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**INVESTIGATION OF THE GRADUATE THESIS RELATED TO THE
PRESCHOOL EDUCATION PROGRAM IN TURKEY**

Filiz AYDEMİR¹

Abstract

Preschool education, which is the first step of a child's education, is of great importance as it is the period in which their cognitive, social and motor developments progress the fastest. The quality of the education provided in these years affect the development and future life of the child. The quality of the developmental education program depends on planning them by considering the age of children and their implementation by taking their development levels, interests and needs into account. As a result of the literature reviews of the postgraduate theses written in the field of preschool education programs, it has been observed that there are no comprehensive studies on this subject. Thematic distribution of master's and doctoral theses on preschool education programs in Turkey were examined in this study. Document analysis was used as a method in the research. The population of the research consists of 1727 graduate theses on preschool education found in the archives of CHE Publication and Documentation Department. A total of 53 postgraduate theses on preschool education programs, written between 1987 and 2019, constitute the sample of the research. In the chapter on findings, the year the theses were written, the university where their research was conducted, their type and themes were examined. As a result of the examination of these researches, it was determined that

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concepts such as teachers' preschool education program practices, the problems they encounter in their implementation and their impact on children's development areas, creativity, character and values education were included in the theme of these studies. Moreover, the opinions of teachers, academicians, school principals and inspectors regarding the preschool education programs were also examined.

Keywords: Pre-school education, preschool education program, graduate thesis

Türkiye’de Okul Öncesi Eğitim Programı İle İlgili Yapılan Lisansüstü Tezlerin İncelenmesi

Öz

Çocuğun eğitiminin ilk basamağı olan okul öncesi eğitim, bilişsel, sosyal ve motor gelişimlerinin en hızlı ilerlediği dönem olması açısından önem kazanmaktadır. Bu yıllarda verilen eğitimin nitelikli olması, çocuğun gelişimini ve ilerdeki yaşamını etkilemektedir. Gelişimsel olan programın nitelikli olabilmesi, programın çocukların yaşlarına uygun olarak planlanmasına ve onların gelişim düzeyleri, ilgileri ve ihtiyaçlarının göz önünde bulundurularak uygulanmasına bağlıdır. Okul öncesi eğitim programı alanında yapılmış lisansüstü tezlerinde yapılan literatür incelemeler sonucunda kapsamlı çalışmaların olmadığı görülmüştür. Türkiye’de okul öncesi eğitim programı ile ilgili yapılmış yüksek lisans ve doktora tezlerinin tematik dağılımları bu araştırmada incelenmiştir. Araştırmada yöntem olarak doküman analizi kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın evrenini, YÖK Yayın Dokümantasyon Daire Başkanlığının arşivindeki konu kısmı okul öncesi olan 1727 lisansüstü tez oluşturmaktadır. Okul öncesi eğitim programı kapsamında 1987-2019 yıllarında yapılmış toplam 53 lisansüstü tezi, araştırmanın örneklemini oluşturmaktadır. Bulgular bölümünde tezlerin yapıldığı yıl, araştırmanın yapıldığı üniversite, türü ve temaları incelenmiştir. Yapılan araştırmaların incelenmesi sonucunda, çalışmalarda öğretmenlerin okul öncesi eğitim programını uygulamaları, uygulamada karşılaştıkları sorunlar, çocukların gelişim alanlarına etkisi, yaratıcılık, karakter ve değerler eğitimi gibi temalara yer verildiği, okul öncesi eğitim programına ilişkin öğretmenlerin, akademisyenlerin, okul müdürlerinin ve müfettişlerin görüşlerinin incelendiği belirlenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Okul öncesi eğitim, okul öncesi eğitim programı, lisansüstü tez.

INTRODUCTION

Considering their importance in preparing an individual for life, preschool years are of extreme significance. In other words, in the first six years of life, which is the preschool period, the development of children is very quick, and they are most susceptible to the effects of their environment during this period. For this reason, the education that the children receive in early childhood

is very critical and the life experiences gained in this period affect the whole life of the child as an individual (Aral, Kandır, & Can Yaşar, 2011; Bekman & Gürlelel, 2005).

Effects that preschool years have on an individual's development is an accepted phenomenon. With a qualified preschool education institution, it is inevitable for children to have an ideal childhood (Ministry of National Education [MEB], 2013). A qualified preschool education depends on the designing of the program according to the ages of the children and arranging their implementation by taking into account their development levels, interests and needs (Morrison, 2012; Zembat, 2007). Preschool education programs include various activities that support children's areas of development (MNE, 2013). Through activities, children find the opportunity to learn by doing and experiencing and child who have discovered their own abilities learn to listen, share and communicate (Hong, 2004; Reynolds, 2004; Yazar, Çelik & Kök, 2008).

Like in every other country, it is essential in our country to implement a qualified education program that is prepared specifically for children aged 0-6. For this purpose, there are efforts to develop and improve the preschool education programs in our country. Until 1952, planning and practices in preschool education in our country were carried out via preschool education activities organized by regulations. After 1952, they were implemented within the framework of a program prepared specifically for this purpose. A preschool education program was prepared in 1989 and this was in implementation until 1994. In 1994, the 1994 preschool education program was put into effect. As a result of the evaluation of the results of this program, the 2002 preschool education program was put into effect. This program, which has been structured at various levels of education since 2004, has been organized in accordance with a constructivist approach (Erdoğan, 2007). With the changes to the primary education program, some arrangements were also made to the preschool education program. In 2006, the 2006 pre-school education program was put into effect. As a result of the analyses made within the scope of the Project for Strengthening Preschool Education, it was attempted to develop the program further in 2012-2013. The updated preschool education program has been implemented in preschool education institutions in all provinces since the beginning of the 2013-2014 academic year.

As a result of these researches, studies that consider a variety of different aspects of preschool programs were found. The aim of this research is to examine the thematic distribution of graduate and postgraduate theses on preschool education in Turkey.

METHOD

Research Model

The research is of the descriptive type and its purpose is to examine the thematic distribution of graduate and postgraduate theses on preschool education in Turkey. According to Karasar (2015), the descriptive model is also known as the scanning model. Document analysis was used as the data gathering method. Document review includes the analysis of visual and written materials that include data about the intended phenomenon or phenomena of the research (Yildirim and Simsek, 2013). The postgraduate theses that make up the sample of the research were analyzed according to their year, method, university and themes.

Universe and Sample

The universe of the research consists of 1727 graduate education theses archived by the Higher Education Board (CHE) Publication Documentation Department, which were categorized as preschool according to their subject. The sample of the study consists of 53 graduate theses in total, with being 41 master's and 12 being doctoral theses, and they were written between 1987-2019 within the scope of the preschool education program.

Limitation

The research has been surveyed using the “preschool” keyword in the CHE Thesis Documentation Center and is limited to postgraduate theses related to the preschool education program.

Data Collection and Analysis

In order to collect the data, the literature was surveyed first. The theses were surveyed by using the keyword "preschool" in CHE Thesis Center. As a result of the survey, the theses related to the preschool education programs were determined and their tag information and full text were obtained from the CHE Thesis Center. Accordingly, the results of the research were explained and suggestions were made.

RESULTS AND COMMENTS

The following findings were obtained as a result of the examination of the postgraduate theses on preschool education programs between 1987-2019. The findings obtained are presented in tables.

Tablo 1

Distribution of postgraduate theses by years

Years	Master's Degree	Doctorate
1987	1	-
1989	1	-
1991	1	-
1997	-	1
1998	2	-
2001	1	1
2003	1	-
2004	1	1
2005	1	-
2007	3	-
2008	2	-
2009	3	-
2010	3	-
2011	1	1
2012	3	1
2013	1	2
2014	2	-
2015	4	1
2016	3	2
2017	4	-
2018	1	2
2019	2	-
Total	41	12

Table 1 presents the distribution of postgraduate theses by years. Examination of the table reveals that out of 53 postgraduate thesis on preschool education in Turkey, 41 are at master's level and 12 are at doctorate level. According to the table above, those at master's level constituted the majority between 1987-2019. Based on the years, it is seen that the most researches at the master's level were carried out between 2015 and 2017 with four theses in both of these years. When the doctoral theses were examined, it was seen that only 12 theses were written between 1987-2018, and the highest number of researches was performed in 2013, 2016 and 2018 with two theses for each of those years.

When the postgraduate theses were examined, it was seen that the majority of them are at the master's level. It is believed that this caused by the fact that there are more master's degree programs on preschool education in

Turkey's universities in comparison to those that have doctorate programs regarding the same subject.

Table 2

Distribution of postgraduate theses by universities

University Name	Master's Degree	Doctorate	Total
Abant İzzet Baysal University	1	-	1
Adnan Menderes University	-	1	1
Ankara University	1	1	2
Atatürk University	3	1	4
Balikesir University	1	-	1
Cukurova University	1	-	1
Dicle University	1	-	1
Erciyes University	2	-	2
Fırat University	2	-	2
Gazi University	11	4	15
Hacettepe University	1	1	2
İnönü University	1	-	1
Kafkas University	1	-	1
Kahramanmaraş Sutcu Imam University	2	-	2
Karadeniz Technical University	-	1	1
Marmara University	1	-	1
METU	3	1	4
Okan University	1	-	1
Pamukkale University	2	-	2
Sakarya University	2	-	2
Selcuk University	3	1	4
Yeditepe Üniversitesi	-	1	1
Van Yüzüncü Yıl University	1	-	1
Total	41	12	53

Table 2 presents the distribution of the postgraduate theses according to universities. Examination of the table demonstrates that most of the theses on the subject of "preschool education programs" were at the master's level with 41 theses. Considering the universities where postgraduate theses were written, it is seen that most of them were written in Gazi University with 15 theses. Moreover, four postgraduate thesis per university were written in Ataturk University, METU and Selcuk University, while two were written per university in Ankara

University, Erciyes University, Firat University, Hacettepe University, Kahramanmaraş Sutcu Imam University, Pamukkale University and Sakarya University, and one per university for other universities listed. Accordingly, it was determined there were a total of 15 theses written in Gazi University with 11 master's theses and 4 doctoral theses, which means that this university is ranked the first among its peers in terms of volume. Ataturk University, METU and Selcuk University ranked second with three theses each at the master's level.

Table 3

Distribution of methods used in postgraduate theses

Method Used	Number	%
Quantitative Research Method	37	69.81%
Qualitative Research Method	14	26.42 %
Mixed Research Method	2	3.77 %

Table 3 presents the distribution of methods used in graduate theses. Examination of the table reveals that 69.81% of the postgraduate theses use quantitative research methods, 26.42% qualitative research methods and 3.77% mixed research methods. According to this result, quantitative research methods are the methods most commonly used in these theses.

Table 4

Methodical distribution of postgraduate theses by years

Years	Quantitative Research Method	Qualitative Research Method	Mixed Research Method
1987	1	-	-
1989	1	-	-
1991	1	-	-
1997	1	-	-
1998	2	-	-
2001	2	-	-
2003	1	-	-
2004	2	-	-
2005	1	-	-
2007	2	1	-
2008	2	-	-
2009	2	1	-
2010	2	1	-
2011	1	1	-
2012	-	4	-
2013	3	-	-
2014	2	-	-
2015	3	2	-
2016	3	2	-
2017	2	-	2
2018	1	2	-
2019	2	-	-

In Table 4, the distribution of graduate theses by years is presented in terms of methodology. Analysis of the table reveals that quantitative research methods were used the most often in 2013, 2015 and 2016, and qualitative research methods were used the most often in 2012. Moreover, mixed research methods were used only in 2017, and these methods were not used in other years.

Table 5

Postgraduate theses on teachers' knowledge and views on preschool education program

Years	Researcher	Title of Thesis
1987	Avci, N.	Kindergarten teachers' knowledge of the program and the contribution of in-service training courses to preschool education and program knowledge
1998	Can Yasar, M.	Determining the knowledge level of kindergarten teachers in Central Ankara regarding the new education program
2001	Demir, O.	Evaluation of the kindergarten program within the framework of teachers' opinions
2001	Guler, D.S.	Evaluation of preschool education programs for 4-5- and 6-year-old students
2004	Caltik, I.	Examining the opinions of teachers working in kindergartens affiliated to the Ministry of National Education on the preschool education program and its implementation
2005	Sivgin, N.	Teachers' views on the education program implemented in preschool education institutions (Denizli province sample)
2010	Aydin, A.	Preschool teachers' evaluations about preschool education programs
2012	Gulmez, Dag, G.	Effectiveness of preschool teacher education programs: perceptions of preschool teachers
2013	Oguz, T.	Examining teachers' views on the 2006 preschool education program
2013	Dilek, H.	Evaluation of 2006 preschool education program
2014	Duzgun, U.	Preschool teachers' opinions on the preschool education programs and the implementation of the 2012 changes (Kayseri province sample)
2014	Gole, M.O.	Examination of preschool teachers' opinions on the characteristics that should exist in a qualified preschool education program
2015	Isik, N.E.	Teachers' views on the 2013 preschool education program of MNE and their usage status of the program
2015	Kay, M.A.	Examination of teachers' views on the effectiveness of the 2013 preschool education programs on learning outcomes
2017	Hamarat, D.	Examining teachers' views on the 2013 preschool education program and its implementation
2017	Tukel, A.	Evaluation of teachers' views on the 2013 preschool education program
2019	Karagoz, M.	Examination of teachers' views on the implementation of MNE 2013 preschool education program

Table 5 presents the postgraduate theses on teachers' knowledge and views on preschool education programs. It has been determined that most of the studies conducted examined the knowledge and opinions of teachers about the preschool education program in terms of variables related to their demographic information.

Table 6

Postgraduate theses on the knowledge and opinions of academicians, inspectors, school principals, parents and teachers about preschool education program

Years	Researcher	Title of Thesis
2008	Abbak, B., S.	Examination of family participation activities in preschool education programs in terms of opinions of kindergarten teachers and parents
2008	Dusek, G.	Examination of the opinions of primary education inspectors, directors of preschool education institutions and preschool teachers about the preschool education program implemented in 2006 (Ordu province example)
2012	Tekmen, B.	Evaluation of preschool teaching program from the perspective of academicians

When Table 6 was examined, it was determined that the opinions of teachers, administrators, academicians, inspectors and parents about the preschool education program were reviewed. Tekmen (2012) demonstrated via the opinions of academicians that the content of the programs in application can be altered and new models can be developed for implementation in case of need. Abbak (2008) stated that family participation could not be fully achieved due reasons related to teachers and parents. Dusek (2008) determined that the 2006 Preschool Education Program should include preparatory work for primary education, that the necessary physical conditions should be provided for the classrooms, that the studies for inclusive education should be included, and that the new programs should be prepared by taking regional differences into account.

Table 7

Postgraduate theses about teachers' implementation of preschool education programs

Years	Researcher	Title of Thesis
1989	Cantekinler, S.	Views of parents and teachers in Konya province on school education programs and practices
1997	Genc, S.	Investigation of the extent to which kindergarten teachers benefit from the education program and its reasons
1998	Parlakyildiz, B.	The proficiency levels of preschool teachers in applying the kindergarten program
2003	Comert, S.	Teachers' views and practices on the 2002 preschool education program (Sakarya province example)
2004	Durmusoglu, M. C.	Examination of the views on the implementation of the MEB 2002 preschool education program
2007	Uzun, H.	Evaluation of teachers' views on the implementation of preschool education program in Malatya province (a study on kindergarten classes)
2009	Akkaya, D.	Evaluation of teachers' views of the implementation of the 2006 preschool education program
2009	Can Gul, S.	Examining the opinions and behaviors of preschool education teachers and teacher candidates towards the evaluation element of the 2006 preschool education program
2011	Cobanoglu, R.	Teachers' self-efficacy and teaching beliefs as precursors of curriculum implementation in preschool education
2015	Koc, F.	Examination of preschool teachers' self-efficacy beliefs about activities in the preschool education program
2017	Is, A.	Preschool and classroom teachers' perceptions of achievement levels regarding learning outcomes in the 2013 preschool education program
2018	Aydemir, F.	Examination of teachers' endeavors on planning and implementation of the Ministry of National Education preschool education program

In Table 7, researches on teachers' implementation of preschool education program are presented. Examination of these researches has revealed that the children could be made to achieve all program goals and that development characteristics of age groups, and the needs and interests of the children were considered when the plans were being prepared (Cantekinler, 1989; Durmusoglu, 2004; Uzun, 2007; Akkaya, 2009; İş, 2017; Aydemir, 2018). It has also been determined that teachers' level of benefiting from the program is high (Genc, 1997), and there is a positive relationship between what teachers say and what they do in practice (Parlakyildiz, 1998; Comert, 2003). Moreover, it was determined that teacher candidates had a more positive opinion regarding the evaluation element of the 2006 preschool education program (Can Gul, 2006) and that teacher self-efficacy and beliefs were significant predictors of both the selection of content and the process of teaching in regards to the implementation of the preschool education program by preschool teachers.

Table 8

Postgraduate theses on the problems teachers encounter in implementing the preschool education program

Years	Researcher	Title of Thesis
1991	Kandır, A.	Difficulties faced by teachers in the preparation of group education programs for 4–6-year-old students in preschool education institutions
2010	Erden, E.	Problems experienced by preschool teachers while implementing the education program
2017	Arslan, Z.	The level of problems preschool teachers encountered in implementing the 2013 preschool education program

In Table 8, researches on the problems that the teachers encounter in applying the preschool education program are presented. Examination of the table indicates that there are only three studies on the problems encountered in practice and they were conducted in 1991, 2010 and 2017. In a research carried out by Kandır (1991), it was established that setting the targets and target behaviors and determining the appropriate educational situation for the activities were among the issues that teachers had the most difficulty in while preparing daily plans and unit plans. Regarding problems that preschool teachers encounter while implementing the education program, it was determined that there is a significant level of difference in regards to running into problems caused by variables such as the level of in-service training received by teachers, educational status, and type of the school they work (Arslan, 2017). Moreover, it was also noted that preschool teachers face the highest amount of difficulties in evaluation and physical resources (Erden, 2010).

Table 9

Postgraduate theses on the Preschool Program and scale adaptation studies

Years	Researcher	Title of Thesis
2010	Saritas, R.	Examination of the effect of the gems (great explorations in math and science) science and mathematics program that is adapted to the Ministry of National Education preschool education program on the concept acquisition and school readiness levels of six-year-old kindergarten students
2016	Unver, N.	Developing a preschool education program evaluation scale and evaluating teachers' practices based on this scale

Postgraduate theses on the Preschool Program and scale adaptation studies are presented in Table 9. When the table is examined, it was noted that only two scale adaptation studies were carried out, one in 2010 and the other in 2016. Therefore, it can be said that the amount of scale adaptation researches that focus on preschool education is not sufficient. Saritas (2010) has advocated that GEMS Science and Mathematics Program, which is being adapted via project-based activities to the Preschool Education Program of Ministry of National Education, is effective in developing the concept acquisition and school readiness levels of six-year-old children. It was determined that the scale developed by Unver (2016) is valid and reliable.

Table 10

Postgraduate theses on teachers' views on character and values education in the preschool education program

Years	Researcher	Title of Thesis
2012	Erkus, S.	Evaluation of preschool teachers' opinions on values education in preschool education program
2018	Catalbas, M.	Examination of character education in the preschool education program and preschool teachers' views on character education

Postgraduate theses on teachers' views on education regarding character and values in preschool education program are presented in Table 10. In a research carried out by Erkus (2012) it was determined that values education of the program was provided via the initiative taken by the teachers and that teachers face difficulties due to causes such there being an excess amount of students in preschool education, parents not being aware enough, and values education only being left to the responsibility of the teachers. In his research, Çatalbaş (2018) determined that teachers can benefit from various activities in the implementation of character education and they are in need of materials that can be used in these implementations.

Table 11

Postgraduate theses examining preschool education programs in terms of creativity

Years	Researcher	Title of Thesis
2007	Yazar, A.	Examination of creativity in preschool education programs between 1914-2006
2016	Karahan, G.	Examining the 2012 preschool education program in terms of creativity

In Table 11, postgraduate theses examining preschool education programs in terms of creativity are presented. In their researches, Yazar (2007) and Karahan (2016) examined preschool education programs in terms of creativity. In his research, Yazar (2007) stated that goals and activities for creativity were included in the programs of 1914, 1952, 1994 and 2002, that the 1989 program was considered negatively in terms of supporting the development of creativity because it was entirely subject focused, and that creativity was adopted as the main feature of the program in the 2006 preschool education program. In his research, Karahan (2016) found that the 2012 pre-school education program included, alongside outcomes and indicators for developing creativity, activities that were planned for this goal and that the physical environments and classes were designed in a way that promotes the development of creativity.

Table 12

Postgraduate theses examining the preschool education program from different perspectives

Years	Researcher	Title of Thesis
2007	Kamis, S.	Effectiveness levels of teachers in proliferating the educational services of the preschool program
2009	Karagoz, A.	Folklore based examination of programs applied in preschool education institutions
2011	Hacisalihoglu	Compatibility of preschool teachers' classroom mathematics practices with preschool education program
2012	Karadeniz, M. Batur Musaoglu, E.	Examination of the Ministry of National Education's Preschool Education Program (2006) for 36-72 months old children in terms of children's rights
2013	Yazar, A.	Examining the effectiveness of the preschool education program in terms of primary school readiness
2019	Kilinc, F., G.	Teachers' use of assessment and evaluation methods in the 2013 preschool education program

In Table 12, postgraduate theses examining the preschool education program from different perspectives are presented. Kamis (2007) examined the

effectiveness levels of teachers in proliferating the educational services of the preschool program, Karagoz (2009) examined programs applied in preschool education institutions in the context of folklore, Batur Musaoglu (2012) examined the program in terms of children's rights, and Yazar (2013) examined effectiveness of the preschool education program in terms of primary school readiness. Additionally, Hacisalihoglu Karadeniz (2011) examined the compatibility of preschool teachers' classroom mathematics practices with the preschool education program.

Table 13

Postgraduate theses on the effect of the preschool program on the developmental areas of children

Years	Researcher	Title of Thesis
2015	Basara Baydilek, N.	The place of reasoning skills in preschool education and the function of an implicit program in supporting reasoning skills in preschool classrooms
2015	Kecelioglu, O.	Examining the social skills of 5-year-old children who receive education according to the MNE preschool education program and the Montessori approach
2016	Kiziltas, E.	Effects of field trip activities integrated with activities of the preschool education on the social and emotional skill development of 48–66-month-old children
2018	Sarikaya, A.	Investigation of the effects of different preschool education programs on 6-year-old children's visual perception

In theses provided in Table 13, the effects of preschool programs applied to the preschool children on the development of their social, emotional and reasoning abilities were examined. It was determined that the Preschool Education Program is effective on the implicit curriculum in schools and classrooms (Basara Baydilek, 2015) and that the field trip activities integrated with the activities of the preschool education program were implemented, and such activities had a positive effect on the social-emotional skills development of the children in the group (Kiziltas, 2016). It has been noted that the communication skills of children who receive education according to the MNE program are better than those of who receive education according to the Montessori approach, while the behavioral problems of children who receive education according to the MNE program are higher in number than those who are educated according to the Montessori approach (Kecelioglu, 2015). Reggio Emilia program was found to be more favorable in comparison to the Montessori approach and the MNE Preschool Education Program (Sarikaya, 2018).

Table 14

Postgraduate theses examining story books in the context of the school education program

Years	Researcher	Title of Thesis
2016	Akgul Alak, S.	Examination of Pamuk Şekerim I-II books in the context of MNE preschool education program (2013)
2016	Sildir, E.	Examination of the story books for the preschool period in the context of supporting the learning outcomes of the social-emotional development area of the Ministry of National Education 2013 preschool education program

Table 14 presents the postgraduate theses that have examined the preschool education program in the context of story books. When these researches were examined, it was noted that Akgul (2016) has indicated that Pamuk Şekerim I-II books cause problems in teaching, learning and adaptation processes, that the pictures and instructions in the books are not clear and understandable, that the books are not suitable for mixed age groups, that the books do not cover the outcomes and concepts adequately, and that the books are not compatible with the basic features of the program. Sildir (2016), on the other hand, found in his research that the expressions representing the social emotional development outcomes and indicators in the story books do not follow a balanced course and while the representation ratio of some outcomes is higher, the others are lower.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

In this research, the thematic distribution theses on the preschool education programs was examined. It was determined that between 1987 and 2013, a total of 53 postgraduate theses were written on preschool education programs in Turkey, with 42 being at master's and 12 being at doctorate levels. It was concluded that majority of master's theses were written in 2015 and 2017 with four theses for each of these years, while the majority of doctoral theses were written in 2013, 2016 and 2018, with two for each year.

Among universities, Gazi University took the first place in the numeral distribution of graduate theses.

When the distribution of methods used in postgraduate theses was examined, it was determined that quantitative research methods were used in 37 of the theses, qualitative research methods were used in 14, and mixed research methods were used in 2. It was concluded that quantitative research methods were

mostly used in 2013, 2015 and 2016, qualitative research methods were used the most in 2012, while mixed research methods were used only in 2017.

It was concluded that a majority of theses (17) examined the preschool education programs in the context of demographic variables of teacher opinions. It was determined that there are three theses that examine the views of academicians, inspectors, school principals, parents and teachers about the program, twelve theses on the preschool education program applications of the teachers; two on the scale adaptation of preschool education programs, two on the teachers' views regarding character and values education aspects of the preschool education program, two on the relationship between creativity and preschool programs, four on the effects of preschool programs on children's areas of development, two on the relationship between story books and preschool education, and six on the various other aspects of the preschool education program.

When these researches were examined, it was concluded that the majority had focused on the teachers' views and opinions regarding the preschool education program. It is believed that the number of thesis studies examining the implementation of the preschool education program by teachers and the problems they encounter in their practice is inadequate. The number of researches that focus how preschool education program is implemented by teachers and the suitability of classroom practices to planning and children's development can be increased.

According to these results, most of the researches in the field of preschool education program were done using quantitative research methods. Method diversity can be increased in future studies.

The scarcity of doctoral theses in the field of preschool education program is also noted among the findings. The number of doctoral theses in this area can be increased. A comparison of the theses written in Turkey and abroad on preschool education programs can also be carried out.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Purpose: Preschool education, which is the first step of a child's education, is of great importance as it is the period in which their cognitive, social and motor developments progress the fastest. The quality of the developmental education program depends on planning them by considering the age of children and their implementation by taking their development levels, interests and needs into account. studies that consider a variety of different aspects of preschool programs were found. The aim of this research is to examine the thematic distribution of graduate and postgraduate theses on preschool education in Turkey.

Method: The research is of the descriptive type and its purpose is to examine the thematic distribution of graduate and postgraduate theses on preschool education in Turkey. Document analysis was used as the data gathering method. The universe of the research consists of 1727 graduate education theses archived by the CHE Publication Documentation Department, which were categorized as preschool according to their subject. The sample of the study consists of 53 graduate theses in total, with being 41 master's and 12 being doctoral theses, and they were written between 1987-2019 within the scope of the preschool education program. The research has been surveyed using the “preschool” keyword in the CHE Thesis Documentation Center and is limited to postgraduate theses related to the preschool education program.

Findings: Turkey made regarding pre-school education program for 53 graduate theses, 41 master's and 12 doctoral level is. Based on the years, it is seen that the most researches at the master's level were carried out between 2015 and 2017 with four theses in both of these years. When the doctoral theses were examined, it was seen that only 12 theses were written between 1987-2018, and the highest number of researches was performed in 2013, 2016 and 2018 with two theses for each of those years.

Considering the universities where postgraduate theses were written, it is seen that most of them were written in Gazi University with 15 theses. it was determined there were a total of 15 thesis written in Gazi University with 11 master's theses and 4 doctoral theses, which means that this university is ranked the first among its peers in terms of volume.

Reveals that 69.81% of the postgraduate theses use quantitative research methods, 26.42% qualitative research methods and 3.77% mixed research methods. Quantitative research methods are the methods most commonly used in these theses.

It has been determined that most of the studies conducted examined the knowledge and opinions of teachers about the preschool education program in terms of variables related to their demographic information.

It has been observed in postgraduate theses that the pre-school education program is examined from different angles. Kamis (2007) examined the effectiveness levels of teachers in proliferating the educational services of the preschool program, Karagoz (2009) examined programs applied in preschool education institutions in the context of folklore, Batur Musaoglu (2012) examined the program in terms of children's rights, and Yazar (2013) examined effectiveness of the preschool education program in terms of primary school readiness. Additionally, Hacisalihoglu Karadeniz (2011) examined the compatibility of preschool teachers' classroom mathematics practices with the preschool education program.

Discussion & Conclusion: When these researches were examined, it was concluded that the majority had focused on the teachers' views and opinions regarding the preschool education program. It is believed that the number of thesis studies examining the implementation of the preschool education program by teachers and the problems they encounter in their practice is inadequate. The number of researches that focus how preschool education program is implemented by teachers and the suitability of classroom practices to planning and children's development can be increased.