teachers who had different years of experience had a similar

perception about how male ECE teachers affect father involvement.

One-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between male ECE teachers' years of experience and the perception of themselves about parental involvement (dependent variable). The factor was years of experience (independent variable) which includes four levels, respectively 0-2, 3-5, 6-and above years. Each of these variables was coded. (0-2=1, 3-5=2, 6+=3) The likert scale survey responses ranged from 1=strongly agree to 5=strongly disagree. Table 10 represents that mean score for teacher with 0-2 years experience (M=4.44, SD= .616), for teachers with 3-5 years experience (M=4.29, SD= .784), and for teachers with 6 or more

years experience (M=1.80, SD= .561). Teachers with less experience (0-2 and 3-5) were more likely to agree that they are not knowledgeable about parental involvement. However, teachers with more experience were more likely disagree. Significant differences were found among the teachers with different years of experience. ($F(2,51) = 5.295, p < .001$). The assumption of variances for age groups was not significantly different. ($F(2, 51) = 1.294, p = .334$) Thus, the assumption of homogeneity of variance was met. The results of one-way analysis of variance suggest that teachers who had different years of experience had a different perception about their proficiency.

Table 4

(I) Experience	(J)experience	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
0-2 years	3-5 years	.159	.216	.745
	6+ years	2.644	.235	.000
3-5 years	0-2 years	-.159	.216	.862
	6 + years	2.484	.228	.000
6 + years	0-2 years	-2.644	.235	.000
	3-5 years	-2.486	.228	.000

Tukey's HSD post hoc test was conducted to evaluate differences within groups. It was found that differences between teachers who have an experience 0-2 and 6 + was significant. ($p < .001$). A difference between teachers who have 3 to 5 and 6 + years experience was significant. ($p < .001$). However, the difference between 0-2 and 3-5 ages was not significant. ($p > .001$) Teachers who have 6 + years experience agree that they have enough knowledge about parental involvement, but teachers who have 0-2 and 3-5 years experience do not agree.

Discussion

Perceptions, beliefs, and implications of male ECE teachers were measured by using "The Attitudes, Beliefs, and Implications of Male ECE Teachers on Parental Involvement" scale. In the survey, the dependent variables were teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and implications in terms of parental involvement.

The independent variables were educational level, age, school type, and years of experience.

The following research questions were used in the study: What are some possible barriers that inhibit mother involvement with male ECE teachers? What kinds of communication, relationships, or contact do mothers prefer with male ECE teachers? How do male ECE teachers influence the level of father involvement in education? What is the perception of male ECE teachers about their parental involvement proficiency? This chapter discusses the findings from each of these research questions.

Research question 1: What are some possible barriers that inhibit mother involvement with male ECE teachers?

There were several factors related to this research question in the survey. The first one concerned the gender of the early

childhood education teacher. The majority of teachers (61.3 %) agree that gender is one of the factors that likely impacts parent-teacher relationships, whereas 25.9 % of the teachers disagree. This result supports Okten's study, which was conducted in the southeastern part of Turkey in 2009. The study argues that gender roles are more patriarchal, and that the role of men and women is relatively different from other regions of the country. Additionally, the result demonstrates that gender is considered an important barrier for parents when they get involved.

Another issue related to barriers is culture. The majority of male ECE teachers (99 %) agree that culture is one of the important factors that inhibit parent teacher relationships and this is statistically significant. This result revealed that cultural beliefs are important factors for parents, which affects their relationships, with male ECE teachers. These results support Turney and Kao's (2009) study which argued that cultural factors are one of the barriers for parental involvement in early childhood education. Religion is one of the other issue related to barriers. The majority of participants (87 %) agree that religion is a significant factor that may inhibit the relationship of male teachers and parents, but only 13 % of the teachers remained neutral. All this statistical information demonstrates that there is strong agreement among male ECE teachers in terms of barriers.

The study showed a difference between the barrier variable and the male ECE teachers' years of experience. The results revealed that teachers' with more experience are more likely to have a positive understanding about barriers. Teachers' with 6 years or more experience were less likely to consider religion, gender, and culture as a barrier. On the other hand, teachers with less than 6 years experience in the field were more likely to consider these elements as significant barriers. This suggests that having more experience in education can possibly affect a teacher's' perceptions, beliefs, and understanding about parent-teacher relationship.

Research question 2: What kinds of communication, relationships or contact do mothers prefer with male ECE teachers?

There were several factors related to the kinds of communication, relationships, or contact that mothers prefer with male ECE

teachers. The first was "mothers prefer to contact male teachers via telephone, newsletter, or e-mail rather than face to face contact." The majority of the teachers (70.3 %) agree that mothers do not prefer to contact male teachers face to face, and 22.3 % of participants do not.

A parent meeting is another important feature that provides communication between teacher and parents. Parent meetings have a significant effect on students' achievement and parental involvement (Meb, 2006). In the study, a comparison was made about the participation of mothers with male ECE teachers. According to the results, 40 % of the participants agreed that mothers attend parent meetings, but 39 % of the participants do not agree. This result demonstrates that there is a significant difference between teachers' perceptions about the meeting attendance of mothers.

The last item related to types of communication was "mothers prefer written communication rather than oral communication with male ECE teachers." More than one-third (37.1 %) of male teachers agree that mothers prefer written communication rather than oral communication, whereas 22.3 % male teachers do not agree. However, the majority, (40.7 %) neither agree nor disagree. These results show that there is a significant disagreement among teachers about the preferred type of communication. Results indicated that male ECE teachers had different perspectives about the types of contact by mothers relative to their years of experience.

Research question 3: How do male ECE teachers influence the level of father involvement in education?

The level of father involvement is one of the important aspects of ECE; however, early childhood teachers are more inclined to interact with mothers than with fathers. In general, mothers have been the primary care-givers and they follow their child's development and education (Gadsden & Ray, 2002). There were two items related to father involvement.

The first item was "Fathers are more likely to be involved in the child's education when the teacher is male." Most of the teachers (88.9 %) agree that the gender of the ECE teacher has a significant effect on father involvement, but 7.4 % do not agree. This statistical information

demonstrated that the majority of the male ECE teachers believe male ECE teachers are a significant opportunity for fathers to be involved. Additionally, some research shows that having male ECE teachers increases the level of father involvement in their child's education, because seeing men in ECE schools creates a positive atmosphere that encourages fathers to get involved (Cooney & Bitner, 2001). Elicker (2002) argues that we have a compelling reason to increase the number of men in ECE since they encourage fathers to participate in educational activities.

The second aspect related to father involvement in the survey was "Male ECE teachers are more comfortable communicating with fathers rather than mothers." Exactly 88.8 % of male teachers agree that fathers are more comfortable communicating with them, and only 11.1 % do not agree. This result supports Cooney and Bither's study which was conducted in 2001. The study argues that having male ECE teachers affects father involvement in a positive way because seeing men in ECE schools creates supportive environment for fathers to get involved.

However, the findings of the study related to this research question indicated that there were no significant differences between groups in terms of father involvement. The majority of male ECE teachers agree that male teachers have a positive effect on father involvement.

Research question 4: What is the perception of male ECE teachers about their parental involvement proficiency?

The item that related to this research question in the survey was "Male ECE teachers do not have knowledge of parental involvement." The survey attempted to measure how male ECE teachers evaluate their proficiency in parental involvement. The majority (66.6 %) of male teachers agree that they have enough knowledge about parental involvement. However, 27.8 % of teachers argue that they are not knowledgeable about parental involvement. This results shows that there is a significant difference between teachers' perceptions about their parental involvement proficiency.

There were significant differences between teachers who have more than 6 years experience and the other two groups that have experience of 0-2 or 3-5 years. These results

demonstrate that teachers with more than 6 years experience are likely to consider themselves less knowledgeable about parental involvement. This result revealed that even experienced teachers may not be able meet all of the expectations of parents.

The increasing number of male ECE teachers in the Southeastern part of Turkey shows that the topic of parental involvement with male ECE teachers is clearly one that deserves consideration.

Limitations of the Study

Conducting the study in the Southeastern part of country and due to small number of male ECE participants, it was not possible to generalize the results for all country. Other regions of the country could have some different cultures and implementations in terms of parental involvement. Also, the number of male ECE teachers was approximately 3500 male ECE which is only 7.2 % of total teachers in Turkey. Therefore, the numbers of male ECE teachers in this study was small.

The instrument was created by the researcher and has never been used before this study. Levels of reliability were analyzed, but the validity of survey was unknown. Systematic error should be taking into account when measuring perceptions and beliefs because sometimes responses do not reflect the actual meaning of what was being measured. Another limitation is that the ECE male teachers provide their perceptions; parents were not asked why they did not engage in parental involvement, or barriers that prevented them from participating in school.

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Frivolity in Teaching English to Young Learners: The other side of the coin

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Abstract

Though children's world view seems to be less complex than older learners', teaching children is not simple but requires skilfulness and understanding to draw upon these young learners' comprehension of more complicated concepts (Cameron, 2001) presented in learning. Such skilfulness and understanding should be applied to elements of instruction, like learners' characteristics. According to the findings of a classroom study on *EFL instruction to early-years learners in Thailand*, a seemingly-negative characteristic of these learners', frivolity, did not constrain them from learning the language but, in contrast, promoted their learning, even in the immersion context. These particular findings were derived from the description and the interpretation of the "soft data" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 2) collected through the two major instruments: the less-structured classroom observations and the in-depth interviews with some learners, in the "natural setting" (Richards, 2003, p. 10) in the naturalistic/interpretive paradigm. These findings were revealed in the language use, as one of the two focussed areas of this study, besides the language learning policy. As the further elaboration of the study, this paper illustrates how frivolity was found to facilitate these learners' learning in this research setting, and also discusses further how frivolity can become an essential component of children's learning, in terms of teaching strategies and lesson contents, in order not to get their learning switch "tripped into the 'off' position" (Wragg, 2004, p. 2).

Introduction

The process of introducing an additional language as a second or foreign language generally demands a lot of effort and skill. Moreover, teaching English to young learners (TEYL) also requires around the same quantity of effort or probably more. In spite of children's simpler way of viewing the world, TEYL is not so simple or straightforward but requires teachers' skilfulness and expertise as much as or more than what is required to teach older learners, so as to draw upon the learners' understanding, as stated by Cameron (2001, p. xii).

‘Children do have a less complicated view of the world than older children and adults, but this fact does not imply that teaching children is simple or straightforward. On the contrary, the teacher of children needs to be highly skilled to reach into children's worlds and lead them to develop their understandings towards more formal, more extensive and differently organised concepts. Primary teachers need to understand how children make sense of the world and how they learn; ...’

(Cameron, 2001, p.xii)

Such a high demand of effort and skilfulness in language teaching results from some of children's characteristics which do not seem to support language learning, like lack of ‘mental maturity’ (Brewster and Ellis with Girard, 2002, p. 7). As part of the lack of mental maturity, frivolity, or lack of seriousness, in learning should be taken into serious consideration, however, in two opposite ways, due to its ambiguous effects.

On the one hand, young learners' common attitude of not taking things seriously, frivolity, is supposed to obstruct rather than promote these young learners' learning. On the other hand, this characteristic, frivolity, as the other side of the coin, when more carefully considered, can also be beneficial to TEYL to some extent, as mainly proposed in this article. As part of the findings of a recent classroom study on EFL instruction to early-years

learners in a Thai primary school, it is surprising that young learners' frivolity tended to support their learning of English, instead of impeding it. This information was gained from description and interpretation of “soft data” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 2) collected through two major instruments: the less-structured classroom observation and the in-depth interview with some learners, in the “natural setting” (Richards, 2003, p. 10). As a whole, this study aimed to investigate the EFL instruction to the young learners at kindergarten level in a Thai primary school, in the two major areas: language learning policy and language use. In the former area, the first research question regarding the curriculum was set up: *What is the focus of the planned English curriculum for these early-years learners in this Thai school?*. In the latter area, the next three research questions involving the classroom activities, the teacher's performance and ideology and the learners' performance and characteristics were proposed: *How do the classroom activities constitute language learning opportunities for the learners?; Do the teacher's classroom performance and prevailing concepts about language teaching support her learners' learning of English in this Thai school?; and In what ways do learners' classroom performance and characteristics promote and impede their learning of English in this Thai school?*

To answer the last research question related to the learners' performance and characteristics, the data were collected from classroom observations and follow-up interviews with some learners. Among the findings about learners' performance and characteristics, frivolity was discovered to play a major role in promoting and encouraging these young learners' learning, as mainly evidenced by the following data from a classroom observation and some follow-up interviews with learners. To elaborate this major finding, this paper both illustrates how frivolity facilitated these young learners' learning in the aforementioned research setting, and also proposes how frivolity can be applied to teaching strategies and lesson contents, to develop TEYL both in the short and long terms. In the short term, it is hoped that frivolity can help stimulate young learners in the classroom setting, whereas, in the long term, frivolity is supposed to maintain young learners' attitude towards learning to be

positive. This aligns to what Wragg (2004, p. 2) proposed, the learners' learning switch should not be "tripped into the 'off' position".

In this following section, some relevant literature is first reviewed to draw upon the understanding of how frivolity can be beneficial to young learners' learning of English. Then the research methods are mentioned in full detail, followed by the findings and the discussion.

Literature review

Though it does not seem to be easy to teach young learners due to their particular needs, learning ability and skills (Harmer, 2007, pp. 82 & 81), young learners were still supposed to 'learn faster and more effectively than any other age group' (*Ibid.*, p. 81), with some characteristics that facilitated their learning (Brumfit, 1991, pp. vi-vii; and Rosenbusch, 1995 cited in Takahashi *et al.*, 2000, p. 139). According to Brumfit, young learners usually had fewer negative attitudes towards foreign languages (p. vii). Likewise, Rosenbusch also proposed that young learners generally had positive attitudes towards diversity, which was supposed to facilitate their foreign language learning (1995 cited in Takahashi *et al.*, 2000, p. 139).

Among these positive attitudes, enthusiasm and frivolity were raised, as follows. In terms of enthusiasm, Brumfit (1991, p. v) claimed that young learners generally "tend to be keen and enthusiastic learners, without the inhibitions which older children sometimes bring to their schooling". When these young learners are keen and enthusiastic in learning, it also implies their characteristic of frivolity, or being not serious with anything they are to encounter. In terms of frivolity, Brumfit (*Ibid.*, p. vi) implied this characteristic through his claim that children's lack of 'worries and responsibilities of adults' would 'help them in learning'. Likewise, Lightbrown and Spada also proposed willingness "to make mistakes" (2006, p. 55 cited in Harmer, 2007, p. 87) as one of the characteristics a good learner should have in their table of "good learner characteristics". This shows that frivolity, or being not serious with mistakes, is also another typical and helpful characteristic for young

learners in learning. In other words, young learners are not supposed to be afraid of making mistakes in learning a new lesson.

These two positive aligning characteristics generally found among young learners are both interesting; however, the latter, frivolity, seems to be more, with its ambiguity as a disadvantage or an advantage to young learners' learning. On the one hand, frivolity, with its negative sense, seems to make these young learners learn with slight intention and little responsibility. However, on the other hand, frivolity can helpfully bring less stress to the learners while they are learning in the classroom and keep their learning on, as recommended in Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis (Richards and Rogers 2001: 183), that learning could be promoted when learners would not be negatively affected by some factors, like embarrassment. This raises a relevant issue of *how frivolity can be applied to the teaching of English to young learners, instead of being accused of as a factor that impedes these young learners' learning.*

Similarly, Cameron's inquiry (2003, p. 107), "how children react when they encounter new language", and Rose Senior's argument (2006, cited in Harmer 2007, p. 153) that students' learning would be influenced by their personalities, their learning expectations and their experiences in the classroom, also lead to the inquiry of *how frivolity can become an essential component that facilitates young children's learning, especially in terms of teaching strategies and lesson contents.*

To facilitate learning, Coyle and Verdú (2000, p. 289) proposed that the teacher's support "is absolutely vital in promoting FL learning in children" and the teacher should link "the new FL content, language skills or activity structures" to the learners' previous knowledge and also "provide children with rich, contextualized linguistic input at the level of discourse and accompany this input with the consistent use of intersystemic support, and also use routine expressions to centre the children attention and control their comprehension" (pp. 289-290). As evidenced by the arguments above, frivolity is assumed to be a tool teachers can use to motivate their young learners. Consequently, teaching English to young learners through frivolity

should be seriously considered, as further discussed later.

Methodology:

This paper presents merely a single aspect of findings revealed in a study on a classroom study on *EFL for Young Learners in Thailand*, the influence of frivolity upon young learners' learning. As a whole, this research study investigated the EFL instruction to Kindergarten 3 pupils in a Thai primary school. During the period of this current study, these learners just formally began learning English, with the exclusive use of English as the medium of instruction by a native-speaking English teacher. The 233 participants of this study comprised 1 English teacher, 213 pupils and 19 parents.

This research was conducted in *naturalistic paradigm* with the *qualitative method* to collect *qualitative data* during the real instructional process provided for Kindergarten 3 pupils. The areas investigated were *language learning policy* and *language use* of the EFL instruction. Three kinds of instruments were used in this study: *document reviews*; *observations* and *interviews*, to collect such data to answer the following research questions.

- RQ1: What is the focus of the planned English curriculum for these early-years learners in this Thai school?
- RQ2: How do the classroom activities constitute language learning opportunities for the learners?
- RQ3: Do the teacher's classroom performance and prevailing concepts about language teaching support her learners' learning of English in this Thai school?
- RQ4: In what ways do learners' classroom performance and characteristics promote and impede their learning of English in this Thai school?

In terms of data collection, *observations* and *interviews* were used to collect data to reflect all RQs, whereas *document reviews* were applied to answer RQs1-3 only. The classroom observations in this study, which were classified as *less-structured/qualitative observations*¹ (Foster, 2006, p. 57), provided in-depth description and illustration of all classroom phenomena. The data from the observations were collected in the forms of *video clips* and *field notes* and later transcribed by the NVivo 8 into *rough scripts* and *transcriptions* for further analysis. Document reviews were used to collect data from four categories: 1) *standard and official sources*; 2) *letters and contemporary writing*; 3) *cabinet and other papers*; and 4) *images, sound and objects*. The data collected from the document reviews were recorded in the form of *narrative records* before being further analysed. The interviews in this study were divided into two major categories. Firstly, *semi-structured interviews*² were conducted with the teacher and learners parents to collect informative data through *factual questions*³ (Wilson & Sapsford, 2006, p. 108-109), and also with a small number of *retrospective questions*⁴

¹ *Less-structured/qualitative observations less-structured/qualitative observations* (Foster 2006: 57) provide 'in-depth description and illustration of all classroom phenomena.

² *Semi-structured interviews* contain 'a clear list of issues to be addressed and questions to be answered', as structured interviews (Denscombe 2010: 175); however, these interviews are quite 'flexible' in terms of the order of topics and other things, in order to give the interviewees opportunities to 'develop ideas and speak more widely on the issues raised by the researcher' (*Ibid*). Moreover, these answers for these interviews are also 'open-ended' with 'more emphasis on the interviewee elaborating points of interest' (*Ibid*).

³ *Factual questions* are the questions that ask for factual information (Wilson & Sapsford 2006: 108-109).

⁴ *Retrospective questions* are the questions asking about what has occurred before in order to get some information about the interviewees' reactions to the situations, in the respect of actions, feelings and attitudes (Wilson & Sapsford 2006: 108-109).

⁵ *Unstructured interviews* emphasised the interviewee's thoughts, with the interviewer just introducing the theme before letting the interviewee develop their own ideas, along

(Ibid). Secondly, a kind of *unstructured interviews*⁵ called *in-depth interviews*⁶ was conducted with some learners to explain learners' classroom performance, through the use of *retrospective questions*. As a result, these interviews would be labelled as *follow-up interviews* throughout this dissertation. All data collected from these interviews were recorded in the forms of *audio records* and *field notes* and later transcribed by the NVivo 8 into *rough scripts* and *transcriptions* as *additional information*, to cross-check with the data from observations and document reviews.

In terms of data analysis, all data were analysed by being first categorised into two major areas of *language learning policy* and *language use* before being subdivided into four major categories of *curricular focuses*; *classroom activities*; *the teacher's performance and prevailing concepts*; and *the learners' performance and characteristics*, to answer the four RQs above. Then all corresponding data were used to cross-check with one another in terms of credibility (validity), dependability (reliability), transferability (generalizability) and confirmability (objectivity), according to Denscombe (2010, pp. 298-304).

Findings: Frivolity

The characteristic of frivolity was discovered among these early-years learners, as evidenced by the following classroom observation. In this situation, the learners were assigned to sing a song and do some actions along.

'their train of thought' (Denscombe 2010: 175; Kumar 2005: 126).

⁶ *In-depth interviews* are defined as "repeated face-to-face encounters between the researcher and informants directed towards understanding informants' perspectives on their lives, experiences, or situations as expressed in their own words" (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984, p. 77 cited in Kumar, 2005, p.124 cited in Techachokwiwat, 2011, p. 63). *In-depth interviews* generally reveal the relationship, "rapport", between researcher and interviewee, and "the corresponding understanding and confidence between them", so as to "lead to in-depth and accurate information" (Kumar 2005: 124 cited in Techachokwiwat, 2011, p.63).

However, these learners could not perform correctly. So, the teacher showed her disapproval by making some funny sounds. Anyway, according to the learners' reactions in Turn 4 (Techachokwiwat, 2011, p.160), these learners did not take the teacher's feedback seriously, though they realised that their classroom performance was not correct.

Turns	Description	Remarks
1	T: Put your left foot in.	CIMG0005 9feb10_class7
2	S1: (Most girls who were assigned could not perform correctly.)	Learner_performance.nvp
3	T: (Making some funny sounds to show that she was not quite happy with it.) (Turning back to the students.)	Tree nodes:
4	Ss: (Laughing and not taking the teacher's feedback with that funny sound serious as negative feedback or feeling embarrassed.)	frivolity
		06:44.0-06:59.1

(Source: Classroom Observation: Week12 Day2 Class7 Lesson1: CIMG0005)

According to the information gained from this particular observation and others, frivolity, or not being serious, is one of these early-years learners' characteristics which were implicitly illustrated in this EFL context. These learners did not take the reaction seriously, despite that the teacher's non-verbal expressions showed her lack of approval of their performance in Turn 3. This was evidenced by their laughters and enthusiastic reactions even after the teacher's negative feedback. Moreover, these learners could still enjoy other following activities later. This aligns with Cameron's argument that the learners at this early age were not yet very

complicated (2001, p. xii) because they were not forced by any social factors, like their social status or social image. As a result, these learners' learning is also not affected by any social factors and is really free of worries, no matter whether they can or cannot achieve any classroom task. In other words, they do not take their learning seriously due to their frivolous characteristic.

Similarly, another piece of evidence which implied these young learners' frivolity was derived from the interview with some learners (00:00-02:27, Learner Interview: 20.4846/group).

Audio Details	Participants	Description	References in Chapters	Length
20.4846	Group interview (00:00-02:27) (01:36-)	- R asked about the reactions to T's punishment if they were moved out of the round. - They still wanted to study further. They always listened further. - They (some) said they would feel a bit unhappy but not really angry. They still wanted to study further. - Nothing.	5.3.3.5	2:27 mins

In this interview, the researcher asked the learners about their reactions to the teacher's punishment of moving some of them out of the learning area when they talked in class. Most of the learners replied that they still wanted to study further, with just a few saying that they might feel a little unhappy, but not really angry. Moreover, these learners said they did not feel much embarrassed about being moved out at all. This reveals that most of these learners are in common with other learners at the same age. Namely, they did not really take negative feedback such as punishment

seriously as older learners or adult learners do. So, these learners were not easily discouraged by obstacles they would encounters in class, due to their frivolity.

This aforementioned finding about frivolity agrees with Lightbrown and Spada's argument of willingness "to make mistakes" (2006, p. 55 cited in Harmer, 2007, p. 87) as a good characteristic for learners' learning. Likewise, this finding also supports Brumfit's claim of young learners' lack of worries which promoted their learning (1991, pp. v-vi).

Discussion:

Subject to the finding above, the characteristic of frivolity, as revealed in the EFL instruction to early-years learners as in this study, is really useful and advantageous for young learners' learning. Frivolity can help learners at around these ages, as in this current study, to enjoy the lessons with good or neutral attitudes toward learning, as recommended by Rosenbusch's proposal of young learners' positive attitudes (1995 cited in Takahashi *et al.* 2000: 139), Wragg's suggestion of learners' positive experiences in learning at their early ages for 'a firm foundation' for their future learning (2004, p. 2), and Krashen's suggestion of a low affective filter in Affective Filter Hypothesis (Richards and Rogers, 2001, p. 183).

Superficially, frivolity seems to be quite negative and useless for learning development. However, when it is carefully considered, frivolity is quite multi-faceted. It can be considered as either advantageous or disadvantageous. In one aspect, frivolity can discourage most learners to learn something, especially with no strong intention, no discipline and no commitment. On the contrary, frivolity, if profoundly considered, can also provide learners with great help to their learning, by relieving their worries or burdens and bringing in pleasant atmosphere for learning, which should certainly promote their learning to some extent.

Such a surprising fact about frivolity raises a relevant issue of *how frivolity can be applied to TEYL, instead of being accused of as a factor that impedes these young learners' learning*, especially in terms of teaching strategies and lesson contents. Moreover, the use of frivolity in teaching and learning should also be considered in both short and long terms. In the short term, it is hoped that frivolity can help stimulate young learners' learning in the classroom setting, whereas, in the long term, frivolity is supposed to maintain young learners' attitude towards their life-long learning to be positive.

Implications:

In addition to the revelation about how frivolity can facilitate young learners' learning, this section of this paper suggests how frivolity can be applied to teaching strategies and lesson contents, so as to develop TEYL in both short

and long terms. The suggestion concerning the use of frivolity is divided into two areas: teaching strategies and lesson contents.

In terms of teaching strategies, most teachers, especially experienced teachers, have always set up their expectation of learners' classroom performance in a solemn way as claimed by Wragg (2005, p. 16). These teachers usually base their teaching performance on the concept of seriousness, in order to indirectly inform their students to be serious while learning with them, as follows.

'Even with those teachers who had more firm intentions to make a start on their subject, there was a need to establish some predominant image...'
(*Ibid.*)

In contrast, Graham Badley and Huang & Kuo suggested the way of 'freeing students and staff from some of the stricter conventions of academic writing' (2011, p. 256), and of providing frivolous performance with humour (2010), to reduce stress learners or staff might get from study or work, respectively.

This concept of frivolity should consequently be included into TEYL while teachers are delivering lessons to their learners. This must be helpful to provide pleasant learning atmosphere as previously suggested by Krashen's concept of affective filters in Affective Filter Hypothesis (Richards and Rogers 2001: 183), Rose Senior's argument of students' learning in accordance with their classroom experiences (2006, cited in Harmer, 2007, p. 153).

As the elaboration of this finding, it is recommended that teacher should take this opportunity of having young learners who do not take things seriously, to provide some frank but also playful feedback to make these young learners learn with disciplines but also without serious worries. So, the learners would not be much affected in classroom learning, which is referred to as benefits of learning in the short term. However, the teacher should not be too extreme in embarrassing these learners, as learning at this age is also considered as a significant time for these learners to 'establish some good and bad

habits' in learning (Wragg 2004, p. 2), especially in a long term.

By this way, teacher performance in TEYL, with the help of frivolity, can promote young learners' learning, in cooperation with the learners' frivolous personality, in the short term, that is, their temporary classroom performance. Moreover, with such positive experiences in learning, young learners can also develop their positive attitudes towards their FL learning through their teachers' teaching strategies, as previously recommended by Coyle and Verdú (2000, p. 289), Rosenbusch (1995 cited in Takahashi *et al.*, 2000, p. 139), and Wragg (2004, p. 2). With the use of frivolity in teaching strategies, the learning switch inside the learners should always be kept in the 'on' position from the beginning of their FL learning. This is the way how frivolity can facilitate TEYL in the long term.

In terms of lesson contents, aligned with the often-used teaching strategies above, most teachers' principles underlying the lesson contents are generally quite strict and serious, as Wragg described in his report of 'first-class content' (2005, p. 16), as follows.

'The most striking contrast between experienced and novice teachers was that for the former first-lesson content was almost irrelevant. They perceived this opening encounter largely in terms of management rituals: "The lesson would be concentrating on establishing standards. The work wouldn't be the most important thing. It would be secondary. I would be setting up expectations of behaviour" (geography teacher, female)' (Ibid.)

It is again obvious that seriousness is always part of teachers' pedagogical concepts. Even in the very first class as above, most teachers also drew upon serious learning context with the (solemn) 'standards' (Ibid.) for lesson contents right from the beginning of their teaching. The introduction of 'management rituals' of classroom performance to their learners, so as to prepare their learners for

responsibility and a good learning discipline, should be fair. However, this also raises some interesting inquiries related to young learners' learning. Firstly, *would these young learners be reinforced or demotivated in learning their very first lesson with such serious atmosphere?* Secondly, *is it really necessary for young learners to be well-disciplined?* In other words, *is it hard for teachers to take care of these young learners' frivolous behaviours?* Thirdly, *would the learners be always well-disciplined, both in terms of classroom performance and cognitive development?* **If so, would these learners' awareness of good discipline in learning interfere with their potential of intellectual development? Would they be able to make any differences, especially in terms of thinking, from other learners while learning the same things?** While some theories, principles and methods related to teaching and learning, like The Natural Approach (Richards and Rogers, 2001) and Vygotsky's *Zone of Proximal Development* (1978a, p. 86 cited in Meadows, 2006, p. 308), as well as other TEYL experts, have been forcing learners to develop their potential in learning by themselves, such seriousness in class disciplines seems to bring in reverse effects on these young learners' learning.

Consequently, this paper, with some ideas gained from some discussions on frivolity (Badley, 2011; Huang & Kuo, 2011), aims to persuade anyone involving TEYL to reconsider the concept of frivolity, especially in terms of lesson contents. Badley (2011), who introduced the concept of 'scribbling', the opposite way of academic seriousness, as a type of frivolity in academic writing, pointed out three major advantages to learners: 1) making academic writing more flexible for academics; 2) 'challenging some of the dualisms that structure and confine our thinking and understanding' (Ibid., p.141); 3) protesting against 'premature closure', according to Derrida (Ibid.). Similar to Badley, Huang & Kuo claimed that frivolity, like 'spontaneous humor' (2011, p. 141) was very useful to initiate new ideas in communication. With such claims of experimenting the concept of frivolity in academic writing courses and in job training above, it should come to an important conclusion that frivolity can be included and

inserted into TEYL lesson content, in order to free the learners from worries and confinement, especially in terms of thinking. For instance, the lesson content for young learners of English does not need to have a fixed or still form, but with some funny pictures which can stimulate the learners' ideas to some extent.

In contrast to the Wragg's description (2004) of the first-class content above, teachers should also balance their power of class control by providing their learners with some interesting teaching materials, instead of serious and strict standard, as conventionally prevailed.

Moreover, in terms of lesson contents, it is also possible to provide these learners with some lesson contents that are quite competitive to challenge them. This should promote rather than impede these learners' learning since these young learners have no worries about losing face or self-esteem, as previously mentioned. It is quite possible that these learners should pay more attention to classroom interaction than to their social status.

By this way, frivolity can play a great role in developing young learners' motivation in class learning via attractive lesson contents, which promotes learning in the short term. Furthermore, with such positive attitude and encouragement the young learners gained from interesting lesson contents, their learning should be well-motivated and should not be ideologically restricted, especially for the long term.

With such proposed experiences in learning with the appropriate teaching strategies and lesson contents, learning English with frivolity at these early ages should provide these learners with 'a firm foundation' (Wragg 2004: 2) of positive experiences in learning for their further learning. In addition, this positive characteristic of frivolity could also be promoted by the teacher to be linked to their needs and development as Coyle and Verdú suggested in their findings (2000, pp. 289-290). In other words, frivolity, on the other side of the coin, is quite possible and practical to promote TEYL, both in the short and long terms.

With all the ideas presented above, it is hoped that this paper can point out how something trivial according to superficial consideration, like the characteristic of frivolity, if more profoundly considered, can be beneficial to learning and also to other fields of study. Sophistically, this paper would like to emphasise multi-faceted consideration on any relevant components of learning such as frivolity here, for the sakes of all stakeholders in the field of education and language learning further.

Recommendations for future research:

For the recommendations for other possible research studies, it is interesting to investigate how some disadvantageous components of teaching and learning languages can be reconsidered and benefited from, in the same way as frivolity was in this paper. However, such studies should be conducted with great care and in a sensible way. Otherwise, the benefits gained from such research studies might not be accurate.

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Sürdürülebilir Gelişme Kavramı Ve Okul Öncesi Eğitim Programına Yansımaları

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Özet

Sürdürülebilir gelişme, bugün yaşayanların gereksinimlerini karşılarken, gelecek kuşakların gereksinimlerini karşılama düzeylerini tehlikeye atmamaları olarak tanımlanmıştır. Bu bağlamda sürdürülebilir gelişmenin doğrudan okul öncesi eğitimi ile ilişkili olduğu açıktır. Okul öncesi eğitim çocukların bir bütün olarak (sosyal-duygusal-dil-zihinsel-psikomotor alanlar) gelişimini desteklediğinden ve çoğu öğrenmelerin temelini bu dönemde atıldığı düşünüldüğünde okul öncesi eğitimin sürdürülebilir gelişme kavramı ile sıkı bir ilişki içinde olması kaçınılmazdır

Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, 2006 Okul Öncesi Eğitim Programının sürdürülebilir gelişme kavramı bağlamında değerlendirilmesidir. Bu amaçla, 2006 Okul öncesi Eğitim Programı sürdürülebilir gelişme kavramı bağlamında değerlendirilmiş ve 2006 Okul Öncesi Eğitim Programında “Çevre Eğitimi”, “Sorumluluk Eğitimi”, “Farklılıklara Saygı Eğitimi” gibi bölümlerin Sürdürülebilir Gelişme ile bağlantılı olduğu ve ayrıca programda yer alan bazı amaç ve kazanımların sürdürülebilir gelişme kavramı ile ilişkili olduğu belirlenmiştir.

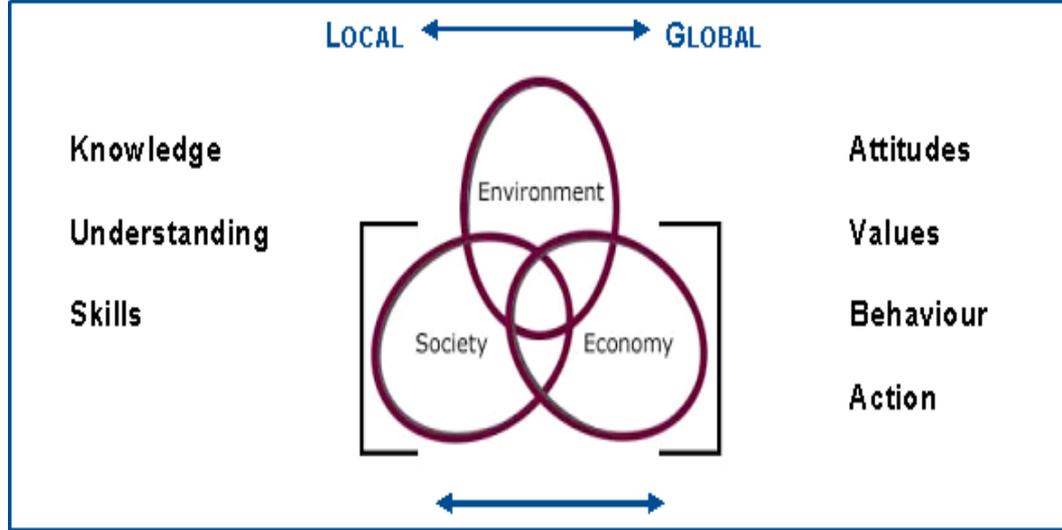
Anahtar Kelimeler: Sürdürülebilir gelişme, okul öncesi eğitim, okul öncesi eğitim programı

GİRİŞ

OECD'nin 1980'lerin sonlarında Brundtland raporunu yayınlamasından sonra, sürdürülebilir gelişme kavramı, kritik küresel bir kavram olarak ortaya çıkmıştır (Hägglund & Pramling Samuelsson 2009). Raporda sürdürülebilir gelişme, bugün yaşayanların gereksinimlerini karşılarken, gelecek

kuşakların gereksinimlerini karşılama düzeylerini tehlikeye atmamaları olarak tanımlanmıştır (Hägglund Karlstad & Pramling Samuelsson & Tallberg Broman, 2007).

Şekil 1: Sürdürülebilir gelişme kavramı



(<http://www.ubuntu.ie/what-is-esd/>)

Şekil 1'de görüldüğü gibi sürdürülebilir gelişme kavramı yerel düzeyden başlayıp, küresel boyuta kadar uzanan, çevre, toplum ve ekonomi boyutları olan ve bu boyutlara ilişkin bilgi, anlama, beceri, tutum, değer, davranış ve eylemleri içeren bir süreç olarak tanımlanabilir.

Sürdürülebilir gelişme kavramının çevre ayağında, hayvanlar, bitkiler, çiçekler, su, toprak, rüzgar, küresel salgınlar, iklim değişiklikleri, doğal felaketler, toprağın fakirleşmesi, ormansızlaşma gibi konular karşımıza çıkarken (Didonet, 2008; Kamara, 2008), ekonomi ayağını ise geri dönüşüm, tasarruf, sosyal adalet, fakirlik, fakirliğin azaltılması- giderilmesi, eşitlik gibi konular oluşturmaktadır.

Sürdürülebilir gelişmenin toplum ayağını ise problemlere küresel bir toplumlumun parçası olarak bakmak ve yaklaşmak, bireylerle işbirliği içerisinde çalışmak ve başkalarının görevlerinde de sorumluluk almak, eleştirel ve sistematik düşünme becerisi, çatışmaları şiddet yanlısı olmayan bir tavırla çözmek, yerel, ulusal ve uluslararası düzeyde politikada yer alma yeterliliği ve istekliliği, insan haklarına karşı duyarlı olma ve insan haklarını savunma

yeterliliği (kadın hakları, etnik azınlık hakları vs...) (Pavlova, 2009) gibi kavramların yanı sıra cinsel, ırksal, kültürel, sosyoekonomik statü, yaş, etnisite, yetenek farklılıkları ile farklı yetersizliklere sahip bireylere karşı ön yargılardan sıyrılma oluşturmaktadır.

Sürdürülebilir gelişme kavramı ortaya atıldıktan sonra politikacılar ve araştırmacılar tarafından eğitimin rolü, bu noktada çok sık tartışılmıştır. Okulların eğitim programında ve uygulamalarında, bu konu ile ilgili araç gereçler ve konularla bağlantı kurulmaya çalışılmıştır. Örneğin iklim değişiklikleri ve doğal kaynaklar eğitim ve öğretimin konusu olmuştur. Tam bu sırada acaba okul öncesi eğitimde de bu konular işlenebilir mi gibi sorgulamalar olmaya başlamıştır (Hägglund & Pramling Samuelsson 2009). Okul öncesi eğitim, çocukların bir bütün olarak (sosyal-duygusal-dil-zihinsel-psikomotor alanlar) gelişimini desteklediğinden ve çoğu öğrenmelerin temeli bu dönemde atıldığından okul öncesi eğitimin sürdürülebilir gelişme kavramı ile sıkı bir ilişki içinde olması kaçınılmazdır. Ayrıca Şekil 1'de de bahsedildiği gibi sürdürülebilir gelişme kavramının boyutlarına yönelik farkındalık ve tutum geliştirmek açısından okulöncesi dönem kritik bir dönem olarak düşünülebilir. Bu

bağlamda erken çocukluk yıllarında çocuklara kazandırılacak sürdürülebilir gelişme kavramları şunlar olmalıdır (Kaga, 2008) :

- Hiçbir çocuğun cinsiyetinden, ulusundan, etnik kimliğinden, yaşından, sosyoekonomik durumundan ve kapasitesinden dolayı ayrımcılığa uğramaması. (Eşitlik kavramı sürdürülebilirlik kavramı içinde örtük olarak bulunan temel bir kavramdır).
- Temel yaşam becerilerini destekleme,
- Doğaya karşı duyarlı olma ve saygı duyma,
- Empati, paylaşma ve saygı gibi değerlerin desteklenmesi,
- Çocukların çevreye karşı farkındalıkları.

Bir çocuğun gelecek nesilleri düşünerek hareket etmesi aynı zamanda çocuğun empati, paylaşma, sorumluluk gibi kavramları üstlenmesini de gerektirir. Ayrıca her çocuğun aynı olumlu koşullarda yaşaması, bir çocuk hakkı olarak fırsat eşitliği kavramını da karşımıza çıkarmaktadır. Bu nedenle sürdürülebilir gelişmenin çok yönlü bir kavram olduğu ve okulöncesi dönemde de rahatlıkla işlenebileceği düşünülmektedir. Bu bağlamda bu çalışmanın temel amacı 2006 Okulöncesi Eğitim Programının sürdürülebilirlik bağlamında incelenmesi ve değerlendirilmesidir.

YÖNTEM

Araştırmanın Modeli

Araştırmada 2006 Okulöncesi eğitim programını sürdürülebilirlik bağlamında incelenmek ve değerlendirmek amaçlandığından dolayı, bu araştırma tarama modelinde desenlenmiştir. Tarama modelleri geçmişte ya da hâlâ var olan durumları betimleyen araştırma modelleridir (Karasar, 2006). Araştırmada nitel araştırma yaklaşımı benimsenmiş, programının değerlendirilmesinde doküman incelemesi tekniği (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006) kullanılmıştır.

Veriler ve Toplanması

Araştırmada verileri toplamak amacıyla 2006 Okulöncesi eğitim programı incelenmiştir. Verilerin toplanmasında alan yazında sürdürülebilirlik ile ilgili yer alan temel kavramlar ve bu kavramlara ait alt konular dikkate alınmıştır.

Veriler ve Çözümlemesi

2006 Okul Öncesi Eğitim Programı sürdürülebilir gelişmenin ekonomi, toplum ve çevre ile ilgili temel kavramları dikkate alınarak değerlendirilmiştir. Çalışmada öncelikle sürdürülebilir gelişmeye ait kavramlara ilişkin 2006 Okul öncesi eğitim programında var olan başlıklar ve amaç-kazanımlar belirlenmiştir. Belirlenen başlıklarda öncelikle nelere yer verildiği tespit edilmiş ardından ise nelerin olması gerektiğine değinilmiştir.

BULGULAR VE YORUMLAR

Bu bölümde araştırma bulgularına yer verilmiş olup bulgular iki başlık altında sunulmuştur. Öncelikle 2006 Okul Öncesi eğitim programında sürdürülebilirlik ile ilgili hangi konu başlıkları olduğuna ardından ise hangi amaç ve kazanımlarda sürdürülebilirlik kavramına yer verildiğine değinilmiştir.

2006 Okul Öncesi Eğitim Programında Sürdürülebilir Gelişme Bağlamında Ele Alınabilecek Başlıklar

2006 Okul Öncesi Eğitim Programında “Okul Öncesi Eğitimde Sorumluluk, Çevre Duyarlılığı ve Farklılıklara Saygı Eğitimi” başlığı yer almaktadır. Her bir başlık tek tek değerlendirilmiştir.

Çevre Duyarlılığı Eğitimi

2006 Okul Öncesi Eğitim Programında yer alan “Çevre duyarlılığı eğitimi” alt başlığında çevre duyarlılığı ile ilgili yapılması gerekenler şu şekilde sıralanmıştır:

- Çocuklara çevreyi aracısız keşfetme olanağının tanınması,
- Çevre gezilerinin düzenlenmesi,
- Mevsimsel farklılıkların incelenmesi,
- Çocuklara Fen-doğa ile ilgili kitaplar okuma,

- Çocukların doğal güzelliklere karşı duyarlılığını artırmak, gözlem yapma yeteneğini geliştirmek amacı ile sanat eğitimi verilmesi,
- Bitki ve hayvan resimlerinin kullanılması,
- Oyun alanlarında çalışmalar yapılması,
- Yetişkinin model olması

Çevre duyarlılığı alt başlığında yer alan maddelerin sürdürülebilirliğin çevre ayağı ile yakında ilişkili olduğu görülmektedir. Ancak, çevre duyarlılığını sürdürülebilirlik bağlamında artırmak için geri dönüşüm, tasarruf, su, toprak, rüzgar, küresel salgınlar, iklim değişiklikleri, doğal felaketler, toprağın fakirleşmesi, ormansızlaşma gibi konulara da değinilmesi gerektiği düşünülmektedir. Ancak alt maddeler incelendiğinde daha çok hayvanlar, bitkiler, çiçekler gibi daha genel konulara vurgu yapıldığı görülmektedir.

Farklılıklara Saygı Eğitimi

2006 Okul öncesi eğitim Programında yer alan “Farklılıklara saygı eğitimi” alt başlığında öncelikle farklılıklara saygının ne demek olduğu, farklılıklara saygı eğitiminin amaçları, farklılıklara saygı eğitiminin özellikleri, aşamaları ve farklılıklara saygı eğitimine ilişkin öneriler yer almaktadır.

Farklılıklara saygı eğitiminin özelliklerinin açıklandığı ilk maddede farklılıklara saygı eğitiminin kapsayıcı olduğu ve “bütün çocukları ve her türlü farklılığı kapsadığı” belirtilmiştir. Ancak, Farklılıklara saygı eğitiminin aşamaları verilirken, bilgilendirme aşamasında çocukların ön yargı ve kalıplaşmış tutumlardan kurtulmaları için bilgilendirme yapılması, gerektiği belirtilirken, bu bilgilendirmenin cinsiyet, engellilik ve fiziksel görünüş hakkında olması gerektiği vurgulanmıştır. Yine aynı şekilde farklılıklara saygı eğitiminin aşamalarından değerlendirme aşamasında da eğitimcilerin sözel ve sözel olmayan davranışlarında çocuklara cinsiyetlerine, görünüşlerine yada engellerine göre farklı davranmamaları gerektiği belirtilmiştir. Oysaki farklılık kavramının her türlü farklılığı kapsadığı özelliklerinde

belirtilmiştir. Bu nedenle bilgilendirme aşamasında sadece cinsiyet, engellilik ve fiziksel görünüme değil, etnik köken, dini inanış, kültür, dil farklılıklarına da vurgu yapılmalı ve değerlendirme aşamasında da öğretmenin çocuklara davranışlarında her türlü farklılığı kapsayacak biçimde davranması gerektiği düşünülmektedir.

Sorumluluk Eğitimi

Programın sorumluluk eğitimi alt başlığında ise 5-6 yaş çocukların için sorumluluğun anlamları şu şekilde belirlenmiştir:

- Kendine ve eşyalarına iyi bakmak
- Yaptığı hareketin başkaları üzerindeki etkilerinin farkında olmak
- Gelişmekte olan bir öz kontrole sahip olduğunu göstermek
- Kişisel sınırlarını bilmek ve başkalarına güvenme bilincine sahip olmak
- Kendisi ve başkaları için verdiği kararlar konusunda kendisine güvenmek
- Yaptığı hareketlerle ilgili dürüst olmak

Ayrıca, çocukların karar verme becerilerini geliştirici, seçimler yapmalarına olanak sunan, empati kurmalarını sağlayabilecek etkinlikler yapılmasının çocukların sorumluluk becerilerini geliştireceği belirtilmiştir. Bu bağlamda, sorumluluk eğitimi alt başlığının sürdürülebilir gelişme kavramı ile bağlantı olduğu görülmektedir. Özellikle çocukların bir kaynağı, aracı, oyuncu vs... kullanırken başka çocukları da düşünebilme becerisinin verilmesi gerektiğinin sürdürülebilirlik açısından son derece önemli olduğu düşünülmektedir.

2006 Okul Öncesi Eğitim Programında Sürdürülebilir Gelişme Bağlamında Ele Alınabilecek Amaç- Kazanımlar

2006 Okul öncesi eğitim programında yer alan ve aşağıda verilen amaç ve kazanımlar sürdürülebilirlik bağlamında değerlendirilmiştir.

Amaç 1. Kendini tanıyabilme

Kazanımlar

1. Fiziksel özelliklerini söyler.
2. Belli başlı duyuşsal özelliklerini söyler.

Amaç 2. Duygularını fark edebilme

Kazanımlar

1. Duygularını söyler.
2. Duygularının nedenlerini açıklar.
3. Duygularının sonuçlarını açıklar.

Amaç 3. Duygularını kontrol edebilme

Kazanımlar

1. Olumlu / olumsuz duygu ve düşüncelerini uygun şekilde ortaya koyar.
2. Yetişkin denetiminin olmadığı durumlarda da gerektiği gibi davranır.
3. Yeni ve alışılmamış durumlara uyum sağlar.

Amaç 4. Kendi kendini güdüleyebilme

Kazanımlar

1. Kendiliğinden bir işe başlar.
2. Başladığı işi bitirme çabası gösterir.

Amaç 5. Başkalarının duygularını fark edebilme

Kazanımlar

1. Başkalarının duygularını ifade eder.
2. Başkalarının duygularını paylaşır.

Amaç 6. Başkalarıyla ilişkilerini yönetebilme

Kazanımlar

1. Kendiliğinden iletişimi başlatır.
2. Grup etkinliklerine kendiliğinden katılır.
3. Grupta sorumluluk almaya istekli olur.
4. Aldığı sorumluluğu yerine getirir.
5. Kendisinin ve başkalarının haklarına saygı gösterir.
6. Gerekli durumlarda nezaket sözcüklerini kullanır.
7. Gerektiğinde lideri izler.
8. Gerektiğinde liderliği üstlenir.
9. Etkinliklerin süresine ilişkin yönergeye uyar.
10. Grup etkinliklerinin kurallarına uyar.
11. Gerekli durumlarda kararlılık gösterir.

Amaç 7. Hoşgörü gösterebilme

Kazanımlar

1. Hata yapabileceğini kabul eder.
2. Kendi hatalarını söyler.
3. Kendisini başkalarının yerine koyarak duygularını açıklar.
4. Başkalarının hatalarını uygun yollarla ifade eder.
5. Başkalarının hata yapabileceğini kabul eder.

Amaç 8. Farklılıklara saygı gösterebilme

Kazanımlar

1. Kendisinin farklı özelliklerini kabul eder.
2. Başkalarının farklı özelliklerini kabul eder.

Amaç 9. Yaşamın iyileştirilmesinde ve korunmasında sorumluluk alabilme

Kazanımlar

1. Yaşamın sürdürülebilmesi için gerekli olan kaynakları verimli kullanır.
2. Günlük yaşamdaki kurallara uyar.
3. Canlıların yaşama hakkına özen gösterir.
4. Canların bakımını üstlenir ve korur.
5. Yaşamda diğer canlılarla paylaştıklarını açıklar.

Amaç 10. Toplumsal yaşamın nasıl sürdüğünü kavrayabilme

Kazanımlar

1. Toplumda farklı rollere sahip kişiler olduğunu söyler.
2. Aynı kişinin farklı rolleri olduğunu söyler.
3. Kendi kültürünün belli başlı özelliklerini açıklar.
4. Farklı kültürlerin belli başlı özelliklerini söyler.

Amaç 12. Çevredeki güzellikleri koruyabilme

Kazanımlar

1. Çevredeki güzelliklerin korunma nedenlerini söyler.
2. Çevredeki güzellikleri korumak için yapılması gerekenleri açıklar.
3. Çevredeki güzellikleri korumada sorumluluk alır.

Amaç 13. Çevreyi estetik bakımdan düzenleyebilme

Kazanımlar

1. Çevresinde gördüğü güzel / rahatsız edici durumları söyler.
2. Çevre sorunları ile ilgili kendi yapabileceklerine örnek verir.
3. Çevresini farklı biçimlerde düzenler.

SONUÇ VE ÖNERİLER

Araştırmadan elde edilen sonuçlar şu şekilde sıralanabilir:

- Okul öncesi eğitim programında sürdürülebilir gelişme kavramı ile bağlantısı olduğu düşünülen çeşitli amaç ve kazanımlar belirlenmiştir. Bu amaç ve kazanımların tümünün sosyal-duygusal alanda olduğu dikkat çekicidir.
- Programda sorumluluk, çevre duyarlılığı eğitimi, farklılıklara saygı eğitimine ayrıca yer verilmiş olup bu kavramlarda sürdürülebilir gelişme ile doğrudan bağlantılıdır.
- Çevre duyarlılığı eğitimi alt başlığında verilen örnekler ve açıklamaların sürdürülebilirlik açısından yetersiz olduğu belirlenmiştir.
- Farklılıklara saygı eğitimi alt başlığında, farklılıklara saygı eğitiminin özellikleri açıklanırken farklılık kavramı ayrıntılandırılmasına rağmen, farklılıklara saygı eğitiminin aşamalarında farklılık kavramının yalnızca cinsiyet, engellilik ve fiziksel görünüş ile sınırlandırıldığı; ırk, etnik

köken, dil, inanış farklılıklarına vurgu yapılmadığı belirlenmiştir.

- Gelir dağılımındaki eşitsizlik, fakirlik, eşitlik, sosyal adalet gibi sürdürülebilirliğin ekonomi ayağını oluşturan konulara değinilmediği görülmektedir.

Araştırmanın sonuçları doğrultusunda şu öneriler getirilebilir:

- Programın çevre duyarlılığı ayağının zenginleştirilmesi, bu bağlamda etkinliklere ve açıklamalara belgesel izletme, hayvan/ bitki yetiştirme ve bakımı, geri dönüşüm, kaynakların verimli kullanımı gibi başlıklar eklenebilir.
- Farklılıklara saygı eğitimi çerçevesinde farklı dil, kültür, etnik yapı ve inanışların olduğunun program ile entegrasyonu sağlanabilir.
- Yalnızca sosyal- duygusal alandaki amaç ve kazanımlarda değil, diğer gelişim alanlarında da sürdürülebilirlikle ilgili amaç ve kazanımlara yer verilebilir.
- Programa adalet, sosyal eşitlik, fakirlik gibi kavramlar eklenebilir ve bu kavramların günlük planda nasıl yer alacağı ayrıntılandırılabilir.

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