



## Preschool Teachers' Learning Attitudes and Job Satisfaction: A Mixed-Methods Perspective

### Okul Öncesi Öğretmenlerinin Öğrenmeye Yönelik Tutumları ve İş Doyumları: Karma Yöntem

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### ABSTRACT

*This study aims to examine the relationship between preschool teachers' attitudes toward learning and their job satisfaction. Although these two factors directly influence educational quality and student achievement, most previous research has focused on secondary education, while early childhood education has been relatively neglected. To address this gap, an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design was adopted. In the quantitative phase, data collected from 114 preschool teachers working in various districts of Istanbul were analyzed. In the subsequent qualitative phase, focus group interviews were conducted with 25 of these teachers. Quantitative findings revealed that teachers generally exhibit positive attitudes toward learning; however, their job satisfaction remains at a moderate level. While low salaries negatively affect job satisfaction, factors such as administrative support, positive relationships with colleagues, and the work environment were found to have positive effects on teacher satisfaction. Qualitative data indicated that teachers' motivation to learn is influenced by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Overall, the study found no significant relationship between attitudes toward learning and job satisfaction. However, a negative relationship was identified between teachers' learning-related anxiety and their openness to learning, while a positive relationship was found between anxiety and general attitudes toward learning. Furthermore, teachers' expectations toward learning were positively associated with both openness to learning and learning attitudes. Strengthening these areas may be possible through providing supportive working environments and offering needs-based professional development opportunities. The findings highlight the importance of addressing teacher satisfaction and learning attitudes together in order to improve the quality of early childhood education.*

**Keywords:** Job satisfaction, Learning attitudes, Mixed-methods, Preschool teacher.

### ÖZ

*Bu çalışma, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin öğrenmeye yönelik tutumları ile iş doyumları arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Eğitim kalitesini ve öğrenci başarısını doğrudan etkileyen bu iki faktör üzerine yapılan önceki araştırmaların çoğunluğu ortaöğretim düzeyine odaklanmış; erken çocukluk eğitimi alanı ise görece ihmal edilmiştir. Bu eksikliği gidermek amacıyla açıklayıcı sıralı karma yöntem deseni benimsenmiştir. Araştırmanın nicel aşamasında, İstanbul'un çeşitli ilçelerinde görev yapan 114 okul öncesi öğretmeninden toplanan veriler analiz edilmiştir. Ardından gerçekleştirilen nitel aşamada bu öğretmenlerden 25'yle odak grup görüşmeleri yapılmıştır. Nicel bulgular, öğretmenlerin genel olarak öğrenmeye karşı olumlu tutumlar sergilediklerini ancak iş doyumlarının orta düzeyde kaldığını ortaya koymuştur. Özellikle düşük maaşlar iş doyumunu olumsuz etkilerken idari destek, meslektaşlarla kurulan olumlu ilişkiler ve çalışma ortamı gibi unsurların öğretmen memnuniyeti üzerinde olumlu etkileri olduğu saptanmıştır. Nitel veriler ise öğretmenlerin öğrenme motivasyonlarının hem içsel hem de dışsal faktörlerden etkilendiğini göstermiştir. Genel olarak çalışma, öğrenmeye yönelik tutumlar ile iş doyumunu arasında anlamlı bir ilişki olmadığını ortaya koymuştur. Ancak öğretmenlerin öğrenmeye yönelik kaygıları ile öğrenmeye açıklıkları arasında negatif yönde, kaygıları ile genel öğrenmeye yönelik tutumları arasında pozitif yönde anlamlı ilişkiler saptanmıştır. Ayrıca öğretmenlerin öğrenmeye yönelik beklentileri, öğrenmeye açıklık ve öğrenmeye yönelik tutumları ile pozitif yönde anlamlı ilişkiler göstermektedir. Bu iki alanın güçlendirilmesi, öğretmenlere yönelik destekleyici çalışma ortamlarının sağlanması ve ihtiyaç odaklı mesleki gelişim olanaklarının sunulmasıyla mümkün olabilir. Araştırma bulguları, erken çocukluk eğitiminin niteliğini artırmada öğretmen memnuniyeti ve öğrenme tutumlarının birlikte ele alınmasının önemini vurgulamaktadır.*

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** İş memnuniyeti, Öğrenme tutumları, Karma yöntem, Okul öncesi öğretmeni.

## INTRODUCTION

Learning is the process through which individuals acquire new knowledge, skills, or behaviors through their experiences and interactions with their environment. It is a dynamic process that enables individuals to create new meanings based on their prior knowledge and contributes to their cognitive, social, cultural, and psychological development (Kara, 2010). Research shows that learning is influenced by interactions with the environment and that factors such as social environment, family, and educational materials play an important role in academic achievement (Yunita, 2024). Furthermore, both the physical and psychological conditions of the learning environment are strongly linked to academic achievement (Nainggolan, 2024). These factors emphasize the important role of environmental interactions in shaping the learning process. In this context, individuals' attitudes toward learning play a central role in determining how they interact with learning opportunities and how they perceive these experiences.

In today's fast-paced world, individuals are expected to embrace lifelong learning, think flexibly, and solve problems (Braten & Stromso, 2016). This can only be achieved with a positive attitude towards learning (Kara, 2010). In education, teachers' positive attitudes toward their own learning are crucial for achieving goals and developing desired behaviors in children (Aktürk, 2012). Teachers' openness to learning not only improves the quality of teaching but also shapes their professional well-being and job satisfaction.

Theories such as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory suggest that job satisfaction is shaped by both internal personal evaluations and external workplace conditions (Çekmecelioglu, 2005; Lund, 2003). While Maslow argued that basic needs must be met before self-actualization, Herzberg identified two components of job satisfaction: "motivational" factors (e.g., success, recognition) and "hygiene" factors (e.g., salary, working conditions). Motivational factors increase intrinsic satisfaction, while hygiene factors prevent dissatisfaction (Peramatzis & Galanakis, 2023). Research shows that both factors affect job satisfaction (Joseph, 2023). For example, hygiene factors such as salary increase job satisfaction, while intrinsic factors such as recognition increase performance (Kim, 2024). These findings support Herzberg's theory and emphasize a holistic approach to increasing employee motivation (Osarenmwinda, 2021). These theoretical perspectives confirm that teachers' intrinsic inclinations toward learning and their perceptions of workplace conditions are interrelated and contribute to overall job satisfaction.

The literature highlights individual and organizational factors that affect teachers' job satisfaction (Wells, 2016). For example, in a study conducted with teachers working in the public and private sectors, teachers who were satisfied with their jobs stated that their personal characteristics were compatible with their work and that appropriate working conditions increased their satisfaction (Burcu-Erdem et al., 2020). Additionally, satisfaction factors, including salary, work environment, and school management attitudes, have been identified, and student success has also been stated as a factor that increases motivation (Mehtap-Topuz et al., 2023). However, when it comes to preschool teachers, these factors may vary due to the developmental characteristics of the age group they work with. For example, a study by İlknur-Tarman et al. (2024) revealed that job satisfaction is affected by difficulties such as experiencing resource scarcity in rural areas and heating/insulation problems. Another study mentioned that the most significant factor affecting preschool teachers' satisfaction was the difficulty of "working six hours a day without a break" (Asar et al., 2023). Research conducted in Turkey shows that while approximately half of teachers would choose to be preschool teachers again, the other half would choose a different profession (Becerem-Özdemir et al., 2020); this finding highlights the importance of working conditions and cultural context. However, studies examining learning attitudes generally focus on pre-service teachers or education levels outside early childhood and rarely address job satisfaction as an outcome variable.

Among the factors shaping preschool teachers' job satisfaction, working directly with children, relationships with colleagues and parents, and interaction with specialist staff at the workplace stand out. On the other hand, the greatest sources of dissatisfaction are inadequate working conditions, low status in society, and negative perceptions of the teaching profession (Jurčević-Lozančić et al., 2023). Emotional intelligence, colleague relationships, leadership styles, psychological resilience, and professional identity are important factors that increase teachers' job satisfaction. For example, Alon and Deitcher (2025) examined the effect of professional identity and social support on job satisfaction among preschool teachers in Israeli special education schools; Fang et al. (2023) emphasized the effect of the school environment on Chinese teachers' professional commitment and

the mediating role of job satisfaction. Xiang et al. (2023) investigated the relationship between psychological empowerment and job satisfaction through professional identity, while Öztürk and Deniz (2008) examined the effects of emotional intelligence on both job satisfaction and burnout, and Eser (2010) emphasized the importance of peer relationships and management support. Teltik (2009) analyzed the connection between perceived professional competence and job satisfaction, Akgün (2021) focused on psychological resilience, Kaplan and Ergül (2015) investigated how the cultural leadership behaviors of preschool administrators affect job satisfaction, and Akkurt (2008) examined job satisfaction and burnout among teachers in Istanbul-Pendik.

A review of the literature found that teachers with higher job satisfaction tend to show greater happiness, productivity, and motivation (Madigan & Kim, 2021). Furthermore, teachers with high job satisfaction participate in continuous professional development programs and remain in the profession longer (Rashid & Maqbool, 2025). In this context, attitudes toward learning can be considered a critical psychological factor that interacts with job satisfaction by affecting teacher motivation and commitment. Factors shaping preschool teachers' job satisfaction generally include professional competence, supportive relationships, effective leadership, and psychological resources. However, existing studies tend to examine the various factors related to teachers' job satisfaction separately and offer limited discussion on how individual learning-related tendencies interact with job satisfaction. Furthermore, inconsistencies among studies regarding the relative importance of personal and organizational factors indicate a need for more integrative research approaches. Teachers' own learning is also closely related to their teaching activities; teachers who are open to learning can be more effective with their students (Niikko & Ugaste, 2019). Therefore, teachers' attitudes toward learning not only shape the quality of teaching but can also affect their professional well-being and job satisfaction.

Learning attitudes are complex psychological orientations that determine how individuals approach the learning process, how they interact with it, and how they perceive it. Sholeh Widodo et al. (2025) examined learning attitudes in four dimensions: the nature of learning, anxiety, expectation, and openness. It was found that teachers who chose their profession for intrinsic reasons were more open to learning, had higher expectations, and experienced lower anxiety (Aktürk et al., 2012). Attitudes are not fixed; they can be developed and changed (Kara et al., 2009). Research has focused on how teachers' attitudes toward learning affect educational practices (Dalaman & Kara, 2021; Güven & Azkeskin, 2018; Kara & Uysal, 2015). International studies have also examined professional learning orientations in the context of pre-service education and technology integration, emphasizing the role of personal and organizational factors (Raviv & Galili, 2024; Valle-Flórez et al., 2024). However, studies examining learning attitudes generally focus on pre-service teachers or educational levels other than early childhood and rarely address job satisfaction as an outcome variable.

## **Importance and Purpose of the Study**

Research consistently shows that job satisfaction affects not only teachers' personal well-being but also students' academic achievement (Došenović & Todorović, 2021). Factors such as supportive school leadership, a positive and collaborative work environment, and ongoing professional development opportunities play a critical role in increasing teachers' job satisfaction (Sinha, 2025). Although the relationship between professional attitudes and job satisfaction has been widely studied, most existing studies have been conducted in secondary education contexts. For example, Quines and Nino (2023) examined the relationship between work attitudes and job satisfaction among high school teachers through the mediating role of professional collaboration. However, these findings provide limited insight into the preschool education context, which has unique emotional, cognitive, and pedagogical demands. As emphasized by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2019), findings from other educational levels may not be directly transferable to the early childhood education setting, as children's developmental needs and teachers' professional roles differ. This necessitates a clear examination of job satisfaction and attitudes toward learning in the early childhood education context.

In this context, the lack of direct research on the interaction between job satisfaction and learning attitudes in the context of preschool teachers creates a notable gap in the literature. The perception of the teaching profession in Turkish society, working conditions, and parental expectations are important factors shaping teachers' professional attitudes and job satisfaction. Therefore, the findings will not only contribute academically but will also guide the design of culturally specific policy and professional development programs.

This study is critically important in addressing this gap and understanding the professional experiences and well-being of preschool teachers in a more comprehensive manner. It also draws attention to preschool teachers, who face unique emotional and pedagogical challenges but are underrepresented in research. It conceptualizes learning attitudes not merely as individual characteristics but as meaningful determinants of job satisfaction shaped by institutional and instructional experiences. Using a mixed-methods approach, it produces both generalizable findings and in-depth, context-specific insights into teachers' professional lives.

From an applied perspective, the findings offer important implications for school administrators, policymakers, and teacher education programs. By revealing the relationship between learning attitudes and job satisfaction, it provides evidence-based guidance for designing effective professional development initiatives, creating supportive school climates, and implementing strategies to increase teacher motivation. Such efforts are essential for supporting teachers' well-being and improving the quality of teaching in early childhood education.

Guided by these aims, the study addresses the following research questions:

1. What are the levels of job satisfaction and attitudes toward learning among preschool teachers?
2. Is there a significant relationship between preschool teachers' learning attitudes and their job satisfaction?
3. To what extent do preschool teachers' attitudes toward learning predict their job satisfaction?
4. How do preschool teachers perceive their attitudes toward learning and their overall job satisfaction?

## METHOD

### Design of the Study

This research utilized an explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach to thoroughly explore the connection between preschool teachers' attitudes toward learning and their levels of job satisfaction. Mixed-methods research involves the combination of both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a more complete and nuanced understanding of the studied phenomenon. In an explanatory sequential design, the process begins with the collection and analysis of quantitative data, which is then followed by the gathering and interpretation of qualitative data (Creswell, 2009; Katıtaş, 2019). In the context of this study, the initial quantitative phase aimed to reveal statistical correlations between the variables. The subsequent qualitative phase was designed to delve deeper into these findings by exploring teachers' personal insights, experiences, and interpretations, thereby shedding light on the underlying factors that influenced the earlier results.

### Sample of the Study

The quantitative phase included 114 preschool teachers from Istanbul, selected through convenience sampling. The qualitative phase used purposive sampling, involving 25 teachers who participated in the quantitative phase and volunteered for follow-up focus group interviews. This integration helped to maintain alignment between the phases and ensured that the qualitative findings directly supported the quantitative results.

The demographic data of the sample group are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Distribution of Preschool Teachers According to Demographic Variables*

Variables	Group	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	108	94.7
	Male	6	5.3
Age	18-25 age	10	8.8
	26-30 age	34	29.8
	31-35 age	42	36.8
	36-40 age	14	12.3
	41 and above	14	12.3
Marital status	Married	72	63.2
	Single	42	36.8

Educational status	High school	3	2.6
	Associate degree	4	3.5
	Bachelor's degree	70	61.4
	Postgraduate degree	37	32.5
Years of service	1-5 year	32	28.1
	6-10 year	37	32.5
	11-15 year	28	24.6
	16-20 year	12	10.5
	21 years and above	5	4.3
Institution of employment	Private	38	33.3
	Ministry of Education	70	61.4
	Other	6	5.3
Type of Preschool Education Institution	Independent	53	46.5
	Kindergarten Preschool Attached to Primary School	40	35.1
	Other	13	19.4
Age group of students	0-2 age	1	0.8
	3-4 age	24	21.1
	5-6 age	89	78.1

The vast majority of preschool teachers (94.7%) are women, while only 5.3% are men. The most common age group among teachers is 31–35. Regarding marital status, 63.2% are married and 36.8% are single. Most teachers (61.4%) hold a bachelor's degree, and a notable 32.5% have completed postgraduate education. In terms of experience, the highest frequency is in the 6–10 year range, with the lowest in the 21 years and above category. A majority (61.4%) work in institutions affiliated with the Ministry of National Education. Most teachers (46.5%) are employed in independent kindergartens. In terms of student age groups, 78.1% of the teachers work with children aged 5–6, while only one teacher works with the 0–2 age group.

## Data Collection Tools

### *Personal Information Form*

The Personal Information Form was used to collect data on gender, age, marital status, education level, years of service, the institution they work for, the preschool institution (independent kindergarten, preschool, and other) they work at, and the age group of their students.

### *Hackman and Oldham Job Satisfaction Scale*

The Job Satisfaction Scale, originally developed by Hackman and Oldham (1980), is designed to assess an individual's level of job satisfaction based on various factors related to their work and work environment. This scale comprises 14 items distributed across 5 dimensions. The reliability and validity of the scale were established through the test-retest method conducted by Hackman and Oldham. In the initial application, the average score was 34.27, while the second measurement produced an average of 34.71. The small difference between these two averages was considered a sign of the scale's reliability. The scale is suitable for use across all educational levels. Since all items are phrased positively, responses are scored on a five-point scale ranging from 1 to 5. In line with the Turkish adaptation study, which reported the scale as a reliable overall measure and provided reliability evidence for the total score (Yüksel, 2005), the present study used and interpreted the scale based on the total score (overall job satisfaction) rather than separate subscale scores. The highest possible score is 70. According to the scoring guidelines, a score between 53 and 70 indicates high job satisfaction, scores between 33 and 52 suggest moderate job satisfaction, and scores ranging from 14 to 32 reflect low job satisfaction. In the Turkish adaptation study, the overall Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was reported as .89 (Yüksel, 2005). For the data used in the present study, Cronbach's alpha was calculated as .88, indicating a high level of internal consistency.

### ***Scale of Attitudes Toward Learning***

This study employed the "Attitude Toward Learning Scale," originally developed by Kara (2010). The scale comprises 40 items divided into four sub-dimensions and utilizes a five-point Likert-type response format, ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). Although it was initially created to assess university students' attitudes toward learning, it was adapted for this research. The first sub-dimension, titled "Nature of Learning," includes 7 items—6 positively worded and 1 negatively worded. The second sub-dimension, "Expectancy," contains 9 items, with 8 positive and 1 negative statement. The third sub-dimension, "Openness," is composed of 11 items—6 of which are positively framed and 5 negatively framed. Lastly, the "Anxiety" sub-dimension includes 13 items, 9 positive and 4 negatives. The scoring ranges for each sub-dimension are as follows: "Nature of Learning" has a minimum score of 7 and a maximum of 35; "Expectancy" ranges from 9 to 45; "Openness" ranges between 11 and 55; and "Anxiety" ranges from 13 to 65. Additionally, items numbered 4, 8, 11, 13, 16, 20, 24, 28, 32, 36, and 38 require reverse scoring due to their negative phrasing. The reliability of the scale was confirmed through the test-retest method, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.87. Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for internal consistency within each sub-dimension are as follows: 0.77 for "Nature of Learning," 0.72 for "Expectancy," 0.78 for "Openness," and 0.81 for "Anxiety." The overall Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient for the entire scale stands at 0.73 (Koyuncu, 2015). In the present study, internal consistency was examined using Cronbach's alpha. Alpha coefficients were .63 for Nature of Learning, .66 for Anxiety, .68 for Expectancy, and .60 for Openness; the overall alpha for the total scale was .65. These findings indicate moderate internal consistency for the total score, with the lowest internal consistency observed in the Openness sub-dimension.

### ***Focus Group Interview Form***

In the qualitative phase of the study, a semi-structured interview form developed by the researchers specifically for preschool teachers was employed. This form, consisting of eight open-ended questions, aimed to examine preschool teachers' experiences and perceptions regarding their attitudes toward learning and job satisfaction in depth. During the development of the interview form, the relevant literature was reviewed, and to ensure content validity, expert opinions were obtained from two academics specializing in early childhood education. Based on expert feedback, necessary revisions were made to the wording and content of the questions, and prior to the main application, the form was pilot-tested with two preschool teachers to assess clarity and comprehensibility.

The interviews were conducted by the researcher acting as the moderator and were carried out in a quiet and secure environment to allow participants to express their views freely. Each interview lasted approximately 10–15 minutes and was audio-recorded with the participants' informed consent. The interview process addressed themes such as professional motivation, attitudes toward learning, levels of job satisfaction, professional development experiences, support mechanisms within the school environment, and challenges encountered in professional practice. These themes constituted the core of the qualitative component of the study, as they represent key psychological and organizational factors influencing teachers' job satisfaction.

Purposeful sampling was used to determine the qualitative sample. Participants were selected from preschool teachers working with different age groups (0–2, 3–4, and 5–6 years). However, the limited number of teachers working with the 0–2 age group was considered a potential constraint on the representativeness of this subgroup in the qualitative findings, and this issue was addressed within the limitations of the study.

All qualitative data were stored in accordance with ethical research principles and confidentiality requirements. Participants' identities were anonymized through the use of codes, and audio recordings were accessible only to the researchers. Following the completion of data analysis, all recordings were securely deleted. These procedures were implemented to enhance the transparency, trustworthiness, and replicability of the qualitative phase of the study.

### **Data Collection**

The necessary permissions were obtained from the authors of the Hackman and Oldham Job Satisfaction Scale and the Attitude Toward Learning Scale used in this study. In addition, ethical approval was granted by the university's ethics committee prior to the data collection process. The authorized measurement instruments were

converted into an online format using Google Forms. Data were collected from preschool teachers who voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. Before the administration of the survey, participants were provided with an Informed Consent Form outlining the purpose of the study, their rights as participants, and the voluntary nature of their participation. It was clearly stated that participants could withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. The principles of confidentiality and anonymity were strictly upheld; no personal identifying information was collected or stored, and the data were used exclusively for research purposes. The online survey data were stored in a password-protected digital environment, accessible only to the researchers, and securely archived after the completion of the data analysis process.

In the qualitative phase, participants who volunteered for the focus group interviews were contacted individually, and verbal informed consent was reaffirmed prior to each interview. The interviews were conducted under the moderation of the researcher, who adopted a neutral stance to ensure equal participation among all participants and to avoid leading or influencing responses. The interviews were conducted in non-judgmental settings that ensured privacy and encouraged participants to express their views openly and honestly. Each interview lasted approximately 10–15 minutes and was audio-recorded with the participants' explicit consent. Following transcription, all identifying information was anonymized through coding.

## **Data Analysis**

### ***Quantitative Analysis***

Quantitative data analysis began with an assessment of data normality using the Shapiro–Wilk test. Subsequently, descriptive statistics and Spearman's rank-order correlation were employed. As the data were determined to be normally distributed, Spearman correlation analysis was performed to examine the relationship between preschool teachers' job satisfaction and their attitudes toward learning.

The scores obtained from the Job Satisfaction Scale were grouped based on total scores:

- 53–70: high job satisfaction
- 33–52: moderate job satisfaction
- 14–32: low job satisfaction

Similarly, the scores from the Attitude Toward Learning Scale were categorized according to average values:

- 1.00–2.33: low level
- 2.34–3.67: moderate level
- 3.68–5.00: high level

Although regression analysis was considered, correlation analysis was preferred in this phase to identify general trends without making predictive assumptions, due to the exploratory nature of the study and sample size limitations.

### ***Qualitative Analysis***

In qualitative research, the inductive approach plays a significant role in the analysis process. This approach makes it possible to arrive at higher-level concepts from the data obtained and to reveal the relationships between concepts (Baltacı, 2017). The qualitative analysis process generally consists of three basic stages: simplification of data, presentation of data, and interpretation and validation of results (Baltacı, 2017).

The data simplification stage involves organizing, classifying, and summarizing raw data. The data presentation stage refers to the systematic and comprehensible transfer of organized data. These two stages are fundamental steps that facilitate reaching conclusions. The final stage, interpreting and validating the results, involves a meaningful and comprehensive analysis of the social phenomenon under investigation. Ensuring the reliability of the research is of great importance at this stage (Baltacı, 2017; Patton, 2002). The qualitative data were analyzed using thematic content analysis. Three researchers independently coded the interview transcripts, followed by a

consensus-building process to identify common themes and subthemes. These codes were synthesized into broader conceptual categories that reflected the participants' lived experiences and perceptions. Instead of presenting isolated quotations, thick descriptions were used to articulate the themes such as "Determinants of Learning Motivation", "Perceptions of Learning Opportunities and Self-Improvement", and "Job Satisfaction and Professional Fulfillment". This approach enabled a deeper and more integrated interpretation of how preschool teachers experience and make sense of learning and job satisfaction within their institutional contexts.

To ensure reliability, the internal consistency formula developed by Miles and Huberman was used. According to the formula, the reliability of data analysis is calculated as  $\text{Consensus} / (\text{Consensus} + \text{Disagreement}) \times 100$  (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this method, a level of agreement of 80% or higher is recommended. The analysis conducted in this study found that the level of agreement in the research was 87%, indicating that the data is reliable.

Determining the accuracy of findings in qualitative research is one of the strongest aspects of the research. Strategies such as triangulation, detailed and rich descriptions, clarification of biases, long-term fieldwork, and the use of external reviewers can be applied to increase validity (Creswell, 2009).

In this study, to ensure validity, the data obtained were reported with detailed descriptions, and care was taken to represent all participants. Throughout the research, information was presented to participants in a clear and detailed manner. During the reporting phase, direct quotations were included to prevent any loss of meaning in the data belonging to the teachers.

### *Integration of Data*

The results of the two phases were compared and contrasted during the interpretation stage. Qualitative themes helped explain the nuances behind the quantitative findings, especially in understanding the reasons why no significant relationship was observed between attitudes toward learning and job satisfaction. For example, workload and institutional constraints mentioned in interviews provided context for moderate satisfaction levels identified in the survey.

### **Ethics Committee Approval**

This study was conducted with the approval of the Ethics Committee for Research and Publication of the Institute of Educational Sciences at Marmara University, dated 25.12.2024 and numbered 938694.

## **RESULTS**

In this section, the findings related to the research questions are presented, with both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data are organized in tables to help the reader understand them more easily. The qualitative data, on the other hand, are examined in depth, supported by the direct statements of the participants within the framework of the themes and subthemes obtained.

### **Quantitative Results**

The descriptive statistics results related to teachers' job satisfaction are presented in Table 2. In addition, normality was assessed using the Shapiro–Wilk test, and the p value is reported in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*Descriptive Statistics of Preschool Teachers' Job Satisfaction*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation	Shapiro–Wilk p
Job Satisfaction	114	23.00	62.00	42.63	9.65	0.059

The scores obtained from the scale ranging between 53–70 indicate a high level of job satisfaction; scores between 33–52 indicate a moderate level of job satisfaction; and scores between 14–32 indicate a low level of job satisfaction (Yüksel, 2005). When examining Table 2, the mean score of 42.6316 suggests that preschool teachers

fall within the moderate job satisfaction range. The high standard deviation of 9.65 indicates that while a significant number of preschool teachers may have high job satisfaction, there are also teachers who experience low job satisfaction. The Shapiro–Wilk test indicated that job satisfaction scores did not significantly deviate from normality ( $p = .059$ ).

The descriptive statistics results regarding teachers' attitudes toward learning are presented in Table 3. Normality was also examined using the Shapiro–Wilk test, and the  $p$  values are provided in Table 3.

**Table 3**

*Descriptive Statistics of Preschool Teachers' Attitudes Toward Learning*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation	Shapiro–Wilk p
The Nature of Learning	114	3.57	5.00	4.39	.44	< 0.001
Concerns About Learning	114	1.31	3.85	2.52	.57	0.11
Expectations About Learning	114	3.44	4.89	4.40	.26	< 0.001
Openness to Learning	114	3.64	5.00	4.54	.34	< 0.001
Attitudes Toward Learning	114	3.04	4.28	3.72	.22	0.894

The scores obtained from the Attitudes Toward Learning Scale were interpreted according to the following ranges: 1.00–2.33 low, 2.34–3.67 moderate, and 3.68–5.00 high. As shown in Table 3, preschool teachers demonstrated a highly positive attitude toward the nature of learning ( $M = 4.39$ ). Their concerns about learning were at a moderate level ( $M = 2.52$ ). Teachers' expectations about learning were found to be high ( $M = 4.40$ ), and they also exhibited a high level of openness to learning ( $M = 4.54$ ). Overall, the findings indicate that preschool teachers hold a positive attitude toward learning ( $M = 3.72$ ). Normality of the data was examined using the Shapiro–Wilk test, and the corresponding  $p$  values are presented in Table 3. The results showed that Concerns About Learning ( $p = .11$ ) and the total Attitudes Toward Learning score ( $p = .894$ ) did not significantly deviate from normality. In contrast, Nature of Learning, Expectations About Learning, and Openness to Learning were found to deviate significantly from normality ( $p < .001$ ).

Since the majority of the variables were not normally distributed, the findings of the Spearman correlation coefficient analysis examining the relationship between teachers' attitudes toward learning and job satisfaction. The findings of the Spearman correlation coefficient analysis regarding the relationship between teachers' attitudes towards learning and job satisfaction are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4**

*Spearman Correlation Coefficient Statistics Regarding Preschool Teachers' Job Satisfaction and Attitudes Towards Learning*

	Job Satisfaction	Nature of Learning	Concerns About Learning	Expectations About Learning	Openness to Learning	Attitude Towards Learning
Job Satisfaction	1.00	0.06	-0.16	-0.05	-0.00	-0.16
Nature of Learning	0.06	1.00	-0.05	0.13	0.08	0.09
Concerns About Learning	-0.16	-0.05	1.00	0.00	-0.49**	0.72**
Expectations About Learning	-0.05	0.13	0.00	1.00	0.36**	0.53**

Openness to Learning	-0.00	0.08	-0.49**	0.36**	1.00	0.11
Attitude Towards Learning	-0.16	0.09	0.72**	0.53**	0.11	1.00

N= 114. \*\*p<0.01

When examining Table 4, it is observed that there is no significant relationship between preschool teachers' attitudes toward learning and their job satisfaction. There is a negative and significant high-level relationship between preschool teachers' concerns about learning and their openness to learning ( $r=-0.49$ ;  $p<0.01$ ). A positive and significant high-level relationship is found between preschool teachers' concerns about learning and their attitudes toward learning ( $r=0.72$ ;  $p<0.01$ ). A positive and significant high-level relationship exists between preschool teachers' expectations about learning and their openness to learning ( $r=0.36$ ;  $p<0.01$ ). Furthermore, there is a positive and significant high-level relationship between preschool teachers' expectations about learning and their attitudes toward learning ( $r=0.53$ ;  $p<0.01$ ).

To address the third research question, a simple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine whether preschool teachers' overall attitudes toward learning significantly predicted their job satisfaction. In this model, Job Satisfaction was entered as the dependent variable and Attitudes Toward Learning (total score) was entered as the predictor. The results of the regression analysis are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5**

*Simple Linear Regression Results for Predicting Job Satisfaction from Attitudes Toward Learning*

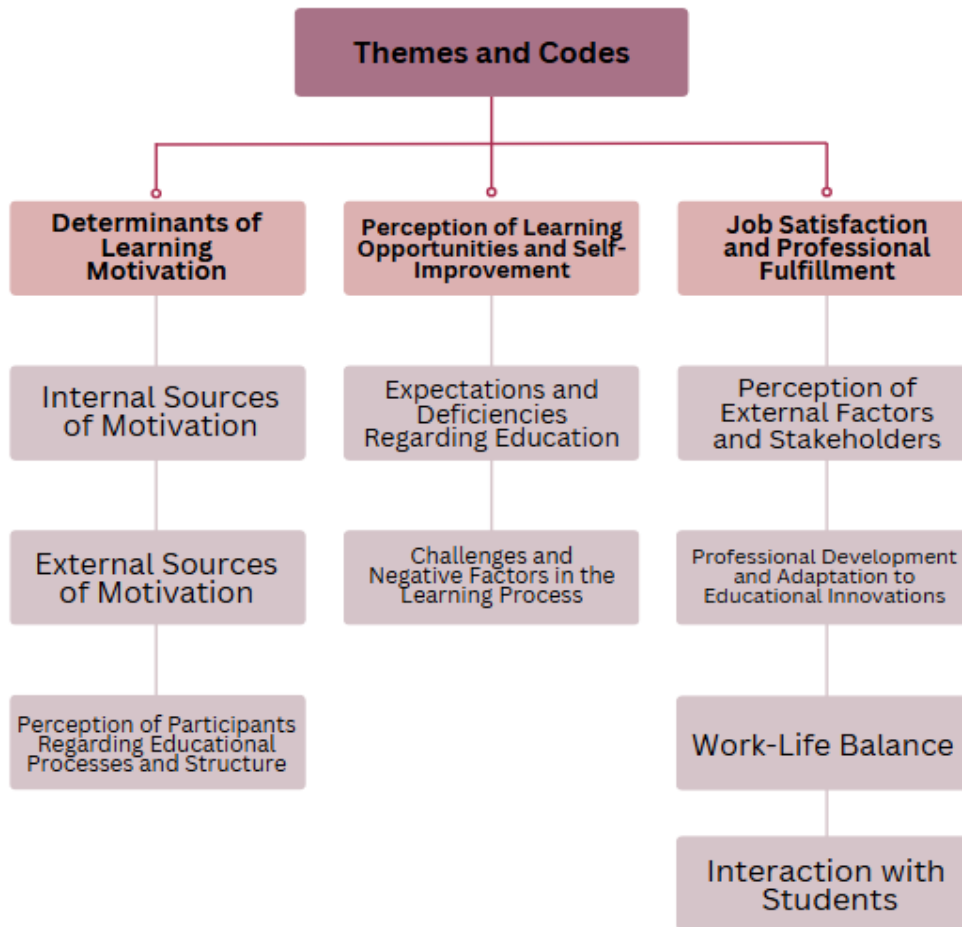
Model Fit	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	SE (Estimate)	F(1,112)	p
	0.15	0.02	0.01	9.58	2.78	0.09
Predictor	B	SE	B	t	p	
Constant	67.78	15.10	—	4.49	< 0.001	
Attitudes Toward Learning (Total)	-6.76	4.05	-0.15	-1.67	0.09	

Table 5 presents the results of a simple linear regression analysis examining whether preschool teachers' attitudes toward learning predict job satisfaction. The Model Fit section reports overall fit indices (R, R<sup>2</sup>, adjusted R<sup>2</sup>, F, and p), while the Predictor section provides the unstandardized coefficient (B), standard error (SE), standardized coefficient ( $\beta$ ), t value, and significance level for the predictor. As shown in Table 5, the regression model was not statistically significant ( $F(1,112) = 2.78$ ,  $p = .09$ ) and explained a small proportion of variance in job satisfaction ( $R^2 = .02$ ). Attitudes toward learning did not significantly predict job satisfaction ( $\beta = -.15$ ,  $p = .09$ ).

## Qualitative Results

To further explore and enrich the findings derived from the quantitative data, focus group interviews were conducted with 25 teachers who also participated in the quantitative part of the study. The focus group interviews form the qualitative data of the study. The qualitative data collected were analyzed thematically using content analysis.

The themes and codes identified through thematic analysis are shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1***Themes and Codes Based on Qualitative Data*

The first theme derived from the interview data concerns the factors influencing teachers' motivation to learn. Three main categories emerged under this theme: individual internal sources of motivation; individual external sources of motivation; and perceptions of the educational process and structure.

### ***Theme 1a: Determinants of Learning Motivation: Internal Sources of Motivation***

Most teachers stated that internal factors such as curiosity, interest and personal satisfaction were fundamental to their motivation to learn. In particular, the desire to achieve personal goals was identified as the primary motivator for learning. One participant (P10) explained this as follows “the most important factors increasing my learning motivation are interest and curiosity, as well as the desire to achieve personal goals.”

Similarly, it has been observed that a sense of achievement in the teaching process has a positive effect on teachers. P24 expressed this as follows “I use various methods and techniques to enrich the presentation and fill in the gaps. This way, the feeling that I have achieved something in the teaching process makes me feel good and increases my motivation.”

Taken together, these accounts suggest that when teachers perceive learning as personally meaningful, they tend to demonstrate higher openness and willingness to engage in professional learning. In particular, goal orientation and a sense of accomplishment appear to encourage continuous self-improvement, rather than representing uniform experiences shared by all participants.

### ***Theme 1b: Determinants of Learning Motivation: External Sources of Motivation***

Another notable theme that emerged from the interviews is the external factors that influence teachers' motivation to learn. In this context, the usefulness of information learned in daily life, environmental support (from managers, colleagues and family) and recognition are important factors. For instance, P11 stated that “Even a small token of appreciation for the effort shown in the workplace can create a positive working environment, which in turn can foster positive learning.”

These findings indicate that a supportive organizational climate may contribute not only to job satisfaction but also to enhanced learning motivation. However, some participants reported contrasting experiences. For instance, P3 stated that “Despite continuing to use methods I believed to be correct, being criticised by the school administration made me feel inadequate and worthless.”

These statements demonstrate that teachers' attitudes towards learning are influenced by institutional relationships and management approaches, as well as being individual. This contrast highlights the variability in teachers' experiences and suggests that institutional relationships and management practices can either facilitate or hinder positive attitudes toward learning.

### ***Theme 1c: Determinants of Learning Motivation: Perceptions of the Educational Process and Structure***

Most participants reported that current education policies negatively affect their motivation to learn. In particular, centralized practices were perceived as limiting teachers' participation and professional autonomy. One participant (P26) stated that “Centrally determined curricula, without teacher participation as stakeholders, have no chance of success.”

Similarly, several teachers emphasized that increasing bureaucratic demands reduce the time and energy available for meaningful interaction with children. P25 explained that “We are forced to devote our minds and energy to paperwork.”

These views are directly related to the third research question and suggest that teachers' perceptions of administrative structures shape both their learning motivation and job satisfaction. At the same time, these perceptions varied across participants, indicating that policy impacts are not experienced uniformly.

### ***Theme 2a: Perception of Learning Opportunities and Self-improvement: Expectation and Shortcomings Regarding Education***

The majority of participants perceived in-service training programs as insufficient, overly theoretical, and limited in practical value. Teachers expressed a desire for flexible learning opportunities aligned with their individual interests. P12 noted that “I am not satisfied with the constant theoretical training and do not consider it sufficient.”

This finding suggests a need for greater teacher autonomy in professional learning decisions. Some participants also questioned the quality of training providers. P8 stated that “Most of the training I have attended is not of a high standard.”

Rather than reflecting a generalized judgment, these comments indicate specific concerns related to perceived expertise and relevance.

### ***Theme 2b: Perception of Learning Opportunities and Self-improvement: Difficulties and Negative factors encountered in the Learning Process***

Participants frequently referred to material, temporal, and physical constraints affecting their learning. Heavy workloads, financial limitations, and transportation issues were commonly cited. P5 noted that “the biggest challenges I face when learning new things are time and financial issues.”

Similarly, P16 emphasized logistical barriers that “transportation and accommodation should be provided for teachers attending training sessions outside the city.”

These findings suggest that despite strong intrinsic motivation, structural constraints may limit access to learning opportunities and indirectly affect professional satisfaction. This theme is closely aligned with the second and third research questions.

### ***Theme 3a: Job Satisfaction and Professional fulfilment: External Factors Stakeholder Perceptions***

Most participants indicated that relationships with administrators, parents, and colleagues significantly influence job satisfaction. Unsupportive interactions were associated with emotional exhaustion and self-doubt: P21 stated that “negative interactions with my colleagues make me more unhappy at work.” Additionally, bureaucratic workload emerged as a major source of dissatisfaction P11 noted that “the increasing workload, especially paperwork, reduces job satisfaction.”

These findings suggest that external pressures may shift teachers away from child-centered practices, although the intensity of this effect differs across individuals.

### ***Theme 3b: Job Satisfaction and Professional Fulfilment: Professional Development and Adapting to Innovations in Education***

Teachers who reported access to updated knowledge and professional renewal opportunities expressed higher levels of job satisfaction. P12 stated that “we must adapt ourselves along with the changing generation.”

This finding indicates that job satisfaction is shaped not only by institutional conditions but also by opportunities for continuous professional development.

### ***Theme 3c: Job Satisfaction and Professional Fulfilment: Private Life and Balance***

Another theme concerns the difficulty of balancing professional and personal responsibilities. P4 noted that “the accumulation of both professional and personal responsibilities makes this situation even more difficult.”

This suggests that insufficient support structures may negatively affect both well-being and professional engagement.

### ***Theme 3d: Job Satisfaction and Professional Fulfilment: Interaction with Students***

Despite institutional challenges, positive interactions with children emerged as a strong internal motivator. Teachers emphasized that applying new methods and observing positive outcomes enhanced their sense of professional fulfilment.

“When I see visible changes, I feel that I am on the right track.”

This theme underscores the central role of student interaction in sustaining teachers’ motivation and job satisfaction, complementing the quantitative findings of moderate satisfaction levels.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

Learning is a continuous process through which individuals develop their knowledge and skills, and teachers play a crucial role in guiding students toward meaningful and lasting educational experiences. Educators' attitudes toward learning significantly affect not only their own professional satisfaction but also the overall quality of their students' educational journeys. Job satisfaction stands out as an important factor shaping the effectiveness and quality of teachers' performance. Teachers with high job satisfaction are generally more committed to their profession, serve as inspiring role models, and contribute to more productive and engaging learning environments. Recent research in early childhood education emphasizes that job satisfaction is closely related to professional commitment, job commitment, and emotional well-being among preschool teachers (Al Jadidi, 2025; Zang & Feng, 2023).

In the context of early childhood education, a fundamental stage in a child's development, examining the connection between preschool teachers' perspectives on learning and their job satisfaction provides important insights into educational practices. This research addresses this relationship using mixed methods. Quantitative data has been enriched with qualitative insights obtained from focus group interviews examining teachers' learning orientations, sources of motivation, and professional experiences. This integrative methodology has enabled a more comprehensive investigation of teachers' beliefs, actions, and life experiences (Demir & Demir, 2023). The study analyzes the correlation between learning attitudes and job satisfaction, as well as educators' personal thoughts on these dimensions.

The findings reveal that preschool teachers' job satisfaction is at a moderate level, which is consistent with previous national studies (Akın & Koçak, 2007; Buluç & Demir, 2015). However, the high standard deviation indicates that some teachers are very happy, while others experience serious dissatisfaction. The reasons for this "moderate" level become clear in the focus group interviews. Teachers see interaction with children as the greatest source of satisfaction, while identifying heavy paperwork and bureaucratic burdens as the main obstacles to satisfaction. These findings indicate that organizational climate, emotional labor, and occupational stress significantly affect preschool teachers' job satisfaction (Xia et al., 2024). In contrast, more recent studies report higher levels of job satisfaction, particularly in early childhood settings, when institutional support and professional recognition are strengthened (Al Jadidi, 2025). Although preschool teachers' job satisfaction is generally moderate in the work context, structural and organizational conditions have been identified as determining factors.

The study also found that preschool teachers generally exhibit positive attitudes toward learning. This high interest in learning among teachers stems from intrinsic motivation (curiosity, interest). This finding is not surprising given the nature of early childhood education, which requires continuous professional learning to support children's social, emotional, and cognitive development.

Given the nature of early childhood education, which requires continuous professional learning to support children's social, emotional, and cognitive development, this result is not surprising. Recent empirical evidence confirms that preschool teachers exhibit a strong lifelong learning orientation, especially when they perceive learning in relation to classroom practices and professional development (Özbilen & Aytac, 2023). Furthermore, self-efficacy beliefs motivate teachers to improve teaching quality and adapt to changing educational demands by reinforcing positive learning attitudes. Current studies indicate that early pedagogical experiences and career motivations play a critical role in shaping teachers' openness to learning and professional renewal (Berger & Ranellucci, 2025). Despite these positive learning attitudes, the study found no statistically significant relationship between overall job satisfaction and attitudes toward learning. This finding contradicts studies conducted at other educational levels, such as Dalaman and Kara (2021), which reported a significant relationship among middle school teachers. A possible explanation for this may be that preschool teachers view learning primarily as a professional requirement rather than a direct source of job satisfaction. Additionally, the high variability in job satisfaction scores suggests that contextual factors such as organizational climate and emotional demands may obscure potential relationships (Xia et al., 2024). However, sub-dimension analyses revealed that higher learning expectations were associated with greater openness to learning and lower anxiety levels, indicating a more nuanced relationship between these concepts.

Similarly, when examining whether preschool teachers' attitudes toward learning predict job satisfaction, attitudes toward learning do not statistically significantly predict job satisfaction. Qualitative data explain this "lack of relationship" with structural barriers. Even if teachers want to learn, time constraints, financial inadequacies, and a centralized curriculum structure prevent this desire to learn from translating into work practice. Therefore, the desire to learn remains an individual attitude and does not translate into job satisfaction due to institutional barriers. The most fundamental contradiction that emerges is that teachers have high personal development motivation, but this potential cannot be transformed into job satisfaction due to the institutional climate and physical impossibilities. This finding is consistent with previous studies suggesting that teachers' job satisfaction is a multidimensional concept. The literature emphasizes that job satisfaction is strongly influenced by factors such as working conditions, administrative support, professional autonomy, salary, classroom management difficulties, and emotional exhaustion (Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). As noted by Desimone (2009), the impact of professional learning on teachers' outcomes depends largely on the quality of learning activities and the extent to which they are supported within the school context. Without adequate institutional support, positive

attitudes toward learning alone may be insufficient to increase job satisfaction. Qualitative findings reinforce these results.

Teachers reported limited access to high-quality professional learning opportunities due to reasons such as time constraints, workload, and inadequate institutional support. These barriers negatively affect both motivation and satisfaction. Similar concerns have been documented in recent research highlighting the critical role of supportive organizational environments in sustaining teachers' motivation and emotional well-being (Xia et al., 2024). Similarly, Zang and Feng (2023) underscore the critical impact of professional commitment on job satisfaction, grounding our current findings in a solid literature foundation.

One of the most striking findings of the research is the strong link between learning anxiety and learning attitude. This statistical relationship suggests that teachers engage in the act of learning not only out of intellectual curiosity but also as a defense mechanism against the "fear of inadequacy" in the face of changing educational demands. Furthermore, teachers find the greatest satisfaction in interacting with children. However, the average level of satisfaction is still moderate. At this point, it can be said that children are a powerful source of intrinsic satisfaction that strengthens teachers' professional commitment despite institutional difficulties.

This study examined whether preschool teachers' attitudes toward learning predict job satisfaction. The results of simple linear regression analysis showed that attitudes toward learning did not statistically significantly predict job satisfaction. The lack of a significant predictive relationship between attitudes toward learning and job satisfaction can be explained by the presence of structural or contextual factors that prevent positive attitudes toward professional learning from translating into higher levels of job satisfaction. As noted by Desimone (2009), the impact of professional learning on teachers' outcomes depends largely on the quality of learning activities and the extent to which they are supported within the school context. Without adequate institutional support, positive attitudes toward learning alone may be insufficient to increase job satisfaction.

Qualitative findings further clarify these results. Content analysis revealed three main themes: determinants of learning motivation, learning opportunities, and perceptions of personal development and professional and job satisfaction. Teachers emphasized both internal motivational factors (e.g., curiosity, personal development) and external conditions (e.g., administrative support, recognition) as influential factors. These findings are consistent with recent research showing that delayed professional satisfaction and professional commitment mediate the relationship between job satisfaction and job commitment among preschool teachers (Zang & Feng, 2023).

Teachers also reported that access to high-quality professional learning opportunities was limited due to reasons such as time constraints, workload, and inadequate organizational support. These barriers negatively affected both motivation and satisfaction. Similar concerns have been documented in recent studies highlighting the critical role of supportive organizational environments in sustaining teachers' motivation and emotional well-being (Xia et al., 2024). Furthermore, interactions with children emerged as a powerful source of intrinsic satisfaction that strengthened teachers' professional commitment despite organizational challenges.

In conclusion, this research has revealed the complex relationship between preschool teachers' attitudes toward learning and their job satisfaction at both the statistical and experiential levels. The findings show that the general assumption in the literature that "learning motivation increases job satisfaction" is hindered by structural and psychological barriers in the context of preschool education. One of the most original findings of the study is the strong positive relationship between learning attitude and learning anxiety. "Anxiety," which is generally considered a factor that hinders learning in the literature, is understood in this study to be a "fear of inadequacy" or a defense mechanism that drives teachers to learn. This finding proves that teacher training should not only involve "knowledge transfer" but also include a "psychological support" dimension that will restore the teacher's professional self-confidence. The "moderate" level of job satisfaction in the quantitative data is a result of the conflict between "child-centered satisfaction" and "system-centered burnout" in the qualitative data. Teachers try to balance negative external factors such as administrative pressure, bureaucracy, and unqualified in-service training with the internal motivation they receive from their students. The lack of a "supportive organizational environment," emphasized by Xia et al. (2024) and Zang and Feng (2023), has been identified in this study as the fundamental "glass ceiling" limiting teachers' job satisfaction. Although teachers are open to learning, they are unable to transfer what they learn to the classroom due to a centralized curriculum, time constraints, and financial

limitations. Consequently, the act of learning ceases to be a tool that enhances job quality and satisfaction and becomes an additional burden on the teacher's shoulders. Therefore, policies aimed at improving early childhood education should not only encourage lifelong learning but also address structural conditions, support work-life balance, and develop institutional support systems. Strengthening these areas can contribute to both higher job satisfaction and sustainable professional commitment among preschool teachers.

In conclusion, rather than increasing the educational burden on teachers to improve the quality of preschool education, it is necessary to remove the administrative and bureaucratic barriers that prevent the existing desire to learn from translating into job satisfaction. Education policies should stop viewing teachers as mere "implementers" and instead grant them the time and autonomy needed to experiment with new methods in the classroom.

## **LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

One of the limitations of this study is the unbalanced distribution of teachers across student age groups in the sample. In particular, the fact that only one teacher works with children in the 0–2 age group limits the ability to conduct statistical comparisons for this group and restricts the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, age group-based results should be interpreted with caution.

To deepen the understanding of teachers' professional satisfaction and learning motivation, future research should transition from purely descriptive frameworks to more integrative approaches. Specifically, mixed-method studies are recommended to triangulate quantitative trends with qualitative insights, providing a nuanced evaluation of teacher attitudes. Furthermore, longitudinal research is essential to track the evolution of job satisfaction and identify the socio-economic dynamics that trigger professional burnout or growth over time. Comparative analyses across different educational levels (e.g., primary vs. secondary) would also allow for targeted policy interventions tailored to the unique stressors of each level.

On a practical level, enhancing teacher satisfaction requires move beyond generic support systems. Instead of broad professional development, institutions should implement differentiated in-service training that addresses specific pedagogical gaps, such as digital literacy or inclusive classroom management, as highlighted in recent literature regarding 21st-century competencies. To ensure effectiveness, these programs must adopt flexible, hands-on modules (e.g., peer-coaching or workshop-based learning) rather than passive seminars. Moreover, administrative support should be formalized through structured work-life balance policies and participatory decision-making processes. By aligning these practical steps with empirical findings on intrinsic motivation, schools can foster a more resilient and committed teaching workforce.

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The researchers do not have any personal or financial conflicts of interest with other individuals or institutions related to the research.

## **Author Contribution**

The researchers contributed equally to the planning, execution and writing of this study.

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## GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

### Araştırmanın Amacı

Bu çalışmanın amacı; okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin iş doyumunu düzeylerini ve öğrenmeye yönelik tutumlarını belirlemek, öğrenmeye yönelik tutum ile iş doyumunu arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemek, öğrenmeye yönelik tutumun iş doyumunu yordama gücünü test etmek, öğretmenlerin öğrenmeye ve iş doyumuna ilişkin algılarını nitel veriler aracılığıyla derinlemesine ortaya koymaktır.

## YÖNTEM

### Araştırma Deseni

Araştırmada açıklayıcı sıralı karma yöntem deseni kullanılmıştır. Bu desende ilk olarak nicel veriler toplanmış ve analiz edilmiştir. Ardından elde edilen bulguları derinleştirmek amacıyla nitel veriler elde edilmiştir. Nicel aşamada değişkenler arasındaki ilişkiler istatistiksel olarak incelenmiştir. Nitel aşamada ise öğretmenlerin deneyim ve algıları tematik analiz yoluyla çözümlenmiştir.

### Çalışma Grubu

Nicel aşamaya İstanbul'da görev yapan 114 okul öncesi öğretmeni katılmıştır. Katılımcıların büyük çoğunluğu kadın (%94,7) ve 31–35 yaş aralığındadır. Öğretmenlerin önemli bir kısmı lisans mezunudur ve Milli Eğitim

Bakanlığına bağlı kurumlarda görev yapmaktadır. Nitel aşamada ise nicel araştırmaya katılan ve gönüllü olan 25 öğretmen ile odak grup görüşmeleri gerçekleştirilmiştir.

### Veri Toplama Araçları

Araştırmada veri toplama aracı olarak Kişisel Bilgi Formu, Hackman ve Oldham İş Doyumu Ölçeği, Öğrenmeye Yönelik Tutum Ölçeği ve yarı yapılandırılmış Odak Grup Görüşme Formu kullanılmıştır. Nicel veriler için betimsel istatistikler, Spearman korelasyon analizi ve basit doğrusal regresyon analizi uygulanmıştır. Nitel veriler tematik içerik analizi yöntemiyle çözümlenmiş; kodlama sürecinde araştırmacılar arası uyum oranı %87 olarak hesaplanmıştır.

## BULGULAR

### Nicel Bulgular

Araştırma bulgularına göre okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin iş doyumunu düzeyi orta seviyededir ( $\bar{X} = 42.63$ ). Öğrenmeye yönelik genel tutumları ise yüksek düzeyde ( $\bar{X} = 3.72$ ) bulunmuştur. Öğretmenlerin öğrenmenin doğasına ilişkin algıları, öğrenmeye açıklıkları ve beklentileri yüksek olurken öğrenmeye ilişkin kaygıları orta düzeydedir. Yapılan istatistiksel analizler, öğrenmeye yönelik genel tutum ile iş doyumunu arasında anlamlı bir ilişki olmadığını göstermiştir. Basit doğrusal regresyon analizi sonuçları da öğrenmeye yönelik tutumun iş doyumunu anlamlı düzeyde yordamadığını ortaya koymuştur ( $p > .05$ ). Alt boyutlar incelendiğinde ise öğrenmeye ilişkin beklenti ile açıklık arasında pozitif; kaygı ile açıklık arasında ise negatif yönlü anlamlı ilişkiler saptanmıştır.

### Nitel Bulgular

Tematik analiz sonucunda üç ana tema belirlenmiştir. Birinci tema, “Öğrenme Motivasyonunun Belirleyicileri”dir. Bu temada öğretmenlerin öğrenme motivasyonunu etkileyen içsel faktörler olarak merak, kişisel gelişim isteği ve başarıya duygusu öne çıkmıştır. Dışsal faktörler arasında yönetici ve meslektaş desteği ile takdir edilme önemli bulunmuştur. Ayrıca öğretmenler, merkeziyetçi yapı ve artan bürokratik yük gibi eğitim politikalarına ilişkin algıların öğrenme motivasyonunu olumsuz etkilediğini belirtmiştir. İkinci tema, “Öğrenme Fırsatları ve Öz-Gelişim Algısı”dır. Katılımcılar, hizmet içi eğitimleri genellikle fazla teorik, uygulamadan uzak ve kalite açısından yetersiz olarak değerlendirmiştir. Zaman, maddi imkânsızlıklar ve ulaşım sorunları öğrenme sürecinde karşılaşılan başlıca engeller olarak ifade edilmiştir. Son olarak üçüncü tema ise “İş Doyumu ve Mesleki Tatmin”dir. İş doyumunu etkileyen başlıca unsurlar arasında öğrencilerle etkileşim, yönetim ve veli ilişkileri, artan bürokratik yük ve iş-özel yaşam dengesi yer almıştır. Öğretmenler, çocuklarla çalışmanın mesleki tatmini artırdığını ancak idari baskı ve evrak yükünün iş doyumunu azalttığını vurgulamıştır.

## TARTIŞMA VE SONUÇ

Araştırma bulguları, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin öğrenmeye yönelik tutumlarının yüksek olmasına rağmen iş doyumlarının orta düzeyde kaldığını göstermektedir. Öğrenmeye yönelik tutum ile iş doyumunu arasında anlamlı bir ilişki bulunmaması, öğretmenlerin öğrenme motivasyonlarının kurumsal ve yapısal engeller nedeniyle iş doyumuna dönüşemediğini düşündürmektedir. Araştırmanın nitel bulguları bu durumu açıklayıcı niteliktedir. Öğretmenler yüksek öğrenme isteğine sahip olmalarına rağmen zaman kısıtı, maddi yetersizlikler, merkezi müfredat yapısı ve bürokratik yük gibi faktörler nedeniyle bu potansiyeli sınıf uygulamalarına yeterince yansıtamadıklarını ifade etmiştir. Araştırmanın özgün bulgularından biri ise öğrenme kaygısı ile öğrenme tutumu arasındaki güçlü ilişkidir. Bu durum, kaygının yalnızca olumsuz bir değişken olmadığını göstermekte olup aynı zamanda “yetersiz kalma korkusu” üzerinden öğretmenleri öğrenmeye yönlendiren bir savunma mekanizması olabileceğini göstermektedir. Sonuç olarak okul öncesi eğitimde kaliteyi artırmak için yalnızca öğretmenlerin öğrenme motivasyonunu yükseltmek yeterli değildir. Aynı zamanda kurumsal destek mekanizmalarının güçlendirilmesi, bürokratik yükün azaltılması, karar alma süreçlerinin geliştirilmesi ve iş-yaşam dengesi politikalarının uygulanması gerekmektedir. Aksi takdirde öğrenme, iş doyumunu artıran bir unsur olmaktan ziyade öğretmen üzerinde ek bir yük haline gelebilmektedir.