

EECERA SIG Gender Balance
2nd International Research Conference
Barcelona, Spain, 7th September 2014



Ramazan Sak* & İkbal Tuba Şahin Sak* (2015)

Activity choices of male and female preschool teachers in Turkey

Presentation on the 2nd SIG Gender Balance Research Conference, 7.9.2015, Barcelona/Spain

In Turkey, each preschool teacher plans a framework for how each school day is meant to flow. There are some fixed points in this routine, such as the time at which school begins, free play time, and assessment time. The Turkish preschool curriculum also requires that teachers plan in detail and conduct activities (including field trips) in several fields of learning, taking into consideration (1) children's developmental characteristics, needs and interests, and (2) the characteristics of their classrooms. It is hypothesized that decision-making about how best to integrate these activities into the daily flow will be influenced by teachers' characteristics, such as gender and experience level. Therefore, this study aims to determine how male and female preschool teachers' daily planning and activity choices differ from each other, and what reasons may underlie such divergences. Daily plans from eight male and eight female preschool teachers are analyzed to determine the distribution of activity types. All teachers will be interviewed and asked what factors influenced his/her decisions related to plans and activity choices. The debate will focus on the connection between curriculum, professionalism, and practice, as well as on methodological issues.

* Yüzüncü Yıl University, Department of ECE, Van, Turkey

Activity choices of male and female preschool teachers in Turkey

Dr. Ramazan Sak, Yüzüncü Yıl University, Turkey

Dr. İkbal Tuba Şahin Sak, Yüzüncü Yıl University, Turkey

Introduction

- In Turkey, each preschool teacher plans a framework for how each school day is meant to flow. There are some fixed points in this routine, such as the time at which school begins, free play time, and assessment time.
- The Turkish preschool curriculum also requires that teachers plan in detail and conduct activities (including field trips) in several fields of learning, taking into consideration (1) children's developmental characteristics, needs and interests, and (2) the characteristics of their classrooms.
- It is hypothesized that decision-making about how best to integrate these activities into the daily flow will be influenced by teachers' characteristics, such as gender and experience level.

Aim

- This study aims to determine how male and female preschool teachers' daily planning and activity choices differ from each other, and what reasons may underlie such divergences.

Method

- Eight male and eight female preschool teachers working in public schools participated in this study. Most men (n=6) and most women (n=7) were aged 30-35. In terms of education level, all teachers had bachelor's degree from early childhood education department. In terms of teaching experience, three male and one female teacher had 7 to 9 years' teaching experience. Also, five male and five female teachers had 10 to 12 years' experience while two female teachers had taught for more than 12 years. The teachers in the study taught children from age 4 to 5 and the number of children in their classrooms changed between 16 and 22.

Method

➤ The data of the study were collected through document reviews and interviews. For document reviews, only one daily plan of eight male and eight female preschool teachers were randomly selected for each week during the second semester. Then, 12 plans for each teacher were analyzed to determine the distribution of their activity. After document reviews, all teachers were interviewed and asked what factors influenced his/her decisions related to plans and activity choices. At the end of the interviews, transcripts were prepared and data were analyzed through word repetition technique. In this technique, researchers found the unique words in data and listed them. Then, they were counted and reported the frequency of their use.

Findings

Activity	In plans of male teachers (n)	In plans of female teachers (n)
Mathematics activity	22	30
Drama activity	19	26
Literacy readiness activity	33	32
<i>Art activity</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>64</i>
<i>Turkish activity</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>43</i>
<i>Play activity</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>47</i>
Music activity	19	24
Science activity	19	21
<i>Movement activity</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>12</i>
Field trip	4	7

Table 1 shows that how often male and female teachers included activities in their daily plans. Based on Table 1, there are differences on between frequencies of male and female teachers' implications for art, Turkish, play and movement activities. Document reviews showed that while male teachers planned play and movement activities more often than their female colleagues, female early childhood teachers had more art and Turkish activities in their plans than males had.

Findings

(1) Teachers' most favorite activities

Male Teachers reported that their most favorite activities were play, art and music & drama, and so they often conducted them in their classroom. One of the male teachers said:

"At this age, children mostly need movement and use their energy effectively. Therefore, play is my favorite activity. I believe that play activity is an outlet for children's energy, and an opportunity for them to develop their coordination skills, and also to enhance various developmental skills." M2

Female teachers stated that their most favorite activities were play, art and Turkish activities and mostly conducted play, art and Turkish activities in their classrooms. One of the female teachers commented as:

"I think that one of the most important goals of early childhood education is to prepare children for first grade education. Therefore, I should help them express themselves effectively and develop especially fine motor skills. It means that art and Turkish activities are important for preparation process. Of course, play should be base of all activities and can be integrated with all activities." F7

Interestingly, none of the teachers mentioned mathematics activity and field trip as one of three activities which they mostly conducted.

Findings

Teachers' self-efficacy related to activities

It can be say that most of male teachers (n=7) thought that they were efficient at conducting play activities. Also, some stated that they were efficient at drama (n=3) and art (n=2) activities. However, the responses of female teachers were quite different from each other. Some thought that they were efficient at Turkish (n=2), music (n=2), drama (n=2) and mathematics (n=2).

Findings

Factors influenced his/her decisions related to plans and activity choices

As related to factors which they considered while selecting and planning the activities, male teachers mentioned needs and interests (n=5) and developmental levels (n=3) of children, and as a teacher, their goals (n=3) and efficacy related to the activity (n=2). One of male teachers said:

“While selecting and planning an activity, the most important factor for me is children’s needs and interests. I think that if you meet their needs and interests through your activity, children’s concentration on the activity will be longer and they will learn more. Therefore, I especially pay attention to that my activities should include play, movement and fun.” M5

Female teachers stated that they considered needs and interests (n=5) and developmental levels (n=4) of children, and as a teacher their goals (n=3). One of female teachers commented as:

“Children’s developmental level is important because they are so different from each other. All of them may be at same age but they are not at same start point. Therefore, I select or plan activities which will be useful for each child in my classroom.” F1

Discussion

➤ Document reviews showed that while male teachers planned play and movement activities more often than their female colleagues, female early childhood teachers had more art and Turkish activities in their plans than males had. These results are parallel with the findings of Sandberg and Pramling-Samuelsson (2005). They reported in their study that male preschool teachers preferred play and fun and they considered the significance of physical development. However, female teachers conducted calmer plays and emphasized the importance of social development (Sandberg & Pramling-Samuelsson, 2005).

Discussion

*There is a similarity between male and female preschool teachers' most favorite activities. Both male and female stated that play and art activities were their favorite activities. This can be a result of these activities' advantages in the classrooms. Preschoolers generally like these activities and concentrate on them more than other activities.

*In terms of teachers' self-efficacy sense related to activities, most of male teachers (n=7) stated that they were efficient at conducting play activities. However, the responses of female teachers were quite different from each other. They thought that they were efficient at Turkish (n=2), music (n=2), drama (n=2) or mathematics (n=2). It can be said that male and female teachers' self-efficacy senses related to activities was different from each other.

*In terms of factors influencing teachers' plans and activity choices, both male and female preschool teachers mostly emphasized the needs, interests and developmental levels of children. However, based on document reviews, while male teachers planned play and movement activities more often than their female colleagues, female early childhood teachers had more art and Turkish activities in their plans than males had. It can be said that male and female preschool teachers interpret children's needs, interests and developmental levels of children differently from each other.

*In conclusion, in Turkey, according to the data collected by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) in 2015, there are 63,968 female ECE teachers and **4,070 male** ones (MoNE, 2015). Although it works out at just **6.36 %**, this rate of male participation is actually very high by global standards. When it is considered the increase of male teachers' population and their different perspectives about their activity choices from their female colleagues, it is hoped that young children have the opportunity to engage in different activities and take advantage of different points of views and implications in Turkey. However, it should not be ignored that in the Turkish preschool curriculum, it is expected from teachers to support whole developmental skills of children and so to conduct all types of activities in their classrooms in a balance.

Sak, Ramazan & Sak, İkbal Tuba Şahin
(2015). **Activity choices of male and
female preschool teachers in Turkey.**

