

Comparison of Early Childhood Care Standards of licensed Daycare Centers in Turkey and Pennsylvania, USA

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Abstract: As of 2010-2011 Education year Turkey has 27, 606 Early Childhood Education Facilities (for profit+non profit) with 1,115,818 children, comparing to 3,625 facilities with 113.388 children in 1990-1991 Education year this is a growth of 762% just in ten years. Turkey has a goal of 100% schooling in kindergarten by the end of 2013. As a developing country, and with the effort to join EU, Turkey is open to all of the new and longstanding approaches to take as a model and create its own with its real values and ethics. In this study, the minimum level of compliance necessary to obtain the state or country's certificate of compliance in Turkey and Pennsylvania are being compared. Content Analysis method is used to compare physical site, education and training of the staff, staff-child ratios, nutrition, safety, program, and costs.

Keywords: Early Childhood, Standards, Turkey, and USA, Pennsylvania

1.Introduction

Interest in childcare has grown considerably in recent years. All over the world teams of economic developers, business leaders, government policy makers, and childcare experts have come together to measure the size and economic importance of childcare in the economy (Ribeiro & Warner, 2004; Stoney, 2004b).

As in any classroom environment in the world, in US and Turkish classrooms effective teaching and learning takes place only in well-managed classrooms, where teaching and learning can flourish (Ulker et. al., 2012). Finding quality childcare is essential and sometimes women even leave their jobs if not satisfied (Rosin & Korabik, 1990), and it is a source of strain-based struggle (Wallace, 1999). The researcher compared Turkish and Pensilvania systems in terms of licenced non-profit and for-profit kindergardens and day care centers. The early primary school years have been regarded as critical for success in school and one of the biggest challenge the students face is to transition to the first grade of the elementary school (Perry & Weinstein, 1998). Even though daycare centers are compared in similar criteria, Kindergardens are a part of primary education in PA, while being a part of pre-primary education in Turkey. Whereas USA kindergarten is mandatory, Turkish kindergartens are not. Pre-primary education and childcare centers are our target in this study.

2. Methodology

With the document analysis and comparative analysis methods, researcher has reviewed and compared research results and related educational law and policies on early childhood rules and regulations in licensed Turkish and American childcare centers. While Pennsylvania licensing rules has been chosen to be compared for the United States, Turkish daycares have two licencing options; National Education and Private Nursing Home Regulations.

A descriptive and ethnographic research approach was applied to content analysis method to conduct a qualitative research. Altheide (1987) defines this type of research as “the reflexive analysis of documents”. Despite that ethnographic content analysis is less commonly used in educational research; it is a more convenient method for document analyses that is conducted by historians, literary scholars, and other social scientists (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Plummer, 1983). Ethnography is a descriptive science of people and their cultures (Schwartz & Jacobs, 1979). Thus, the subject matter here, who are the human beings that are engaged in meaningful behavior, guide the way the inquiry is developed as well as the orientation of the investigators (Altheide, 1987). As a consequence, character education naturally reflects the characteristics of the culture where it is taught since one of the indications of a good character education is raising good citizens. In this manner, ethnographic content analysis and descriptive approach methods are used to document and analyze the communication of

meaning, also to verify theoretical relationships. The distinction here as Altheide puts it, “is the reflexive and highly interactive nature of the researcher, concepts, data collection and analysis”

Like all ethnographic research, the meaning of a message is assumed to be a reflection of various modes of information exchange, format, rhythm and style (e. g., aural and visual style) as well as in the context of the report itself, and other nuances (Altheide, 1987). Thus, ethnographic content analysis is embedded in constant discovery and constant comparison of relevant situations, settings, styles, images, meanings and nuances (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). That is what we tried to do by comparing the Early Childhood Care Standards of licensed Daycare Centers in Turkey and Pennsylvania, USA.

3. Research Data

The data in this study is obtained from variety of sources such as textbooks, Internet sources, printed literature, and review and research articles about character education systems in both the USA and Turkey. Ethnographic content analysis, thus, is one type of research design that is most appropriate when dealing with such topics. However, while collecting data from the Internet and other sources, the researchers are careful to triangulate the data to verify the integrity of the printed and the Internet sources, textbooks, reports and such.

4. Findings

4.1 Purpose of Early Childhood Education

Depending on the statistics of MEB (National Ministry of Education) there are 27,606 (public+private) pre-primary education centers, 1,115,818 total students, and 48,330 teachers in Turkey in 2009/2010 school year, but the total student number was only 344,741 in 2003/04

(Istatistik, 2010). In 2002 the Turkish population was estimated to be 69.6 million. According to the 2000 census, 35% of Turkey's population is under the age of 18 and 9% are under five (World Bank Group). The projected population is estimated to be 91.3 million by the year 2030 (Turkey Demographic and Health Survey, 1999). Turkish General Directorate for Pre-School Education was established in 1992 according to per law no. 3797 on "The Organization and Duties of the Ministry of National Education". The Directorate plans, programs, executes, monitors and controls education and training services targeted at teachers and students.

In addition to the increase of the young generation in Turkey, expanding women work force also emphasizes the importance of Early Childhood Education. Women's involvement in the workforce is increasing all around the world (Adler & Izraeli, 1994; Davidson & Burke, 2004).

While Turkey has 27,606 United States has more than 60,000 licensed day-care centers, according to the National Association for the Education of Young Children, in Washington (Kunton, 1988). This number is rather similar when the size and the populations of the countries are compared.

When the future of the child is thought experiences gained in the early years of life have an important role in the development of a child (Çağdaş, 1997; Çimen, 2009).

One country's goal should be to up bring smart, self-motivated, courageous and honest nations. The education and the environment should be created depending on its own culture and ethics. Education systems should be compared internationally for perfection but adjustments should be made for uniqueness. Student centered classrooms definitely enhance academic achievement and student behaviors at the preschool and primary school level (Smith & Renzulli, 1984).

4.2 General Requirements

Even though both of the comparibles have non-licensed or family day care providers, only the licenced centers are compared so that the data will be more accurate. In order to get license from legal authorities both USA and Turkey have similarities and differences in laws concerning physical site, fire safety, equipment, inspection and program requirements. Both countries facilitators need to obtain a liability insurance to operate the center. While Turkey does not require it, PA center workers need to report a suspected child abuse in writing to the authorities within 48 hours.

Just like Turkish centers, PA childcare centers need to report a death or serious injury of the child need to the appropriate regional office with in 24 hours.

Both of the countries centers give the parent a permission to enter the facility without previous notice.

Availability of certificate of compliance and applicable regulations should be posted in both countries licensed centers. While PA centers are required to post compliance documents about disability, discrimination, human rights, civil rights acts, and state minimum wage law on a noticeable wall, Turkish centers are only required to post only the minimum wage law.

Emergency plan; while Turkish centers are required to have a brief plan and the staff are required to know it PA centers are required to have a much lengthy one. It needs to include a posting at a conspicuous place with evacuation plan with different exits, fire evacuation drills maximum every sixty days, and different plans for different types of emergencies like terrorism or bomb threat.

While PA childcare centers are open all year other than national holidays, Turkish centers are only required to be open 180 days of the year. Few for-profit centers remain open during the summer for working parents. Also PA centers do not have requirements about lesson length, Turkish centers have lessons that are 50 minutes long, and than followed with a break.

4.3 Facility Persons

Teacher qualifications significantly affect the quality of education provided to young children and that higher qualifications in early childhood education teachers have both short- and long-term positive effects on their students (Kabadayi, 2010). Importance of the education is proven by the researchers who are interested in teaching perceptions of teachers, have found at least minimal support for the supposition in that early childhood educators with more education typically hold different opinions and insights, and may behave differently from teachers with less education (Elicker, Huang, & Wen, 2003; McMullen & Alat, 2002).

The research from the current two decades also confirms that teacher qualifications significantly affect the quality of teaching, opinions, perceptions and education provided to young children (Lazar, Darlington, Murray, Royce, & Snipper, 1982; Oden, Schweinhart, & Weikart, 2000; Phillips, Mekos, Scarr, McCartney, & Abbott- Shim, 2000; Whitebook, Sakai, Gerber, & Howes, 2001) and that higher qualifications in preschool children's teachers contribute to more positive short- and long-term results for these children (Kontos & Wilcox-Herzog, 2001).

In Turkey if the school has two shifts as morning and afternoon; the staff can maximum work forty-two hours a week, but if the center is open only one shift then staff has a thirty hour a week working time. While in PA each staff may have a different kind of contract with the owner, while fourty hours a week is the full-time length of work.

The qualifications for being a childcare director is pretty strict forward in Turkey; directors must have graduated from either 2 or 4 year college with an Early Childhood, Social Services, Psychology or Elementary Teaching Degree. On the other hand PA licensing requirements allow similar majors as long as they have 30 credits of education courses and at least one year of experience.

4.4 Staff-child ratios

Quality of the caregiving and educational processes within child-care centers strongly depends on the “structural” characteristics of the caregiving environment is an accepted fact by many educators. Four structural characteristics have been found to be particularly influential, namely (1) the child – caregiver ratio (i.e., the number of children per caregiver), (2) group size (i.e., the total number of children assigned to a caregiver or team of caregivers), (3) caregiver education and training, and (4) caregiver salary (Lamb, 1998; Vandell & Wolfe, 2000).

In centers with low child-teacher ratios have been found to be less anxious and less aggressive (Howes et al., 1995) and less uninterested and less anxious (Ruopp, Travers, Glantz, & Coelen, 1979) during childcare than children in child-care groups with more children per caregiver.

While Turkish centers have a ratio as follow;

0-2 years old; maximum 10 children in the class with one leading and one assistant teacher (Kurumsal Danismanlik, 2012)

2-6 years old; maximum 20 children with one leading and one assistant teacher.

PA centers are more precise and have smaller groups for children (PACode, 2012)

<i>Similar Age Levels</i>	<i>Staff</i>	<i>Children</i>	<i>Maximum Group Size</i>	<i>Total Number of Staff Required for the Maximum Group Size</i>
Infant	1	4	8	2
Young toddler	1	5	10	2
Older toddler	1	6	12	2
Preschool	1	10	20	2
Young school-age	1	12	24	2
Older school-age	1	15	30	2

The rules when the children are napping are as followed in PA;

<i>Similar Age Level</i>	<i>Staff</i>	<i>Children</i>
Young toddler	1	10
Older toddler	1	12
Preschool	1	20

When the groups are mixed with different age groups PA centers are required the rules depending on the youngest child. But Turkish centers do not allow the groups to be mixed

4.5 Physical Site

From early childhood, the school setting is the extension of the family setting (Cicchetti & Cohen, 2006). Children are more likely to continue to experience social and behavioral problems throughout their schooling if they face this type of problems in the early years of school (Ladd & Price, 1987).

To eliminate the frustration, health and lack-of exercise issues the size of the centers are essential.

Inside; for PA the allowable number of children in a space is determined by dividing the total square feet in a space by 40 (PA Code, 2012) no matter what the age of the child is. Turkish centers require having 2 m² floor space and 6 m³ air space for each child. If we put this into an example; when we have 280 sq ft. area (26 m²); in PA only 7 children are allowed but in Turkey up to 13 children are permitted.

Outside; Trost et. al. 2010; “The result of the review on studies shows that training, staff education, and staff behavior in the playground greatly influences the quality and **randomness** of the physical activity of preschoolers. Besides, the lower playground density as well as open and presence of vegetation in play areas positively affect the emotional and social behaviors of the children.” Supports the idea of having a larger out door play area with trees, vegetables and plants.

4.6 Cost

Inside of the fact that the cost is often assumed to be the most important factor of the type of care parents select, and the relative ‘affordability’ of one type of childcare compared

with others is frequently mentioned by researchers, policy-makers and parents. Still, when childcare choices are researched, (Pungello & Kurtz-Costes 1999) showed that fairly low price is only one of several known characteristics of which parents take account—location, hours and reliability often being equally important.

While non-profit Turkish National Education centers are almost free to students, registration might be complicated since children coming from low-income families, orphans, or who have veteran parent/s have priority. Non-profit centers are required to register at least %5 of the students for free. For profit centers in Turkey on the other hand, may cost in a variety of amounts depending on what they offer just like non-profit PA centers. PA centers are not free but the low-income families might be able to find supporting funds like welfare (Welfare, 2012), or head start (Head start, 2012).

4.7 Child Health

Early childhood ages are important to upbringing healthy individuals and to support the development of a strong population (Van Zandvoort, et.al.2010). Health of the children is very important to create the leaning environment; the density of the centers, contagious sicknesses, and lack of hygiene invite the illnesses. Centers shall do evetything in their power to prevent bad health habits for protection. Both of the countries require a physical exam and shot records at registration. And while it is not a requirement both counties recommend a sink in the room to support frequent hand washing. PA requires that if a child is has symptoms of a disease staff is required to ask the parent to take the child to a physician and not bring her back for 24 hours or until the symptoms disappear. Casually non-transmitted disease carriers cannot be discriminated in both countries.

4.8 Adult Health

A great way to illness-transmission cut down is by insisting on adequate health guidelines and a well-trained staff in the child-care programs who understand importance and ways of illness-prevention (Health and Childcare, 1997). Both countries require a physical exam that was done within one year. While Turkish centers require the physical exam annually and some tests like jaundice every six months, PA centers only need the physical exam every 24 months unless the staff has symptoms of the sickness.

4.9 Nutrition

Nutritional status and health of children in early ages is the combination of complex relations and habits. The way to great nutritious behavior habits should be taught by multi sectors and disciplines (Unusan & Sanlier, 2007). Teachers and researches state that the first five or six years of age is easier to learn to like all foods since children are not born with an ability to choose a nutritious diet (Fuhr & Barclay, 1998). Preschool children are eager to learn and early ages are the times when nutrition education should begin (USDE, 1995).

At Turkish centers the children receive breakfast and lunch if they are attending in the morning, and they receive lunch and snack in the afternoon sessions. The food should be kept in a container for twenty-four hours after the meal. The menu depends on the center and other than sanitation rules there are not many regulations about the nutrition. On the other hand PA centers are required to post the menu at least one week ahead of the time, provide food every for hours and serve one serving from each of the five groups; dairy, protein, fruits, vegetables, and grains for lunch and dinner. Food may not be prepared by the center or the

parent. A child may not be forced to eat and food cannot be withheld from the child for discipline.

For infants; PA centers are required to have a written statement from the parent about the feeding schedule and the formula preference. New foods may not be introduced without consent, disposable nursers and bottles shall have the child's name on them, and the formula may not be heated in the microwave oven. Also an infant six months or younger should be held while being bottle fed.

Both Turkish and PA centers shall conform to the requirements of the Department of Health or the Department of Environmental Resources or its delegate agency where the day care facility is located.

4.10 Transportation

Turkish centers shall provide a driver and a staff for assisting in the transportation vehicles. The driver is responsible from maintaining the vehicle and reporting any changes to the director. PA centers require the children to be picked up and discharged only at locations specified in writing by the facility as safe locations. The staff-child ratios apply in the vehicle as well, and the driver is not counted as staff when infant, toddler, and preschool children are transported. But the driver is considered as staff when school age children are transported. Safety restraints installed in the vehicle at the time of manufacturing shall be used by all occupants, and the manufacturers' instructions for use of safety restraints shall be kept in the vehicle at all times. A school bus with a seating capacity of 16 or more children used in transporting preschool or school-age children is exempt from the requirements about safety restraints. The vehicle shall have insurance, all of the doors shall be locked when in motion, back of a truck and cargo area of a station wagon may not be used for transportation. Children

shall be supervised by the staff who remains outside during boarding and exiting the vehicle, and the children may not be left unattended in a vehicle. A first-aid kit shall be in the vehicle when the children are being transported (PA Code, 2012).

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The fact that children who are secure in their connection display fewer non-adaptive behaviors when they begin at the elementary school's first grade indicates that secure connection is a significant variable in school adaptation (Seven, 2010).

The biggest issue in Turkish centers is the room size versus child numbers. As stated in 3.4. Physical Site above, there is a big difference in the density. Zuraimi et. al. 2008 indicates that ; "increased human related bacteria levels were associated with high occupant densities and irregular floor but regular table cleaning frequencies."

While there are debates about the benefits of mixed age groups, they definitely encourage the idea of being an older and younger sibling. And all centers should be allowed to have pilot centers to experience this (Bailey et.al.,1993)

Definitions

Age level—The grouping category appropriate for the child's age.

(i) *Infant*—A child from birth to 1 year of age.

(ii) *Young toddler*—A child from 1 to 2 years of age.

(iii) *Older toddler*—A child from 2 to 3 years of age.

(iv) *Preschool child*—A child from 3 years of age to the date the child enters kindergarten in a public or private school system

Certificate of compliance—A document issued by the Department to a legal entity permitting the entity to operate a specific type of facility at a specific location for a specific period of time according to applicable Department regulations. A certificate of compliance approves the operation of a facility subject to Article IX of the act (62 P. S. § § 901—922) or licenses the operation of a facility subject to Article X of the act (62 P. S. § § 1001—1087).

Childcare experience—Care for a child in lieu of care by the parent or guardian for part of a 24-hour day. The term includes care of foster children in a court-supervised arrangement. The term does not include care of related children who reside with an individual. The term does not include supervised onsite training in the case of a student who is fulfilling the requirements of a secondary or postsecondary childcare training or educational curriculum.

Child day care center—The premises in which care is provided at any one time for seven or more children unrelated to the operator.

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Department—The Department of Public Welfare of the Commonwealth.

Facility—A child day care center.

Facility person—A staff person, a substitute staff person, a volunteer, a food service person, a janitorial person or another adult who serves in or is employed by a facility.

Fire protection professional—An individual knowledgeable and competent in fire inspections, fire detection, fire suppression systems and practices, fire service training, emergency preparedness planning and emergency evacuation whose competence is demonstrated by membership in a professional organization which promotes fire safety education.

Group—Children assigned to the care of one or two staff persons. A group occupies a space or a defined part of a space.

Legal entity—A person, society, corporation, governing authority or partnership that is legally responsible for the administration of one facility or several facilities, or one type of facility or several types of facilities.

Mobile Kindergarten—Aiming at developing pre-primary education, mobile kindergarten is an alternative implementation to institution based pre-primary education for children of low-income families aged 36-72 months who cannot attend pre-primary education institutions.

Night care—Care for a child between the hours of 7 p.m. and 7 a.m.

Operator—The legal entity or a person designated by the legal entity to serve as the facility director.

Parent—The biological or adoptive mother or father or the guardian of the child.

Pre-Primary Education—Pre-primary education; involves the education of children in the age group of 3 to 5 who have not reached the age of compulsory primary education, on an optional basis. Pre-primary education institutions may be established as independent

kindergartens or, where considered necessary, as nursery classes within a primary education school or as practice classes affiliated to other related education institutions.

Space—Indoor or outdoor area designed for childcare that is large enough to accommodate the maximum number of children allowed under this chapter. A space may be used by more than one group of children.

Staff person—A person included in the regulatory ratio who is responsible for childcare activities.

Supervise—To be physically present with a group of children or with the facility person under supervision. Critical oversight in which the supervisor can see, hear, direct and assess the activity of the supervisee.

Volunteer—A person 16 years of age or older who is not included in the regulatory ratio and who assists in implementing daily program activities under the supervision of a staff person.

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