PROBLEMS THAT PRESCHOOL TEACHERS FACE IN THE CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

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Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

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This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

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ABSTRACT

PROBLEMS THAT PRESCHOOL TEACHERS FACE IN THE CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

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This study aimed at investigating the challenges preschool teachers face in the curriculum implementation and whether these challenges differ in relation to teachers' level of education, department they graduated from, the type of the school they are working in, teaching experience and level of in-service training. In addition, in this study, it was also aimed to find out the underlying reasons of most frequently stated issues of implementation from the teachers' perspectives.

In the present study, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. The quantitative data were gathered through a questionnaire from 223 preschool teachers teaching in public and private kindergartens in Ankara. The qualitative data were gathered through interviews with a group of participants selected from the 223 teachers. One-way repeated measure of ANOVA and multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) were employed to analyze the quantitative data. For the qualitative data content analysis was conducted.

The results indicated that the most frequently reported issues by the participants were the problems related to evaluation and physical facilities followed by the ones related to planning science and math activities, organizing field trips, providing parent involvement and inclusion. Results showed that the problems related to physical facilities experienced by preschool teachers working in public

kindergartens were significantly differed compared to teachers working in private preschools.

Keywords: Curriculum, Preschool Curriculum, Curriculum Implementation, Preschool Teachers, Problems of Preschool Teachers.

ÖZ

OKUL ÖNCESİ ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN EĞİTİM PROGRAMINI UYGULAMA SIRASINDA YAŞADIĞI SORUNLAR

Erden, Emine

Tezli Yüksek Lisans, Eğitim Programları ve Öğretim Anabilim Dalı

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Bu çalışmanın amacı, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin eğitim programını uygulama sırasında yaşadığı sorunları ve bu sorunların öğretmenlerin eğitim durumu, mezun oldukları bölüm, çalıştıkları okul türü, hizmet içi eğitim durumlarına göre değişip değişmediğini incelemektir. Ayrıca en çok karşılaşılan sorun alanlarının olası sebeplerini okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin bakış açısından irdelemektir.

Bu çalışmada, nicel ve nitel veri toplanmıştır. Nicel veriler Ankara'da devlet ve özel okullarda çalışan 223 okul öncesi öğretmeninden anket aracılığı ile toplanmıştır. Nitel veri ise 223 okul öncesi öğretmeni içinden seçilen öğretmenlerle yapılan görüşme ile toplanmıştır. Nicel verilerin analizi için tek yönlü tekrarlı varyans analizi (ANOVA) ve çok yönlü varyans analizi (MANOVA) kullanılmıştır. Nitel veriler için ise içerik analizi yapılmıştır.

Araştırma bulguları, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin en çok değerlendirme ve fiziksel olanaklar ile ilgili alanlarda sorun yaşadıklarını göstermiştir. Ayrıca, fen ve matematik etkinlikleri planlama, alan gezileri düzenleme, aile katılımını sağlama ve kaynaştırma da en çok sorun yaşadıkları alanlar arasında bulunmuştur. Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin eğitim programını uygulama sırasında yaşadığı sorunlar çalıştıkları okul türüne göre anlamlı bir farklılık göstermiştir. Devlet anasınıflarında çalışan

öğretmenler özel anaokullarında çalışan öğretmenlere göre fiziksel olanaklar ile ilgili sorunlarla daha çok karşılaşmaktadırlar.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Eğitim Programı, Okul Öncesi Eğitim Programı, Eğitim Programının Uygulanması, Okul Öncesi Öğretmenleri, Okul Öncesi Öğretmenlerinin Sorunları

To my mother, my father, my brother and my sister
whose love and wishes made my dream possible

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides information about the background to the study with a brief description of teachers' role in curriculum implementation and factors affecting curriculum implementation. The purpose, significance of the study and definitions of the terms is also presented.

"Everything changes, nothing remains still."

Plato

1.1 Background to the Study

This famous quote explains everything in the world. Like all other things in the universe, we, as human beings, are exposed to change constantly in every moment of our lives. In fact, in today's world, the term *change* has gained speed.

Being in the information age by the mass spread of computers and internet all around the world, education and holding the information in hands became more crucial. In other words, knowledge became a power. Then, the active, productive and having knowledge of producing their own technology, skilled at several foreign languages, leader type of human beings are valued (Dülger, 2000). So, countries started to reshape their curriculum towards cultivating those types of people for their countries. Since it is started from the early of ages, the countries started to go on curriculum reforms in early childhood education. Turkey, as well, went on curriculum change on early childhood education in 2006 for the children between the 36-72 months –olds.

Curriculum change can be described as the transformation of the curriculum sheme such as goals and objectives, content, design (Hooper, 1971 as cited in Amimo, 2009) or it could be done in more minor sense by modifying the curriculum such as changing the learning activities and adding one more topic to the curriculum (Shindu & Omulondo, 1998). In fact, as to educate society towards the changes in the world, curriculum change is inevitable (Bondi & Wiles, 1998).

Curriculum change, however, standing alone is not adequate for providing high quality of education rather there is a need for good implementers of those developed curriculums. In that sense, as teachers are the principal actors who transfer all those theoretical information into real classroom setting, whenever there is an implementation of a new curriculum, the issue of whether preschool teachers are facing problems in the process of implementation or not are triggered.

Teachers have roles in curriculum implementation in addition to other roles such as child guidance and discipline, respecting cultural diversity (McDonnell, 1999), establishing reciprocal relationship with families, (Lundin, 2000), creating a caring community of learners, teaching to enhance development and learning (NAYEC, 1997) in the classroom.

In curriculum implementation, both personal and environmental factors are effective. To illustrate, teachers, as human beings, bring their past experience into classroom settings so their beliefs regarding how children learn and develop affect the quality of the curriculum implementation. In the study of Cronin- Jones (2006), it was elaborated that if the teachers' existing belief structures were not consistent with the philosophy of the curriculum, then they affect the success of curriculum implementation adversely. Parallel to this study, Kern, Kruse and Roehring (2007) found that teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning are strongly influencing the curriculum implementation. In other words, once the teachers are defending the ideology of the curriculum being implemented, then the performance of the teacher in the real classroom setting is affected positively during implementation.

Furthermore, besides appreciating the philosophy of the new curriculum, Park (2008) suggested that understanding of the curricula by the teachers is crucial for proper implementation. Because once the teachers do not comprehend what the curriculum's theoretical framework is in details, they will not be able to successfully implement the curriculum.

On the other hand, Butera, Czaja, Daniels, Goodman, Hanson, Lieberal and Plamer (2009) claimed that teachers' personal characteristics have impact on the curriculum implementation. According to the study result, teachers characterized as motivated, open to changes and willing to try new learning opportunities are found high curriculum implementers compared to teachers described as unmotivated, not open to changes.

Moreover, Punch and Waugh (1987) claimed that teachers' appraisal of the change is significant for a good quality of curriculum implementation. In other words, openness to change creates a difference in curriculum implementation in a positive way.

On the other hand, intrinsic factors such as knowledge of professional area, interest in teaching and motivation are significant features in the delivery of program and can be barriers for proper curriculum implementation if there is inadequacy in any of those (Lewthwaite, 2006).

Besides personal elements of the teachers, environmental factors are influential in curriculum implementation. Fishman, Gallagher, Penuel and Yamaguchi (2007) found that allocating time for teachers to plan curriculum implementation and providing technical support is a necessity for promoting program implementation. According to Lewthwaite (2001) environmental and extrinsic factors are critical elements for the effective curriculum implementation. For him, the common listed environmental factors are time constraints and resource inadequacy which are limited equipment, space and facilities.

In addition, supportive network in the school is crucial (Kern, Kruse & Roehring, 2007). In other words, supports from the school principal and colleagues are key factors for successful curriculum implementation (Desimone, Fedoravicius, Finn, Henrich, Payne & Stevenson, 2004). Teberg, (1999) also discussed the necessity of administrative support for a successful curriculum implementation by claiming that in addition to knowledge and skills, teachers need encouragement and assistance to reach the goals defined for their children.

For teachers, collaborative environment is also a necessity. In the study conducted by Desimone, et, al., (2004), it was found that collaborative relationship and networking were detected as positive factors increasing the teachers' attitudes and motivation, as well as their teaching. Once they are motivated to teach, teachers show better performance in classroom implementation.

Accordingly, both personal and environmental factors create difficulties on the shoulder of teachers and in that case, the issue of teachers' problems faced regarding the curriculum implementation is brought into discussion. In one of the study, conducted by Cisneros, Cisneros- Chernour, and Moreno (2000), Mexican kindergarten teachers' problems and dilemmas was explored after the K-9 curriculum reform. The conflict between the school and home, lack of continuity and compatibility between kindergarten and elementary school, differences in role expectations from teachers by the schools and the Mexican Department of Education, lack of resources, dealing with children with limited Spanish and not knowing how to include those children are the major problems.

Accordingly, it was found that there is not a simple problem of teachers that they are encounter, rather there are many and interdependent from each other. To illustrate, lack of resources and children with limited Spanish both have a combination effect of the quality of the curriculum being implemented. In such case, it is obvious that teachers have to grapple with the children's lack of language ability as well as the problem related lack of resources.

In fact, in education of people, as it has been dealing with the human beings, it is inevitable to see that factors such as environmental, personal are overlapping. According to the Brofenbrenner (2005) since teachers are human beings, they are also being affected by many factors and these factors are interrelated each other. For him, sometimes there are things out of teachers' control. So for the problems faced by teachers during curriculum implementation, individual teachers will always not be the responsible for. To illustrate, in the study, conducted by Wai-Yum (2003), it was aimed to find out the problems of early childhood teachers experienced in the process of top-down curriculum reform at a local kindergarten in Hong Kong. It was discovered that teachers were not always the source of the problem. Sometimes, the problems occurred as a result of external factors such as frequent supervision and intervention of the principal into the classroom teaching, the lack of getting answers from principals regarding the new curriculum reform, lack of support and encouragement from the administrators and parents.

On the other hand, in the study conducted by Düşek (2008), in addition to the teacher related problems such as lack of knowledge about understanding the new curriculum as whole, it was discovered that existence of external factors such as finding the necessary documents such as development control list, objective evaluation form, physical environment deficiencies, parent involvement was still an issue in effective curriculum implementation. Furthermore, in Şıvgın's (2005) study, it was added that in terms of education and planning, the need for examples regarding which methods to use, what kinds of technological materials to be included in the daily plans, not describing the kinds of activities needed regarding parent involvement clearly are the problems caused by external factors.

Finally, in a study conducted by İnal, Kandır, and Özbey (2009), problems of preschool teachers regarding the curriculum implementation were gathered through questionnaires. At the end of the study, it was found that problems of the preschool teachers were caused by both external and internal factors. To illustrate, among the problems detected in the study, designing classroom and having problem regarding the attitudes of parent towards early childhood education can be described as the

environmental factors. On the other hand, having a difficulty in writing the evaluation parts of the plans, preparing annual plans and choosing objectives and goals for the whole year were stated as the teachers' other problems.

The review of the literature related to the studies conducted regarding the problems of teachers with respect to curriculum implementation, in Turkey, showed that few studies were conducted to find out their problems and offer solutions. The literature also indicated that, inclusion related problems were not examined by the researchers despite its emphasized significance in the curricula. In addition, in most of the studies underlying reasons of problems that teacher experience in curriculum implementation were not investigated.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to explore the problems that preschool teachers face in the implementation of the early childhood curriculum.

Another purpose of the study was to detect differences, if any, in problems faced by teachers with respect to their educational level, the department they graduated from, their years of experience and type of the school they are working in. Then, it was also aimed to identify underlying reasons of highly stated problems by participant teachers.

This study is aimed to answer following questions:

1. What are the problems that preschool teachers face in the curriculum implementation?

    i. Do the problems that preschool teachers face in the curriculum implementation differ with respect to their level of education?

ii. Do the problems that preschool teachers face in the curriculum implementation differ with respect to department they graduated from?

iii. Do the problems that preschool teachers face in the curriculum implementation differ with respect to their years of experience?

iv. Do the problems that preschool teachers face in the curriculum implementation differ with respect to type of the school they are working in?

2. What are the underlying reasons of mostly stated problems from the perspectives of teachers?

1.3 Significance of the Study

In general, teachers' capacity to learn and become accustomed to innovations can lead to students' learning and acquaintance with the innovations in classrooms. Regarding this logic, teachers can be seen as both the means and ends of reform movements (Cohen & Hill, 2001). This is the same for preschool teachers as well.

There are multiple roles of the early childhood educators and these roles are not exclusive of each other, but are complex, varied and interdependent (Kline, O'Connor, Vakil & Welton, 2009). To illustrate, knowing how children develop and learn, building family and community relationship, using assessment responsibly, teaching to promote children's learning and becoming a professional in the field are among the roles (Hyson, Morris & Tomlinson, 2009). According to NAEYC (2001) standards, for serving a good quality of education to children, there is a need to meet those standards. Especially, when the role is related to curriculum implementation, things are getting more challenging and heavier responsibility creates on the shoulders of the early childhood educators. Despite what it is written in the curriculum; practices of teachers and events going on in the classroom settings are being affected by many factors at the same time.

Both the personal and environmental factors (İnal, Kandır & Özbey, 2009) are affecting the curriculum implementation which in turn affects the quality of the education aimed to be given via curriculum. To illustrate, the absence of the comprehensive infrastructure is an obstacle preventing good quality servings for children (Azzi-Lessing, 2009) or levels of teachers' qualifications (well-preparedness, openness to innovations) affect the quality of classroom environment (Shonkoff & Philips, 2000). On the other hand, despite the teacher knows what to do and understands the issues regarding the specific tasks of curriculum and curriculum implementation, still there can be problems faced by preschool teachers.

In fact, no matter what factors cause the problems, it is certain that they affect educational environment of the classroom or the way of implementing the good quality of curriculum. In other words, the teachers' problems and difficulties creates an adverse effect on the quality of the curriculum implementation, there is a need for understanding what possible problems teachers are encountering with and taking necessary precautions to eliminate the effects of those problems on implementation.

In that sense, indentifying preschool teachers' problems faced during the implementation of the curriculum is a necessity because once the problems were detected precisely, it is easier to deal with and find ways to cope with those issues. Therefore, for the specific purpose of the study, a questionnaire was designed to find preschool teachers' problems faced during the curriculum implementation.

To sum up, this study aimed to contribute to the literature by analyzing early childhood teachers' problems faced regarding curriculum implementation as well as finding out the reasons for the ones ranked high among the stated problems through interviews with the teachers.

1.4 Limitations

There are several limitations to this study.

First of all, a noticeable limitation was related with the population of the study. Data were collected only from the preschool teachers who were working in the private and public schools which are under control of MONE in the academic year of 2009-2010 in the regions of the Ankara city. So, results of the study can not be generalized directly to all preschools teachers all over Turkey. Those results can only provide us insights and general opinions from the specific sample.

Second limitation was that data were relied on the teachers' self reported data. Although, this data were supported through interviews with teachers, the findings of this study do not reflect what actually happens in the classroom because observations of the real classroom settings were not included.

Third limitation was the gender of the participants in the study. All the preschool teachers were female in the study. There were no male preschool teachers among the schools visited by the researcher.

1.5 Definitions of the Terms

According to the booklet of MONE (2002), definitions of the terms used in this study were as follows:

Preschool Teachers: Teachers who teach between 3 and 6 years-olds children are referred to as preschool teachers in the study.

Independent Public Preschool (Bağımsız Devlet Anaokulu): Preschools serving only for the children between the 3 and 6 years of age are referred to as independent public preschool.

Public Kindergarten (Devlet Anasınıfı): Kindergarten classes being included in public primary school (the school for 1st grades to 8th grades) are referred to as public kindergarten classes.

Private Preschool (Özel Anaokulu): Private preschools serving only for the children between the 3 and 6 years of age are referred to as private preschool.

Private Kindergarten (Özel Anasınıfı): Kindergarten classes being included in private primary schools (the school for 1st grades to 8th grades) are referred to as private kindergarten classes.

In Turkey, preschool refers to a school for children between 3-6 years. Kindergarten, on the other hand, refers to the year before the first grade in primary school. It is less formal than primary school but it prepares children to primary school. Kindergarten, currently in Turkey, is a part of preschool however; in the following years, it will be the part of primary school system. According to the initiative conducted by Ministry of National Education (MONE), kindergarten will be compulsory within the four years as in the case of primary schooling, which is 8 year-long. Now, by the beginning of 2009-2010 education- instruction year, 32 cities of Turkey were chosen as pilot cities. In these cities, parents having children at kindergarten age were acknowledged about the initiative and expected to send their children to kindergarten. The number of the pilot cities will be increased each year and by the 2013-1014 education and instruction year, it will be expanded all around Turkey.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter is devoted to a literature review that describes the theoretical background, necessities for the new curriculum in early childhood education, the role of teachers in curriculum implementation and research on problems faced by the early childhood teachers in curriculum reform.

2.1 Early Childhood Education

2.1.1 What is Early Childhood Education?

The definition of the term, early childhood education, depends on where it is looked at the issue from. In terms of child's life, it is the period from birth to eight years of age (Miles & Browne, 2004). Grotewell and Burton (2008) also shared this definition, elaborated it accordingly as the time between the zero and eight years of age. However, by school terms, early childhood education incorporates the group settings for infants through elementary school grade three (Miles & Browne, 2004). In other words, early childhood education is a special branch of education serving with children from infancy to elementary grade level of three (Gonzalez-Mena, 2008).

As definitions imply, early childhood education brings the children (birth to eight) into the arena. Significance of the early childhood education increased tremendously all over the world within the last twenty years. This situation is complementary with research results based on long term effects of early education to later life (Groark, et, al., 2007).

2.1.2 The Importance of Early Childhood Education

Early childhood education, within the last few decades, took the attention from the different fields (Roopnarine & Johnson, 2005) such as developmental psychology, cultural psychology, childhood studies, cultural anthropology, history and philosophy because recent studies showed that babies and young children are born with the capacity to understand (Nutbrown, 2006). In other words, their brains are ready to learn when they came to the world and during this process; both the environment and genes take an important role which in turn, builds the brain (Levitt, 2008). This view regarding children, perceiving them as competent learners rather than empty slates changed the disciplines' way of looking to the education of children or early childhood education.

The readiness of the children to learn even when they are just born triggered the ideas of necessity of early childhood education both for the individual child and for the society as a whole, in broader sense.

Longitudinal studies have showed that early childhood education is the period when children's development was rapid and when children were affected more from the environmental factors. In addition, two thirds of the brain development was completed between the years of 0-4 (AÇEV, 2006). Therefore, education in this crucial period creates significance for the development of children. In a study conducted by Barnett (1995), it was found that getting an early childhood education provided an increase in the IQ level of children in the short term and in the long term; it increased the child's school achievement.

Early childhood education becomes more beneficial especially, for the children coming from low socio-economic background. Bassok, Bridges, Fuller, Loeb and Rumberger (2007) identified benefits of being exposure to early education for the children coming from low-income families as cognitive growth and school readiness. Besides children from low socio-economic background, good quality of

early childhood education provides early reading and math skills to children from high and middle socio-economic status.

Early education cultivates children in terms of socialization rather than purely academic enhancement such as math and reading. Webb (2003) elaborated that children learn cooperation through education in child care centers and such skills help them to obey rules and stay safe in a society. Regarding socialization, parents also share the same perspective. In the study of Seng (1994), it was revealed that one of the biggest reasons for parents sending children to early childhood education center is to get them socialized. In fact, in a longitudinal study, Kağıtçıbaşı (1991) explained that children who received early childhood education became emotionally and socially more competent adults compared to the ones whom did not received early education.

In terms of children, in addition to social emotional and academic benefits, early education provides them a better future in the long term such as preparing them for school and increase in high school graduation rates. Inevitably, knowing the benefits of early education for the individuals in the short and long term brings the discussion of early childhood necessity in society as a whole.

Modern societies, as Durkheim clarified, are composed of many institutions and there is a dynamic relationship among those. Each institution depends on each other to survive and to create the harmony within the society (Greve, 1998). Keeping this logic in mind, societies need individuals who function well within that system. So, educational institutions gains significance from early childhood education to university to reach that harmonic society.

Governments start to put early childhood education into their agendas, especially, after it was proved that good quality of early education has long lasting effects on the children's later life productivity for the society. To illustrate, Oppenheim and MacGregor (2002) distinguished that children received early education are less likely to involve in crime and more likely to complete their high

school education and get into a college education. In another studies such as Chicago Longitudinal study and the Cost, Quality and Child outcome study indicated that getting high quality early childhood education make children become successful students and citizens in their later lives (Reynolds & Ou, 2004).

On the other hand, according to the World Bank Report (2005), between 0-6 years of age, each 1 dollar invested on children will be returned back as 7.6 dollars in the future as a result of the productivity gained through early childhood education. Parallel to this study, Everingham, Karoly, and Kilbourne (1997) indicated that rate of the return of the investment in people in early childhood period is higher compared to investment in other periods of human life.

In addition, research results supporting that earlier the children are exposed to good quality of experience, the more the connections in their brains develop, triggered early childhood education to gain greater importance in the society. Such results opened the way to start education of brains as early as possible.

In one of the study conducted by Knudson (2004), it was elaborated that developmental flexibility of brain wiring or its ability to change due to influences of experience were affected by both genes and early environmental factors. So, the necessity occurs for educators, policy makers and others in the society helping children to construct their initial brain architecture by providing education for them in their early ages.

Findings of the longitudinal and cross-sectional studies (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1991; Barnett, 1995; Openheim & MacGregor, 2002; Reynolds & Ou, 2004) related the benefits of early childhood education provided logical reasons to emphasize on early education for a better society. Besides all, in the last twenty years, socio-cultural changes such as getting into the information age and changes in the world order through globalization triggered early childhood education to be concern of many societies.

2.1.3 Globalization and Early Childhood Education

Globalization has reshaped many issues (Grant &Grant, 2007; Koggel, 2003) international relations, population growth, development, human rights, the environment, labor, health care and poverty. It also affected and reshaped the education as well. Beginning from early childhood education to college education, we may see the influences of globalization.

Effect of globalization seemed to be seen in all countries more, after 1985s, when entered into an information age by the mass spread of computers and internet all around the world, education and holding the information in hands became more crucial. In other words, knowledge became power. Bearing this in mind, the active, productive and having knowledge of producing their own technology, skilled at several foreign languages, leader type of human beings are valued. So, countries started to reshape their curriculums in all levels of education (from early childhood to college) towards cultivating those types of people (Dülger, 2000). As this cultivation process starts from the first level which is early education, the countries are looking for the best curriculum model in early childhood education.

In addition to the need for fully competent individuals having the skills and knowledge of dealing with the new world's demands, changes in the family units (Morrison, 2007) such as more mothers entered into the work force or rich parents who look for the best educational places for their children as early as possible, brought the early childhood education as growing concern.

On the other hand, more women have been favored in employment than in the past (Anning & Edwards, 2006). As manufacturing industries declined, service industries expanded. Employers seeking a more flexible, part time, cheaper, non-unionized work force found that women fitted more passively into such patterns of employment than men. Women also traditionally have better 'people skills' and that quality was both useful and profitable for industries serving the public at a face-to-

face level. So, as more women involved in the work force, the problem of educating those women's children aroused.

Both the place need for education of working mothers' children and the necessity of cultivating individuals being able to deal with the new world's demands urged to ask the question of what the most beneficial curriculum model for educating of young children. So, countries started to make investigations on enhancing the quality for early childhood education such as developing early childhood curriculum models.

2.2 Early Childhood Curriculum

To be able to understand the foundations of early childhood curriculum, looking at the historical process gives us opportunity to see how young children and their way of learning is perceived by the past generations based on religious, ethnic, political and economic pressures of the times (Jackman, 2005). For example, Rousseau, who is famous with his book "Emile", believed in the idea of unfolding. For him "unfolding" can occurs as a result of development according to children's innate timetables (Morrison, 2008, p.58). In fact, such an approach is used now as teachers choose their activities according to children's developmental levels. Moreover, Pestalozzi believed in that children learn through their senses and through this they can achieve their natural potential. "Whole person", observation and sympathetic approach of teachers were among the significant principles that he contributed to early childhood education (Clough, Nutbrown & Selbie, 2008, p.28). Owen, on the other hand, believed in the importance of environment which has effects on children's development. This idea is still valid today and early childhood classroom environment helps children to develop their beliefs, behavior and achievement (Morgan, 2006).

Froebel, known as the father of kindergarten, is another influential figure in early childhood curriculum (Gordon & Browne, 2004). Froebel used planned curriculum which included gifts and occupations to educate children. Today, it is the

same with the toys we use when we educate children. The concepts of unfolding and learning through play are among the biggest contributions of Froebel to early childhood curriculum models (Morrison, 2008).

It can be recognized that early childhood education has a rich history (Gordon & Browne, 2004) and the history of its development include many figures most of which are developmental theorists. In that sense, foundation of all curricula is developmental theory or beliefs regarding how children develop and learn (Catron & Allen, 2003), in fact, those are the ones guiding our view of teaching and supporting children as learners. In other words, in early childhood education, theories of child development have served as the dominant foundation for curriculum development model (Day, 1977; Spodek, 1988; Weber, 1984; White & Buka, 1987 as cited in Jackman, 2005) and early childhood curriculum has been largely informed by the belief that early childhood education should be directly derived from child development research and theory (Caldwell, 1984; Elkind, 1989; Sigel, 1972; Wever, 1969; White & Burka, 1987 as cited in Jackman, 2005).

For those aforementioned reasons, curriculum in early childhood education is dramatically different from that at other levels of education. Because children are developing at such a rapid rate during the early years, and because what children are capable of learning and doing is so dependent on their development, curriculum decisions regarding young children's education must take into account each individual's developmental level (Spodek & Saracco, 1994). Accordingly, there is a variety in early childhood curriculum models.

2.2.1 Curriculum Models Used in Early Childhood Education

Throughout the history of early childhood education, diversity in early childhood curriculum can be seen. For example, Montessori, Reggio Emilia, Head Start, High/Scope can be given among the well-known early childhood curriculum models. Today, principals of those models are appreciated in many early childhood education settings (Clough, Nutbrown & Selbie, 2008). In many parts of the world,

Montessori, Reggio Emilia, Head Start and High scope schools applying the principals of those models can be found.

Montessori

The name itself comes from Maria Montessori, an Italian medical doctor whom was affected from Pestalozzi. Pestalozzi thinks that a teacher must have a special training combining both intellectuality and the ability of touching the hearts by feeling respect and sympathy for the children (Montessori, 1972). Montessori followed the ideas of Pestalozzi and she focused on the process of normal development to discover how human beings could reach their potential more fully than they did in traditional schools. Dr. Montessori worked with younger children before elementary schools. Dr. Montessori began her experiment in January 1907. She viewed her schools as laborites in which to study how children learn best (Lillard, 2005).

According to Dr. Montessori's philosophy, child-sized environment offering beauty and order is the best for children's learning because it is cultivating and stimulating. In such an environment, children may choose her own work- activities that have meaning and purpose for her. In addition, there are times when carefully sequenced and structured materials (sensory materials) are introduced by the teacher to the child (Wortham, 2006). The Montessori curriculum is divided into motor education, sensory education, and language and intellectual education (Wortham, 2006).

Motor education: Montessori classroom is designed in order to provide children's free movement during the day. Children's fine motor skills are enhanced by the sensory materials as well as the work in the area of practical life. In addition, as children learn pouring materials, sweeping, polishing shoes, they have opportunity to foster both large and fine motor skills.

Sensory education: Manipulative and didactic materials are used for sensory

education. The sensorial curriculum includes a large number of sets of materials that promote seriation, classification and conservation activities in a variety of media. The materials are sequenced according to difficulty with control of error being a primary objective.

Language and intellectual education: The sensorial materials are part of intellectual education. The teacher involves in careful pronunciation of words as he or she talks to the children and during teaching a concept, it is common to use physical dimensions of the objects such as big, thin, large and small. On the other hand, there is a three part lesson and when learning, for example, concepts of large and small, the teacher would first say, "This is the small ball". Second the teacher wants the child to show the small ball and finally, the teacher wants the child to name the object.

Writing and reading activities are also crucial in Montessori curriculum. First children's fine motor skills are enhanced by active hands-on activities with the sensory materials. At the same time, the visual-motor understanding of alphabet letters and how to form them introduced. Exercises to write letters, words and how to read them are done. Once a child does those independently, reading and writing are expanded to writing sentences and reading simple books.

Reggio Emilia

Reggio Emilia, a small city in industrial northern Italy, established what is now called "The Reggio Emilia approach" shortly after Second World War, when working parents helped to build new schools for their young children (New, 2000). Founded by Loris Malaguzzi, the early childhood schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy, have captured the attention of educators from all over the world. Inspired by John Dewey's progressive education movement, Lev Vygotsky's belief in the connection between culture and development, and Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development, Malaguzzi (Thorton & Brunton, 2009) developed his theory and

philosophy of early childhood education from direct practice in schools for infants, toddlers and preschoolers.

The teachers in Reggio Emilia are partners and collaborators in learning with the children and parents. The teachers become skilled observers of children in order to plan in response to the children. Each group of children is assigned co-teachers. There is no lead teacher or director of the school. A *pedigogista*, a person trained in early childhood education, meets with the teachers weekly. Every school has an *atelierista*, who is trained in visual arts, working closely with teachers and children.

The hundred of languages of children is the term teachers use in referring to the process of children depicting their understanding through one of many symbolic languages, including drawing, sculpture, dramatic play and writing. Teachers and children work together to solve any problems that arise (Goffin & Wilson, 2001)

Head Start

Head Start is a publicly funded program. Developed in the 1960s for intervention with at-risk minority and low-income children, it is a comprehensive program that addresses the educational, nutritional and social needs of such children. It can be associated with public school districts or conducted as a separate program through a community agency.

These programs are the largest publicly funded educational programs for infants and toddlers (Early Head Start) and preschool children. They include health and medical screening and treatment, required parent participation and involvement, and comprehensive services to families. “Today there are Head Start programs in every state and territory, in rural and urban sectors, on American Indian reservations, and in migrant areas” (Essa, 2003, p. 24). From its inception in 1965, Head Start has sought to provide classroom-based and, most recently, home based comprehensive developmental services for children from low-income families.

The large number of children served by Head Start has increased in recent years. In 1993, 36% of at-risk children had been served. An increase of $550 million for Head Start in fiscal year 1994 enabled tens of thousands of children to be added to the Head Start program (Children's Defense Fund, 1994). In 1999, over 800,000 children were being served by Head Start programs, representing about 50% of the children who were eligible (Children's Defense Fund, 2000).

An essential part of every Head Start program is the involvement of parents in parent education, program planning and operating activities. Many parents serve as members of policy councils and committees and have a voice in administrative and managerial decisions while others participate as volunteer or paid aides to teachers, social service personnel, and other staff members. Head Start programs have a low child-staff ratio, with 10 percent of the enrollment in each state available for children with special needs.

High/Scope

High scope is a cognitively oriented curriculum (Wortham, 2006) when it is first developed in order to serve 3 and 4 years-old children from poor neighbors in Ypsilanti, Michigan, in 1962 so it helps children to become independent thinkers and problem solvers (Peyton, 2005). However through the four decades of working, the curriculum has evolved to the model that is used today. There are principles of the curriculum (Morrison, 2008, pp.101-102):

Active learning: Active learning is the most crucial way for children to make sense of their world because as they interact with the real world, as they have immediate first hand experience, they are able to build their own understanding.

Key experiences: Interacting with people, materials and ideas through a creative and ongoing way helps children to enhance mentally, emotionally, socially and physically.

Plan-do-review process: Children have right and time to plan their own activities, perform them and at the end, reflect on what they had done.

Parent component: By offering ideas about child development and learning, teachers make home visits.

Among those principles, active learning and key experiences form the core of the High Scope Model. In fact the four elements, child-adult interaction, learning environment, daily routines and assessment are the ones support active learning.

Child-adult interaction: Adult is the supporter in High-Scope Preschool program. Positive interaction strategies such as focusing on children's strengths, sharing control with children, forming an authentic relationship with children are highly valued in High- Scope classrooms. In other words, when dealing with the every situation in the classroom, the teacher is the guider and supporter which creates a harmony in the classroom.

Learning environment: Environment is significant in this model and it is arranged into different areas to foster children's different developmental levels. Many kinds of activities can be carried out in High-Scope classroom by the wide variety of materials.

Daily routines: Active learning is also supported by daily routines. Consistent routine is important. Plan- do- review session, small group and large group times when teachers also engages in, are crucial part of a typical High-Scope preschool classroom.

Assessment: There is a special observation record used for assessing the children's progress, The High/Scope Child Observation Record (COR) because observation is the major tool to understand children's development and learning. While observing and interacting with children, teachers also keep daily anecdotal records and planning sessions.

As early childhood curriculum models and guidelines were enhanced throughout time, countries' early education curriculum also affected by the innovations and developments in the field accordingly. Turkey also had gone through many ways regarding early childhood curriculum.

2.3 Early Childhood Curriculum Models Used in Turkey

Republic of Turkey founded in 29th of 1923 and within that time, there were 80 kindergartens with 5.880 children in total. However, by the establishment of the new Turkish Alphabet in 1928, emphasis was given to primary education levels in order to make each Turkish citizen literate. So, directing the government budget to primary level of education and focusing on primary education leaded to close off kindergartens by the year 1937-1938 (Başal, 2005).

2.3.1 Early Childhood Curriculum Models Used Before 2006 Curriculum

The first early childhood curriculum was prepared by the year 1952 named as "Kindergarten Program and Temporary Teacher Training Program for Kindergartens" This program (Kantarcıoğlu, 1984) also was accepted in the V. National Education Council. In the program, it was declared that 3 years-old children are full of with energy, endless curiosity so they frequently ask questions and investigate their environment. As the parents are not adequate to respond all need of those groups of children, there is a need for children to be educated in the hands of teachers knowledgeable in child development and learning.

Moreover, by this curriculum, it is defined that children should not be tired both mentally and physically, rather there should be balance among the duration of the activities and daily routines as well. The example of a sample day in this curriculum is:

1. Arrival Time
2. Free Play Time
3. Circle Time
4. Snack Time

5. Bathroom/ Toilet
6. Free Play Time
7. Table Activities
8. Clean Up Time
9. Lunch Time
10. Rest Time
11. Snack Time
12. Free Play Time
13. Departure Time (Kantarcıoğlu, 1984)

Time limits were not specifically given rather it was clarified that there was a flexibility for teachers to arrange the times according to children's needs. Some of the activities could be removed due to the national and religious holidays.

Play was also highlighted in this curriculum and specified as the way of children's learning. In addition, as children like to use their senses and try to learn the limits of their abilities, significance of providing wide variety of materials to children were emphasized. Here, it was the role of the teacher to provide such a rich environment for the children. Especially for the children between the ages of 2-4, the materials should be in the place that they can easily take and use. In that sense, teachers should be supporter of each child to experience as many materials as they can.

On the other hand, according to this curriculum, the teachers are responsible for encouraging children to make them engage in activities rather than forcing to do, directing children to play with different materials, praising children verbally when needed, giving responsibilities to the children according to their abilities, informing children regarding the dangerous situations.

Furthermore, in 1952 early childhood curriculum, regarding the music education, singing and listening songs, rhythm activities, plays with songs and

movements were highlighted. Because it was elaborated that children can express their emotions freely through musical activities.

Within this curriculum, parent involvement was emphasized as well. School-family collaboration was supported and the teachers became the responsible actors to inform the parents about the child development and learning.

The early childhood curriculum and related regulations in order to upbringing teachers for the kindergartens prepared in 1952, were not implemented strongly due to the deficiency in facilities. However, this was a significant step to see that early childhood education was getting the required attention. In fact, in 1962, significance of early childhood education was highlighted more and "Kindergartens Legislation" were published (Aral, Kandır & Yaşar, 2000).

The second early childhood curriculum was developed as a result of the developments and changes in socio-economic situation in 1981. The purpose was to include early childhood education to the normal education system via expanding it. So the essentials of kindergarten classrooms were defined (Meydan, 1984).

By the 10th National Education Council in 1981, in addition to the essentials of kindergarten classrooms, under the titles of the content, categories of the activities and suggestions for the implementation, early childhood education were discussed (Güler, 2001).

In the National Congress, content and the categories of the activities of early childhood curriculum were defined as:

1. Social and cultural activities
2. Activities for being able to meeting daily needs of the children
3. Activities for providing children sense of work and sense of respecting to others' work
4. Activities for teaching Turkish children in appropriate for their developmental level

5. Activities for gaining national identity according to the way of Ataturk.
6. Activities for science and environment
7. Activities for supporting abilities and creativity

In addition to those activities, there were times in the curriculum for discussing the cause-effect relationship, drawing pictures, completing the story and fairy tales, free plays (MONE, 1981).

The third early childhood curriculum was put into implementation in 1989 and both Early Childhood Curriculum and Teacher Guidance Booklet was prepared by the experts in the field and MONE (Ministry of National Education) was published them. These documents were used till the year 1994 (Gürkan, 2006).

This curriculum was prepared for the 4 and 5 year old children and purpose of the early childhood education, principles of education, the purpose of educating 4 and 5 years-olds, schedule of daily activities, units and specific days and weeks were all included within the curriculum. 1989 early childhood curriculum is context based, units-based curriculum so despite it is stated as the flexible curriculum, and there were critics that those contexts and units are limiting freedom and flexibility (Güler, 2001).

On the other hand, 1989 early childhood curriculum supports the learning by doing so the classroom environment is significant to provide richness for children to explore. In that sense, teachers are the responsible to provide such environment by balancing many kinds of activities for children in a daily plans. According to the program, necessary activities needed in a daily program are: activities related self help skills, free play times, teacher directed activities such as language activities, reading-writing activities (Güler, 2001).

In addition to positive points of 1989 early childhood curriculum, there were critics regarding it and in fact, in 1994, it was changed to provide consistency in early childhood education services in terms of curriculums. In fact, it was named as

1994 National Early Childhood Curriculum. Rather than focusing on 4-5 years olds' developmental abilities and listing of contexts, broader curriculum (including children from 0 to 72 months-olds) which was child-centered was prepared. Children's cognitive, social-emotional and psychomotor areas were considered to be enhanced (MONE, 1994).

Principle of learning by doing was also emphasized again and it was aimed to educate children in multiple ways. In fact, the children divided into three groups:

1. 0-36 months-olds (0-3 years-olds) (Curriculum for toddlers)
2. 37-60 months-olds (4-5 years-olds) (Curriculum for preschoolers)
3. 61-72 months-olds (6 years -olds) (Curriculum for kindergarteners)

In the curriculum as a whole, it was emphasized that the teachers should be a supporter of children's solutions the problems and rather than letting children to focus on one type of solution, they should be encouraged to find multiple ways of solutions to the problems (MONE, 1994).

In the curriculum, in the part for toddlers, children are categorized into three groups (0-12 months, 13-24 months, 25-36 months) and their cognitive, language, social-emotional, self-help skills were determined accordingly and developmental abilities were given in table format. In addition to goals (hedef) and objectives (hedef davranış), related activities were given appropriate for those goals and objectives. In fact, through these, the purpose was to provide safe and loving environment both at home and school for toddlers.

Moreover, for the preschool children curriculum (37-60 months olds) and kindergarteners (61-72 months olds), goals and objectives were defined according to their developmental abilities. In order to meet those goals and objectives, some context and concepts were given as an example, however it is elaborated that topics and units are just tools to reach goals and objectives. In that sense, it can be inferred that goals and objectives have a crucial place within the curriculum while proving

flexibility to teachers. The goal areas defined in this curriculum were (MONE, 1994, p.134):

1. Goals related Self-Awareness
2. Goals related Psychomotor Skills
3. Goals related Self-Help Skills
4. Goals related Emotional Skills
5. Goals related Social Skills
6. Goals related Cognitive Skills
7. Goals related Language Skills
8. Goals related Aesthetic and Creativity Skills

In the curriculum, despite the topics and units are just examples for teachers to reach the defined goals and objectives, according to the research regarding the use of 1994 Early Childhood Curriculum, it was found that teachers were taking the topics and units as the aim of the curriculum and detected that teachers were trying to teach those topics rather than concentrating on reaching the goals and objectives (Aral, Kandır and Yaşar, 2001). For this reason, in order to enrich the quality of the early childhood education and provide better opportunities for children's development, a new commission was established to create new curriculum for the children between 36-72 months-olds (Aral, et, al., 2001).

Moreover, according to the investigations and needs, the curriculum for the 0-36 months- olds children was not changed however the curriculums for preschoolers and kindergarteners were combined as "Early Childhood Curriculum for the children 36-72 months-olds". In this curriculum, topics or units were omitted rather goals and objectives were emphasized. In fact, this was the most significant change within the curriculum (Gürkan, 2006).

The 2002 early childhood curriculum focuses on fostering the cognitive, language, psychomotor, social-emotional skills and providing self-help skills for normally developed children between the 36-72 months-olds. Compared to the

previous curriculum, there were no specific goals defined for the creativity (Yazar, 2007).

There are daily and yearly plans in the curriculum. In terms of yearly plans, it includes the goals and objectives for children to gain for a whole year, field trips, activities for specific days and weeks and the ways of parents' involvement in those events.

For the teachers, while preparing the daily plans, they could bring more than one activities together to meet the goals defined. During the implementation of the activities, the teacher was the responsible for the active involvement of the children. Sometimes, children should be responsible for starting and ending of an activity (Yazar, 2007).

On the other hand, the teacher is more flexible in this curriculum compared to the previous one because regarding the activities; the teacher can change their places within a daily plan as well as changing time and type of the activity according to the children's needs.

Within the 2002 early childhood curriculum, one of the significant issue is to provide children safe and loving environment to let them investigate their surroundings freely. For this reason, the topics should be chosen as to trigger the children's sense of curiosity, investigation. So the classroom environment should be designed to serve for those purposes. To illustrate, materials in the classroom should easily be reachable for children.

Moreover, parent involvement was significant in this curriculum. The strong collaboration between the school and home is highly valued. Related this, home visits (at least one in one semester) are suggested to inform the parents about their children's development and to do activities with parents to foster creativity in children.

Ministry of National Education (MONE), in order to evaluate the early childhood curriculum being implemented, views of early childhood teachers, school administrators from 81 cities, academicians in the early childhood education field were all gathered in 2005. According to those evaluations and the analysis of the changes in the elementary school curricula in 2005-2006, the need for a change in early childhood curriculum aroused. In fact, making the early childhood curriculum appropriate with the elementary school curricula, providing an easier transition from kindergarten to primary school are among the reasons for a curriculum change (Gürkan, 2006).

On the other hand, there was a continuous change all around the world and globally the concept of 'information', the understanding of 'science' and the notions of 'democracy' and 'government' have been changing (Akinoglu, 2008). And the biggest contribution was sought in the amount of investments made for the human development. It was observed that there had been some fundamental reforms in the education systems of many countries by the 21st century.

Turkey, as well was affected by the changes in the new world order and the formation of Turkey's educational policies was greatly influenced by the projects of World Bank and the harmonization and standardization of the European Union in the 1990s (Akinoglu, 2008).

Innovations in Turkish primary educational curricula in 2005-2006 education-instruction year, feedbacks from the research and practices in early childhood education field, for the purpose of fulfilling the requirements of EU and international standards; practices in early childhood education in different EU countries were all analyzed (MONE, 2006).

On the other hand, in order to raise children as citizens who respect for the human rights, democracy and different cultures, the need of revising and updating the new early childhood curriculum emerged (MONE, 2006, p.12). So according to this need, it was decided to enhance "Early Childhood Education Curriculum for 36-

72 Months-old Children" and to prepare "Teacher Guide". While the book of Early Childhood Curriculum for 36-72 Months-olds Children are explaining the theoretical structures of the new curriculum, Teachers Guide is giving examples of daily and yearly plans, activities for each group of children, and supplementary forms.

2.3.2 2006 Early Childhood Curriculum

Through 2006 Early Childhood Curriculum, it is aimed to foster the developments of psychomotor, social-emotional, language and cognitive skills, to gain self-help skills and to prepare for the primary education of the 36-72 months-olds children continuing to an early childhood education centers.

The previous program being implemented since 2002-2003 education year was revised and enhanced by making necessary corrections through the feedbacks from experts and implementers in the field, modern development and learning theories, changing needs of the society and principles, approaches and specialties of the new primary education curriculum (MONE, 2006).

During the development process, examples of early childhood education implementations from different countries were analyzed; various approaches and curriculum models were examined; data was gathered from those integrated with the characteristics of our children, structure and values of our society, and required qualifications of an individual in 21st century.

Early Childhood Curriculum initiated in 2006 is a developmental curriculum. In other words, it emphasizes the whole-child principle. For that reason, it is consistent with the principles of "Multiple Intelligence Theory". Objectives defined in this curriculum include the entire skills determined in primary education curriculum. Problem solving, communication, reasoning, decision making, taking responsibilities, consciousness for environment and consumption and many more skills will be gained by the children naturally through the play based activities, active involvement and the construction of their own knowledge (MONE, 2006).

Basic Principles of 2006 Early Childhood Curriculum are as follows:

1. It is developed for 36-72 months olds children
2. It is a child centered curriculum
3. Goals and objectives are the bases
4. Developmental characteristic of the children are arranged separately for each age level.
5. Topics are the tools rather than purpose.
6. There are no units.
7. It is a flexible curriculum.
8. It provides freedom to the teacher.
9. Creativity is emphasized.
10. It requires teachers' systematic study.
11. It requires environment providing free exploration for children.
12. Problem solving and play are the bases of the activities.
13. It encourages the use of daily experiences and opportunities of near environment for educational purpose.
14. Enrichment of the learning experiences is highly valued.
15. Parent involvement is highly valued.
16. Evaluation is multifaceted
17. Specific days and weeks are determined according to the characteristics of the age group.
18. Tables and forms given in the appendices are just an example of activities.
19. The curriculum is open to be developed (MONE, 2006, pp.12-18).

Some crucial topics were emphasized by 2006 Early Childhood Curriculum. In that sense, this might be considered as a revolution among early childhood curriculum used in Turkey up to now. Topics related whole development, educational activities such as free time activities, literature activities, play activities, music activities, field trips, literacy activities, science and math activities, quality in education, ethics in education, behavior management, creativity, responsibility, environmental education, respect for diversity, inclusion, arrangement of

environment, planning, parent involvement, assessment and evaluation and school readiness were highlighted.

In the 2006 curriculum, it was elaborated that teachers were expected to prepare daily and yearly plans. These plans should involve the goals and objectives appropriate for the age group of the children. In other words, in yearly plans, all the objectives and goals aimed to be gained by the children are required to be identified at the beginning of the year. Then, in the daily plans, teachers need to choose the necessary goals and objectives from the yearly plans. In that sense, the wide variety of activities selected are needed to reflect those goals and objectives already chosen.

Moreover, this curriculum emphasizes on the evaluation process so there are evaluation parts in each of the daily plans. At the end of the day, evaluation of the plan, children and teachers-self evaluation should be written.

Furthermore, compared to the previous curriculum, scope of the specific days and weeks was narrowed and those were carefully chosen according the characteristics of 36-72 months-olds children. In the curriculum, it was highlighted that those days and weeks are expected to be used in order to make children achieve objectives defined rather than using as tool for performance (MONE, 2006). In fact, this might be considered as evidence that this curriculum is child- centered.

In addition, parent involvement highlighted and parent meetings, individual meetings with parents and home-visits are one of the examples given in order to provide home-school collaboration. However, teachers are let to be flexible for enhancing the ways of parent involvement (MONE, 2006).

On the other hand, there is a significant place for inclusion within the curriculum. The purposes of the inclusion, factors affecting the success of the inclusion, influences of the inclusion are explained in details (MONE, 2006).

Developing an effective curriculum for young children is a significant key factor in education of those however; it is not adequate standing alone. Rather there is a high need of good implementers of the developed curriculum. In this point, early childhood teachers are the responsible actors who transfer all those theoretical information into real classroom life.

2.4 Early Childhood Teachers and Curriculum

Early childhood has many knowledge bases that are rooted in child development, social work, family relationships, anthropology, as well as health, developmentally appropriate practice and special education (Kendall, 1993). So teachers need to be skilled at many issues which in turn create a big responsibility in the shoulders of early childhood educators.

In other words, early childhood teachers' roles vary in the classroom. McDonnell (1999) describes the early childhood teachers' role as having the knowledge of twelve areas; (1) foundations, (2) child development and growth, (3) curriculum, (4) health, safety and nutrition, (5) child observation, record keeping and assessment, (6) creating environments for young children, (7) child guidance and disciplines, (8) cultural diversity, (9) special needs, (10) family and community relationships (11) professionalism and professional development (12) administration and supervision. On the other hand, The National Association for Education of Young Children (1997) identifies the role of the early childhood educator in five areas: (1) creating a caring community of learners, (2) teaching to enhance development and learning, (3) Constructing appropriate curriculum, (4) Assessing children's development and learning (5) Establishing reciprocal relationships with families. Moreover, Lundin (2000) distinguished the role of the early childhood educator within 6 components: (1) understanding needs and capabilities of the children, (2) creating an environment for social and emotional learning (3) accommodating a wide range of abilities, (4) balancing teacher initiated and child-initiated activities, (5) assessing how well the curriculum meets children's needs (6) developing strong needs with families. The roles of the early childhood teachers can

be expanded more however there is a common point in all explanations: the teacher's role in curriculum.

Considering the teacher's role in curriculum, there are various factors affecting it. Both the personal and environmental factors are affecting the curriculum implementation in the real classroom settings. To begin with, characteristic of the teacher might be among the factors. As the teachers are social beings and as they are coming from different backgrounds, they bring their past experience into their classroom practice. Accordingly, the personal characteristics have an impact on the implementation of the curriculum (Butera, Czaja, Daniels, Goodman, Hanson, Lieber & Plamer, 2009). To illustrate, teachers characterized as motivated, responsible, organized and open to new learning opportunities were found high curriculum implementers (Butera, et, al., 2009) compared to teachers described as unmotivated, not open to changes.

Moreover, the level of support from administrators and colleagues can be explained as one of the factors effecting early childhood teachers' curriculum implementation. Fedoravicius, Finn- Stevenson, Desimone, Henrich and Payne (2004) insisted on the support from the school principal as a key factor for successful curriculum implementation. In other words, collaborative environment is a necessity. In the study, it was found that collaborative relationship and networking were detected as positive factors increasing the teachers' attitudes and motivation, as well as their teaching (Fedoravicius, et, al., 2004). Teberg, also (1999) supported the necessity of administrative support for a successful curriculum implementation by discussing the fact that teachers need more than just knowledge and skills, they need encouragement and assistance to reach the goals defined for their children.

In addition to the factors affecting the curriculum implementation, early childhood teachers are facing with the problems when there is a curriculum reform. In one of the study conducted by Cisneros, Cisneros- Chernour and Moreno (2000), Mexican kindergarten teachers' problems and dilemmas was explored after the K-9 curriculum reform. The new curriculum emphasizes "individualism and

assertiveness" which are opposed with the Mexican culture and there was a stress on accountability. Data gathered through a qualitative method by interviews, focus groups, document analysis over 8 weeks of period. First problem was the conflict between the school and home. Parents perceive kindergarten as a playing ground for the children not as a learning place after the curriculum reform so this creates a barrier between the school and home collaboration. Second, there was a lack of continuity and compatibility between kindergarten and some elementary schools. Transition from kindergarten to elementary school becomes a problem because children were expected more passive role when they start to elementary school. Third, role expectations from teachers by the schools and the Mexican Department of Education were different. While the department let the teachers to be flexible in terms of activities, the school principals wanted them to follow exactly what the manuals and guides tell. Fourth was the lack of resources. Teachers, especially when working in rural areas developed low expectations for children because of the scarce resources. In that sense, teacher explained that this curriculum does not pay attention to regional differences. Final problem was the immigration and migration issues. Teachers were having difficulty when dealing with children with limited Spanish and do not know how to include those children into the classroom activities.

In another study, Wai-Yum (2003) tried to find out the problems of early childhood teachers experienced in the process of top-down curriculum reform at a local kindergarten in Hong Kong. The purpose of the study was to reveal the lived experience of the real people in real context. The qualitative method was used through individual and focus-group interviews.

At the end of the study, teachers explained four major difficulties regarding the new curriculum reform. The first problem was that teachers had to fulfill too many tasks by the implementation of the curriculum however they do not have adequate time to finish those and they became overburdened by the heavy – workload. Second was the frequent supervision and intervention of the principal into the classroom teaching so teachers felt that the principals do not trust and these lead teachers to lose confidence in their teaching. Third problem was the lack of getting

answers from principals regarding the new curriculum reform. Teachers added that despite the expectation was high from the teachers; it was surprising to see that the administrators do not know much about the things about to implement. Finally, teachers were having the problem of lack of support and encouragement from the administrators and parents. There is a need for collaboration among the teachers, principals and parents for the proper implementation of the new curriculum.

On the other hand, in the study of Düşek (2008), the views of early childhood teachers (*N*=91), schools principals (*N*=22) and inspectors (*N*=27) about the 2006 Early Childhood Curriculum were gathered. The data were collected in the city of Ordu and both questionnaires and interviews were used. Inspectors, school principals and early childhood teachers all reached a consensus that the new curriculum was child-centered and more flexible compared to the previous one. School principals and early childhood teachers also appreciated that there was an emphasis on the parent involvement by the new curriculum. Besides, inspectors and school principals indicated the appropriateness of the new curriculum with the curriculum used in primary education.

In addition to the positive sides of the curriculum, school principals described the problems of the new curriculum implementation as the lack of information regarding the new curriculum among early childhood teachers. They also added the physical environment deficiencies as the hurdles confronted during implementation.

Early childhood teachers on the other hand, distinguished their problems regarding the curriculum. First, they stated the physical environment deficiencies which prevent proper implementation of the new curriculum. Then, they added their lack of knowledge about understanding the new curriculum as whole. Third was related with the parent involvement that is early childhood teachers claimed that home-visits were difficult to make. Teachers also added that it was difficult to find the necessary documents such as development control list, objective evaluation form, teacher self-evaluation form…etc.

In a study conducted by Şıvgın (2005), early childhood teachers' views regarding the curriculum being implemented were gathered. The data were collected from early childhood teachers (*N*=114) in Ordu city and their views categorized into four areas: objectives, education and planning, parent involvement and evaluation. Regarding the objectives, it was detected that teachers did not have difficulties both on deciding the objectives to choose for an activity and choosing objectives from all areas of development appropriate for the age group of the children.

Teachers, in terms of education and planning, proposed that there was a need for examples regarding which methods to use, what kinds of technological materials to be included in the daily plans. In addition, teachers elaborated that the examples of science and nature activities, music activities and reading- writing activities should be included in the curriculum.

The type of activities were needed regarding parent involvement, on the other hand, were not described clearly according to the views of the teachers. They added that parent involvement should consider involvement of both fathers' and mothers' education.

Finally, teachers found evaluation forms designed for evaluating children inadequate. They suggested that there should be more examples of evaluation forms to understand whole progress of the children. In other words, observation forms designed for children were not adequate so other evaluation techniques should be included in the curriculum.

Another study (İnal, Kandır, & Özbey, 2009) focused on the difficulties faced by preschool teachers in the planning and implementation of curriculum. The study sample consisted of a total of 154 teachers working at private and government kindergartens in Ankara and Afyon. Questionnaire with two sections (demographic information of teachers and their views on educational contexts) was used to gather the data. In the study, it was aimed to analyze whether teachers' views on planning

educational contexts varied with respect to their years of experience, educational background and type of the school they are working in.

At the end of the study, it was found that the biggest difficulties teachers faced were in preparing annual plans and choosing objectives and goals for the whole year. Then, evaluation was the difficult part for the teachers since they were not sure what to write.

On the other hand, choosing the kinds of teaching methods and techniques was a problem for the teachers. They had difficulty in designing the classroom and having problem regarding the attitudes of parent towards early childhood education.

Despite stating the different types of problems faced by the preschool teachers, problems related with the kinds of activities such as science-math, reading and writing, field trips, inclusion were not included in the questionnaire.

Moreover, the reasons for such problems were not gathered from the first-hand resources that of the preschool teachers. In that sense, to be able to offer suggestions for possible solution to the problems of preschool teachers, their ideas might also be included in the process.

In conclusion, various studies have been conducted focusing on the problems' of preschool teachers regarding the curriculum implementation. In order to achieve the high quality standards in early childhood education, problems of preschool teachers should continue to be analyzed well and realistic practical solutions should also be offered to increase effectiveness in curriculum implementation. In this context the present study is expected to make a contribution to the literature by analyzing the problems of teachers in detail and taking the ideas of preschool teachers regarding the possible solutions.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

This chapter will provide information about the over all design of the study, the participants of the study, development of the data collection instrument, data collection procedures and data analysis.

3.1 Overall Design of the Study

This study, which is a survey research design, aimed to find out the problems faced by the preschool teachers during the implementation of the curriculum through asking questions to the carefully selected sample. As the study aimed to make single-time description, cross-sectional survey design was used (Babbie, 1990).

The sample of this survey study consisted of preschool teachers working in both selected public and private preschools and kindergartens from the different regions of Ankara. The mentioned schools were the ones which are under control of Ministry of National Education (MONE) and responsible for implementing the curriculum published by MONE in 2006.

Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected in this study. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher. Items of the questionnaire were selected from the related literature and validated by a group of expert in the field. A pilot study was conducted to assess the clarity of the questionnaire items.

After collecting and analyzing the data obtained through questionnaires, high ranked problem areas were detected. For those groups of problems, interviews were conducted with preschools teachers. Interviews were conducted with volunteer

teachers from selected preschools to explore the possible reasons of most frequently stated problems by the teachers in the questionnaire.

Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were employed to provide deeper insight into the research questions. Qualitative data were content-analyzed.

3.2 Variables

Gender: The variable is a nominated dichotomous variable with categories of female (1) and male (2).

Educational level: This variable is nominated variable with categories of Vocational Girl High School (1); 2 Years College Graduate (2); 4 Years Bachelor Degree (3); Graduate (Master or Doctoral) (4); Others (5).

Department graduated from: This variable is nominated variable with categories of Child Development and Psychology (1); Early Childhood Education (2); Others (3).

The type of the school working in: This variable is nominated variable with categories of Independent Public Preschool (1); Public Kindergarten in a Public Primary School (2); Private Preschool (3); Private Kindergarten in a Private Primary School (4).

Years of experience: This variable is nominated variable with categories of Less Than One Year (1); 1-5 years (2); 6-10 years (3); 11-15 years (4); 16-20 years (5); 21-25 years (6).

In-service training related 2006 curriculum: The variable is a nominated dichotomous variable with categories of yes (1) and no (2).

3.3 Development of the Questionnaire

In this study, a questionnaire was administrated to collect data on the problems that preschool teachers face in the curriculum implementation. The instrument was developed by the researcher. For the purpose of developing the questionnaire, the literature related to the problems that preschool teachers in the curriculum implementation (Wai-Yum, 2003; Şıvgın, 2005; Düşek 2008) and factors affecting the curriculum implementation were reviewed (Fedoravicius, Finn-Stevenson, Desimone, Henrich & Payne, 2004; Butera, Czaja, Daniels, Goodman, Hanson, Lieber & Plamer, 2009).

As the early childhood curriculum implemented in both public and private schools under the control of Ministry of National Education (MONE) was changed in 2006, the characteristic of new curriculum were considered while forming the items of the questionnaire.

In addition to literature review, interviews were conducted with the preschool teachers to identify the problems that they faced. In the questionnaire there are items related to all the components of a curriculum such as goals and objectives, content, teaching and learning process, plans and activities, evaluation, social environment and physical facilities.

The face validity was also examined through expert opinion; from the Department of Educational Sciences at Middle East Technical University, Department of Early Childhood Education at METU and Department of Early Childhood Education at Maltepe University.

At the end, on the basis of responses and suggestions and the related literature, the instrument consisted of 54 items in a four point Likert scale format scoring by 4 to “Never creates a problem for me”, 3 to “Sometimes creates a problem for me”, 2 to “Usually creates a problem for me”, 1 to “Always creates a problem for me” was used to collect data. However, in order not to force the reader to make a choice, at the end of the each line, the choice of “I am not sure whether it is a problem or not” was added. In fact, regarding this usage, Cox and Cox (2008)

suggested that if it is seen necessary to be included in the amount scale, it can be separated from the other choices.

On the other hand, Gilham (2000) clarified that it is better to put the neutral part at the end of the scale rather than eliminating it because according to the research results, people are less likely to select the neutral part when it is located at the end of the scale.

3.3.1 Pilot Testing of the Questionnaire

An initial pilot testing was conducted with 150 preschool teachers in Central Anatolia including cities Konya, Kayseri, Sivas, Yozgat and Ankara. Preschool teachers were asked to fill out questionnaire that included background information part and 54 items regarding parts of a curriculum including goals and objectives, content, learning and teaching process, plans and activities, evaluation, social environment and physical facilities. On the other hand, they were asked to make comments related the statements for clarity.

Initial principal component analysis with varimax rotation of the 54 items inventory revealed 10 factors with eigenvalues greater than 1. However, only seven factors remained meaningful. These were goals and objectives, content, teaching and learning process, plans and activities, evaluation, social environment and physical facilities.

Goals and objectives pertained 3 items (items 1, 2, 3) with loadings from .86 to .91, content pertained 8 items (items 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11) with loading from .77 to .93, teaching and learning process pertained 15 items (items 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26) with loadings from .61 to. 81, plans and activities pertained 8 items (items 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34) with loadings from .80 to .94, evaluation pertained 7 items (items 37, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44) with loadings from .82 to .90, social environment pertained 5 items (items 46, 47, 49, 50, 51) with loadings

from .71 to .89, physical facilities pertained 3 items (items 52, 53, 54) with loadings from .75 to .79.

The reliability scale was reported as the internal consistency measures. Reliability refers to the question whether the scale is measuring a single idea and the items are internally consistent or not. In the pilot study, for the overall reliability coefficient Alpha calculated to measure internal consistency of questionnaire with 54 items was .75.

3.3.2 Reliability and Validity

The results of the principal component analysis were used as the evidence for construct and content validity of the questionnaire.

When the data obtained from 223 pre-school teachers, the reliability of the dimensions measured to check whether the items, which make up the factors, are internally consistent. Coefficient Alpha calculated to measure internal consistency on 7 dimensions of final version of the questionnaire were .61, .89, .94, .88, .80, .76 and .75 respectively.

3.4 Population and Sample Selection

Population of the study was all the preschool teachers in Ankara. According to the list taken from Provincial Directorate of National Education in Ankara, based on the selected schools, the sample was composed of 223 preschool teachers working in public and private schools in the center of Ankara during the education year of 2009-2010.

Stratified sampling was used. The main purpose of stratification is to arrange the population into homogenous subsets and to choose adequate number of elements from each other. In that sense, here, the choice of stratification variables depended on the variables used in this study (Babbie, 1990).

For the purpose of selecting the sample, list of the schools from Provincial Directorate of National Education in Ankara was gathered and both public and private schools were chosen. Schools from Altındağ, Etimesgut, Çankaya, Keçiören, Yenimahalle and Gölbaşı were chosen to include schools from different regions of Ankara.

In the list that was taken from Provincial Directorate of National Education in Ankara, only the number of classrooms and number of children in each school were included. So, number of the classroom and children were taken into consideration while choosing the schools. Both schools with more classrooms and children and schools with fewer classrooms and less children were included in the sample. As the number of the public schools was higher than the private schools in the list, more public schools were included in the sample. Fifty-seven preschools among 200 were selected to conduct the study. All of the preschool teachers in selected 57 schools were asked to fill out the questionnaire. A total of 223 questionnaires were returned.

The background characteristic of the school teachers who responded who responded the questionnaire were described below. Table 3.1 presents the number of teachers participated from different schools.

Table 3.1 The Number of Preschool Teachers Participated With Respect to the Type of the School They Work in.

School Types	Number of Teachers
Independent public preschool	73
Public kindergarten	68
Private preschool	51
Private kindergarten	31

There were no male preschool teachers in the schools visited by the researcher so preschool teachers participated in the study were all females. Among

the preschool teachers participated in the study, 13% of them were girl vocational high school graduate, 23.3% of them were 2 years of college graduate, 63.7% of them were 4 years of bachelor graduate (See Table 3.2).

Table 3.2 Number of the Preschool Teachers Participated With Respect to Their Educational Background

Educational Level	Number of teachers
Girl Vocational High School	29
2years of College	52
4 years bachelor degree	142

More than half of the preschool teachers participated in the study were graduates of child development and psychology department whereas 44.4% of them were graduates of early childhood education department (See Table 3.3).

Table 3.3 Number of the Preschool Teachers Participated With Respect to the Department They Graduated

Department Graduate	Number of Teachers	%
Child Development and Psychology	124	55.6
Early Childhood Education	99	44.4

Teaching experience of the preschool teachers varied: 12.6% of them have less than a year teaching experience, 23.3% of them have 1-5 years of teaching experience, 20.6% 6-10 years, 19.7% of them have 11-15 years of teaching experience, 12.6% of them have 16-20 years of experience, and 11.2% of them have 21-25 years of experience (See Table 3.4).

Table 3.4 Number of the Preschool Teachers Participated With Respect to Their Years of Experience

Years of Teaching Experience	Number of Teachers	%
Less than year	28	12.6
1-5 years	52	23.3
6-10 years	46	20.6
11-15 years	44	19.7
16-20 years	28	12.6
21-25 years	25	11.2

Regarding the participation in in-service training, 57% of them elaborated that they had in-service training related 2006 Early Childhood Curriculum and 43% of them explained that they did not.

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

In this study, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. First, quantitative data were collected through questionnaire. Second, according to the results of questionnaire, high ranked problems were detected. Then, to be able to understand the reasons of those high ranked problems, qualitative data were collected via interviews with the selected preschool teachers.

Approval of METU Ethic Committee and permission from Provincial Directorate of National Education in Ankara were obtained to administer the questionnaire. The researcher visited the selected 57 schools out of 200 in the last three weeks of March, 2010 and first week of April, 2010. All the preschool teachers in each selected schools were asked to fill out the questionnaire. A total of 223 questionnaires were returned.

After obtaining the results of the questionnaire, high ranked problem areas were detected. The high ranked problem areas were the ones with means scores lower than 3. Then interviews with preschool teachers (two from each four types of the school) were conducted to be able to understand the possible reasons of those problems. Consequently 8 teachers were interviewed from 4 different schools.

Each interview was carried out in one session by the researcher. Problems related to evaluation of the child, preschool teachers preferred to give answers as a whole, rather than touching upon keeping observation record, anecdotal records, preparing portfolios and writing developmental reports separately.

During the interview, as the teachers did not wish the interview sessions to be tape-recorded, the interviewer took notes. For each identified problem areas, four questions were asked to the preschool teachers:

1. What kind of problem do you experience regarding _____?
2. What are the possible reasons of those problems?
3. As a teacher, what do you do to solve those problems?
4. For you, what kinds of things to be done to solve those problems?

3.6 Data Analysis

In this study, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected.

Principal component analysis, Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) were used to analyze the quantitative data.

Principal component analysis was employed to confirm underlying dimensions of the questionnaire. In order to identify whether there is a significant mean difference among the problem areas perceived by the preschool teachers, Repeated Measure ANOVA was carried out. To be able to detect whether the problems faced by preschool teachers during the curriculum implementation differ with respect to certain background variables (teachers' educational level, type of the school they are working in…etc.) or not, MANOVA was conducted. The .05 alpha level was accepted as a criterion of statistical significance for all the statistical procedure performed.

Finally, in order to determine the reasons of highly stated problems and to support the quantitative data gathered through questionnaire, interviews were conducted with the selected preschool teachers. Then, qualitative data collected through interviews were content analyzed. According to Silverman (2001), content analysis is a well-known technique for contextual investigation. In the content analysis, categories are created by the researchers and related instances falling into each category are detected (Silverman, 2001).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This study is aimed to find out the problems that preschool teachers faced during curriculum implementation. The results of the study were presented in three sections. In the first section, results of the principal component analysis were given. In the second section, the findings of one-way repeated measures of ANOVA, as well as the effects of some background variables on the problems faced by preschool teachers (the findings of MANOVA) were presented. In the third section, interview findings with the preschool teachers for the possible reasons of high ranked problems were presented.

4.1 Results Concerning Dimensions of Problems That Preschool Teachers Face in the Curriculum Implementation Questionnaire

A principal component analysis with a varimax rotation was run for 54 items to detect perceived dimensions of Problems of Preschool Teachers Faced During Curriculum Implementation Questionnaire (PPTFDCIQ).

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Barlett's test indicated sampling adequacy for factor analysis. That is the KMO measure is .809 and also Barlett's test of sphericity (.00) is significant. Initial principal component analysis with varimax rotation of the 54 items inventory revealed 11 factors with eigenvalues greater than 1. When the content of each factor was examined, the contents of factors were found meaningful. These factors were goals and objectives, content, teaching and learning process, plans and activities, evaluation, social environment and physical facilities. The factor loadings of seven dimensions are given on Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Factor Loading Obtained via Principle Component Analysis With Varimax Rotation

ITEMS	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7
Teaching and Learning Process							
Using Appropriate Teaching Methods and Techniques	**.866**	-.046	.030	-.007	.008	.011	.076
Doing Play Based Activities	**.836**	-.057	.113	.042	.024	.029	.006
Creating Learning Centers	**.786**	-.012	.004	-.104	-.079	.017	.039
Directing Children to Think with Open ended Questions	**.775**	.059	-.079	-.020	.015	.082	.057
Encouraging Children's Active Involvement	**.767**	.041	-.053	.022	.042	.090	-.021
Respecting Individual Differences	**.764**	-.053	-.025	-.023	.021	-.021	-.073
Developing Materials For Activities	**.758**	.020	.039	-.036	.077	.055	.091
Awakening Children's Curiosity	**.757**	-.060	.080	.042	.081	-.006	.018
Learner Centered Process Planning	**.741**	-.083	-.060	.110	.078	-.020	.056
Doing Activities To foster Children's Social Emotional intelligence	**.729**	-.027	.111	-.004	-.096	.044	-.023
Using Knowledge and Information Technologies	**.720**	-.023	.058	-.075	-.001	-.023	.065
Fostering Children's Creative Thinking Skills	**.718**	.064	-.045	-.027	-.023	.070	-.089
Being Flexible During Implementation	**.687**	.054	-.013	.041	.021	-.056	.032
Encouraging Children to Involve in Activities Based on Corporation	**.496**	-.074	-.045	.068	.077	-.032	.117
Content							
Telling Mathematics Related Concepts	-.047	**.844**	.024	.000	-.064	.034	-.057
Telling Emotion Related Concepts	.001	**.829**	.074	.016	-.048	.053	-.079
Telling Time Related Concepts	-.064	**.795**	.034	.064	-.027	.000	-.015
Choosing Age Appropriate Concepts	-.009	**.780**	.185	-.045	-.127	-.025	-.040
Telling Science Related Concepts	.014	**.727**	.129	-.081	-.004	.010	-.094
Telling Space Related Concepts	.044	**.722**	.105	.011	-.091	-.084	.092
Telling Abstract Concepts	-.104	**.705**	.007	-.052	.113	.003	.083
Choosing Developmental Level Appropriate Concepts	.016	**.657**	.041	-.005	.020	.090	.099
Plans and Activities							
Preparing Drama Music Activities	-.001	.074	**.865**	.090	.050	-.107	-.068
Preparing Annual Plan	.035	.133	**.841**	.010	.037	-.060	-.022
Preparing Language Activities	.069	.086	**.827**	.038	.046	-.104	.006
Preparing Art Activities	.022	.048	**.749**	-.032	.045	.001	.038
Designing Reading And Writing Practices	.015	.114	**.713**	-.054	.120	.071	.085
Preparing Play and Movement Activities	.059	.039	**.698**	-.023	-.034	.018	-.052
Preparing Free Play Activities	-.002	.003	**.693**	-.037	.075	.092	-.018
Preparing Daily Plan	-.002	.088	**.557**	-.059	.066	.149	.064

Evaluation							
Preparing Portfolios	.017	.059	.082	**.768**	.012	.001	.012
Evaluating Plans	-.076	.024	-.052	**.762**	-.002	.010	.146
Keeping Anecdotal Records	.044	-.080	.053	**.667**	.060	.012	-.018
Evaluating Child	-.001	-.023	-.099	**.636**	-.131	.115	-.108
Keeping Observation Records	-.080	.007	-.081	**.559**	-.097	-.184	.001
Social Environment							
Making Corporations With Colleagues	.078	-.029	.061	-.030	**.783**	-.033	.022
Lack of Assistant Teacher	-.052	-.044	.088	-.019	**.730**	.004	.047
Inadequacy In Classroom Materials	.036	.091	.011	-.085	**.700**	-.069	.144
Lack of Helping Mum	.134	-.110	.046	.121	**.665**	-.130	-.069
Making Corporations With School Principals	-.069	-.124	.096	.030	**.650**	.118	-.064
Physical Facilities							
Lack of Relax Time	.002	.007	-.009	-.006	-.135	**.850**	-.080
Small Classroom Environment	.038	.005	.021	-.056	.072	**.792**	.027
Crowded Classroom	-.048	.043	-.080	.025	-.085	**.730**	.155
Goals and Objectives							
Choosing Age Appropriate Goals and Objectives	-.037	-.002	.009	-.002	.116	.040	**.818**
Selecting Goals and Objectives From All Developmental Areas	.076	-.032	-.073	.102	-.008	.028	**.733**
Choosing Developmental Level Appropriate Goals and Objectives	.091	.009	.097	.094	-.017	.144	**.604**

Goals and objectives, content, teaching and learning process, plans and activities, evaluation, social environment and physical facilities were the seven factors of the scale. As can be seen on the table 4.1, teaching and learning process pertained 15 items (items 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26) with loadings from .49 to. 86, content pertained 8 items (items 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11) with loading from .65 to .84, plans and activities pertained 8 items (items 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34) with loadings from .55 to .86, evaluation pertained 7 items (items 37, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44), social environment pertained 5 items (items 46, 47, 49, 50, 51) with loadings from .65 to .78, physical facilities pertained 3 items (items 52, 53, 54) with loadings from .73 to .85, goals and objectives pertained 3 items (items 1, 2, 3) with loadings from .60 to .81.

The item called “Evaluating Myself as a Teacher” was loaded separately so this item was not included in the main analysis. Items called “Planning Field Trips” (.75) and “Planning Science and Mathematic Activities” (.73) were loaded together separate from the plans and activities so they were excluded from the main analysis however as their mean values were low, these two items were also included into the interview session. Besides, two items which are “Parental Involvement” (.63) and “Inclusion” (.88) were loaded separately so these items were not included in the main analysis however their mean value were low, for this reason; these items were added to the interview part as well.

In order to assess the internal consistency of the Problems that Preschool Teachers Face in the Curriculum Implementation Questionnaire, Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient was computed. Reliability Coefficient for the overall scale was found to be .81. In addition, coefficient alpha that calculated to measure internal consistency on 7 factors was .61, .89, .94, .88, .80, .76 and .75 for the first (Goals and objectives), second(content), third (teaching and learning process), fourth (plans and activities), fifth (evaluation), sixth (social environment) and seventh (physical facilities) dimensions respectively.

4.2 Results Concerning the Problems That Preschool Teachers Face in the Curriculum Implementation

In this study, the answers to the two main questions were aimed to find out. First question was: “What are the problems that preschool teachers face in the curriculum implementation?”

To be able to answer such a question, one- way repeated measures of ANOVA were conducted. The sphericity assumption was checked. According to the Mauchley’s test of sphericity, the significance value (p=.00) is less than critical value of .05 which means that variances of the differences between levels are significantly different. It seemed that the assumption of sphericity has been violated. Therefore, Greenhouse& Geisser (ε) correction was used. The Greenhouse-Geisser correction varies between 1/k -1 and 1 (Field, 2005). In this study, Greenhouse & Geisser (ε)

correction was .85 so it closer to the upper limit of 1. In this case, it can be assumed that the data did not represent a deviation from sphericity. The univariate tests for within subjects effects also indicated that all four tests were coincided with each other (See Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 Tests of Within Subjects Effects

		df	F	p	η2
Problem areas	Sphericity Assumed	6	297.926	.000*	.573
	Greenhouse-Geisser	5.112	297.926	.000*	.573
	Huynh-Feldt	5.246	297.926	.000*	.573
	Lower-bound	1.000	297.926	.000*	.573

*Significant at the .05 level

In order to find out the main effects among the problem areas faced by preschool teachers in the curriculum implementation; Wilk's Lamda is used as multivariate test to understand whether or not there was a significant difference among the means of problem areas. Repeated contrast was used to determine which problem area was given the greatest emphasis among the preschool teachers. Accordingly, in order to investigate the mean differences among problem areas, Bonferroni multiple comparisons were used as it was the most robust to Type 1 error.

The follow-up multivariate tests indicated an overall significant difference among the mean scores of 7 problem areas (λ=.11, F (6,217)= 280.926, p<.001, η2=.88).

Table 4.3 Multivariate Tests of Problem Areas

		Value	F	Hypot df	Error df	Sig.	η2
Problem Areas	Wilks' Lambda	.114	280.926	6	217	.000*	.886

*Significant at the .05 level

A follow-up pairwise comparison (see Table 4.4) was also conducted to examine the mean difference among problems areas faced by the preschool teachers.

Table 4.4 Pairwise Comparison of the Problem Areas

	Mean Differences	Std.Error	p
G&O- C	.210*	.037	.000
G&O- T&LP	.162*	.038	.001
G&O- P&A	.267*	.045	.000
G&O- E	.833*	.039	.000
G&O- SE	.106	.041	.229
G&O- PF	1.338	.049	.000
C- T&LP	.372	.035	.000
C- P&A	.476	.038	.000
C- E	1.043	.039	.000
C- SE	.315	.040	.000
C- PF	1.548	.048	.000
T&LP - P&A	.105	.042	.303
T&LP - E	.671*	.040	.000
T&LP - SE	.056	.040	1.000
T&LP - PF	1.176*	.050	.000
P&A - E	.567*	.047	.000
P&A - SE	161*	.043	.006
P&A – PF	1.071*	.056	.000
E- SE	728*	.044	.000
E-PF	.504*	.053	.000
SE - PF	1.232*	.055	.000

G&O: Goals and Objectives; C: Content; T&LP: Teaching and Learning Process; P&A: Plans and Activities; E: Evaluation; SE: Social Environment; PF: Physical Facilities

*Significant at the .05 level

The results of the pairwise comparison, indicated a significant mean difference between goals and objectives and content; goals and objectives and teaching and learning process; goals and objectives and plans and activities; goals and objectives and evaluation; goals and objectives and physical facilities; content and teaching and learning process; content and plans and activities; content and evaluation; content and social environment; content and physical facilities; teaching and learning process and evaluation; teaching and learning process and physical facilities; plans and activities and evaluation; plans and activities and social environment; plans and activities and physical facilities; evaluation and social environment; evaluation and physical facilities; social environment and physical

facilities. However, no significant difference was observed between social environment and goals and objectives; social environment and teaching and learning process; plans and activities and teaching and learning process. Accordingly; by considering the mean scores (see Table 4.5), the problem areas faced by the preschool teacher can be arranged from most problematic to less problematic as, physical facilities (*M* =2.21, *SD*= .63), evaluation (*M* =2.71, *SD*= .45), plans and activities (*M* =3.28, *SD*= .52), teaching and learning process (*M* = 3.39, *SD*= .39), social environment (*M*=3.44, *SD*= .46), goals and objectives (*M* =3.55, *SD*= .43) and content (*M* =3.76, *SD*= .33).

Table 4.5 Means and Standard Deviations of Problem Areas

Problem Areas	M	SD	N
Physical Facilities	2.21	.63	223
Evaluation	2.71	.45	223
Plans and Activities	3.28	.52	223
Teaching and Learning Process	3.39	.39	223
Social Environment	3.44	.46	223
Goals and Objectives	3.55	.43	223
Content	3.76	.33	223

The physical facilities (*M* =2.21) and evaluation (*M*=2.72) were seemed to be the highly ranked problem areas by the preschool teachers during the curriculum implementation and the means difference was significant ($p<.05$) between the two. Accordingly, for preschool teachers, problems related to physical facilities such as "Crowded Classrooms" and "Small Classroom Environment" were perceived more significant than those related to evaluation.

4.3 Results Concerning the Problems That Preschool Teachers Face in the Curriculum Implementation With Respect to Some Background Variables

In order to explore whether some background variables such as gender, educational level, department of graduate, school type, teaching experience, in-service training create a difference on the problems that preschool teachers face in

the curriculum implementation or not, Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was carried out.

There were no variations regarding gender (all pre-school teachers were female) in the data, this background variable was excluded from the analysis.

4.3.1 Results Concerning the Problems That Preschool Teachers Face in the Curriculum Implementation With Respect to Educational Level

To be able to identify whether there is a significant difference with respect to educational level of preschool teachers on the problems faced during the curriculum implementation or not, MANOVA was conducted.

First of all, it was looked for the multivariate normality. Regarding this issue, Filed (2005) elaborated that the assumption of multivariate normality can not be tested on SPSS so checking the assumptions of univariate normality for each dependent variable can be a practical solution. So, it was looked at the normality of each dependent variable in this data.

When it is looked at the normality tests (Kolmogorov- Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk), (problems related goals and objectives based on two years of college graduates, problems related evaluation based on 4 years bachelor degree) indicated significant difference. However, visual inspection of histograms, Q-Q plots and box plots indicated no great deviation from normality. In addition, skewness and kurtosis values were all close to zero (-2, +2) which provided another evidence of normality.

Moreover, the assumption of equality of covariance matrices was also checked. According to Levene's test, calculated differences of significance, expect physical facilities, seemed non-significant $p>.05$. Then, Box's test was checked and it was found that this also indicated a non-significant result. So, it can be concluded that this assumption was also met.

For the educational level, as Box's Test is non-significant we look at Wilk's Lamda (see Table 4.6). The Wilk's λ of .90 is non-significant, F (14, 428) = 1.62, p>.01, indicating that the perceptions of teachers on the problems they faced during the curriculum implementation does not change according to the preschool teachers' level of education.

Table 4.6 Multivariate Tests of Problem Areas With Respect to Educational Level

		Value	F	Hypot df	Error df	Sig.	η2
Educational Level	Wilks' Lambda	.901	1.628	14	428	.069	.051

4.3.2 Results Concerning the Problems That Preschool Teachers Face in the Curriculum Implementation With Respect to Department Graduated

To be able to identify whether there is a significant difference with respect to department that preschool teachers graduated from on the problems faced during the curriculum implementation or not, MANOVA was conducted.

On the other hand, when it is looked at the normality tests (Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk), some of the values such as problems related social environment based on early childhood department graduate and problems related physical facilities based on child development and psychology graduate indicated significant difference. However, visual inspection of histograms, Q-Q plots and box plots indicated no great deviation from normality. In addition, skewness and kurtosis values were all close to zero (-2, +2) which provided another evidence of normality.

Moreover, the assumption of equality of covariance matrices was also checked. According to Levene's test, calculated differences of significance, except social environment, seemed non-significant p>.05. Then, Box's test was checked and it was found that this also indicated a non-significant result. So, it can be concluded that this assumption was also met.

According to the analysis for the department that preschool teachers graduate from, as Box's Test is non-significant, it was looked for the Wilk's Lamda (See Table 4.7). The Wilk's λ of .94 is non-significant, F (7, 215) = 1.67, p>.01, indicating that the perceptions of teachers on the problems they faced during the curriculum implementation does not change according to the departments that preschool teachers were graduated from.

Table 4.7 Multivariate Tests of Problem Areas With Respect to Department Graduated

		Value	F	Hypt df	Error df	Sig.	η2
Department Graduated	Wilks' Lambda	.948	1.674	7	215	.117	.052

4.3.3 Results Concerning the Problems That Preschool Teachers Face in the Curriculum Implementation With Respect to School Type Teachers Working in

To be able to identify whether there is a significant difference with respect to school type that teachers are working in on the problems faced during the curriculum implementation or not, MANOVA was conducted.

When it is looked at the normality tests (Kolmogorov- Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk, some of the values such as problems related content based on the private kindergarten and problems related goals and objectives based on private kindergarten classes indicated significant difference. However, visual inspection of histograms, Q-Q plots and box plots indicated no great deviation from normality. In addition, skewness and kurtosis values were all close to zero (-2, +2) which provided another evidence of normality.

Moreover, the assumption of equality of covariance matrices was also checked. According to Levene's test, calculated differences of significance, except physical facilities, seemed non-significant p>.05. Then, Box's test was checked and

it was found that this also indicated a non-significant result. So, it can be concluded that this assumption was also met.

For the type of the school that preschool teachers work in, as Box's Test is non-significant we look at Wilk's Lamda. The Wilk's λ of .82 is significant, F (21, 612) = 1.98, p<.01, indicating that the perceptions of teachers on the problems they faced in the curriculum implementation change according to the school type that preschool teachers are working in.

In the study, there were four different types of schools so to be able to detect in which schools there is a significant difference on which factors, one way ANOVA was conducted. Accordingly, it was found that there is a significant difference among the school types based on physical facilities, p<.007 (See Table 4.8).

Table 4.8 ANOVA Table of Problems Areas With Respect to School Types

		SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Physical Facilities	Between Groups	10.269	3	3.423	9.363	.000*
	Within Groups	80.066	219	.366		
	Total	90.335	222			

*Significant at the .007 level

However, to be able to detect among which type of the school there is a significant difference based on physical facilities, it was looked at the multiple comparison table (See Table 4.9). As when the test of homogeneity variance table was checked, for the physical facilities, it was seen that p>.05 so there is a need to be looked at the results for Bonferonni test to understand which type of school creates difference. Results were presented on Table 4.9.

Table 4.9 Multiple Comparisons With the Types of the Schools With Respect to Physical Facilities

School Types		Mean Dif.	Sd Error	η2
Independent Public Preschool	Public Kindergarten	-.03143	.10191	1.000
	Private Preschool	.47184*	.11035	.000
	Private Kindergarten	.33923	.12962	.057
Public Kindergarten	Independent Public Preschool	.03143	.10191	1.000
	Private Preschool	.50327*	.11200	.000
	Private Kindergarten	.37065	.13103	.031
Private Preschool	Public Preschool	-.47184*	.11035	.000
	Public Kindergarten	-.50327*	.11200	.000
	Private Kindergarten	-.13262	.13770	1.000
Private Kindergarten	Independent Public Preschool	-.33923	.12962	.057
	Public Kindergarten	-.37065	.13103	.031
	Private Preschool	.13262	.13770	1.000

*Significant at the .007 Level

According to the multiple comparisons table, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between government kindergarten and private kindergarten; government kindergarten classes and private kindergarten.

4.3.4 Results Concerning the Problems That Preschool Teachers Face in the Curriculum Implementation With Respect to Teaching Experience

To be able to identify whether there is a significant difference with respect to teaching experiences of preschool teachers on the problems faced in the curriculum implementation or not, MANOVA was conducted.

On the other hand, when it is looked at the normality tests (Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk, some of the values such as problems related plans and activities based on 6-10 years of experience and problems related content based on 16-20 years of experience indicated significant difference. However, visual inspection of histograms, Q-Q plots and box plots indicated no great deviation from

normality. In addition, skewness and kurtosis values were all close to zero (-2, +2) which provided another evidence of normality.

Moreover, the assumption of equality of covariance matrices was also checked. According to Levene's test, calculated differences of significance, expect social environment, seemed non-significant p>.05. Then, Box's test was checked and it was found that this also indicated a non-significant result. So, it can be concluded that this assumption was also met.

For the teaching experience, as Box's Test is non-significant we look at Wilk's Lamda (See Table 4.10). The Wilk's λ of .86 is non-significant, F (35, 890) = .93, p>.01, indicating that the perceptions of teachers on the problems they faced during the curriculum implementation does not change according to the preschool teachers' years of experiences.

Table 4.10 Multivariate Tests of Problem Areas With Respect to Preschool Teachers' Teaching Experience

		Value	F	Hypot df	Error df	Sig.	η2
Teaching Experience	Wilks' Lambda	.860	.931	35	890	.585	.030

4.3.5 Results Concerning the Problems That Preschool Teachers Face in the Curriculum Implementation With Respect to Participation in In-Service-Training

To be able to identify whether there is a significant difference with respect to participation in in-service training program by preschool teachers on the problems faced during the curriculum implementation or not, MANOVA was conducted.

On the other hand, when it is looked at the normality tests (Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk, some of the values such as problems related social environment based on not having an in-service training and problems related evaluation based on having an in-service training indicated significant difference.

However, visual inspection of histograms, Q-Q plots and box plots indicated no great deviation from normality. In addition, skewness and kurtosis values were all close to zero (-2, +2) which provided another evidence of normality.

Moreover, the assumption of equality of covariance matrices was also checked. According to Levene's test, calculated differences of significance, expect physical facilities, seemed non-significant p>.05. Then, Box's test was checked and it was found that this also indicated a non-significant result. So, it can be concluded that this assumption was also met.

For the in-service training situation, as Box's Test is non-significant we look at Wilk's Lamda (See Table 4.11). The Wilk's λ of .96 is non-significant, F (7, 215) = .98, p>.01, indicating that the perceptions of teachers on the problems they faced in the curriculum implementation does not change according to the preschool teachers' in-service training situation.

Table 4.11 Multivariate Tests of Problem Areas With Respect to Teachers' In-service Training

		Value	F	Hypot df	Error df	Sig.	η2
In-service Training	Wilks' Lambda	.969	.984	7	215	.443	.031

4.4 Results Concerning the Possible Reasons of High Ranked Problems That Preschool Teachers Face in the Curriculum Implementation

In this part, after detecting the high ranked problems of preschool teachers, two preschool teachers from each four types of the schools were selected and interviews were conducted to collect in-depth information on the possible reasons of those high ranked problems. In determination of high ranked problem areas, results of one-way repeated measures of ANOVA (Table 4.4) and descriptive statistics indicating the means and standard deviations (Table 4. 12) of each item were

considered. The means and standard deviations of all items were presented on Appendix B.

Table 4.12 Means and Standard Deviations of Items

Items	M	SD	N
Inclusion	1.80	.399	223
Field trips	1.83	.509	223
Preparing science and mathematic activities	1.84	.613	223
Providing parent involvement	1.96	.770	223
Finding time for writing detailed evaluation	2.32	.970	223
Writing developmental reports	2.54	.826	223
Keeping observation records	2.59	.716	223
Keeping anecdotal records	2.60	.696	223
Evaluating plans	2.61	.565	223
Preparing portfolios	2.65	.625	223
Evaluating child	2.84	.593	223
Designing reading and writing practices	3.24	.732	223
Learner centered process planning	3.25	.526	223
Preparing daily plan	3.25	.723	223
Preparing annual plan	3.26	.724	223
Preparing language activities	3.28	.653	223
Preparing art activities	3.29	.696	223
Preparing play and movement activities	3.30	.682	223
Preparing drama-music activities	3.33	.649	223
Preparing free play activities	3.34	.691	223
Using knowledge and information technologies	3.35	.579	223
Doing play based activities	3.36	.499	223
Encouraging children's active involvement	3.36	518	223
Using appropriate teaching methods and techniques	3.38	.505	223
Respecting individual differences	3.38	.487	223
Directing children to think with open-ended questions	3.38	.538	223
Lack of helping mother	3.39	.675	223

Table 4. 12 Continued

Awakening children's curiosity	3.40	.509	223
Being flexible during implementation	3.41	.545	223
Lack of assistant teacher	3.42	.686	223
Creating learning centers	3.43	.531	223
Fostering children's creative thinking	3.44	.515	223
Creating Democratic Learning Environment	3.45	.499	223
Encouraging Children to Involve In activities Based on Corporation	3.47	.518	223
Doing Activities to foster Children's Social Emotional intelligence	3.48	.501	223
Inadequacy In Classroom Materials	3.48	.621	223
Making Corporations With Colleagues	3.54	.606	223
Evaluation of myself As A teacher	3.61	.490	223
Telling Emotion Related Concepts	3.78	.412	223

The questionnaire was prepared in a 4 Likert type scale scoring by 4 to "Never creates a problem for me", 3 to "Sometimes creates a problem for me", 2 to "Usually creates a problem for me", 1 to "Always creates a problem for me". To be able considered as high ranked problems, items with mean scores less than three were selected. Accordingly, lack of a resting time, crowded classrooms, small classroom environment, finding time for writing detailed evaluation, evaluation of plans, evaluation of the child, preparing science and mathematic activities, field trips, parental involvement and inclusion were the high ranked problems.

Items that are lack of resting time, crowded classrooms, and small classroom environment composed of the problem area that is *physical facilities*. Items that are finding time for writing detailed evaluation, evaluation of plans and evaluation of the child composed of the problem area that is *evaluation*. Also, items that are preparing science and mathematic activities, field trips are from the problem area that is *plans and activities*. Finally, as the item inclusion and parental involvement were loaded separately, these items were not included into any of the problem areas however as they had mean scores lower than three, they were included in the interview session.

The preschools teachers involved in the interview process (Table 4.13) varied in terms of their backgrounds:

Table 4.13 Demographic Information About Preschool Teachers Involved in Interview

	Degree Level	University	School Type	Years of Experience	In-Service Training
T1	4 years faculty	Gazi University	Government Kindergarten Classes	11-15	Yes
T2	4 years faculty	Hacettepe University	Government Kindergarten Classes	1-5 years	Yes
T3	2 years college	Gazi University	Government Kindergarten	20-25 years	No
T4	Girl Vocational High School	_____	Government Kindergarten	5-10 years	Yes
T5	4 years faculty	Konya Selcuk University	Private Kindergarten Classes	5-10 years	Yes
T6	4 years faculty	Hacettepe University	Private Kindergarten Classes	1-5 years	Yes
T7	4 years faculty	Hacettepe University	Private Kindergarten	5-10 years	No
T8	4 years faculty	Gazi University	Private Kindergarten	11-15 years	No

Lack of Resting Time (Physical Facilities)

Lack of resting time caused psychological problems for preschool teachers. They stressed that this situation makes them overloaded very much. Both physically and psychologically they get tired of being in the same environment for long hours, this affects the quality of the teaching for their opinion.

"It is a real disaster for pre-school teachers because both physically and psychologically I feel terrible (T1)…""I feel as if I am captured in a prison, I even can not go out for drinking coffee and tea (T3)…""Staying for long hours in the class makes me tired both physically and mentally (T5)…"

Preschool teachers, regarding the problems created by the lack of resting time, elaborated that they need small and frequent break times or so called resting times in the way that the primary school teachers have. Despite using children free play times as to get rest a little, preschool teachers explained that the purpose from getting relaxed should not be considered as to sit and doing nothing rather it should let teachers to get out of the classroom and change the atmosphere for frequent breaks. These break times of preschool teachers must have stated legally in the related regulation.

Crowded Classroom (Physical Facilities)

Preschool teachers explained that crowded classrooms cause a decrease in the overall quality of the education carried out in classroom settings. For teachers, first of all, this eliminates the one-to-one interaction with children. Teachers had to deal with the overall performance of the children rather than finding a chance to interact with each child individually. Also, the more children preschool teachers have in the classroom, the more they get tired physically and this affects their classroom performance accordingly.

"It really makes me tired to have a crowded classroom (T1)…" "I have 20 children in my classroom and I am having difficulty during preparing materials for the activities and while implementing the activities (T2)…""I do want to deal with each child in my classroom during activity times however it is impossible to do when you are in such a crowded classroom (T5)…"

Preschool teachers stressed that there is nothing to do for the teachers to

overcome the problem of being in crowded classroom rather the number of children within a classroom have to be reduced between 15-16 children for a productive education environment.

Small Classroom Environment (Physical Facilities)

One of the consequences of being in a small classroom environment clarified by the preschool teachers is the limitations about the kinds of activities. They elaborated that once the classrooms are small and not suitable for the activities with movements, the activities have to be limited with table activities. Furthermore, more teacher-directed and guided activities were chosen to be carried out within the classroom environment. Preschool teachers indicated that the beginning and end of the activities should all be defined by the teacher because teachers are the responsible for children's safety as well.

"Small classroom environment restricts my children's movement so I have to give more places to table activities (T5)…" "Small classroom environment prevents children from moving freely so to provide safety in the classroom, I provide more teacher directed activities (T6)…""Since I have a small classroom, I have to give more places for table activities and teacher directed activities (T2)…"

Another consequence of being in small classroom environment is the increase in aggressive behavior among children. The preschool teachers emphasized that when there is less personal space left to each child, they can not move freely as to express themselves. For teachers, it is unrealistic to expect 5-6 year-olds to sit on their chairs for long hours. Children are full of energy and have to move to release their energy however small classroom environment prevents their free movements so this results in aggression among the children in the classroom.

"Each child needs enough personal space but they don't in my classroom so after a while, they show aggressive behaviors (T8)…" "Children have to move to release their energy otherwise this may create problems in the classroom (T3)…"

"This age of children needs more movements more but they can't move freely in this small classroom so this leads aggressive behaviors among my children (T4)…"

In sum, being in a small classroom environment caused the decrease about the kinds of activities and the increase aggressive behavior among children. As a solution to those issues, pre-school teachers involved in outdoor activities more when the weather is warm and suitable. However, when this is not available, the teachers added that they are creating more space within the classroom by carrying tables and chairs to one side of the classroom. Despite, it is difficult and tiring to re-shape the classroom environment in each time when there is a need for activities with movements, it is vital to provide harmony among children. As for the pre-school teachers, it is worth for children's healthy development otherwise this may create more problems in the future. So, for teachers, there is an urgent need to build large classroom environment as well as decreasing the number of children in existing small classroom environment.

Finding Time for Writing Detailed Evaluation (Evaluation)

Preschool teachers elaborated the reason of not finding time for writing detailed evaluation as there is a loaded curriculum during the day so this occupies whole time of teachers. Then, no time is left for teachers to write and complete the evaluation in three parts; evaluation for the plan, for the each child and for the teacher.

"There is already a program to follow during the day so I don't have time to write detailed evaluation (T1)…""Honestly, I don't have time to write detailed evaluation rather I must complete doing the activities required for the day (T2)…""In addition to follow the program required for the day, it is nonsense to expect pre-school teachers to write detailed evaluation. I don't have to do it (T5)…"

Preschool teachers clarified that they try to take small notes regarding the things they found significant in the classroom. Later on, they add these things to their

evaluation reports.

Evaluation of the Annual and Daily Plans (Evaluation)

One of the reasons of having problem in evaluation of the plans declared by the preschool teachers is that they see daily evaluation us unnecessary. For preschool teachers, writing an evaluation for each day is time consuming. In other words, as writing a daily evaluation is compulsory, evaluation part are just composed of repetition of the same things. So in that sense, this effects the annual plan evaluation directly as annual plan is a general picture of all the evaluations written throughout the year.

"I don't find writing daily evaluations for each day as healthy; it becomes just repetitions of same comments (T7)…""Making daily plans for each day and writing a daily evaluation accordingly are difficult and unnecessary for me (T8)…""It is too long to write those evaluation parts, I can't understand what the logic behind writing the same things for everyday. It is meaningless (T2)…"

For preschool teachers, daily evaluations should be promoted to weekly evaluations to be considered as healthy and reliable evaluation. As for them, the learning is a process so evaluations should be made for longer time intervals rather than daily.

Evaluation of the Child (Evaluation)

The preschool teacher explained the reason of having problems in child evaluation as this creates too much work load for teachers. Expecting teachers to evaluate each child everyday is unrealistic as there are many children in the classroom. For the preschool teachers, during the day, in addition to other responsibilities of the teacher, it is impossible to follow each child. Teacher can not decide on what to do during the day: to continue on daily program or follow each child's movements?

"What it is wrong is that I have 21 children in my classroom and it is impossible to write evaluation for each of them on a daily basis (T1)…" "I can't get the logic behind observing each child in my classroom, the maximum number of child that I can observe in a healthy way is just 2 (T4)…"

As a result, one of the possible solutions to this issue created by the teachers was that they prefer to take notes in less frequent time intervals. For them it is better to take notes for children when there is a need. For teachers, if learning is a process, children should be evaluated in a weekly base rather than focusing on each day.

Planning Science and Mathematic Activities (Plans and Activities)

As one of the reasons of having problems in planning science and math activities, all of the preschool teachers stated that there was an inadequacy of resources for doing different kinds of math activities. They mentioned that materials exist in the schools were just for repeating the same kind of activities rather than doing something original.

"There is a lack of resources so we had to do the same things for math activities. (T1)…" "*I do not have adequate resources for doing rich math activities; I am just repeating myself (T2)…" "There is a problem of resources, to be able to make good math activities I need different resources (T6)…"*

As another reason for having a problem in planning science and math activities, preschool teachers elaborated that there is no science center in their classes and related equipment. For them, there was a need for providing science rich classroom environment.

"There is no science center in my classroom, if it existed; actually I have no related materials to put in it. (T1)…""Besides not having a science center in my classroom, I even do not have the related materials to use there (T6)…""There are no science center and science materials in my classroom (T8)…"

Lack of a suitable classroom for doing scientific experiments was also mentioned by pre-school teachers as a reason for having problems in planning science and math activities. So they do not have a chance of doing such experiments in their classrooms.

"I can't make experiment in my classroom because there is no available place for it (T6)…""There is no chance for me to make experiments in my classroom (T7)…""There is no available space for making experiments in my classroom (T4)…"

The preschool teacher, also, complained about the attitude of school administration towards science activities and for them, there is a lack of support for doing it. Teacher added that administration emphasis on art and creating visual objects more because they want to show concrete things to the parents.

"There is a need for administrative support but rather we are expected to make visual things rather than science activities (T5)…" "The school administration should give support to teacher for science activities however what it is supported is just visual activities (T7)…"

In sum, preschool teachers explained the reasons of problems related to planning science and math activities as lack of original books and materials for doing rich activities, the lack of science center and related equipments, negative attitude of school administration towards science activities. Teachers find some solutions to these obstacles in front of the doing science and math activities such as they make activities with available, easy-reachable materials at school or at home such as planting a flower, evaporating water…etc. Also, one of the teachers added that she brings videos of some experiments or pictures of it to the class to provide children science rich environment.

Field Trips (Plans and Activities)

For preschool teachers, one of the reasons of having problems in organizing field trips is the difficulty to take necessary permission when a field trip is intended to be done. Long process of permission taking is the de-motivating factor for organizing field trips. Teachers added to have less hierarchical process for obtaining the necessary permissions.

"The process of permission taking is a kind of torture to me, at least 2 weeks before; you have to start the writings as to get it (T1)…""Permission taking process is a tiring issue for me and it is really overburdening to wait for the consents of parents (T4)…" "It was a really big problem for us to deal with permission taking process (T6)…"

Moreover, as another obstacle in front of the field trips is the attitude of parents towards filed trips. The preschool teachers clarified that parents are not willing to give their consent for the field trips as the children are still young. They explained that parents do not want their child to be involved in field trips for safety and health issues.

"Parents here are so sensitive about their kids; they think that their kids will get cold and became sick during the field trips (T8)…""Parents with the concerns of what if something happens to my child during field trips do not want their child to participate in such activities (T2)…""With the concerns of safety issues, parents do not allow their child to be in field trips (T1)…"

In overall, there are two major difficulties in organizing a filed trip for preschool teachers; one is the overburdening process of permission taking and the other one is the attitude of parents towards field trips. For the first issue, an alternative solution was offered by one of the preschool teachers that is deciding all the field trips at the beginning of the year so the only once in a year, that process is being experienced.

Besides, for the second difficulty, some of the preschool teachers highlighted changing the parents' attitude towards field trips via informing the parents about the significance of field trips for children's learning during small times of departures and mentioning the necessity of field trips in parent meetings.

Parental Involvement (Parental Involvement)

The preschool teachers elaborated the reason of having problems in providing parent involvement as the attitudes of parents towards early childhood education. They claimed that parents see the early childhood education centers as a playing area rather than a learning environment. For parents, children do not learn academic skills such as science and math in early childhood education so this leads parents to underestimate the significance of early childhood education and to see parent involvement as an unnecessary activity.

"For parents, early childhood education centers are just a playground (T1)…" "I think parents just perceive early childhood education centers as a caring place (T7)…"Parents don't see here as a place to learn something rather they see as a playing area (T4)…"

Preschool teachers, as a solution to this problem, supported that it is necessary to inform parents about the importance of early childhood education for children's well-development so they make parent meetings at the beginning of the year. However some of the teachers found those parent meetings as something inefficient to serve for the purpose rather there is a need for role play or dramatization to show real-life experience regarding the importance of early childhood education for child development and psychology to parents.

Inclusion (Inclusion)

As one of the reasons of having problems in inclusion, preschool teachers complained about the lack of support from parents and school administration. They

advocated the need help from parents and school administration to provide efficient inclusion because when the child was left to the class, expecting the teacher to create miracles is just unrealistic. For teachers, inclusion needs collaboration. Parents are responsible for providing information about their children's abilities: what s/he could do or could not do because inclusive children are coming from diverse disabilities and disorders so it is the parent's responsibility to acknowledge about his/her child's disorder/ disability. Teachers, only in this way, can see their ways how to enhance that child's skills.

"When the inclusive child comes into the classroom, all the responsibility is on the shoulders of the teacher. Parents and school administrator should be a collaborator (T3)…""First the parents should be the helper to the classroom teacher but they don't and teacher became the only responsible for the inclusive child (T8)…"

As another reason for having a problem in inclusion, preschool teachers claimed the lack of assistant teacher accompanying to the inclusive child. There is a necessity of assistant teacher accompanying to the inclusive child otherwise as teachers, they can not decide whether to focus on normally developed children or the inclusive child. For them, those children need one-to one interaction for learning so when there is a lack of assistant teacher, teacher can not deal with the inclusive child.

"There is no assistant teacher helping to the inclusive child so I can not figure out what to do: deal with the normal ones or the inclusive child? (T1)…""There should be an educator to the inclusive child but there is not. So I don't know what to do: focus on normally developed children or inclusive child? (T8)…""There is an urgent need for an educator next to inclusive child in the classroom (T6)…"

Also, not having a separate curriculum for inclusion is proposed by preschool teachers as another reason having problems in inclusion. For them, this curriculum is

focusing on normally developing children beginning from defining goals and objectives ending with the types of activities.

"To be able to talk about the inclusive education, first of all this curriculum should have been developed accordingly but unfortunately not (T4)…""This curriculum was not developed for inclusion, it is not appropriate for those groups of children (T5)…""This curriculum is not appropriate for inclusion; there is an urgent need of developing such a curriculum (T3)…"

In sum, preschool teachers explained the reasons of problems related to inclusion as lack of support from parents and school administration, lack of assistant teacher accompanying to the inclusive child and not having a separate curriculum for inclusion. Despite preschool teachers found no alternative solutions to the reasons; lack of support from parent and school administration and inappropriateness of the curriculum for inclusion, they find some solutions when there is a lack of assistant teacher: asking normally developed children to help their inclusive friends when the inclusive child is quite and don't give any harm to other children.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter includes an interpretation and synthesis of the findings in relation to relevant literature, conclusions drawn from those findings; implications and suggestions for practice and for the future research.

5.1 Discussion of the Results

5.1.1 Problems That Preschool Teachers Face in the Curriculum Implementation

One of the purposes of this study was to investigate the problems of preschool teachers faced during curriculum implementation. Principal component analysis with varimax rotation was conducted and 7 seven meaningful factors, in other words, problems areas during curriculum implementation were found. Accordingly, data obtained from the preschool teachers revealed that the problems areas that preschool teachers face during curriculum implementation were as follows: (1) physical facilities, (2) evaluation, (3) plans and activities, (4) teaching and learning process, (5) social environment, (6) goals and objectives, (7) content.

In the study conducted by İnal, Kandır, and Özbey (2009), the problem areas identified as goals and objectives, content, teaching and learning process, plans and activities and evaluation were also supported as the problems areas that preschool teachers faced during curriculum implementation. In addition to this study, in another study, Şıvgın (2005) detected the problems areas that preschool teachers faced as the goals and objectives, plans and activities, evaluation and parental involvement.

One of the problem areas, social environment, detected in this study was supported by the study conducted by Fedoravicius, Finn- Stevenson, Desimone, Henrich and Payne (2004). According to the study, teachers need supporting environment for a successful curriculum implementation because collaborative relationship and networking are crucial factors that motivates teachers for better implementation.

Moreover, Teberg (1999) also emphasized the necessity of administrative support for a successful curriculum implementation. For him, teachers without the encouragement and assistance from the colleagues and administration, it is unrealistic to expect them not to have problems in curriculum implementation. Therefore, the examination of rotated factor solutions indicated that detected problem areas found in this study are meaningful in terms of content and these areas are relevant with the literature.

5.1.2 Problems That Preschool Teachers Face in the Curriculum Implementation With Respect to Some Background Variables

Another purpose of the study was to investigate whether the problems faced by preschool teachers faced during curriculum implementation change in relation to some background variables.

Educational Level

In the present study, the problems that preschool teachers face in the curriculum implementation showed no significant difference with respect to preschool teachers' educational level. This situation may be due to level of education studied, in other words, it is a consequence of dealing with early childhood education. In one of the studies (Berry, Tout and Zaslow, 2006), it is elaborated that higher levels of teacher education were generally linked with higher classroom quality in elementary and higher levels, but in terms of early childhood education, there is no great distinctions. In other words, it can not be concluded that the higher

level of education early childhood teachers have, the higher quality classrooms with fewer problems.

In addition, Alva, Benden, Bryant, Burchical and Maxwell (2007) detected no association with higher teacher education level and higher classroom quality in early childhood education. Preschool teachers with less or more education levels are exposed to problems during curriculum implementation as the effective pedagogy is complex and do not depend on one single criteria (Field, Clifford and Maxwell, 2006). Accordingly, the results concerning the problems areas faced by preschool teachers during curriculum implementation based on their level of education is consistent with the related literature. There may be some other factors that influence the behaviors of teachers with both higher and lower level of education such as lack of physical facilities and administrative support.

That is, when a preschool teacher needs help in providing materials, if the school principal is unwilling to cooperate with finding the necessary materials, this may affect both teachers with higher and lower level of education. Also, if the school administration advocates only the art activities but not the science and math related activities, then teachers with higher and lower level of education may have problems while implementing those kinds of activities.

Department That Preschool Teachers Graduate

In the study, the problems that preschool teachers face in the curriculum implementation showed no significant difference with respect to department that they graduated from.

Teachers involved in this study were the graduates of child development and psychology department and early childhood education department. In both of the departments, there are classes regarding child development and child psychology (Principal of Early Childhood Education, 2004). So, all teachers coming from these departments have knowledge of how children develop and learn. It can not be

claimed that one group of teachers do not have knowledge related to child development and psychology. This might be one of the reasons why preschool teachers graduated from these two departments were not differentiated in terms of the problems they experience during curriculum implementation.

In addition, in one of the study conducted by Hyson, Morris and Tomlinson (2009), the researchers mentioned the significance of having a degree in early childhood education; however, they did not make a comparison among teachers based on the name of the degree obtained. For them, the quality of the program is more critical than the degree itself, because they added that degree alone does not guarantee teacher competence. In other words, either departments that preschool teachers graduate or the degree they have, does not guarantee having more qualified classrooms with fewer problems. As a matter of fact, we can not conclude that preschool teachers graduate of certain departments deal with fewer or more problems during curriculum implementation.

School Type

In this study, the problems of preschool teachers experienced during curriculum implementation showed a significant difference with respect to the school types they are working on. There is a difference between private preschool and independent public preschool; private preschool and public kindergarten. This consequence may be explained by the difference in the level of infrastructure in those types of schools.

In early childhood education, adequate infrastructure is crucial to provide high quality education because infrastructure, within a complex system, serves as a foundation for the rest (Azzi-Lessing, 2009). The lack of necessary infrastructure causes problems for proper curriculum implementation as it has a role in establishing and enforcing program and child outcome standards. Accordingly, a school without a proper infrastructure opens the doors to other implementation problems.

Moreover, it would be possible to conclude that this difference might be related with the expectations of parents and principals from teachers within these schools. In private preschool, parents and school principals might be expecting more from preschool teachers related to children's academic success, so the teachers may either hide the problems that they are facing or show more effort during curriculum implementation to satisfy the expectation of parents and principals. In a way, preschool teachers in private preschools might be working hard to eliminate the problems that they encounter.

On the other hand, it might be claimed that if the principals in private schools are monitoring preschool teachers periodically and giving scores based on their performance, preschool teacher might be more likely to show their positive experience during their implementation rather than problems.

Teaching Experience

In the study, the problems of preschool teachers faced during curriculum implementation showed no significant difference with respect to their years of experience.

Teaching experience can be differentiating aspect among preschool teachers in classroom management skills (Reid, Stoolmiller & Webster- Stratoon, 2008; Martina, Mayall & Yin, 2006) or selecting and using appropriate methods for teaching in their classrooms. However, results of this study indicated physical facilities and evaluation as the most problematic areas for preschool teachers during curriculum implementation. In terms of problems related physical facilities, solution of which is not in the hands of being experienced or not, preschool teachers can not be the first responsible ones to overcome deficiencies in infrastructure.

Moreover, it can be concluded that parents' attitude can be the reason of detecting no effect of teaching experience in having problems related evaluation. The teachers, regardless of their teaching experience, may feel uncomfortable when

writing an evaluation about a child if the parents show serious reactions for the evaluation written for their child. So, this may lead teachers to soften or change their comments related children in evaluation part.

In addition, the curriculum being implemented in schools under control of MONE was started to be used by 2006. Some aspects of the curriculum have changed including evaluation compared to the previous one (MONE, 2006). As this is a new aspect both for experienced and inexperienced teachers, this might be one of the reasons why there is no significant difference among preschool teachers in relation to their years of teaching experience.

In-service Training

Results revealed that participating in-service training activities related to 2006 curriculum does not create a significant difference among the teachers regarding the type of the problems that they experience during the implementation of the program.

Results concerning the effect of participating in an in-service training about new curriculum can be explained by the content of those in-service training sessions carried out throughout the year. According to the study conducted by Gündoğan (2002) in- service trainings carried out by the staff from MONE are far away from meeting the needs of early childhood educators related curriculum implementation. According to the study, as staff responsible for acknowledging the preschool teachers about the curriculum are not from the field of early childhood education, the in-service training sessions that teachers participated might not be helpful for them in finding answers for their question on curriculum implementation.

5.1.3 Possible Reasons of Highly Ranked Problems That Preschool Teachers Face in the Curriculum Implementation

One of the purposes of this study was to detect the possible reasons of highly ranked problems of preschool teachers faced during curriculum implementation. Overall 11 high ranked problem areas were detected and to be able to have

information about the possible reasons and solutions of those problems, interviews were conducted with the selected preschool teachers who filled out the questionnaire.

Problems Related to Physical facilities

For the preschool teachers involved in this study, deficiencies in physical facilities are among the big hurdles during curriculum. As it is clarified in the study conducted by Azzi-Lessing (2009), in education, infrastructure provides bases for the rest. Once the deficiencies related to infrastructure occur, this may trigger other problems as well. In fact, in another study conducted by Aktan and Cömert (2007), %74 of the preschool teachers proposed the source of the problems they faced in their schools as the deficiencies in physical facilities.

Regarding the deficiencies related to physical facilities, preschool teacher complained about the small classroom environment. For them, this creates two major problems; one was the limitations about the types of activities and the other was the increase in aggressive behaviors among children.

In addition to small classroom environment, crowded classrooms are among the discouraging factors for the preschool children during curriculum implementation as this decreases the quality of education carried out in the classrooms.

Finally, the lack of resting time makes the preschool teachers exhausted during the implementation of the curriculum. They explained that without having a resting time separate from the classroom environment resulted in psychological problems on teachers. Once the teachers were overburdened, this decreases the level of tolerance among teachers towards children.

Problems Related to Evaluation

In the study, one of the mostly stated problems that preschool teachers face in the curriculum implementation was evaluation. The teachers claimed that it was

unnecessary to write evaluation everyday. For them, there was no need for writing the daily evaluation because it created too much work-load on teachers. The teachers added that they already had many responsibilities during the day so there was no available time for writing. If they attempt to write, then other things needed to be covered can not be finished. In fact, this result is similar with the study of Wai- Yum (2003) conducted for exploring the problems of preschool teachers on a newly implemented curriculum. Teachers mentioned that there was too much work on teachers that makes them not being able to decide what to focus on.

Moreover, preschool teachers clarified that child evaluation needed too much effort and time. There are many children in the classroom and in addition to completing the daily requirements, to be able to write evaluation for each child is unrealistic. Parallel with the findings of the present study, in the study conducted by Şıvgın (2005), it was emphasized that evaluation took too much time and effort for teachers. Besides, teachers were having problems in finding related documents and filling them for each child in the classroom.

Problems Related to Science and Math Activities (Plans and Activities)

According to the teachers interviewed, the biggest problem for the teachers is the inadequacy of resources in the math activities. In fact, this is the problem of having same type of books which results in doing the same kind of mathematic activities. What the teachers wants is just to have activity books which involve original mathematic activities. Majority of the teacher have the books but they think that the content of the books are inefficient.

From the perspective of teachers, lack of science centers and related materials prevents them from properly implementing science activities. They also added that the classroom environment was not suitable for doing scientific experiment. The findings related with science activities are consistent with the findings of study conducted by Ayvacı, Devecioğlu and Yiğit (2002) that deficiencies in providing materials negatively affects the preschool teachers' performance of implementing

science activities. Also, Özbey (2006) elaborated that for preschool teachers, difficulty in planning and implementing science activities derived from the lack of science materials.

In addition, the preschool teachers complained about the lack of administrative support for doing scientific activities. For them, the school administration expects them to work on concrete things such as doing art activities just to present to the parents. In a way, school administrations see the science activities as unnecessary for those groups of children. In preschool, emphasis on the art and visual activities is a common theme because parents want to see something concrete. Despite it is stated on the booklet of 2006 early childhood curriculum (MONE, 2006), as the process is significant rather than the product, majority of the activities done in preschool are product oriented.

Problems Related to Field Trips (Plans and Activities)

Preschool teachers elaborated that getting necessary permission for making a field trip is an overwhelming process. Bureaucratic obstacles which take time as well as the parents' negative attitudes towards field trips are very discouraging for preschool teachers to make attempt for organizing a field trip. As the children are young, safety issues make parents hesitant about sending their children to field trips.

Field trips are crucial for their development and learning because through hands on experience and using scientific strategies such as observing, data and drawing conclusions (Seafeldt, 1993), more meaningful learning occurs (Katz & Chard, 1999).

In one of the studies conducted (Morris, Taylor & Young, 1997), field trips were emphasized as helpers for children while developing their social and communication skills but here as well, parents' concerns for safety issues were also highlighted. Accordingly, if the teachers' attempts are lacking in acknowledging parents regarding its significance, support of school administrations might help to

persuade parents. School administration can be the first responsible actor to overcome bureaucratic obstacles in organizing field trips.

Problems Related to Parental Involvement

Preschool teachers complained about the attitudes of parents toward early childhood education. Some of the teachers claimed that parents did not see early childhood education as the first of level education primary education. For them, early childhood education was not a real school rather it starts with primary school. Also, parents' perceptions about early childhood centers just as a playing ground not a serious place makes the parent involvement harder. This situation was also observed in the study conducted by Cisneros, Cisneros- Chernour and Moreno (2000). In this study, Mexican preschool teachers' problems were detected and found out that parents perceived kindergarten as a playing ground for the children not as a learning place after the curriculum reform. This attitude of parents resulted in a barrier between the school and home collaboration.

Moreover, problems of preschool teachers regarding parents involvement found in another study (Şıvgın, 2005), were similar. Preschool teachers highlighted that they were having difficulty to provide parent involvement and claimed that there was a lack of acknowledgement about the kinds of activities in the curriculum to involve parents in schools.

Problems Related to Inclusion

In this study, it was found that inclusion was a problematic area for preschool teachers during curriculum implementation. Preschool teachers explained that when there was an inclusive child in their classroom, teachers were left alone without a support from parents and even from school administrations. Teachers also added that many parents stay far away informing teachers' about their children's capabilities. So, teachers may feel confused where to begin related inclusive child education. Similar to the preschool teachers' problem, Bateman (2002) clarified that when

general education teachers and staff are not trained to work with specially needed children and when they did not find necessary support, inclusive children fell behind their peers. Here, it can be conclude that there is an urgent need of support from parents and school principals for preschool teachers.

Besides, teachers are confused with whom to deal with: normally developed children or inclusive child. For preschool teachers, without an assistant teacher accompanying to the inclusive child, it is difficult to talk about a successful inclusion. This problem was also consistent the relevant literature (Bateman, 2002; Gilbert & Zinkil, 2000; Cardona, 1999). Accordingly, to those studies, teachers require help from a professional who knows about the inclusive child needs and the way of learning.

Moreover, preschool teachers explained that this curriculum seemed to be designed for normally developing children. The preschool teachers added that despite there is a high emphasis on inclusion within the curriculum, a separate curriculum for inclusion is needed. In fact, this obstacle in front of the preschool teachers' curriculum implementation was also supported by Heornicke, Kallam, Scheffel and Smith (1996). According to them, for a successful inclusion, there was a need for a separate curriculum that best fits with the inclusion settings.

5.2 Implications for Practice

One of the aims of this study was to reveal the problems that preschool teachers face in the curriculum implementation. According to the results, problem areas were related with physical facilities, evaluation, plans and activities, teaching and learning process, social environment, goals and objectives and content. The examinations of the rotated factors solutions showed that the items that composed the problems areas were consistent with the related literature (Desimone, Henrich, Fedoravicius, Finn- Stevenson & Payne, 2004; İnal, Kandır, Özbey, 2009; Şıvgın, 2005; Teberg, 1999).

The results showed that preschool teachers had more problems related to evaluation and physical facilities compared to problems areas such as goals and objectives, content, teaching and learning process, plans and activities and social environment.

Problems related physical facilities were preventing teacher from effective curriculum implementation. While small classroom environment negatively affects the types of activities (more teacher directed and on-table activities compared to free play activities) carried out in classroom, having a high child ratio even worsen the situation as the preschool teachers do not have a chance to deal with each child in their classrooms.

Regarding the improvement of physical facilities, the experts in MONE might consider building larger schools with larger classrooms for the future early childhood education centers. Related this, MONE and NGOs may work together. In addition, MONE might inform the school administrators for letting children to go out more using the outdoor area of the schools.

On the other hand, school administrators in public kindergarten may provide larger classroom or they might provide special outdoor area for children. So, children in small classroom might have opportunity to move freely and release their energy.

Furthermore, in terms of the problems related physical facilities, item called "lack of resting time" is the most overburdening situation for the preschool teachers. In preschool level there is no break time like in the case of primary level or upper level of education. Accordingly, being in the same place for long hours makes them exhausted and decreases the teachers' level of tolerance towards children and the events that take place in the classroom. Using free play times of children as an alternative for a rest time does not meet the needs of teachers.

Expert in MONE might take this issue into account and provide preschool teachers a right to have resting time like in the case of primary and higher levels.

There might be alternative resting times defined by the school administration. Teachers might be given time to go out of the classrooms to change the atmosphere.

It can be concluded from the findings that problems that preschool teachers face in the curriculum implementation related to evaluation were derived from the lack of knowledge about what to write for evaluation parts for plans, activities and children. Also, preschool teachers clarified that writing evaluation everyday is just repetition; they found this as useless so evaluation should be done in longer time intervals. Besides, the lack of time was an obstacle for writing evaluation reports according to the preschool teachers. During the whole day, teachers are responsible for covering the daily program so there is no time left for them to write evaluation. In other words, this evaluation part creates a heavy work load for teachers. So regarding the problems in evaluation, there might be things to be done for Ministry of National Education (MONE), universities and school administrations.

First of all, experts in MONE, they may take the problems related to evaluation into consideration and may reexamine this part of the curriculum again. The inspectors assigned for controlling the forms and plans will be informed about the difficulties of the teachers that they are having in evaluation. So, inspectors might take this issue into consideration while checking the plans, reports and related documents.

Second, for the universities, the instructors may inform the candidate preschool teachers related evaluation part and might get feedbacks from these teachers related evaluation process. In the end, they may also offer suggestion about the possible solutions for this problem to the experts in MONE.

Third, school administrations might monitor the problems occurred related evaluation part and may work in cooperation with preschool teachers. Accordingly, when an inspector comes, the problems aroused in evaluation might be presented in a more systematic way. So, this might help the experts in MONE to see the general picture related problems occurred in curriculum implementation.

Related to problems occurred in evaluation, it might be possible to conclude that evaluation can be made with less frequent time intervals. Rather than expecting teachers to make evaluation everyday, they might do weekly evaluation. Moreover, teachers may be informed about what it is expected from them related to evaluation. So, teachers might be able to complete this part easily.

Preschool teachers also elaborated their problems about science and math activities. Lack of resources was among the obstacles for doing these activities. Moreover, teachers explained that classroom environment were not suitable for doing scientific activities. School administrators and NGOs may work together related this problem.

NGOs might provide rich resources via helping campaigns (books, materials…etc.) all around Turkey. In that sense, if the NGOs work in collaboration with the school administrators, specific and solutions that best fits for the school might be offered. Also, if the classroom was not suitable for doing scientific experiments, school administrators might arrange a special room for science to use it as a science laboratory. If there is no change providing such a classroom, school administrators might allow preschool teachers to use primary grades' laboratory.

Field trips were among the problematic areas for teachers. Despite its significance for child development and psychology, parents seemed unwilling to send their children for their safety concerns. Moreover, the long process of permission taking discourages teachers to organize field trips.

Related to field trips' permission taking process, MONE might offer some alternatives to make taking the official permission easier. Experts from MONE might visit the schools to inform parents about the necessity of field trips for children's development. So, parents might realize the significance of those field trips.

Teachers may invite one or two parents to the field trips to decrease their concerns related to safety issues. Also, if getting permission each time is overburdening, all the field trips can be identified at the beginning of the year so that process will be experienced only once throughout the year.

Preschool teachers claimed that they have problems with parent involvement as parents see the early childhood education centers just as a playing area rather than a learning environment. Teachers added that for parents, children do not learn academic skills in early childhood education centers. Regarding this problem, there might be things to do for MONE, school administrators and teachers, NGOs and universities.

It might be possible to conclude that parents may be influenced more if experts from MONE inform parents about the necessity of early childhood education and parent involvement.

School administrators and teachers might invite parents to the schools and the classrooms of their children. Rather than lecturing, through role plays or dramatization, real-life examples could be possible to be performed for persuading parents about the necessity of early childhood education and parent involvement.

NGOs and universities may work together to create an awareness among parents and society for the benefits of early childhood education and parents involvement for children's development and their later success. The television advertisements might be possible to serve for this purpose.

Inclusion was among the mostly stated problem areas by the preschool teachers. Lack of support from parents and school administration, lack of assistant teacher accompanying to the inclusive child, not having a separate curriculum for inclusion were the common problems among the preschool teachers. Related to these, teachers, school administrators, parents, MONEs, NGOs and universities might take actions.

Preschool teachers, parents and school administrators might work in collaboration for detecting inclusive child's needs. Accordingly, they may prepare a schedule for the whole year to enhance the inclusive child's development and learning.

MONE might take necessary precautions to eliminate the number of children in the early childhood classroom. Therefore when there is an inclusive child in the classroom, smaller class size might increase the chance of one-to-one interaction with the inclusive child. On the other hand, in a school, MONE might control having only one inclusive child in each early childhood classroom within a school.

NGOs and universities might work in collaboration to provide more practice with inclusive children for pre-service teachers during their undergraduate education

Related to in-service training, teachers mentioned that people responsible for in-service training, did not meet the needs of teachers. Experts in MONE might upgrade the content of those training sessions. People from the early childhood education field might be chosen so people can be familiar with the problems of preschool teachers. Rather than only including presentation slides, the in-service training sessions might be made practice-based. They might be frequently provided considering preschool teachers' needs, career plans, motivation, and learning (Eren, Ozen, & Karabacak, 2010).

However, their problem during the implementation of curriculum changed according to the school type they are working in. There is a difference between private preschool and independent public preschool; private preschool and public kindergarten. This situation can be explained by the difference in infrastructure of the schools because infrastructure provides base for the rest in education. Related for the possible solutions to this problem, MONE and NGOs may work together.

MONE may create project to upgrade the physical facilities of the public schools like private schools. This might be provided through collaboration with NGOs rather than expecting the MONE to meet the requirements. Also, for books and other supplies, NGOs might start helping campaigns all around Turkey.

5.3 Implications for Further Research

The present study aimed to investigate the problems faced by the preschool teachers during curriculum implementation only in the center of Ankara. The results can not be generalized to whole country. In addition, as there is an initiative (Principal Directorate of Early Childhood Education, 2004) already conducted in 32 cities of Turkey and the number of the pilot cities will be increased in each year. The next step might be collecting the data from those pilot cities regarding the problems that preschool teachers face in the curriculum implementation.

Moreover, rather than focusing on the many aspects of the problems that preschool teachers faced during curriculum implementation, single problem area can be chosen and investigated deeply. For example as inclusion is mostly stated problem by teachers, this problem area can be examined in detail by collecting data from different regions of the country.

On the other hand, rather than making quantitative study with large sample size, in depth analysis can be done in narrower sense with one or two schools. To be able to provide, applicable solutions that fits within the school system, being specific and to the point can be more efficient.

In addition to the place of the data collected, this study was limited with the type of the data gathered: first questionnaire was used and then interviews were conducted with the preschool teachers volunteered to participate. Then, in the future studies, observations in real classroom settings might be added to the data to provide in depth analysis.

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APPENDIX A

OKUL ÖNCESİ ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN EĞİTİM PROGRAMINI UYGULAMA SIRASINDA YAŞADIĞI SORUNLAR ANKETİ

Değerli öğretmenimiz, bu anket öğretmenlerin okul öncesi eğitim programını uygulama sürecinde yaşadığı sorunlar konusunda bilgi toplamak amacıyla hazırlanmıştır. Ankete samimi olarak verdiğiniz yanıtlar, okul öncesi eğitim programının uygulanmasında yaşanan sorunlara ışık tutacaktır. Verdiğiniz yanıtlar sadece araştırma amacı ile kullanılacaktır. **Adınızı yazmanız gerekmemektedir.** Herhangi bir sorunuz olursa, benimle iletişime geçebilirsiniz.

Katkılarınızdan dolayı şimdiden teşekkür ederim.

Emine ERDEN
ODTÜ Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümü
Eğitim Programları ve Öğretim Ana Bilim Dalı
Yüksek Lisans Öğrencisi
Tel: 0505 698 42 10
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1. Cinsiyetiniz: Kadın ( ) Erkek( )

2. Eğitim Durumunuz:

1. Kız meslek lisesi mezunu: …….....( )
2. İki yıllık yüksek okul mezunu……( )
3. 4 yıllık fakülte mezunu:…….....( )
4. Lisansüstü (Yüksek lisans ve doktora):…….....( )
5. Diğer (belirtiniz): ……...( )

3. Mezun olduğunuz bölüm(belirtiniz): ……

4. Şu anda görev yaptığınız okulun türü:

1. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığına bağlı bağımsız anaokulları……( )
2. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığına bağlı ilköğretim anasınıfları…….....( )
3. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığına bağlı özel anaokulları……( )
4. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığına bağlı özel ilköğretim okulları anasınıfları…….( )

5. Öğretmenlik tecrübeniz:

1 yıldan az ( ) 1- 5 yıl ( ) 6–10 yıl ( )

11–15 yıl ( ) 16–20 yıl ( ) 21–25 yıl ( )

6. 2006 Okul Öncesi Eğitim Programı ile ilgili hizmet içi eğitim aldınız mı?

Evet ( ) Hayır( )

7. Bu araştırmadan sonra yapılacak olan görüşmeye katılmak isterseniz, lütfen size ulaşabileceğimiz bir iletişim adresinizi belirtiniz.

Tel:…… E-mail:……

Aşağıda verilen maddeler okul öncesi öğretmeni olarak, sizin okul öncesi eğitim programını uygulama sürecinde yaşadığınız sorunları öğrenmek amacıyla hazırlanmıştır. Lütfen belirtilen konularda ne sıklıkla sorun yaşadığınızı ilgili sayıyı yuvarlak içine alarak belirtiniz.

"Emin değilim" **diyorsanız ilgili kutucuğu işaretleyiniz.**

		Benim için hiçbir zaman sorun olmuyor	Benim için bazen sorun oluyor	Benim için genellikle sorun oluyor	Benim için her zaman sorun oluyor	Sorun olup olmadığından emin değilim
	AMAÇ VE KAZANIMLAR					
1	Yaş grubuna uygun amaçları ve kazanımları belirleme	4	3	2	1	
2	Çocukların gelişim düzeyine uygun amaç ve kazanımlar belirleme	4	3	2	1	
3	Amaç ve kazanımları seçerken tüm gelişim alanlarına yer verme	4	3	2	1	
	İÇERİK					
4	Kavramları yaş grubuna göre belirleme	4	3	2	1	
5	Kavramları çocukların gelişim düzeyine göre belirleme	4	3	2	1	
6	Soyut kavramları (adalet, demokrasi, dürüstlük vb.) anlatma	4	3	2	1	
7	Zaman ile ilgili kavramları (dün, bugün, yarın, önce, sonra. vb) anlatma	4	3	2	1	
8	Mekân ile ilgili kavramları (önünde, arkasında, yanında, ortasında, içinde, dışında) anlatma	4	3	2	1	
9	Matematik ile ilgili kavramları (kenar, köşe, üçgen, dikdörtgen. vb) anlatma	4	3	2	1	
10	Fen ile ilgili kavramları (ağır, hafif, canlı-cansız, taze- bayat) anlatma	4	3	2	1	
11	Duygular ile ilgili kavramları (şaşkın, korkmuş, mutlu. vb) anlatma	4	3	2	1	
	ÖĞRENME VE ÖĞRETME SÜRECİ					
12	Öğrenen merkezli bir süreç planlama	4	3	2	1	
13	Eğitim programını uygularken esnek davranma	4	3	2	1	
14	Bireysel farklılıklarını göz önünde bulundurma	4	3	2	1	
15	Çocukları işbirliğine dayalı etkinliklere özendirme	4	3	2	1	
16	Demokratik bir öğrenme ortamı oluşturma	4	3	2	1	
17	Çocukların yaratıcı düşünme becerisini geliştirme	4	3	2	1	
18	Çocukların bilgiye ulaşması için, onların merakını uyandırma	4	3	2	1	
19	Çocukların sosyal ve duygusal zekâlarını güçlendirmeye yönelik	4	3	2	1	

	faaliyetlere yer verme					
20	Çocuğun öğrenme sürecine aktif katılımını destekleme	4	3	2	1	
21	Açık uçlu sorularla çocukları düşünmeye yöneltme	4	3	2	1	
22	Oyun temelli etkinlikler düzenleme	4	3	2	1	
23	Bilişim ve bilgi teknolojilerini kullanma	4	3	2	1	
24	Öğrenme köşeleri oluşturma	4	3	2	1	
		Benim için hiçbir zaman sorun olmuyor	**Benim için bazen sorun oluyor**	**Benim için genellikle sorun oluyor**	**Benim için her zaman sorun oluyor**	**Sorun olup olmadığından emin değilim**
25	Etkinlikler için gerekli materyal geliştirme	4	3	2	1	
26	Okul öncesi eğitimine uygun öğretim ve teknikleri (drama, hikâye anlatma, model alma vb.) kullanma	4	3	2	1	
	PLANLAR VE ETKİNLİKLER					
27	Yıllık plan hazırlama	4	3	2	1	
28	Günlük plan hazırlama	4	3	2	1	
29	Serbest zaman etkinliklerini planlama	4	3	2	1	
30	Oyun ve hareket etkinliklerini planlama	4	3	2	1	
31	Okumaya yazmaya hazırlık çalışmaları tasarlama	4	3	2	1	
32	Türkçe dil etkinlikleri planlama	4	3	2	1	
33	Sanat etkinlikleri planlama	4	3	2	1	
34	Drama müzik etkinlikleri planlama	4	3	2	1	
35	Fen ve Matematik etkinlikleri planlama	4	3	2	1	
36	Alan gezileri	4	3	2	1	
	DEĞERLENDİRME					
37	Ayrıntılı değerlendirme yazmak için zaman bulabilme	4	3	2	1	
38	Öğretmen olarak kendimi değerlendirme	4	3	2	1	
39	Planı (yıllık ve günlük) değerlendirme	4	3	2	1	
40	Çocuğun değerlendirilmesi	4	3	2	1	
41	Gözlem kayıtları yapma	4	3	2	1	
42	Anekdot kayıtlar yapma	4	3	2	1	
43	Gelişim dosyaları hazırlama	4	3	2	1	
44	Gelişim raporları yazma	4	3	2	1	
	EĞİTİM ORTAMI VE DURUMU					
45	Ailenin etkin katılımını sağlama	4	3	2	1	
46	Okul idaresi ile işbirliği yapma	4	3	2	1	
47	Okuldaki meslektaşlarım ile işbirliği yapma	4	3	2	1	
48	Kaynaştırma	4	3	2	1	
49	Sınıftaki demirbaş sayısının (masa, sandalye, dolaplar… vb) yetersizliği	4	3	2	1	

50	Yardımcı öğretmen bulunmayışı	4	3	2	1	
51	Bakıcı anne bulunmayışı	4	3	2	1	
52	Dinlenme zamanının olmaması	4	3	2	1	
53	Sınıf mevcudunun fazla olması	4	3	2	1	
54	Sınıfın fiziksel mekânının dar olması	4	3	2	1	
55	Başka belirtmek istedikleriniz: ……					

APPENDIX B

Mean and Standard Deviations of all Items

	M	SD
Choosing age appropriate goals and objectives	3.67	.525
Choosing developmentally appropriate goals and objectives	3.43	.625
Selecting goals and objectives from all developmental areas	3.55	.574
Choosing age appropriate concepts	3.79	.427
Choosing developmentally appropriate concepts	3.70	.495
Telling abstract concepts	3.73	.485
Telling time related concepts	3.81	.395
Telling space related concepts	3.76	.447
Telling mathematics related concepts	3.80	.402
Telling science related concepts	3.73	.485
Telling emotion related concepts	3.78	.412
Learner centered process planning	3.25	.526
Being flexible during implementation	3.41	.545
Respecting individual differences	3.38	.487
Encouraging children to involve in activities based on corporation	3.47	.518
Creating democratic learning environment	3.45	.499
Fostering children's creative thinking skills	3.44	.515
Awakening children's curiosity	3.40	.509
Doing activities to foster children's social emotional intelligence	3.48	.501
Encouraging children's active involvement	3.36	.518
Directing children's to think with open ended questions	3.38	.538
Doing play based activities	3.36	.499
Using knowledge and information technologies	3.35	.579
Creating learning centers	3.43	.531
Developing materials for activities	3.41	.511
Using appropriate teaching methods and techniques	3.38	.505

Preparing annul plan	3.26	.724
Preparing daily plan	3.25	.723
Preparing free play activities	3.34	.691
Preparing play and movement activities	3.30	.682
Designing reading and writing practices	3.24	.732
Preparing language activities	3.28	.653
Preparing art activities	3.29	.696
Preparing drama music activities	3.33	.649
Preparing science and mathematic activities	1.84	.613
Field trips	1.83	.509
Finding time for writing detailed evaluation	2.32	.970
Evaluation of myself as a teacher	3.61	.490
Evaluating plans	2.61	.565
Evaluating child	2.84	.593
Keeping observation records	2.59	.716
Keeping anecdotal records	2.60	.696
Preparing portfolios	2.65	.625
Writing developmental reports	2.54	.826
Providing parent involvement	1.96	.770
Making corporations with school principals	3.40	.696
Making corporations with colleagues	3.54	.606
Inclusion	1.80	.399
Inadequacy in classroom materials	3.48	.621
Lack of assistant teacher	3.42	.686
Lack of helping mum	3.39	.675
Lack of resting time	2.22	.799
Crowded classroom	2.09	.797
Small classroom environment	2.34	.747