

Examining Preschool and First Grade Teachers' Opinions on the Effects of School Readiness to Classroom Management

Berrin Akmanⁱ
Hacettepe University

Sevi Kent Kükürtcüⁱⁱ
Preschool Teacher

İlknur Tarmanⁱⁱⁱ
Hacettepe University

Zeynep Seda Şanlı^{iv}
Principal

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to examine preschool and first grade teachers' opinions on the effects of school readiness to classroom management. The participants of this research consisted of the 18 preschool and 22 first grade teachers who work at public and private schools in the cities of Konya, Ankara and Kayseri in Turkey. Phenomenological research design is used in this qualitative study. In order to identify the opinions of the preschool and first grade teachers on the effects of school readiness to classroom management, an interview form comprised of open ended questions developed by the researchers was used. The data is gathered from the teachers' answers given to the structurally prepared questions and the collected data is analysed through content analysis method. The result of the research shows that both the preschool and first grade teacher groups expressed that level of readiness has an impact on classroom management. The teachers in both groups have stated that it is observed learning difficulty in children with low level of readiness and boredom and impatience in children with higher level of readiness. At the end of this research the necessary suggestions were given according to the obtained findings.

Keywords: School readiness, classroom management, preschool teacher, primary school teacher

ⁱ **Berrin Akman**, Prof. Dr., Hacettepe University, Department of Elementary Education, Division of Preschool Education. Beytepe Kampüsü, Ankara / TURKEY

ⁱⁱ **Sevi Kent Kükürtcü** Preschool Teacher, Erciyes Primary School, Kayseri/ TURKEY

ⁱⁱⁱ **İlknur Tarman** Ph. D Candidate, Hacettepe University, Department of Elementary Education, Division of Preschool Education. Ankara / TURKEY

Correspondence: tarmanilknur@gmail.com

^{iv} **Zeynep Seda Şanlı** Principal, Ankara Zafer Preschool, Ankara/ TURKEY

Introduction

Education is the process of creating desired changes in individual's behaviours through their own lives. Immediate environment and school get involved in this process which starts in babyhood with the family. Education for the child in the family proceeds spontaneously whereas at schools a classroom environment organized physically and socially well and a qualified teacher who can carry out the curriculum in this environment are needed. All these components create the need of classroom management.

Çetin (2013) identified the classroom management as "preparing the necessary environment and the conditions by the teacher in order to perform an effective teaching-learning process in the classroom and thus accomplish the desired educational success" (p.300). The most essential element of an effective classroom management is the teacher. A teacher who wants to be successful in classroom management has to regard the student as an individual in the first place. Since the different features of the students affect the classroom management in various ways, the students' needs and interests should be taken into account. Taking the students' features which affect the classroom management in different ways into account, we come across with the students' physical characteristics, socioeconomic and sociocultural status, perception of self, social and emotional growth and their readiness which consists of all these features (Aydın, 2013; Güven, 2012; Gezgin, 2009; Özgan et al., 2011; Çubukçu and Girmen, 2008; Yeboah, 2002).

The readiness of the children is essential in classroom management. According to Teke (2010), the readiness is the child's being ready to conduct an activity in terms of cognition, affectivity, language and social and psychomotor growth. It is a complicated notion which comprises of various supplementary elements and progresses by the help of the close mutual effect of learning and growing.

Chronologically, coeval children might have different characteristics in developmental terms. Thus, considering the factors affecting a readiness, we come across with physical health and motor development, social and emotional development, learning approaches, language development, cognitive development and general knowledge (Kahraman Bağçeli, 2012). A child with lack of readiness may experience several problems in the classroom at any level of education. Teachers should get to know children and follow up their development in both preschool and elementary school periods (Kutluca Canbulat and Tuncel, 2012; Yaman, 2010; Güven, 2012; Clark and Zygmunt-Fillwalk, 2008; Erkan, 2011a; Harman and Çelikler, 2012, Özgan and Tekin, 2011). For example, a child who starts elementary school at an early age and whose impulse control has not well developed yet is likely to have difficulty in maintaining behaviour control, taking turns, getting in line, sitting up in the classroom for almost 50 minutes, focusing for a long time or following the rules. Being unable to conduct these tasks, the child would get restless. The first sign appearing in such a case would be child's getting over active. Since this over activeness would create problems in the learning environment, the attention spans of the other children would diminish as well and their motivation would decline. In another example, a child with insufficient level of self-care skills may have plenty of problems at the kindergarten when the child has difficulty in using the toilet or feeding himself, classroom management would be adversely affected by this (Türk Tabipleri Birliği, 2012).

It is possible that children whose readiness levels are high have more successful education life than children whose readiness levels are low (Chan, 2012). Harman and Çelikler (2012) stated that children whose readiness levels are high comprehend the subjects faster and become readier to learn the next subject. However, Dağlı (2012) has found out that children who start elementary school one or two years later than they should have lower academic success than children who start at proper age when they are all at third grade.

Researches show that the biggest responsibility on a child's getting ready to elementary school lies in families and preschool education institutions (Esaspehlivan, 2006; Ülku, 2007; Çelenk, 2008; Koçyiğit, 2009; Kayılı and Arı, 2011; Erkan, 2011a). The readiness of the children should be evaluated correctly by both families and teachers. For example, Boz (2004) has discovered in a research on surveying the school readiness of six-year-old children in terms of the opinions of the parents and teachers that the preschool teachers care about the children's social and communicative skills in terms of their readiness whereas the parents care more about their academic success. Lara-Cinisomo et al.(2008) have reached a conclusion in their researches among teachers that it is very important for the families that they support their children in all areas of development and that the teachers coordinate with the families in terms of the readiness of the children.

Şahin, Sak and Tuncer (2013) think that one of the aims of the preschool education is preparing the children to elementary school based on their study with preschool and primary school teachers. The primary school teachers suggested the preschool teachers that they should be in touch with the first grade teachers support the readiness with entertaining activities and choose activities that are suitable for all areas of development.

Readiness is related with the consistency of a child's skills with the instruction method. The purpose in classroom management is to increase success by creating suitable learning environments for children. Teachers should design their curriculum based on the childrens' level of readiness (Eryaman, 2010). However, curriculum is designed according to a single age group (education-equity.org) which highlights the importance of teachers' classroom management styles and attitudes towards readiness.

One of the aims of the preschool education is preparing the children for elementary school (MEB, 2013). For this aim, it is important to obtain ideas of preschool and primary school teachers' on classroom management and to organize the programmes according to these ideas for raising the quality of education. When the body of literature is analysed, it is seen that there are numerous researches on the importance of readiness in education, the effect of preschool education to readiness and on the opinions of the preschool and first grade teaches about readiness (Ülku, 2007; Boz, 2004; Esaspehlivan, 2006; Harman and Çelikler, 2012; Kahraman Bağçeli, 2012; Koçyiğit, 2009; Teke, 2010). Dereli (2012) compared the preschool teachers' and first grade teachers' opinions on preparation process to elementary school, but did not evaluate the effect of this issue to the classroom management. Özgan and Tekin (2011) investigated the teachers' opinions on the effect of the readiness levels of the students to the classroom management only in terms of primary school teachers. However, there is not a research which includes both preschool and primary school teachers' opinions at the same time on the effect of readiness to classroom management. In this research, comprehending the effects of children's readiness to classroom management and acquiring the opinions of our valuable teachers who could tell us their own life experiences on this subject are aimed.

Method

The Method of the Research

Phenomenological research design is used in this qualitative study. According to Büyüköztürk, Kılıç Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz and Demirel (2013), "the phenomenology model focuses on the facts which we are aware of but do not have a detailed and profound understanding and data sources are individuals or groups that live the fact focussed by the research and externalize or reflect this fact." (p.20). The reason for using the phenomenology model is that the research has been done for the reflection of the effects of the school readiness to the classroom management in terms of the preschool and first grade teachers' point of views and experiences (Büyüköztürk, Kılıç Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz and Demirel, 2013; Eryaman, Kocer, Kana & Yagmur Sahin, 2013; Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2005). Acquiring and comparing the opinions of the preschool and first grade teachers on the effects of school readiness to classroom management was aimed in the research.

Participants

The participants of the research comprised of the preschool and first grade teachers who work at public and private schools in the cities of Konya (n=16), Ankara (n=12) and Kayseri (n=12) in Turkey and who were chosen with the proper sampling methods. All preschool teachers (n= 18) who participated in the research were women and many of them (n=12, 66.6%) have a degree from university. It is seen that the 27.7% of the preschool teachers has 6-10 years of service (n=5), 11-15 years of service and 16 years or more service (n=5). The graduates of the Education Faculty Preschool Teaching are high in number (n=8, 44.4%) in the research. The 33.3% of the preschool teachers who participated in the research work for private nursery schools, whereas the 27.7% of them work for the nursery schools of the elementary schools subject to Turkish Ministry of Education. It was found out that the maximum number of children in the preschool teachers' classes is between 16 and 20 (n=14, 77.7%).

The majority of the elementary school teachers (n=22) consists of female teachers (n=18, 81.8%), whereas the male teachers (n=4) form 18.1% of the group. The 86.3% of the elementary school teachers (n=19) work for private elementary schools, whereas the 13.6% of them (n=3) work for the elementary schools subject to Turkish Ministry of Education. The 63.6% of the teachers (n=14) have been in service for 16 years or more. The 54.5% of the elementary school teachers (n=12) who participated in the research have a degree at university, whereas the 22.7% of them (n=5) have master degree. The graduates of the Education Faculty Elementary School Teaching are high in number (n=15, 68.1%) in the research. It was found out that the number of students in the elementary school teachers' classes is between 26 and 30 at a rate of 40.9%.

Data Collection Tool

In order to identify the opinions of the preschool and first grade teachers' on the effects of school readiness to classroom management, a form developed by the researchers and comprised of open ended questions was used. The data was gathered by obtaining the teachers' answers to the configured questions. While preparing the open ended questions to be asked the teachers, the literature was scanned and by consulting the experts, the content validity was provided. After that by doing an advance study with two preschool teachers and two first grade teachers, the clarity of the questions was checked. At the end of the advance study one of the question was removed from the form. The first part of the form, which included the research questions, consisted of six demographic questions and the second part consisted of nine questions for the preschool teachers and 10 questions for the first-grade teachers.

Data Collection Process

The research data was collected from the preschool and first grade teachers who was working for the public and private schools in the cities of Konya, Ankara and Kayseri during April and May in 2013-2014 academic year. Firstly, the researchers met with the principals and explained the aim of the research and took permission to work with the teachers. The teachers were informed that the participation was based on voluntariness and that the names and the organizations of the volunteers would not be asked and shared at any platform and that the questions would be addressed them only to identify opinions. The teachers who accepted to take part in the research were given the interview form and asked to answer the questions.

Data Analysis

The qualitative research method was used in data analysis and the answers given by the teachers to the open ended questions were analysed by using content analysis technique. Content analysis "is a systematic and replicable technique in which some words of a text are summarized with smaller context categories by codes based on specific rules" (Büyüköztürk et al., 2013, p.240). According to Yıldırım and Şimşek (2005), similar data is gathered in terms of specific notions and themes and interpreted by organizing them to be comprehended by the reader.

The data gathered as a result of the answers given by the teachers to the questions were read repeatedly and some coding categories based on the questions on the research form were generated.

The coding key was formed by scanning the related literature and taking the opinions of the experts. The data collected from the teachers were coded separately by three researchers. The coding was made by using open and closed content, thus the implied meaning and the directly stated notions and expressions were identified as a whole. The research was carried out among the preschool and first grade teachers who work for the public and private schools in three different cities. It enabled to introduce different perceptions and lives (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2005). Furthermore, in order to ensure the reliability of the research, direct quotations from the participants was included, member checking was made while making data analysis. The data was coded by three researchers doing Ph.D degree at Preschool Education Department and the results were compared and contrasted. According to Büyüköztürk et al. (2013), the way to overcome the reliability problem is that two researchers' agree with each other at a rate of 80%. While making the data analysis separately, the researchers agreed with each other at a rate of 90%.

First, the data was displayed on the tables by using frequency and percentage. Then, the opinions of the preschool and first grade teachers' on the effects of school readiness to classroom management were included with direct quotations and the collected data was interpreted.

Findings

The answers given by the preschool and first grade teachers who participated in the research can be found in this section as well as the findings gathered in line with these answers.

In the 1st Table there are the answers of the teachers to the question: "What are the elements which affect your classroom management?"

Table 1. *The Elements Which Affect the Classroom Management*

The elements which affect the classroom management	<i>Preschool</i> (<i>N=18</i>)		<i>Primary School</i> (<i>N=22</i>)	
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Characteristics of the Teacher	17	94	22	100
Characteristics of the Student	18	100	22	100
Characteristics of the Curriculum	7	39	6	27
Family's Attitude Towards School	9	50	4	18
Physical Properties	11	61	8	36

As it is seen in the 1st Table, all of the preschool and primary school teachers (100%) who participated in the research mentioned the characteristics of the student among the elements which affect the classroom management. In terms of the student's characteristics which affect the classroom management, the half of the preschool and primary school teachers pointed out the need for special education. While 40% of the primary school teachers talked about hyperactivity, the rate for the preschool teachers' talking about this subject is 22%. When looked at the rate of mentioning the behavioural problems, we come across with 33% among the preschool teachers and 27% among the primary school teachers. 27% of the primary school teachers and 17% of the preschool teachers mentioned the readiness of the student.

While all of the preschool and primary school teachers (100%) who participated in the research mentioned the characteristics of the teacher as well, the rate of the preschool teachers who talked about this subject was 94%. It was seen in the research findings that the participants who pointed out teacher's characteristics among the elements which affect the classroom management emphasized the teacher's motivation level, problem solving skills, used disciplines and teaching methods and communicative skills.

While the rate of the preschool teachers who thought that the physical characteristics of the classroom affected the classroom management was 61%, the primary school teachers' was 36%. Among the preschool teachers who mentioned the physical characteristics of the classroom features were mentioned at a rate of 64%, whereas classroom population was mentioned at a rate of 18%. Among the primary school teachers, however, classroom features were mentioned at a rate of 50%, whereas classroom population was mentioned at a rate of 37%. 9% of the preschool teachers and 12% of the primary school teachers mentioned boy-girl ratio in the classroom.

While half of the preschool teachers stated that one of the elements that affected the classroom management was the family's attitude towards school, 18% of the primary school teachers expressed this idea. The rate of the preschool teachers who thought that one of the elements which affected the classroom management was the characteristics of the curriculum was 39%, whereas the rate of the primary school teachers' on this issue was 27%. Among the preschool teachers who pointed out the characteristics of the curriculum as an effect to the classroom management, education policy was mentioned at a rate of 43% and education programmes at a rate of 28%. The primary school teachers, however, expressed the education policies at a rate of 33% and the education programmes at a rate of 17%.

The findings found out by the teachers' answers to the question: "What are the characteristics of the children who affect your classroom management approach?" can be seen in the 2nd Table.

Table 2. *The Characteristics of the Children*

Characteristics of the children	<i>Preschool</i> (<i>N=18</i>)		<i>Primary School</i> (<i>N=22</i>)	
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
Hyperactivity	8	44	10	45
General health problems	0	0	4	18
Special education needs	4	22	3	17
Attention deficit	2	11	7	39
Lack of motivation	1	5	7	39
Behavioural problems	18	100	9	41
Developmental differences	14	78	12	54
Family characteristics	7	39	0	0

All of the preschool teachers (100%) who participated in the research talked about the behavioural problems among the characteristics of the children who affected the classroom management, whereas the primary school teachers' rate who mentioned this issue was 41%. The teachers talked about notions such as "behavioural problems, disobeying the rules, negative peer communication" when asked what kind of characteristics the children who had behavioural problems showed.

Developmental differences among the children were the most quoted characteristic among the primary school teachers (54%). This characteristic was also frequently quoted by the preschool teachers (78%). When analysing the developmental differences among the children it was seen that the teachers talked about notions such as "social and emotional growth, differences in cognitive development, the children's ages being different and the differences among the school readiness levels of the children."

The 39% of the primary school teachers mentioned attention deficit and lack of motivation in their answers, whereas the 11% of the preschool teachers pointed out attention deficit and the 5% lack of motivation. The 44% preschool teachers and the 45% of the primary school teachers who took part in the research stated that hyperactive children affect classroom management. None of the preschool teachers mentioned children's general health problems in their answers, but the 18% of the primary

school teachers pointed out this issue. Also, there were not any primary school teachers who mentioned family characteristics, whereas 39% of the preschool teachers pointed out this issue. When analysing the characteristics of the children about their families, we came across with the notions such as “families’ attitudes towards the school, children of divorced parents, being only child and children exposed to negative family communication.” The 22% of the preschool teachers and the 17% of the primary school teachers expressed that children’s special educational needs affect classroom management.

The participant teachers’ answers to the question: “according to what should the time of starting school be determined?” can be seen in the 3rd Table.

Table 3. School Entry Time

School entry time	<i>Preschool (N=18)</i>		<i>Primary School (N=22)</i>	
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Age	6	33	5	23
Readiness	10	56	8	36
Both	2	11	9	41

The 56% of the participant preschool teachers stated that they were of the opinion that the school entry time should be set according to the readiness of the children and the 33% to their ages. The 11% of the preschool teachers, however, expressed that it should be set according to both.

The 41% of the participant primary school teachers were of the opinion that the school entry time should be set according to both the readiness level and age. The 23% of the teachers stated that it should be set according to age and the 36% to the readiness of the children.

The statements of some of the teachers who were of the opinion that “The school entry time should be set according to age” are as follows:

- *“Children who are younger but have high readiness levels have academic problems in the following grades.”*
- *“The period of playing games is essential for the development of a child. Sending a child who gains readiness at an early age means dispossessing his/her period of playing games. Therefore children should not be sent to school before proper age.”*

The statements of some of the teachers who were of the opinion that “The school entry time should be set according to child’s readiness level.” are as follows:

- *“The developments of the same-age children are different.”*
- *“It is a matter of transition from education to instruction in school entry. In order to start learning children should complete their physical development, be independent of self-care skills, be courageous to join social environment, their understanding, perception, listening and expressing skills should be sufficient, they should have problem solving skill, be emotionally in a better situation and have self-management skills.”*

The statements of some of the teachers who were of the opinion that “The school entry time should be set according to both age and child’s readiness level” are as follows:

- *“Readiness level should coincide with age.”*
- *“Readiness is essential for skill development and age for physical development.”*

- *“To me both are needed, because the child can have a productive and qualified education period only if he/she is at proper stage in terms of both age and readiness. According to my observations, the students who are younger but sufficient in terms of readiness could have problems in years when the academic studies become hard.”*

The most repeated statements that the participant teachers made when asked “What is readiness?” are in the 4th Table.

Table 4. *What is Readiness?*

What is readiness?	<i>Preschool (N=18)</i>		<i>Primary School (N=22)</i>	
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Showing developmental sufficiency	18	100	22	100
Being at proper age	2	11	3	14
School and teacher’s being ready	0	-	1	4
Motivation	0	-	7	31
Interest and attitude	0	-	1	4

All of the participant preschool and primary school teachers stated that readiness was to show developmental sufficiency. In addition to this, the 11% of the preschool teachers and the 14% of the primary school teachers also pointed out “being at proper age”. The other characteristics that were not mentioned by the preschool teachers but the primary school teachers were school and teacher’s being ready (4%), motivation (31%) and interest and attitude (4%).

Some of the descriptions made by the teachers for the readiness are as follows:

- *“It is the whole of the characteristics brought to the education environment by the child.”*
- *“It is the development of the child’s social, emotional, cognitive, language, and motor skills which will help him/her reach the expected and aimed gains at school.”*
- *“It is the developmentally and individually shown performance of the child in learning process.”*

The answers given by the participant teachers to the question: “What are the indicators of the child’s school readiness?” are in the 5th Table.

Table 5: *Indicators of Readiness*

Indicators of Readiness	<i>Preschool (N=18)</i>		<i>Primary School (N=22)</i>	
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Showing sufficiency in development areas	18	100	22	100
Being at proper age	0	-	2	10
Interest and motivation	2	11	1	5
Abilities and skills	0	-	1	5
Pre-learnings	0	-	2	10
Healthy emotional/physiological development	0	-	1	5

All of the participant teachers expressed “showing sufficiency in development areas” as an indicator of readiness. When looked at the teachers’ opinions on developmental aspect of readiness, it is seen that all of the primary school teachers and the 88% of the preschool teachers mentioned social-emotional maturity. Also, the 88% of the preschool teachers and the 50% of the primary school teachers pointed out cognitive maturity. The 83% of the preschool teachers and the 45% of the primary school teachers mentioned the state of showing sufficiency at fine motor skills of children as

an indicator of readiness. The 72% of the preschool teachers and the 23% of the primary school teachers expressed the state of showing sufficiency at standard motor skills. The rate of the preschool teachers who stated physical maturity in general was 61%, and primary school teachers 41%. The 78% of the preschool teachers pointed out the state of showing sufficiency at language skills, whereas only the 23% of the primary school teachers mentioned this subject. The 50% of the preschool teachers and the 27% of the primary school teachers emphasized self-care skills.

The answers given by the participant teachers to the question: “Do the children’s readiness levels affect your classroom management? How?” are in the 6th Table.

Table 6. *Effect of Readiness to Classroom Management*

Effect of Readiness to Classroom Management	<i>Preschool (N=18)</i>		<i>Primary School (N=22)</i>	
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
It does	18	100	19	86
It does not	0	-	3	14

According to the Table 6, all of the participant preschool teachers (100%) and the 86% of the primary school teachers stated that the child’s readiness affect classroom management.

The statements of the teachers on how the readiness of the children affect classroom management are as follows:

- *“The children with different readiness levels affect their peers negatively.”*
- *“The children with different readiness levels affect the context of the learning activities.”*
- *“If an activity which is not suitable for the children’s readiness level is carried out, it will be meaningless to talk about classroom management there.”*

The statements of the teachers on the effect of the children with low readiness levels to classroom management are as follows:

- *“The necessity of the preparation of individual programme will increase.”*
- *“The application of the programme will decrease.”*
- *“They affect the communication between the teacher and the other children.”*
- *“Perception and academic success will be low.”*
- *“They have problems in following the instructions.”*
- *“They disturb the classroom management.”*

The statements of the teachers on the effect of the children with high readiness levels to classroom management are as follows:

- *“When working with the children with high readiness levels, success is achieved in classroom management.”*
- *“Education with the children with high readiness levels is a lot easier, a lot more peaceful and entertaining. You immediately or in a short time take what you give. Parents are also aware of this. Teacher – student and parent triangle progresses positively.”*

The findings reached by the answers of the teachers to the questions: “What kind of situations do you come across with the children with low readiness levels in comparison to their peers? How does this situation affect your classroom management?” are in the 7th Table.

Table 7. *Experience with Children with Low Readiness Levels*

Experience With Children With Low Readiness Levels	<i>Preschool (N=18)</i>		<i>Primary School (N=22)</i>	
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Child aspect	18	100	22	100
Peer aspect	9	50	3	14
Teacher aspect	2	11	3	14
Process aspect	12	67	15	69

All of the participant teachers mentioned that the situations that they came across with the children who had low readiness levels were the situations that they experience directly with the child. The 69% of the primary school teachers and the 67% of the preschool teachers stated that the situations that they came across with the children with low readiness levels affected the education process. The 50% of the preschool teachers and the 14% of the primary school teachers mentioned that the situations that they came across with the children with low readiness levels were the situations that the children experienced with their peers (class mates). The 11% of the preschool teachers and the 14% of the primary school teachers emphasized the effect of the situations that they came across with the children with low readiness levels to the teachers.

When analysed the child aspect of the situations that the teachers came across with the children who had low readiness levels, the 72% of the preschool teachers and the 50% of the primary school teachers were of the opinion that children with low readiness levels had difficulty in learning. In addition to this, the teachers (33% preschool and 32% primary school) stated that children with low readiness levels had lack of motivation. The rate of the primary school teachers who expressed that the children with low readiness levels had lack of self-confidence was 32% and preschool teachers 28%. Both the preschool teachers (17%) and the primary school teachers (18%) were of the opinion that children with low readiness levels had behavioural problems. The participant preschool teachers (17%) stated that children with low readiness levels were worried at school, whereas the primary school teachers did not comment on this.

Upon analyzing the statements of the teachers on the peer aspect of the situations that the teachers came across with the children who had low readiness levels, it was seen that they mentioned that children with low readiness levels caused distraction in the classroom, negatively affected the other kids, often had problematic situations with those kids and affected the relationship between other kids and teacher.

When analysed the statements of the teachers on the process aspect of the situations that the teachers came across with the children who had low readiness levels, it was seen that they pointed out difficulties with carrying out the curriculum, negative effect to time management, decline of quality in learning environment, necessity of reward and punishment method and necessity of multiple variation of learning methods and techniques.

Some of the statements that the teachers made on their experiences with children who had low readiness levels are as follows:

- *“Children with low readiness levels show little participation, interest and motivation. One-on-one care is needed with these kids. Other kids get bored while waiting them. Last year, one of my students had low level in comparison to his peers. The kid did not know anything (colours, shapes, numbers, etc.). I had difficulty particularly at reading-writing hour and his friends were getting bored while waiting him and starting talk to each other in the classroom. Also, because the child was falling behind in all activities, unfortunately all his friends had labelled him and no matter how hard I tried to prevent, they would not let him join them.”*

- *“I have a student with low readiness level in the classroom. He does not join any activity willingly. He is worried that he will not be successful. Because the preschool students do whatever their peers do in regard to their ages, I have difficulty in carrying out the activities every now and then.”*

The findings reached by the answers of the teachers to the questions: “What kind of situations do you come across with the children with high readiness levels in comparison to their peers? How does this situation affect your classroom management? Can you tell us any experiences?” are in the 8th Table.

Table 8. *Experince with Children with High Readiness Levels*

Experince With Children With High Readiness Levels	<i>Preschool (N=18)</i>		<i>Primary School (N=22)</i>	
	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
Child aspect	18	100	22	100
Peer aspect	8	44	4	18
Teacher aspect	9	50	0	0
Process aspect	6	33	3	17

All of the participant teachers mentioned that the situations that they came across with the children who had high readiness levels were the situations that they experience directly with the child. The 50% of the preschool teachers emphasized the effect of the situations that they came across with the children with high readiness levels to the teachers, whereas the primary school teachers did not comment on this. The 44% of the preschool teachers and the 18% of the primary school teachers mentioned that the situations that they came across with the children with high readiness levels were the situations that the children experienced with their peers (class mates). The 33% of the preschool teachers and the 17% of the primary school teachers stated that the situations that they came across with the children with high readiness levels affected the education process.

When analyzed the statements of the teachers on the child aspect of the situations that they came across with the children who had high readiness levels, it was seen that the teachers mentioned notions such as “high speed learning, encouraging the peers, high self-confidence, being highly popular among the peers, helping the peers and the teacher, behavioural problems, getting bored and being impatient, lack of harmony with the classroom dynamics.”

When analyzed the statements of the teachers on the peer aspect of the situations that they came across with the children who had high readiness levels, it was seen that the teachers mentioned notions such as “attention deficiency, negative affection, frequently being exposed to problematic situations, pressure, humiliation and model taking.”

When analyzed the statements of the teachers on the process aspect of the situations that they came across with the children who had high readiness levels, it was seen that the teachers mentioned notions such as “disorder of the classroom discipline, increase in efficiency in learning environment, incline of quality in learning environment, having difficulty in time management.”

Some of the statements that the teachers made on the effect of the children who had low readiness level to classroom management are as follows:

- *“While most of the time education is positive with children with high readiness level, since not all the kids are at the same level sometimes we have problems. Children with high readiness levels are understand everything immediately. They finish the activity and wait until other kids understand it. Sometimes this makes them get bored. Thus, they influence other friends and disturb the classroom order. Sometimes they compete to be the first to finish.”*

- “We find solutions by giving extra work and additional activities to this kind of children and by supporting their work without offending other kids.”

One of the primary school teachers quoted a case experienced with children who had high readiness levels as follows:

“I was teaching subtraction at the first grade. I told the students that big numbers couldn’t be subtracted from smaller ones. One of my students said he wanted to tell me something outside the classroom. We went out together. He said that a large number could be subtracted from a smaller one and that the result would be minus something, adding if he had told that in the classroom, his classmates would have got confused.”

The findings reached by the answers of the participant preschool and primary school teachers to the questions: “What do you think about the effect of family over the children’s school readiness? What might be your suggestions to families on this?” are in Table 9.

Table 9. Suggestions to Families

Suggestions to Families	<i>Preschool (N=18)</i>		<i>Primary School (N=22)</i>	
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Developing healthy school perception	3	17	4	18
Supporting the child’s development	18	100	22	100
School and family coordination	5	28	6	27
Accurate attitude and approach	4	22	13	60

All of the participant teachers shared the idea that families should support their children’s development in order to increase the children’s readiness levels. The 60% of the primary school teachers and the 22% of the preschool teachers suggested that families show accurate attitude and approach to their children. Other suggestions made by the teachers were ensuring the coordination of school and family (preschool: 28% and primary school: 27%) and developing healthy school perception for children (preschool: 17% and primary school: 18%).

The examples of the statements of the teachers on their suggestions to families are as follows:

- “They have to know their children very well, learn their growth process and support them.”
- “The more the families coordinate with the teachers, the more they receive positive results.”
- “Families should give responsibilities to their children, they shouldn’t interfere in their lives as much as possible and trust them.”

The findings reached by the answers of the participant primary school teachers to the question: “What might be your suggestions to preschool teachers in terms of school readiness?” are in Table 10.

Table 10. Suggestions to Preschool Teachers

Suggestions to Preschool Teachers	<i>Primary School(N=22)</i>	
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Curriculum aspect	22	100
Assessment-evaluation aspect	3	14
Attitude and approach	4	18
Relations with family	5	23
Field competence (accurate teaching)	8	36

As it is seen in Table 10, all of the participant primary school teachers (100%) made suggestions to preschool teachers in terms of the curriculum aspect. Other suggestions made by the primary school teachers were field competence (36%), relations with family (23%), attitude and approach (18%) and assessment-evaluation aspect (14%).

When analysing the teachers' suggestions on the aspect of curriculum, it was seen that they expressed notions such as 'teaching school life and rules, ensuring the development of positive school perception, supporting the language development, supporting the social and emotional growth, supporting the mental development, pre-studies for reading and writing, satisfying their game needs, increasing the readiness level'.

When analysing the teachers' suggestions on the aspect of assessment and evaluation, it was seen that they expressed notions such as 'identifying and reporting the learning needs of the children, making assessments on readiness level, revealing individual differences'.

When analysing the teachers' suggestions on the aspect of attitude and approach, it was seen that they made statements such as 'children should be given more responsibilities, ensuring children make the activities themselves and not presenting the teachers' output as children's, not being worried academically, obeying the limits of the curriculum, being a positive role model to kids'. On family education, the teachers said: 'The teacher should educate the parents first and ensure that they have the positive part in kid's education.

When analysing the teachers' suggestions on the aspect of relations between teachers and family, it was seen that they made statements such as 'families should be informed correctly and promptly about the developmental characteristics of their children, families should be instructed correctly about the developmental needs of children, effective and efficient family education should be provided'.

When analysing the teachers' suggestions on the aspect of field competence, they said 'whatever they teach, they should teach correctly and accurately. Inaccurate teachings cannot be reversed.' They also made statements such as 'they should properly teach to hold pencil, to paint, to write numbers and letters, they should teach correct pronunciation and be careful about inaccurate learnings on any field'

Results and Discussion

If an assessment is made within the context of the demographic data of both preschool teachers and first grade teachers who participated in the research, it can be noted that the findings claimed in this study reveal that the teachers' perceptions and points of view of classroom management and readiness and the relationship between them are in a heterogeneous distribution.

Elements That Affect Classroom Management (According to the Views of Teachers)

When the teachers were asked about their views on the elements that affect the classroom management, it was concluded that regarding the teacher and the student "individual features" came into prominence. Almost all preschool and primary school teachers who participated in the research emphasized the characteristics of the teacher and the student. Özgan and Tekin (2011) found out the same result that the teachers emphasized the characteristic of the student as the most important element which affected the classroom management. Also in the same research, it is concluded that one other important element was the characteristics of the teacher. These results are consistent with the results of this research. While the teachers stated that characteristics of the children were the factors that affected the educational process and classroom management strategies they followed, they also dwelled on the qualitative importance of teacher approaches, in other words, teacher qualities, in terms of managing this process. Based on this, individual characteristics can be said to be the main determining element in the education process emphasized with its "individual focused" aspect in the literature according to teacher opinions.

Classroom management has a strategic importance for quality in terms of education dynamics and efficiency (Akman, 2014). Today, in addition to the basic curriculum set by the Ministry of Education, different teaching approaches come up and there are rapid developments in educational technology and in the practice of role of the families in learning process. According to the teachers' views, the factor that makes the learning process efficient and affects it at the most intense level is student and the teacher; in other words "human" factor. It is believed that this is a very significant result which cites to current education policies in terms of the aims of education and its basic elements.

According to the findings, as the individual differences increased, teachers became in need of developing different strategies of classroom management which involved different approaches. However, it was also seen that the effectiveness of these strategies were said to depend on the characteristics of the teacher. These individual differences were expressed to be hyperactivity, special education needs, behavioural problems and readiness level.

All preschool teachers and almost half (41%) of the primary school teachers stressed that the most effective feature of the students which affected the classroom management was behavioural problems. While the primary school teachers expressed opinion about developmental differences (54%), the preschool teachers also intensely talked about developmental differences (75%). These findings could be read as the preschool teachers might come across individually different kinds of developmental features and behavioural problems at that age period.

While it was noted that the preschool teachers emphasized effectiveness of the family characteristics to the classroom management at a substantial rate (39%), the primary school teachers did not underline the family effect. Yet, it was also noted that all teachers said the family had a very significant importance when asked if they had an effect on the students' readiness level. Erkan (2011b) found out that there was a relation at a significant level between the education level of the mother and readiness level of the child while searching for the effect of the families' educational status to the elementary school readiness of the children. Despite the primary school teachers' views and given the research findings of Erkan (2011b), it is striking that the primary school teachers did not stress the effect of family characteristics to the readiness of the children.

Hyperactivity was another element which both preschool teachers (44%) and primary school teachers (45%) significantly and intensely referred to as a child feature that affected the classroom management. These findings reveal that the hyperactivity has effectiveness on school dynamics at two different learning stages.

While the primary school teachers were monitored to have emphasized attention deficit and motivation equally (39%), the preschool teachers were seen to have emphasized them at a low rate. This can be explained with the fact that since preschool education is a step in primary education, teachers' expectation of motivation was lower than primary school teachers. Özenç and Çekirdekçi (2013) said that teachers had problems particularly with children who started elementary school earlier than they should have. The orientation at preschool education process requires longer and more comprehensive studies than at primary school. Yet, children are expected to start primary school with higher motivation because of the effect of the preschool education. This also emphasizes the importance and the gains of preschool education.

The divergence between the preschool teachers and the primary school teachers on attention deficiency can be explained with the variety of the materials and learning activities in terms of methods, the presence of free time activities, and the curriculum and approach emphasize more on individual developmental needs. While at primary school both the physical conditions and the programme expectations challenge the teachers in terms of the children's individual differences and needs, in preschool education teachers have more flexibility because of the nature of the preschool education and the context of the programme.

The preschool teachers emphasized the effect of programme, family attitudes and physical conditions to the classroom management at a higher rate than the primary school teachers did. At the end of their research, Çelik and Kök (2007) mentioned about the significance of preparing a good physical environment in order to make the students gain desirable behaviours and design an effective learning environment in the classroom. It is particularly important that teachers use the physical environment and the materials effectively when designing the learning process in order to fulfil the interest and motivation needs of the preschool students. Especially the physical features of the classroom were intensely stressed by the preschool teachers. This difference might be said to be based on the basic differences between the preschool and the elementary school education practices in Turkey. In a study by Yilmazer (2003), the children were made to sit on the same kind of desks with a consecutive order in the classroom. It is a well-known fact that this traditional approach still continues in Turkish education system. Also, since the preschool education has a developmental structure because of the nature of the children, the intensity difference between the preschool teachers and the primary school teachers on emphasizing the physical properties is not surprising.

Another element stressed in the opinions of the teachers was the family's attitude towards the school. Yaman (2010) discovered that almost all teachers who participated in his research thought that the primary reason for the problematic behaviour was the family factor. Lara-Cinisomo et al. (2008) stated that the preschool teachers emphasized the effect of the family on the readiness of the children. In the findings of this research it is seen that one of two preschool teachers stressed the family as an important factor to the classroom management and that one of five teachers stressed the family effect. Preschool age children have more intense needs in terms of individual attention and adult support due to their age and development. The difference between the preschool and primary school teachers' opinions can be explained with the fact that in Turkey, preschool parents are trying to be more involved in the preschool education process and they have an over-protective attitude, which highlights the care aspect of preschool education while there is a perception and approach that primary schools are more academical.

The Definition and the Indications of Readiness in the Eyes of Teachers

How the teachers define readiness is one of the sub problems of this research. The teachers said that readiness reflects "all developmental features of the children" and that it differs depending on the individual characteristics.

The frequency of the emphasis of the development areas was followed in the teachers' definitions regarding readiness. All of the primary school teachers mentioned social-emotional maturity in their explanations regarding the indications of readiness. Also, a large number of preschool teachers (88%) mentioned that maturity in their explanations. While the preschool teachers stressed cognitive enhancement at same degree as social-emotional maturity, half of the primary school teachers primarily stressed cognitive enhancement. These findings reveal that the social-emotional maturity level of children is the most determinative element on the strategies of the classroom management. The next notion mostly mentioned by the primary school teachers was the development of fine motor skills (45%). It can easily be said that the emphasis on this developmental area is about children's level of readiness for writing practices and wrongly learnt behaviors that teachers had hard time correcting. In Koçyiğit's (2009) research first grade teachers emphasized social, emotional, physical and cognitive development dimensions while defining readiness and defined them as maturity in terms of skills required at the first grade. The findings gathered in this research are in line with Koçyiğit's (2009) findings.

Uzun and Alat (2014) analysed the opinions of the teachers about the readiness of the children who started the school at an early age in 4+4+4 education system. They revealed that the most problematic situations that the teachers mentioned they had to deal with were physical maturity, coordination, basic concept knowledge, expressing themselves, obeying the instructions and rules and meeting the needs of toilet and cleaning. These findings are consistent with the indications pointed out by the teachers in this research.

As seen in the findings, first grade teachers mentioned more about sound education as well as mislearnings in literacy practices. However, it is also revealed that regarding the indications of readiness, the preschool teachers -different from the primary school teachers- also stressed other areas of development as intensely important. (self-care skills 50%, language skills 78%, gross motor skills 72%, fine motor skills 83%) When the statements of the preschool teachers and the primary school teachers on the indications of readiness are compared, it can be said that the primary school teachers expect more from the preschool education process in terms of reading and writing preparatory work. Yapıcı and Ulu (2010) found out in their research that the most divergent issue between the preschool teachers and the primary school teachers was the preparatory work for reading and writing. This finding can be said to support the comments in the findings of this research. This can be interpreted as the preschool teachers perceive the developments of children as a whole in the context of the programme and preschool period development characteristics. When the primary school teachers' highlighting frequency of self-care (27%), language (23%) and gross motor skills (23%) and their highlighting frequency of cognitive development areas (50%) and social-emotional development areas (100%) are compared, it could be said that the priorities of the teachers are providing the classroom management and reaching the learning targets. This is a remarkable conclusion when the preschool teachers' and the primary school teachers' opinions are compared within this framework.

On the other hand, this finding reveals that the development of self-care, language and gross motor skills of the children who received preschool education are supported more competently in the preschool education period. Erkan (2011a) found that the readiness levels of the children who receive preschool education are much higher than the ones who do not receive.

When the teachers were asked to commentate on the relation between chronological age and readiness, it was observed that the preschool teachers intensely expressed (56%) readiness whereas the primary school teachers suggested that both had to be taken into consideration equally. This might be the effect of the fact that the regulations made by the Ministry of Education regarding the primary school starting age is on top of the agenda. The work made in order to lower the primary school starting age reveals the starting age negatively affects the readiness (Özenç and Çekirdekçi, 2013; Uzun and Alat, 2014). Koçyiğit (2009) explained that readiness differed in reading and being successful at school although the ages were same because children differed themselves in growing process and pointed out that the level of the school starting age did not clear away the developmental differences of children. Koçyiğit (2009) mentioned that the primary school teachers pointed out more things than the age criteria in order to start school. This coincides with the findings in this research.

The Effect of Readiness to Classroom Management According to the Teachers

When the teachers were asked about their opinions on the effect of readiness to classroom management, all preschool teachers and 86% of the primary school teachers answered that it had an effect. This reveals that according to the teachers, readiness has a significant effect on classroom management.

72% of the preschool teachers and 50% of the first grade teachers emphasized the observation that lower readiness leads to difficulty in learning. While the difference between readiness levels of the children who had different learning experiences is high in the preschool education, equality of opportunity at preschool period decreases this difference at primary school. As another observation, "anxiety" was emphasized by the preschool teachers even with a lower ratio but classroom teachers didn't even mention about it. This can be explained with the important effect of preschool education regarding children's school adjustment previous to primary school. While anxiety can be observed in children who start school the first time at preschool education center, the child would adjust to school life by the end of preschool.

The preschool teachers pointed out the effect of low-readiness-levelled children to their peers at a rate of 50% and to the teacher at a rate of 11%. The primary school teachers, however, stressed this effect at a rate of 14% to both peers and teacher equally. This reveals that the preschool teachers

think that the effect of children on their peers is much higher. The fact that since in preschool education process, games are used more frequently as a method, the peer interaction is higher and that in comparison to primary school flexible learning environments take place more often explain this situation.

When the teachers' opinions on the effect of high-readiness-levelled children to classroom management is analysed, it is observed that both teacher groups stressed the impatience and boredom of these children and the effect of these behaviours to the educational process. (44% and 45%) This presents the potential that the teachers allow group-centred and structured learning environments more than individual-centred and flexible semi-structured learning environments.

Teachers' Suggestions on Supporting Readiness

All teachers in both groups suggested that the readiness must be supported developmentally when they were asked about their recommendations for the families on supporting their children's readiness. Yeboah (2002) revealed that level of the school-family cooperation and the families' social-economical wealthiness was an important element for readiness and transition to primary school process. This stresses the families' necessity for being conscious on cooperation with school, following the right attitude and giving the right and rich inspiration to their children. Family support is an important element which affects the process in every stage of education. It is discovered in the findings that the teachers expect families' support especially for the social-emotional skills of the children and children's gain of personal freedom. Both teacher groups stressed the school-family cooperation at nearly same rates (28% and 27%) and suggested the families follow their children's development more closely and consciously. While the preschool teachers' suggestion frequency about developing right attitude and approach to their children was 22%, same frequency for the primary school teachers was 60%. This could be linked with expectation of the primary school teachers about the behavioural characteristics of the children to be at a desired degree at primary school. This expectation is related with the gains achieved in preschool education as previous step. Within this expectation the preschool teachers perceive that as a part of the education process right attitude and approach ability is a skill that families are gaining during the process and that the families have yet to complete the education process concerning themselves. Therefore the points of view on this issue could be regarded as flexible. However, the expectations of the primary school teachers are way higher. Both teacher groups emphasized the families developing healthy school perception for their children at nearly same levels. (17% and 18 %) This reveals that there is an expectation almost at same degree in both stages and could be interpreted as the teachers are of the opinion that schools and teachers have a main role for children to develop a healthy school perception.

The teachers' answers were noted to be programme (100%), assessment and evaluation (14%), attitude and approach (18%), relations with the family (23%) and competence of fields (36) when they were asked about their suggestions to the preschool teachers on developing the readiness of children. Yeboah (2002) pointed out that in order to ease the transition to elementary school and to increase the readiness levels of the children the developmental necessities of the children should be discovered with the assessment and evaluation work and a programme should be planned accordingly. All teachers stressed the programme aspect and suggested to support the development of the children with rich materials and education activities. The most striking aspect here is fields of competence. Primary school teachers particularly emphasized the importance of correct instruction in the sound and pre-writing education and underlined the challenge of reversing the mislearning. Güven (2012) emphasized the importance of the teachers' proficiency levels in both theoretical and practical terms.

The sum up the results obtained from the findings of this study;

- Both preschool and primary teacher groups stressed student and teacher characteristics as the most effective element for classroom management.
- It is found out that all participating teachers described readiness accurately and adequately.
- The primary school teachers most frequently emphasized social-emotional and fine motor skills respectively as the indications of readiness.

- The primary school teachers expect the children to start school life with high motivation and healthy school perception as a result and gain of preschool education.
- Both preschool and primary school teachers think that schools and teachers have a main role for children to develop a healthy school perception.
- The preschool teachers stressed all areas of development at almost the same frequency and intensity level as the indications of readiness.
- The preschool teachers perceive the developments of the children as a whole in terms of the curriculum and the characteristics of preschool period development.
- Both teacher groups mentioned hyperactivity as an important element that affected the classroom management.
- The preschool teachers frequently expressed that the criteria for starting the school was the readiness level, whereas the primary school teachers stated that age and readiness level had to be considered together.
- Both teacher groups stressed that readiness level affected the classroom management.
- Both teacher groups said that they observed challenge in learning as the most frequent case among the low-readiness-levelled children. On the other hand boredom and impatience observed among the high-readiness-levelled children.
- Both teacher groups suggested to the parents that they should support their children's development.
- The primary school teachers recommended the preschool teachers that they should get the children engaged in activities that would support their development.

Suggestions

According to the results of the research:

- In order to increase the awareness of the families on the importance of the readiness, family education programmes should be organized and the school-family cooperation should be provided.
- By more effectively using the assessment and evaluation work especially in the preschool period, the requirements of the children's readiness should be determined and education process plan should be made more qualified within that framework.
- The development portfolio made in the preschool period should be shared with the primary school teachers.
- By the help of the programmes that provide extensive services and will support the children's all development areas, suitable learning environments should be provided to the children whose developments are at risk and the elementary school readiness of those children should be supported.
- For the preschool and primary school teachers, in-service training activities should be organized.
- For the preschool teachers the opportunity of attending the first grade classes as an observer and for the primary school teachers the opportunity of attending preschool education environment as an observer should be created.

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