Classroom Teachers' Expectations from Pre-School Education on the Process of Preparation for Literacy: An Exploratory Sequential Design Study

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Abstract

In this study, it was aimed to reveal classroom teachers' expectations from pre-school education within the context of literacy teaching and to develop a measurement tool depending on these expectations. The study was conducted with 682 classroom teachers in accordance with the exploratory sequential design, one of the mixed method designs. The expectations of classroom teachers within the context of literacy teaching were first determined by qualitative data collection methods, then, the validity and reliability analyses of the draft measurement tool created with these data were performed and the measurement tool was developed, and finally, this measurement tool was applied on a different sample and the expectations of classroom teachers from preschool education within the context of literacy were determined. According to the qualitative data, classroom teachers' expectations were evaluated under the themes of listening, speaking, reading, writing and school adjustment. In the scale development process, the reliability was ensured by Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, the content validity was ensured by expert opinions, and the construct validity was ensured by exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. As a result of the analyses, a valid and reliable scale consisting of 24 items and three factors as listening-speaking, reading-writing and school adjustment was developed. It was recommended that classroom teachers should evaluate their expectations from pre-school education with pre-school teachers during their professional working periods.

Keywords: Pre-School Education; Preparation for Literacy; School Adjustment; Exploratory Sequential Design

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Classroom Teachers' Expectations from Pre-School Education on the Process of Preparation for Literacy: An Exploratory Sequential Design Study

In today's world, it has become almost impossible for an individual to lead a normal life without literacy skills (Taylor & McAtee, 2003). In fact, it can be said that the studies based on the concept of lifelong literacy (Hanemann, 2015; Hanemann & McKay, 2015; Raseroka, 2003; Sligo et al., 2007), as well as the idea that considers literacy as a basic communication tool (Benavot, 2015), confirm it. Early literacy skills constitute the basis of literacy, which is of such vital importance, and the reading and writing that children will learn later (Justice et al., 2002).

Early literacy skills develop before formal education in which reading becomes the primary academic focus (Missall et al., 2007). In this period which corresponds to the pre-school period, the is widely believed that the rich stimuli that children encounter are effective in the acquisition of literacy skills (Şenol & Akyol, 2021). There are approaches that evaluate the early literacy skills of toddlers with this idea (Weigel et al., 2017). Despite the attempts to perform these evaluations before formal pre-school education, the view that pre-school period is the most appropriate time to promote the development of literacy and to screen for and respond to the first signs of reading difficulties has increasingly gained more acceptance (Missall et al., 2007).

It is of critical importance to develop children's basic literacy skills before they start primary school. Children's home literacy environments (Evans et al., 2000) and classroom practices in pre-school education (Jackson et al., 2006) have effects on the language and literacy development that includes these skills. While the home literacy environment can be shaped according to the families' economic opportunities (Templeton, 1986), pre-school education is carried out within the scope of a formal program (Niikko & Havu-Nuutinen, 2009). From this aspect, pre-school education can be described as a conscious and programmed initiative that prepares children for primary school (Lim-Ratnam, 2013). In this respect, it can be said that pre-school education is the last opportunity for disadvantaged children with insufficient home literacy environment to start primary school by being ready (Barnett, 1992).

Early childhood education constitutes the basis not only for individual development but also for social development (Temple & Reynolds, 2007; Yoshikawa et al., 2013). Despite this critical importance, there are different approaches to pre-school education between countries. While these differences can sometimes be caused by the policies of the governments, and the level of social awareness may sometimes lead to these differences. For instance, the schooling rate is not sufficient because pre-school education is not compulsory in Turkey. In the 2018-2019 academic year, the schooling rate between 4-5 years of age in pre-school education was announced as 57.9% and it was planned to switch to compulsory education for the 5-year-old group (Official Gazette, 2019). In some countries, although pre-school education is not compulsory, the rate of participation in education can be very high during this period. For instance, the schooling rate of children aged 3-5 years in Hong Kong is 94.7% (Chan, 2010).

The quality of education received by children is as important as their access to pre-school education for children to start primary school ready (Sandstrom, 2012). The abovementioned quality problem may also lead to other problems. For instance, although pre-school education is carried out with a certain program, teachers may neglect some aspects of this program in practice (Niikko & Havu-Nuutinen, 2009). This negligence may cause children with incomplete and incorrect learning in pre-school education and their classroom teachers to have various difficulties in the literacy learning process (Koçyiğit, 2009). Such cases reveal the importance of increasing communication and cooperation between pre-school teachers and classroom teachers in order to increase the quality of pre-school education. Indeed, the lack of communication and cooperation between teachers may lead to serious problems such as making it difficult and delaying the adaptation of children to school (Chan, 2012). In cases where preschool and primary school teachers are in cooperation, teachers will be able to communicate their mutual expectations to each other and it will be possible to increase the quality of pre-school education (Niikko & Havu-Nuutinen, 2009).

There are essential differences between pre-school and primary school education, for instance, pre-school education is planned and mostly carried out with play and child-centered methods, however, the education in which courses and subjects are of first priority is at the center of primary school education. Therefore, pre-school teachers consider curriculum as a framework and can be flexible in practice according to the needs of the children, however, primary school first grade teachers can feel the pressure of the curriculum (Einarsdottir, 2006). The fact that teachers know their students in every aspect and carry out the first literacy teaching process in accordance with the needs of the students in the first grade is important to achieve success. Since pre-school education is not compulsory in Turkey, the differences in school readiness levels of students who receive and do not receive pre-school education in the transition to primary school are among the significant challenges faced by classroom teachers in the educational environment. This problem may be reduced by making pre-school education compulsory. However, when the literature is reviewed, problems such as the presence of children who do not start primary school ready due to incomplete and erroneous learning despite receiving pre-school education (Koçyiğit, 2009), the fact that literacy teaching is carried out although it is not included in the preschool education program (Taşkın et al.,2015), and some preschool teachers' mistakes in literacy preparation activities (Yapıcı, & Ulu, 2010) may also cause difficulties for primary school teachers in the literacy teaching process. For these reasons, in many studies aimed to determine the expectations of classroom teachers from pre-school education (Bozgün & Uluçınar-Sağır, 2018; Pekdoğan, 2017; Tantekin-Erden & Altun, 2014), classroom teachers' expectations from pre-school education within the context of preparation for literacy were mentioned.

The starting point of this study is that although children receive pre-school education, they face various problems in the literacy learning process due to incomplete or erroneous learning during this period. Children should start primary school by reaching a certain level in terms of listening and speaking skills, which are among the four basic language skills, so that literacy education can be carried out in a qualified manner. However, while pre-school teachers focus more on writing skills as a preparation for literacy, they may include more limited studies on improving phonological awareness, visual perception, vocabulary, listening and speaking skills (Erdoğan et al., 2013). In this study, listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, which are the competencies that children need to acquire in the pre-school period so that they can start school ready to learn to read and write, were discussed as a separate category. Furthermore, in addition to these four basic language skills for the literacy teaching process, children's level of school adjustment was also discussed as a separate category. The expectations of classroom teachers from pre-school education in terms of the process of preparation for literacy were examined under these five categories. In brief, unlike other studies, the aim of this study was to determine classroom teachers' expectations from pre-school education on the process of preparation for literacy, and to develop a valid and reliable scale accordingly with the contributions of the program and the relevant literature along with these expectations. With the scale developed, it is considered that policy makers and school directorates will be enabled to quickly determine the expectations of classroom teachers from pre-school education within the context of the studies on the process of preparation for literacy and that that preschool teachers will be able to organize their teaching activities in accordance with these expectations.

METHOD

Research Model

This study was conducted in accordance with the exploratory sequential design, one of the mixed method designs. In this design, the research problem is first addressed by collecting and analyzing qualitative data, and then, the results obtained are converted into a scale and become a data collection tool. After this quantitative stage, the data collection tool developed with a third quantitative stage is tested (Creswell, 2015). In the study process, firstly, the qualitative data were first collected and analyzed, and the expectations of classroom teachers from pre-school education within the context of literacy teaching were revealed. Along with these expectations, an item pool was created by using the literature (Akçay, 2016; Bozgün & Uluçınar-Sağır, 2018; Chan, 2012; Chan, 2010; Deveci & Kavak, 2020; Güneyli & Bağkent-Özyel, 2016; Pekdoğan, 2017; Tantekin-Erden & Altun, 2014;

Taşkın et al., 2014; Taşkın et al., 2015) and Ministry of National Education [MoNE, (2013)] Preschool Education Program and MoNE (2019) Turkish Language Curriculum. Then, the validity and reliability studies of the measurement tool were performed. As the third stage of the exploratory sequential design, classroom teachers' expectations from pre-school education within the context of literacy teaching were revealed through the scale, the validity and reliability study of which was performed. The other parts of the method applied in this study are presented under the titles of qualitative and quantitative parts in accordance with the exploratory sequential design.

Qualitative Part

Study Group

The qualitative data group consisted of the teachers who completed the essay form on the subject and the teachers who participated in the focus group interview. These teachers were selected by the maximum diversity sampling method. In this type of sampling, it is aimed to ensure the diversity of those related to the aim of the study (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). The essay form was applied to 30 teachers working in primary schools located in regions where families from upper, middle and lower socioeconomic levels lived. Focus group interviews were conducted with 22 teachers working in primary schools located in regions where families from upper, middle and lower socioeconomic levels lived, provided that they were different from the schools where the teachers in the first group worked. Teachers' gender, professional seniority, literacy teaching with the sound-based literacy teaching method, and class level distributions were taken into consideration in the selection of teachers. The schools were determined by interviewing the directorate of national education. The characteristics of the classroom teachers who participated in the qualitative part of the study are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of the study group from which qualitative data were collected

Gender		Professional Seniority					
Female	Male	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	21-25 years	26+
30 58%	22 42%	1 2%	5 10%	18 35%	10 19%	9 17%	9 17%
Number teaching 1st graders						Applying the Sound Based Method	
1	2	3	4	5+	Did not teach	Yes	No
0 0%	1 2%	9 17%	17 33%	25 48%	0 0%	52 100%	0 0%
Grade level taught this						Undergraduate Program Graduated	
1.	2.	3.	4.	Multigrade class		Classroom teaching	Other
23 44%	9 17%	14 27%	6 12%	0 0%		47 90%	5 10%

When Table 1 was examined, it was observed that while 35% (f=18) of the 52 participating teachers had 11-15 years of professional seniority, 48% (f=25) of them taught first graders for 5 times or more, 44% (f=23) of them taught first graders this year, and all of the teachers (f=52) apply the sound-based literacy teaching method.

Data Collection Tools

Expectation Questionnaire for the Process of Preparation for Literacy. The questionnaire developed by the researchers consists of two parts. The first part includes four open-ended questions such as "What are your expectations from pre-school education within the context of listening skills for the process of preparation for literacy?". The second part includes those related to literacy teaching such as “Applies verbal instructions.” and "Does painting and drawing works” among the 1st grade achievements included in the MoNE (2019) Turkish Course Curriculum. Classroom teachers in the

research group completed the questionnaire by marking the achievements that they thought should be prepared in the pre-school period in accordance with the needs of primary school first grade students. A pilot study was conducted with four classroom teachers before applying the questionnaire. No suggestion was offered by the teachers in the pilot application and the questionnaire was applied in its original form.

Focus Group Interview Form for the Process of Preparation for Literacy. The interview form developed by the researchers includes five open-ended questions such as "What are your expectations from pre-school education within the context of reading skills to support the literacy learning process of students?". Probe sub-questions were prepared to get detailed information about each question. For instance, sub-questions such as "What are your expectations about phonological awareness" and "What are your expectations about the ability to read visual materials?" were included for the question stated above. A pilot study was conducted with six classroom teachers, and it was indicated by the teachers that there should be a question about "readiness for school" and "recognition and writing of numbers". All of these suggestions of the teachers were added to the interview form and the form was finalized.

Data Collection and Analysis

Due to the pandemic, the days when the classroom teachers were at school were learned from school directorates and school visits were carried out on those days. The teachers were informed about the research subject and they were given one week to complete the essay form. After the teachers completed the forms, they submitted them to the school directorates and the questionnaires were taken from the school directorates. A total of 40 teachers were reached, but 30 teachers returned. The answers to the open-ended questions of the questionnaire were analyzed using the descriptive analysis method, and the part of the questionnaire related to the 1st grade achievements was analyzed by creating frequency. The data collected from the teachers were used both in the creation of the scale item pool and in the development of the interview form.

The focus group interview was conducted by one of the researchers via the internet in order to avoid any confusion. The interview was conducted in three sessions with one school each from the regions where low, middle and high socioeconomic level students lived, and teachers working in these schools. The interviews were conducted with a total of 22 volunteer teachers, including 7 teachers from schools in low and middle socioeconomic regions and 8 teachers from the school in the high socioeconomic region. The interviews lasted for 56 minutes 15 seconds, 62 minutes 25 seconds, and 71 minutes 42 seconds, respectively. The video-recorded interviews were analyzed separately by both researchers through descriptive analysis method, and the common codings were included in the scope of qualitative data. Miles and Huberman (2015) indicated that the consistency between the coding of both researchers should be at least 80% and that this value can be calculated with the formula "Consensus/(Consensus+Dissensus)x100". In accordance with this formula, the intercoder reliability was calculated as 86.1% according to the 31/(31+5)x100 operation, and this value was considered sufficient in terms of consistency.

Quantitative Part

Study Group

No sampling method was used for exploratory factor analysis (EFA), and the draft scale was delivered to the classroom teachers working in 11 of 17 districts in Bursa province through the district national education directorates and school directorates on the internet. Necessary reminders were given to teachers by reaching the district directors of national education, branch managers in charge of primary schools, and some school principals many times so that the scale would be completed by the teachers. 375 teachers completed the draft scale, and information about these teachers is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Characteristics of the study group from which EFA Data were Collected

Gender		Professional Seniority					
Female	Male	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	21-25 years	26+
274	101	25	49	73	70	93	65
73.1%	26.9%	6.7%	13.1%	19.5%	18.7%	24.8%	17.3%
Number teaching 1st graders						Applying the Sound-Based Method	
1	2	3	4	5+	Did not teach	Yes	No
11	41	51	68	190	14	361	14
2.9%	10.9%	13.6%	18.1%	50.7%	3.7%	96.3%	3.7%
Grade level taught this						Undergraduate Program Graduated	
1.	2.	3.	4.	Multigrade class		Classroom teaching	Other
93	80	89	105	8		289	86
24.8%	21.3%	23.7%	28%	2.1%		77.1%	22.9%

When Table 2 was examined, it was observed that while 73.1% (f=274) of the 375 participating teachers were female, 24.8% of the teachers (f=93) had 21-25 years of professional seniority, and 50.7% of the teachers (f=190) taught first graders for 5 times or more.

It is a more accurate approach to perform CFA on a different dataset instead of trying to confirm the structures formed as a result of factor analysis with the same data set through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (Gürbüz, 2019). Therefore, the data for CFA were collected from classroom teachers working in six districts of Bursa province, except for the group in which factor analysis was performed. The teachers were reached with the method used in the draft form and the information about these teachers is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Characteristics of the study group from which CFA Data were Collected

Gender		Professional Seniority					
Female	Male	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	21-25 years	26+
179	76	18	61	51	58	41	26
70.2%	29.8%	7.1%	23.9%	20.0%	22.7%	16.1%	10.2%
Number teaching 1st graders						Applying the Sound-Based Method	
1	2	3	4	5+	Did not teach	Yes	No
7	19	34	48	132	15	240	15
2.7%	7.5%	13.3%	18.8%	51.8%	5.9%	94.1%	5.9%
Grade level taught this						Undergraduate Program Graduated	
1.	2.	3.	4.	Multigrade class		Classroom teaching	Other
66	73	55	58	3		190	65
25.9%	28.6%	21.6%	22.7%	1.2%		74.5%	25.5%

When Table 3 was examined, it was observed that while 70.2% (f=179) of the 255 participating teachers were female, 22.7% of the teachers (f=58) had 16-20 years of professional seniority, and 51.8% of the teachers (f=132) taught first graders for 5 times or more.

Data collection tool

The draft items of the Expectations from Preschool Education (EPE) were created by using the qualitative data, literature and the relevant curricula. The items were prepared under the themes of listening, speaking, reading, writing and school adjustment. A total of 40 items, consisting of 9 items for listening skill, 7 items for speaking skill, 3 items for reading skill, 8 items for writing skill and 13 items for school adjustment, were created from the qualitative data. The final draft scale was formed

as 52 items by adding 12 items (1 item for listening, 4 items for speaking, 3 items for reading and 4 items for school adjustment) from the literature and the relevant curriculum to these items. Expert opinions were obtained from a total of 12 people, one of whom was a faculty member working in the field, three of whom were preschool teachers and eight of whom were classroom teachers, in order to ensure content validity. The experts evaluated the items in the scale one by one and marked one of the "appropriate, should be added to the scale with corrections, removed" options given next to the items for each item. Experts were asked about which corrections should be made in the items requested to be corrected. The content validity ratio (CVR) was calculated for each item with help of the formula proposed by Lawshe (1975) to calculate the content validity of the scale items along with the data collected from the experts. KGO=[Nu-(N/2)] / (N/2)

While Ayre and Scally (2014) indicated that at least 10 experts should express positive opinions about the item when 12 expert opinions were obtained, and that the CVR value should be at least 0.667, Lawshe (1975) indicated that the CVR value should be at least 0.56 when 12 expert opinions were obtained. The CVR values of the items were 0.667 for three items (items 11, 14, 49), and the other items had values between 0.834 and 1. Based on these results, no item was removed from the scale as a result of expert opinions. The language validity of the items was examined by a Turkish language expert before conducting a pilot application with draft scale. The language expert made suggestions for a total of seven items and all suggestions were fulfilled. The fact that it was asked to write "Sense of self-confidence for students" instead of “Students' sense of self-confidence…”, and “The similarities between the images and the...” instead of “The similarity between the images and …” can be given as examples of the corrections suggested. After the relevant corrections, a pilot application was conducted after 17 classroom teachers completed the scale, and no correction suggestions were received from the teachers.

Data Collection and Analysis

The draft scale was delivered to the teachers through the school directorates and the teachers completed the scale with a computer, tablet or mobile phone. EFA was performed with the data collected, and principal components analysis and varimax rotation method were used. Then, Cronbach's Alpha reliability values were calculated on the basis of factors and for the whole scale. The final scale formed as a result of content validity, factor analysis and reliability analysis was applied to a different group, and CFA was performed.

FINDINGS

The findings of the study are presented in three parts in accordance with the exploratory sequential design. While the qualitative data of the study are presented in the first part, the validity and reliability information of the scale developed is presented in the second part, and the data on the expectations of classroom teachers from pre-school education are presented in the final section.

Qualitative Findings of the Study

The qualitative data of the study are presented in an order in accordance with the themes of "listening, speaking, reading, writing, school adjustment " and the findings on the listening theme are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Qualitative data on listening skill

Thematic Codes	Teacher Codes	f
Activities that will enable students to listen in accordance with the rules	T2/T3/T6/T9/T15/T19/T22/ T23/T29 /T35/T40/T42	12
Listening activities with the help of audio materials without technology support	T32/T41/T43/T44/ T48/T49/ T52	7
Activities that improve attention during listening	T41/T42/T43/ T46/T49/T50/T52	7
Activities to improve students' ability to apply verbal instructions	T1/T11/T23/T40/T42/ T51/T52	7
Listening activities supported by technological tools	T33/T45/T48/T52	4
Activities in which students are listened	T31/T32	2
Developing students' listening skills with games	T46	1
Ensuring that students make eye contact while listening	T46	1
Supporting students' appropriate listening behaviors with reinforcers	T46	1

When Table 4 was examined, it was observed that while 12 of the participating teachers indicated that students' listening skills should be developed in accordance with the rules, 7 of them indicated that there was a need for listening activities with audio materials without technology support. While T1 said that "more importance can be attached to their ability to act according to directions.", T32 said "I think that watching audio-visual videos and games, and listening and watching cartoons will not benefit children in terms of listening. (…) I think the most important thing here is to be able to listen while talking to each other.

The findings on the speaking theme of the study are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Qualitative data on speaking skill

Thematic Codes	Teacher Codes	f
Activities that encourage students to speak	T3/T9/T15/T16/T19/T20/T24/ T33/ T40/T41/ T42/ T44/T52	13
Supporting students' appropriate speaking behaviors with reinforcers	T46/ T52	2
Approaches to develop students' self-confidence for speaking	T28/T52	2
Increasing the participation of introverted students in speaking activities	T33/T47	2
Activities that support students to say the words fully and correctly in speech	T33/T50	2
Studies on the elimination of speech disorders caused by speech organs	T45/T50	2
Activities to gain speaking rules through games	T40	1

When Table 5 was examined, while 13 of the participating teachers indicated that there was a need for activities that encourage students to speak, 2 of them stated that students' speaking in accordance with the rules should be supported with reinforcers. T28 stated that "Emphasis should be placed on activities that improve children's self-confidence and speaking skills.".

The findings on the reading theme of the study are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Qualitative data on reading skill

Thematic Codes	Teacher Codes	f
Studies to feel, recognize and distinguish the sounds	T4/T8/T14/T24/T28/T34/T36/T41/T50	9
Activities to improve students' visual reading skills	T2/T4/T15/T19/T41/T46	6
Preventing mislearning related to sounds and letters	T8/T46/T49/T50	4

When Table 6 was examined, while 9 of the participating teachers indicated that students needed to feel, recognize and distinguish sounds, 6 of them indicated that there was a need for activities to improve their visual reading skills. T4 stated that "Sound awareness studies should be

included in the preschool period. In particular, sound recognition activities should be carried out effectively".

The findings on the writing theme of the study are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Qualitative data on writing skill

Thematic Codes	Teacher Codes	f
Approaches and activities that enable students to hold the pencil correctly	T4/T8/T11/T12/T13/T16/T17/T23/T24/T25/T29/T30/ T31/T33/T35/T42/T46/T49/T51/T52	20
Exercises to develop students' finger muscles	T1/T3/T6/T10/T13/T18/T19/T21/T22/T24/T26/T27/T 28/T30/T31/T33/T34/T40/T46/ T50	20
Performing painting and drawing works that will not tire the students	T3/T5/T6/T8/T11/T12/T13/T24/ T39/T40/T41 T45/ T48/T49/T51/T52	16
Line works suitable for the lengths and slopes of the lines forming the letters	T19/T25/T28/T30/T34/T35/T40/T46	8
Studies on writing awareness	T4/T15/T16/T20/T23/T25/T32	7
Line works in areas with certain borders	T35/T42	2
Preferring pencils that do not tire the child	T45	1
Line works in accordance with the instructions on squared paper	T47	1

When Table 7 was examined, while 20 of the participating teachers indicated that the students needed to hold the pencil correctly, 18 of them indicated that it was necessary to perform activities to develop students' finger muscles. T17 stated that "I want them to make sure they hold the pen correctly. The boy went to kindergarten. He held the pencil wrong. Unfortunately, we cannot provide the correct holding.".

The findings on the school adjustment theme of the study are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Qualitative data on school adjustment

Thematic Codes	Teacher Codes	f
Activities for teaching school/classroom rules	T5/T6/T13/T16/T17/T18/T19/ T20/ T21/T22/T30/T31	12
Regular parent education on topics such as the aims of pre-school education, literacy teaching method, child raising	T31/T33/T35/T41/T42/T43/T46/ T48/T49/T52	10
Students' acquisition of self-care skills (toilet training, tying laces, unbuttoning trousers, feeding, etc.)	T10/T32/T33/T34/T35/T39/T40/ T42/T43	9
Approaches and activities to develop a sense of responsibility in students	T30/T41/T42/T43/T48/T49/T52	7
Approaches and activities that improve students' self-confidence	T5/T33/T39/T40/T41/T43	6
Studies for students to act independently from parents	T23/T31/T35/T42/T43	5
Activities for teaching basic concepts (right, left, beginning, end, etc.)	T32/T33/T34	3
Activities for the child to experience the sense of achievement	T39/T40	2
Students' introduction with literacy materials Activities in which students' visual interpretations are written by adults	T32	1
Increasing the physical and social similarity of pre-school education classes and primary school classes	T36	1
Vocabulary development studies	T31	1
Students starting pre-school education as young as possible	T41	1
Regular parent education on topics such as the aims of pre-school education, literacy teaching method, child raising	T39	1

When Table 8 was examined, while 12 of the participating teachers indicated that students should learn the school and classroom rules, 10 of them indicated that there was a need for regular education for parents on the issues such as informing them about the aims of pre-school education and the literacy teaching method. T48 stated that "The child whose mother does everything does nothing, he cannot take his book, he waits, because his mother or father always did all the work for him, he never did them on his own".

Quantitative Findings of the Study

Before the factor analysis to be performed to test the construct validity of the scale, Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett test results were examined to determine whether the data were appropriate and normally distributed, and the values were found to be KMO=.958 and Bartlett's Test <.000. The fact that the KMO test is higher than .60 and the Barlett test is significant indicates that the data are suitable for factor analysis (Büyüköztürk 2007). Based on this information, it can be said that the data are suitable for factor analysis. The factor analysis results and the reliability values of the whole scale are presented in Table 9.

Table 9. EFA results

Item	Common Variance	Component-1 Factor Loading	Factors			Item Total Correlation
			F1	F2	F3	
m45	.794	.817	.806			.765
m44	.750	.800	.777			.750
m42	.818	.861	.771			.811
m38	.762	.821	.763			.769
m37	.742	.814	.748			.765
m43	.737	.815	.722			.760
m50	.740	.840	.692			.796
m28	.687	.802	.652			.748
m8	.718	.715		.795		.666
m7	.677	.706		.760		.652
m9	.633	.701		.722		.651
m4	.612	.694		.702		.643
m2	.582	.699		.651		.645
m17	.586	.712		.644		.677
m6	.516	.656		.627		.608
m10	.514	.684		.572		.647
m35	.718	.640			.821	.559
m25	.565	.644			.752	.335
m47	.593	.626			.651	.623
m41	.634	.719			.605	.711
m34	.643	.735			.583	.726
m51	.540	.681			.549	.666
m15	.409	.526			.521	.513
m22	.419	.568			.510	.552
Source of Variance			F1	F2	F3	Total
Variance Explained			25.011%	22.695%	16.406%	64.111%
Reliability Analysis (Cronbach's Alpha)			.953	.903	.857	.948

When Table 9 was examined, it was observed that while the factor loadings of the items in the first factor varied between .806 and .652, the factor loadings of the items in the second factor varied between .795 and .572, the factor loadings of the items in the third factor varied between .821 and .510, and all factors explained 64.111% of the variance. Cronbach's Alpha values of the factors and the whole scale were calculated as .953; .903; .857; .948, respectively. According to Büyüköztürk (2007), it is sufficient that the factor loadings of the items are higher than .45, the variance explained is 2/3, and the Cronbach's Alpha is above .70. It can be said that EPE was a valid and reliable scale since the data of the study met these conditions. The scale items were examined in terms of content, and the first

factor was named as listening and speaking competencies, the second factor was named as school adaptation competencies, and the third factor was named as literacy competencies.

The fit index results obtained as a result of the CFA and the criteria used to evaluate these results are presented in Table 10.

Table 10. CFA Fit Indices of EPE

Fit Indices	Research Finding	Perfect Fit	Acceptable Fit	Result
χ2/sd	2.141	≤ 3	≤ 5	Perfect Fit
RMSEA	.067	≤ .05	≤ .08	Acceptable Fit
RMR	.026	≤ 0.05	≤ 0.08	Perfect Fit
SRMR	.049	≤,05	≤.08	Perfect Fit
IFI	.941	≥ .95	≥ .90	Acceptable Fit
GFI	.874	≥ .90	≥ .85	Acceptable Fit
NNFI	.924	≥ .95	≥ .90	Acceptable Fit
CFI	.940	≥ .95	≥ .90	Acceptable Fit

When Table 10 was examined, it was observed that the fit of model was tested by the criteria of chi-square (χ2) fit index and χ2/Degrees of Freedom (S.D.), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Root Mean Square Residual (RMR), Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI), and Incremental Fit Index (IFI).

As a result of the analyses, ratio of the degree of freedom (SD) to the chi-square (χ2) fit index can be considered as a criterion for competence, and to this end, χ2/S.D.≤ 3 indicates a perfect fit, and χ2/S.D. ≤ 5 and below indicates acceptable fit (Gürbüz, 2019). In the study, a perfect fit was obtained by the value χ2/S.D.= 464.655/217=2.141, (p<.000). While a RMSEA value of ≤ .05 indicates a good fit, the values between .05 and .08 indicate an adequate fit, and the values between .08 and .10 indicate a mediocre fit, the values of >.10 are not acceptable (Schermelleh-Engel & Moosbrugger, 2003; Browne & Cudeck, 1992). In the study, the RMSEA value was found to be .067, and an acceptable fit was achieved. RMR ≤ 0.05 is considered perfect fit, RMR ≤ 0.08 is considered acceptable fit (Byrne, 2005), SRMR ≤.08, preferably below ≤.05 is considered sufficient (Gürbüz, 2019). Since the findings of RMR=.026 and SRMR=.049 were obtained in the study, perfect fit was obtained in these fit indices. IFI ≥ .90 indicates an acceptable fit, ≥ .90 indicates a perfect fit, GFİ ≥ .85 and above indicates an acceptable fit, ≥ .90 indicates a perfect fit (cited from Schumacher and Lomax, 2004 by Seçer, 2005), CFI and NNFI values of ≥ .95 indicate a perfect fit and ≥ .90 indicates an acceptable fit (Sümer, 2000). In the study, these values were found to be .941; .874; .924; .940, respectively, and acceptable fit values were reached in the indexes.

Scoring of the Scale

The scale consists of 3 factors with 8 items in each factor, and 24 items. The scale prepared in 5 point Likert type includes options from 1 to 5 (very low, low, medium, high, very high). The scale can be scored in two ways in order to determine the expectation levels of the participants and the level of need for the activities specified in the items of the scale. For the expectation level of the participants, a minimum of 8, a maximum of 40 points can be obtained from a factor, and a minimum of 24 and a maximum of 120 points can be obtained from the whole scale. The scale has no item requiring reverse scoring, and it is interpreted that the level of expectation from preschool education increases as the score obtained from the scale is increases, and that the expectation from preschool education decreases as the score obtained decreases. The group width values suggested by Sarı et al. (2018) were used to determine the level of need for the activities specified in the items. Based on the formula 4/5=0,80 for five-point Likert scales, the group widths were determined with values between 1,00 -1,80 indicating very low, 1,80-2,60 indicating low, 2,60-3,40 indicating moderate, 3,40-4,20 indicating high, and 4,20-5,00 indicating very high. By taking the arithmetic mean of the scores

obtained by the participants from the items, the level of need for the activities specified in that item was interpreted by comparing them with the above-mentioned values. The need for the activities in the factors can be calculated by applying the same evaluation method within the context of the factor. The exemplification related to scoring was made with the CFA data group and presented in the last part of the findings.

The Pearson Correlation coefficient was calculated to determine the correlation between the factors of the scale and the whole scale, and the data obtained are presented in Table 11.

Table 11. EPE Components Correlation Matrix

	EPE	B1	B2
B1 (Listening-Speaking)	.911**		
B2 (School Adjustment)	.879**	.779**	
B3 (Reading-Writing)	.869**	.667**	.596**

** p<.01

In correlation analysis, a correlation value between 0.70-1.00 indicates a high level of correlation, a value between 0.70-0.30 indicates a moderate level of correlation, and a value between 0.30-0.00 indicates a low level of correlation (Büyüköztürk, 2007). When Table 11 was examined, it was observed that the correlation of the factors with the whole scale was significant at the level of r=.911, r=.879, r=.869, respectively, and that the correlation between the factors was significant at the level of r=.596, r=.667 and r=.779 and p<.000, respectively. Since the factors were highly correlated with the whole scale, the scale can be scored both at the factor level and as a whole.

Findings on Classroom Teachers' Expectations from Pre-School Education

In the final stage of the study, the scores of the CFA group from the EPE scale were evaluated. While the mean score of the listening speaking competencies factor of the study group was calculated as 37.59, the mean scores of the school adjustment competencies factor and the literacy competency factor were calculated as 37.30 and 34.68, respectively, and the mean total score was calculated as 109.58. Considering that minimum 24 and maximum 120 points can be obtained from the scale, it can be stated that the expectations of the study group from pre-school education were high. The expectation levels within the context of the items and factors in the scale are presented in Table 12.

Table 12. Classroom teachers' expectations from pre-school education

Factor	Item No	Scale items	N	Minimum	Maximum	Item Mean Score	Factor Mean Score
1st Factor Listening Speaking Competencies	i28	Ensuring that students make eye contact with the speaker while listening	255	3	5	4.69	4.7
	i37	Performing activities that support students to communicate with their peers	255	3	5	4.65	
	i38	Performing attention-developing activities while listening	255	3	5	4.71	
	i42	Performing activities to teach the rules of speaking with games	255	3	5	4.69	
	i43	Developing students' listening skills with games	255	3	5	4.74	
	i44	Performing activities that support students to form sentences in the communication process	255	3	5	4.71	
	i45	Performing activities that will allow students to listen in accordance with the rules	255	3	5	4.74	
	i50	Performing activities that support students to use language for communication purposes	255	2	5	4.67	

2nd Factor School adjustment competencies	i2	Performing activities for students to acquire self-care skills (toilet training, tying laces, unbuttoning trousers, feeding, using handkerchiefs, etc.)	255	2	5	4.68	4.66
	i4	Performing activities that allow students to express themselves	255	3	5	4.65	
	i6	Performing studies to find the similarities and differences between the images	255	2	5	4.58	
	i7	Performing studies for students to act independently from their parents	255	3	5	4.65	
	i8	Performing activities that enable students to develop positive attitudes towards school	255	3	5	4.73	
	i9	Performing activities for teaching school and classroom rules	255	3	5	4.71	
	i10	Conducting regular parent education on the aims of pre-school and primary school education and child raising	255	3	5	4.64	
	i17	Performing activities for teaching basic concepts (right, left, beginning, end, etc.)	255	3	5	4.68	
3rd Factor Literacy competencies	i15	Performing line works in accordance with the instructions on the squared paper	255	2	5	4.46	4.33
	i22	Performing activities in which students' interpretations on the visuals are written by adults and read to the student	255	1	5	4.27	
	i25	Performing studies to feel, recognize and distinguish the sounds	255	1	5	3.96	
	i34	Teacher performing interactive reading exercises with students	255	2	5	4.51	
	i35	Performing studies on writing awareness	255	1	5	4.02	
	i41	Performing activities to improve reading awareness	255	2	5	4.58	
	i47	Students' introduction with literacy materials	255	1	5	4.45	
	i51	Performing vertical, oblique, circular and horizontal line works that prepare for writing letters	255	2	5	4.44	

When Table 12 was examined, participants indicated that it was mostly needed to perform activities to develop listening skills with games ($\bar{X}$=4.71) and to enable students to listen in accordance with the rules ($\bar{X}$=4.71) in the listening speaking competencies factor, that it was mostly needed to perform activities that enable students to develop positive attitudes towards school ($\bar{X}$=4.73) in the school adjustment competencies factor, that it was mostly needed to perform activities to improve reading awareness ($\bar{X}$=4.58) in the literacy competencies factor, and that it was mostly needed to perform activities related to the listening-speaking competence factor ($\bar{X}$= 4.7) within the context of the factor. Since the value of 4.7 was between 4.20-5.00, it can be said that the expectations of this group from pre-school education in the listening-speaking competence factor were very high.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The data of the study were discussed in accordance with the mixed method design and the steps of the exploratory sequential design. First, the qualitative and quantitative data on classroom teachers' expectations from pre-school education within the context of literacy were discussed, and then the validity and reliability results of the EPE were discussed.

When the qualitative data collected from the participating teachers were examined, it was observed that the expectations of teachers from pre-school education were collected under the themes of listening, speaking, reading, writing and school adjustment. In the study conducted by Yapıcı and Ulu (2010) to determine the expectations of classroom teachers from pre-school teachers, the themes of adaptation to school, the studies on preparation for literacy were reached, and apart from these themes, the needs determined as prerequisites for teaching literacy were listed, and the competencies related to listening and speaking were included. In a study conducted by Kırat and Güven (2021) to determine the views of children about the transition from pre-school education to primary school, classroom teachers used the expression "expectation" by 62.7% while expressing their views. Based on this information, it can be said that centering expectation in the present study, and the themes reached were consistent with the literature.

Classroom teachers in the study group indicated that children needed to learn listening rules (n=12) and to be encouraged to speak (n=12) while listing their expectations from pre-school

education. In the quantitative findings of the study, it was stated that activities ($\bar{X}$=4.65) that support students' communication with their peers should be performed. Children acquire the listening and speaking skills in the family environment, however, these skills are developed through learning at school (Michaels, 1986). These skills that children acquire before they come to school are the variables that affect their literacy learning (Connor et al., 2005). Vandergrift (2004) states that listening is the most implicit and most difficult developing skill among language skills. McNaughton et al. (2008) drew attention to the relationship between listening and speaking skills by stating that listening is an important factor in the communication process between individuals. The fact that the participating teachers mentioned listening rules together with the students' need for encouragement to speak may be due to the relationship between these skills. In this context, designing activities to develop children's listening skills during the pre-school education period may encourage them to communicate by speaking depending on the listening-speaking interaction.

When the findings of the study on reading and writing were examined, classroom teachers indicated that they needed activities that would develop students' ability to sense, recognize and distinguish sounds (n=9), hold the pencil correctly and develop finger muscles (n=20). Phonological level is an important factor in the acquisition of reading skills (Plaza & Cohen, 2003). However, children may not have reached the expected competency in terms of phonology in the pre-school period (Bryant et al., 1990). Since learning to read is associated with phonology, children with phonological deficiencies may be in the risk group in learning to read and write (Carroll & Snowling, 2004). Children in this situation can be provided with a qualified pre-school education to acquire the phonological skills (O'connor et al., 1996; Pullen & Justice, 2003). Writing education is another skill that should be considered in the pre-school period and should not be left in the background (Jones & Reutzel, 2014). Reading books to children in the pre-school period may support their language development by intensely exposing them to written language (Bus et al., 1995). Moreover, the activities to develop students' hand muscles will support their legibility (Reis, 1989). Ertürk-Kara (2019) draws attention to the effect of the family in providing the fine muscle development necessary for the habit of holding the pencil correctly, which is the basis of children's writing skills. With the measures to be taken to meet the need for parent education ($\bar{X}$=4.64) in the quantitative findings of the present study, the needs for correct pencil holding and muscle development of children stated by classroom teachers in qualitative findings can be met.

With regard to the school adjustment competencies of children in the qualitative findings of the study, classroom teachers indicated that they students needed to learn school and classroom rules (n=12), parents needed to be educated (n=10), and children's self-care skills needed to be developed (n=9). In the quantitative findings of the study, it was stated that the same competencies were needed at a very high level ($\bar{X}$=4.71, $\bar{X}$=4.68, $\bar{X}$=4.64). In the phenomenological study conducted by Sarıçelik and Saban (2021) to determine the perceptions of difficult children by classroom teachers, one of the themes created was the theme of unruly boy. In the study conducted by Yaraş and Turan (2021), students' failure to obey the class rules was determined as an undesirable situation that classroom teachers encountered in classroom management, and the teachers in the study group suggested cooperation with the family to solve this problem. The fact that children come ready to primary school is one of the determinants of their success (Fridani 2020). Korucu and Schmitt (2020) indicated that the home environment and parental attitudes improved children's school readiness skills. Stewart (2016) emphasized that parents should consciously perform their roles so that their children would be ready for preschool education. The fact that children learn to live according to the rules and receive self-care education in the home environment will support them to be in the school environment independently of their parents when they start primary school. Children whose self-care needs, such as meeting toilet need, feeding, and maintaining personal cleanliness at school, are met by their parents may have problems in separating from their parents at school. The fact that children acquire self-care skills during pre-school education period may also be a solution to the problems of students acting independently from their parents indicated by classroom teachers in the quantitative findings of the study ($\bar{X}$=4.71). In the study conducted by Erbasan and Erbasan (2020), participating classroom teachers indicated that they cared about being in communication with parents in the literacy teaching process and that parents' awareness would reduce the problems experienced by classroom teachers.

According to these evaluations, it can be said that educating parents in the fields of child development, early literacy and conscious parenting may decrease the possible problems in literacy teaching in primary school.

The measurement tool consisting of three factors and 24 items was developed based on the qualitative data obtained from the classroom teachers who participated in the study. In the analysis performed with the data collected from the classroom teachers (n=375) for the purpose of EFA, it was determined that the factor loadings of the items varied between .510 and .821, and that all factors explained 64.111% of the variance. Cronbach's Alpha values of the factors and the whole scale were calculated as .953; .903; .857; .948, respectively. All of the fit indices obtained as a result of CFA performed with the data collected from a different research group (n=255) were determined to be at an acceptable or perfect fit level, and the factor structure formed as a result of EFA was confirmed by CFA. The structures such as listening, monitoring, comprehension, phonological awareness, writing awareness, and basic writing skills similar to the factors obtained in the presented were obtained in the measurement tool developed by Delican and Ateş (2021) to determine the early literacy development of children. It was determined that the fit indices obtained as a result of the CFA applied for this measurement tool were at an acceptable level, similar to the CFA results of EPE. Cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and self-care factors were reached in the scale developed by Canbulat and Kırıktaş (2016) to determine the readiness level of children for primary school. When the items in the scale were examined, it was observed that there were similar items in the scale developed in the present study on pencil holding, self-expression, visual reading, and activities requiring hand and eye coordination, muscle development, and self-care skills, and the factor loadings of the scale items were found to be between .589 and .820 and were close to the factor loading values of the items in the present study.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made to educators, researchers and policy makers.

(ı) The validity and reliability of the scale can be tested by applying the measurement tool to classroom teachers working in different regions. (ıı) By applying the scale to classroom teachers working in primary schools with kindergarten, the teaching activities in the kindergarten can be performed in a way that focuses on the needs stated by the classroom teachers. (ııı) The expectations of classroom teachers from pre-school education can be examined by analyzing the mean scale scores according to the demographic characteristics of the sample group. (ıv) Classroom teachers and preschool teachers can be brought together during their professional working periods so that they can evaluate the expectations of classroom teachers from pre-school education together.

Declaration of commitment to the ethical rules

Approval was received for this study from the participants and Turkey/Bursa Uludağ University Research and Publication Ethics Committee. Scientific research ethics were followed during the study.

Declaration of conflict of interest

The authors have no conflict of interest with any institution or person regarding this paper.

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