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The Relationship of the Type of Preschools with Child Development and Parent Involvement

Abstract

Evaluating how early childhood education and care (ECEC) settings have an effect on children's development is important. In this research, the relationship among the types of preschools, parents' views of quality, and children's development were investigated. The data were collected from parents and teachers of twenty-eight ECEC settings. 295 parents filled out "From a parent's point of view: Measuring the quality of child care" and 336 teachers filled out "Early Development Indicators". In findings, types of schools seemed to continue affecting socio-emotional development even though family income was controlled. On the contrary to the other studies, not the family factors but the types of schools and numbers of children in classroom have affected children's development.

Keywords: Early childhood education and care, parents' views of quality, child development.

Introduction

The benefits of early childhood education and care (ECEC) on child development have been an important research subject for a long time (Burchinal, et al., 2014; Pianta, Barnett, Burchinal, & Thornburg, 2009). Considering a country such as Turkey that has an intensive child and young population, ECEC becomes much more important. According to the data provided by Turkish Statistical Institution (TSI), the 28,7% of population in Turkey was below 18 in 2016. Approximately, six and a half million children were between the ages of 0 and 4. Enrollment rate of children between 3 and 5 was 85% in European countries whereas the rate was 37,3% in Turkey in 2014 (OECD, 2016).

Various goals have been identified in order to increase enrollment in ECEC since 1998 with some intervals. For example, Ministry of Education (MOE) and The World Bank prepared a joint program and targeted to reach a rate of 16% in schooling in 2000; however, the rate was able to reach just 13% in 2004 (Kaytaz, 2004). Afterwards, some cities were identified as pilot cities, and ECEC was aimed to be included in the scope of compulsory education in 2017. Similar attempts have led to some improvements in terms of implementations in the last twenty years.

As one of the attempts from this framework, preschool classes were opened at different state schools for children who were five and six to provide them ECEC. In addition, MOE put the project of independent preschools (i.e., schools that are independent from any other educational institution; having their own principals and their own independent buildings) into action. Apart from this, the number of the private ECEC schools working under the authority of MOE and Ministry of Family and Social Services (MFSS) has been increasing day by day.

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In addition, government provided families who sent their children to private schools with financial supplementary contributions under the name of educational contributions to promote ECEC. However, the increase in quantity does not guarantee quality. For this reason, it is essential that the education and care provided by preschools be evaluated in order to increase the efficiency of the practices.

Studies on curriculum, classroom environment, teacher characteristics and education, teachers' practices, relationship between the teacher and children, and quality started in 1990s (Bekman, 1992; Bekman, 1997; Bredekamp, 1987; Bryant, Clifford, & Peisner,1991; Crahay, 1994; Epstein, 1999; Whitebook, Howes & Phillips, 1989). Number of such studies have been increasing in Turkey as well (Agirdag, Yazici, & Sierens, 2015; Aran, Boudet, & Aktakke, 2016; Aydogan, Farran, & Sagsoz, 2015; Gol-Guven, 2009; 2014).

Gol-Guven (2009) made qualitative study of quality assessment in nine preschools in İstanbul and found out some similarities and differences between the state and private schools. Both state and private schools revealed similarities in terms of the organization of classroom, authoritative attitudes of teacher, excessive amount of paper and pencil-based activities designed by teacher, and high amount of child-adult rate. On the other hand, private schools were found to be better in terms of managing daily routines, parent-teacher relations, and professional development of teachers. Solak (2007) reached similar results. Using Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) (Harms, Clifford, & Cryer; 1998) she compared state and private schools and found out that private schools had higher schools in all subscales (i.e., physical environment, teacher-child interaction, activities, family participation) except for language use in the class and establishing causality in quality.

Studies on schools providing ECEC from the perspectives of parents are relatively limited. In another study, Gol-Guven (2014) compared the expectations of parents and teachers in terms of curriculum, teacher and learning environment. Among the findings of the study were, common expectations of both parents and teachers related to the development of children considering the curriculum's involving active participation of child, supporting discovery, focusing on individual needs, teachers' being well-educated, respectful to differences, patient and kind-hearted, environment's being clean, healthy, and secure, and the teacher-child rate balanced.

Studies on the effects of various variables such as characteristics of schools, quality indicators and teacher practices on child development have been continuing in international and national scales. In their study focusing on research on school types, accessibility, and quality, Anderson and Mikesell (2017) evaluated the differences between urban and rural areas. They stated that families made their preferences regarding the differences between family care and institutional care, and they also stated that there were some remarkable differences in terms of quality in these preferences. Ozguluk (2006) made quality assessment of preschool education institutions providing full-time and part-time schooling services and found out that children continuing full time schools were better in terms of socio-emotional development compared to part time going students. Canbeldek and Isikoglu Erdogan (2016) reached similar results as well. In this study they found out that full time schooling and small class size in preschool education had positive effects on child development. Micozkadioglu and Berument (2011) assessed the quality of preschools, and followed the children participated in the study in the first grade in primary school. They found out that there was a significant relationship between the quality of preschool and social competencies and academic success of students. Ozgunlu (2017) revealed the relationship between the interaction between the teacher and children and readiness to school.

Limited number of the studies make it difficult to develop standards in ECEC for educators in Turkey to follow (Bekman, 1993). Evaluation of ECEC and studying its contribution to child development; assessment of both structural factors such as school types and class sizes and process factors such as classroom

practices and families' participation to education are considered significant. The number of studies in the field should be increased in order to set standards and identify institutional needs while taking into account a variety of variables.

Aim of the Study

The relationship between the ECEC institutions (i.e., preschools attached to primary schools, preschools under vocational schools, independent preschools and private preschools) and child development was analyzed in this study. While doing this, family factors were also tried to be taken into consideration. In addition, parents were asked to evaluate early childhood education services (e.g., such as teacher's interest and approach to their children, and his/her setting appropriate class environment for better education) from various perspectives as well.

The roles of family-related factors (e.g., such as education, income, age, number of the children in the family, number of the people living in the same house and so on) on development of children were examined in the study. Moreover, participation of the parents in education and their engagement with their children at home should be taken into consideration as effecting factors of development. With the quality assessment from the perspectives of parents, it was aimed to find out whether school types had an effect on child development.

Regarding the views of families on teachers and school, various family variables (such as socio-economic indicators, family's engagement with their child, the activities done with child at home), and school and teacher variables (school types, class size, teacher's attitudes and in-class practices), relationship between these variables and the development of child were studied.

Research Questions

1. What are the activities children do when they are at home? And how do parents participate in these activities?
2. At what level is the participation of parents in the education of their children?
3. What are the opinions of parents on the school and teachers?
4. Is there any relationship between school types and child development areas?
5. Provided that family variables are taken under control, does the relationship between school types and developmental areas continue?

Method

Research Model

Quantitative model was used as research model. Data were collected through questionnaires from the parents and teachers of the participant schools. The questionnaires were given to 362 parents and teachers, and 295 parents and 336 teachers answered them. The family questionnaire included demographic information (e.g., education, age, income and so on) about the parents, parents' engagement with their child at home and activities they do together. As for the questionnaire that was filled in by the teachers, it included questions related to developmental conditions (e.g., physical, cognitive-language ad socio-emotional) for each child. In addition, it had some demographic questions (e.g., education, age, experience) about teachers as well. Information about class size was obtained from the teachers. The scales were translated into Turkish, and then they were back-translated into English.

Data Collection Procedure

Relationship between family characteristics based on the types of MOE, MFSS and ECEC institutions from various districts of Istanbul was investigated. The views of parents about teacher and the school and child development was examined in this study. Sampling of the study was preschools differing from each other in terms of the sources of grants they receive (defined as state or private). The selected schools were evaluated under four categories as preschools attached to primary education, preschools under vocational and girls' vocational schools, independent preschools, and private preschools.

Sampling group was identified in two steps in the study. At the first step of the study, 15 schools were identified and 17 were identified at the second step. Thirty-two preschool institutions were selected through convenient sampling method in the study. Necessary official permissions were taken from MOE. Then, these institutions were contacted while providing information of the content of the study and the procedures. Their participation was requested. Eleven of the 15 schools that were identified at the first step of the study accepted to participate in the study. Four of these schools were private schools under the inspection of MOE; one was independent preschool, and the rest 6 schools were preschool classes working under primary education of MOE.

One of the questions during the data collection procedure was to evaluate whether there were differences in terms of quality between state and private schools. However, although the necessary permissions were taken from MOE, only one of the 6 private schools accepted to participate in the study, and the other five did not want to take place in the study coming up with various reasons. Then, three MFSS preschools that were easily accessible were asked to participate in the study and they approved participating in the study.

As to the second step data collection, since the private preschools working under the inspection of MOE were not volunteer, the researcher headed to preschools working under some girls' vocational schools or vocational schools of MOE. During the second step, the data were collected from 6 independent preschools, 5 MOE preschools working under vocational schools, and 6 preschool classes of primary schools. The data were collected from 28 preschools 4 of which were private preschools; 7 were independent preschools; 5 preschools of vocational schools and 12 preschool classes of primary schools. The school types, the independent variable of the study, appeared as a result of this procedure.

Data Collection Tools

Quality assessment from the perspective of parents

The scale "From a parent's point of view: Measuring the quality of child care" was developed by Emlen, Koren, Schultze and Weber (2000). The questionnaire consists of four parts. First part includes demographic questions about family, parent and the child. They were about the age of the child, gender, number of siblings, number of adults at home, and income of the family. Second part included questions related to the time parents spend with their children. They were asked to provide their answers by choosing the time periods for some of the activities. For example, playing out together, playing on computer, and watching TV in last 7 days were answered by marking never (1), 1 – 5 hours (2), 6 – 10 hours (3), and more than 10 hours. Some activities were answered in terms of the frequency of their being done. Some of these activities were reading/telling stories, doing letter/number exercises and cooking/cleaning. They were asked to mark never (1), 1-2 times (2), and more than 3 (3) for these questions. Third part consisted of four questions related to the participation of parents in school. Questions referring to joining school meetings, doing volunteer activities, and so on were answered by marking one of the choices of never (1), 1-2 times (2), and more than 3 (3). The last part, part four, included questions on the views and evaluations of parents. This part included 45 Likert type questions beginning general evaluation statements (such as "I receive the education and care my child needs") and continuing with a variety of specific questions focusing on sincerity of teacher, health, security, and so on. Parents answered the questions form never (0) to always (4) through the five-point Likert scale. As in the original version of the scale, 7 subscales were formed with the reliability test of the scale. They were (a) Teacher's sincerity and engaging with the child (6 questions, α=.91), (b) Rich environment and activities for the child (5 questions, α=.82), (c) Teacher's expertise and skills (3 questions, α=.72), (d) Teacher-parent relationship (6 questions, α=.84), (e) Feelings of the child (6 questions, α=.77), (f) Health and security (10 questions, α=.83), (g) Special needs of the child (9 questions, α=.93).

Child development scale

Early Development Instrument (EDI) (Offord & Janus, 2004) was developed to

evaluate three developmental dimensions. The scale included questions on physical development, cognitive and language development, and socio-emotional development of children. This scale was filled by the teachers. There were 13 questions about physical development in the scale. The number of the questions related to language and cognitive development was 40, and there were 58 questions on socio-emotional development. Teachers were asked to mark "yes", "no" or "I don't know" for some of these questions; "very good/good", "average", "weak/very weak" for some others, and "very often/true", "sometimes/ occasionally true", "never/not true" for the rest of the questions.

The answers given to the questions in developmental scale were scored in order to find out some possible risk factors. That is, the "no" reply to positive questions such as "Can the child hold a pencil?" were scored as 1 while the "yes" reply for the same question was scored as 0. In addition, "listening and understanding competency of Turkish" was scored as 2 for "very weak/weak", 1 for "average", and 0 for "very good/good". Children getting high scores from developmental subscales are in high-risk group for these areas.

As the item of holding pencil, brush and pastel pencil increased reliability from .77 to .95, it was removed from the physical development subscale which consisted of questions related to physical development (such as competency of using objects, competency of climbing upstairs, whole-day energy at school, competencies of holding pencil, brush and pastel pencils) of child. Reliability of cognitive and language development subscale was α=.85; and it was α=.87 for socio-emotional development subscale.

Participants

Parents of the classes which participated in the study were given questionnaires by the teachers. 295 (81,5%) of the given 362 questionnaires were answered and given back, and 67 (18,5%) parents did not give the questionnaires back. The questionnaire was filled by 231 (63,8%) mothers and 32 (8,8%) fathers. Thirty-two participants did not identify themselves as mothers or fathers. The information gathered from the parents revealed that 130 of the children were female; 149 were male; and 16 of them did not state genders of their children (Table 1).

As for the age of the children, the biggest group was identified to be at 6 with 199 children. 55 children were 5 years old; 30 children were 4 and below, and 13 children were 7 and above. When it comes to the number of the children at home, 131 children were stated by parents to be the only child in the family; 127 children had one sibling; 27 had two siblings; and 9 had three siblings. Parents were also asked to state the number of adults at home, and 12 of them replied that there was only one adult at home; 223 said that there were two adults; 36 stated as three; and 21 of them stated that there were 4 and more adults in the family.

As to the education level of the parents, 76 of them were primary education graduates; 115 were high school graduates; 88 had university degrees and 11 had postgraduate degrees. Considering the age, 56 of the parents were below 29; 179 were between 30 – 39; 44 were between 40 – 49; and 4 were above 50 years of age. As for the income level of the families, 158 participants stated that they had an income of 3000TL and below; 64 had an income state between 3001 and 6000TL; 44 had between 6001 and 9000; and 23 parents stated that they had an income above 9001TL.

Demographic information about the teachers were gathered from 24 teachers. Twenty-one of them were female, and the other teachers did not state their genders. Eight of them were between 20-29 ages; 7 between 30-39; and 7 teachers were above 40. Two teachers were girls' vocational school graduate; 3 teachers were graduates of Anadolu University Open Education Faculty; 2 teachers were graduates of education faculty; 11 teachers were graduates of preschool teaching programs, and 2 were postgraduates. Their teaching experiences varied from 10 months to 29 years. Class sizes were stated to be between 9 and 25.

Table 1.
Characteristics of Participants

Participants			n	%
Child	Gender	Female	130	36
		Male	149	41
	Age	4 and below	20	5.5
		5 age	55	15.2
		6 age	199	55
		7 and above	13	3.5
	Number of siblings	Only child	131	36
		One sibling	127	35
		Two siblings	27	7.5
		Three siblings	9	2.2
	Number of adults	One adult	12	3.3
		Two	223	62
		Three	36	10
		Four-up	21	6
Parent	Education	Primary	76	21
		High school	115	32
		University	88	24
		Postgrad.	11	3
	Age	29 & below	56	15.5
		30-39	179	50
		40-49	44	12
		50 & above	4	1
	Income	Below 3000	158	43.5
		3001-6000	64	17.7
		6001-9000	44	12.2
		Above 9001	23	6.5

Findings

Parents' engagement with children at home

Within the scope of parents' engagement with their children at home, they were asked to give information about the frequency and duration of the activities they do with their children at home. The percentages of children's playing outside, using computer, watching TV and playing video games in last seven days can be seen in Table 2. The highest percentage was for watching TV alone. 47,2% of parents stated that their children watched TV between 1 and 5 hours alone. While children's watching TV alone, with friends or with an adult were the activities chosen more frequently, playing outside was the activity indicated never happened (28,7%).

Table 2.
Percentages of the types of activities of children and their durations

Percentages	Never	1-5	6-10	10
Playing outside	28,7	35,6	7,7	5,2
Using computer	28,2	40,6	6,6	3
Watching TV alone	6,9	47,2	18	7,5
Watching TV with an adult	10,5	55	10,5	1,9
Watching TV with a friend	38,4	35,4	2,8	1,4
Playing video games	53,3	19,6	2,5	1,7

Among the activities parents did with their children in last 7 days, playing with their children had the highest percent (48,3%). It was followed by going to bank/market (47,4%) and teaching them letter/numbers (42,8%) (Table 3).

Doing arts and crafts had the highest percent of "never" with 23,2%. The activity that was indicated as the one being done once or twice or various times was cleaning/cooking (71,3%).

Table 3.
Percentage of the activities and their frequencies parents do with their children

Percentages	Never	Yes once or twice	Yes many times
Reading/telling stories	9,7	34	34,5
Teaching letters/words/numbers	8,3	26,8	42,8
Music/Singing	16	29,3	32,6
Doing crafts/art	23,2	30,4	23,2
Playing games/sport/walking	2,2	27,6	48,3
Going to bank/market	7,2	23,2	47,4
Cleaning/cooking	7,7	31,2	40,1

Family's participation to education

Percentages of the answers to four questions related to the participation of families to education are given in Table 4. Fifteen percent replied "no" to the question, "Have you ever participated in any school meeting in this academic year? (for example, school guidance meetings, expert speech seminars, etc)", and 40% stated that they participated in once or twice, and 21% stated to participate more than three times.

The question, "Did you participate in parent-teacher conferences?" was replied as "no" with 31%; "once or twice" with 28%, and "more than three" with 13%. The question, "Did you join any school or class event? (such as children's festival, national holiday or kermis)" was replied as "no" by 24%; "once or twice" by 29%; and "more than three" by 23%. "Did you volunteer at school?" was the last question, and it was answered as "no" by 54%; "once or twice" 10%; and "more than three" by 9%.

Table 4.
Family's participation to education

Percentages	*No/Never*	*Once or twice*	*More than 3*
Participation in school meetings	*15*	*40*	*21*
Participation in parent-teacher conference	*31*	*28*	*13*
Participation in School/class events	*24*	*29*	*23*
Volunteering at school	*54*	*10*	*9*

Considering the differences among the mean scores of variables of school types and family's participation in education, engaging with child by doing activities, families of the children who went to preschools of vocational schools revealed group differences from ANOVA analyses in terms of their own participation to school activities compared to the parents of children who went to private and independent schools and preschool classes of primary schools (F=6,843, p=.0001). Parents of children who went to preschools of vocational schools were observed to score parent participation to school activities at lower levels (primary school X=.72, girls' vocational X=.47, independent X=.82, private X=.96).

Parents' views of the school and the teacher

Three questions that were asked for overall evaluation were answered as follows: The item, "I receive the care and education my child needs" was answered as "yes" by 234 parents; "I am not sure" by 39 parents, and "no" by 15 parents. The item, "If I were to choose a school, I would choose the same school," was answered as "yes" by 236 parent; "I am not sure" by 47 parents, and "no" by 5 parents. Finally, parents were asked to grade school among six choices starting form terrible (1) to perfect (6). 39 parents marked "perfect", 134 of them marked "very good", 97 "good", 23 "moderate", and 1 "weak". None of the parents marked the choice "bad".

Comparing this evaluation of parents and school types, ANOVA results were statistically significant at F(3,293)=4,32, p=.005. The average of private schools was 5.10; the average of preschools under vocational schools was 4.94; with average of independent preschools was 4.84; and the average of preschool classes in primary schools was calculated as 4.50. As for the average differences among groups, only vocational preschools and primary preschools had significant difference with .44 (p=.04).

Correlations among seven subscales was calculated regarding the evaluation made by parents about the teacher and classroom environment. The variable of teacher's sincerity and engaging with child had positive relationship with variables of providing rich environment and activities for child (r=.441, p=.0001), teacher's expertise and skills (r=.466, p=.0001), teacher-parent relations (r=.434, p=.0001), and feelings of child (r=.192, p=.0001) There was also positive relationship with variable of offering a rich environment and activities for the child and teacher's expertise and skills (r=.635, p=.0001), teacher-parent relations (r=.569, p=.0001), and feelings of child (r=.191, p=.0001). As for the relationship between teacher's expertise and skills, it revealed positive relationship with teacher-parent relations (r=.566, p=.0001), and feelings of child (r=.206, p=.0001) variables. The variable of teacher-parent relations had positive correlation with feelings of child variable (r=.119, p=.039) as well. Finally, the variable of feelings of child had positive correlation only with health and security variable (r=.299, p=.0001). The variable of child's specific needs that was reported by parents did not correlate with any of the abovementioned variables.

Regarding school types, the ANOVA test on teacher's sincerity and engaging with child, providing rich environment and activities for child, teacher's expertise and skills, teacher-parent relations, feelings of child, health and security, and child's specific needs, only the specific needs variable that was reported by parents had significant values with F(3,293)=11,660, p=.0001. Some of the comments made on this variable were "my child needs more care than the other children," "teacher finds my child's specific needs tiring," and "it can be difficult to cope with my child." The difference between the average scores of the parents of children who continued preschools of vocational schools and the parents of children who went to the preschool classes of primary schools was 3; was 2,5 with the parents of children who went to private schools; and was 1,5 compared to the parents of children going to independent preschools. Children going to independent preschools revealed an average of one point difference.

Among the abovementioned variables that referred to the evaluations of teachers by parents, three of them were found to have correlative relationships with two of the child development areas as a result of correlation analysis. The higher

the score of child's special needs subscale, the higher the risk score of child's socio-emotional development was (r=.159, p=.008). There was a negative correlation between teacher's sincerity and engaging with child and socio-emotional development risk score (r=-.128, p=.034). Finally, the relationship between teacher's expertise and skills score and child's physical development risk score had negative correlation although the score was not significantly meaningful (r=-.110, p=.068).

Child development in accordance with school types

Correlation analyses revealed that developmental areas had positive correlations among each other. Physical development and cognitive and language development had r=.198 (p=.0001); physical development and socioemotional development had r=.324 (p=.0001); cognitive and language development and socioemotional development had r=.367 (p=.0001) scores of positive correlation.

Correlation analysis showed that there was not any relationship between parent's contributions to child's education, parent's engagement with child and doing activities with child variables and various developmental areas of child. No relationship was found between developmental areas of child and demographic variables of family (i.e., education, income level, age, number of adults at home). The only positive correlation was found between child's physical development risk score and the number of children at home (r=.192, p=.001). On the other hand, there was negative correlation between socio-emotional development risk score and class size (r=-.135, p=.033). This meant that the more children in class were present, the lower the socio-emotional development risk for children was. Furthermore, there was a significant relationship between socio-emotional development risk score and school type (r=.150, p=.006).

The ANOVA test conducted on school types revealed developmental differences in socio-emotional development and cognitive and language development except for physical development (Table 5). Physical development had scores of F(3,329)=1,010, p=.388; Cognitive and language development had F(3,329)=11,328, p=.0001; socioemotional development had F(3,329)=9,436, p=.0001 and class size had F(3,244)=4,383, p=.005 scores.

Table 5.

Physical, socio-emotional, cognitive and language development and class sizes considering school types

Developmental Areas	Types of pre-schools	Number	X	Standard deviation
Physical	Primary school	135	1,78	1,31
	Vocational	59	2,08	1,00
	Independent	103	1,76	1,18
	Private	36	1,86	1,45
	Total	333	1,83	1,22
Cognitive Language	Primary school	135	9,56	4,36
	Vocational	59	14,47	6,99
	Independent	103	10,05	6,62
	Private	36	12,86	7,19
	Total	333	10,94	6,22
Socio-emotional	Primary school	135	70,06	14,02
	Vocational	59	82,76	19,38
	Independent	103	73,26	18,37
	Private	36	81,33	21,70
	Total	333	74,52	18
Class size	Primary school	94	18,74	3,64
	Vocational	32	18,59	5
	Independent	92	17,84	6,11
	Private	30	15,03	4,85
	Total	248	17,94	5,10

Significance degrees of group average scores were analyzed through Bonferroni test. Cognitive and language development scores of children going to preschools of vocational schools had an average difference of five compared to the ones going to preschool classes of primary schools; and 4,5 compared to the ones going to independent preschools (p=.0001). As for the children going to private preschools, they had an average difference of 3,5 (p=.02) compared to their counterparts going to preschool classes of primary schools. High scores showed an increase in risk.

The same tendency was observed in the scores of socio-emotional development as well. Socioemotional development scores of children going to preschools of vocational schools had a difference of 12,7 (p=.0001) compared to the ones going to the preschool classes of primary schools. As for the ones going to independent preschools, there was a difference of 9,5 in their average scores (p=.005). The children going to private preschools had a difference of 11,5 (p=.004) in their average scores.

Comparing class sizes in terms of school types, it was seen that private preschools had smaller class sizes. The difference between the average scores in terms of class sizes was 3,70 for preschool classes of primary schools; 3,57 for the preschools of vocational schools, and 2,81 for independent preschools.

The relationship between the income of the family and school types, and whether this situation was the main factor affecting children's socio-emotional development was analyzed through ANOVA. As it can be seen in Figure 1, whether the differences between school type and socio-emotional development continued or not were analyzed controlling the income level of family [F(3,175)=3,145, p=.027]. The difference continued for preschool classes of primary schools and vocational schools. Socio-emotional development risks of children going to preschool classes of primary schools and vocational schools continued even if the income level of families was controlled.

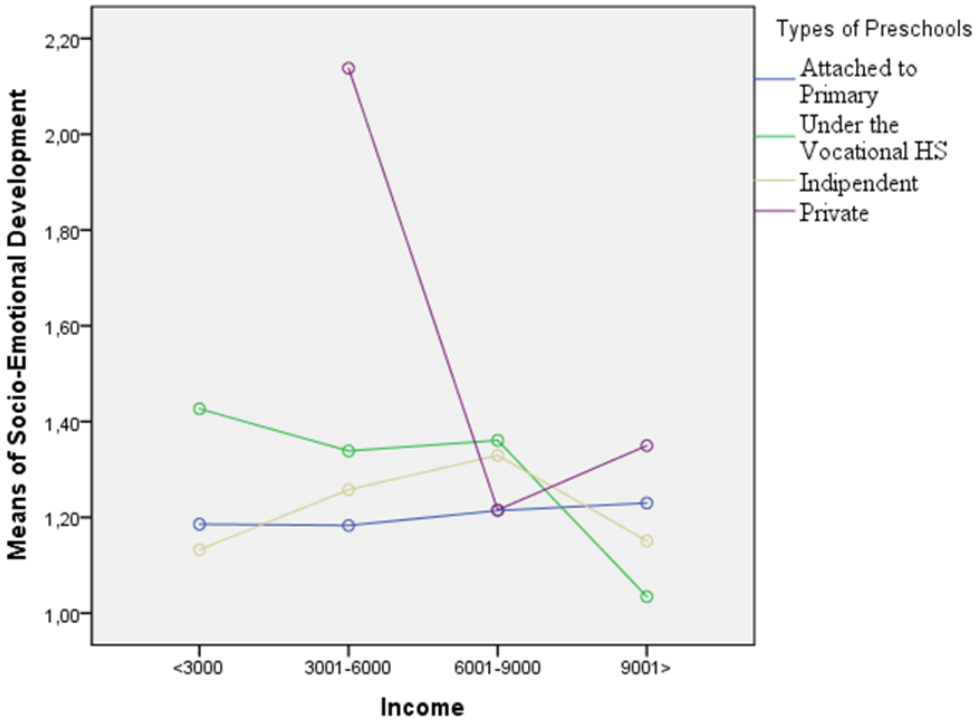

Figure 1.
Relationship between school type and socioemotional development regarding the income state of the family

Discussion and Suggestions

Main aim of the study was to examine the relationship between views of parents about schools and teachers and children's developmental areas in terms of types of ECEC institutions in Istanbul. The most remarkable one among the findings of the study was especially the preschools working under vocational schools revealed differences in many of the variables. Family participation and views of parents about the teacher and school had lower scores for these schools. Compared to the scores of other schools, these schools had higher risk scores for child development areas. The effect of school type on child development revealed significant difference even though the income state of families was controlled for these schools.

The reverse correlation between class size and socioemotional development risk scores of teachers (i.e., the higher the class size was the lower the risk scores, or vice versa) demonstrated an interesting situation. A similar situation was found in Ozgunlu's (2017) study. There was a positive relationship between crowded classes and quality in that study. One of the reasons for this for Ozgunlu was families' intensively enrolling their children to the preschools that are considered qualified, and that caused increase in class sizes. Two explanations can be made to this finding in this study: first, behavioral problems can be more remarkable for the teachers who had smaller class sizes. Second, although the problematic behaviors increase in crowded classes the teachers might internalize them as normal.

Thirdly, although no significant relationship was found between child development areas and family related factors, it was an astonishing finding that these developmental areas had meaningful correlations with class sizes and school types. The only positive relationship was between the number of children at home and physical development risk score. The reason for this might be the fact that families with more children do not allocate enough time for childcare. There are some studies in literature that showed that family related factors (such as education level or income state of family) were among the basic indicators affecting child development (NICHD, 2001). However, as the studies evaluating family and school variables together in the field in Turkey are limited, it would be difficult to imply the same conclusions. Further studies aiming at finding out why this was a special situation for schools, children and families would be utmost important.

Studies conducted so far showed that positive characteristics and quality of the school had positive contributions to cognitive, social and language developments of children who continued to those schools, and it was also seen that those children were more ready to primary school (Sylva et al., 2006). As for Turkey, although there are some district level local studies on constituting quality standards and evaluating quality, unfortunately, there are not any countrywide study (Gol-Guven, 2009; Ozguluk, 2006; Solak, 2007). Increasing the number of these studies is important. Moreover the two different ministries, MOE and MFSS, should increase cooperation and manage the operability of similar standards to increase quality (Goren Niron, 2013). As in other countries, this and other similar studies are expected to provide positive contributions to increase service quality of institutions providing early child education in Turkey.

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