



EXAMINING SCHOOLING AGE FOR THE 1ST GRADE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL ACCORDING TO THE VIEWS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL MANAGERS AND TEACHERS

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Abstract

The aim of this research was to investigate the views of managers and teachers regarding schooling age. The research was regulated in accordance with the screening model. And a relational scan was conducted to test the effects of independent variables on result. The relation between the managers' and teachers' variables on professional seniority, branch and place of duty and the factors that affect the schooling age on primary school was investigated. A total of 55 managers and 178 teachers, a total of 232 participants, who work in ten different counties in the Erzurum province constituted the research sample. The data were collected through a questionnaire developed by the researcher based on expert opinion. Chi-square analysis was applied to analyze the data. In this study, not only the calendar age of primary freshman students, but also the social, physical and mental characteristics should be taken into consideration was concluded.

Key Words: Calendar age, schooling age of primary school, the classroom teacher, school manager. CT.

INTRODUCTION

Starting school is one of the most important events in a child's educational life. Starting school requires mental, physical emotional and social maturity (Ülkü, 2007). The period from 0 to 6 years constitutes the fastest and most critical years of a child's development. There is a high chance that if the foundations of physical health and personality structure are laid in these years, they will develop in the same course without changing direction in later ages (Oktay, 1998; Oktay, 2003).

Varying research in this century has highlighted the concept of "schooling maturity". Some of these researchers have investigated this concept more broadly with regards to earning school-related skills comfortably whereas some researchers have further narrowed the subject by investigating in terms of "reading maturity". However,



both school maturity and reading maturity aim to ensure a child's entire development in order to reach a certain level (Oktay, 1980).

One must be ready before starting primary school. As previously mentioned, readiness is the physical, mental, emotional and experiential development stage in which children have the ability to understand a certain thing easily and comprehensively and are eager to learn. Children must be ready to experience any learning (Kılıç, 2008; Ryan Jr., 2003; Oktay and Unutkan, 2005).

Literacy is a bridge that is built among students, teachers and families. Bringing the family culture to the school, children create a school culture with the family culture (Tompkins, 1997). The fact that the families participate in school activities and exhibit supportive attitudes in literacy activities is among the important factors that increase children's school success (Little and Box, 2002). The fact that the families effectively participate in their children's first literacy activities as well as their interaction with their children has a significant effect in developing their first literacy skills (Ortiz, 2001; Morrow, 1993).

Today, schooling age and related procedures differ in the countries of the world. In Germany, France, Belgium and Austria the compulsory schooling age is six. Education before this age is on a voluntary basis (Kantos, 2011; Memduhoğlu, 2011; Yılmaz, 2011).

The compulsory schooling age is 5 in the United Kingdom (Erginer, 2009). Children start primary school through guidance in the United States of America since each state has formed its own educational system (Harmancı, 2011). The traditional schooling age is 6 in Japan (Telci, 2011).

The procedure for starting school is decided with families and children under the supervision of experts in many developed countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Northern European countries. When the calendar age is taken as a basis, children start primary school in the same age range in many countries. Although this age ranges from five to eight, generally children who have reached six or seven years of age start primary school. Reading maturity is of top priority for starting school.

Today, in Turkey, a child's readiness for primary school is decided by taking the calendar age as a basis, and every child aged 66-72 months starts primary school (MEB [Ministry of National Education], 2006, 2012). It is a matter of debate to what degree this condition is healthy. It is supported with recently conducted research that it is more important to consider the physical, social, emotional, cognitive and self-care fields apart from calendar age basis while deciding whether children should start school (Çelenk, 2003; Yapıcı, 2004).

It is also among the debated issues that parents should not be the sole authority in deciding whether the child is ready for school and will continue studying in the 1st grade and that teachers and guidance counselors must participate in this process.

Aim of the Research

Schooling age for the 1st grade of primary school was examined in this study according to the views of primary school managers and classroom teachers.

1. Do schools with different socio-economic levels affect schooling age?
2. Does the educational level of the child's father affect schooling age?
3. Is there a difference between schools located in rural areas and central schools in terms of schooling age?
4. Does pre-school education affect schooling age?
5. Does the fact that the student's mother and father live together affect schooling age?
6. Do the climatic conditions in the region where the student lives affect schooling age?



METHOD

Research model, universe and sample, data collection tools, data collection and data analysis are highlighted in this section.

Research Model

In this study, which is of the screening model, relational screening was conducted in order to test the effect of the independent variables of the research on the result. Relational screening models are the research models that aim to determine the existence and/or the degree of change between two or more variables (Karasar, 1998).

Universe and Sample

The universe of the research was composed of managers and teachers working in the primary schools of the Ministry of National Education that are located in Erzurum's various districts, namely Aşkale, Aziziye, Çat, Hınıs, Horasan, Narman, Palandöken, Pasinler, Tortum and Yakutiye in the 2010-2011 school year. The sample of research was composed of 55 managers and 178 teachers working in the primary schools of the Ministry of National Education that are located in Erzurum's various districts, namely Aşkale, Aziziye, Çat, Hınıs, Horasan, Narman, Palandöken, Pasinler, Tortum and Yakutiye in the 2010-2011 school year.

Data Collection

The data of the research was collected via the questionnaire titled "The Views of Classroom Teachers and Primary School Managers on Schooling Age for the 1st Grade of Primary School" which was prepared by the researchers. The questionnaire, which was a 5-point Likert type, was composed of a total of 25 items. The options of the questionnaire items were prepared as follows: "Completely Disagree, Disagree, Partially Agree, Agree and Completely Agree". The opinions of three field experts were taken regarding the validity of the questionnaire. Examining the questionnaire given to them, stating the ambiguous expressions and options, managers and teachers helped the researcher review and revise the questionnaire to a more comprehensible degree. The internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha) of the questionnaire was found to be 0.72.

Data Analysis

The dependent variable of this research was the schooling age for the 1st grade of primary school. The independent variables of this research were managers' occupational seniority, teachers' occupational seniority, their fields and the districts where they work. Statistical analysis of the data was studied in a model that would set forth the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variables. Chi-square analysis was used in order to understand whether there was a difference among the items in terms of managers' occupational seniority, teachers' occupational seniority, their fields and the districts where they work. The significance level was determined to be 0.05 in data analysis.

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS

The results and interpretations of the statistical analyses applied to the data that were collected in the research are given under four main headings in this section. The questionnaire, which was prepared in accordance with the conducted study, was administered to the teachers and primary school managers in the districts and district centers (Aşkale, Aziziye, Çat, Hınıs, Horasan, Narman, Palandöken, Pasinler, Tortum and Yakutiye) located within the boundaries of Erzurum province. The obtained data were graded in a range from 1 to 5 using a statistical package program, and chi-square analysis was conducted on the data. The data of the participants who marked their occupational seniority as 11-15 years, 16-20 years and 21 years or over were combined with the data of the participants who had 6-10 years of occupational seniority and they were collectively taken as six years or over in order for the chi-square analysis to yield more accurate and clear results. Furthermore, the main fields were Turkish, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Social Sciences and English whereas Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge, Physical Education, Visual Arts, Music, Information Technologies, Technology-Design and Counseling, the areas of the teachers and primary school managers, were taken as the other fields. The obtained results were given as tables, and the interpretations are presented below the tables.

Table 1: The Distribution of “the Effect of Schools with Different Socio-economic Levels on Schooling Age” in Terms of the Fields of Primary School Managers and Teachers

Teachers' Occupational Seniority	Completely Disagree	Disagree	Partially Agree	Agree	Completely Agree	Total
Classroom Teacher	21	15	31	32	25	124
n						
%	16.9	12.1	25	25.8	20.1	100
Mathematics Turkish						
n	10	14	8	32	15	79
%	12.6	17.7	10.1	40.5	18.9	100
Social Sciences						
Science and Technology						
Other	2	7	9	6	5	29
n						
%	6.8	24.1	31.1	20.6	17.2	100
Total	33	36	48	70	45	232
n						
%	14.2	15.5	20.6	30.1	19.3	100
S.D.= 8		$\chi^2= 15.874$			p= 0.044	

Chi-square analysis was conducted on the given answers in order to understand whether “schools with different socio-economic levels affect schooling age” in terms of the fields of primary school managers and teachers. χ^2 value was calculated as 15.874 and $p = 0,044$; this was found to be significant at the $p < 0.05$ significance level. This finding shows that there is a difference in “the effect of schools with different socio-economic levels on schooling age” in terms of the fields of primary school teachers. When the table is examined, it is observed that 26% of the classroom teachers, 40% of the teachers of main fields (Mathematics, Turkish, Science and Technology, Social Sciences and English) and 21% of teachers of other fields marked the “Agree” option. Consequently, it can be stated that the teachers of main fields exhibited a higher degree of agreement with the idea that schools with different socio-economic levels affect schooling age.

Table 2: The Effect of the Educational Level of the Student’s Father on Schooling Age

Teachers' Occupational Seniority	Completely Disagree	Disagree	Partially Agree	Agree	Completely Agree	Total
Classroom Teacher	16	20	27	48	13	124
n						
%	12.9	16.1	21.7	38.7	10.4	100
Mathematics Turkish						
n	14	7	18	25	15	79
%	17.7	8.8	22.7	31.6	18.9	100
Social Sciences						
Science and Technology						
Other	7	9	2	11	0	29
n						
%	24.1	31.1	6.8	37.9	0	100
Total	37	36	47	84	28	232
n						
%	15.9	15.5	20.2	36.2	12.1	100
S.D.= 8		$\chi^2= 19.411$			p= 0.013	

Chi-square analysis was conducted on the given answers in order to understand whether there was a difference in the degree to which primary school managers and teachers agree with the idea that “the educational level of the student’s father affects schooling age” in terms of their fields. χ^2 value was calculated as 19.411 and $p = 0.013$; this was found to be significant at the $p < 0.05$ significance level. This finding shows that there is not an important difference in “the effect of the educational level of the student’s father on schooling age” in terms of the fields of primary school managers and teachers. When the table is examined, it is observed that 39% of the classroom teachers, 32% of the teachers of main fields and 38% of teachers of other fields marked the “Agree” option. Consequently, it can be stated that the classroom teachers exhibited a higher degree of agreement with the idea that the educational level of the student’s father affects schooling age.

Table 3: Is There a Difference Between Schools Located in Rural Areas and Central Schools in Terms of Schooling Age?

District		Completely Disagree	Disagree	Partially Agree	Agree	Completely Agree	Total
Aşkale	n	0	2	0	9	2	13
	%	0	15.3	0	69.2	15.3	100
Aziziye	n	1	3	2	1	3	10
	%	10	30	20	10	30	100
Çat	n	0	1	2	7	0	10
	%	0	10	20	70	0	100
Hınıs	n	1	1	7	2	0	11
	%	9.1	9.1	63.6	18.1	0	100
Horasan	n	10	7	26	33	19	95
	%	10.5	7.3	27.3	34.7	20	100
Narman	n	10	6	3	4	2	25
	%	40	24	12	16	8	100
Palandöken	n	4	1	4	2	6	17
	%	23.5	5.8	23.5	11.7	35.2	100
Pasinler	n	3	4	8	5	2	22
	%	13.6	18.1	36.3	22.7	9.1	100
Tortum	n	0	2	1	5	1	9
	%	0	22.2	11.1	55.5	11.1	100
Yakutiye	n	2	1	11	5	1	20
	%	10	5	55	25	5	100
Total	n	31	28	64	73	36	232
	%	13.3	12.1	27.5	31.4	15.5	100

S.D.= 4

$\chi^2= 81.319$

$p= 0.00$

Chi-square analysis was conducted on the given answers in order to understand whether there was a difference in the degree to which primary school managers and teachers agree with the idea that “there is a difference between schools located in rural areas and central schools regarding schooling age” in terms of the district where they work. χ^2 value was calculated as 81.319 and $p = 0.00$; this was found to be significant at the $p < 0.05$ significance level. This finding shows that there is not an important difference in “the effect of the difference between schools located in rural areas and central schools on schooling age” in terms of the district where managers and teachers work. When the table is examined, it is observed that 31% of the managers and teachers marked the “Agree” option in terms of the district where they work. Consequently, it can be stated that the teachers working in Çat exhibited a higher degree of agreement with the idea that there is a difference between schools located in rural areas and central schools regarding schooling age.

Table 4: The Effect of Pre-School Education on Schooling Age

District		Completely Disagree	Disagree	Partially Agree	Agree	Completely Agree	Total
Aşkale	n	0	0	1	6	6	13
	%	0	0	7.6	46.1	46.1	100
Aziziye	n	0	0	0	7	3	10
	%	0	0	0	70	30	100
Çat	n	0	1	2	4	3	10
	%	0	10	20	40	30	100
Hınıs	n	0	1	3	4	3	11
	%	0	9.1	27.2	36.3	27.2	100
Horasan	n	5	3	22	28	37	95
	%	5.2	3.1	23.1	29.4	38.9	100
Narman	n	6	1	2	12	4	25
	%	24	4	8	48	16	100
Palandöken	n	0	1	3	5	8	17
	%	0	5.8	17.6	29.4	47.1	100
Pasinler	n	2	0	4	4	12	22
	%	9.1	0	18.1	18.1	54.5	100
Tortum	n	0	2	0	5	2	9
	%	0	22.2	0	55.5	22.2	100
Yakutiye	n	4	2	3	8	3	20
	%	20	10	15	40	15	100
Total	n	17	11	40	83	81	232
	%	7.3	4.7	17.2	35.7	34.9	100

S.D.= 36

$\chi^2= 56.856$

$p= 0.015$

Chi-square analysis was conducted on the given answers in order to understand whether there was a difference in the degree to which primary school managers and teachers agree with the idea that “the pre-school education affects schooling age” in terms of the district where they work. χ^2 value was calculated as 56.856 and $p=0.015$; this was found to be insignificant at the $p < 0.05$ significance level. This finding shows that there is not an important difference in “the effect of pre-school education on schooling age” in terms of the district where managers and teachers work. When the table is examined, it is observed that 36% of the managers and teachers marked the “Agree” option in terms of the district where they work. Consequently, it can be stated that the teachers working in Aziziye exhibited a higher degree of agreement with the idea that the pre-school education affects schooling age.

Table 5: The Effect of the Parents’ Marital Status on Schooling Age

District		Completely Disagree	Disagree	Partially Agree	Agree	Completely Agree	Total
Aşkale	n	0	1	5	7	0	13
	%	0	7.6	38.4	53.8	0	100
Aziziye	n	0	1	2	4	3	10
	%	0	10	20	40	30	100
Çat	n	0	3	1	0	6	10
	%	0	30	10	0	60	100
Hınıs	n	0	1	7	3	0	11
	%	0	9.1	63.6	27.2	0	100
Horasan	n	11	12	27	27	18	95
	%	11.5	12.6	28.4	28.4	18.9	100
Narman	n	8	7	2	5	3	25
	%	32	28	8	20	12	100
Palandöken	n	0	6	2	4	5	17
	%	0	35.2	11.7	23.5	29.4	100

Pasinler	n	1	5	5	6	5	22
	%	4.5	22.7	22.7	27.2	22.7	100
Tortum	n	2	2	1	4	0	9
	%	22.2	22.2	11.1	44.4	0	100
Yakutiye	n	3	7	2	6	2	20
	%	15	35	10	30	10	100
Total	n	25	45	54	66	42	232
	%	10.7	19.3	23.2	28.4	18.1	100
S.D.= 36		$\chi^2= 73.438$			p= 0.000		

Chi-square analysis was conducted on the given answers in order to understand whether there was a difference in the degree to which primary school managers and teachers agree with the idea “that the student’s mother and father live together affects schooling age” in terms of the district where they work. χ^2 value was calculated as 73.438 and $p = 0.000$; this was found significant at the $p < 0.05$ significance level. This finding shows that there is an important difference in the degree to which managers and teachers agree with the idea “that the student’s mother and father of live together affects schooling age” in terms of the district where they work. When the table is examined, it is observed that 28% of the managers and teachers marked the “Agree” option in terms of the district where they work. Consequently, it can be stated that the teachers working in Aşkale exhibited a higher degree of agreement with the idea that the student’s mother and father live together affects schooling age.

Table 6: The Effect of the Climatic Conditions in the Region Where the Student Lives on Schooling Age

District		Completely Disagree	Disagree	Partially Agree	Agree	Completely Agree	Total
Aşkale	n	0	1	4	6	2	13
	%	0	7.6	30.7	46.1	15.3	100
Aziziye	n	0	4	3	0	3	10
	%	0	40	30	0	30	100
Çat	n	2	1	0	3	4	10
	%	20	10	0	30	40	100
Hınıs	n	1	2	2	3	3	11
	%	9.1	18.1	18.1	27.2	27.2	100
Horasan	n	16	24	16	21	18	95
	%	16.8	25.2	16.8	22.1	18.9	100
Narman	n	7	6	1	9	2	25
	%	28	24	4	36	8	100
Palandöken	n	3	0	9	2	3	17
	%	17.6	0	52.9	11.7	17.6	100
Pasinler	n	1	9	8	3	1	22
	%	4.5	40.9	36.3	13.6	4.5	100
Tortum	n	1	0	5	2	1	9
	%	11.1	0	55.5	22.2	11.1	100
Yakutiye	n	6	2	7	4	1	20
	%	30	10	35	20	5	100
Total	n	37	49	55	53	38	232
	%	15.9	21.1	23.7	22.8	16.3	100
S.D.= 36		$\chi^2= 67.213$			p= 0.001		

Chi-square analysis was conducted on the given answers in order to understand whether there was a difference in the degree to which primary school managers and teachers agree with the idea that “the climatic conditions in the region where the student lives affect schooling age” in terms of the district where they work. χ^2 value was calculated as 67.213 and $p = 0.001$; this was found significant at the $p < 0.05$ significance level. This finding shows that there is an important difference in the degree to which managers and teachers agree



with the idea that “the climatic conditions in the region where the student lives affect schooling age” in terms of the district where they work. When the table is examined, it is observed that 24% of the managers and teachers marked the “Partially Agree” option in terms of the district where they work. Consequently, it can be stated that the teachers working in Tortum partially agreed with the idea that the climatic conditions in the region where the student lives affect schooling age.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

It is not adequate to take chronological age as the sole criterion for schooling age. The development levels of the children can be identified using developmental tests, and experienced specialist educators can find the overall level of the children by making an objective evaluation. The behavioural level of the children, which can be found to be under or over the chronological age of the children, is a more accurate criterion compared to chronological age when determining schooling age (Banerji, Smith and Dedrick, 1997). When the findings of the research are examined, it is observed that primary school managers and teachers expressed that they consider determining schooling age according to calendar age alone to be incorrect in terms of several variables. These findings correspond with the opinions of Banerji, Smith and Dedrick (1997).

In Turkey, the Ministry of National Education implemented a new regulation on schooling age as of the 2012-2013 school year, and determined that the schooling year is 66-72 months. The ministry showed that it paid attention to the views of parents and other participants. This indicates that schooling age differs according to socio-economic level, the educational level of mothers and fathers, having pre-school education, living in rural or urban areas and climatic conditions.

WJEIS's Note 1: This study was prepared by benefiting from the graduate study entitled “Examining Schooling Age for the 1st Grade of Primary School According to the Views of Primary School Managers and Teachers” that was argued that the Department of Classroom Teaching, Institute of Social Sciences, Atatürk University.

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