An Experimental Study Related to School Adjustment of Children in the Preschool Period

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Abstract

The study aimed to support the resolution of problems experienced due to preschool children not adjusting to school at the start of first schooling. Thus, problems leading to school rejection and many other probable issues will be prevented. The experimental study about orientation problems occurring in students newly starting preschool used a semi-experimental method with implementations to ensure school adjustment. The study included 53 students with ages between 60-72 months with frequent school absenteeism due to a variety of reasons. Parents of selected students were given information and the general lines of the Designed Adjustment Program (DAP) were explained. The study applied to the students who could not adapt to the school and have experienced school refusal included a preparation phase for a maximum of 1 week. Afterwards, it covers a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 12 days of application. Accordingly, all students in the experimental group to whom DAP implemented adjusted to school, while 66.7% of students in the placebo group and 61.5% of students in the control group were identified to adjust to school. In conclusion, it was identified that the parental training about duties falling to parents during school adjustment provided positive results, individual studies actively including parents, school and teachers were more effective, peer acceptance was important for adjustment to school, there was a need to use social skill acquirements, and girls were more successful at adjustment to school compared to boys.

Keywords: orientation, preschool, school rejection

1. Introduction

Adjustment is a basic life criterion for humans who are social beings. Every person wants to continue their life by ensuring balanced adjustment to their surroundings. For children, adjustment may be defined as features forming the ego, along with the ability to form and maintain regular and balanced relationships with people around them (Dogan et al., 2008, pp. 47-52).

Adjustment processes occur in all stages of life. Ensuring adjustment to one of these stages of the preschool period is a vital requirement for a child to develop successful and effective relationships (Stoeckli, 2010, pp.28-39). After experiences in the family, the children continue their educational experiences in preschool educational facilities targeting appropriate completion of social, emotional and cognitive development within the framework of an education program (Darling, 2007, pp. 203-217).

Thus, the first institutional experiences begin after the family and adjustment is an important stage in this process. School adjustment may be explained as the degree of adjustment of children's qualities to many qualitative requirements formed by school culture (Spencer, 1999, pp. 43-57). From another aspect, school adjustment may be assessed within the framework of children abiding by school culture and rules (Gedik, 2015, p. 45). In reality, school adjustment forms the basis of a child's developing positive attitudes towards the school, teachers and friends (Kaya and Akgun, 2014, pp. 1311-1324).

During the school adjustment process, teachers and parents should provide coordinated support to the child and ease this difficult period (Basaran et al., 2014, pp. 197-222). The child's first interventions related to adjustment to a different environment are very important in terms of personality patterns. According to the Ecologic Model of Bronfenbrenner, the children shape their own transitional experiences to school in this period and at the same time their experiences also shape them (Docket & Perry, 2016, pp. 47-75). Negative experiences like conflict,

tension and indecision experienced in this process are shaped as bad experiences (Docket & Perry, 2016, pp. 47-75).

In a child's first days at the start of school, it is necessary for them to display behavior of abiding by school rules, communicating with those around them, and self-control. In situations which adjustment does not occur, problems like school rejection, crying, shouting and anger may occur (Seven, 2011, pp. 29-42). A short time later, school phobia forms. School phobia is due to the child and may be defined as the child not wanting to go to school or to stay in school for the whole day (Kearney & Silverman, 1996, pp. 339-54).

If a child cannot adjust to school, it may be assessed within the Separation Anxiety Disorder diagnostic classification, a syndrome specific to children, in the DSM-IV (APA 1994). However, this process was defined as school fear in the past (Johnson et al., 1941, pp. 702-711). Currently, the school rejection term has begun to be used (King & Bernstein, 2001, pp. 197-205).

The study aims to support solutions to problems experienced by preschool children at the start of first schooling which causes the inability to adjust to school. Thus, problems that may progress to school rejection and involve many possible problems will be prevented.

Supporting school adjustment in class during preschool education positively affects adjustment in future periods of life (Onder & Gulay, 2010, pp. 204-224). Early learning skills increase at significant levels (Orcan Kandır & Orcan, 2011, pp. 41-49). Additionally, the child's form of self-perception (societal role, identity, expectations and participation in society) is positive (Dockett & Perry, 2016, pp.47-75).

The desired school adjustment process in the child involves happiness, social and emotional success, reduced problematic behavior and rapid development. Thus, school and family have opportunities for sharing, assessment, and quality communication (Kahraman et al., 2018, pp. 681-701).

When children adjust to school, they have traits of being more careful, participatory, active and the ability to work independently, in addition to higher quality communication with peers and teachers (Bart et al., 2007, pp. 597-615). Children experiencing adjustment problems in school have high possibility of experiencing problems in both school life (Ladd & Price, 1987, pp. 1168-1189) and future periods of life (Walker, 2009, pp. 339-358).

School adjustment supports school attendance and development in academic and social terms (Demirtas-Zorbaz, 2016, pp. 1-4), along with easing adjustment to community life (Berber, 2015, pp. 1-3).

Finally, it is necessary to meet a child's needs for adjustment (Kaya et al., 2007, pp. 137-146). In this study, in line with this, experimental methods ensuring adjustment were applied in preschool facilities. Selection of preschool facilities was linked to the excess development rate and high effect in this period, so there may be higher effect compared to other periods (Denham & Holt, 1993, pp. 271-275). There was no experimental study relating to school adjustment in the preschool period in the literature. From this aspect, this study is important to fill a gap in the literature.

2. Method

A semi-experimental method including implementations to ensure school adjustment in relation to orientation problems occurring in students newly starting preschool was used in the study. Accordingly, the research was based on a mixed experimental pattern with pretest-posttest experiments, and control and placebo groups.

2.1 Study Group

The group with implementation applied in the research comprised 53 students with ages between 60-72 months attending three state and five private preschools linked to Malatya Provincial Directorate of National Education, who had not adjusted to school in spite of over a month passing since school began, rejected school, wished to stay with their mothers (pathologic attachment) but were brought to school against their wishes, and frequently missed school due to a variety of excuses. Absenteeism was accepted with the criteria of not attending school on more than two days per week was accepted as absenteeism. Information was given to the parents of these students and the general outline of the Designed Adjustment Program (DAP) was explained. Twelve students who agreed to participate were chosen as the experimental group, the parents of 15 students received training were chosen as placebo group, and 26 students comprised the control group.

The distribution of problematic situations and gender of students without adjustment is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Problematic situations among students experiencing orientation problems

Problematic Situation	Gender		Number
	Female	Male	
Wanting parents with them (WP)	4	9	13
School rejection (SR)	7	18	25
Absenteeism (A)	6	9	15
Total	17	36	53

The distribution of students in the research groups is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of gender and problematic situations in research groups

Groups	Gender		WP	SR	A	Number
	Female	Male				
Experiment	4	8	8	3	1	12
Placebo	5	10	2	6	7	15
Control	8	18	3	16	7	26
Total	17	36	13	25	25	53

Of the parents wanted by the students chosen for the experimental group, 5 comprised their mothers, 2 comprised grandmothers (mother's mother) and 1 comprised childminder who previously cared for the child. Parents of students with school rejection were interviewed and 3 mothers agreed to participate in the study. The grandmother (mother's mother) of 1 student with absenteeism agreed to participate voluntarily. Thus, a total of 12 people participated in the study.

2.2 Study Procedure

The implementation, called as the Designed Adjustment Program (DAP), developed with a three-factor consecutive system comprising the parent-student-school (teachers and peers) triad was used in the study.

2.3 Designed Adjustment Program

Students who could not adjust to the program were effectively included in implementations with the parent with pathological attachment and the teacher because it is important that the teacher and parent participated together in the school adjustment process (Kahraman et al., 2018, pp. 681-701). Parents play an indirect role and teachers play a direct role in school adjustment (Onder & Gulay, 2010, pp. 204-224). In the program, the parent represents the mother, grandmother or childminder with whom the child has pathological attachment. Attitudes displayed by parents create important effects on a child's development (Eisenberg et al., 2005, pp. 1055-1071). Parents' quality communication relationships (intimacy, warmth, etc.) develop the child's social skills (Paterson & Sanson, 1999, pp. 293-309). However, in addition to good communication with parents, forms of child-raising affect social skills of the children and hence affect school adjustment directly and indirectly (Bascoe et al., 2009, pp. 1740-1751). Additionally, parental styles, especially democratic attitudes, contribute to children gaining the desired social behavior (Altay & Gure, 2012, pp. 2699-2718). From another aspect, authoritative parenting attitudes form a model preserving the child's self-control and this positively affects peer relationships (Bornstein & Zlotnik, 2009, pp. 280-292). Authoritative attitudes support open communication within a democratic, respectful, and logical framework, and the child's independence, and do not include hard and physical punishments (Ogelman, 2013, pp. 143-152). As a result, the program actively included parents.

For children to adjust to their first social environment of school, high social competency is important Temel (2018, pp. 1015-1034) In line with this, teachers play a dominant role in school adjustment of children. In the initial period in school, qualified teacher behavior and quality school-family cooperation come to the fore Kahraman et al. (2018, pp.681-701). In this period, the education given by the school in the necessary social and emotional areas should occur mediated by teachers Temel (2018, pp. 1015-1034). In line with studies, as a child's social skills reaching desired levels is an important marker in ensuring school adjustment (Ozen Altinkaynak & Akman, 2019, pp. 19-36), teachers performing excessive activities to develop social aspects will increase success in school adjustment Temel (2018, pp. 1015-1034).

For children's adjustment to school, it is necessary for them to form trust-based peer and teacher relationships (Bart et al., 2007, pp. 597-615). In reality, teachers and peers are determinative factors in school adjustment as

the basis for some children crying and not wanting to go to school in the first days of preschool is that they don't feel secure (Oktay & Polat, 2005, p. 121). As a result, teachers need to include social skill activities and cooperative group activities regularly in education (Gulay & Erten, 2011, pp. 81-92).

There is mutual interaction between school adjustment and peer relationships in preschools (Bart et al., 2007, pp. 597-615) and positive approaches by peers are important in school adjustment (Gulay & Erten, 2011). This is because the support, care, trust and good relationships formed between peers increase self-confidence and strengthen a feeling of belonging (Gulay, 2011, pp. 1-10).

Play is an important aid for studies about parental support at home and performed in school for children experiencing problems with school adjustment. Play is a good teaching method to develop empathic skills, resolve conflict and learn cooperation (Guralnick et al., 2006, pp. 312-324). At the same time, play is effective in development of communication skills, and identifying and adopting social roles (Howes & Matheson, 1992, pp. 961-974).

In line with assessments of the explanations above, DAP was organized as a program including both the student along with parents and teachers. Activities included in the program were based on Freud's psychosexual development concept, Piaget's cognitive development concept and Ericson's psychosocial development concept. Accordingly, the determined criteria can be listed as follows:

- Freud's phallic period is about 3-6 years. The child experiences fear of castration in this period and males encounter Oedipus complex, while females encounter Electra complex. Passion for research and learning intensifies (Yilmaz Esencan & Rathfisch, 2017, pp. 68-82). In line with this, parents should support giving homework and teachers.

- Dominance of being emotion-centered and more pronounced autonomy efforts with opposition (Budak et al., 2018, pp. 415-436).

- Within Piaget's development periods, the use of mental representations and symbols occurs in the period before the procedure (2-7 years) (Budak et al., 2018, pp. 415-436).

- Attention to symbolic games, magical thinking, animation, self-centered thinking, parallel games and bulk monologue content in the period before the procedure (Budak et al., 2018, pp. 415-436).

- Organize activities according to features like one-way thinking, one-way classification, one-way ranking and artificialism (Budak et al., 2018, pp. 415-436).

- In this period when Erikson states that feelings of guilt are experienced in relation to innovation (3-6 years), creation of an educational environment supporting the student's entrepreneurship and self-discovery (Orcan, 2008, p. 145).

- Inclusion of family and school activities about gaining target development skills (Sari, 2006, p. 199).

- Apply action plans about curiosity and very excessive questioning in children between 3-6 years old as per Erikson (Arslan & Erikson, 2008, pp. 53-60).

- While the children discover themselves, they assess their power in forming good relationships and undertaking some responsibilities (Isik, 2007, p. 24).

Additionally, strategies were followed for the students to attract the attention of friends in peer relationships, to participate in the topics, to play with peers and to say nice things to them (Erten 2012, p. 26). Additionally, applied seminars were given about the efficacy of a democratic class climate and empathic communication on school adjustment (Erten, 2012, p. 45).

2.4 Designed Adjustment Program Implementation Stages

The study applied to the students who could not adapt to the school and have experienced school refusal includes a preparation phase for a maximum of 1 week. Afterwards, it covers a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 12 days of application.

1st Stage: The school psychological counselor collected data from the parents of the students about health, including development curves, personality traits, activities the student likes and displays active skills for, relationships with peers if present, and games and in-depth data about time spent with the family. Similarly, information was collected in depth from the teachers about the student's behaviors in the month since the student started school, participation in activities, communication process, peer relationships, and eating drinking and toilet habits. Additionally, information was obtained about studies and outcomes within the framework of school adjustment in the one-month period from the parents and teachers.

2nd Stage: The school counselor assessed data obtained from the students. Later, the main headings of suitable implementations with play and educational quality on the syllabus to be performed with the student were determined.

3rd Stage: A study was planned by the school counselor, teacher and parent about the determined main headings. In planning, a strategy was followed where the student would do the same or very similar activities at home as in school during the first week. Additionally, on the first two days of the week, activities involving the student's parents were included. Activities were planned as common studies about communication with the student's peers and at the same time, organization was made to ensure the student actively working with two students with highest school adjustment with whom they could form close relationships. Activities selected in planning could be easily performed by the students and games they were happy to play were chosen.

4th Stage: The parents were told they should stay in the school until the student adapted to the teachers and were given information about duties and studies they should undertake in the school and the determined strategies were explained. Similarly, strategies were explained to the teachers, and they were given information about the studies.

5th Stage: Before the first day of the study, the parent was requested to perform at least 3 play activities included on the home plan. It is essential that the activities were fully completed by the students. Later, it was stated that the same games were repeated at intervals within a week until the students became bored. - The teachers were requested to provide information to all personnel about the studies related to introduction to the school and to perform preparation studies about introducing themselves.

6th Stage: On the first day of the study, the teachers were requested to meet the students at the door by smiling and hugging them. Later, they took the children's hands, brought the students and their parents to all other classes in the school, canteen, toilets, administrative sections, garden, and boiler room and introduced the students to all officers, teachers or administrators. This was repeated even if it had been performed in different forms beforehand. Introduction to each section included at least 3 minutes of explanation and the students were asked if they had any questions. All questions were answered in accordance with their age interval. Care was taken to complete the implementation by ensuring the child had no remaining curiosity about any area or person. Later, the teachers told the students that if there was a problem with their friends, and they needed the toilet, were thirsty or hungry, they could ask the teachers for help. In this stage, the strategy was that other personnel in the school and the parents did not respond to any demand from the student including problems with friends, toilet needs and eating and drinking requirements, but only the teachers responded and acted.

After these studies, the game activities played by the students with the parents before the first day were completed with other peers, dominantly by two peers previously determined and parent participation. Additionally, the teachers asked the students to complete very simple tasks (bring material, tidy pencils, bring a toy from the toy basket, etc.) along with two close peers. The teacher verbally praised the student's performance with supportive reinforcement that did not include comparison with other students. When the student left the school at the end of the day, performance was rewarded by brief verbal review of work done by the student with others (with the two peers present); if there was student work which could be put on the class walls, it was hung or displayed on a table. In this process and other stages, the school counselor only observed activities in the class or garden and shared any situations external to the program, if present, with the teacher at the end of the day. The parent made explanations encouraging the student by talking about the process in school in the home environment and celebrated due to having a good day (eat cake, play a nice game, etc.). Later they played the games planned for the second day. If the games planned with the parents were not completed as desired, the situation was explained to the teachers the next day. In these situations, the teachers repeated the same or similar games as on the previous day.

7th Stage: On the second day of the study, verbal praise was given by reminding the students of what was done on the first day in the display area. Later, the games included on the program and played at home the previous day were completed with parent's participation. Again, the parents did not respond to any of the students' questions, apart from during games, and directed them to the teachers. The teachers met all the students' needs in relation to eating-drinking, toileting, and peer relationships. Additionally, like the first day, the teachers gave the students very easy tasks to complete with close friends (bring material, tidy pencils, bring a toy from the toy basket, etc.) and continued with reinforcing praise. The parent continued with the process like the first day.

8th Stage: On the 3rd day of the study, the teachers played games with the students and accordingly the parents were told not to speak and stay quiet. The parents were not included in any activity and did not make any gestures, mimics, or movements toward the students. They were included neutrally in the class. The teachers solved all the students' requirements themselves, as on the 1st and 2nd days. The students completed activities on the program and were rewarded as on other days. Similarly, the students were given duties and activities were displayed. Similar to

the other days, the parents completed the tasks at home. Additionally, a game environment was created where the students could have a good time with close friends during free-time activities.

9th Stage: The fourth day of the study was like the 3rd day both at home and at school.

10th Stage: The 5th day was completed like the 3rd and 4th days. The duration for the students to spend quality time with close friends was increased, and no complementary and supportive studies were performed.

11th Stage: As it was the weekend, activities allowing the students and parents to spend quality time together were given. The students were told the teachers assigned the activities. When completing an activity on Saturday, the teachers were called at one point for help and the activity was completed in line with the teachers' directives. On Sunday, activities similar to Monday were repeated until fully completed.

12th Stage: The 6th day of the program was completed in similar fashion to the 3rd, 4th and 5th days. In this stage, the students were assessed by the teachers. Accordingly, the students' direct requests to the teachers for all demands including problems related to friends, toilet needs, and eating and drinking requirements without contact with the parents and sharing with two selected close students were accepted as important criteria. This situation was an indicator that the students saw the teachers as a secure base, and they felt they belonged to the school. The students could continue the class process healthily without the parents. If the teachers thought this stage was reached, they reported to the school counselor. If the counselor made a similar assessment after observations, it was determined the criteria were fulfilled. If the students were not ready, work continued until the criteria was fulfilled. If the students had not reached the desired level after the 12th day, implementation began including a family counselor and child psychiatrist.

13th Stage: On the 6th day of the study, the parents were neutrally included in the class. After nearly an hour, the plan was that the parents left the school for nearly two hours. Accordingly, the parents smiled at the students and comfortably stated they needed to leave for a short while. At this point, the students were brought to talk to the parents while holding the teachers' hand. Later, the parents left the school regardless of the student's demands or expectations. The teachers continued with an entertaining activity on the program including the students and their two close friends. If the students did not want to continue the activity, they were not forced to and told they could join in whenever they wanted. Additionally, the students were invited to rejoin the activity at short intervals. Even if the students cried, the teachers hugged and comforted them. However, the parents were not invited to the class. Two hours later, when the parents came to the school, they saw the students but remained neutral. The day ended like other days.

14th Stage: The 7th day of the study was completed similar to the 6th day. However, the parents left the school for 3 hours rather than 2 hours.

15th Stage: On the 8th day of the study, in the morning the parents told the students they had some work and would come later and left the students at school. Activities on the program continued. At the end of the day, the children were evaluated with praising and encouraging words when the parents arrived. The parents evaluated the day with the families at home and they celebrated by performing an activity the students liked. Later, the process continued in line with the normal syllabus.

In each stage, the teachers assessed the daily lesson program and, if necessary, shared things with the school counselor. If it was appropriate to the program, a meeting was held with the parents and changes were made. During the implementation, parents, teachers, and counselors noted interesting situations and events.

2.5 Examples of the Designed Adjustment Program Implementation Stages

Activity Example: According to information obtained from the parent of a female student, the student wanted to make a house of Lego with walls, roof and garden different colors (e.g., roof yellow, walls red and garden green Lego) and to make the house very quickly. Planning was made accordingly, and the students were asked to make a house at group tables. The student immediately applied the directive, directed their close friends and finished the house very quickly.

Game Example: According to information obtained from the parent of a male student, the student displayed higher performance in a range of competitive games including jumping, sliding, and bouncing. The teacher gave similar information. In line with this, the students were divided into groups and game activities planned. The student was included in the same group as some close friends, and they completed with game with high performance assisted by other friends.

3. Results

Statistical analysis of data calculated the chi-square likelihood ratio value as the expected frequencies were <5.

All analyses were completed with IBM SPSS v.26.

The frequency distribution of the adjustment status of students according to group is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Frequency distribution of groups according to adjustment

	Adjustment status		Total	p
	Provided	Not provided		
Experiment	12(100.0%)	0(0.0%)	12(100.0%)	
Placebo	10(66.7%)	5(33.3%)	15(100.0%)	0.009**
Control	16(61.5%)	10(38.5%)	26(100.0%)	
Total	38(71.7%)	15(28.3%)	53(100.0%)	

**:<0.001.

Accordingly, all students in the experimental group adjusted, while 66.7% of students in the placebo group and 61.5% in the control group adjusted. The difference between the groups was found to be significant. In other words, nearly 2/3 of students in the placebo and control groups adjusted to school within the process; however, the rate of those adjusting in the placebo group was slightly higher than in the control group. All students in the experimental group were observed to adjust to school. The difference between the groups was found to be significant according to the chi-square test (p<0.01).

The frequency distribution for student adjustment status according to sex is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Frequency distribution of adjustment status according to group and gender

		Adjusted		Did not adjust		p
		n	%	n	%	
Experiment	Female	4	100.0	0	0.0	-
	Male	8	100.0	0	0.0	
Placebo	Female	4	80.0	1	20.0	0.439
	Male	6	60.0	4	40.0	
Control	Female	8	100.0	0	0.0	0.007**
	Male	8	44.4	10	55.6	
Total	Female	16	94.1	1	5.9	0.006**
	Male	22	61.1	14	38.9	

-: Not calculated; **:<0.001.

Accordingly, the sex factor in adjustment was identified to be significantly in favor of girls (p<0.001). The rate of students with school adjustment among girls (94.1%) was determined to be higher than among boys (61.1%). All students in the experimental group adjusted; however, the adjustment rates for girls in the placebo and control groups were found to be at meaningfully higher levels compared to boys.

4. Discussion

The school adjustment values for students in the placebo and control group were close to each other and significantly lower compared to the experimental group. The slightly higher rate of students adjusting in the placebo group compared to the control group was important in terms of showing the efficacy of parental education programs. Similarly, there are studies in the literature about the efficacies of parental training programs (Kazdin, 1999, pp. 1349-56.; Chorpita et al., 2002, pp. 165-190; Mattejat, 2005, pp. 3-11). However, all the students in the experimental group undergoing the designed training program adjusted which shows the effectiveness of the program. With efficacy determined in the study, the DAP based on the triad of parent-students and school (teacher/peers) was constructed for students who had not adjusted to school to acquire social skills through play.

One leg of the triad of parents is an important factor in school adjustment of children in the preschool period (Celikturk, 2011, p. 27; Yalcin, 2016, p. 1) because parental attitudes play effective roles in socialization, personality development and construction of self-perception of children (Can, 2007, pp. 1-22). This process is completed positively or negatively with the expectations and attitudes related to the school, personality traits and

form of communication of parents (Inal, 2010, pp. 87-109). Positive feeling expression by parents within the family was effective on emotional control (Eisenberg et al., 2005, pp. 1055-1071), while punishments were determined to be associated with social incompetence (Jones et al., 2002, pp. 405-415). At the same time, democratic attitudes in the family support social skills like cooperation, assistance and sharing in children (Laibe et al., 2004, pp. 551-569) and the child's parents are taken as models in creating healthy communication with peers (Bornstein & Zlotnik, 2009, pp. 280-292). This is because children gain emotional regulation skills by modelling and thus are liked by other children (Davidov & Grusec, 2006, pp. 44-58). In the contrary situation, children's emotional adjustment reduces (Isık, 2006). Finally, the relationship between parents and children affects the relationships with the child's peers during social development (Kumpfer & Turner, 1990, pp. 435-563). In line with the information stated above, the study was applied by planning training about democratic family attitudes in the program for parents. Additionally, a range of studies were performed about communication skills, discipline in family, gaining responsibility and quality time activities.

Another leg of the triad in DAP is the main factor of school comprising teachers and mediated peer relationships (Betts et al., 2009, pp. 405-424). School adjustment is negatively affected for a child with low numbers of friends in school, exposure to peer violence, exclusion or rejection (Ladd, Kochenderfer, & Coleman, 1996, pp. 1103-1118). However, several behavioral problems like aggressiveness and bullying may emerge in children rejected by peers (Denham and Holt, 1993, pp.271-275) and adjustment levels may reduce (Klima & Repetti, 2008, pp. 151-178). Contrary to this, peer acceptance reduces anxiety about school (Ladd, 1990, pp.1081-1100) and is effective in ensuring school adjustment (Gulay & Erten 2011, pp. 81-92) because peer acceptance supports the feeling of security in children, reduces shyness and eases social adjustment (Hartup, 2000). While ensuring adjustment to school, parents and social surroundings, in addition to teachers, have an important place in children gaining meaningful, happy and new experiences (Yasar, 2009, p. 126). School adjustment is a determinant of the child developing positive attitudes towards their teachers and friends in school (Kaya, 2014, pp. 1311-1324). In line with this, the study included peer acceptance activities where the teacher was active, and parents participated. To resolve school adjustment problems, coordinated work must occur between school, family and teacher (Vakkas, 2016, pp. 1-2).

An important factor in school adjustment is the social skill acquirements of children. There is a close relationship between social skills and school adjustment, and children with an absence of social skills encounter difficulties in ensuring adjustment (Gulay, 2011, pp. 139-146). In a study of 140 children in the 5-6-year age group attending preschool, Gulay (2011, pp. 139-146) found a significant correlation between incidence of social skills and school adjustment. From another aspect, development of a child's social skills is an important marker in ensuring school adjustment (Ozen Altinkaynak & Akman, 2019, pp. 19-36). As a result, in this study, play-based activities about the child acquiring social skills supported by parents and teachers were included for students who had not adjusted to school. This is because play develops the child's social, emotional, and physical development and provides communication skills (Irawan et al., 2021, p. 191; Ulutas, 2011, pp. 232-242).

Another dimension of the study is the sex factor. In the study, the school adjustment values for female students were found to be significantly higher than for male students. Similarly, studies by (Ozcan & Aysev, 2009, pp.232-242) and Kaya and Akgun (2016, p.1311-1324) identified that girls displayed better performance for school adjustment. Differently, there are studies showing no effect of sex on adjustment (Ozguluk, 2006, pp. 1-5; Gunindi, 2008, pp. 1-7; Yoleri, 2014, pp. 1-18). In the study, the statistical difference in favor of female students for school adjustment may be linked to the style of raising girls culturally in Turkey where the study was performed. When raising girls in Turkey, they generally adopt a compromising approach involving verbal communication as social skill in problem solving.

5. Conclusion

According to data obtained in the study, the following conclusions were reached in school adjustment studies in preschool facilities:

Parental training about duties falling to parents in school adjustment provided positive outcomes,

Individually planned studies including the parent, school and teacher about students who had not adjusted to school were more effective,

Studies about peer acceptance are important in school adjustment,

Play-based activities should target acquiring social skills in school adjustment studies,

Females are more successful in school adjustment compared to males.

The following recommendations are made based on the results above:

Integrated studies planned in depth and including parent, school and teacher should be performed for students who have not adjusted to school,

If in-depth planning is not performed, parental training programs indexed to school adjustment should be organized,

In line with the desired peer relationships, activities and social skill acquirements should be included in school adjustment studies,

Studies should be performed in different cultures about the reasons for the outcome that the sex factor in school adjustment was in favor of girls.

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