

A Study on School Maturity Level of Children Continuing to Preschool Education

By

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Abstract

Purpose of this study is to analyze school maturity levels of preschool children, and to determine if sexuality, age, mother's educational status and father's profession variances make a difference on school maturity levels. This study has been executed on 41 girls and 39 boys, 80 children in total, who continue independent preschools which were determined by random sampling method in Kırıkkale city center. In the study, "General Information Form" prepared by researchers was used in order to obtain information about the children and their families, and "Metropolitan School Maturity Test" adapted to Turkish by Oktay (1980) was used in order to determine school maturity levels of children. In consequence of the study, data was evaluated by t-test and Variance Analysis. In consequence of the study, it has been determined that father's profession makes an important difference on children's school maturity point averages ($p < .05$). However, it has been determined that sexuality and mother's educational status doesn't make a significant difference on school maturity point averages ($p > .05$).

Keywords: School maturity, preschool education, school starting age

1. Introduction

Starting to school is one of the most important milestones in child's life. Child comes up against attending the activities required by programmed education, a determined discipline, obeying the rules within a plan, carrying out a instruction of teacher, and learning some subjects such as reading-writing, arithmetic, etc. , for the first time (Oktay and Unutkan, 2003). Generally, every child reaches this maturity nearly at the age of 6. However, the age to reach school maturity can change because of the individual differences (Ülkü, 2007). Being ready to school or school maturity explains that child is ready to achieve school education, and it is important in terms of school success (Özdemir Kılıç, 2004). For Gessell, school maturity is a function to grow mature. A child who has school maturity has reached to a level in terms of physical, mental, social and emotional development, and he/she is ready to carry out anything to be asked in school successfully. Thackray has defined the school maturity as preparation to all kinds of learning, and a period in which child can learn easily and capably without having a difficulty (Quoted by Özdemir Kılıç, 2004).

In all this definitions, researchers consider that child should reach a determined maturity level before starting to school and it is an obligatory precondition. It is also required that before starting to school child should get enough education in this subject and should have mental and psychological sufficiency to reach this (Çataloluk, 1994).

In Turkey, school starting age has been determined by laws. However, it is an object of interest if children are ready to start school at this determined age (Oktay, 2007; Uyanık-Balat, 2010).

In Turkey, until 2012-2013 academic years, children started to school if they turn 72 months on December of the year when they started to school. In 2012, according to the Article 15th of the Primary Education Foundations Regulations of Ministry of National Education, school starting age has been changed by the statement that "A child is registered for 1st grade of primary schools if he/she turns

months by the end of September when the registrations are made. If it is seen that children between the months of 60-66 months are ready to primary school in sense of development, they can be registered to 1st grade of primary school by permission of their parents” (Official Journal, 2012). It is estimated that children should start to 1st grade of primary school at the age of 5. In this model, students at the age of 5 are asked to sit for 40 minutes in the class and to listen to the lesson or to attend in activities. An academic education, all day long in the classroom, conflicts with development features of children at the age of 5 (Güven, 2012). This application has created big reactions in the society and has discussed by relative environments. In this case, lack of a scientific study that can be a basis for these discussions has been felt. This deficiency is a basis for this study. It is expected that study results will shed light on the discussion about this subject.

2. Material and Method

This study has been executed on 41 girls and 39 boys, 80 children in total, who continue independent preschools Turkey which were determined by random sampling method in Kırıkkale city center. In the study, “General Information Form” prepared by researchers was used in order to obtain information about the children and their families, and “Metropolitan School Maturity Test” adapted to Turkish by Oktay (1980) was used in order to determine school maturity levels of children. “Metropolitan School Maturity Test” is a test applied in order to determine if the children is ready to rules of school and to learn. It is used in evaluating physiological, environmental and mental factors that are necessary while preparing to school. Metropolitan School Maturity Test consists of 100 articles in total: understand a word as 19 articles, sentences as 14 articles, general information as 14 articles, matching as 19 articles, numbers as 24 articles, copying as 10 articles. Every subtest includes pictures to be marked and copied by child according to directive given by an expert as verbal. It is possible to apply the scale both in group and as individual, and application time is about 24 minutes. In the directions of directives given by executive, child is asked to response the scale. In all this subtests, the true answer given to each article is evaluated as one point. Entire points create total point of the test. Highness of the total point illustrates that general school maturity level is high. In consequence of the study, data has been evaluated by t-test and Variance Analysis.

3. Findings and Discussion

Data belonging to the study carried out in order to determine if school maturity levels of preschool children have difference by some variances has been analyzed and illustrated as tables. It has been discussed by supporting relative literatures.

Table 1. t-test results of point averages in school maturity test of the children who continue preschool education by sexuality

Metropolitan School Maturity Test	Sexuality	N	\bar{x}	Sd	t	p
General Preparation	Female	41	74.44	78	-.876	.384
	Male	39	76.41			
Number Preparation	Female	41	17.56	78	1.437	.155
	Male	39	18.72			
Reading Preparation	Female	41	49.61	78	.638	.526
	Male	39	50.49			

*p<.05

When Table 1 is analyzed, it is seen that point averages for general preparation (\bar{x} =76.41), number preparation (\bar{x} =18.72 and reading preparation (\bar{x} =50.49) of boys are higher than girls. However, according to result of t-test, it has been determined that point averages of girls and boys obtained from school maturity test didn't make a significant difference by sexuality (p>.05).

Gullo and Burton (1992) has determined that there isn't a significant difference between sexuality and readiness in the study in which he analyzed if academic readiness at the end of preschool education makes a difference by sexuality.

Arıkök (2001) has determined in a study that sexuality doesn't make an important difference at the reading levels of children at the ages of 5-6.

Cinkılıç (2009) has emphasized that sexuality has no effect on school maturity in the study in which it was analyzed if effect of preschool education continue on school maturity levels of the students at 1st grade of primary school.

Table 2. t-test results of point averages in school maturity test of the children who continue preschool education by age

Metropolitan School Maturity Test	Age (month)	N	\bar{x}	Sd	t	p
General Preparation	56 -65	29	69.55	78	-4.351	.00*
	66 -76	51	78.73			
Number Preparation	56 -65	29	16.21	78	-3.875	.00*
	66 -76	51	19.22			
Reading Preparation	56 -65	29	47.14	78	-3.397	.001*
	66 -76	51	51.69			

*p<.05

When Table 2 is analyzed, it is seen that point averages for general preparation (\bar{x} =78.73), number preparation (\bar{x} =78.73) and reading preparation (\bar{x} =51.69) of children between the months of 66-76 are higher than the children in another group. According to the result of t-test, it has been determined that there is a significant difference by age on the point averages for general preparation [t (78) =-4.351. p<.01], number preparation [t (78) =-3.875. p<.01] and reading preparation [t (78) =-3.397, p<.05] of preschool children.

Lois (1996) has indicated that age is an important factor in introducing school and preparation to reading in the study that done by 56 children at the ages of between five and half and six and half.

Unutkan (2007) has determined that children at the age of five is insufficient than the groups at the age of five and half and six and half in terms of mathematics, in the study examining school readiness of preschool children.

In the study they analyzed school readiness of children at the months of 69 and 78, Ramazan and Esaspehlivan (2008) have determined that school readiness of children at the months of 78 is higher than children at the months of 69 in terms of mental, language, social-emotional and physical.

A child at five is in playing period. His environment is toys and friends. He expresses himself by toys and games he imagined. In the new education model, although it is said "in direction of request of the parents", these results make us think that children under 66 months should not be started primary school.

When Table 3 is analyzed, it is seen that point averages for general preparation (\bar{x} =77.70) and reading preparation (\bar{x} =52.06) of children whose mother's educational level is university are higher. In consequence of variance analysis, it has been determined that mother's educational level of children makes a significant difference on point averages for reading preparation (F 2-77) = 3.418, p<.05). In consequence of Scheffe test, it has been determined that this difference has been created by children whose mothers were postgraduate.

Table 3. Standard deviation and variance analyses results of point averages in school maturity test of the children who continue preschool education by mother's educational level

Metropolitan School Maturity Test	Mother's Educational Level	N	\bar{x}	Sd	F	p
General Preparation	Primary school	8	71.38	2	1.782	.175
	High school	39	74.28	77		
	University	33	77.70			
Number Preparation	Primary school	8	17.75	2	.047	.954
	High school	39	18.18	77		
	University	33	18.15			
Reading Preparation	Primary school	8	47.5	2	3.418	.038* Difference 1-3 2-3
	High school	39	48.85	77		
	University	33	52.06			

*p<.05

In the study of Fitzgerald, Spiegel and Cunningham (1991), they have determined that the children whose families have high literacy levels are more successful in the school. Yazıcı (2002) has stated that school maturities of children are different by mother's- father's educational levels, and has determined that school maturity levels for children whose parents are postgraduate are higher than children whose parents are high school and primary school graduates.

Erkan and Kırca (2010) have determined in the study they compared school readiness of children who had and didn't have preschool education in terms of mother's-father's educational levels that school readiness of the children whose parents are high school and university graduates are higher than the children whose parents are not literates or literates as primary school graduation.

The more educational level of mother increases, point averages of the children obtained from subtests become higher. A high education level for a mother is important in order that mother can be notice needs of her child and can determine where her child needs a support and can do what she should do consciously.

Table 4. Standard deviation and variance analyses results of point averages in school maturity test of the children who continue preschool education by father's profession

Metropolitan School Maturity Level	Father's Profession	N	\bar{x}	Sd	F	p
General Preparation	Self-employment	14	69.64	4	2.927	.026* Difference 1-5 1-3
	Officer	44	76.57	74		
	Employer	6	71.67			
	Teacher	9	75.56			
	Engineer	6	84.33			
Number Preparation	Self-employment	14	15.86	4	2.027	.099
	Officer	44	18.61	74		
	Employer	6	18.67			
	Teacher	9	17.89			
	Engineer	6	19.83			
Reading Preparation	Self-employment	14	48.14	4	3.038	.022* Difference 3-5
	Officer	44	50.45	74		
	Employer	6	44.67			
	Teacher	9	51.00			
	Engineer	6	55.50			

*p<.05

When Table 4 is analyzed, it is seen that point averages for general preparation (\bar{x} =84.33), number preparation (\bar{x} =19.83) and reading preparation (\bar{x} =55.50) of children whose father are engineers are

higher than children whose father have other professions. In consequence of the variance analysis, it has been determined that father's profession status of children makes a significant difference in point averages for general preparation ($F_{4-74} = 2.927, p < .05$) and reading preparation ($F_{4-74} = 3.038, p < .05$). In consequence of Scheffe test, there is a significant difference for general preparation between point averages of children whose father are engineers and other children whose fathers are employer and self-employment but it has been determined that this difference has been formed in reading preparation by children whose fathers are engineers and employers.

As being a different profession, engineering ask to think a situation by a sophisticated perspective, to examine events by causes and results and to have a capability to think analytically. This result can be thought us that fathers who have professional properties give more attention on their children's academic improvement.

4. Consequence and Suggestions

Purpose of this study has been to analyze school maturity levels of preschool children and to determine if sexuality, age, mother's educational level and father's profession variables make any difference on school maturity levels.

In consequence of the study, point averages for general preparation, number preparation and reading preparation of boys higher than girls but points averages don't make a significant difference by sexuality ($p > .05$). While age variable of preschool children makes a significant difference on point averages, mother's educational level makes a significant difference on reading preparation and father's professional status makes a significant difference on general preparation and reading preparation for point averages ($p < .05$).

School maturity level changes significantly depending on month (age) the more age increases, school maturity point become higher. In other words, it can be said that age is an important variable which would make a significant difference on school maturity. In the direction of results;

Preschool education should be taken into the scope of compulsory education by generalizing across the country. Skills to school preparation in the current preschool educational institutions by extending their scopes and it can be include studies to increase their quality. Preschool teachers and primary school teachers should study together in order to determine common points in preparing children to school. In service training course should be given to preschool and class teachers about school maturity and passing to primary school. These teachers should become conscious about importance of this passing period. All kids should be tested by school maturity tests at the stage of passing to primary school.

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