

Teachers' Views on Factors Affecting Creativity Levels of 5-6 Year Old Children*

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Abstract: The present study is conducted in order to determine teachers' views on the factors that develop creativity in children aged 5-6. Hence, a 67 item questionnaire consisting of judgments about factors affecting creativity based on five subsections such as environment, family, school, child himself, and visual arts was developed. 121 teachers providing preschool education at public schools or private kindergarten in the city of Konya and three immediate suburbs were administered the questionnaire forms during one to one meetings. The data obtained were analyzed using T-test and ANOVA for statistical purposes. According to the results obtained; the most important environmental factor that improves the creativity of the child is 'providing an environment for games and to play', school-related factor is 'the use of versatile materials in the activities conducted', family related factor is 'the interest of the family to the child', related to the child her/himself is 'the self-esteem of the child', and to visual arts is 'making activities using colors'. In the general evaluation, it was concluded that 'coloring books' affected the creativity of the child the least.

Keywords: Creativity, Pre-school, Teachers' views.

1. Introduction

Creativity is, according to Mednick, either to create new combinations from compatible elements in line with a certain requirement or for a particular benefit (Zongur, 1996) and according to Vance, "the production of the new and the rearrangement of the old" (Bentley, 1999). Creativity is the individual's unique solution for a problem that needs to be resolved after passing some certain stages (Dirim, 2001), the introduction of a new but appropriate idea or creation for a particular goal processed over time. As MacKinnon puts it succinctly, creativity is "a process that has spread over time and has the features of innovation, adaptability and realization" (Gander & Gardiner, 2001).

Creativity is a process and can be developed through education (Çellek, 2005). Creativity is to think freely, to attribute a novel meaning to everything that exists beyond its already known meaning, to be able to go beyond frames, that is, to remain a child. If creativity is considered as a process, it can be defined as the transformation of interpersonal or internal processes into original, high-quality and meaningful products. It is the thinking process that we should especially emphasize in the education of young children.

The development of creativity is quite different from other areas of personal development. Therefore, parents and educators have to know age specific levels of creativity of children. Parents and educators who know the characteristics of their children would understand them better, establish relationships, and provide better education. However, the point that should not be forgotten here is that creativity is unique and the development of creativity is to be evaluated within his/her own characteristic features (Ömeroğlu, 1990).

The five-six-year-old child is creative like an artist and enjoys playing with cultural symbols. S/he formulates cultural symbols not as seen from others, but as s/he thinks and feels personally. The child creates stories, draws pictures and dramatizes various life styles. It is in this period that the child begins to create his own personality with his own abilities whereas previously s/he did not consider him/herself to be different from others, at this age s/he begins to regard him/herself as a separate person and others as separate people as well.

Moran et al. (1983) suggested in a study they conducted that preschool children showed more original responses than older children (9-12). These findings reveal that the creativity of primary school children who spend a lot of time in school lessons is influenced by the formal lessons and the primary school education program. However, preschool children have not yet experienced formal school lessons determined with strict rules (Ömeroğlu & Turla, 2001). Primary school period

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is the time during which basic knowledge and skills are acquire. Basic knowledge and skills acquired through qualified and sufficient experiences at early ages, not only increase the success of subsequent learning, but also have a positive impact on children's emotional and social life (Yıldız, 2000). The most appropriate period for stimulating creativity-related aspects in the child's genetic portfolio is the pre-school education period. Creativity is the last stage of cognitive development in children. Cognitive development passes respectively through perception, conceptualization, remembering, forming logic and results with decision making and problem solving (Atkinson et al., 1999).

In preschool education, the preschool teacher plays a major role in the development of the child's creativity. Teachers working in preschool education institutions should be good observers and should support the development of children's creativity by using activities that will support the development of thought and creativity of children while considering their developmental characteristics (Harris, 2000; Isenberg & Jalongo, 1997; Beaty, 2000).

Undoubtedly, teachers 'and teachers' attitudes towards children are one of the most important factors in the development of children's creativity. If teachers learn creativity skills and are constantly aware of these, they can bring up creative individuals. (Bilir, 1991).

The aim of the preset study is to determine factors with an impact on the creativity levels of 5-6 year old children and to define the views of teachers working in pre-school education institutions about the levels of the factors affecting the creativity of their children.

2. Method

The research is conducted based on the general survey model, among the quantitative research methods. In the study, the opinions of teachers about creativity of 5-6 year old preschool children were analyzed with an observation form prepared in line with expert opinions.

2.1. Universe and Sample / Study Group

The study was conducted by taking the opinions of 77 teachers working in pre-school institutions in three central districts (Meram, Karatay, Selçuklu) in Konya city center and in the districts of Sarayönü, Çumra and Beyşehir close by. Moreover, 44 teachers working in private kindergarten in Konya city center have also participated in the present study. Out of the 121 teachers participating, 56 are working in the city center, 21 in the primary schools in the districts, and 44 in kindergartens.

2.2. Data Collection Tools

A questionnaire form was prepared for the present study in order to determine teacher views on the factors affecting the creativity levels of preschool children aged 5-6 years. Subsequent to the review of the relevant literature, factors affecting the creativity of children aged 5-6 were determined. Factors considered to affect and develop the creativity of children are grouped under five groups (sub-factors). These sub-factors are as follows: Environmental factors, School-related factors, Family-related factors, Child-related factors, Visual arts-related factors. After the form was prepared, it was presented to 2 faculty members from Selçuk University Child Development and Education Department, 1 faculty member from the Department of Guidance and Psychological Counseling, and 5 preschool teachers working in an independent kindergarten in order to obtain their views regarding the questionnaire prepared. The questionnaire form revised according to the views obtained was distributed to the 4th grade preschool education department students of the faculty of education and thus both their opinions were taken and the form was piloted. In the questionnaire applied to actual preschool education teachers, the answers to the items were limited to "absolutely agree", "agree", "undecided", "disagree", "absolutely disagree". Cronbach alpha value was determine for the reliability of each factor in the present study. Cronbach alpha for the environmental factor was determined as .66, for the school factor as .78, for the family factor as .7304, for the child factor as .8610, and for the Visual Arts factor as .8278. The Cronbach alpha value for the total of the items was determined as .9185.

2.3. Data Collection

The questionnaire forms were administered to the volunteers participating during the visits made in preschools after explaining the subject and purpose of the present study either in one-to-one or in group sessions. Hereby, the aim is to ensure that teachers give realistic and correct answers to the questionnaire questions. Therefore, instead a large number of teachers participating in the survey, provision of correct and consistent answers given in the survey were prioritized.

2.4. Data Analysis

SPSS 15.00 package program was used to evaluate the results obtained from the questionnaires. T-test was used for bivariate analysis of variance and ANOVA for multivariate analysis of variance.

3. Findings and Results

T-test was applied to all items asked as questions or judgments in the questionnaire, according to variables of gender, place of work, type of school, and ANOVA for variables of service years or in other words years spend as a teacher and educational status. This application also included factors related to the environment, school-related factors, family-related factors, child-related factors, and visual arts factors.

Table 1. T-Test results according to gender variable

Questions (items)	Gender	n	X	SS.	Sd	t	P
Visiting museums	Female	110	4.84	.49	.04	-3.29	.00
	Male	11	5.00	.00	.00		
	Female	110	4.40	.66	.06	2.35	.02
	Male	11	3.90	.70	.21		

On examining Table 1, a significant difference was found at $P < 0.05$ in terms of 'providing an environment for games and to play' and "visiting museums". Here, the male teachers who participated in the questionnaire thought that the item "providing an environment for games and to play" improves creativity more than female teachers who think that the item "visiting museums" improves creativity more than men.

Table 2. t- Test results for school types

Questions (items)	School Type	n	X	SS.	Sd	t	P
Living in a house with a garden	Public School	77	4.12	.90	.10	2.11	.03
	Private School	44	3.77	.88	.13		
Use of various colors at preschool education institutions	Public School	77	4.68	.54	.06	2.76	.00
	Private School	44	4.25	.96	.14		
Neat materials at preschool education institutions	Public School	77	4.49	.64	.07	2.11	.03
	Private School	44	4.20	.85	.12		
Low number of students in the classroom	Public School	77	4.31	.89	.10	3.12	.00
	Private School	44	3.68	1.15	.17		
Separated parents	Public School	77	4.46	.77	.08	2.00	.04
	Private School	44	4.15	.88	.13		
Presence of a computer at home	Public School	77	3.55	.96	.11	2.11	.03
	Private School	44	3.15	1.05	.15		
Readiness for the activity	Public School	77	4.49	.55	.06	2.65	.00
	Private School	44	4.18	.72	.10		
Physical development level	Public School	77	4.22	.78	.08	2.15	.03
	Private School	44	3.81	1.08	.16		

Analyzing Table 2, in the school type variable; "living in a house with a garden", "use of various colors in preschool education institutions", "presence of neat materials in preschool education institutions", "low number of students in the classroom", "separation of the parents", "presence of a computer at home", "readiness for the activity", and "physical development level" a significant difference was determined at $P < 0.05$ level.

Accordingly teachers working in public schools believe that "living in a house with a garden", "using various colors in preschool education institutions", "presence of neat materials in preschool education institutions", "low number of students in the classroom", "separation of the parents", "presence of a computer at home", "readiness for the activity", and "physical development level" improves creativity in children.

The answers given to the questions (items) by the teachers participating in the survey have been evaluated using ANOVA according to the variables of service year and education status. Items with significant differences were determined and LSD test was administered to determine the difference between the educational statuses. The results obtained are presented in Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3. ANOVA results for service year variable

Questions (items)	Service Year	n	X	SS	F	p	Significant
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						Difference	
Providing an environment for games and to play	0-4	54	4.74	.64	.300	.040	C- A
	5-9	28	4.92	.26			
	10 years and above	39	4.97	.16			
Use of various colors at preschool education institutions	0-4	54	4.35	.91	.146	.018	C- A
	5-9	28	4.50	.69			
	10 years and above	39	4.38	.74			
Physical development level	0-4	54	3.92	1.0	.376	.038	C- A
	5-9	28	3.92	.89			C- B
	10 years and above	39	4.38	.74			
Visiting museums	0-4	54	4.24	.69	.315	.040	C- A
	5-9	28	4.28	.71			
	10 years and above	39	4.58	.59			
Talking about works of Art	0-4	54	4.03	.84	.610	.012	C-A
	10 years and above	39	4.53	.75			

A= 0-4 years, B= 5- 9 years, C= 10 years and above

On examining Table 3, the years of service of teachers leads to a significant difference in terms of the items “providing an environment for games and to play”, “using various colors in preschool educational institutions”, “physical development levels”, “visiting museums”, and “talking about art work”. On examining the differences according to service year variable, teachers who have worked for 10 years and above consider that “providing an environment for games and to play” improves creativity in children more compared to teachers with an experience of 0-4 years. Teachers working for 10 years and above think that the item "using various colors in preschool education institutions" improves creativity more than teachers working for 0-4 years as well. Moreover, teachers working for 10 years and above think that the item "physical development levels" improves creativity more than the teachers working for 0-4 years and for 5-9 years. Likewise, teachers working for 10 and above think that the item "visiting museums" improves creativity more compared to teachers working for 0-4 years. Likewise, teachers working for 10 and above think that the item "talking about artworks" improves creativity more compared to teachers working for 0-4 years.

Table 4. ANOVA results according to “educational background” variable

Questions (items)	Educational Background	n	X	SS	F	P	Significant Difference
Providing an environment for games and to play	High school	25	4.80	.40	3.28	.023	C-B D-B
	Associate Degree	12	4.50	1.16			
	Bachelor of Arts	79	4.92	.26			
	Postgraduate	5	5.00	.00			
Methods and techniques used by the teacher	High school	25	4.76	.43	5.05	.003	A-B C-B C-D
	Associate Degree	12	4.33	.88			
	Bachelor of Arts	79	4.83	.37			
	Postgraduate	5	4.40	.54			
Low number of children in the class	High school	25	3.52	1.1	4.54	.005	C-A B-A
	Associate Degree	12	4.58	.79			
	Bachelor of Arts	79	4.21	.98			
	Postgraduate	5	3.60	.54			
Attitude of the teachers towards the children	High school	25	4.76	.43	3.08	.030	C-B
	Associate Degree	12	4.50	.52			
	Bachelor of Arts	79	4.86	.34			
	Postgraduate	5	4.80	.44			
No over interference of the teacher in the activities conducted	High school	25	4.12	.88	2.99	.033	C-A
	Associate Degree	12	4.33	.65			
	Bachelor of Arts	79	4.59	.65			
	Postgraduate	5	4.20	1.30			
Readiness for the activity	High school	25	4.12	.72	3.38	.021	C-A
	Associate Degree	12	4.25	.62			
	Bachelor of Arts	79	4.50	.57			
	Postgraduate	5	4.00	.70			

A= High School, B= Associated Degree, C= Bachelor of Arts, (B.A.) D= Postgraduate

If table 4 is examined, significant differences can be seen in the following items according to the variable of educational background of participating teachers “providing an environment for games and to play”, “teaching methods and techniques used by the teacher”, “low number of children in the classroom”, “teacher's attitude towards the children”,

“over interference to the child in the activities performed”, and “readiness for the activities”. When these differences are examined according to the educational background groups, teachers with undergraduate and graduate degrees think that the item “providing an environment for games and to play” improves creativity more than the teachers with an associate degree. According to the teachers with a high school degree compared to teachers with an associate degree; teachers with B.A degree compared to teachers with and associate and postgraduate degree believe that “the teaching methods and techniques used by the teacher” improves creativity more. Teachers with bachelor's and associate degrees think that the item “having a low number of children in the classes” improves creativity more compared to teachers with a high school degree. Teachers with a B.A. degree think that “teacher's attitude towards children” improves creativity more compared to teachers with an associate degree. Teachers with a bachelor's degree think that the item “no over interference in the activities” improves creativity more compared to teachers with a high school degree. Teachers with undergraduate degrees regard that the item “readiness for activity” improves creativity more compared to teachers with a high degree.

4. Discussion

Whereas male teachers think that “provision of an environment for games and plays ” improves creativity more, female teachers consider that the item “visiting museums” improves creativity more. A study made by Shukla (1982) revealed that boys are more creative than girls according to the locality variable. This study supports the finding that male teachers consider the “provision of an environment for games and to play” develops as more contributive to creativity development.

According to the teachers working at public schools “living in a house with a garden”, “ use of various colors in preschool education institutions”, “presence of neat materials in preschool education institutions ”, “ low number of children in the classroom”, “separate parents” “having a computer at home”, “readiness for the activity”, and “physical development level” improve creativity more compared to the teachers working in private kindergarten. Aral (1990) determined in her study made with nine-year-old children that a high socio-economic status contributes to a better creativity level in children. However, the fact that teachers working at private institutions with children of a higher socio-economic status have more negative thoughts about the development of creativity compared to their counterparts working at public school suggests the presence of different variables on this issue. Teachers who have been working for 10 years and above consider that “provision of an environment for games and to play”, “use of various colors in preschool education institutions”, “visiting museums”, and “talking about artworks” improve creativity more compared to teachers working for 0-4 years. Contrary to their colleagues with a work experience of 0-4 years and 5-9 years, those who have been working at least 10 years and above consider that “physical development levels” of the children improves creativity more. These results indicate that teachers with a decade long experience have a more positive attitude towards creativity in general. Dehouske (2006) found that communication with the teacher and the art background of the teacher are important for art-enabled creators. This outcome also supports the findings of the present study.

Teachers with a B.A. and postgraduate degree think that the item “providing an environment for games and to play” improves creativity more compared to their colleagues with an associate degree. Teachers with a high school degree consider that the “teaching methods and techniques used by the teacher” are facilitating creativity more compared to their colleagues with and an associate degree, and teachers with a B.A. degree consider the same compared to their colleagues with a postgraduate degree. Teachers with an associate and B.A. degree think that “low number of children in the classroom” improves creativity more compared to teachers who are high school graduates. Undergraduate teacher compared to their colleagues with a high school degree think that the item “teacher's attitude towards children” improves creativity more than the teachers with an associate degree. Teachers with a B.A degree consider that “the teacher should not interfere too much while doing the activities” and “readiness for activity” items facilitate creativity more compared to teachers with a high school degree. When these results are evaluated, it can be seen that teachers with a graduate degree have more positive opinions except for one item. However, no difference could be determined between teachers with a graduate and postgraduate degree. Higher degrees of graduation could be considered to provide teachers a positive aspect towards creativity. The findings of Dehouske (2006), explained in the previous result, are supporting the findings of the present study.

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