

Time Dependent Changes in the Opinions of First Grade Students Regarding Their Preschool and Primary School Teachers

(İlköğretim 1. Sınıf Öğrencilerinin Anasınıfı ve İlköğretim Öğretmenlerine İlişkin
Düşüncelerinde Zaman İçinde Görülen Değişimler)

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Abstract: The goal of this research is to investigate how opinions of first grade students, coming from different types of preschools and attending different primary schools, change from the beginning to the end of one school year about their preschool and primary school teachers. In this context, we used a qualitative case study method, with a sample of 27 first grade students in order to observe changes in the opinions of students and subsequently analyze important differences between these school types. Our sample includes three different categories of first grade students: 9 students graduated from the kindergarten of a Ministry of National Education Primary School (MONEPS) and continuing with the same primary school, 9 students graduated from the kindergarten of a Private Primary School (PPS) and continuing with the same primary school and finally 9 students graduated from an Independent Preschool Administered by the Ministry of National Education (IPAMONE) and continuing with the Ministry of National Education Primary School. For each student, relevant data was collected through interviews with semi-structured questionnaires, conducted twice at the beginning and at the end of a seven month period within the 2008-2009 academic year twice. Following these interviews, any differences or similarities between the answers of students coming from different types of schools are investigated. As an additional outcome of this study, changes in the opinions of each student between the two associated interviews were identified. The results of first interviews show that students in all types of schools liked doing reading and writing exercises with their teachers. However, during their second interviews, they favored studying and examinations instead. Nearly all of the students remembered their preschool experiences and mentioned that they missed play activities and the close relationship they had established with their preschool teachers during that period.

Keywords: preschool, primary school, teacher

Öz: Bu araştırmanın amacı, farklı okul öncesi eğitim kurumlarının anasınıflarından gelerek farklı ilköğretim okullarının 1. sınıflarına devam etmekte olan öğrencilerin, anasınıfı ve ilköğretim 1. sınıftaki öğretmenlerine ilişkin düşüncelerinde eğitim-öğretim yılı başı ve sonu arasında meydana gelen değişimleri incelemektir. Nitel araştırma metodolojisinin desenlerinden biri olan durum çalışması yöntemiyle gerçekleştirilen çalışmamızın çalışma grubunu 2008-2009 eğitim-öğretim yılında üç farklı ilköğretim okulunda öğrenim gören toplam 27 ilköğretim 1. sınıf öğrencisi oluşturmaktadır. Çalışmamızda öncelikle öğrencilerin okul türüne göre düşüncelerindeki değişim araştırıldığından çalışma grubumuz için M.E.B. ilköğretim okulunun anasınıfından gelip aynı okulun 1. sınıfına devam eden 9 öğrenci; özel ilköğretim okulunun anasınıfından gelip aynı okulun 1. sınıfına devam eden 9 öğrenci ve M.E.B.'na bağlı bağımsız anaokulunun anasınıfından gelip M.E.B. ilköğretim okulunun 1. sınıfına devam eden 9 öğrenci belirlenmiştir. Araştırma verileri, yarı yapılandırılmış soru formlarıyla, görüşme yöntemi kullanılarak toplanmıştır. Görüşmeler sonucunda öğrencilerin okul türlerine göre yedi ay arayla verdikleri yanıtlar arasında farklılık veya benzerliklerin olup olmadığı araştırılarak çalışmamızın bir başka amacı olan zaman içinde görülen değişimler kaydedilmiştir. Araştırmamız sonucunda, tüm okul çeşitlerindeki öğrencilerin ilk görüşmelerde öğretmenleriyle okuma-yazma etkinlikleri yapmaktan hoşlandıklarını belirtmiş olmalarına karşın ikinci görüşmelerde bunun yerine öğretmenleriyle ders çalışma ve sınav olmayı tercih ettikleri görülmüştür. Öğrencilerin neredeyse tamamı anasınıfı yaşantılarını çok iyi hatırlamış ve özellikle öğretmenleriyle birlikte oyun oynatmaya ve kurdukları sıcak iletişime olan özlemlerini dile getirmişlerdir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: okul öncesi, ilköğretim, öğretmen

Introduction

Contemporary researches on education increasingly focus on changes and difficulties encountered during the transition from preschool to primary school, resulting in increased awareness of this issue in both educators and parents. Various factors outside of the schools, such as the attitudes of parents, different quality levels of the child, and the school environment, determine whether this transition is easily handled or leads to complications. Moreover, professional qualifications of the teacher and their attitude towards the child also play significant roles in a healthy realization of this adaptation. The transition from a sheltered educational and family environment to primary school, where different rules and responsibilities must be learned and adopted, is a difficult and important milestone in a child's life. By observing this period from a seven year old child's point of view and seeing changes in their opinions about their teachers over time will help us better understand their needs and guide them through associated difficulties. Furthermore, discussing reasons behind changes in a student's opinions about their preschool and primary school teachers will be helpful in taking measures towards improving teacher qualifications.

A child's relationship with adults plays an important role in her social and emotional development. The most important adults in a child's life are of course their parents, followed closely by their teachers. Successful adaptation of children to the school environment, together with their academic success critically depends on their relationships with their teachers. Positive feelings towards school life and teachers will directly influence the quality of life during school and hence are very important during this period (Zembar, 2005). Students who are forced to understand and adapt to two very different school environments with distinct features and different teacher profiles may sometimes miss their preschool experiences and their preschool teachers, while trying to adapt to the new requirements of primary school and the attitudes of associated teachers. In order to make this transition as efficient as possible, it is necessary that teachers and other adults around the children provide sufficient support to them (Ari, 1995; Oktay, 2006). Upon starting primary school, children begin a new period in their lives. They leave the familiar environment of their family and preschool to which they were used to and in which they had gained acceptance. A seven year old child starting the first grade finds herself in an unusually crowded setting, in which she tries to establish her place within a social environment that is very much unlike the sheltered atmosphere of the preschool and she has to survive without immediate support from her family (Ari, 1995). This transition is particularly more difficult for students in this stage of their lives within countries where there are substantial differences in the context and teaching practices of preschool and primary school programs. Many problems arise when children who are used to a learning environment based on play based teaching methods try to adapt to the first grade (Yeo & Clarke, 2006). According to Hanline and Knowlton, the “fear of the unknown” and the perception of decreasing familial control are the primary reasons why such transition stages are stressful (cited in Dunst, Trivette & Cornwell, 1989). In addition to curricular differences, the organization of the school and lessons, the physical and social environment, and changes in academic expectations are among other factors that may increase adaptation problems. Consequently, a child often feels an unfamiliar sense of being tested in all of these areas when she enters primary school. This, in turn, makes the beginning of primary school a stressful experience in itself. Considering its social dimension, this transition to primary school represents a substantial change in the child's perceived place in both her family as well as the society in general. As children start primary school, their roles, identities and expectations as well as their relations with their environment and the expectations of the people they interact with change (Einarsdottir, Perry & Dockett, 2008). Moreover, starting a mandatory educational period can be seen as one of the child's first officially assigned duties. Therefore, it is quite natural that a child has strong feelings and mixed emotions when she is taking the first and most important steps towards becoming an independent member of the society (Lappalainen, 2008).

During this period, the teacher plays a significant role besides that of the family and the environment. Since the impressions of children during their first years of primary education will affect the attitudes in the years to come, the opinions of children regarding their teachers established during these critical periods will lay the foundations for their future adaptability and success (Arı, 1995). As part of their adaptation to the first grade, children not only need to improve their academic skills but also their social skills in interacting with peers and teachers. Since teachers are one of the most important constituents of the social environment in this new school setting, establishing positive relations with them will make the school experience much safer and comfortable for the child. According to Bowman, Fillmore and Weikart, the more unfamiliar and different the school environment is, the harder it will be for the child to adapt (cited in Margetts, 2002). Consequently, for the purposes of facilitating this adaptation period, it seems crucial to ensure that the new school environment is organized to be familiar, preventing the children from feeling as if they are strangers in this new environment. If the environment is familiar to the children, they use their skills, knowledge and previous experience to make sense of duties and responsibilities they encounter (Margetts, 2002). Solutions to this feeling of unfamiliarity experienced by a child should be sought within the social environment. Several qualities of teachers such as their warmth, consistency, control of the classroom and ability to carefully observe communication among children carefully are very important in this regard (Dağlıoğlu, 2007). Existing research shows that the child's inability to establish a healthy relationship with her teacher and the school environment has a negative impact on development. For example, according to Miller, Gouley, Shields, Dickstein, Seifer, Magee and Fox (2003), children under risk of not being able to adapt to this transition period are less skillful in transferring their emotional knowledge to the social situations they encounter. If a child is not socially competent and cannot successfully communicate with her teacher, their social and emotional development is likely to be negatively affected as a result of not being able to establish positive social relations during primary education. Consequently, the establishment of strong and positive relations with teachers is identified to have a crucial impact on a child's success in adapting to the school environment at every level.

Substantial research effort has been devoted to the study of both opinions of first grade students regarding their teachers prior to, during and after the transition from preschool to the first grade as well as different components in the teacher's behavior that has impact on these opinions. Primary areas of focus in this context has been factors that effect this adaptation process (Yeo & Clarke, 2006), effects of positive teacher attitude on students during preschool and the first years of primary school (Brizuela & Garcia-Sellers, 1999; Pedersen, Faucher & Eaton, 1978; Stipek, Feiler, Byler, Ryan, Milburn & Salmon, 1998; Burst, Hart, Charlesworth & De Wolf, 1993), and differences in student opinions between the beginning and the end of their first year in primary school (Donelan-McCall & Dunn, 1997). Studies carried out by Yeo and Clarke (2006) have shown that students that

are observed to be better adapted received higher scores at the end of the school year, did not need additional learning support and demonstrated better social skills compared to students with adaptation problems. As part of their work on the adaptation period of first grade students in primary school, Brizuela and Garcia-Sellers (1999) observed the perceptions of teachers and their relationships with children, and found that teacher support both during and after the transition period facilitates their adaptation and increases their future success. There are also several studies which show that students who can establish a supportive relation with their teachers during the first grade have much easier time adapting to their classes and school (Pedersen, Faucher and Eaton, 1978). Stipek, Beiler, Ryan, Milburn and Salmon (1998) found that students, who receive social and emotional support from their teachers during preschool and primary education, demonstrated less anxiety and achieved greater success. Similarly, research carried out by Burst, Hart, Charlesworth and De Wolf (1993) has shown that students whose teachers emphasize social needs of their students and provide activities that fit their developmental stage demonstrated less anxiety and stress at the end of the school year. As part of a large scale, observation based study carried out by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD, 2002), it was observed that students whose teachers provide greater emotional support were more interested in academic activities, established greater social interaction with their peers and engaged less in negative behavior. In contrast, a longitudinal study by Donelan-McCall and Dunn (1997) has shown with a group of 44 first grade students that it is possible for positive opinions about school experience and teachers at the beginning of the school year to be replaced with negative opinions towards the end of the school year.

Existing researches in Turkey related to teacher-student relations during the transition period includes; studies on the knowledge of preschool and primary school teachers on healthy adaptation to school (Oktay, 2006); the effects of orientation programs designed for children starting primary school (Bilgili & Yurtal, 2009) and different methods for primary school teachers to cope with adaptation problems of students at the beginning of the school year (Sarp, 1995). In this context, Oktay's (2006) study discovered that preschool and class teachers did not have the necessary knowledge and skills to help students adapt to the first grade. Moreover in the same study, it was also seen that experienced primary school teachers linked adaptation problems of students to different factors such as the families of students and the preschools they attended rather than to themselves. In the study carried out by Bilgili and Yurtal (2009) on the effects of orientation programs on adaptation of students starting primary school, it was found that these programs contributed to teacher and student acquaintance, helped to establish feelings of safety and comfort in moving around the school. Moreover, these orientation programs also improved student perceptions about school as an entertaining place and improved teacher-student interactions. In Sarp's (1995) study focusing on orientation problems faced by students starting primary school and coping strategies applied by teachers has shown that many of

the problems could be solved through interactions between teachers and students that suffer from adaptation problems and through one-to-one attention given by teachers.

As evident from the range and scope of existing research summarized above, there have not yet been any extensive studies focusing on the changes in the opinions of students about their teachers during the critical periods including the preschool, the transition from preschool to primary school and the first year of primary school in Turkey. In this context, the present research fills a gap in the literature by revealing differences between different types of schools in this regard, together with reasons and factors leading to these differences and can help educators and decision makers better understand the importance of teacher competence. As a result, the aim of this study is to investigate students from different preschool backgrounds, attending different types of primary schools and the change in the views of students about their preschool and first grade teachers over time. We hope that the findings of this research will be useful in improving the quality of education and teacher competence.

Method

Methodology of the Study

In this research the case study technique, based on one or more special cases being investigated and analyzed in depth and can be characterized as a qualitative study technique, has been used (Karasar, 2003; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005).

Participants of the Study

The study group in this research is composed of 27 first grade students from three different primary schools within the 2008 – 2009 school years. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample group. Purposive sampling is based on a detailed investigation of situations that are believed to contain sufficiently rich information. In this study, the maximum variation sampling method was used among purposive sampling methods. The aim of this technique is to form a relatively small sample and maximally represent the variety of individuals that may be biased with respect to the problem being studied. The primary purpose of forming a sample based on maximum variety is not to generalize the results but to find out whether there is a common or a shared situation between cases and to present different dimensions of the problem according to this diversity (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005). As the changes in the opinions of first grade students coming from different preschools about their teachers is investigated,

9 students graduated from the age-six class of a Ministry of National Education Primary School and continuing the same primary school, 9 students graduated from the age-six class of a

Private Primary School (PPS) and continuing with the same primary school and finally 9 students graduated from an Independent Preschool Administered by the Ministry of National Education (IPAMONE) and continuing in a Ministry of National Education Primary School (MONEPS) were selected. In organizing the sample, an attempt was made to keep the number of male and female students the same. At the end, 13 male and 14 female students were selected. The gender of all the teachers that took part in the study was female.

Data Collection

During the data collection phase, separate interviews with students were carried out. The questionnaire was formed by the researchers and was composed of open ended questions. Previous research on similar topics was used in designing the questionnaire. Moreover, opinions of two different experts specializing in assessment and evaluation were also consulted to ensure the validity of the content. It is also important to note that this study is part of an ongoing research that has other components not yet completed. For that reason, the data in this study were collected from only four questions of the questionnaire which had ten questions in total. Following the development of the questionnaire, it was administered on six first grade students. As a result of the pilot study, the questions that students had difficulty in understanding were identified and changed; and the questionnaire was subsequently reformed and finalized. Students in the pilot study were later excluded from the scope of the study. After getting necessary official permissions, interviews were done within a week with first grade students in November closely following the beginning of the school year. During interviews, students were asked what they liked and disliked doing with their preschool and first grade teachers in both November and June. Second set of interviews were carried out and finished within a week seven months later than the first interviews in June. The gathering of all the data took place between November 2008 and June 2009. Interviews were carried out in a suitable room in the school building with permission from the teachers. The note taking technique was used in recording the interview data. Face to face interviews lasted about 35 minutes on average.

Data Analysis

The content analysis technique was used in analyzing the semi-structured interviews with first grade students. Firstly, data gathered from interviews with 27 students were transferred to the computer, and a corresponding data set was created. Some students had given multiple answers to some questions. The data was subsequently analyzed, divided into meaningful parts and coded. The coding was organized in the light of notions inferred from data gathered from the research done rather than predetermined notions. After that, based on the codes that were generated in the first phase, these

codes were categorized. Repeated codes were expressed through their frequency values to enhance reliability and to enable comparison between categories.

Results of the Study

In this section, results derived from the interviews are presented and the most important findings related to the opinions of the children are summarized.

Differences in the Opinions of Primary School Students Regarding Their Primary School Teachers Between November and June Interviews

Tables 1, 2 and 3 present expressions of children about activities they would like to do with their primary school teacher, were categorized based on the time of the interview and the type of the school. Categories of activities were considered were “Class Activities”, “Out of Class Activities” and “Relations with Teacher”.

Table 1. Most favorable activities mentioned by the students coming from the age six class of a PPS and attending the same PPS about their primary school teacher in the November and June interviews

Category	Activities Mentioned in November Interviews		Activities Mentioned in June Interviews	
		<i>f</i>		<i>f</i>
Class Activities	Studying lessons (5)	21	Studying lessons (9)	18
	Reading exercises (5)		Reading exercises (2)	
	Activities (3)		Activities (2)	
	Homework (1)		Homework (2)	
	Writing exercises (6)		Examinations (3)	
	Experiments (1)			
Out of Class Activities	Playing games (3)	7	Playing games (1)	4
	Painting (1)		Painting (3)	
	Telling stories (2)			
	Watching movies (1)			
Relations with Teacher	Praises by the teacher (3)	6	Praises by the teacher (2)	2
	Being held by the teacher (3)			
TOTAL		34		24

Table 1 summarizes the results of both interviews, conducted in November and June, identifying most favorable activities that students coming from Age Six Class of Private Primary School and attending the first grade of the same Private Primary School like to do with their primary school teachers. Activities that were found to be common to both November and June interviews were

as follows: Under the “Class Activities” category, “studying lessons, reading exercises, activities and homework” were common whereas under the “Out of Class Activities” category, “game play and painting” were common. When frequencies are considered, the number of students who indicated that they liked the activity of studying lessons (f=5) increased in the June interviews (f=9) with a corresponding decrease in other activities. In particular, while students indicated at the beginning of the school year that they liked doing writing exercises with their teacher (f=6), this activity was not mentioned at all at the end of the year. Another decrease was observed in mentions of reading exercises as a preferred activity from the beginning of the year (f=5) to the end of the year (f=2). A similar decrease in the number of times different out of class activities and relations with the teacher was also observed.

Table 2. Most favorable activities mentioned by the students coming from the age six class of MONEPS and attending the first grade of the same MONEPS about their primary school teachers in the November and June interviews

Category	Activities Mentioned in November Interviews	<i>f</i>	Activities Mentioned in June Interviews	<i>f</i>
Class Activities	Studying lessons (7)	17	Studying lessons (7)	17
	Reading exercises (3)		Reading exercises (2)	
	Homework (2)		Homework (2)	
	Writing exercises (5)		Activities (2) Examinations (4)	
Out of Class Activities	Playing games (1)	4	Playing games (4)	13
	Painting (2)		Painting (3)	
	Sports (1)		Sports (1)	
			Solving puzzles (2)	
			Singing (2) Watching cartoons (1)	
Relations with Teacher	Praises by the teacher (2)	2	Praises by the teacher (3)	6
			Being listened by the teacher (3)	
TOTAL		23		36

Table 2 give results of both interviews, conducted in November and June, about most favorable activities that students coming from the Age Six Class of Ministry of National Education Primary School and attending the first grade of the same Ministry of National Education Primary School wants to do with their primary school teachers. Activities that were found to be common to both November and June interviews were as follows: Under the “Class Activities” category, “studying

lessons, reading exercises and homework” were common, under the “Out of Class Activities” category, “game play, painting and sports” were common and finally, under the “Relations with Teacher” category, “praises by the teacher” was found to be common. Even though “writing” was mentioned by 5 out of 9 students in November interviews, it was not mentioned at all in the June interviews. When frequencies are considered, there was an increase in the preference for activities “game play” and “painting” under the category of “Out of Class” but there was also new activities such as “solving puzzles” (f=2), “singing” (f=2) and “watching cartoons” (f=1). Finally, there was an increase in the amount of positive comments for relations with the teacher.

Table 3. Most favorable activities mentioned by the students coming from IPAMONE and attending the MONEPS about their primary school teachers in the November and June interviews

Category	Activities Mentioned in November Interviews	f	Activities Mentioned in June Interviews	f
Class Activities	Studying lessons (8)	18	Studying lessons (8)	17
	Reading exercises (3)		Reading exercises (1)	
	Activities (1)		Activities (3)	
	Writing exercises (6)		Examinations (5)	
Out of Class Activities	Playing games (1)	3	Playing games (3)	7
	Sports (1)		Painting (3)	
	Telling stories (1)		Sports (1)	
Relations with Teacher	Praises by the teacher (2)	2	Praises by the teacher (3) Affection of the teacher (2)	5
TOTAL		23		29

In Table 3, results of interviews conducted in November and June about most favorable activities that students coming from Independent Preschool Administered by the Ministry of National Education and attending to the Ministry of National Education Primary School want to do with their primary school teachers are presented. Activities that were found to be common to both November and June interviews were as follows: Under the “Class Activities” category, “studying lessons, reading exercises and activities” were common, under the “Out of Class Activities” category, “game play and sports” were common and finally under the “Relations with Teacher” category, “praises by teacher” was found to be common. When frequencies are considered, “studying lessons” was found to be the most preferred activity in both November (f=8) and June (f=7) interviews. “Reading” activities was

only infrequently indicated in November interviews (f=3), further decreasing in June interviews (f=1). Even though most of the students (6 out of 9) indicated in the beginning of the year that they liked writing exercises, it is notable that none of them mentioned this activity at the end of the year. Nevertheless, new academic activities such as “examinations” were mentioned at the end of the year. Finally, it is also notable that frequencies of all out of class activities and relations with teachers increased at the end of the year.

When these results are compared for different types of schools, it can be seen that students of both government schools mentioned that they like to study with their teachers in both the November and June interviews. Private Primary School students liked that activity more at the end of the first grade than the beginning. In all three schools, there was a decrease in positive feelings about reading activities with the teacher. Moreover, it is noteworthy that in all three schools, writing activities that were mentioned frequently by all students in November interviews were not mentioned at all in the June interviews. Another common observation for June interviews in all three schools was the occurrence of positive feelings related to “examination”. While expressions about playing games with the teacher decreased in the private school, there was an increased mention of this activity by students in the two other government schools. It should also be noted that while there is a decrease in the categories related to out of class activities and relations with teacher for the Private Primary School, there has been an increase in both categories at the two government schools.

In the November interviews, frequencies of undesirable activities students mentioned as things they do not want to do with their primary school teachers are; Private Primary School: “being angry” (f=2), “giving homework” (f=2), “warning” (f=1), “difficult reading assignments” (f=1), Ministry of National Education Primary School: “being angry” (f=2), “punishing” (1), “beating” (f=1), “warning” (f=1), “oral examination in front of the class” (f=1), “sending to counseling” (f=1), Students coming from Independent Preschool Administered by the Ministry of National Education and attending in a Ministry of National Education Primary School: “being angry” (f=2), “shouting” (f=1), “difficult task assignments” (f=2), “boring teacher” (f=1), “beating” (1). At the beginning of the first grade in all of three schools, students did not want to see their teacher angry. It is also notable and alarming that in the two government schools, students mentioned violent disciplinary methods. Answers to the same question in the June interviews were as follows; Private Primary School: “being angry” (f=1), “too much studying” (f=1), “studying Mathematics” (f=1), “studying for disliked lessons” (f=1), Ministry of National Education Primary School: “being angry” (f=4), “punishing” (f=3), “beating” (f=1), “forcing me to punish my friends” (f=1), Students coming from Independent Preschool Administered by the Ministry of National Education and attending in a Ministry of National Education Primary School: “being angry” (f=2), “warning” (f=1), “bad grades” (f=1), “giving exams” (f=2). According to

these results, it is noteworthy that students in the Ministry of National Education Primary School mentioned their unhappiness about rigid disciplinary rules adopted by their primary school teachers.

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Table 4, 5 and 6 present expressions of children about activities they would like to do with their preschool teachers, categorized based on the time of the interviews and the type of the school. Categories of activities that were considered were “Educational Activities” and “Relations with Teacher”.

Table 4. Most favorable activities mentioned by students coming from the age six class of a PPS and attending the same PPS about their preschool teachers in November and June interviews

Category	Activities Mentioned in November Interviews	<i>f</i>	Activities Mentioned in June Interviews	<i>f</i>
Educational Activities	Activities (7)	29	Activities (3)	32
	Playing games (4)		Game play (7)	
	Learning about numbers (4)		Learning about numbers (3)	
	Painting (6)		Painting (9)	
	Reading (4)		Reading (2)	
	Drawing(1)		Drawing (2)	
	Answering questions (1)		Working on projects (2)	
	Making collages (2)		Working on letters (2)	
Relations with Teacher			Homework assignments (1)	
			Singing (1)	
			Affection of the teacher (3)	7
			Teacher not shouting (2)	
		Teacher's jokes (1)		
		Teacher's tenderness (1)		
TOTAL		29		39

Table 4 summarizes the results of both interviews, conducted in November and June, identifying most favorable activities that students coming from Age Six Class of Private Primary School and attending the first grade of the same Private Primary School wanted to do with their preschool teachers. In this table, expressions of first grade students in Private Primary School, shows that most students remember many different kinds of activities and relationship patterns with their preschool teachers. Students remembered and mentioned under the “Educational Activities” category that “activities, game play, learning about numbers, painting, reading, drawing” were the most favorable activities that they wanted to do with their preschool teacher both in November and June

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interviews. The most enjoyable activity was the game play with the teacher (f=7) in June interviews. There was no responses in the “Relations with Teacher” category in November but it is noteworthy that students mentioned many new things (such as the affection of the teacher, teacher not shouting, teacher's jokes, teacher's tenderness) in June interviews.

Table 5. Most favorable activities mentioned by students coming from the age six class of MONEPS and attending the same MONEPS about their preschool teachers in November and June interviews

Category	Activities Mentioned in November Interviews	<i>f</i>	Activities Mentioned in June Interviews	<i>f</i>
Educational Activities	Painting (9)	22	Painting (6)	13
	Playing games (5)		Playing games (2)	
	Activities (4)		Activities (2)	
	Watching movies (1)		Watching movies (2)	
	Singing (1)		Computer games (1)	
	Jigsaw puzzle (1) Puppet games (1)			
Relations with Teacher	Affection of the teacher (4)	8	Affection of the teacher (5)	13
	Playing with me (3)		Playing with me (3)	
	Talking with me (1)		Teacher not shouting (4)	
			Acting me like I am a big child (1)	
TOTAL		30		26

In Table 5, results of both interviews, conducted in November and June about most favorable activities that students coming from the Age Six Class of the Ministry of National Education Primary School and attending the first grade of the same Ministry of National Education Primary School wanted to do with their preschool teachers are presented. In “Educational Activities” category, “painting, game play, activities, watching movies” and in “Relations with Teacher” category “the affection of the teacher, playing with me” were common opinions in both interviews. When we look at the total frequencies, there is a decrease about the memories of favorable activities of students in June (f=26) interviews compared to the November interviews (f=30). Under the “Relations with Teacher” category, “the affection of the teacher, playing with me” was common thoughts in both interviews. Apart from this, it is an important finding that especially in June interviews (f=4), students remembered and emphasized their non shouting preschool teacher.

Table 6. Most favorable activities mentioned by students coming from IPAMONE and attend to the MONEPS about their preschool teachers in November and June interviews

Category	Activities Mentioned in November Interviews	f	Activities Mentioned in June Interviews	f
Educational Activities	Field trips (4)	18	Field trips (4)	14
	Activities (3)		Activities (2)	
	Watching movies (1)		Watching movies (3)	
	Drawing (1)		Drawing (2)	
	Reading (2)		Reading (2)	
	Puppet games (2)		Singing (1)	
	Drawing exercises (1)			
	Writing exercises (1)			
	Playing with toys (1)			
	Playing in the garden (1)			
Learning music (1)				
Relations with Teacher	Playing with me (4)	7	Playing with me (4)	14
	Teacher's tenderness (2)		Teacher's tenderness (4)	
	Being held by the teacher (1)		Teacher not shouting (2)	
			Not beating (3)	
		Being with me while I was falling sleep (1)		
TOTAL		25		28

Table 6 presents the results of both interviews, conducted in November and June about most favorable activities that students coming from Independent Preschool Administered by the Ministry of National Education and attending to the first grade of Ministry of National Education Primary School wanted to do with their preschool teachers. In the “Educational Activities” category; “field trips, activities, watching movies, drawing, reading” and in the “Relations with Teacher” category, “playing with me, teacher's tenderness” were common expressions of students in both interviews. When we look at the frequencies, it can be seen that there are many new things expressed considering their frequency and type under the “Relations with Teacher” category in June interviews relative to November interviews.

Undesirable activities that were mentioned in November interviews by students as examples of things they did not want to do with their preschool teachers are; Age Six Class of Private Primary School: Doing Mathematics (f=2), drawing lines (f=2), homework (f=1), writing (f=1), number writing (f=1), painting (f=1), doing activities (f=1), working on stage (f=1), to be yelled at (f=1), being angry (f=1)”. Age Six Class of a Ministry of National Education Primary School: “To be yelled at (f=2), being angry (f=1), not playing games (f=1), teacher using a whistle for warning (f=1), teacher's help in eating (f=1), not allowing to take a break (f=1), watching boring movies (f=1), not taking care of us (f= 1)”. Independent Preschool Administered by the Ministry of National Education: boring lessons (f=1), being angry (f=1), being thrown out of the classroom (f=1)”. Answers to the same question in June were as follows; Age Six Class of Private Primary School: “to be yelled at (f=1),

being angry (f=1), being forced to finish a painting book (f=1), the teacher presenting a project that was mine (f=1)", Age Six Class of a Ministry of National Education Primary School: "teacher using a whistle for warning (f=1), punishing (f=1), to be yelled at (f=1), being angry (f=1), beating (f=1)", Independent Preschool Administered by the Ministry of National Education: "being angry (f=4), beating (f=2), teacher making us sleep (f=1), not allowing to go to the park (f=1), teacher scaring us on purpose (f=1), turning off TV (f=1)". These answers lead to the conclusion that, in the age-six classes of a Ministry of National Education Primary School and Independent Preschool Administered by the Ministry of National Education, there are some disciplinary techniques that rely on verbal and physical violence. On the other hand, in the Age Six Class of Private Primary Schools students can be unhappy about participating in regular curriculum activities.

Discussion and Conclusions

According to the findings of this research, students in all three types of schools enjoy reading and writing activities with their teachers in the beginning of the first grade. This is not surprising since these activities seem appealing and new to them as they have not encountered such activities in preschool. Interestingly, even though writing was indicated to be a likable activity by most children in the beginning, none of the students mentioned this preference again in the subsequent meeting with them in June. Chun's study (2003) also supports these findings by stating that students who just started their primary education tend to like learning new things such as reading and writing. However, towards the end of the year, their enthusiasm disappears and this task begins to look exhausting to them. Since the writing activity requires sitting, intense focusing and using delicate motor skills, it becomes a tiring task as time passes and hence loses its popularity. Another result of the present study is that in all the types of schools, "having an exam" was identified to be a likable activity in the meetings that were held in June even though it was not mentioned at all in the beginning of the first grade. This can be explained by observing that as students slowly learn the rules of primary school, they get used to them and learn to like these new activities.

When out of class activities enjoyed by students in Private Primary Schools are considered, it was found that not only there was a decrease in the time spent on activities such as games, drawing pictures, reading stories and watching movies, but students also showed increased enjoyment of study-related activities conducted by their teacher in their answers to the last interviews. This result can be explained in two ways. Firstly, it is possible that teachers in Private Primary Schools may have evoked the necessary curiosity and attention needed for learning and studying by using different teaching methods and their personal traits. Second, it is also possible that Private Primary Schools emphasize

and encourage success and competition among students since they adopt a teaching approach based on a strictly academic focus. Moreover, families who chose to send their children to Private Primary Schools tend to have increased expectations from the school, inevitably leading to this outcome. In related literature, researchers often emphasize that in order to maintain the children's feeling of trust and to prevent any decrease in learning performance during the transition period from preschool to primary school, the teacher should take into consideration the social, emotional and academic development of the child altogether. Consequently, it is crucial to equally support all developmental areas of the child and to encourage out of class activities during the preschool and primary school periods (Chow, 1993). In contrast to the results obtained for the Private Primary School, there has been an increase in the amount and variety of non-study activities that students in the other two governments related schools enjoy to do when they were interviewed at the end of the first grade. Another result that emerges from these findings is that there has been a steady increase in the usage of positive statements to describe the student's relationships with their teachers in the two government schools at the end of the first grade. At this point, it can be said that there is a positive correlation between the time the teacher spends on non-study activities with the children and the increase in children's interaction with their teachers even though the causal relationship between them is unclear. As such, positive interactions with teachers seem to make it easier for students to adjust to the transition from preschool to primary school. Other existing studies also support this interpretation and show that the student's formation of a healthy relationship with the teacher has a positive effect on their social and emotional adaptation and academic achievements (Perry & Weinstein, 1998).

When negative personality traits of first grade teachers within all schools are considered, disciplinary methods used by the teachers such as being angry, shouting, warning and pushy attitudes for academic achievements are often observed. This finding is also supported by existing literature on this topic (Yeo & Clarke, 2005). In Chun's research (2003), students observed that their most unpleasant times at school were when they received a warning or got punished by their teachers. In fact, in meetings that were held with the same set of students at the end of the first grade, it was found that some students would rather go back to preschool for these reasons. In this context, private schools were found to be more favorable in terms of these criteria. The fact that students in the two governmental schools never mentioned academic pressure, but still complained about negative disciplinary actions by the teacher calls for a reevaluation of teaching and disciplinary approaches used by primary school teachers within government schools. According to Harter (1996), children between the ages of four and seven determine their worth as a human being by looking at things that they can and cannot do. In these early years, constantly facing failures and punishments can interfere with their identity building processes. Another important result of the present study is that none of the first grade students were found to show a dislike for their teacher's personal traits. This result can be a

reflection of the fact that first grade teachers in primary school are often considered by their students to be ideal educators.

A common result that consistently appears in the literature regarding the transition to primary school is the observation that this period should show pedagogical continuity in both structure and attitudes. In simple terms, it is critical that during the first years following the transition from preschool to primary school, the content of the education system, teaching methods, and teacher behavior in both schools are closely coordinated to create a connected education system and to facilitate the transition for children (Ari, 1995; Chun, 2003; Kagan & Neville, 1996; Pianta, Cox, Taylor, & Early, 1999). Positive experiences students have with their preschool teachers are very beneficial in ensuring the flexibility of the transition period and maintaining a continued connection between two institutions. In this sense, first grade primary school students that took part in the present research mentioned many activities that they liked to do with their preschool teachers. The most remembered memory of private school students were games that their preschool teacher played with them, with students remembering them even at the end of the first year in primary school. This result can be interpreted as a longing for the play based preschool education. The same argument can be used to explain why, among different interactions with preschool teachers within the Private Primary School, those that were remembered and mentioned in June interviews (e.g. the teacher showing affection, avoiding shouting, joking with students, stroking their heads) were neither remembered nor mentioned in earlier November interviews. At the end of their first year in primary school, all students remembered and mentioned their close relationships with their teachers as well as different games and activities that they took part in during their time in preschool even though they were not aware of them before.

Furthermore, during the last meetings with all groups, the observation that “the preschool teacher did not shout as much” was observed as a new statement, different from those mentioned in the first meetings. It can be said that crowded classes with primary schools and the authoritarian character that is forced upon teachers might have caused students to observe their primary school teacher as a “shouting” teacher. As a result, it is natural that students remember their “non-shouting” preschool teacher. Moreover, since the number of students in primary school is usually larger than the number of students in preschool, students might have become more sensitive to the level of noise and shouting in primary school. While in the two government schools, children's memories of preschool years seem to fade at the end of the first year, the same does not seem to be true for private preschool students. A possible reason for this is that opportunities provided by preschool facilities within Private Primary Schools are more diverse and their education system is more flexible. Children who encounter the authoritarian world of the primary school from a more flexible preschool environment can remember their preschool life more vividly and thus, miss that life.

When the negative opinions by students about their preschool teachers are analyzed, it is seen that while students in private preschools did not like to carry out activities that are academic, artistic, or social with their teachers; students in government preschools and independent preschools administered by the Ministry of National Education voiced their dislike of rules determined by their teachers, punishments, mandatory tasks and disciplinary methods. Interestingly, despite the time elapsed, students tend to primarily remember negative verbal or physical behaviors of their preschool teachers and these memories are not forgotten even after the long period between preschool and the end of the first grade. Similar results exist in the literature, establishing that students dislike their preschool teachers punishing them or to forcing rules upon them (Mağden & Tuğrul, 1997). While there seems to be no mention of physical punishments in Private Primary Schools, both physical and verbal punishments were mentioned in the other two governmental preschools, indicating that violence exists even in the first stages of the education system. In general, all answers related to this question show that negative memories related to preschool teachers are less vividly remembered at the end of the first year of primary school. Moreover, it can be seen that most memories remembered at this stage are those related to verbal, physical, and emotional violence.

The results of this research have shown that at the beginning of the first grade, nearly all students are enthusiastic about reading and writing activities with their teachers but this enthusiastic feeling disappears by the end of the first year, replaced by the educational experience of studying with the teacher and attending examinations. The frequencies of both non-study activities and positive relationships between the teacher and students were found to be relatively high in the first grades of government schools. At the end of the first grade, primary school students told that, the activities that they liked to do most with their preschool teachers and missed were playing games and forming close relationships with their teachers.

In the light of these results, it can be said that in order to eliminate differences in the educational system and teacher-student relationships between preschool and primary school environments, it is necessary to adopt the early childhood education approach and carry out the associated necessary preparations. Things to be done to this end include the use of educational strategies such as the “play based education” and “discovery learning” in both preschools and primary schools, making sure that the teachers get acquainted with the learning styles and developmental abilities of students, and following the updated preschool and primary school systems. It should not be forgotten that the relationship between teacher and the student is the basis of a student’s success and happiness in every stage of the education system.

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