

Longitudinal Observation of Self-Regulation and School Adjustment during the Preschool Period

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to observe independent learning behaviours and school adjustment during the preschool period in a longitudinal manner. Based on teacher's observing self-regulation and school adjustment of young children within six months, this study is quantitative, longitudinal and conducted in the relational screening model. The study includes 120 children aged 5-6 years old and who are enrolled in a preschool education institution affiliated with the Ministry of National Education. There are two scales (Children's Independent Learning Development Checklist 3-5 (CHILD 3-5) and Teacher Rating Scale of School Adjustment for 5-6 Years of Children) in the research. As a result of examining self-regulation and school adjustment of preschool children according to the two-measure, six months longitudinal study, it is evident that first of all, self-regulation in the fall semester is positively related to self-regulation in the spring semester. According to this result, as self-regulation during the fall semester increases, self-regulation during the spring semester; as school adjustment during the fall semester increases, school adjustment during the spring semester may also increase. Also, self-regulation of the initial measurement predicts self-regulation of the second measurement. Same finding is also valid for school adjustment. School adjustment of the initial measurement predicts school adjustment of the second measurement. Self-regulation and school adjustment at the beginning of school may affect self-regulation and school adjustment in the second semester. With respect to this result, it is possible to assert that the self-regulation skills and school adjustment levels of young children when they start preschool education are important in the short-term and long-term. With respect to the short and long-term relationships and predictive effect of the variables with each other, it was determined that self-regulation during the fall semester is positively associated with school adjustment level during both semesters.

Keywords: Preschool period, Self-regulation, School adjustment, Longitudinal study




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INTRODUCTION

Children's adjustment to preschool education is a complex process that includes many personal and environmental characteristics (Blair & Raver, 2015). When children start school, they encounter various social and academic demands from their teachers, parents and peers and go through some changes in order to adapt to the process (Adynski, Propper, Beeber, Gilmore & Zou., 2024). In this process called school adjustment, children both fulfil the requirements of the formal school environment which they are enrolled in and can direct their behaviour based on their personal interests and needs. Adjustment to school begins in preschool education institutions, which provide the first formal education environment. In this context, studies that have examined short-term and long-term effects of school adjustment during the preschool period have been conducted for long years, especially within the international literature. In line with these studies, it has been revealed that adjustment to school in the preschool period has various effects on children and teachers. For example, in their study with 183 children attending preschool education in Korea Chi, Kim, and Kim (2018) underline that adjustment to school is related to peer relationships and cognitive skills. In addition, it is stated that adjustment to school may be associated with academic success in the short term and social and economic independence in the long term (Symonds, D'Urso & Schoon, 2023). Along with the various effects of adjustment to school, there are many factors that can affect this process (Bağçeli-Kahraman, 2020). For example, in their study with 206 children and their teachers, Birch and Ladd (1997) emphasize the role of the teacher-child relationship within the context of school adjustment during preschool. Additionally, it was revealed in the same study that the dependency in teacher-child relationship can lead to school adjustment problems, especially lower academic success, more negative attitudes towards school and less favoured interaction with the school environment, and that teacher-child closeness is positively related to children's level of liking school along with self-management (Birch & Ladd, 1997). In the research conducted by İldeniz Elmas and Çoruk (2023), preschool teachers stated that parental attitudes and the school adjustment training program have a significant effect over the school adjustment process. Kaya and Akgün (2016) along with Birch and Ladd (1997) also underline that gender is effective in school adjustment and that school adjustment levels of girls may be higher than boys. It is evident that there are various variables which can affect young children's level of school adjustment.

Self-regulation is one of the variables affecting school adjustment. Self-regulation, which begins to develop in the preschool period (Garon, Bryson & Smith, 2008), includes the regulation of cognitive and emotional processes (Montroy, Bowles, Skibbe, McClelland & Morrison, 2016). Generally defined, self-regulation includes higher-level processes and at the same time enables the individual to manage his/her emotions, thoughts and behaviours to achieve a goal (Rothbart, 1989). Self-regulation includes regulating emotions, adjusting behaviour and managing attention (Hetherington, McDonald, Racine & Tough, 2020). Having self-regulation skills can provide various benefits to the child in terms of adjusting to school (Mauer, Zhou & Uchikoshi, 2021). In their study including 173 children in the 5-year-old group, Gülay Ogelman, Sarac, Kahveci and Akdoğan (2022) state that children's self-regulation levels can predict school adjustment. Gülay Ogelman and Kaya (2023) found in their study that independent learning behaviour of young children and their total level of school adjustment, self-management and collaborative participation is at moderate; they observed that there is a low-level significant relationship between liking school, however they did not observe relationship with school avoidance. In addition, recently, there has been an increase in studies on self-regulation in Turkey. For example, Tutkun (2022) states that the issues families need most concerning self-regulation are changing children's problem behaviours and discipline. In the study conducted by Bay (2024), a positive and strong relationship was observed between preschool children's independent learning behaviours and play skills, and it was concluded that play skills of children show a significant effect on their independent learning behaviours. In their research, Ural, Gültekin Akduman and Şepitci Sarıbaş (2020) emphasize that the preschool children's self-regulation levels may differ with respect to birth order, mother and father's educational status, family type and father's working status. In the study on 122 children and 122 parents, Dağgül (2016) states that there is no relationship between parents' child-rearing attitudes and self-regulation skills. In their study on 316 preschool teachers and 213 children, Kurt and Dikici Sığırtaç (2023) observed that self-regulation skills of children differed in favour of those older than 68 months, girls and children who had attended preschool education for over one year. In addition, it was revealed that there

is a positive relationship between teachers' self-regulation and classroom practices to support self-regulated learning (Kurt & Dikici Sığirtmaç, 2023). As can be seen, in recent years, different variables can be addressed in studies on self-regulation during the preschool period in Turkey.

Longitudinal studies refer to repeated measurements of the same individuals over time. These studies can offer exclusive information in many areas such as physical and mental health, social, emotional, cognitive development, academic achievement, behaviour, attitudes, employment and income (Park & Rainsbery, 2020). However, although longitudinal studies have a long-term study schedule, they may also require more labour and financial resources than cross-sectional studies (Batcheler, Ireland, Oppenheim & Rehill, 2022). In the USA, the National Centre for Education Statistics supports longitudinal studies during early years of life with the Early Childhood Longitudinal Studies Program (ECLS, 2024). It is evident that longitudinal studies, especially in the preschool period, are important with respect to both the literature and educational policies with the results they provide. In various compilation studies conducted in Turkey (Gülay-Ogelman & Güngör, 2022; Müren & Yasin, 2021), it was observed that among the studies on many subjects during the preschool period, longitudinal studies were much less in number than cross-sectional studies. In the literature review, it is possible to come across an increasing number of studies in recent years on self-regulation and school adjustment in the preschool period (Karaman, 2022).

Although there is an increase in studies on self-regulation and school adjustment, it is evident that there are longitudinal studies on school adjustment in the preschool period (Gülay-Ogelman & Erten-Sarıkaya, 2013) and a study on self-regulation (Astarlar, 2019); no longitudinal study has been found that examines school adjustment and self-regulation together. For this reason, it is considered that this present study can contribute to the literature by examining school adjustment and self-regulation longitudinally. In addition, it can be stated that it can guide future studies as a longitudinal study. Determining the relationship between young children's school adjustment and self-regulation levels at the beginning of preschool education process and their long-term effects can provide guidance to programs on the subject. With this respect, the purpose of this research is to monitor independent learning behaviours and school adjustment during preschool period in a longitudinal manner. Sub-purposes obtained from the six months longitudinal study are as follows:

1. Is there a significant relationship between self-regulation and school adjustment measurements during the fall and spring semesters?
2. Is there a significant predictive effect between self-regulation and school adjustment measurements during the fall and spring semesters?

METHOD

This study, based on observing young children's self-regulation and school adjustment within six months, is quantitative, longitudinal and in the relational screening model. Survey research is carried out to obtain a general judgment regarding the universe by selecting samples from the universe (Büyükoztürk, Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz & Demirel, 2022). The relational screening method is carried out to identify whether or not two or more variables change together and, if so, to reveal the degree and direction of change (Akbat, 2021). Longitudinal studies are conducted to identify the changes in research variables over time. In this study, comprehensive observations can be made depending on the depth and width by making repeated measurements on the same units at different times (Kadioğlu-Ateş & Mazi, 2017).

1. Study Group

The study includes 120 children aged 5-6 years old who attend a preschool education institution affiliated with the Ministry of National Education. Non-divorced families and their children with normal development were included in the study. Detailed information about the study group is presented on Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic information of the families

Gender		f	%
Girl		54	45.0
Boy		66	55.0
Age		f	%
5 years old		100	83.3
6 years old		20	16.7
Mother's educational status		f	%
Primary school graduate		8	6.7
Secondary school graduate		5	4.2
High school graduate		23	19.2
University graduate		84	70.0
Father's educational status		f	%
Primary school graduate		2	1.7
Secondary school graduate		13	10.8
High school graduate		24	20.0
University graduate		81	67.5
Mother's age		f	%
20-30 years old		16	13.3
31-40 years old		97	80.8
41 years old and over		7	5.8
Father's age		f	%
20-30 years old		10	8.3
31-40 years old		91	75.8
41 years old and over		19	15.8
Mother's profession		f	%
Housewife		59	49.2
Civil servant		50	41.7
Worker		7	5.8
Self-employed		4	3.3
Father's profession		f	%
Civil servant		71	59.2
Worker		20	16.7
Self-employed		28	23.3
Retired		1	0.8
Number of siblings		f	%
Only child		20	16.7
1 sibling		80	66.7
2 siblings		17	14.2
3 siblings		2	1.7
4 or more 4 siblings		1	0.8
Gender of siblings		f	%
Only child		20	16.4
Has a sister		43	35.8
Has a brother		47	39.2
Has a sister and brother		10	8.3

2. Data Collection Tools

There are two scales in the research, Children's Independent Learning Development Checklist 3-5 (CHILD 3-5) and the Teacher Rating Scale of School Adjustment for 5-6 Years of Children

Personal Information Form: The form was developed by the researchers and includes information regarding the children's gender, age, parents' educational status, parents age, parents' profession, number of siblings and gender of siblings.

Children's Independent Learning Development Checklist (Child 3-5): The scale developed by Whitebread et al. (2009) is evaluated by observing 3-5 year old children in a classroom environment (cited in [Saraç, Karakelle & Whitebread, 2019](#)). The scale, which is filled out by a teacher who regularly deals with and observes children in the classroom environment, was adapted into Turkish as the 'Children's Independent Learning Behaviour Checklist' by [Saraç et al. \(2019\)](#). It is a one-dimensional scale consisting of a total of 16 items. The teacher observes the children in the classroom and fills out the scale for each child and marks how often the child displays the behaviour in question on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = Never; 4 = Always). High scores show that the child's self-regulation skill is high. According to

the scale's adaptation study, the internal consistency coefficient is .97 (Saraç et al., 2019). With respect to this research, the scale's internal consistency coefficient was observed to be .96 in the fall semester and .97 in the spring semester.

Teacher Rating Scale of School Adjustment for 5-6 Years of Children: The original form of the scale, which was developed by Ladd, Kochenfender and Coleman (1996) to measure school adjustment skills of young girls, includes of 27 items. The scale includes 4 sub-scales (collaborative participation, school avoidance, self-management and liking school). Each item in the scale is marked based on the teacher's in-class observation and how often the child displays the behaviour in question (0=Not appropriate, 1=Sometimes appropriate, 2=Completely appropriate) based on a 3-point rating system (cited in Birch & Ladd, 1997). High scores from the scale filled out by the teacher indicate that the relevant variable has a high level, and low scores indicate that the relevant variable has a low level. While the scale can be evaluated according to the total score, evaluation is also made based on the sub-dimensions. The scale's Turkish adaptation studies were conducted by Önder and Gülay (2010) and the Turkish form consists of 25 items and 4 sub-scales (collaborative participation, school avoidance, self-management and liking school). In addition, there is a positive, significant and high relationship between the scale's test-retest studies ($r = .97$ $p < .01$). The internal consistency coefficient of the total scale for the adaptation study is .70 (Önder & Gülay, 2010). With respect to this research, the total scale internal consistency coefficient was observed to be .83 in the fall semester and .80 in the spring semester.

3. Data Collection

During the research data collection process, ethics committee permission was obtained in accordance with the permission of Sinop University Human Research Ethics Committee, decision numbered 2023/97-129, dated 09.06.2023. The families and teachers of the children from whom data will be collected were given information regarding the subject, purpose, measurement tools and the process and informed consent forms were obtained from parents and teachers. Data collection tools were filled in by teachers twice for every child, once each semester during the academic year, in November and April.

4. Data Analysis

The SPSS 26.0 statistical package program was used for analysing the data. Since the data kurtosis and skewness values were observed to be between +1.5 and -1.5, it was accepted that the data was normally distributed (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Kurtosis and skewness values were as follows: Kurtosis value of the self-regulation measurement 1 (Fall) was -.832 and skewness value was -.019; kurtosis value of the self-regulation measurement 2 (Spring) was -1.082 and skewness value was -.121; kurtosis value of school adjustment measurement 1 (Fall) was -1.015 and skewness value was .324; kurtosis value of school adjustment measurement 2 (Spring) was .966 and skewness value was -1.281. For normality distribution, a Simple Linear Regression analysis, one of the parametric techniques, was conducted. Simple linear regression is used to predict the dependent variable explained with the help of the independent variable in the presence of a linear relationship between the independent and dependent variables (Büyüköztürk, 2021). To determine the relationship between the variables, a correlation coefficient between 0.00-0.30 can be defined as low, between 0.30-0.70 can be defined as medium and 0.70 and above can be defined as high (Büyüköztürk, 2021).

FINDINGS

Descriptive findings regarding the variables are presented on Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics on self-regulation and school adjustment measurements

Variables	N	\bar{X}	sd	Min.	Max.
Self-regulation Measurement 1 (Fall)	120	3.16	.59	1.75	4.00
Self-regulation Measurement 2 (Spring)	120	3.20	.61	2.00	4.00
School Adjustment Measurement 1 (Fall)	120	1.81	.17	1.28	2.00
School Adjustment Measurement 2 (Spring)	120	1.86	.15	1.39	2.00

It is evident on Table 2 that the children's average score in the first measurement regarding self-regulation is 3.16, their average in the second measurement is 3.20, their average in the first measurement regarding school adjustment is 1.81, and their average in the second measurement is 1.86.

Table 3 presents the findings revealing the relationships between the measurements.

Table 3. *Pearson product moment correlation coefficient analysis results regarding self-regulation and school adjustment measurements*

Variables	School Adjustment Measure 1 (Fall)	Self-regulation Measurement 2 (Spring)	School Adjustment Measurement 1 (Fall)	School Adjustment Measurement 2 (Spring)
Self-regulation Measurement 1 (Fall)	-	.56*	.52*	.41*
Self-regulation Measurement 2 (Spring)	.56*	-	.41*	.44*
School Adjustment Measurement 1 (Fall)	.52*	.41*	-	.45*
School Adjustment Measurement 2 (Spring)	.41*	.44*	.45*	-

*p < .01

According to Table 3, children's self-regulation levels when they start school in the fall semester are positively related to school adjustment in the same semester and self-regulation and school adjustment in the second semester. School adjustment in the fall semester is positively associated with school adjustment during the second semester; self-regulation in the second semester is positively related to school adjustment during the same semester ($p < .01$). There is a medium level relationship between the variables.

Table 4 presents the findings that reveal predictive effects between the variables.

Table 4. *Simple linear regression analysis results concerning the predictive effects between self-regulation and school adjustment measurements*

Variables	R	R ²	F	Std. Er.	β	t	p	Durbin Watson
Self-regulation Measurement 1 (Fall)	.565	.319	55.293	.078	.565	7.436	.000*	2.131
Self-regulation Measurement 2 (Spring)	.452	.204	30.229	.069	.452	5.498	.000*	2.206
School adjustment Measurement 1 (Fall)	.521	.271	43.963	.023	.521	6.630	.000*	1.882
School adjustment Measurement 2 (Spring)	.411	.169	24.013	.021	.411	4.900	.000*	2.495
Self-regulation Measurement 1 (Fall)	.443	.196	28.731	.020	.443	5.360	.000*	2.260
School adjustment Measurement 2 (Spring)								

* p<.01

According to Table 4, self-regulation during the fall semester predicts self-regulation during the spring semester ($R = .565$, $R^2 = .319$, $F = 55.293$, $p < .01$). Self-regulation during the fall semester accounts for 32% of self-regulation in the same semester. Adjustment to school in the fall semester predicts adjustment to school in the spring semester and can account for 20% of it ($R = .452$, $R^2 = .204$, $F = 30.229$, $p < .01$). Self-regulation during the fall semester predicts school adjustment in the same semester ($R = .521$, $R^2 = .271$, $F = 43.963$, $p < .01$) and in the spring semester ($R = .411$, $R^2 = .169$, $F = 24.013$, $p < .01$); also, it accounts for 27% of school adjustment during the fall semester and 17% of school adjustment during the spring semester. Self-regulation during the spring semester predicts school adjustment in the same semester ($R = .443$, $R^2 = .196$, $F = 28.731$, $p < .01$) and accounts for 20% of it.

DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS

As a result of examining preschool children's self-regulation and school adjustment based on a two-measure, one-year longitudinal study, it is evident that first of all, self-regulation in the fall semester is positively related to self-regulation in the spring semester. According to this result, as self-regulation during the fall semester increases, self-regulation during the spring; as school adjustment during the fall semester increases, school adjustment during the spring semester may also increase. Also, self-regulation of the first measurement predicts self-regulation of the second measurement. The same finding is also valid for school adjustment. School adjustment of the first measurement predicts school adjustment of the second measurement. Self-regulation and school adjustment at the beginning of school may affect self-regulation and school adjustment in the second semester. Taking into consideration this result, it can be asserted that the self-regulation skills and school adjustment level of young children when they start preschool education are important through the short and long term. Various studies concerning long-term effects of self-regulation ([Colliver, Harrison, Brown & Humburg, 2022](#); [Robson, Allen & Howard, 2020](#)) underline that the effects of early self-regulation skills can last a lifetime and that this effect can be seen in many issues such as health, substance addiction, educational success and parenting style. [Rademacher \(2022\)](#) conducted a longitudinal study on 434 German children and revealed that intelligence and good self-regulation skills of the children are crucial for their school achievement and that high levels of self-regulation skills throughout kindergarten may be related to behavioural issues in primary school. There are longitudinal study findings showing that first experiences related to school adjustment can affect subsequent levels of education. For example, a study conducted in Australia ([Margetts, 2009](#)) reveals that adjustment in the first weeks of preschool education has an impact on adjustment in the 5th grade of primary school after taking into account various personal characteristics, family demographic characteristics and school factors. In the longitudinal study carried out by [Reynolds and Bezruczko \(1993\)](#) on 1255 children from black families with low socioeconomic status, it is underlined that school adjustment in the preschool period may be related to reading success in 1st grade of primary school along with academic success and absenteeism rate in 4th grade. As a result, self-regulation and school adjustment have important short-term and long-term outcomes on children's lives. Supporting results have also been obtained in this research.

With respect to short and long-term relationship and predictive effect of the variables with each other, it was determined that self-regulation in the fall semester is positively associated with the level of school adjustment in both semesters. It can be said that as self-regulation in the fall semester increases, school adjustment in both semesters may increase. According to the findings, it is possible to state that as self-regulation increases in the spring semester, there may be an increase in school adjustment in the same semester. It can be said that self-regulation is associated with school adjustment in short and long-term and predicts school adjustment. The development of self-regulation among young children is critical for school adjustment. Self-regulation abilities enable participation in learning activities and can provide the basis for school adjustment ([Blair & Raver, 2015](#)). [Adynski et al. \(2024\)](#) underline in their study that emotional regulation, one of the dimensions of self-regulation, is necessary for sustainable health and well-being, including adjustment to school. [Chi et al. \(2018\)](#), who state that there is a reciprocal relationship between self-regulation and school adjustment, underline that young children can develop and maintain trust, positive interactions and relationships with adults and peers, and improve many essential skills in terms of social interaction and controlling behaviour. [Rimm-Kaufman, Pianta and Cox \(2000\)](#) state that attention control may be related to school adjustment. [Bağçeli Karaman, Şen, Alataş and Tütüncü \(2018\)](#) point out that problems in school adjustment include situations arising from deficiencies in self-regulation skills such as shyness, non-compliance with rules, and aggression ([Bağçeli Karaman et al., 2018](#)). In the study on Chinese American children, [Gys, Haft and Zhou \(2024\)](#) emphasize that there is a negative association between self-regulation and behavioural maladjustment. In the study conducted by [Beyazıt \(2019\)](#) with 150 children in the 4-6 age group, a significant negative association was observed between self-regulation levels and behavioural problem levels. It is evident that the predictive effect of self-regulation on school adjustment was evident in both semesters, and the fact that self-regulation during the first semester predicts school adjustment during the second semester coincides with study findings examined on the subject in the literature. At this point, if children who start preschool education have high self-regulation skills, they may have fewer problems in adjusting to

school, especially in following the rules, participating in activities, liking school and establishing successful relationships with teachers and peers, compared to their peers with low self-regulation skills. However, since the initial self-regulation and school adjustment scores predict the average scores in the following semester, it can be said that the skills that children have when they start school and their attitudes towards school are crucial in the short and long term. With respect to the findings, it is possible to assert that children with low self-regulation skills such as self-control and the ability to postpone their wishes/needs can maintain their levels for a long time. Similarly, children who start school with a negative attitude or who cannot adjust to school in a healthy way in a short time are likely to continue their negative attitudes. It can be stated that children's self-regulation levels can differ before they start preschool education. At this point, it can be said that many factors such as children's individual differences, family variables and the environment they live in can effect self-regulation (Hoyle & Moshontz, 2018). The same situation applies to school adjustment (Reed-Victor, 2004). Therefore, children's self-regulation and school adjustment potentials can differ at the beginning of school. At this point, it is crucial to know the children, to determine their individual characteristics and to have a perspective towards individualization in the education process so as to decrease adjustment problems and increase the skills.

In the research, it was observed that self-regulation and school adjustment score averages of preschool children in the fall semester resulted in an increase, although not at a high level, in the spring semester. The fact that the self-regulation score average increased in the second measurement does not coincide with the finding of Astarlar (2019). In the study carried out by Astarlar (2019), it was observed that behavioural self-regulation skills scores in the first measurement scores are higher than the second and third measurement scores. There is a study that is in line with the findings of this study. In a two-year longitudinal study including 78 children carried out by Gülay Ogelman and Erten Sankaya (2013), the self-management, liking school and cooperative participation levels of children who are enrolled in preschool education on the second year increased at the age of 6, and a decrease was observed in their positive school avoidance levels. It is an expected finding that children's self-regulation and school adjustment score averages increase within six months. As a matter of fact, the preschool education process includes objectives such as supporting children's developmental areas. At this point, children are expected to acquire various behaviours and skills, adjust to school and develop healthy relationships with their teachers and peers throughout the year. Therefore, the increase in children's self-regulation skills and school adjustment levels throughout the year can be considered as an outcome of preschool education.

Findings of this research reveal that self-regulation skills in the preschool period are a crucial variable with respect to adjustment to school, and indicate that the goal of a successful school adjustment process may be necessary in the short and long term. As a matter of fact, Margetts (2009) pointed out the importance of transition programs that benefit from children's competencies when starting school and minimize the risks of non-compliance. At this point, both teachers and parents are expected to take an approach to ensure that children have a healthy adjustment process to school. It is important to inform families and teachers in order to assist self-regulation skills of children in the preschool period, both at home and at school. Modelling approaches that accept children's emotions, support their attention and control skills and enable them to take responsibility can improve self-regulation. Similarly, teacher-parent cooperation is necessary for the school adjustment process. The process of school adjustment is not restricted within the classroom. For a successful school adjustment process, it will be beneficial for families to receive training and guidance on how to support the child's formal education process to get used to school. Teachers can use various types of activities during the school adjustment and self-regulation process. In addition, individual profiles can be determined through assessments of children's developmental characteristics. Activities can be adapted based on children's individual differences. In terms of research, this study is limited to two measurements carried out in one academic year. In addition, measurements were carried out with two measurement tools based on the teacher's opinion. In future studies, planning longer-term longitudinal studies may be beneficial in terms of monitoring variables. In addition to the teacher's opinion, using different data collection sources such as observation and mother-father-child opinion can diversify the data. Considering self-regulation and school adjustment longitudinally in line with various variables can

reinforce the increase of findings on the subject and therefore the knowledge in the relevant literature. School adjustment and self-regulation issues can be addressed under different headings such as socio-economic level, age differences, temperament, family variables and teacher-child relationships. Observational studies on school adjustment can be carried out. Longitudinal studies can be planned to examine the relationships between self-regulation and school adjustment with different variables. Experimental studies based on teacher training can be organized with respect to school adjustment and self-regulation. In addition, mixed-design studies based on teacher and parent opinions can be planned to determine school adjustment problems.

Okul Öncesi Dönemde Öz Düzenleme ve Okula Uyumun Boylamsal Olarak İncelenmesi

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Özet

Bu araştırmanın amacı, okul öncesi dönemde bağımsız öğrenme davranışlarını ve okula uyumu boylamsal bir şekilde incelemektir. Öğretmenlerin küçük çocukların altı aylık dönemde öz düzenleme ve okula uyum gözlemlerine dayanan bu çalışma nicel, boylamsal ve ilişkisel tarama modelinde yürütülmüştür. Araştırmaya Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı'na bağlı bir okul öncesi eğitim kurumuna devam eden 5-6 yaş grubu 120 çocuk dâhil edilmiştir. Araştırmada iki ölçekten (Bağımsız Öğrenme Davranışları Ölçeği (3-5 yaş) ve 5-6 Yaş Çocuklar İçin Okula Uyum Öğretmen Değerlendirme Ölçeği) yararlanılmıştır. Okul öncesi çocukların öz düzenleme ve okula uyumunun iki ölçekli, altı aylık boylamsal çalışmaya göre incelenmesi sonucunda, ilk olarak güz dönemindeki öz düzenlemenin bahar dönemindeki öz düzenlemeyle olumlu yönde ilişkili olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu sonuca göre, güz döneminde öz düzenleme arttıkça bahar döneminde öz düzenleme artabilir; güz döneminde okula uyum arttıkça bahar döneminde okula uyum da artabilir. Ayrıca, birinci ölçümdeki öz düzenleme ikinci ölçümdeki öz düzenlemeyi yordamaktadır. Aynı bulgu okula uyum için de geçerlidir. Birinci ölçümdeki okula uyum ikinci ölçümdeki okula uyumu yordamaktadır. Okul başlangıcında öz düzenleme ve okula uyum, ikinci dönemdeki öz düzenleme ve okula uyumu etkileyebilir. Bu sonuca göre, okul öncesi eğitime başlayan küçük çocukların öz düzenleme becerilerinin ve okula uyum düzeylerinin kısa ve uzun vadede önemli olduğu söylenebilir. Değişkenlerin birbirleriyle olan kısa ve uzun vadedeki ilişkileri ve yordayıcı etkileri göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, güz dönemindeki öz düzenlemenin her iki dönemde de okula uyum düzeyi ile olumlu yönde ilişkili olduğu belirlenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Okul öncesi dönem, Öz düzenleme, Okula uyum, Boylamsal çalışma



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Önerilen Atıf

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Genişletilmiş Özet

Problem: Çocukların okul öncesi eğitim sürecine uyum sağlaması, birçok kişisel ve çevresel özellikleri içeren karmaşık bir süreçtir (Blair ve Raver, 2015). Çocuklar okula başladıklarında öğretmenlerinden, anne-babalarından ve akranlarından gelen çeşitli sosyal ve akademik isteklerle karşılaşarak sürece uyum sağlayabilmek adına birtakım değişimlerden geçerler (Adynski vd., 2024). Okula uyum adı verilen bu süreçte çocuklar hem bağlı oldukları formal okul ortamının gerekliliklerini yerine getirmekte hem de kişisel ilgi ve ihtiyaçlarına dayalı olarak davranışlarını yönlendirebilmektedirler. Okula uyum, ilk formal eğitim ortamını sağlayan okul öncesi eğitim kurumlarında başlamaktadır. Bu bağlamda okul öncesi dönemde okula uyumun kısa ve uzun süreli etkilerinin ele alındığı araştırmalar özellikle uluslararası alan yazında uzun zamandır gerçekleştirilmektedir. Öz düzenleme, okula uyumu etkileyen değişkenlerden biridir. Okul öncesi dönemde gelişmeye başlayan öz düzenleme (Garon vd., 2008), bilişsel ve duygusal süreçlerin düzenlenmesini içermektedir (Montroy vd., 2016). Genel tanımıyla öz düzenleme, bireyin bir hedefe ulaşmak için duygularını, düşüncelerini ve davranışlarını yönetmesini sağlamakla birlikte üst düzey süreçleri içermektedir (Rothbart, 1989).

Öz düzenleme ve okula uyum ile ilgili çalışmalarda artış olmasına karşılık okul öncesi dönemde okula uyum ve öz düzenleme ile ilgili çalışmaların ayrı ayrı ele alındığı araştırmaların oldukça sınırlı olduğu görülmekle birlikte okula uyum ve öz düzenlemenin bir arada boylamsal olarak ele alındığı bir çalışmaya rastlanılmamıştır. Dolayısıyla bu çalışmanın alan yazına okula uyum ve öz düzenlemenin boylamsal olarak ele alınması açısından katkı sağlayabileceği düşünülmektedir. Ek olarak boylamsal çalışma olarak da sonraki çalışmalara rehberlik edebileceği söylenebilir. Küçük çocukların okul öncesi eğitim sürecinin başındaki okula uyum ve öz düzenleme düzeylerinin gerek birbirleriyle ilişkisi gerekse uzun süreli etkilerinin ortaya konulması konu ile ilgili programlara rehberlik sunabilir. Bu bağlamda araştırmanın amacı, okul öncesi dönemde bağımsız öğrenme davranışları ile okula uyumun boylamsal olarak izlenmesidir. Araştırmanın alt amaçları şu şekildedir:

1. Güz ve bahar dönemlerine ait öz düzenleme ve okula uyum ölçümleri arasında anlamlı düzeyde ilişki var mıdır?
2. Güz ve bahar dönemlerine ait öz düzenleme ve okula uyum ölçümleri arasında anlamlı düzeyde yordayıcı etki var mıdır?

Yöntem: Küçük çocukların öz düzenleme ve okula uyumlarının iki ölçüm doğrultusunda izlenilmesine dayalı bu çalışma, ilişkisel tarama modelinde, nicel ve boylamsaldır. Araştırmada Milli Eğitim Bakanlığına bağlı bir okul öncesi eğitim kurumuna devam eden 5-6 yaş grubundan 120 çocuk yer almaktadır. Veri toplama araçları olarak Kişisel Bilgi Formu, Bağımsız Öğrenme Davranışları (3-5 yaş) Ölçeği ile 5-6 Yaş Çocukları İçin Okula Uyum Öğretmen Değerlendirme Ölçeği kullanılmıştır.

Bağımsız Öğrenme Davranışları Ölçeği (3-5 yaş): Sınıf ortamında düzenli olarak çocuklarla ilgilenen, gözlemleyen bir öğretmen tarafından doldurulan tek boyutlu ölçek 16 madden oluşmaktadır. Sınıf içinde öğretmen, çocukları gözlemleyerek her bir çocuk için ölçeği doldurmakta ve çocuğun söz konusu davranışını 4'lü likert üzerinden ne sıklıkla gösterildiğini işaretlemektedir. Yüksek puanlar öz düzenleme becerisinin çocukta yüksek olduğunu işaret etmektedir. Ölçeğin uyarlama çalışmasına bakıldığında iç tutarlılık katsayısı .97 olarak bulunmuştur (Saraç vd., 2019). Bu araştırma kapsamında ölçeğin iç tutarlılık katsayısı güz döneminde .96, bahar döneminde .97 olarak belirlenmiştir.

5-6 Yaş Çocukları İçin Okula Uyum Öğretmen Değerlendirme Ölçeği: Küçük çocukların okula uyum becerilerini ölçmek amacıyla geliştirilen ölçekteki her maddede öğretmenin sınıf içi gözlemine dayanarak çocuğun söz konusu davranış ne sıklıkta gösterdiği 3'lü derecelendirme sistemi esas alınarak işaretlenir. Ölçekten alınan yüksek puanlar ilgili değişkenin düzeyinin yüksek olduğunu, düşük puanlar ilgili değişkenin düzeyinin düşük olduğunu göstermektedir. Ölçeğin Türkçe'ye uyarlama çalışmaları Önder ve Gülay (2010) tarafından yapılmış olup ölçeğin Türkçe formu, 25 madde ve 4 alt boyuttan (işbirlikli katılım, okuldan kaçınma, kendi kendini yönetme ve okulu sevme) oluşmaktadır. Buna ilaveten ölçeğin test tekrar test uygulamaları arasında olumlu yönde anlamlı ve yüksek bir ilişki olduğu görülmektedir ($r = .97$ $p < .01$). Uyarlama çalışmasında tüm ölçeğin iç tutarlılık katsayısı .70 olarak bulunmuştur (Önder ve Gülay, 2010). Bu araştırmada tüm ölçeğin iç tutarlılık katsayısı güz dönemi için .83 bulunurken bahar dönemi için .80 olarak bulunmuştur.

Veri toplama sürecinde Sinop Üniversitesi İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulundan 09.06.2023 tarihli 2023/97-129 karar sayılı izin alınmıştır. Veri toplama araçları öğretmenler tarafından her çocuk için her dönem bir kez olmak üzere iki defa doldurulmuştur.

Bulgular ve Sonuç: Bulgular doğrultusunda okul öncesi dönem çocukların güz döneminde okula başladıkları öz düzenleme düzeyleri, aynı dönemdeki okula uyum, ikinci dönemdeki öz düzenleme ve okula uyum ile olumlu yönde ilişkilidir. Güz dönemindeki okula uyum, ikinci dönemdeki okula uyum ile ikinci dönemdeki öz düzenleme aynı dönemdeki okula uyum ile olumlu yönde ilişkilidir. Ayrıca güz dönemindeki öz düzenleme, bahar dönemindeki öz düzenlemeyi yordamaktadır ($R = .565$, $R^2 = .319$, $F = 55.293$, $p < .01$). Güz dönemindeki öz düzenleme aynı dönemdeki öz düzenlemenin %32'sini açıklayabilmektedir. Güz dönemindeki okula uyum, bahardaki okula uyumu yordamakla birlikte % 20'sini açıklayabilmektedir ($R = .452$, $R^2 = .204$, $F = 30.229$, $p < .01$). Güz dönemindeki öz düzenleme aynı dönemdeki ($R = .521$, $R^2 = .271$, $F = 43.936$, $p < .01$) ile bahar dönemindeki ($R = .411$, $R^2 = .169$, $F = 24.013$, $p < .01$) okula uyumu yordayarak güzdeki okula uyumun % 27'sini bahardaki okula uyumun ise % 17'sini açıklamaktadır. Bahardaki öz düzenleme, aynı dönemdeki okula uyumu yordamakta ($R = .443$, $R^2 = .196$, $F = 28.731$, $p < .01$) ve % 20'sini açıklayabilmektedir.

Okul öncesi dönem çocuklarının öz düzenleme ile okula uyumlarının iki ölçümlü boylamsal çalışma kapsamında ele alınması sonucunda öncelikle güz dönemindeki öz düzenleme bahar dönemindeki öz düzenleme ile olumlu yönde ilişkilidir. Bu sonuca göre güz dönemdeki öz düzenleme arttıkça, bahardaki öz düzenleme; güz dönemdeki okula uyum arttıkça, bahardaki okula uyum da artabilmektedir. Ayrıca ilk ölçümdeki öz düzenleme ikinci ölçümdeki öz düzenlemeyi yordamaktadır. Aynı bulgu okula uyum açısından da geçerlidir. İlk ölçümdeki okula uyum ikinci ölçümdeki okula uyumu yordamaktadır. Okulun başlangıcındaki öz düzenleme ve okula uyum, ikinci dönemdeki öz düzenleme ve okula uyumu etkileyebilmektedir. Bu sonuca dayalı olarak küçük çocukların okul öncesi eğitime başladıkları öz düzenleme becerilerinin ve okula uyum düzeyinin kısa ve uzun süreli olarak önem taşıdığı söylenebilir. Değişkenlerin birbirleri ile kısa ve uzun süreli ilişkisine ve yordayıcı etkisine bakıldığında güz dönemindeki öz düzenlemenin iki dönemdeki okula uyum düzeyi ile olumlu yönde ilişkili olduğu belirlenmiştir. Güz dönemindeki öz düzenleme arttıkça iki dönemdeki okula uyumun artabileceği söylenebilir. Bulgulara göre bahar dönemindeki öz düzenleme de arttıkça aynı dönemdeki okula uyumda artış olabileceği ifade edilebilir. Öz düzenlemenin kısa ve uzun süreli olarak okula uyumla ilişkili olup, okula uyumu yordadığı söylenebilir. Küçük çocuklarda öz düzenlemenin gelişimi, okula uyum açısından önem taşımaktadır. Ek olarak Araştırmada okul öncesi dönem çocuklarının güz dönemindeki öz düzenleme ve okula uyum puan ortalamalarında bahar döneminde yüksek düzeyde olmasa da artış olduğu belirlenmiştir.

Öneriler: Bu araştırmanın bulguları okul öncesi dönemdeki öz düzenleme becerilerinin okula uyum sağlama açısından önemli bir değişken olduğunu ortaya koyarken başarılı bir okula uyum süreci hedefinin kısa ve uzun süreli olarak gerekli olabileceğini ifade etmektedir. Bu noktada gerek öğretmenlerin gerekse anne-babaların çocukların okula uyum sürecini sağlıklı geçirmelerine yönelik bir yaklaşım içinde olmaları beklenmektedir. Okul öncesi dönemde çocukların öz düzenleme becerilerinin gerek evde gerekse okulda desteklenmesi adına ailelerin ve öğretmenlerin bilgilendirilmesi önem taşımaktadır. Çocukların duygularını kabul eden, dikkat ve kontrol becerilerini destekleyen, sorumluluk almalarını sağlayabilecek yaklaşımlarla model olmak, öz düzenlemeyi geliştirebilecektir. Benzer bir şekilde okula uyum sürecinde de öğretmen-ebeveyn iş birliği gereklidir. Okula uyum süreci sadece sınıfla sınırlı bir durum değildir. Ailelerin de çocuğun okula alışması için formal eğitim sürecini nasıl destekleyeceklerine ilişkin eğitim almaları, yönlendirilmeleri başarılı bir okula uyum süreci açısından yararlı olacaktır. Araştırmalar açısından bakıldığında bu çalışma bir eğitim öğretim yılında gerçekleştirilen iki ölçümle sınırlıdır. Ek olarak ölçümler öğretmen görüşüne dayalı olarak iki ölçme aracıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Sonraki çalışmalarda daha uzun süreli boylamsal çalışmaların planlanması değişkenlerin izlenmesi açısından yarar sağlayabilecektir. Öğretmen görüşünün yanı sıra gözlem, anne-baba-çocuk görüşü gibi farklı veri toplama kaynaklarına başvurulması, verilerin çeşitlenmesini sağlayabilecektir. Öz düzenleme ve okula uyumun farklı değişkenler doğrultusunda boylamsal olarak ele alınması da konu ile ilgili bulguların dolayısıyla ilgili alan yazındaki bilgilerin artmasını destekleyebilir.

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