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Analysis of the Expectation Levels of the Parents from the Preschool Education Institution in Terms of Various Variables

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ABSTRACT

Many variables can affect the expectation levels of the parents from the preschool education institution. In the current research, whether the parents' expectation levels from the preschool education institution show statistical discrepancy according to the (a) education backgrounds of the parents and (b) parents' monthly total income levels has been researched. As the research is in the survey model, the parents of the children getting preschool education from the 18 elementary schools and three kindergartens located in the Centrum of province of Kastamonu in Turkey (427 mothers-307 fathers) have participated to the research. "A Quality Scale for Preschool Education Institutions (QSPEI)" which has been developed by the researcher has been used with the aim of collecting data for the research. In the analysis of the data, one-way analysis of variance (Anova) has been applied. As a result of the research, it has been found that the parents' expectation levels from the preschool education institution show significance in terms of pedagogical quality and physical quality according to both variables of education backgrounds and monthly total income levels. In the researches to be made after this, it is required that the parents' expectation levels from the preschool education institution should be revealed with the qualitative studies and it is believed that revealing how much the changing technological opportunities and changing childhood affect these levels will make contributions to the field.

Key Words: Preschool education, parent expectations, quality in the preschool education

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INTRODUCTION

When the studies dealing with the short and long term effects of the preschool period in the human life are analyzed, it is observed that the children's developments can be supported with the care and education at the highest level and these developments can positively affect the various fields of the person's life (Gülay & Akman, 2009). This period is the years in which the child development gains speed. The education given in this period gives direction to the child's future. In the realized researches, it has been observed that the majority of the behaviors acquired in the childhood years has shaped the individual's personality structure, attitude, habit, belief and standard of judgment in the adulthood (Şahin, 2005). The preschool education is a very important step in the socialization process of the child and this education is required to be given in a way which is appropriate to the child's age, individual characteristics and needs. The benefit that the preschool education to be started to be given at the early age will provide to the child, his/her family and community is an unquestionable reality. From this reality, the idea that every child should get education at the smallest age possible has arisen (Güven & Azkeskin, 2010).

In the developed communities, the most productive investment is perceived to be the investment made to the preschool education. Because, a qualified education in this period will decrease the costs of education and training in the forthcoming periods. For example, growing of individuals who have good personalities and learn to look positively to the life and who are conscious of social communication and their own capabilities will minimize the social problems that will appear in the future, introduce much academically successful individuals and therefore there will be easiness in the forthcoming lives of the individuals.

The entrance to the preschool education institution causes big changes in child's own world. The social environment of the preschool period is significantly different than the home. Primarily, the children meet some adults who are not their own parents, but who are clearly certain to be authority figures. Also, when s/he enters to the preschool period, s/he meets with many children most of who are strangers for him/her, who s/he has never seen or established interaction in his/her own home environment. In addition to these newly met adults and other children, there is also the preschool institution itself. The ecological characteristics, content, physical and visual nature of the preschool environment are especially the most attractive side for the child. The preschool environments can change; however, many of them do not resemble to home in ecological terms. When it is considered from the point of the view of the child, the preschool institution looks very bigger than home due to the general size of the ecological area. In due time, the children discover their common interests and a common peer culture starts to appear in the preschool institution (Corsaro, 2001).

The results of the long term researches showing that the qualified training and care services given in the preschool period have positive reflections in the elementary schools have been observed (Ellen & Noreen, 2004). A qualified preschool education will cause that the children will be successful at their schools, will be better citizens, therefore there will be less crimes in the future. Also, it will decrease the education costs in the future (Camlan & Tarr-Whelan, 2005).

Especially, the researches questioning the quality in the last ten years are gathered under three main titles. These can be classified as follows: Researches discussing the physical structure of the schools and quality of the materials (Warash, Ed, Ward & Rotilie, 2007; Güven, 2009), researches including quality quests for training teachers (Sheridan & Samvelsson, 2001; Ying hu & Szente, 2009; Hyson, Tomlinson & Morris; 2009; Barnett & Frede, 2010) and researches examining whole structure (Dora, 2007; Rao & Li, 2009; Niikko & Nuutren, 2009; Pan, Liu & Lav, 2010; Hughes, 2010).

In raising the education's quality, the education environments (Houlihan, 1988), socio-economic levels of the students, training of the families, general structure of the institutions training teachers and most importantly, the professional qualifications of the teachers come into prominence (Monkevičienė & Stankevičienė, 2011). According to Wortham (2006), for a qualified training, the application of programmes, physical structure of the schools, income sources and their usages and salaries of the teachers should closely be followed as well as the pedagogical information of the teachers.

The fundamental objective of the current research is to analyze the expectation levels of the parents from the education institutions in terms of various variables. Within the content of this aim, the following questions will be answered:

1. Is there a significant discrepancy between the educational backgrounds of the parents and their levels of expectations from the preschool education institution?
2. Is there a significant discrepancy between the monthly total income levels of the parents and their levels of expectations from the preschool education institution?

METHOD

As the research is in the survey model, the expectation levels of parents from the preschool education institution have been analyzed in terms of various variables. The researches in the survey model aims to define the previous and existing situation as it is (Karasar, 2004).

Study Group

The parents of the children getting preschool education from the 18 elementary schools and three kindergartens located in the Centrum of province of Kastamonu in Turkey (427 mothers-307 fathers) have participated to the research. The demographical information related to the parents participating to the research has been given in the Table 1.

Data Collecting Instrument

A *Quality Scale for Preschool Education Institutions (QSPEI)* which has been developed by the researcher has been used with the aim of collecting data for the research. This scale which is composed of 54 articles consists of two factors as pedagogical quality (29 articles) and quality of physical environments (25 articles). The scale has been prepared as five-point likert type (1-I Strongly disagree, 2-I Disagree, 3-Undecided, 4-I Agree, 5- I Strongly agree), and the data has been collected as a result of the scoring of the answers that the participants have given to the scale questions. The factor load of the scale takes values between the values of 0,48-0,70 in the lower

dimension of the pedagogical characteristics and between the values of 0,46–0,74 in the lower dimension of the physical characteristics. The reliability of the scale has been found as . 96 as Cronbach Alpha value (Kildan, 2012a).

Table 1. Demographical characteristics of the parents participating to the research

| Parents that have participated to the research | | F | % |
|--|------------------------------|-----|--------|
| Mother | | 427 | 58,20 |
| Father | | 307 | 41,80 |
| Total | | 734 | 100,00 |
| Educational Background | Graduate of primary school | 157 | 21,40 |
| | Graduate of secondary school | 108 | 14,70 |
| | Graduate of high school | 251 | 34,20 |
| | Graduate of university | 218 | 29,70 |
| | Total | 734 | 100,00 |
| Monthly Total incomes | 600 TL and less | 84 | 11,40 |
| | Between 601-1200 TL | 258 | 35,10 |
| | Between 1201-1800 TL | 148 | 20,20 |
| | Between 1801-2400 TL | 97 | 13,20 |
| | 2401 and more | 147 | 20,00 |
| | Total | 734 | 100,00 |

Analysis of Data

The data related to 734 parents have been entered to SPSS package programme, and primarily, the frequency and percentages of the study group forming the demographical information have been determined. The classifications have been controlled for the comparisons and it has been reached to the conclusion that the distributions are appropriate for the comparisons. With the aim of determining whether there is a significant difference in the answers that the parents give to “A Quality Scale for Preschool Education Institutions” in terms of their educational background and monthly total incomes, the one-way variance analysis (Anova) of the answers given to the scale articles has been used separately in terms of pedagogical characteristics and physical characteristics and as discrepancy is found between the groups as a result of the one-way variance analysis, the post-hoc scheffe test has been applied with the aim of determining source of discrepancies.

Findings

When the sub-problems of the research are considered, the findings have been gathered under two headings: *Expectations of Parents from the Preschool education institution and their educational backgrounds*, *Expectations of Parents from the Preschool education institution and their income levels*.

Expectations of Parents from the Preschool education institution and their educational backgrounds

The Single Factor Variance analysis (One-Way Anova) has been realized with the aim of determining whether the answers that 734 parents participating to the research have given to “A Quality Scale for Preschool Education Institutions” show significance according to the educational backgrounds of the parents in terms of both pedagogical quality and physical characteristics and the results have been given in the Table 2.

As it is seen in the Table 2, the analysis results have shown significance for the expectations of the parents from the preschool education institution in both dimension of pedagogical quality ($F_{(3-730)}=10,16$, $p<.05$) and in terms of physical quality ($F_{(3-730)}=11,97$, $p<.05$) according to the variable of educational background. With the aim of determining between which educational backgrounds the significance appearing in terms of pedagogical and physical quality is, the Scheffe test has been applied. As a result of the test, in the dimension of pedagogical quality, it has been determined that the university graduate parents ($\bar{X}=128,42$) have higher expectations from the preschool education institution than the primary school graduate parents ($\bar{X}=122,83$), and than the secondary school graduate parents ($\bar{X}=123,84$) and than the high school graduate parents ($\bar{X}=124,61$).

Table 2: Results of Single Factor Variance Analysis of Expectations of Parents from the Preschool Education Institution according to their Educational Backgrounds

| | Educational Background | N | \bar{X} | S | F | P | Difference |
|---------------------|------------------------------|-----|-----------|-------|-------|------|--|
| Pedagogical Quality | Graduate of Primary school | 157 | 122,83 | 11,72 | 10,16 | .000 | University – Primary school University – Secondary school University – High school |
| | Graduate of secondary school | 108 | 123,84 | 11,76 | | | |
| | Graduate of high school | 251 | 124,61 | 10,29 | | | |
| | Graduate of university | 218 | 128,42 | 9,40 | | | |
| Physical Quality | Graduate of Primary school | 157 | 112,29 | 11,17 | 11,97 | .000 | University – Primary school University – Secondary school University – High school |
| | Graduate of secondary school | 108 | 114,17 | 11,10 | | | |
| | Graduate of high school | 251 | 114,33 | 10,85 | | | |
| | Graduate of university | 218 | 118,45 | 8,94 | | | |

Similarly, also in the dimension of physical quality, it has been determined that the university graduate parents (\bar{X} =118,45) have higher expectations from the preschool education institution than the primary school graduate parents (\bar{X} =112,29), and than the secondary school graduate parents (\bar{X} =114,17) and than the high school graduate parents (\bar{X} =114,33).

Expectations of Parents from the Preschool education institution and their income levels

The Single Factor Variance analysis (One-Way Anova) has been realized with the aim of determining whether the answers that 734 parents participating to the research have given to “A Quality Scale for Preschool Education Institutions” show significance according to the monthly total income levels of the parents in terms of both pedagogical quality and physical characteristics and the results have been given in the Table 3.

Table 3: Results of Single Factor Variance Analysis of Expectations of Parents from the Preschool Education Institution according to their monthly total income levels

| | Income level | N | \bar{X} | S | F | P | Difference |
|---------------------|----------------------|-----|-----------|-------|-------|------|---|
| Pedagogical Quality | 600 TL and less | 84 | 120,43 | 11,77 | 11,99 | .000 | 2400 TL and more --600 TL and less 2400 TL and more – between 601-1200 TL 2400 TL and more – between 1201-1800 TL Between 1801-2400 TL --600 TL and less Between 1801-2400 TL— between 601 1200 TL Between 1801-2400 TL – between 1201-1800 TL |
| | Between 601-1200 TL | 258 | 123,98 | 10,62 | | | |
| | Between 1201-1800 TL | 148 | 124,60 | 10,86 | | | |
| | Between 1801-2400 TL | 147 | 128,29 | 9,49 | | | |
| | 2401 and more | 97 | 129,17 | 9,64 | | | |
| Physical Quality | 600 TL and less | 84 | 110,05 | 10,63 | 13,57 | .000 | 2400 TL and more --600 TL and less 2400 TL and more –between 601-1200 TL Between 1801-2400 TL --600 TL and less Between 1801-2400 TL – Between 601-1200 TL Between 1801-2400 TL -- Between 1201-1800 TL |
| | Between 601-1200 TL | 258 | 113,50 | 10,81 | | | |
| | Between 1201-1800 TL | 148 | 115,02 | 11,25 | | | |
| | Between 1801-2400 TL | 147 | 118,14 | 8,50 | | | |
| | 2401 and more | 97 | 119,17 | 9,30 | | | |

As seen in Table 3, the analysis results have shown significance for the expectations of the parents from the preschool education institution in both dimension of pedagogical quality ($F_{(4-729)}=11,99$ $p<.05$) and in terms of physical quality ($F_{(4-729)}=13,57$, $p<.05$) according to the variable of the monthly total income level. With the aim of determining between which monthly total income levels the significance appearing in terms of pedagogical and physical quality is, the Scheffe test has been applied. As a result of the test, in the dimension of pedagogical quality, it has been determined that the parents having monthly total income of 2400 TL and more ($\bar{X}=129,17$) have higher expectations from the preschool education institution than the parents having monthly total income of 600 TL and less ($\bar{X}=120,43$), and than the parents having monthly total income between 601-1200 TL ($\bar{X}=123,98$) and than the parents having monthly total income of 1201-1800 TL ($\bar{X}=124,60$). Similarly, in the dimension of physical quality, it has been determined that the parents having monthly total income between 1801- 2400 TL ($\bar{X}=128,29$) have higher expectations from the preschool education institution than the parents having monthly total income of 600 TL and less ($\bar{X}=120,43$), and than the parents having monthly total income between 601-1200 TL ($\bar{X}=123,98$) and than the parents having monthly total income of 1201-1800 TL ($\bar{X}=124,60$). Also, in the dimension of physical quality, it has been determined that the parents having monthly total income of 2400 TL and more ($\bar{X}=119,17$) have higher expectations from the preschool education institution than the parents having monthly total income of 600 TL and less ($\bar{X}=110,05$), and than the parents having monthly total income between 601-1200 TL ($\bar{X}=113,50$). Similarly, in the dimension of physical quality, it has been determined that the parents having monthly total income between 1801- 2400 TL ($\bar{X}=118,14$) have higher expectations from the preschool education institution than the parents having monthly total income of 600 TL and less ($\bar{X}=110,05$), and than the parents having monthly total income between 601-1200 TL ($\bar{X}=113,50$) and than the parents having monthly total income between 1201-1800 TL ($\bar{X}=115,02$).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Many variables can affect the expectation levels of the parents from the preschool education institution. In the current research, whether the parents' expectation levels from the preschool education institution show statistical discrepancy according to the (a) education backgrounds of the parents and (b) parents' monthly total income levels has been researched. As the research is in the survey model, the parents of the children getting preschool education from the 18 elementary schools and three kindergartens located in the Centrum of province of Kastamonu in Turkey (427 mothers-307 fathers) have participated to the research. "A Quality Scale for Preschool Education Institutions (QSPEI)" which has been developed by the researcher has been used with the aim of collecting data for the research. In the analysis of the data, one-way analysis of variance (Anova) has been applied; when there is discrepancy between the groups in the one-way analysis of variance, the post-hoc scheffe test has also been applied with the aim of determining the source of discrepancies.

As a result of the research, it has been found that the parents' expectation levels from the preschool education institution show significance in the dimension of pedagogical quality and in terms of physical quality according to variable of educational backgrounds. In the research that Tokuç (2007) has realized, it has been observed as directly related with the current research that while the educational level of the parents increase, their opinions to send their children to the kindergarten at early ages become more evident. Therefore, as the education level of the parents increases, their expectations from the preschool education also increase; this situation causes them to want to make their children meet with the preschool education at earlier ages.

Kildan (2012b) has taken the opinions of the teachers and parents regarding the objective of the preschool education in his research. According to the results of the research, the significant discrepancies have been observed related to the objective of the preschool education in both dimensions of preparation to the school and preparation to the life. While it has been found that the preschool teachers care the objective of the preschool education more according to the other branch teachers, it has also been observed that the parents care the objective of the preschool education more according to the teachers.

As a result of the research, it has also been found that the parents' expectation levels from the preschool education institution show significance in the dimension of pedagogical quality and in

terms of physical quality according to the variable of monthly total income levels. Therefore, while the parents' monthly total income levels increase, their expectation levels from the preschool education institution also increase.

In the research that Metin and others (1993) have realized, the expectations of the parents from the kindergarten have been tried to be revealed; as a result of the research, it has been observed that the parent pay attention especially to the quality of the education and characteristics of the trainers while selecting the kindergarten. Similarly, in the research that Tokuç (2007) has realized, it has also been observed that the school's education understanding and references that they get from the other persons are utmost effective in the selection of kindergarten by the parents.

Köksal (2002) has mentioned in his research called factors affecting the selection of the preschool education institution by parents of 3-6 age group children that the working mothers care the physical conditions of the schools more than the mothers who are not working and similarly, the caring levels of working mothers are also higher than the nonworking mothers again in the educational environment.

In the researches to be made after this, it is required that the parents' expectation levels from the preschool education institution should be revealed with the qualitative studies and it is believed that revealing how much the changing technological opportunities and changing childhood affect these levels will make contributions to the field.

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