

Abdülkadir Kabadayi 

PhD (Pedagogical Sciences), Prof. Dr.,
Necmettin Erbakan University A. K. Faculty of Education,
Konya, Turkey

INVESTIGATING THE QUALITY OF PRESCHOOL EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS REGARDING THE VIEWS OF THE EXISTING STAFF

***Annotation.** Institutions enter into a fierce struggle in order to prove themselves and to be popular among the public. In order to be more successful in this competition, it needs to raise the quality level of its institution to the highest level. This study aims to measure the quality of education of 37-66 months old children attending pre-school education institutions in Aksaray province. 73 personnel participated in the research. In this study, the Early Childhood Classroom Surveillance scale was used. During the analysis of the questionnaires, significant differences were observed in the physical environment and health safety items in independent kindergartens and primary school kindergartens in Gülağaç district, and Aksaray province.*

***Key words:** quality, institutions, preschool, staff, Aksaray.*

Introduction. Throughout history, the concept of quality has been used in association with different fields and meanings, and discussions continue whether the concept of quality is an objective or subjective element. The concept of quality constitutes an important aspect of human life [12]. Quality in education, on the other hand, often depends on an institution's ability or ability to fulfill its mandate or work program to achieve its purpose. Quality education requires a continuous improvement process through the evaluation and renewal of the system systematically and collectively [13]. It is seen that this improvement and development process is directly related to the change and development of society. The quantitative increase should be sustained by increasing the quality of institutions [11]. The quality education that the

child will receive in these institutions can be provided with both a well-prepared program and a well-organized educational environment [8]. The basic knowledge, skills and habits to be acquired through the experiences to be provided to the child at an early age, the child's future education level, life success (such as high-income work and education, low crime rate, cognitive, language, socio-emotional and psycho-motor developments, early academic skills. and affects school readiness levels [1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 12]. For this reason, quality and quantity should be improved together in order to obtain the expected benefits in pre-school education. When the literature is examined, it is seen that the "quality", in other words, the «quality» framework and indicators of preschool education are defined differently by different stakeholders such as families, supervisors, and administrators who want to measure quality. For this reason, it is not possible to talk about a single definition and quality measurement regarding the quality of pre-school education [6]. Many educational institutions provide education and care services to children during the preschool years, which cover a significant part of the early childhood period. The results of a study revealed that there is a positive relationship between the quality of preschool education classes and the development of children [3]. In early childhood, children must benefit from an institutional education where «quality» education services are provided, not any institutional education. The factors that determine the quality of an educational institution are summarized [7]. The themes of physical equipment and arrangement, an education program that supports all developmental areas, the quality of educator-child communication, the participation of the family in the education program, and the evaluation of the program are important.

Purpose of the study. This study aims to measure the quality of education of 37-66 months old children attending pre-school education institutions (kindergarten and kindergarten) in Aksaray province. For this, a questionnaire was applied to teachers-administrators and staffs working in preschool institutions in Aksaray province and the results were evaluated.

Data collecting tools. The applied questionnaire is the Early Childhood Classroom Surveillance scale, a rating scale used by the National Academy of Early

Childhood Programs (USA) to measure the quality of young children's experiences in programs seeking accreditation.

The criteria in the scale address all early childhood program components: interactions between staff and children, curriculum, employee-parent relationships, employee qualifications and development, management, employment, physical environment, health and safety, nutrition and food service, and assessment. About half of the criteria relate to what happens to children in classrooms and can therefore be assessed through direct observation. The remaining criteria relate to the administrative policies and procedures established for the entire program and are evaluated by examination of physical evidence or other sources.

The scale consists of five main titles. These:

- Interactions Between Employees and Children;
- Physical Environment;
- Health and Safety;
- Curriculum;
- Preschool kids activities.

However, some parts of the content of the questionnaire were removed under the guidance of the advisor in order to make it compatible with the standards of the preschool institutions where the questionnaire was applied. Some of the items removed from the survey:

- Babies' toys are big enough to prevent choking.
- Cribs, cots, or bed linens have not been washed.
- Cribs, bedsteads are always placed inside and separately.

The sides are locked when using the bassinets.

Items like these are about babies. However, since the pre-school education institutions in Aksaray, where the survey was applied, are official institutions affiliated to the Ministry of National Education, there are no infants in the age group where they are registered.

Participants. 32 preschool teachers, 11 preschool principals, 30 assistant personnel, a total of 73 employees participated in the research. 10 preschool

institutions in Aksaray city center and Gülağaç district participated in the research. The questionnaire was administered in these schools: Seyhun Aytac Kindergarten; - Haci Omer Usluer Kindergarten; Fatma Hatun Kindergarten; Governor Ferit Unal Kindergarten; Kılıçarslan Primary School; Cahit Zarifoğlu Primary School; Kanber Gulizar Demir Primary School; Gülağaç Primary School; Gülağaç Mimar Sinan Primary School; Gülağaç Mehmet Akif Primary School.

Evaluation of the study. Answer options for each question in the questionnaire: Always (equivalent to 4 points); Frequently (equivalent to 3 points); Sometimes (equivalent to 2 points); The survey was concluded by scoring as never (corresponding to 1 point). The average of the answers given to each item was taken individually.

Results. After the analysis of the scale, the averages of all items were taken, and the five items with the lowest average were listed as follows.

*In the physical environment title,

Article 15 with an average of 1.67 (Sound-absorbing materials were used).

*Health and safety,

Article 29 with an average of 2.4 (Floor coatings do not slip).

*In the title of Physical Environment,

Item 10 with an average of 2.6 (There is enough open space available).

* In the title of preschool children's activities,

Item 46 with an average of 2.7 (There are materials and time for children to choose their activities).

* In the title of Physical Environment,

Item 12 with an average of 3.0 (Fields are arranged for various activities).

These results are similarly consistent with the results of the research (made in 31 different centers in the USA) where the scale was taken.

After the analysis of the scale, the averages of all items were taken and the items with the highest average were listed as follows

* In Health and Safety

Item 21 with an average of 3.97 (Employees wash their hands before feeding).

With an average of 3.94, with item 25 (Children wash their hands after using the toilet and before meals).

*In the title of preschool children's activities

Item 40 with an average of 3.91 (Some activities develop social skills).

* In the topic of employee interaction with children

Article 3 with an average of 3.90 (Employees provide equal opportunities for both genders).

*In the title of preschool children's activities

Item 43 with an average of 3.8 (Some activities contribute to physical development).

Again, these results; when the scale was compared with the results of the research (made in 31 different centers in the USA), it was seen that different results were obtained. Because, in the study conducted in the USA, it was concluded that «The items with the highest correlation with the total score are included in the curriculum component». As seen above, the highest correlation in the results of Aksaray province was found in the title of Health and Safety and Preschool Children's Activities.

Discussion and conclusion. One of the important findings in the interpretation of the scale is the different results in the items related to the preschool curriculum according to the general judgment of the participants. The need for a regulation change, which is currently on the agenda of the Ministry of National Education, has emerged easily even at this scale. Another important situation that stands out during the analysis of the questionnaires is that there are significant differences in the physical environment and health safety items in independent kindergartens and primary school kindergartens in Aksaray.

References

1. Burchinal, M., Roberts, J., Riggins, R., Zeisel, S., Neebe, E. & Bryant, D. (2000). Relating quality of center-based child care to early cognitive and language development longitudinally. *Child Development*, 71(2), 339–357.

2. Burchinal, M., Vandergrift, N., Pianta, R. & Mashburn, A. (2010). Threshold analysis of association between child care quality and child outcomes for low-income children in pre-kindergarten programs. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 25(2), 166-176. doi:10.1016/j.ecresq.2009.10.004
3. Canbeldek, M., Işıkoğlu Erdoğan, N.. (2016). Okul öncesi eğitim kurumlarında kalite ile çocukların gelişim düzeyleri arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesi. *Abant İzzet Baysal Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 16(3), 792-809.
4. Duyar, İ. (2010). Relationship between school facility conditions and the delivery of instruction. *Journal of Facilities Management*, 8(1), 8-25.
5. Feyman, N. (2006). Okul öncesi eğitim kurumlarında kalitenin çocukların gelişim alanları üzerine etkisinin incelenmesi. Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Hacettepe Üniversitesi, Ankara.
6. Işıkoğlu, N. (2007). Okul öncesi eğitim kurumlarında kalite. *Gazi Üniversitesi Mesleki Eğitim Dergisi*, 9(18), 37-47.
7. Karademir, A. ve Ören, M. (2020). Okul iklimi: Anaokulu yöneticileri ve öğretmenlerin bakış açısıyla karşılaştırmalı bir araştırma. *Eğitimde Nitel Araştırmalar Dergisi – Journal of Qualitative Research in Education*, 8(1), 206-236.
8. Özdemir Beceren, Y. (2012). Okul öncesi eğitim ortamları. Zembat, R. (Yay. Haz.). *Okul öncesi eğitime girişinde* (s. 180-199). Ankara: Hedef.
9. Schweinhart, L.J. & Weikart, D. P. (1997). The High/Scope Preschool Curriculum Comparison Study through age 23. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 12, 117 - 143.
10. Sylva, K., Siraj-Blatchford, I., Taggart, B., Sammons, P., Melhuish, E., Eliot, K. & Totsika, V. (2006). Capturing quality in early childhood through environmental rating scales. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 21, 76-92.
11. Zembat, R. (2007). Okul öncesi eğitimde nitelik. Oktay, A. & Polat Unutkan, Ö. (Ed.), *Okul öncesi eğitimde güncel konularında* (s. 25-45). Ankara: Morpa Yayınevi
12. Sherddan, S. (2001). Pedagogical Quality in Preschool. An issue of perspectives *Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis*. S.14-82

13. De jager H. J. and Nieuwenhuis F. J. (2005). Linkages Between Total Quality Management and The Outcomesbased Approach in an Education Environment. *Quality in Higher Education*, Vol. 11, No. 3, November 2005, S. 251