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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Determining the Practice Differences in Preschool Teachers' Practices for Evaluating Children in the Face-to-Face and Distance Education Process, with the Views of the Teachers

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Abstract

Child assessment studies are essential for the child, the teacher, and the program. Daily evaluations help educators reveal the holistic picture of the child, determine the program's effectiveness, and determine the appropriateness of the methods used by the teacher. The COVID-19 pandemic affected the field of education and all other fields, and it required updating the evaluation methods. This is aimed to compare the evaluation processes of preschool teachers in face-to-face and distance education. The study was designed using basic qualitative research. The participants consist of 20 teachers determined by criterion sampling, one of the purposeful sampling methods. In the research, in which standardized interview and demographic information forms were used, data were collected online and content analysis was used in the analysis. As a result of the research, teachers use different assessment techniques and the same assessment techniques in face-to-face and distance education processes. Assessment techniques are divided into two categories as authentic and traditional assessment; the assessment methods they use are mostly observation interviews and portfolios. As a result of the research, it was determined that the evaluation studies were used at different time intervals. In the light of the findings, it can be said that it is a desirable situation in the literature that teachers use other techniques; however, the frequency of evaluation is not as expected in the literature.

Keywords: Assessment, authentic assessment, pandemic, preschool education, traditional assessment

Introduction

Evaluation, which is a continuous process in which information about children, learning environment, and education is collected, synthesized, and interpreted (Bayhan, 2016), is defined by The National Association of the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) as "Observation process, the record of what children do and how they do it and documents define it as various educational decisions that affect the child" (Hunter Myers, 2021). The reasons for evaluating children in learning environments are grouped under three headings by NAEYC (2004):

1. To be able to make healthy decisions for the education process of children.
2. To recognize children in need of early intervention and to identify special situations.
3. To help the development of the program with educational and developmental interventions.

Educators should know the developmental characteristics of children at a certain age very well to make sense of the behaviors exhibited by children, determine the possible behaviors they should acquire as target behaviors, and use teaching strategies that will enable them to reach these goals. However, the tools to be used in teaching should be

appropriate for the cognitive level of children, teaching relevant to their language development level, and knowing the level of social interaction expected from children according to their development are necessary for planning and carrying out effective teaching practices for children (Howard et al., 2010). In order to achieve all these, evaluation is critical in early childhood and classrooms. Through the assessments made during this period, educators can obtain four types of informations: (1) identifying children in need of special education, (2) making individualized and group education plans, (3) ensuring the development of the program, support needs of the developer and educator, and (4) to what extent the goals set for children are determining whether it is met (Bayhan, 2019).

When the relevant literature is examined, it is seen that the evaluation has four purposes: screening, diagnosis, program evaluation, and evaluation (Bayhan, 2019; Losardo & Syverson, 2020). Screening has an important role in determining developmental delays; it is defined as identifying early symptoms in children at risk of developmental delay (Singh et al., 2017; Yazıcı et al., 2020). The American Academy of Pediatrics states that all babies and children should be evaluated with various standard assessment tools, regardless of whether they show any developmental delay or retardation, and their development should

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be screened at 9, 18, 24, and 30 months (Aksoy & Şahin, 2017). Diagnosis, which is defined as the medical evaluation of children at risk after the screening, has 9 principles: earliness, integrity, diversity, expertise, continuity, competence, cooperation, willingness, and confidentiality (APA, 2013; Bayhan, 2016). Early diagnosis means making the diagnosis as early as possible and initiating the necessary intervention efforts. Integrity focuses on the versatility of diagnosis.

Diversity is the diversity in the assessment tools, methods, and techniques used in the diagnostic process. The focus of the specialization principle is that the team members involved in the diagnosis process have sufficient knowledge in their fields. The continuity principle focuses on the routine continuation of evaluation. The principle of competence is based on the assessment by focusing on the areas that the child can do and the areas that need improvement. The collaborative diagnostic process focuses on the cooperation of the intervention team, family, and school. In the principle of willingness, it is essential to obtain the views of the family and, when necessary, the child at every stage of diagnosis. On the other hand, confidentiality focuses on not making any disclosures in the diagnosis process without the consent of the child and family but using the obtained information and evaluation results for education and guidance purposes (Bayhan, 2019). Program evaluation is primarily undertaken to support the continuous improvement of programs. The information collected during the program evaluation is combined and reported for various purposes such as creating additional resources or identifying the parts of the program that need improvement (Bayhan, 2019). On the other hand, evaluation is used to determine how children have progressed over time by comparing their skills before and after the intervention (Losardo & Syverson, 2020).

Types of Evaluation and Evaluation in Preschool Education Program

When the literature is examined, it is seen that there are many different types of assessment, such as standard/authentic, formal/informal, formative/level determinant, and criterion/norm-based assessment (Buldu, 2010). The type of assessment that forms the focus of this study is standard and authentic assessment. Standard evaluation is the kind of assessment that has the same content for everyone participating in the assessment, is offered under the same conditions for everyone, and the same scoring criteria are used for everyone. The scores are interpreted in the same way for everyone, wherever and whenever it is applied (Akman & Yazıcı, 2016). The authentic assessment focuses on vital knowledge and skills, in which children are observed in natural learning environments such as games without entering the testing and questioning environment; the evaluation is carried out with meaningful and applicable activities in life. Anecdotes, checklists, rubrics, rating scales, observations, and portfolios are authentic assessment tools (Akman, 2010; Buldu, 2010).

When the MEB 2013 Pre-School Education Program is examined, it is seen that the evaluation is handled in three categories: evaluation of children, evaluation of the program, and self-evaluation of the teacher. For the assessment of the child, which is the subject of this study, the development observation form, the development report, and the development file (portfolio) are mandatory evaluation tools (MEB, 2013).

COVID-19 Pandemic and Educational Process in Turkey

The COVID-19 pandemic, which emerged in the last days of 2019 and affected the whole world, deeply affected the field of education and all other fields. Various measures have been taken to reduce the impact of the pandemic and slow its contagious nature. Practices such as flexible working, working from home, and rotating work have been introduced. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, different distance education systems were developed to ensure the continuity of education, and the missing learning gains were tried to be compensated for (Karaca & Kelam, 2020). Countries have tried to find urgent solutions to maintain

the right of individuals to education and keep the inequality of opportunity in education at a minimum level and have started practices to make a rapid transition from traditional education to distance education. With the emergence of the epidemic, distance education has become one of the first options preferred to ensure the continuity of education (Eken et al., 2020). In the 2020–2021 academic year, the fall semester started face to face, but with the rapid increase in cases, distance education was started again. In the spring term, pre-school education institutions continued with face-to-face education.

There was halt in the functioning of schools during COVID-19 and the new and challenging digital learning situation caused by it; to overcome the process with the least damage and obtain detailed information about the practices, some evaluation studies were needed. Some countries experienced natural disasters (e.g., earthquakes or floods) that caused school restructuring on a regional basis, these did not lead to absolute digital learning, lasting for an unpredictable period. Since many countries have not yet experienced a social crisis and then a pandemic that caused school closures, they have limited knowledge on how to deal with the current situation and how to overcome the problems arising from digital learning in this context (Huber & Helm, 2020).

Teachers, parents, and students have faced various problems during the pandemic. For example, both parents and teachers had to encourage children to continue online education. Teachers had to carry out all online teaching activities with their existing skills; therefore, they faced several problems from lack of sufficient materials, technical support, and time to carry out their online teaching activities (Nuere & de Miguel, 2020; Stone & Springer, 2019). UNESCO (2020) also emphasized that students have problems getting adequate support and qualified teaching from their teachers, who participate in distance education under challenging conditions. On the other hand, Kyodo News (2020) mentioned that distance education activities impact the learning outcomes of students during the pandemic.

Purpose of the Research

With the pandemic, there has been a rapid change in our lives, and different applications have taken more place in our lives to ensure continuity in education as in every field. Assessment, which helps us support the areas that need improvement by determining what children can do/know, has a significant place in the education process. When the literature is examined, it is seen that the studies focus on teachers' views on the education and training process in the COVID-19 process (Asri et al., 2021; Giovanella et al., 2020; Lapada et al., 2020; Rasmitadila et al., 2020; Vu et al., 2020). Similarly, there are studies on the views of parents (Garbe et al., 2020; Ok et al., 2021; Parczewska, 2020; Sancho et al., 2021; Yazcayir & Gurgur, 2021). When the studies on recognizing and evaluating the child in the preschool period are examined, it is seen that the compilation (Kan, 2007; Kuru & Akman, 2019; Sapsağlam, 2013), the opinions of the teachers (Ntuli et al., 2014; Topuz & Kaya, 2016). It is seen that there are studies on proficiency levels (İşıkoğlu Erdoğan et al., 2021) and of teachers attitudes (Brown & Rolfe, 2005; Ulusoy, 2019). However, no research has been found on the evaluation studies of preschool teachers in the face-to-face and distance education process during the pandemic. For this reason, this study aims to determine the evaluation processes of preschool teachers in face-to-face and distance education. For this purpose, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. Which evaluation methods did the preschool teachers use in the face-to-face and distance education process?
2. Why did preschool teachers prefer the techniques they use in face-to-face and distance education processes?
3. How often did preschool teachers use face-to-face and distance education assessment techniques?

Methods

Research Pattern

This research, which aims to determine the evaluation methods used by preschool teachers in the face-to-face and distance education process and their reasons, was designed using basic qualitative research, one of the qualitative research methods. Researchers using basic qualitative research are interested in how people interpret their lives, how they construct their world with this information, and how they add meaning to their experiences. Basic qualitative research is one of the most frequently used techniques in education (Merriam, 2009). In conducting basic qualitative research, the researcher(s) seeks to explore and understand a phenomenon, a process, the perspectives and worldviews of the people involved, or a combination of these. Data are collected through interviews, observations, or document analysis. These data are analyzed inductively to identify recurring patterns or common themes that cut through the data. A rich, descriptive summary of the findings is presented and discussed using the literature references that framed the study in the first place (Merriam, 2002).

Working Group

While determining the study group of the research, criterion sampling, one of the purposive sampling methods, was used. Criterion sampling: The study of a situation or situations that meet a predetermined set of criteria. The criterion is determined by the researcher or a previously prepared criteria list can be used (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Critical situations determined by the researcher to explain the

phenomenon he/she is examining can be used for criterion sampling (Creswell & Clark, 2016). In this research, teachers have experienced both face-to-face and distance education processes since the pandemic. In both cases, they were involved in recognizing/evaluating the child determined as a criterion. Information about the study group is presented in Table 1.

When Table 1 is examined, 16 of the teachers participating in the research are female, 4 are male, 10 are 23–30, 8 are 31–40, 2 are 41 years or older, 16 are pre-school education undergraduate, 1 pre-school education graduate, and 3 are child development. It is seen that 11 of them have 1–5, 3 have 6–10, 6 have 11 years and more professional seniority, 7 have 5–10, 7 of the 11–15, and 6 of them have 16 and above. Three teachers stated that there were children with special needs in their class. Two of these children have language and speech disorders, one has intellectual disability and one has emotional and behavioral disorders.

Data Collection Tools

“Demographic Information Form” and “Standardized Interview Form” were used as data collection tools.

Demographic Information Form: In this form, there are questions about gender, age, last education level graduated, and professional experience.

Standardized Interview Form: In this form, there are questions about the assessment methods teachers use in face-to-face and distance education, the reasons for preferring these methods, and the frequency of their use. After the questions were prepared, they were sent to 3 field experts and asked whether the questions were appropriate. In line with the suggestions from the field experts, one more question was added to the form. However, since the problem did not work in the pilot application, the question was removed from the actual application.

Data Collection Process

In order to conduct this research, permission was obtained from the Social and Human Ethics Committee of Ondokuz Mayıs University (Decision number: 2021/768). The data were collected in individual interviews organized online with the Zoom program due to the pandemic. During the data collection process, the participants were primarily informed that the interview would be recorded, and the recording was started after the participant’s consent was obtained. At the beginning of the interview, the participants were asked to read aloud the consent form sent to them via e-mail in the virtual environment and verbally express their willingness to participate in the study. After obtaining consent, interview questions were directed to the participants, 1–10, and teacher and the second author of this study, 11–20. The third author of this study conducted interviews with the teacher. The interviews lasted between 45 and 52 minutes.

Data Analysis

Content analysis was used in the analysis of the data. Content analysis is defined as “any qualitative data reduction and interpretation effort to determine basic coherences and meanings by taking voluminous qualitative material” (Patton, 2015). The following method was followed in the analysis of data in this study.

1. After the data collection process was completed, the voice of each interview was uploaded to a separate Word file for each teacher by giving names such as T.1, T.2.... Then, the audio recordings were transferred to the interview forms without any changes. After all the interviews were written down, the data (20%) of the four teachers who were determined by impartial assignment were confirmed by the first author.

Table 1.

Demographic Information of the Study Group

Gender	<i>f</i>
Female	16
Male	4
Total	20
Age	
23–30	10
31–40	8
41 and over	2
Total	20
Last Graduated Education Level	
Pre-school education (bachelor)	16
Pre-school education (master’s degree)	1
Child development (bachelor)	3
Total	20
Seniority (year)	
1–5	11
6–10	3
11 and over	6
Total	20
Number of Child	
5–10	7
11–15	7
16 and over	6
Total	20
Whether There Are Special Needs Children in the Class	
Yes	3
No	17
Total	20
Special Needs Type of the Child	
Language and speech disorder	2
Mental disability	1
Emotional and behavioral disorder	1
Total	4

2. After the transcription process was completed, the authors independently coded the data and divided them into themes. Afterward, the researchers came together to examine their codes and themes and reached a consensus by talking on the issues of disagreement. After reaching consensus, the codes and themes were arranged, and the findings were defined and interpreted. After the data were analyzed, five teachers (25%) were asked whether the findings reflected their views. Teachers stated that the findings reflect their views.

Transferability, Credibility, and Confirmability of Research

Transferability of the Research: While it is thought that the results obtained in quantitative studies conducted with large groups can generally be generalized to the population, even if there is a certain margin of error, it is thought that the results of studies that were carried out with the participation of a smaller number of people with certain characteristics and in a small and specific setting cannot be applied to other situations or communities. Therefore, the purpose of qualitative research is not to generalize the results to other environments and situations; instead, it is to transfer the results obtained to similar environments (Shenton, 2004; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006). In this study, detailed description and purposive sampling were preferred in order to ensure transferability.

Credibility of Research: In qualitative research, unlike quantitative research, the researcher has to prove how convincing he/she is in the observations he/she made during the research and the data he/she obtained, by using multiple data collection techniques. The better the researcher does this, the higher the internal validity of the research (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006). Expert review and participant confirmation were used in this study to ensure credibility.

Confirmability of Research: In qualitative research, reliability comes up with the concept of confirmability and requires the researcher to confirm the results he/she has reached with the data he/she has collected (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). The external reliability method used in this study is short confirmation.

Results

Evaluation Methods Preschool Teachers Use in Face-to-Face and Distance Education

The evaluation techniques used by preschool teachers in face-to-face and distance education processes are presented in Table 2.

When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that the assessment techniques used by preschool teachers in face-to-face and distance education are divided into two categories as authentic and traditional assessment techniques. When the authentic evaluation techniques used are examined, it is seen that observation is the most used evaluation technique in both face-to-face ($f=14$) and distance education ($f=13$). Observation is followed by both face-to-face ($f=10$) and distance education ($f=6$) interviews. The third most used technique is the portfolio in both face-to-face ($f=9$) and distance education ($f=4$). Regarding this issue, T.2 and T.13 stated the following:

"I make classroom observations and prepare developmental checklists to get to know children. I do parent interviews. In addition to these, I apply some standard tests, such as the Scamper test. I use portfolio in assessment studies. The portfolio includes the child's personal information, examples of activities, development, and checklists, and notes from the observations I made during the year." (T.2)

"I get help from parents in online education. I'm on the phone with parents, asking them to send me photos of the activities the

Table 2.
Evaluation Methods Preschool Teachers Use in Face-to-Face and Distance Education

Face to Face		Distance	
Authentic Assessment		Authentic Assessment	
Observation	14	Observation	13
Meeting	10	Meeting	6
Portfolio	9	Portfolio	4
The game	5	Anekdot	3
Progress report	4	Checklist	3
Checklist	3		
Total	45	Total	28
Traditional Evaluation		Traditional Evaluation	
Standard tests	1	Developmental assessment scales	1
Projective tests	1		
Total	2	Total	1

kids have completed every day. I already gave the standard tests as a file at the beginning of the year. However, it is difficult to develop, observe and evaluate children's socialization skills in distance education. For the development of socialization skills, there are assignments to call and chat with different friends on the phone twice a week. In addition, on special occasions such as oil lamps, holidays, and old people's day, I give homework to talk to elders such as grandparents, grandfathers, aunts, etc. on the phone." (T.2)

"I use observation to get to know the child individually. I generally prefer to make my observations at the start of the day and during the game times. In other words, the children played freely with their friends, I prefer to observe when they spend time individually. While evaluating the child, I consider the developmental observation forms and prepare development reports in the light of this; of course, I also use the portfolio, which is indispensable." (T.13)

"I apply all of these in distance education; I do each of them one by one, but what I get in practice decreases a lot. I take this into account when choosing my activities. I mostly prefer activities where I can observe and see the child's development. I can evaluate accordingly, but the data I receive is still very, very incomplete." (T.13)

Reasons for Preschool Teachers to Prefer the Assessment Methods Used in Face-to-Face and Distance Education

The reasons preschool teachers prefer the assessment techniques they use in face-to-face and distance education are presented in Table 3.

When Table 3 is examined, it can be seen that the reasons for preferring the assessment techniques used by preschool teachers are divided into two categories: from the perspective of the child and the perspective of the program. When the benefits for the child are examined, when the answers given are examined, it is seen that the most focused situation in both face-to-face ($f=11$) and distance education ($f=13$) is to follow the development of the child. It is seen that the other focus for children in both education processes is supporting children. When the answers are examined in terms of the evaluation of the program, it is seen that increasing the quality of education in face-to-face education is the most preferred reason. At the same time, it is determined that the answers given in terms of the program in the distance education process are focused on being suitable for distance education. Regarding this issue, T.6 and T.19 stated the following:

"I use these methods to observe the child's development and see where he has come from and where he has come in the process.

Table 3.
Preschool Teachers' Reasons for Preferring the Assessment Methods Used in Face-to-face and Distance Education

Face to Face		Distance	
In Terms of Children		In Terms of Children	
To follow the development of children	11	To follow the development of children	13
Getting to know the child	4	Be able to support children	2
Be able to support children	3	Understanding the psychological state of children	1
Identifying problem behaviors	2		
Total	20	Total	16
In Terms of the Program		In Terms of the Program	
Increasing the quality of education	2	Suitable for distance education	4
To understand the effectiveness of the process	1	Evaluate the effectiveness of the program	3
Total	3	Total	7

If a point needs to be developed in the child, I write them specifically in the development observation report.” (T.6)

“We did not do much distance education like other education levels, so I had the opportunity to get to know the children more. I have information about their development, I use these methods to see how advanced their development is.” (T.6)

“The reason I chose these techniques is because it allows me to get to know children in a versatile way; I find it important. I prefer these techniques because they provide the chance to watch children in their natural environment, games or activities.” (T.19)

“I prefer these techniques because of the limited interaction with children in online education. Because these techniques allow me to learn more about children in online education than other techniques.” (T.19)F

Frequency of Preschool Teachers' Use of Assessment Methods Used in Face-to-Face and Distance Education

The frequency of using the assessment techniques that preschool teachers use in face-to-face and distance education processes is presented in Table 4.

When Table 4 is examined, it is seen that nine teachers make daily assessments in both face-to-face and distance education. When the frequency of evaluation in face-to-face education is examined, the answers given are when there is a problem ($f=5$), frequently ($f=4$), once a term ($f=3$), twice a term ($f=3$), monthly ($f=1$), and It is seen that it is in the form of weekly ($f=1$). When the evaluation frequencies in the distance education process are examined, it is seen that once a term ($f=6$), weekly ($f=3$), frequently ($f=3$), and monthly ($f=1$) answers are given. Regarding this issue, T.4 and T.11 stated the following.

“I observe every day. As for the anecdotal technique, I always take notes when I see a different movement. I repeat some techniques at the beginning and end of the semester to see the difference in the child, and what is progressing or changing. Also, when I need a situation other than that, I repeat it in case of a problem.” (T.4)

“I pay attention to meeting 2-3 times a week. At the end of the process, I evaluate the portfolios.” (T.4)

“I use child recognition techniques throughout the academic year. Because development continues all the time. However, I do

Table 4.
Frequency of Preschool Teachers' Use of Assessment Methods Used in Face-to-Face and Distance Education

Face to Face		Distance	
Everyday	9	Everyday	9
When there is a problem	5	1 time per term	6
Often	4	Weekly	3
Once per term	3	Often	3
Twice per term	3	Monthly	1
Monthly	1		
Weekly	1		
Total	26	Total	22

my weighty studies such as standard tests, and parent interviews within the first 1 or 1.5 months when the school opens. Although I deem it necessary, I make home visits in the future.” (T.11)

“These are the techniques I know best and can easily apply. I adapt these techniques to practice most efficiently in the distance education process.” (T.11)

Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Child recognition and evaluation studies have a significant role in determining and supporting the child's development. Thanks to the teachers' evaluation studies systematically, the developmental levels of children, their interests, and strengths can be determined, and thus the areas that need support are developed. Thanks to the evaluation studies, deviations in the development of children can be determined, and if necessary, they can be directed to the relevant places. In addition, thanks to evaluation studies, teachers can evaluate the effectiveness of their programs and instructional strategies and adapt them when necessary. For this reason, evaluation studies in classrooms are critical in both face-to-face and distance education.

As a result of the research, it was seen that the preschool teachers in the study group mainly included authentic assessment methods in their classes. It has been observed that traditional assessment techniques are given less place in early childhood education. The American Educational Research Association, the American Psychological Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education have set certain standards for tests developed in education and psychology under “Standards for Education and Psychology Tests.” Many tests prepared for children in early childhood do not meet the technical standards specified in the “Standards for Education and Psychology Tests.” This is because some of the theories about what and how the child learns during the preparation period for the tests lose their effectiveness (Camara, 2007; Ekinici, 2012; ETS, 2014). For this reason, it is a pleasing finding that preschool teachers focus on authentic assessment methods rather than traditional assessment methods.

When the authentic assessment methods used by the teachers participating in the research are examined, it is seen that observation, interview, portfolio, game, progress report, and checklist are used in face-to-face education. Progress reports and games are evaluation types that are not used in distance education. When the literature is examined, it is seen that the answers given in our research show parallelism with the previous studies (Mercan Uzun et al., 2017; Ntuli et al., 2014; Okatan & Tagay, 2021; Topuz & Kaya, 2016; Türkoğlu, 2017). It was determined that the most used evaluation technique in all studies was observation. However, as stated in the introduction, the development observation form, development report, and development file (portfolio) are mandatory evaluation tools in evaluating the child in the MEB 2013 Pre-School Education Program (MEB, 2013). However, when Table 2 is examined, it is seen that the evaluation methods, which are compulsory in our official education program, are used by all teachers.

It was determined that the evaluation methods they used, especially in the distance education process, were minimal, but not all authentic evaluation methods were included in both teaching processes. For example, as can be seen in Table 3, some of the teachers stated that they use the techniques they use to identify problem behaviors. However, functional evaluation, ABC recording, time, and event sampling are more functional evaluation techniques in determining problem behaviors and their causes. However, none of the teachers mentioned these assessment methods. In their study, Bernes et al. (2018) determined that teachers lack understanding of the causes of problem behaviors. As mentioned above, the assessment effectively identifies problem behaviors and applies intervention methods. It is seen that teachers' information needs on this subject also cause problems in classroom management, program planning, and child support (Bernes et al., 2018).

Similarly, checklists are used, but these lists are limited to the presence or absence of behavior. However, rating scales and rubrics reveal the level of the behavior more clearly than checklists. Although it is a pleasing finding that teachers use alternative assessment techniques such as game-based assessment and portfolio (in fact, all teachers should use it because it is a critical assessment tool), it seems thought-provoking that this assessment technique is not encountered in a program suitable for program-based assessment such as the Preschool Education Program. Additionally, the anecdotal record has given limited space, while methods such as sample records, monitoring, and sociometry are not included. It can be thought that the reason for this is because the child recognition and assessment course in the preschool education undergraduate program has become compulsory as of 2018. It is thought that teachers may not have taken this course in their undergraduate education since recognizing and assessing the child is in the category of elective courses in the 2006 undergraduate program. However, it should be taken into account that the subject of evaluation is included in the scope of other classes. In the study conducted by İşikoğlu Erdoğan et al. (2021), it was determined that approximately 80% of preschool teachers had average or lower proficiency in recognizing and evaluating children. In the research conducted by Banerjee and Luckner (2013) and Topuz and Kaya (2016), it is seen that teachers focus on specific methods such as developmental observation forms and different observation forms. As can be seen, there are parallels between the findings of this study and previous studies.

When the reasons for preferring the evaluation techniques used by the preschool teachers participating in the research are examined, it is seen that the answers are divided into two categories: from the perspective of the child and the perspective of the program. Beatty (2014) states explicitly that there are two main reasons for using observation: evaluation of the child and evaluation of the program. When the reasons for being preferred in terms of children are examined, it is seen that following the development of the child, getting to know the child, being able to support children, and identifying problem behaviors are the reasons for preference in face-to-face education; it has been determined that following the development of children, being able to support children and understanding the psychological state of children are the reasons for preference in distance education. It is a pleasing finding that by following the development of children, planning the attainment indicators in this direction, and supporting their development. However, it was surprising that few teachers focused on getting to know the child. Thanks to the activities to get to see the child, the interests and abilities of the children are determined, and the preparation of the program in line with these ensures more active participation of the children. For this reason, it is thought that recognition studies have an essential place in the evaluation process.

Similarly, in the studies conducted by Okatan and Tagay (2021) and Topuz and Kaya (2016), it was determined that teachers generally

make evaluations in order to evaluate the development of the child. When the reasons for preferring the evaluation techniques in terms of the program were examined, it was determined that they chose face-to-face education to increase the quality of education and to understand the effectiveness of the process and distance education, for the purpose of being suitable for this process and evaluating the effectiveness of the program. However, it was seen that the majority of teachers did not focus on the evaluation of the program. However, program evaluation is critical in early childhood education as it is in all education levels. The teacher needs to evaluate the program and make the necessary updates for the children to reach their achievements. In this research question, another situation attracts the attention of researchers. As stated in the Introduction section, the MEB 2013 Pre-School Education Program includes the evaluation of the child, the program, and the teacher. However, none of the teachers participating in the research stated that they assessed themselves.

In the last research question in which we examined how often teachers evaluate, 9 teachers stated that they do the daily evaluation in face-to-face and distance education. Short-term daily systematic evaluations accumulate and provide a complete picture of the child (Bayhan, 2016). Although it is a pleasing finding that nine teachers evaluate daily, it is a sad finding that most of the teachers do assess but not regularly. The fact that the evaluation is not routinely done is considered as an obstacle to the reliable assessment of the child and the program.

Suggestions

As a result of the research, the following recommendations can be made:

- It is seen that teachers have a lack of knowledge about different assessment methods. When YÖK Pre-School Education Programs are examined, it is seen that there is no compulsory course specifically for recognizing and evaluating the child before the 2018 program. It is thought that this is the reason for the lack of knowledge in teachers. Cooperation can be made between the Ministry of National Education and universities to meet teachers' knowledge needs about recognizing and evaluating children.
- This research is a research carried out by designing with basic qualitative research. More comprehensive research can be done by using observation, document analysis, and different scales in future research.

When the evaluation part of the MEB 2013 Pre-School Education Program is examined, only the Development Observation Form, the Development Report, and the Development File are given in the summary form in the evaluation part of the children. As mentioned in the first suggestion, it is seen that there is a lack of knowledge of teachers in the field at present. Information on assessment techniques, advantages, and disadvantages can be given to the MEB 2013 Pre-School Education Program.

The Role of Researchers

Researchers are field experts working on early childhood. He/she has research based on qualitative research methods. Within the scope of this study, the second and third authors conducted interviews. The first, second, and third authors were equally involved in the data analysis and reporting process.

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