


## An Investigation of Studies Conducted on School Adjustment in Preschool Education

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**Abstract:**

*This descriptive qualitative research aims to investigate the studies conducted on school adaptation in preschool education. Within the scope of the research, graduate theses published in the National Thesis Centre of the Council of Higher Education and articles published in journals indexed in the ULAKBIM TR Index on school adaptation in preschool education, including the year 2024, were examined. The data analysis used a form to evaluate the "type, year, study group, research method, research design, data collection tools and prominent results" in the studies. According to the analysis findings, there are 41 studies, including 25 master's theses, four doctoral theses, and 12 research articles. It is seen that most of these studies were carried out with children with typical development. Additionally, it was determined that quantitative research methods were used the most in the examined studies. The relational survey design was the most used among the designs used in this method. According to the data collection tools used in the studies, it is noteworthy that the scale-questionnaire form was used the most, in parallel with the research method and design of the examined studies. Finally, the most frequently repeated result in the studies was significant relationships between children's demographic characteristics such as gender, number of siblings, mother's educational status, birth order, family income level, etc., and their level of school adaptation. Based on the study's results, using qualitative and mixed research methods effectively in studies on children's school adaptation in the preschool period is recommended.*

**Keywords:** Preschool education, early childhood education, school adjustment, graduate thesis, research article.

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## INTRODUCTION

The preschool period is a crucial phase of children's developmental processes. This is true for their social, cognitive, emotional, and physical development. Notably, a significant portion of brain development is known to be completed by the age of five (Haartsen et al., 2016). During this period, stable, responsive, supportive relationships and rich learning experiences are emphasized to positively affect an individual's lifelong learning ability, behaviours, and physical and cognitive health (Shonkoff & Richmond, 2009). Besides parents, the most important institutions to support children in this process are preschool education institutions. These are the settings where children first encounter school and have their initial school experiences. Therefore, preschool education institutions involve the adaptation process, and the child must be included in this process from a good home environment for successful adaptation (Polat & Atış Akyol, 2021). The school adaptation process is significant and critical because it encompasses a dynamic involving the child's emotions, attitudes, and relationships with the environment, in addition to cognitive skills (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Oktay & Polat Unutkan, 2005), and it affects the child's subsequent school experiences, effective utilization of preschool education, and long-term school performance (Erten, 2012; Kaya & Akgün, 2016). Indeed, adapting to school during the preschool period equips children with academic, social, emotional, and motor skills, preparing them for primary education (Ladd & Price, 1987; Ramey & Ramey, 1999; Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 2000) and plays a facilitating role in their adaptation to school in primary education (Cook et al., 2017).

School adjustment, a complex process, is defined as the ability of children to respond to their academic, social, and emotional needs, participate in school activities, and successfully integrate into school life (Ladd & Price, 1987; Ramey & Ramey, 1999). This process introduces children to many new experiences and expectations, and they are expected to exhibit adaptive behaviours. School adjustment is a multidimensional concept with sub-dimensions such as liking school, avoiding school, academic achievement, and school dropout (Goldberg, 2006). Children can develop many thoughts and beliefs about school during preschool (Nur, 2020). Researchers have found that these ideas, beliefs, and attitudes children develop about school continue throughout their later lives (Ladd & Dinella, 2009; Ladd et al., 2000; Smith, 2011). This situation reveals that school adjustment in the preschool period is an essential factor that affects not only that period but also the following years. In this context, school adjustment is not a suddenly occurring situation. School adjustment should be considered as a process, and it should be remembered that many dynamics influence this process. In this process, children acquire many new academic, social, and emotional skills and try to adapt to the school environment. Indeed, the process of school adjustment requires children to establish a balance between their developmental needs and school expectations (Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 2000).

The preschool period, a critical stage of development, marks the child's first step into educational life and their first encounter with a world outside the family environment. The initiation of preschool education and the child's adaptation to the institution are fundamental for their subsequent life (Kit, 2023). Preschool education helps children adapt to the school environment, routines, expectations, and social roles. Children prepare for school life by interacting with preschool teachers and peers in the preschool classroom setting. Preschool education supports the academic, language, social-emotional, and self-regulation skills of children starting school. These skills facilitate children's participation in classroom activities, peer relationships, and school adjustment (Gormley et al., 2005; Magnuson et al., 2007).

An adaptive school experience, which is critical for children's future outcomes, positively influences their academic achievement, social development, psychological well-being, and future academic and professional success (Kranstuber et al., 2012; Ladd, 1990). It is possible to state that children who cannot adjust to school fall behind academically, experience social-emotional problems, and have decreased school motivation. Therefore, understanding and supporting the school adjustment process is of utmost importance, as it can have a lasting impact on a child's life.

Given the significant impact of the school adjustment process on children's academic and social development, it is considered a critical element in their educational experiences. Therefore, the issue of school adjustment has become an important focus of research, and a considerable number of scientific studies have been produced. Academic studies on school adjustment are essential to understand this critical process better and develop practical solutions. A review of the existing literature reveals that numerous thesis and article studies have been published on school adjustment. These studies have been found to address different aspects of the process using scientific methods. Moreover, most of these studies approach the school adjustment process from a specific perspective. Consequently, there is a need for studies that can provide a more holistic perspective. This study examines academic research on school adjustment in the preschool period. Thus, the data obtained will provide a comprehensive overview of the types of studies conducted in the field, the areas where further research is needed, and the appropriate samples to study in the context of school adjustment. The findings will contribute to the literature and develop solution proposals for practical applications.

### ***Purpose of the Study***

The present study examines the studies conducted on school adjustment in preschool education. In line with this aim, the following questions are sought to be answered:

- What is the distribution of studies on school adjustment in preschool education by type?
- What is the distribution of studies on school adjustment in preschool education by year?
- What are the distributions of the study groups in the studies on school adjustment in preschool education?
- What are the research methods used in the studies on school adjustment in preschool education?
- What research designs are used in the studies on school adjustment in preschool education?
- What data collection tools have been used in the studies on school adjustment in preschool education?
- What are the prominent findings in the studies on school adjustment in preschool education?

## **METHOD**

### ***Research Design***

This research, which holds significant implications for early childhood education, aims to examine the studies on school adjustment. It is a descriptive qualitative analysis. The current research aims to analyse existing studies and data by describing them in order to gain an in-

depth understanding of a specific topic. Descriptive qualitative analysis allows for a detailed understanding of a particular subject's current state, trends, and characteristics. In this context, this method has been employed to examine the general features and distributions of research on school adjustment.

### ***Research Materials***

Within the scope of the study, the graduate theses published in the Higher Education Institution National Thesis Centre and the articles published in the journals indexed in the ULAKBIM TR Index related to school adjustment in preschool education, including the year 2024, have been examined. The researcher aimed to select the relevant databases to ensure access to reliable and comprehensive academic sources on school adjustment in Türkiye, to conduct an in-depth examination of the study, and to keep up with the current literature. No time constraint was imposed at the beginning while scanning the research materials. Indeed, it has been observed that the research materials are limited to theses and articles published between 1998 and June 2024.

### ***Data Collection***

In order to examine the studies on school adjustment in preschool education, the master's and doctoral theses in the National Thesis Centre were transferred to the digital environment. In addition, the articles published in the journals indexed in the ULAKBIM TR Index were also transferred to the digital environment simultaneously. The prerequisites of these studies were that they were conducted in preschool education and were related to school adjustment.

To ensure the reliability of the research, a simultaneous screening was carried out by an expert other than the researcher. The data transferred to the digital environment were compared. During this process, the data were coded and classified. As a result of the classification, a total of 189 graduate theses and 141 articles were reached. However, when the contents of these articles were examined, it was determined that 31 graduate theses and 21 articles met the criteria for the current research. When the graduate theses and articles were compared and examined, it was determined that six articles were produced from the graduate theses included in the research material and were removed. Five studies were also removed from the research material because the study group was not limited to the preschool period. As a result, 29 graduate theses and 12 articles which met the specific criteria for this research were included in the research material.

### ***Data Analysis***

As part of the analysis of the study, the works transferred to the digital environment were processed in a form that included the headings "type, year, study group, research method, research design, data collection tools, developmental areas of the variables, and prominent results". Through this form, which was prepared within the framework of the research questions, a descriptive analysis of the studies obtained was carried out. The purpose of the descriptive analysis is to present the obtained findings in an organized and interpreted manner. The obtained data are first presented systematically and clearly. These descriptions are then explained and interpreted, with cause-and-effect relationships examined. Finally, some conclusions are drawn from the analysis (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013).

Our analysis process was not only thorough but also collaborative. To ensure reliability, the researcher and the expert who conducted the scanning simultaneously compared the differences in the database that was previously created and transferred to the digital environment. The

researcher and the expert conducted separate examinations of this database. After this step, the researcher and the expert came together under the guidance of a field expert to identify the commonalities that emerged in the examinations and to eliminate the differences. In this session, the final decision was made based on the principle of unanimity/majority vote, and the data analysis was completed. Additionally, tables containing frequency and percentage distributions were created to increase the transferability of the data.

### ***Ethics Committee Approval***

Since the study is a systematic literature review and a document analysis study, it does not belong to the study group that requires Ethics Committee Approval. Therefore, Ethics Committee Approval was not declared.

## **FINDINGS**

This section of the study presents the findings and interpretations based on the descriptive data of the examined studies.

### ***Distribution of Studies Related to School Adjustment by Type***

The distribution of studies related to school adjustment in preschool education by type is presented in Table 1.

**Table1.** Distribution of Studies Related to School Adjustment in Preschool Education by Type

Research type	f	%
Master thesis	25	60,9
Doctoral dissertation	4	9,8
Research article	12	29,3
Total	41	100

When the graduate theses published in the National Thesis Centre and the articles published in the journals indexed in the ULAKBIM TR Index on school adjustment in preschool education are considered, it was determined that 60.9% of these studies were master's theses, 9.8% were doctoral dissertations, and 29.3% were research articles. Looking at the distribution of studies on school adjustment in preschool education, it is seen that master's theses stand out.

### ***Distribution of Studies Related to School Adjustment by Year***

The distribution of the graduate theses published in the National Thesis Centre and the articles published in the journals indexed in the ULAKBIM TR Index on school adjustment in preschool education by year is presented in Table 2.

**Table2.** Distribution of Studies Related to School Adjustment in Preschool Education by Year

Year	Master thesis	Doctoral dissertation	Research article	Total	%
1998	1			1	2,4
2009	1			1	2,4
2011			1	1	2,4
2012	1		1	2	4,9
2013			1	1	2,4
2014	1			1	2,4
2015	1	1	1	3	7,3
2016	3			3	7,3
2017	2			2	4,9
2018	2		3	5	12,2
2019	3		3	6	14,6
2020		1	1	2	4,9
2021	2			2	4,9
2022	4	1	1	6	14,6
2023	4	1		5	12,2
Total	25	4	12	41	100

According to the descriptive statistics presented in Table 2, the studies related to school adjustment first started with a master's thesis in 1998, the first doctoral dissertation was in 2015, and the first research article published in the journals indexed in the ULAKBIM TR Index was in 2011. However, after the master's thesis study in 1998, there was a gap until 2009 with no thesis or article published in the ULAKBIM TR Index journals. Nevertheless, it is seen that the number of master's theses has increased as they approach the present day. In contrast, the increase in research articles, especially doctoral dissertations, is relatively lower.

### *Distribution of Studies Related to School Adjustment by Study Groups*

The distribution of the graduate theses published in the National Thesis Centre and the articles published in the journals indexed in the ULAKBIM TR Index on school adjustment in preschool education by study groups are presented in Table 3.

**Table3.** Distribution of Studies Related to School Adjustment in Preschool Education by Study Groups

Study Group	Master thesis	Doctoral dissertation	Research article	Total	%
Typically developing children	17	4	6	27	41,5
Preschool teachers	8	2	4	14	21,5
Parents	5	2	3	10	15,4
Mothers	1		2	3	4,6
Immigrant children	3		2	5	7,7
Children with special needs	3		1	4	6,2
Elementary school teachers	1		1	2	3,1
Total	38	8	18	65	100

Each group participating in the working groups was individually included in the data presented in Table 3. Accordingly, it was observed that the studies conducted in preschool education regarding school adjustment primarily involved typically developing children in the study groups. However, it was also determined that the studies were conducted with preschool teachers, parents, immigrant children, children with special needs, and classroom teachers. Based on the obtained data, it was found that the least number of studies were conducted with

classroom teachers. In some studies, it was determined that more than one group was included in the study group. For example, in three master's theses, two doctoral dissertations, and one research article, the study group consisted of typically developing children, parents, and preschool teachers.

#### ***Distribution of Studies on School Adjustment by Research Methodology Used***

The distribution of the graduate theses published in the National Thesis Centre and the articles published in journals indexed in the ULAKBIM TR Index on school adjustment in preschool education, according to the research methodologies employed, is presented in Table 4.

**Table4.** Distribution of Studies on School Adjustment in Preschool Education by Research Methodology Used

Research Method	Master thesis	Doctoral dissertation	Research article	Total	%
Quantitative research	21	2	8	31	75,6
Qualitative research	1	1	4	6	14,6
Mixed methods research	3	1		4	9,8
Total	25	4	12	41	100

In studies on school adjustment in preschool education, quantitative research has been the most commonly used research method at 75.6%. This was followed by 14.6% qualitative and 9.8% mixed methods research. Quantitative research was found to be used particularly frequently in master's theses. However, it was observed that mixed methods research was the least preferred. No articles based on mixed methods research on school adjustment in preschool education published in journals indexed in the ULAKBIM TR Index were encountered. Additionally, it was determined that qualitative research is more frequently preferred in research articles but less preferred in postgraduate theses.

#### ***Distribution of Studies on School Adjustment by Research Design***

The distribution of the graduate theses published in the National Thesis Centre and the articles published in journals indexed in the ULAKBIM TR Index on school adjustment in preschool education by research design is presented in Table 5.

**Table5.** Distribution of Studies on School Adjustment in Preschool Education by Research Design

Research design	Master thesis	Doctoral dissertation	Research article	Total	%
Correlational survey design	15	1	7	23	54,8
Cross-sectional survey design	1			1	2,4
Descriptive survey design	4		1	5	11,9
Pretest-Posttest control group design	2	1		3	7,1
Case study	2	1	3	6	14,3
Ethnographic case study			1	1	2,4
Convergent parallel design	1			1	2,4
Explanatory sequential design	1	1		2	4,8
Total	26	4	12	42	100

An examination of Table 5 reveals that the correlational survey design, a significant and frequently used research design, accounted for the highest proportion of the studies. This design was followed by the case study (14.3%) and the descriptive survey design (11.9%). The

research designs that were used the least in the studies included the cross-sectional survey design, the ethnographic case study, and the convergent parallel design.

In the master's thesis on school adjustment in preschool education, the correlational survey design (f=15) was identified as the most commonly used research design. Similarly, the correlational survey design (f=7) was also the most frequently employed design in the research articles. In the doctoral dissertations, a variety of research designs including the correlational survey design, the pretest-posttest control group design, the case study, and the explanatory sequential design were used with equal frequency (f=1), providing an intriguing mix of methodologies. In contrast to the master's theses and doctoral dissertations, the research articles included studies that utilized the ethnographic case study design.

### ***Distribution of Studies on School Adjustment by Data Collection Tools***

The distribution of the graduate theses published in the National Thesis Centre and the articles published in journals indexed in the ULAKBIM TR Index on school adjustment in preschool education by data collection tools are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6.** Distribution of Studies on School Adjustment in Preschool Education by Data Collection Tools

Data collection tool	Master thesis	Doctoral dissertation	Research article	Total	%
Scale/Questionnaire	23	3	8	34	68
Interview form	4	2	4	10	20
Document			1	1	2
Observation form/list	1	1	1	3	6
Checklist	1			1	2
Researcher diary		1		1	2
Total	29	7	14	50	100

Table 6 indicates that the scale/questionnaire (f=34) was the most frequently used data collection tool in the studies on school adjustment in preschool education. However, it's important to note that nine studies employed a variety of data collection methods, showcasing the diversity and thoroughness of the research. Among these, five were master's theses, two were doctoral dissertations, and two were research articles. The interview form (f=10) was the second most commonly used data collection tool, followed by the observation form/checklist (f=3), document (f=1), checklist (f=1), and researcher journal/diary (f=1). The predominant use of the scale/questionnaire in the reviewed studies aligns with the expected research methods, as quantitative research typically involves the use of measurement tools such as scales, questionnaires, and tests.

### ***Prominent Findings in Studies on School Adjustment***

As shown in Table 7, the prominent findings from the master's theses and doctoral dissertations on school adjustment in preschool education and the research articles published in journals indexed in the ULAKBIM TR Index are presented.



**Table 7.** Prominent Findings from Studies on School Adjustment in Prechool Education

Prominent findings	Master thesis	Doctoral dissertation	Research article
Children's personal and household traits, including their sex, number of brothers and sisters, mother's education level, birth order among siblings, and family income status, are strongly associated with how well they adapt to the school environment.	17		1
Children's social development predicts their level of school adjustment.	4		2
The quality of children's relationships with their peers significantly predicts how well they will adjust to the school environment.	3	2	1
There is a relationship between how well children adjust to school and the child-rearing attitudes of their parents.	2		2
The quality of children's relationships with their parents and teachers influences the skills they develop for adjusting to the school setting during the preschool years.	2	2	
The school adjustment program implemented during the preschool period has increased the level of school adjustment and readiness of the first-grade students.		1	1
Most teachers prefer engaging activities, introduction activities, and games during the adjustment process.			2
Parents of anxious children tend to have a protective attitude.	1		
There is a negative relationship between cognitive processes and adjustment and behavior problems.	1		
The educational drama-based school adjustment program has positively influenced children's school adjustment.	1		
Children with secure attachment have higher levels of school adjustment.	1		
The home early literacy environment has positively affected children's school readiness skills.	1		
Teachers with higher levels of psychological well-being place greater importance on general factors, family factors, and facilitating factors that influence the school adjustment process.	1		
A significant positive relationship exists between children's school adjustment skills and their self-regulation abilities.	1		
The school adjustment week program helps children become more familiar with the physical environment more quickly and perceive the school as a safe place.	1		
The implemented program has made a significant and encouraging positive contribution to the school adjustment of immigrant children.	1		
There is a significant positive relationship between children's school adjustment, their learning behaviours, and their levels of psychological well-being.	1		
Students with special needs have lower pragmatic language skills and school adjustment skills than their typically developing peers.	1		
A significant positive relationship exists between children's pragmatic language skills and their school adjustment skills.	1		
Managing cultural differences, overcoming communication barriers, and strengthening family-school cooperation support children's school adjustment.		1	
Emotion regulation skills partially mediate the relationship between children's anxiety levels and their school adjustment, as well as their peer relationships. Additionally, the development of anxiety coping strategies partially mediates the relationship between children's anxiety levels and their peer relationships.		1	
The social skills program has reduced problem behaviors and improved school adjustment.	1		
According to teachers, the family factor is the most influential in problems experienced during the adjustment process.			1

As the level of school adjustment increases, levels of aggression, fearful-anxious behavior, exclusion, hyperactivity, and exposure to peer violence decrease, while the level of positive social behavior towards others increases.	1
The close relationship that immigrant families establish with the school and their positive attitudes towards language learning have facilitated the school adjustment process of their children.	1
Self-regulation skills have a full mediating role between peer relationships and school adjustment.	1
Total	41

Table 7 shows that research on school adjustment in preschool education frequently examines the relationship between children's demographic characteristics and their level of school adjustment. These studies are often found in master's theses, with only one identified research article. The demographic factors investigated include gender, number of siblings, mother's education level, birth order, and family income level. The literature underscores the crucial role of children's social development in predicting their school adjustment level. Peer relationships, in particular, have a significant influence on school adjustment. Understanding and addressing these social dynamics can be a key focus for interventions aimed at improving school adjustment. There is also a clear relationship between children's school adjustment and parenting attitudes, and the quality of their relationships with parents and teachers. These factors significantly affect their school adjustment skills in the preschool period. Importantly, school adjustment programs implemented in preschool have been found to increase the school adjustment and readiness levels of first-grade students. Additionally, most teachers prefer to use engaging activities, get-to-know-you activities, and games during the adjustment process. Beyond these critical findings, the paragraph notes that 19 other results have been presented across different studies, including master's theses, doctoral dissertations, and research articles.

## DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The research, which delved into the graduate theses published in the Council of Higher Education National Thesis Centre and the articles published in the journals indexed in the ULAKBIM TR Index, focused on the crucial topic of school adjustment in preschool education. It meticulously examined the type, year, study group, research method, research design, data collection tools, and prominent results of these studies. The results, presented in the context of similar studies' findings, underscore the significance of this research topic.

In preschool education, when examining the graduate theses and articles related to school adjustment, it has been determined that more than half of these studies are master's theses. However, only four doctoral dissertations have been identified. This imbalance between master's theses and doctoral dissertations suggests a need for more comprehensive and in-depth studies in preschool education, particularly on the topic of school adjustment. Given the importance of school adjustment in the preschool period, it can be emphasized that the number of high-quality studies on school adjustment needs to be increased in Turkey, which has very different regions and a large population. In this context, it can be stated that the number of doctoral dissertations is quite insufficient. School adjustment is a highly comprehensive phenomenon (Özen Altınkaynak & Akman, 2019), and it can become a preferred topic, especially in doctoral dissertation studies. Additionally, it has been determined that approximately one-third of the studies are comprised of articles. When examining the distribution of these studies over the years, it has been observed that the number of academic

studies conducted per year is less than three. Moreover, it has been determined that the number of recent research articles has decreased, while there has been a slight increase in graduate theses. However, it should be emphasized that this increase is quite limited. Ahi and Kıldan (2013) believe that this situation is due to the increasing awareness and importance of preschool programs in line with changing educational programs, which has led to increasing demand from teachers and individuals from other disciplines interested in the field. Considering that the child's school adjustment process in the preschool period, where the first encounter with school takes place, affects their future school experiences, social-emotional adjustment, and academic achievement (Ladd & Price, 1987; Ladd, 1990; Özen Altınkaynak & Akman, 2019; Reynolds & Bezruczko, 1993; Tuğluk, 2023), an increase in the number of studies on this topic can contribute to a better understanding of this process.

When the study groups of the research conducted in preschool education on school adjustment are examined, it is determined that the studies are mainly carried out with children with typical development. However, it has been found that the studies are also carried out with preschool teachers, parents, mothers, immigrant children, children with special needs, and classroom teachers. It can be stated that the frequency of studies conducted, especially with mothers, immigrant children, children with special needs, and classroom teachers, is relatively low. The studies examining the graduate theses stated that the study group consists mainly of children and teachers (Ahi & Kıldan, 2013; Erbil Kaya et al., 2022; Şahin & Bartan, 2017). Considering that many stakeholders have a role in children's school adjustment processes (Correia & Marques-Pinto, 2016; Karaman, 2022), studies focused on these stakeholders will contribute to understanding this process. Additionally, focusing on studies that consider different groups, such as immigrant children and children with special needs, will provide data to all stakeholders for these children to go through the adjustment process healthily. Adapting to a new socio-cultural environment is "a highly variable process" with multiple aspects for these children (Sam & Berry, 2006). Furthermore, when discussing the academic success or failure of children with immigrant backgrounds, it is essential to consider the acculturation process and its outcomes (Coll & Marks, 2012).

In preschool education, studies on school adjustment have determined that the most commonly used research method is quantitative. This is followed by qualitative research studies, with six studies, while mixed-method research studies, with four studies, have been the least preferred. Research examining postgraduate theses in preschool education in Turkey also indicates that the quantitative research method is prominent (Ahi & Kıldan, 2013; Şahin & Bartan, 2017). In contrast, Erbil Kaya and colleagues (2022), who examined postgraduate theses on preschool education environments at the national and international levels, drew attention to the fact that qualitative research is the most preferred method in these studies. Furthermore, in a study by Erbil Kaya and colleagues (2024) that examined articles on preschool education environments at the national and international levels, it was revealed that quantitative research methods are more commonly used in the international literature, while qualitative research methods are more frequently preferred in the national literature. From this, it can be emphasized that quantitative research methods are more frequently used in national postgraduate theses related to preschool education. In contrast, qualitative research methods are more frequently preferred in research articles. However, qualitative research methods are more frequently used in international postgraduate theses related to preschool education, while quantitative research methods are more frequently preferred in research articles. To better understand the complex and multifaceted topic of school adjustment (Rutter, 1989) in the national literature, there is a need to increase the number of qualitative and mixed-method research studies. Among the examined

studies, the correlational survey design was prominent, followed by case study, descriptive survey, pretest-posttest control group design, explanatory sequential design, cross-sectional survey, ethnographic case study, and concurrent design. Due to the predominant use of the quantitative research method in the studies, the most commonly used data collection tool was the scale-questionnaire form. Similarly, Ahi and Kıldan (2013) and Şahin and Bartan (2017) stated that scale forms were the most preferred data collection tool in postgraduate theses in preschool education. Furthermore, the interview form was the second most frequently used data collection tool in the examined studies. In contrast, Erbil Kaya and colleagues (2022), who examined postgraduate theses on preschool education environments at the national and international levels, emphasized that observation was the most preferred data collection method. This seems to be related to the more significant number of qualitative research studies on preschool education environments in the international literature. The examined studies were followed by observation forms/checklists, documents, checklists, and researcher diaries as data collection tools. Since examining children's first-hand experiences in the school adjustment process can better describe their development, changes, and experiences through data collection methods such as observation and interview, the number of studies using these methods can be increased. Observation provides the opportunity to directly know people's experiences, opinions, emotions, and knowledge (Patton, 2014).

In preschool education, studies on school adjustment have predominantly focused on examining the relationship between demographic characteristics and children's level of school adjustment. These studies have often been in the form of master's theses, with only one research article being conducted on this topic. The demographic information considered in these studies includes gender, number of siblings, mother's educational status, birth order, and family income level. Additionally, it has been found that children's social development predicts their level of school adjustment, peer relationships have a significant predictive effect on school adjustment, and there is a relationship between children's school adjustment and parental child-rearing attitudes. The quality of children's relationships with their parents and teachers in preschool has also been found to affect their school adjustment skills. Furthermore, the school adjustment program implemented in preschool education has been shown to increase the school adjustment and readiness levels of first-grade students, and most teachers prefer to use engaging activities, introductory activities, and games during the adjustment process. Other prominent findings have been obtained in different studies, such as master's theses, doctoral dissertations, and research articles. This study has generally reached these conclusions. These results also indicate the need for studies on specific topics. Therefore, the current study has examined the studies on school adjustment in the preschool period in terms of type, year, study group, research method, research design, data collection tools, and prominent results. Based on the data obtained, this study will shed light on future studies in the field. In this context, current studies and similar studies in the literature (Ahi & Kıldan, 2013; Erbil Kaya et al., 2022; Erbil Kaya et al., 2024; Şahin & Bartan, 2017) should be considered, and current studies should be conducted to gain a more detailed understanding of the school adjustment processes of preschool children.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

When the frequency and distribution of academic studies on school readiness and adaptation in the preschool period are evaluated, expanding the academic studies on this subject, especially doctoral dissertations, is recommended. In order to ensure the adaptation of children to school in the preschool period, it is necessary to conduct studies not only on typically developing children but also on stakeholders such as mothers, fathers, teachers, and school administration.

Furthermore, it is recommended to expand studies on the adaptation processes of relatively more minor groups, such as immigrant children and children with special needs, in order to understand their adjustment better. Since children's adaptation to school is a complex process, it is recommended to conduct longitudinal studies to monitor these processes better. In studies on children's adaptation to school in the preschool period, it is recommended to use qualitative and mixed research methods effectively. Finally, focusing on the underexplored topics identified in the academic studies examined in this research is recommended.

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