

Factors That Affect Psycho-Social Development of Preschool Children in Terms of Art Activities: Family and Teacher of Variables

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People living in a society need socialization. While maintaining social relations, they learn behaviors approved by the society. Through art education, which is applied in preschool education, planned studying habits, taking responsibilities, cooperating, helping, developing solidarity habit and building positive relations with others are taught to the children. However, the environment is an important factor in the psycho-social development of children. In this research, the psycho-social development of six-year-old children that attended preschool in affect of sosyo-cultural level, educational level of parents, the year of attending preschool, sosyo-economic level, gender, number of sibling and the status and graduation program of the teacher, has been investigated. Psycho-social Behaviors Scale for Preschoolers developed by Turkish Psychology Union Preschool Committee (1998) was applied to designate the psycho-social development. The sample is composed of 119 children. Different art activities of children attending preschools were recorded by camera and the psycho-social behaviors were assessed by two observers in four months. The correlation among the scores, which was given by the two observers, was calculated, and the averages of the two observers' scores were used. Data were tested through the Pearson moments multiplication correlation coefficient, regression analysis. As the result of the research, it was found that parents' sosyo-cultural level, sosyo-economic level, parents' education level, number of sibling, the year of attending preschool and status of teachers explained and predicted psycho-social development level six-year-old children that attend preschool.

Keywords: art education, psycho-social development, preschool education

Introduction

People living in a society need socialization. Social relations in cultural conditions affect both the society and the structure of the individuals. Therefore, individuals spend their lives seeking to adapt to environment (Yavuzer, 1998). After birth, in his/her struggle for adapting to physical and social environment, a child gets the biggest support from his/her parents. Parents and the other members' interaction with a child determine the place of the child in the family. The attitudes towards the child and socialization opportunities provided to the child are of significant importance in this period (Yavuzer, 1994; Eminoğlu, 2007). The pattern of the attitudes

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of the child toward society and social lives, and how well she/he get on with others largely depend on the learning experiences in his/her early years. Through their experiences, children gain both positive behaviors like love, cooperation and negative behaviors like aggressiveness. What type of behavior the child has will largely depends on social learning experiences and the models around him/her. The development of social behaviors is generally determined by particular experiences (Morgan, 1991). Therefore, family and the individuals in the family are prominent models for learning social behaviors. The child takes family's identification models and learns their own way of life through imitation (Yavuzer, 1998).

Children learn many social behaviors from their families and other adults till they come to preschool education institution. Once a child starts school, family members who are important role models are replaced by teachers. In a child's life, the second most important person and social institution after his/her family are teachers and schools (Artut, 2006). The child learns not only the socially-accepted behaviors at school but also the ways to get into effective communication with adults other than his/her family members and peers (Senemoğlu, 1994). The behaviors of the children at school affect their social behaviors and help them understand themselves better. The attitudes and behaviors of the teacher are important factors in children's acquisitions of positive social behaviors.

The children in preschool period are in the search of new and need friends who can help them develop their creativeness and artistic process and with whom they can communicate and express themselves and cooperate (Artut, 2006). In early childhood, one of the aims and objectives of visual art instruction is to provide children with opportunity to work together and organize and manage artistic activity they plan as a group and develop children's self-confidence and independence (Arda, 2009; Nikoltos, 2000). With visual art activities, the children are taught to work in planned way, take over responsibility, work in cooperation and develop positive relations with others, solve problems, share ideas with his/her peers, respect others artistic works and are given opportunities to exhibit these psycho-social behaviors they acquire (Arda, 2009; Abacı, 2003; Aral, Yaşar, & Kandır, 2002; Nikoltos, 2000; Şahin, 2004; Gel, 1994).

Today in education processes, besides academic skills, it is important for children to develop psycho-social skills—a belief based on the assumption that social development is also a basis (Akkök, 1999). Psycho-social skill is to develop positive relationships with peer groups, family and teachers. More specifically, psycho-social skill can be explained with basic skills as balancing emotions, social skills and positive communication skills. The psycho-social skills of the children can be product of many factors (Brophy-Herb, Lee, Nievar, & Stollak, 2007). Both family and school are important in shaping psycho-social development and explaining it. Therefore, this study sought to determine family and teachers' characteristics which affect psycho-social development of preschool children and some suggestions about early interventions were proposed.

Problem

The aim of this study is to find out whether there is a significant relation between psycho-social development scores of six-year-old children attending preschool education and the socio-cultural environment they live in, socio-economic level, parents' education level, number of siblings, gender, the length of attendance to preschool education, the length of service of the teacher, or the type of school the teacher graduated from, and whether these factors interpret psycho-social development of children at a significant level.

Methodology

The Research Design

The behaviors of the children in the study group of art activities (paper works, material studies, project studies, paint works and dough activities) were recorded with a secret camera for four months. Observation method is a data collection method by observing people in different environments for various behaviors. Observation is a technique which allows collecting data about all observable behaviors of the individuals one by one or as a group without changing the conditions of the individuals, and as it is suitable for development and socialization features it finds a larger place in preschool education institutions. However, the observation method has some limitations which particularly stem from the observer himself/herself (Kepçeoğlu, 1996). Therefore, two observers scored psycho-social behaviors of the children independently for each activity and each recording to reduce observer-related limitations and collect data objectively. Before data were assessed the correlation coefficient between the scores of the two observers and their coefficient value was found to be $R = 90.204$, $P < 0.01$. These two values indicate that the relation between the scores the two observers gave is high. In the assessment of data the mean score the two observers gave was used.

The Subjects

The universe of the study is composed of six-year-old children attending preschool education in Konya, Turkey. The study group of four schools from high socio-cultural environment, four schools from middle socio-cultural environment and four schools from low socio-cultural environment with random clustering method, and 119 children from the same schools were chosen with random element sampling.

Measurement

Psycho-social Behaviors Scale for Preschool Children developed by Turkish Psychology Union Preschool Committee (1998) and forms were used to collect data for the study.

Psycho-social behaviors scale for preschool children. The scale is designed in Likert type with five choices. The Alfa coefficient was calculated to be 0.89 for all items of the scale, and it was stated that the inner-consistency of the form was high (Ekinçi-Vural, 2006). Higher scores from observation form indicate that the development level of the child in this field is high.

Data Analysis

In statistical analysis of data, Pearson correlation coefficient, simple linear regression analysis and arithmetic mean and standard deviation values were used.

Results and Discussion

In this section, first of all, the Pearson correlation coefficient and regression analysis results related to the factors which can affect psycho-social development of children were given. Later on, arithmetic means and standard deviation values for each factor were given to see these factors are in favor of which group.

In Table 1, the relation between demographic characteristics of six-year-old children attending preschool education, teacher related variables and psycho-social development level scores was examined with Pearson correlation coefficient. There found negative significant relation between socio-cultural environment in which the children live and psycho-social development scores, the number of siblings and psycho-social development

scores. There found negative significant relation between teachers' length of service and psycho-social development scores. We found: (1) There was positive significant relation between psycho-social development scores and mothers' education level, father education level, length of preschool education, socio-economic level of family; (2) There was not any significant relation between psycho-social development scores and gender, and the type of school the teacher graduated from.

Table 1

The Relations Between the Demographic Characteristics, Teacher-Related Factors and Psycho-Social Development Levels of Six-Year-Old Children Attending Preschool Education

Variable	Psycho-social development	
Socio-cultural environment	$R = -0.420$	$P = 0.000^{**}$
Gender	$R = 0.037$	$P = 0.691$
Mother education level	$R = 0.432$	$P = 0.000^{**}$
Father education level	$R = 0.341$	$P = 0.000^{**}$
Number of siblings	$R = -0.264$	$P = 0.004^{**}$
The length of attendance to preschool education	$R = 0.397$	$P = 0.000^{**}$
Social-economic level	$R = 0.593$	$P = 0.000^{**}$
Type of school the teacher graduated from	$R = -0.103$	$P = 0.263$
The length of service of the teacher	$R = -0.208$	$P = 0.023^*$

Notes. * $P < 0.05$; ** $P < 0.01$.

When Table 2 is examined, results indicate that the socio-cultural environment in which six-year-old children attending preschool education predicts their psycho-social development scores ($R = 0.420$, $R^2 = 0.176$, $F = 25.060$, $P < 0.01$). The socio-cultural environment of children explains 17.6% of total variance in psycho-social development. The gender of six-year-old children attending preschool education does not predict psycho-social development scores ($R = 0.037$, $R^2 = 0.001$, $F = 0.159$, $P > 0.01$). Mothers' education level of six-year-old children attending preschool education predicts psycho-social development scores ($R = 0.432$, $R^2 = 0.187$, $F = 26.897$, $P < 0.01$), and explains 18.7% of total variance in psycho-social development. Father education level of six-year-old children attending preschool education predicts psycho-social development scores ($R = 0.341$, $R^2 = 0.116$, $F = 15.400$, $P < 0.01$), and explains 11.6% of total variance in psycho-social development. Numbers of siblings of six-year-old children attending preschool education predict psycho-social development scores ($R = 0.264$, $R^2 = 0.070$, $F = 8.746$, $P < 0.01$) and explains 7.0% of total variance in psycho-social development. Length of preschool education of six-year-old children attending preschool education predicts psycho-social development scores ($R = 0.397$, $R^2 = 0.158$, $F = 21.908$, $P < 0.01$), and explains 15.8% of total variance in psycho-social development. Socio-economic level of families of preschool education of six-year-old children attending preschool education predicts psycho-social development scores ($R = 0.593$, $R^2 = 0.352$, $F = 63.535$, $P < 0.01$), and explains 35.2% of total variance in psycho-social development. Type of school the teachers of six-year-old children attending preschool education does not predict psycho-social development scores ($R = 0.103$, $R^2 = 0.011$, $F = 1.267$, $P > 0.01$). Length of service of the teachers of preschool education of six-year-old children attending preschool education predicts psycho-social development scores ($R = 0.208$, $R^2 = 0.043$, $F = 5.278$, $P < 0.05$), and explains 4.3% of total variance in psycho-social development. When *t*-test results of the regression coefficients' significance were examined, it was seen that the most significant

predictive one is the family's socio-economic level ($\beta = 0.593$; $t = 7.971$), which is followed by mothers' education level ($\beta = 0.432$; $t = 5.186$), socio-cultural environment in which children live ($\beta = 0.420$; $t = 5.006$), the length of preschool education ($\beta = 0.397$, $t = 4.681$), fathers' education level ($\beta = 0.341$; $t = 3.924$), the number of siblings ($\beta = -0.264$; $t = -2.957$) and the teacher's length of service ($\beta = -0.208$; $t = -2.297$). The authors were seen that gender ($\beta = 0.399$; $t = 0.691$), and the type of school the teacher graduated ($\beta = -0.103$; $t = -1.125$) do not predict children's psycho-social development of children.

Table 2

Explanation of Psycho-social Development by Demographic Characteristics of Six-Year-Old Children Attending Preschool and Teacher-Related Variables

Variable	R	R ²	F	B	S. Error	Beta	t	P
Socio-cultural environment	0.420	0.176	25.060	-13.744	2.745	-0.420	-5.006	0.000**
Gender	0.037	0.001	0.159	1.997	5.007	0.037	0.399	0.691
Mothers' education level	0.432	0.187	26.897	13.799	2.661	0.432	5.186	0.000**
Fathers' education level	0.341	0.116	15.400	11.477	2.925	0.341	3.924	0.000**
Number of siblings	0.264	0.070	8.746	-8.460	2.861	-0.264	-2.957	0.004**
Length of attendance to preschool education	0.397	0.158	21.908	8.899	1.901	0.397	4.681	0.000**
Social-economic level	0.593	0.352	63.535	14.105	1.770	0.593	7.971	0.000**
Type of school the teacher graduated	0.103	0.011	1.267	-2.676	2.378	-0.103	-1.125	0.263
Length of service of the teacher	0.208	0.043	5.278	-6.950	3.025	-0.208	-2.297	0.023*

Notes. * $P < 0.05$; ** $P < 0.01$; R = Correlation; R² = R Square; F = One Way Anova Result; B = Unstandardized Coefficients; Beta = Standardized Coefficients; t = t-test for independent groups result; P = significance level.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics on Six-Year-Old Children's Psycho-social Development Levels in Terms of Socio-cultural Environment, Mothers' Education Level, Fathers' Education Level and Socio-Economic Level Variables

Socio-cultural level	N	\bar{X}	Sd	Mothers' education	N	\bar{X}	Sd
High cultural level	39	157.769	24.056	Primary school	47	127.936	23.165
Middle cultural level	41	131.365	21.652	High school	36	138.861	25.918
Low cultural level	39	130.281	24.991	University	36	155.777	23.595
Socio-economic level	N	\bar{X}	Sd	Fathers' education	N	\bar{X}	Sd
0-750 TL	29	123.379	23.885	Primary school	27	126.888	22.898
750-1,500 TL	48	132.708	23.788	High school	40	135.750	27.540
More than 1,500 TL	31	165.645	12.531	University	52	149.307	24.434

According to Table 3, results indicate that as children's cultural level, mothers of children education level, father of children education socio-economic level of families of children decrease, their psycho-social development score means decrease as well. Psycho-social behaviors are learned later by taking models. Individuals' families and the people around the individuals are prominent models for learning psycho-social behaviors. Children do not only learn to help each other, cooperation, but also learn behaviors like crying, hitting and offence (Morgan, 1991; Oğuzkan & Oral, 1990). Moreover, it is highly probable that families in good economic condition and with high education level strengthen social skills of their preschool children by having confident and respectful family strategies (Brophy-Herb et al., 2007). It can be attributed to the fact that parents

with higher level of education take over more responsibilities about children and their development and their being suitable models for psycho-social development as they share more things with their children (Morgan, 1991). Er-Gazeloğlu (2000) and Brophy-Herb et al. (2007) found that as parent education level increase, psycho-social development scores increase, and parent education levels have a negative significant relation with problematic social behaviors and social skills. This can be attributed to the fact that families with high socio-economic levels do not experience financial stress and support the activities in which children can socialize, and spend more time with their children as they do not have socio-economic worries (Morris & Gennetian, 2003). The findings of the study are supported by Öğretir's (1999), Berger, Paxson, and Waldfogel's (2005) and Brophy-Herb et al. (2007) that family's socio-economic level has a significant effect on social behaviors.

There is no difference between psycho-social development mean scores of girls and boys ((girls: \bar{X} = 138.875; sd = 26.862); (boys: \bar{X} = 140.872; sd = 26.445)). Gizir (2002), Çimen (2000), Eminoğlu (2007), Baran (2005), Brophy-Herb et al. (2007) found that gender does not have significant effect on social development of children.

The psycho-social development scores of the children with no sibling or with one sibling are higher than those of the children with two siblings or more than two siblings: ((no sibling \bar{X} = 143.607, sd = 26.791); (one sibling: \bar{X} = 145.868, sd = 25.662); (two sibling: \bar{X} = 121.409, sd = 19.030); (more than two siblings: \bar{X} = 128.750, sd = 23.444)). Most of the social behaviors are based on family-learning or taking models provided by family members. The fact that children with two or more than two siblings have lower psycho-social development scores can stem from their taking negative behaviors of their siblings as models. Moreover, children's psycho-social development scores can be significantly affected by the environment they live in. Öğretir (1999) and Çimen (2000) found that the number of siblings affects psycho-social development. However, it contradicts with Eminoğlu's (2007) finding that the number of siblings is not significant in children's social development.

Result show that as the length of preschool education children receive increases, their psycho-social development mean scores increase as well ((No previous preschool education: \bar{X} = 132.845, sd = 26.061); (attending preschool for one year: \bar{X} = 134.090; sd = 24.663); (attending preschool for two year: \bar{X} = 145.235, sd = 24.4459); (attending preschool for three year: \bar{X} = 162.2000, sd = 17.772)). Preschool education institutions bring children together in an educational and healthy environment and help them internalize the cultural values of the society he/she lives in, a child can acquire appropriate behaviors better in this environment. The child can learn accepting himself/herself and others, protecting his/her rights and respect others' rights, appropriate behaviors by internalizing cultural values, expressing himself/herself independently, establishing his/her own rules which will also be adopted by everyone, helping each other, cooperation, waiting his/her turn, realizing the responsibility he/she takes over and compromising in preschool education environment (Mangır, 1987; Baykan et al., 1994). The findings of the study are supported by Dinç (2002), Eminoğlu (2007), Çimen (2000) and Baran's (2005) findings that the lengths of attendance to preschool education affect children's psycho-social development. Teachers graduation status do not affect children's psycho-social developments ((High school graduation status: \bar{X} = 165.285, sd = 10.546); (associate degree: \bar{X} = 135.101, sd = 29.737); (bachelor's degree: \bar{X} = 139.237, sd = 23.755)). This result can be attributed to the fact that in children's psycho-social development family characteristics and the attitudes and behaviors of teachers are more important than teacher graduation status. Teachers' length of service affects children

psycho-social development ((6-10 years: $\bar{X} = 147.489$, $sd = 25.283$); (11-15 years: $\bar{X} = 133.609$, $sd = 25.722$); (more than 15 years: $\bar{X} = 135.000$, $sd = 27.538$)). This can stem from the fact that younger teachers believe that psycho-social development is as important as academic success and learn how to support their students' psycho-social developments with art activities in their teacher training periods.

Conclusions and Suggestions

When the research results are assessed, it is seen that family-related factors predict psycho-social development scores. The following suggestions can be made in line with the findings of the study:

(1) Preschool education should be compulsory and the society can be supported to start preschool education at an early age;

(2) The most disadvantageous group for psycho-social development is the one which has grown up in low socio-cultural environment. Therefore, in making preschool education widespread, the place with such characteristics can be given priority;

(3) Considering that peer interaction is important in children's psycho-social development, social activities to which children in disadvantageous groups who can subscribe free of charge can be organized, and they can be encouraged to participate these activities.

In the study it was found that parent factors are significant in accounting for children's psycho-social development. Therefore, studies on parent behaviors and children's psycho-social developments can be carried out to determine which behaviors of parents prevent children's psycho-social development.

To examine age-related changes in children's psycho-social development, studies of different age groups from different socio-cultural environments can be conducted.

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