

Analysis of Some Factors Related to Pre-School Term Teachers Affecting the Status of Liking Children

By

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Abstract

Within this study, it is aimed to analyze the levels of preschool term teachers in liking children and determine whether some factors such as the ones that are socio-demographic and related to work life have an impact on the point averages of liking children. Subjects of this study were 109 preschool term teachers from nursery schools in Kırıkkale either belonging to the primary schools inside the center of the city or independent from any other school. Within this study, a "Questionnaire Paper" was used in order to obtain the information about teachers and "Barnett Liking of Children Scale" developed by Barnett and Sinisi (1990) whose reliability and validity studies had been conducted by Duyan and Gelbal (2008) was used in order to determine the levels of liking children. The data obtained through this study was evaluated with "t-test" and "Variance Analysis". It was determined in this study that the majors of these teachers have a significant effect on the point averages in liking children in terms of statistics ($p < 0.05$) while some other conditions such as age, seniority within the profession, the alma mater, marital status, having children or not and the institution they work in do not have any significant effect on levels of liking children ($p > 0.05$).

Keywords: *Preschool, liking children, preschool teacher.*

1. Introduction

Preschool period has a vital importance for the development of a child. Within this period, children need for some physical, psychomotor, cognitive, lingual, social and sensual support and development (Atay, 2009). A sufficient support for the development of children highly depends on a range of factors such as an effective and efficient education process, a fruitful program for preschool education and a well-equipped physical environment. And another significant factor for an efficient and fruitful preschool education is the preschool teacher (Saltalı and Erbay 2013).

The profession of teaching, however it is gained through education, is an important profession that requires devotion. It is also known that, the teachers for the preschool period should be more devoted due to the fact that the development process of a child has its highest speed and the environmental factors have their highest effect within this period. Due to this fact, it comes out as a requirement that a preschool teacher have more abilities and this critical period be overcome healthfully (Gürkan, 2005). A teacher should use the current conditions efficiently, study continuously in order to achieve the perfect, be flexible using his/her creativity, be eager for cooperation, sharing and creative in order to meet the changing demands of the society and institutions (Yetim and Göktaş 2004). A teacher who is successful and liked by everyone is suggested to be patient, kind, tolerant, self-confident and to love every human beings, the environment and the life and especially children (Aydın, 2004; Çelikten et al., 2005; Gürkan, 2005).

Downing, Ryndak and Clark (2000) made a list of features required to be an educator including liking children, having the ability to interact with them, being patient, kind and flexible and keeping calm

(Gelbal and Duyan, 2010). According to two studies conducted by Eskicumalı (2002) and Özsoy et al. (2010), 23% and 46.9% of all preservice teachers choose this profession because they like children.

One of the most significant features a teacher should have is the ability of impressive communication (Bulut, 2008; Gürkan, 2005). The success of a teacher depends on his/her attitudes towards children and way of making contact with them. The ability of impressive communication is directly related to understanding children, meeting their needs and developing empathy with them (Kılıç, 2005). The relationship between teacher and child has a significant role on removing developmental risk factors of children. Efficiency of this relationship requires a high level closeness between the child and teacher, minimum conflict and some other processes that will contribute to the academic and social success of the child in the long term. (Cottone et al., 2008, Kıldan 2011).

Within the preschool period, children obtain some correct attitudes, good habits and develop themselves positively and this fact proves that this period and the sufficiency and attitudes of the teachers who take part in this process have an utmost significance. Due to this fact, it is considered as a necessity to present the levels of preschool teachers in liking children because this period has a high impact on cognitive, social and sensual developments of human beings.

2. Method and Materials

Within this study it is aimed to analyze the levels of preschool teachers in liking children and to determine whether the socio-demographic and work life conditions have an effect on the point averages of liking children. Subjects of this study were 109 pre-school term teachers from nursery schools in Kırıkkale either belonging to the primary schools inside the center of the city or independent from any other school. Within this study, a “Questionnaire Paper” as a tool for gathering information about teachers and “Barnett Liking of Children Scale” developed by Barnett and Sinisi (1990) were used. The first part of this questionnaire includes some questions about several socio-demographic features of teachers (such as age, alma mater, marital status, having children or not). And the second part is about the work life of preschool teachers (the institution they work, seniority in profession, the major they studied). Barnett Liking of Children Scale is a measurement tool developed by Barnett and Sinisi (1990) in order to evaluate the attitudes of people towards children and its reliability and validity studies were conducted by Duyan and Gelbal (2008). There are 14 items in this scale and the participants are suggested to choose one of seven different choices changing from “I completely disagree” to “I completely agree”, for each item. 4 of these items (3, 6, 10 and 13) are negative, while the other ten are positive. The point of “I completely agree” is 7, while the one of “I completely disagree” is just 1. And the same items, “I completely disagree” and “I completely agree” have 7 and 1 points respectively for the negative questions. A high point obtained within this scale means the participant likes children more while the lower points show that he/she has a low level of liking children. The points obtained through liking of children scale are changeable and regarded as the dependent variable of this study. The independent variable of the study is composed of the socio-demographic and work life features of the teachers. In order to analyze the data, arithmetic means of the points that teachers obtained through this scale were compared and they were evaluated by “t-test” when the number of categories were two; and by “Variance Analysis” when it was more than two. As a result of the variance analysis, “Scheffe Test” was used in order to determine which group causes this difference (Büyüköztürk, 2002).

3. Findings and Discussion

Within this study conducted in order to analyze the levels of preschool teachers in liking children and to determine whether their socio-demographic and work life features have an impact on the point averages of liking children, the data related to preschool teachers was presented through some tables and discussed.

Table 1. The analysis results related to point averages of liking children according to socio-demographic features of preschool teachers

Socio demographic features	S	%	\bar{x}	ss	Statistics
Age					F = -0.874 p = 0.420
20-30	72	66.10	70.38	13.52	
31-40	28	25.70	73.50	10.29	
41+	9	8.20	74.33	9.42	
Alma mater					t=0.091 P=0.928
Undergraduate	93	85.30	71.55	12.79	
Associate degree	16	14.70	71.25	10.83	
Marital status					F=0.044 P=0.957
Married	59	54.10	71.62	10.92	
Single	47	43.10	71.25	14.66	
Divorced	3	2.80	73.33	1.45	
Having children					t=0.577 P=0.565
Yes	36	33.00	70.52	11.60	
No	73	67.00	72.00	12.94	

*p<0.05

According to Table 1 it is seen that teachers at the age of 41 and over have the highest point averages in liking children (\bar{x} =74.33) and the age group of 31-40 (\bar{x} =73.50) and 20-30 (\bar{x} =70.38) follows this group respectively. It was identified that, elder preschool teachers have an higher point average in liking children however it is seen as a result of the variance analysis that ages of preschool teachers have not a significant effect on their point averages (F= -0.874, p>.05). These results make us think that as these preschool teachers get elder, the levels of their standing, enduring and bearing against misbehaviors of children increase. Within their study, Gelbal and Duyan (2010) analyzed the levels of primary school teachers in liking children; they determined that the teachers at the age group of 41-45 have higher points compared to the other age groups.

When we compare alma maters of those teachers, it is seen that bachelor's degree teachers have a point average of \bar{x} = 71.55 in liking children, while the point average of associate degree teachers is \bar{x} =71.25. As a result of the t-test, it was identified that there is not a significant difference in teachers' point averages of liking children caused by alma mater (t=0.091, p>.05). This result could be explained by some factors such as the teachers study with the same age group, they take a similar education and perform their profession fondly.

According to the marital status, divorced preschool teachers have a higher point average of liking children with (\bar{x} =73.33), while married and single teachers have (\bar{x} =71.62) and (\bar{x} =71.25) respectively. However, it is clearly seen that marital status of those teachers does not have a significant effect on their point averages of liking children (F=0.044, p>.05). As a result of the fact that marital status does not have a significant effect on teachers' liking of children, it can be concluded that teachers like children in all conditions and their marital status is not an effective variable.

Teachers who do not have a child, have a higher point average (\bar{x} =72.00) compared to those who have at least one child (\bar{x} =70.52); however, it was identified that having children or not does not have a significant impact on liking of children (t=0.577, p>.05). Within their studies, Gelbal and Duyan (2010) identified that there is not a significant relation between having a child or not and liking children, for

primary school teachers. This result makes us think that teachers like children who are at young ages even if they do not have a child, as they study with them.

Table 2. The analysis results related to point averages of liking children according to work life and other features of preschool teachers

Working features	S	%	\bar{x}	SS	Statistics
Institution					
Nursery class	100	91.70	71.51	12.94	t = -0.010 p = 0.352
Independent Nursery School	9	8.30	71.55	1.78	
Seniority In Profession (years)					
0-5	67	61.50	70.49	12.13	F=0.587 P=0.558
6-10	18	16.50	72.83	15.61	
11+	24	22.00	73.37	11.00	
Alma mater					
Child development	33	30.30	72.00	11.41	F=8.279 P=0.000* Significant difference
Preschool teaching	70	64.20	72.90	10.52	
Others	6	5.50	52.66	23.40	

*p<0.05

When we look at Table 2, it is seen that there is not a significant difference in point averages of liking children caused by institution (t= -0.010, p>.05); nursery class teachers have a point of (\bar{x} =71.51) while teachers studying at independent nursery schools have (\bar{x} =71.55). This result makes us think that the working conditions and workload in preschool institutions do not differ from other institutions and working part time or full time does not have an impact on teachers' status of liking children.

Although the point averages of teachers increase as they get elder, there is not a significant relation between seniority and point averages in liking children (F=0.587; p>.05). Gelbal and Duyan (2010) identified that there is not a significant relation between the level of liking children and office periods of teachers. However, there is an increase in their point averages of liking children in proportion to their durations in office.

When alma maters of those teachers are compared, it is seen that the ones who studied child development (\bar{x} =72.00) and preschool teaching (\bar{x} =72.90) majors have higher point averages in liking children than the others (\bar{x} =52.66). As a result of the analysis, it was identified that the major of teachers has a significant impact on the status of liking children (F=8.279; p<.01). And according to the scheffe test, it was determined that this difference is caused by the preschool teachers who studied the other majors. Duyan and Gelbal (2008) identified within their studies that students who study child development and education major have higher point averages of liking children compared to those who study social services. This result makes us think that teachers who studied child development and preschool teaching have a different education from the others.

4. Conclusion and Suggestions

Within this study, it is aimed to analyze the levels of preschool term teachers in liking children and determine whether some factors such as the ones that are socio-demographic and related to work life have

an impact on the point averages of liking children or not. As a result of this study, it was identified that the majors of preschool teachers have a significant impact on their status of liking children ($p<.05$). However, it was also identified that age, alma mater, having children and seniority in profession do not create a significant difference in their status of liking children ($p>.05$).

As a result, it bears a great importance for preschool teachers to like children besides their knowledge and skills. The teacher candidates of preschool education should choose this major willingly and some measures should be taken in order to make teachers studying in this field like their profession. Similar studies may be conducted in different sample groups.

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