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FROM THE EDITOR

Dear esteemed readers,

We are delighted to present the second issue of the International Journal of Positivity & Well-Being for the year 2024. Our publication policy is firmly rooted in scientific rigor, diligence, and quality. We maintain our publication processes within this framework, aiming to contribute to the scientific literature in the field of well-being. Our objective is to continue within this discipline, to be indexed in high-quality scientific databases, and to enhance the accessibility of our publications to a broader audience.

The registration of our journal with the Digital Object Identifier (DOI) system and our forthcoming inclusion in various indices facilitate the accessibility of the articles to which our authors have devoted their efforts. Another indication of our respect for the authors' efforts is our commitment to providing preliminary review feedback within one to two weeks of article submission and promptly advancing suitable manuscripts to the peer review process. Our reviewers also make commendable efforts to ensure that the evaluation process is thorough and timely. Their dedication and support are invaluable and cannot be overlooked.

In this context, as an international journal, we owe a debt of gratitude to our esteemed colleagues who are devoted to science and aim to contribute to scientific knowledge globally. We are pleased to share that as of 2024, our journal has begun indexing in the EBSCO and DOAJ databases. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the valuable members of our editorial board, our reviewers, and our authors who have supported us throughout this journey. We believe that this support will continue to grow.

This issue features high-quality and up-to-date international articles that you will enjoy reading. I thank all my colleagues for their interest and support for our journal and wish for this interest and support to increase continuously. We look forward to meeting again in our next issue.

With best regards,

Prof. Dr. Çağla GÜR

Editor-in-Chief

EDİTÖRDEN

Saygıdeğer Okurlar,

International Journal of Positivity & Well-Being Dergimizin 2024 yılı ikinci sayısı ile karşınızdayız. Dergimizin yayın politikası bilimsellik, özen ve kalite üzerine kuruludur. Yayın süreçlerimizi bu çerçevede sürdürmekte olup, iyi oluş alanında bilimsel literatüre katkı yapmayı hedefliyoruz. Amacımız; bu disiplinle devam ederken kaliteli bilimsel indekslerde yer almak ve yayınlarımızın daha geniş tabanlı olarak ulaşılabilirliğini sağlamaktır.

Dergimizin, bir çeşit numaralandırma ve erişim sistemi olan Digital Object Identifier (DOI, Sayısal Nesne Tanımlayıcı) sistemine kayıtlı olması ve kısa süre içinde içinde çeşitli dizinlerde yer almaya başlaması yazarların emek verdiği yazılarına ulaşılabilirliği kolaylaştırmaktadır. Yazarların emeğine saygı gösterdiğimizin diğer bir göstergesi, yazarlara makale yüklediklerinde bir-iki hafta gibi kısa bir süre içerisinde öndeğerlendirme dönütü verilmesi ve uygun görülen makalelerin hızlı bir şekilde hakem sürecine alınmasıdır. Hakemlerimiz de değerlendirme sürecinin kaliteli bir şekilde ilerlemesi ve sürecin yavaş olmaması adına ellerinden geleni yapmaktadırlar. Bu konuda hakemlerimizin emek ve desteği göz ardı edilemeyecek düzeydedir. Bu bağlamda, uluslararası bir dergi olan dergimizin amaçladığı şekilde evrensel anlamda bilimselliğe katkıda bulunmayı da hedefleyen, bilime gönül vermiş olan değerli meslektaşlarımıza teşekkürü bir borç biliyoruz. 2024 yılı itibariyle dergimizin EBSCO ve DOAJ veritabanlarında dizinlenmeye başladığını memnuniyetle sizlerle paylaşmak istiyorum. Dergimizin bu yolculuğunda bizleri yalnız bırakmayan editör kurulumuzun değerli üyelerine, hakemlerimize ve yazarlarımıza gönülden şükranlarımızı sunuyorum. Aynı desteğin bundan sonra da artarak devam edeceğine inanıyorum.

Bu sayımızın kapsamı içerisinde yine zevkle okuyacağınız nitelikli ve güncel bilgiler içeren uluslararası makaleler sizlerin beğenisine sunulmaktadır. Tüm meslektaşlarımın dergimize gösterdiği ilgi ve desteğe teşekkür ediyor, bu ilgi ve desteğin giderek artmasını diliyorum. Bir sonraki sayımızda buluşmak dileğiyle.

Saygılarımla,

Prof. Dr. Çağla GÜR

Baş Editör

TABLE OF CONTENTS/ İÇİNDEKİLER

Research Articles/Araştırma Makaleleri

Review Articles/İnceleme Makaleleri

The Influence of Confucianism on the Self-Esteem of the Adolescents with Self-Destructive Behaviour: A Vietnamese Phenomenological Study

Konfüçyüsçülüğün Kendine Zarar Veren Davranışları Olan Ergenlerin Benlik Saygısı Üzerindeki Etkisi: Bir Viyetnam Fenomenoloji Çalışması

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Abstract

Confucianism has a substantial impact on the Vietnamese family culture. Over many generations, Confucianism in Vietnamese families has been distorted, affecting the behavior and mental health of family members. This paper presents the influence of Confucianism on the self-esteem of adolescents with self-destructive behavior. The study applied a phenomenological study approach in qualitative research to find out the essence of the adolescents' self-destructive behavior and how it affected to the adolescents' mental health. An in-depth examination of three typical cases was implemented to triangulate the data and obtain the trustworthiness. The findings showed that self-destructive behavior stemmed from the participants' needs for being recognized and loved by parents that were not satisfied due to loose family attachment caused by their parents' Confucian ideology. This reason led to consequences that the adolescents' self-esteem appeared to be incomplete and that they tended to exhibit negative behaviors. As a result, the essence of self-destructive behavior is the consequence of prejudices about Confucian ideology in family education that still exists in Vietnamese family culture. These findings offer an essential reference source for counseling and mental health care services in supporting those with self-destructive behavior caused by family.

Keywords: Confucianism, Self-destructive behaviour, Family education, Adolescent, Self-esteem.

Öz

Konfüçyüsçülüğün Vietnam aile kültürü üzerinde önemli bir etkisi vardır. Vietnamlı ailelerde, Konfüçyüsçülük nesiller boyunca çarpıtılmıştır. Bu durum, aile üyelerinin davranışlarını ve ruh sağlığını etkilemiştir. Bu makalede, Konfüçyüsçülüğün kendine zarar veren davranışlara sahip ergenlerin özsaygıları üzerindeki etkisi tartışılmaktadır. Araştırmada, ergenlerin kendine zarar veren davranışlarının özünü ve bunun ergenlerin ruh sağlığını nasıl etkilediğini ortaya çıkarmak amacıyla nitel araştırma kapsamında fenomenolojik çalışma yaklaşımı uygulanmıştır. Verileri üçgenlemek ve güvenilirliği elde etmek için üç tipik vaka, derinlemesine incelenmiştir. Bulgular, ergenlerde kendine zarar verme davranışının, ebeveynlerin Konfüçyüsçü ideolojisinin neden olduğu gevşek aile bağlılığı nedeniyle tatmin olmayan ergen katılımcıların, ebeveynleri tarafından tanınma ve sevilme ihtiyaçlarından kaynaklandığını göstermiştir. Bu durum, ergenlerin benlik saygısının eksik görünmesi ve olumsuz davranışlar sergileme eğiliminde olmaları gibi sonuçlara yol açmaktadır. Sonuç olarak, kendine zarar verici davranışının özünün, Vietnam aile kültüründe hala var olan aile eğitiminde Konfüçyüsçü ideolojiye ilişkin önyargıların sonucu olduğu ifade edilebilir. Bu bulgular, aileden kaynaklanan kendine zarar verici davranışlar sergileyen bireylerin desteklenmesi açısından, danışmanlık ve ruh sağlığı hizmetleri için önemli bir referans kaynağı sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Konfüçyüsçülük, Kendine zarar verme davranışı, Aile eğitimi, Ergenlik, Benlik saygısı.

Introduction

According to the World Health Organization's prediction, by 2020, suicide will be the leading cause of death in developed countries and the second in developing countries. The expressions of self-destructive behavior (SDB) also include self-harm (e.g., hunger strike; using a knife to cut hands and feet; pulling hair; burning skin or scratching the body; punching a wall; slapping the face); irresistible behaviors (e.g., gambling, overeating, stimulant use, unsafe sex, excessive shopping); neglect (e.g., inattention to needs, health, refusal to receive help); and thoughts/actions that can be detrimental to the mental health (e.g., pessimism, obsession, denying responsibility, allowing people to mistreat themselves). These behaviors are common among adolescents (Kerig, 2017). Although, according to DSM-V (American Psychiatric Association, 2013), suicidal acts are different from SDB even though they are closely related. Therefore, these two behaviors cannot be separated from research and clinical practice. Stivers (1990) found that, for adolescents, the lack of self-esteem can lead to self-destruction. Thompson and Bhugra (2000) agreed that there is a correlation between children's self-esteem and SDB. These researchers also pointed out that the main factor affecting a child's self-esteem is family education (FE).

FE, or family culture, is the foundation of a child's personality education throughout their lifetime. If the culture of a family tends to impose, control, and ignore the role of the child, their self-esteem system will be affected because they will not be able to develop autonomy and cannot achieve excellent academic performance in this family system (Schmidt and Padilla, 2003). The way these children tend to relieve the repression brought about by the family is through SDB, which attracts the parents' attention or escapes from the reality of grief and frustration.

Vietnam is a country with the Confucian heritage culture, a religious ideology system, that has strongly influenced Vietnamese education and family culture for over 2000 years, from the time Vietnam was colonized by China (Chu, 2019). Therefore, the Vietnamese family culture (up to the present time) is always more or less influenced by Confucian ideology (Pham, 2019). Some modern Confucian educational ideas are no longer appropriate because they violate gender equality rights and family education methodology but are still preserved in the traditional educational methods of many Vietnamese families. It can lead to generation conflicts between parents and children as well as among other family members. As a result, too many adolescents feel that the family is not a safe environment and become autistic, live in a virtual world, or harm themselves to reduce their stress.

Based on these points, this paper presents the influence of Confucianism on the self-esteem of adolescents with SDB in Vietnamese families. The study offers insights into the causes of adolescents' SDB and explores the experience of the Vietnamese adolescents having SDB caused by living in the Confucian family within the context of phenomenology.

The Confucianism and its influence on the self-esteem and SDB of the adolescents in Vietnamese families

Studies on the impact of religious thought on human SDB are not a new field. However, each religion will have different influences on such behaviors. In Western countries, in Christianity, suicide is an unforgivable act of violating filial piety to parents (Sanders, 2020). In Eastern countries where Buddhism is popular, it is believed that suicide is a great sin and the worst for humans. Besides, some other religions consider suicide to be a sacred thing. In Japan, the Samurai did not complete the task of choosing a form of self-dissection to atone for the act of failure because they revered the culture of "death is protecting the dignity" in Shinto. This cult of suicidal behavior seems to be engraved in the minds of Japanese and has become one of the leading causes of the nation's high suicide rate in the world (Leenaars, 2017).

Hinduism and some ancient countries (such as Champa) have a tradition of voluntary/forced wives to be burned with their husbands (Gearing and Alonzo, 2018; Kitts, 2018). With Confucianism, the teaching system does not seem to mention the issue of suicide, however, in the concept of three obligatory tasks of women clearly defined issues of life – death: 'when in your family, obey your father; when married, obey your husband; when your husband died, obey your son.' The fate of a woman is decided by the family's main man (Cheung, 2020). This view was imprinted on the educational ideology of Confucian families and easily realized, this thought strongly influenced the education of parents, especially in personality education for their children.

Confucianism was introduced into Vietnam many years Before Christ when China invaded Vietnam. It has more than 2,000 years of existence and nearly 500 years as Vietnam's national religion. Confucian ideology strongly influenced the cultural foundation of Vietnamese families (Weiming, 2017). Dormeier Freire and Giang (2012) found that Confucianism had both positive and negative impacts on Vietnamese families. On the one hand, Confucianism emphasizes the gratitude and responsibility of people towards their families and considers it an emotional focal point for people to fulfill their obligations towards the country and their families. In other words, Confucianism highly values discipline and order within the family.

On the other hand, it brought about selfish familyism, whereby the father and the grandfather have absolute authority; the daughters-in-law must follow their husbands and their husbands' families. Unlike sons, daughters have no voice in the family. Jayakody and Phuong (2013) analyzed and evaluated the negative influence of Confucianism on Vietnamese families today, showing that the thought of three obligations and; respecting the absolute decision-making power of the father has made many Vietnamese families 'incomplete'. The gap between generations has become too high; the children have no voice in family and are obliged to follow all the decisions of grandparents and parents. In career orientation, family decision making is directly and almost decisively with the career choices of high school students (Tran, 2017). In the marriage, without the consent of the parents, a couple cannot conduct the marriage; even, some families still have the habit of 'getting engaged' to their children from an early age (Tran, 2019). In business or vocational orientation, children often have to continue the family line, not in a different field other than the family tradition (Dormeier Freire and Giang, 2012). In daily life, during meals, the woman can only eat after the man is served (Tran, 2019). The studies of Van (2003) and Nguyen (2019) on the psychological trauma of children in incomplete families also suggest that the imposition and the separation of parents are one of the causes of children's trauma. This problem stems from the idea of teaching children from a Confucian perspective. Dinh et al. (2019) analyzed the self-esteem of children living in incomplete Vietnamese families and yielded similar results that the self-esteem system of these children is almost below average, and this leads to negative behaviors such as committing suicide and SDB (e.g., hunger strike, slitting hands, self-isolation).

A child's self-esteem develops through schooling and learning from their own families. Barry et al. (2007) found that, when children's self-esteem was harmed, they were more likely to engage in adolescent offenses. Goodson et al. (2006) agreed that when self-esteem is not strengthened, children not only tend to exhibit standard deviation when they reach adulthood, but they also tend to live in isolation or retreat from social interactions for the simple reason that they lose faith in social relationships. Schou Andreassen and Pallesen (2014), when studying social network addiction behavior of high school students, found that one of the significant causes of student's addictive behavior is the lack of family interaction. A study on social isolation syndrome of Coles et al. (2016) also showed that adolescents chose this way of reaction because they did not feel safe in the family, did not receive respect, recognition, and attention from their parents. Nguyen et al. (2018), in a study on Vietnamese teenage self-isolation behavior, emphasized that the lack of family interaction and opposing educational ideology of parents led to such behavior, causing involved children's SDB.

The interaction and attachment between family members, especially the cultural and religious aspect of the family, also has an impact on the children's self-esteem and behavioral tendencies. Rothbaum et al. (2002) believed that children observed the interaction between parents and their parents' solutions in family conflicts. This taught them a range of excellent and essential values for maturity. Behavior with people around, the way they play and choose friends, team spirit, and many other things about children are also influenced by how parents treat each other. If the relationship between parents and children is not strong enough to make children safe to learn and develop, it is straightforward for children to develop unwanted behaviors and risk illegal behaviors in the future. The role of parents has not stopped there; parents are also responsible for teaching children to understand the family's religion, praying, and understanding what to do and what is wrong (Walsh, 2012). Parents should teach children how to accept and have faith in the right things to help them be more aware of their future goals. However, do not try to bind the child to any religion they do not want, leave them free to explore the spiritual world in their own way. Heinke et al. (2019) agreed with the spiritual education for children in the family that children should not be forced to follow the standards of the mental and religious life of their parents. Parents should let the children choose their own beliefs and religions. Exline and Rose (2005) found that religious imposition in the family was a source of many mental disorders, even psychotic symptoms and personality disorders in children when they matured. At the same time in Vietnam, Tran (2019) stated that religion and spiritual culture of the family is one of the factors that strengthen family ties among generations. When analyzing loose cohesion and incomplete families, previous Vietnamese studies found a conflict of ideological, religious, and spiritual life between parents and children is the seed of the breakdown, unhappy and prone to violence (Nguyen, 2019; Van, 2003).

From the discussion of the literature, globally and locally, the relationship between family members has a substantial impact on children's psychology, and Confucian ideology has been affecting the family educational methods. As a result, the children experience many adverse effects on self-esteem, especially when they enter a period of psychological crisis (puberty period). The researcher raises the question of how the ideology of Confucian education in the family affects the self-esteem and SDB of Vietnamese adolescents. Therefore, this study is conducted to understand the essence of the Vietnamese adolescents' SDB, approaching the Confucian viewpoint.

Method

Study Design

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to describe the SDB for Vietnamese adolescents at the Confucian family ideology. At this stage in the research, the SDB will be generally defined as the expressions of the external behavior of a conflict between Confucian parents and children. The study contributes to the discussion of the theoretical basis for the influence of religious views on SDB and the prevention measures for SDB in school counseling services, as well as other mental health services.

In a phenomenological study, the researcher overcomes or suspends prior knowledge and experience to understand a phenomenon at a deeper level (Casey, 2009; Creswell and Creswell, 2017). As a mental counselor and researcher with adolescents with SDB, the interviewer needs to acknowledge and try to frame those experiences. No participant was a client of the interviewer. Discover how the Confucian ideology affected the family education method of parents of the adolescents having SDB could reveal the intervention strategies for this group of Vietnamese SDB adolescents.

Participants

The researcher used the screening method through a questionnaire to find adolescents who exhibited SDB. The screening questionnaire was built in 2 steps: (1) Design and finalize the official questionnaire:

An open questionnaire consisting of 10 items was distributed to 30 adolescents (from 12 to 16 years old) to be surveyed; then, combined with the theoretical framework into a test questionnaire. The questionnaire was sent to 10 experts in the field of counseling - psychotherapy for students with SDB for professional advice. After being commented on the questionnaire was distributed to 50 adolescents for feedback on the language and format. The questionnaire was completed after removing the necessary evaluation and suggestions of the questionnaire on the aspects of language, quantity, content, and form with Cronbach Alpha reliability of 0.863. (2) Conduct an official questionnaire distribution with 18 items (including four parts: understanding the status, understanding the perception, attitudes, and behaviors of the participants about SDB; understanding the influence of SDB; learning about living situations and assess the satisfaction with intervention strategies). The number of participants screened was 280 out of 1043 adolescents (from 12 to 16 years old).

Of the 280 participants screened as SDBs, the researcher conducted an in-depth structured interview. Each participant was asked to verbally respond to the following: 'What is your experience with SDB? Can you describe the expressions of SDB you have done? What does the SDB mean to you? Are your parents involved in your motivation to implement SDB? How do you feel about your relationship with your parents?'. Each interview lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. This step was conducted by the school counselor at the participant's school. The results of the first interview were systematically compiled into a list of client information with SDB and sent to the research team for processing. All interviews were conducted in Vietnamese, the native language of both the researchers and participants. The translation process from Vietnamese to English was done by two experts in English teaching and proofreading to ensure the Vietnamese words, phrases and expressions had almost equivalence in English.

When the abundance of cognitive representation appears, it is clear that greater depth can be achieved by asking participants to describe their experience of living in the family with parents treating them in Confucian ideology ways and providing explanations of their feelings and experience. Three participants clearly described their experiences of living in a Confucian traditional family. All collected data about the interviews was asked for permission from the participants to record by taps; some used handwritten notes to record the information. This data is committed to confidentiality and is used for research purposes only.

Data Analysis

The phenomenological method was used in analyzing the participants' transcripts. In this method, all written transcripts are read several times to get an overall feeling for them. From each transcript, key phrases or sentences directly related to the life experience of SDB and family relationships are identified. The meaning is then made up of essential sentences and phrases. Formula meanings are grouped into themes that allow for popular themes to appear on all participant transcripts. The results are then integrated into a complete, insightful description of this phenomenon. After the description and topic have been obtained, the researcher at the final step can approach several participants a second time to confirm the results. If new relevant data appears, it is included in the final description.

This study employed a thematic approach in the analysis of interview data (Guest et al., 2011). Key themes emerged from the analysis. All quotations cited in this paper have been translated from Vietnamese to English from interview transcripts. The findings are presented as a theme that represents the overall picture of how Confucian ideology in a family affected the SDB of Vietnamese adolescents. The participants' names are coded as Phu, Ha, and Vy. Based on these findings, the researcher discovered how the relationship between FE, family ideology, and family culture affected adolescent SDB tendencies. The analyzed evidence will be the concrete foundation to describe the essence of the SDB of Vietnamese adolescents in an intercultural context.

Results

From three verbal transcripts, 42 significant statements were extracted. Table 1 includes the example of significant statements with their formulated meanings:

Table 1. Selected examples of significant statements of Vietnamese adolescents with SDB caused by living in the Confucian-affected family and related formulate meanings

Significant statement	Formulated meaning
(Ha) Parents only love my brother. Therefore, I want to win over my brother's love to avenge my parents ... I often skip meals and take my life to scare my brother to take care of and depend on me. Since then, my parents will pay more attention to me.	The adolescent wants to self-destruct to get attention and be recognized for existence by family members.
(Phu) My father always imposed everything, not giving me any decision. I have to study well, I have to become a wealthy person to continue the family tradition. I have to shoulder the responsibilities of the family, I must live for the reputation of the family ... My father never even asked if I liked those things?	The adolescent feels the gap between generations in the family is too big; parents do not sympathize with children and always want to impose everything.
(Phu) I want to live in a virtual world [online game], where I can be a heroic knight, with a great, healthy appearance. I can win against all enemies, and I am free to do what I want.	The adolescent's self-esteem system is incomplete and negatively developed by the adverse effects of the parent's Confucian educational perspective.
(Vy) I do not want to kill myself, I want to self-destruct. I want to take revenge on my parents. They always consider me a "sin", a child should not be present in this world. I do that [SDB] to please them. I will torment them. I want them to regret treating me like that.	Family relationships strongly influence adolescent SDB tendencies.

Arranging these formulated meanings into clusters resulted in 2 key themes: (1) the family recognition on the formation of an adolescent's personality, and (2) the family attachment and adolescent behavioral trends.

Theme 1: The Family Recognition on the Formation of Adolescent's Personality

Committing SDB as a request to recognize family existence. Phu was always dissatisfied with his father's treatment. Phu does not have the right to decide for himself. Phu likes to live in the online gaming world to be himself and to decide his life. He stated that:

> 'My father is very strict with me. What my father wants me to do, I must follow. I am the only son in the house, the heir of the family. Therefore, I have to study really well and be very manly. My father always scolded me for not being like a man, being tall and strong. I am under pressure. The online gaming world is my savior. That is the only place I can be myself and be respected by everyone.'

Not just venture into the online gaming world. Phu also expressed his secret aspirations through the appearance of the avatar in the game:

> 'My representative character in the game is a fierce warrior, with great body and unrivaled strength. When controlling the characters participating in in-game battles, as well as interacting with other players, I feel their trust in me. Whenever my father scolded me because my study was not good, or when I skipped meals, I would log in and play the game right after. I feel this gives me a sense of comfort and under no pressure.'

Excessive gaming makes Phu almost out of control in the real world. Phu gradually skipped meals, did not eat or drink, just focused on playing games. Phu shows signs of online game addiction, but he is very self-reliant when it comes to this issue. Phu is aware of his frequency of playing games, but he does not want to stop. Because the online gaming world is the only place, he feels secure, respected and uplifted in his desires. Phu confirmed:

> 'I am not addicted to the game even though I spend much time playing. I am depressed in real life. The lower academic results made my father scold me more. I wish I could live in the gaming world, to be a strong man, not as weak as I am now. I want to be recognized. I want my dad not to be so harsh with me. I want to be free.'

Ha's SDB is somewhat similar to Phu's, but the hidden purpose of the behavior is different. Ha is the second daughter in a family of 2 children. Ha is an unwanted child, so she is always looked down upon by her father and does not seem to exist. In the family, Ha's elder brother is the only one who cares about her. Therefore, Ha always wants to monopolize the affection of his brother for herself. Ha wants his brother to love her for the parents [because Ha does not get it]. Ha will torture her own body if her brother does not care about her or even asks for suicide. She noted:

> 'Without my elder brother, I cannot sleep peacefully, I cannot feel secure in living in this family. Parents do not care about me. My father did not take my existence seriously. I am like a surplus in the family. Only my elder brother is the only one who loves me… Recently, my brother is on a business trip, I feel very insecure when I am with my parents. I decided to skip meals, not to eat or drink to avoid facing my parents. When my brother comes back, I will eat. But it seems that my brother does not seem to care about me anymore.'

Ha always feels insecure when living with her family. She always felt guilty for her appearance. The fact that her brother cared less about Ha made her feel scared and worried, so she locked herself up and did not eat or drink. However, the purpose of such SDB is not only to attract the attention of her brother but also of her parents. She spoke her feelings:

> 'Although I was very uncomfortable when I fasted, stopped drinking, and locked myself in my room, I felt delighted. Parents pay more attention to me. However, my father always scolded me. My father even threatened that if I were fasting, he would send me away from home. I am terrified. I almost panicked [crying]. My father said that because I am a girl, I cannot carry on domestic work, so it is okay to have me, and not. I am not important in this family. My father can only have my brother ... [continue crying]'

Precisely because Ha received no recognition from her father, Ha hated her father more. Ha decides to win her brother's affection, forcing her brother to depend on her, to care for her without caring for her parents. Ha wants her father to regret his actions. She stated:

> 'I must monopolize the affection and concern of my brother. In this way, parents will not dare to scold me anymore and have to recognize me. As long as my brother depends on me, my parents will have to defend and take care of me more.'

Hatred, negative feelings for parents who have acts of imposing children, especially on girls, are not just seen in Ha's case. Vy also has similar circumstances. Vy is the only daughter and the unwanted child. Vy's parents want to have a son. Since Vy was born, the whole family almost ignored her family. Vy's parents are no longer happy because Vy is not a boy. Vy is considered 'sin' of the family. Her parents only raised Vy for gratitude but did not love her. Since then, Vy developed a hatred for her parents, especially her father. She expressed:

> 'My parents just want to have a son, so why they give birth to me? Why give birth to me and then do not love me. I am their child [angry to share]. The whole family always despises me, my father despises me. My mother cared for me, but she was afraid of my father, so she did not dare to care for me much. I am very angry with him. I hate him. He just neglected my family's reputation. He always poured negative emotions at me. Whatever he wants to do, he does not agree. He even judges and imposes all ugliness on me.'

Because of being unrecognized, unloved in the family, Vy participated in social networking activities. The pictures that Vy posted were many people loved and praised. Vy became interested in that and gradually became addicted to social networks. Vy cannot live without social networks because that is the place where Vy is praised and respected. Nevertheless, in the real world, Vy has no friends. She does not care about other real relationships (even at school, or with neighbors). Unfortunately, Vy's father disliked her over-using social network and banned her from using a smartphone. Vy seems to have lost control when sharing:

> 'He is too much. He forbade me to use a smartphone, even smashed my smartphone in front of me. He does not love me; I am used to it. Now my hobby, my only joy he also deprived. What does he want? [angry sharing] What did I do, so he did it to me? Just because I am not a boy? Or am I the reason why the clan does not recognize my father, as well as unfairly treating my father?'

Not only stopped at expressing hatred and resentment for her father, but Vy also began to perform acts of SDB and widely publicized on social networks to avenge her father. Vy wants her father to regret treating her that way. She wants her father to suffer like the pain he caused her; she described:

> 'Once I uploaded a cut-off-hand photo on my social network [Facebook] and shared that for my father to cause, social networkers interact a lot. They shared my articles a lot to create public opinion. My parents' neighbors, friends, and colleagues all know and scold them a lot. My parents were in crisis because of criticism. I am delighted. Although after that, my father yelled at me more, even beaten and threatened to kick me away, I was not afraid, I was happy to see him suffering. It is the consequence that my father has forbidden me, been strict with me, hated me ever before.'

However, the motive for Vy's SDB is not entirely derived from hatred for parents, but also from the desire to be loved and be protected. When Vy finished clearing the anger in her heart, Vy began to cry and share:

> 'I was in so much pain, so painful [hugging her face]. However, I could not stop banging my head against the wall and cutting my vein. When it hurts me, my parents seem to be more concerned about me. When my father scolded me, I felt like I was still valuable, still a family member. Normally my father does not care about me. He saw me as invisible. Over here, every day my father looked at me and scolded me. When I held sharp objects in my hand, my father immediately dissuaded and scolded me, not allowing me to use them. I feel pleased about that. I gradually became visible to my father [smiled bitterly].'

It can be noticed, the recognition of family members always affects the personality and behavior of children. Injustice, coercion, and non-recognition are among the causes that cause adolescents to commit SDB to avoid reality, to get revenge and, more deeply, to be concerned by their parents.

Theme 2: The Family Attachment and Adolescent Behavioral Trends

In the group of adolescents exhibiting SDB, family attachment is always missing and a cause for them to do so. This is evidenced by the confession of three participants on the question, 'How do you feel about your relationship with your parents?'. They expressed their feelings:

Phu: 'Father always kept his distance from me. The fact that I share my thoughts and feelings with my parents seems to be something that is not in the family. Every time I spoke my feelings, my father would scold me for being weak, not being a man. I was very disappointed and did not earnestly share and confide with my father anymore. I went to the online gaming world, where there are always friends listening. That [the online gaming world] is really where I belong. My parents are too conservative, too traditional.'

Ha: 'I hardly feel my parents' feelings for me. I feel like my parents consider me an acquaintance who lives in the same house. Each day we meet and greet, but I do not feel like living in a proper family. My father is always strict with me in everything, from studying to making friends. Most recently, the relationship between me and my brother, my father did not want me to be too close to my brother. My father said that because of me, my brother did not work well. I hate that father's way of thinking. Moreover, my mother is helpless before my father. I love my mom, but I can not help it because my mom loves my brother after all.'

Vy: 'Since I was born, I have always been a child destroying family happiness. My appearance makes my parents not happy anymore. My father was abandoned by my father's head family, my mother was disappointed at giving birth to a daughter [me] so she did not open her heart to me. I feel like my parents only support me for my obligations. They do not love or care for me. I want to be cared for by my parents, even once...'

As such, the tendency to perform SDB of three participants is also for a reason: To receive the parents' attention. They described that:

Phu: 'The fact that I spend so much time playing games and neglecting food and drinks, my health becomes weaker and my academic performance goes down. This made my parents more concerned about my feelings than before. My father, for fear of losing this 'only son', treats me with 'gentleness' more than before, not overly imposing or scolding me. Although still strict, at least every day my father called me downstairs to eat and reminded me to go to bed early. I feel happy about that. Father cares about my feelings more. I do not know when I stopped playing online games, my father still treated me like that or not. I might continue torturing myself for a little more, so my father could change his treatment to me...'

Ha: 'Parents will have to regret not loving me. I will win the affection of the son my parents love the most [Ha's brother]. Parents will know that my existence is what makes parents concerned ... Why do parents only care about my brother, but never me? Do my parents ever understand my feelings? Why did they give birth to me? [Ha pity to share]'

Vy: 'My father will not live in peace with me. I will make my father pay for prohibiting me, hating me. I will not commit suicide, I will torture this body so that my father will be criticized by public opinion. Do fame, status, and honor be more important than his child? My father is too important in the appearance and dignity of the family. I just want him to be a little more concerned about me. After all, I am his daughter, his child!' [Vy sobbed to share].

Results were integrated into an essential approach of SDB in adolescents. The lived experience of adolescents with SDB showed that the influence of the family is the leading cause of the SDB. More profound is the traditional ideology of the parents themselves that directly affect negatively to the self-esteem system of their children. The results analysis will be presented more clearly in the Discussion section.

Discussion

Through an in-depth study of the three cases with typical expressions of SDB, the researchers found that some common characteristics of adolescent mental trauma were all related to family education. In particular, the tradition of Confucian education appeared to have a substantial impact on the self-esteem system of children. Ha (2015) stated that Confucianism in modern society is not bad, but it is the cultural and social changes through different historical periods of the country that have made Confucian thought distorted and change in a negative way. It is different from the original ideology mentioned by Confucius. Confucian educational views emphasize the role of filial piety and the respect of children for parents, as well as the economic and social role of the men in the family. However, that viewpoint becomes a pressure, a framework of moral standards for families. The father has the absolute right, the right of a woman to be lowered. Children must obey their parents (especially their fathers), lowering the children's freedom and equality in the family. At the same time, the son must be the heir, not accepting the presence and inheritance of the daughter. The influence of Confucianism on the Vietnamese family tradition is the result of this distortion. This inadvertently harms family relationships and seems to influence the mental trauma of children. The pressure between family members is growing, and it is difficult to deal with. Children want to be cared for and acknowledged by their parents, but parents are dominated by negative thoughts, which threaten the children's self-esteem system. As a result, negative behaviors break out so that children receive the attention of their parents, typically the SDB. Unlike the purpose of SDB found in other religions (Gearing and Alonzo, 2018; Leenaars, 2017; Sanders, 2020), Confucian ideology only indirectly influences and is the main factor affecting parents' views and styles of parenting. From there, creating stifling, pressure and suppression in the mental health of children, they burst out into the act of SDB. The researchers conducted an in-depth analysis of how the ideology of Confucian education in the family affects the self-esteem and SDB of Vietnamese adolescents as followed themes:

The Impact of the Recognition on the Formation of Adolescent's Self-esteem

Social studies have shown that an essential factor in determining the future development of children lies in family education rather than school education (Li, 2007; Guven and Yılmaz, 2017). Parents are the best role models for children; each of their words and actions will influence their children's behavior and personality (Muris et al., 2000). For children who lack the care and recognition of their parents, problems arise. The case of children living in a family with a Confucian education tradition is similar. The imposition of roles and non-recognition of existence are the causes of the vulnerability of the child's self-esteem. Then, the indirect cause of SDB when the child enters the stage of encountering many difficulties in managing emotions and behaviors, the adolescence. Three analyzed cases support this finding.

All three lived in a family with a Confucian educational tradition, the father had all the family power, and the mother had almost no authority. The repression of negative emotions of Phu, Ha, and Vy all stemmed from the imposition of the father's perceptions, and the culmination of the act of SDB is from the act of causing a negative source from the father (with Phu being the imposition and long-term family pressure from his father; with Ha being her brother's love and hatred for her father; with Vy being an act of banning the use of phones and social networks). Previous studies stated that, in Confucianism, the father was always the mainstay of the family and was primarily responsible for helping that family maintain its lineage and develop its generation; therefore, the children in the family absolutely must obey what the father taught to be a bright heir to the family (Jayakody and Phuong, 2013; Tran, 2017; Tran, 2019). Although this thought is no longer suitable with the times, it seems to have become a genetic trait in the minds of Vietnamese people; this is the most reasonable explanation when the father of Phu, Ha, and Vy's families negative imposing educational style. As a result, not only do Phu, Ha and Vy had rather low self-esteem, they felt unconfident in the real world and wish to be recognized through the virtual world. With Phu, the only son has to shoulder the responsibilities of the whole clan in the

strict upbringing of his father. This has made Phu's self-esteem not unique and fully developed. This is the cause of Phu's inner conflict, one side is the need to be recognized, expressed, and to be himself; and one side is the clan, the family responsibility. With Ha, she did not receive love from her parents; her parents are always biased towards her brother; therefore, Ha developed feelings of hatred for her parents, and desire to possess her brother for revenge. However, hidden behind that, is the desire to be loved, recognized by parents, even if only a little. This was an inner conflict that promoted Ha to self-destruct so that she not only attracted the attention of her brother but also attracted the attention and care of her parents - the affection she longed for since childhood. For Vy, her negative emotions stemmed from her birth - an unwanted child. Throughout her development, Vy has never received love from her parents, as well as from her father's family. It is the pressure from the family tradition that Vy's family cannot become a safe environment for her to develop healthily. Vy understood and tried to repress her negative emotions to please her parents. At the same time, she transformed her negative emotions into the virtual world - the social network, the only place that recognized her existence. However, everything collapsed when Vy was banned from using the smartphone by her father. This event triggered a long series of negative emotions in Vy and expressed to the outside by SDB. Vy was unconsciously driven to do it, but hidden behind was the desire to receive love and recognition.

The Confucian educational ideology in the family has a direct negative impact on the development of children's self-esteem, making them unable to build a positive image for themselves. This problem lasted and was repressed from childhood to adolescence - a period of dramatic changes in mental life that makes past repressions unable to continue and flare up when there are adverse impact events. Compared with previous global and local studies on the impact of self-esteem on adolescent SDB (Barry et al., 2007; Coles et al., 2016; Goodson et al., 2006; Nguyen et al., 2017; Schou Andreassen and Pallesen, 2014), the findings in this study discovered that the influence of religion (Confucianism) on family education ideology is the main reasons for the imperfect self-esteem and the motive leading to the SDB of the current Vietnamese adolescents.

Family Attachment and Adolescent Behavioral Trends

In this study, all three cases were assessed without family cohesion, and this was the leading cause leading to the negative behavior trend [the SDB] of Phu, Ha, and Vy when entering adolescence - a period of age when it is difficult to control emotions and impulsive behaviors. Phu, even as an only son, holds a unique position in the family; but, Phu has no choice for his own life. He must live for his father and family tradition. Parents love Phu but love by creating authority and pressure for him to achieve his goals (or his parents' goals). The forced compliance with family rules made it impossible for Phu to build a value system for himself and to release SDB when he was under excessive stress. For Ha, who is an unwanted child in the family, so the family connection is almost noexistent between Ha and her parents. Her father never once acknowledged the existence of her. Ha did not feel the family connection, which led to the suppression of negative emotions in for a long time. Precisely because she is not cared for, not recognized, and loved in the home, Ha always wants to get the attention and care from her parents. This led to Ha's behavioral tendency to do something that caught her parents' attention and care for her, even if it was a negative behavior. Vy's case is severe. Vy is both an unwanted child and a "sin" that the whole clan assigns Vy's family. Vy is not recognized as a family existence because she is a girl. Vy received negative thoughts from her parents during her development, which led to not only the broken connection between Vy and her family but also between Vy and the society. The trend of socially isolated and immersed living behaviors is the result of family interaction received by Vy.

Compared to previous studies on the influence of family attachment on children's behavioral trends (Exline and Rose, 2005; Heinke et al., 2019; Jayakody and Phuong, 2013; Rothbaum et al., 2002; Tran, 2019; Walsh, 2012), the results of this study continue to confirm these above findings when placed in

the context of Vietnamese families, with the Southeast Asian family culture, and mainly traditional FE from a Confucian perspective. The tradition of Confucian FE has broken family ties, creating too great emotional distance between parents and children. Children living in these families cannot fully and positively learn from their parents. Therefore, negative emotions are repressed from an early age and tend to flare up when the child enters adolescence. The expressions of SDB, in the three analyzed cases, all have the same purpose that they want to be more attentive to their parents. They wanted to have cared about their emotions and received recognition from parents – the things they could not have since childhood. With these findings, the intervention strategy and mental support for these clients are required to approach the family system and adjust from the perception of FE. Besides, strengthening the self-esteem and family culture are essential requirements to reduce the risk of SDB of this group.

In summary, through the analysis of causes and factors affecting the SDB of Vietnamese adolescents, it can be noticed that the essence of SDB is the consequence of prejudices about Confucian ideology in family education that still exists in Vietnamese family culture. Without interfering with the influence of this culture in the parenting style, the SDB prevention strategies for Vietnamese adolescents will not be sufficient. The limitation of this study is to focus only on the in-depth analysis of three adolescents with SDB living in families whose parents are the 'product' of an outdated Confucian educational perspective. The issue of women's rights and gender equality has not been addressed in the analysis, nor has the researcher overlooked the positive aspects that other religions (Buddhism, Christianity) bring to Vietnamese families and culture. The method of educating children according to modern psychological and educational theories has not been proposed and analyzed.

Conclusions and Recommendations

From an in-depth analysis of two key themes through a phenomenological study, the essence of the SDB of three typical participants, the family education was affected negatively, degenerated from Confucian ideology; which led to the educational methodology of parents who face many obstacles and create mental pressure that prevents children from developing ~~with~~ positive mental health. In particular, it was these negative perceptions that made the adolescent's self-esteem not develop positively; they were deprived of the right to control their own lives and could not become fully. Adolescents living in these families always wanted to be recognized and loved, but it was the old strict law that made these precious records buried, leading to an unintended outburst when they enter a period of psychological crisis during puberty. Only with the negative stimulation from their parents, the children release acts of SDB to 'take revenge'. However, hidden behind them are emotions, the desire to receive love, care, recognition, and understanding from parents. The results of the study have shown that the 'incomplete' family picture considered as a consequence of the remnants of religious culture in family education is no longer suitable for the times. This is a negative aspect that still exists in the Vietnamese family.

With these findings, to provide timely mental support and appropriate intervention strategies, the family system approach in mental counseling, school counseling, school-based prevention program, or social work projects, need to be paid attention to support those with SDB the most effective way. These findings are expected to add to the reasoning system on the causes of adolescent's SDB in modern society, especially in Vietnam and other Asian countries that have Confucianism, as well as to provide mental support strategies for the counseling services and other mental health care services. It can be concluded that this study achieved the research question. It will be further developed and researched in the future to adjust and propose the most effective intervention strategies.

Declarations

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Ethics approval and consent to participate: This study received approval from the Research Ethics Board of the Department of Science and Technology of a critical pedagogical university under the Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training (supervised committee: QD4167-DHSP) and adheres to the Declaration of Helsinki. Access to participants was granted by providing a clear language statement and consent form. Participants were given the option to decline participation or withdraw at any point, and they could choose the interview format (online/on-site) and location. Prior to the study, the lead researcher held private meetings with selected participants to provide detailed information and obtain consent. Participants were required to sign written consent forms, ensuring confidentiality and authorization for publication of findings. All data collection, including audio recordings, was conducted with participants' explicit permission. To further demonstrate respect, interview questions were shared with participants at least three days before the interview. After translation and coding, interview data were sent to participants for review to ensure accuracy.

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2013 Preschool Education Programme
Investigation in terms of "Positive Thinking and Well-Being"*

2013 Okul Öncesi Eğitim Programının
"Pozitif Düşünce ve İyi Oluş" Açısından İncelenmesi

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Abstract

In the preschool period, brain development and the rate of establishment of synaptic connections are intense and rapid. The education to be given in this period should be based on programmes, away from coincidences. In this study, it was aimed to examine the 2013 Preschool Education Programme in terms of "Positive Thinking and Well-Being". Qualitative research model and document analysis method were used in the study and Positive Thinking and Well-Being Analysis Form was prepared based on the literature. The form includes 57 sub-items under five main items. According to the findings of the study, it was seen that the Preschool Education Programme includes the main elements of self-awareness, followed by self-actualisation, empathy, communication and interaction with the group, and communication and interaction with the society; and in terms of sub-elements, the most common elements are taking responsibility, independent thinking, being open to development and learning, having different perspectives, acting in accordance with the decisions made, making efforts in line with the goal set, recognising their emotions and being creative. In addition, it was understood that 12 sub-items in the Positive Thinking and Well-Being Analysis Form were included less and 12 sub-items were not included at all. In line with the results obtained, in the new curriculum development processes, the elements related to positive thinking and well-being should be taken into consideration and more gains and indicators that will support positive thinking and well-being should be included. Also, teachers should be informed and raised awareness about positive thinking and well-being. In this sense, it was seen that the content related to positive thinking and well-being was included more in the updated 2024 Preschool Programme.

Keywords: Preschool Education Programme, Positive Thinking, Well-Being

Öz

Okul öncesi dönemde beyin gelişimi ve sinaptik bağlantıların kurulma oranı yoğun ve hızlıdır. Bu dönemde verilecek eğitimin rastlantılardan uzak, programlara dayalı yürütülmesi gereklidir. Bu araştırmada; 2013 Okul Öncesi Eğitim Programı'nı "Pozitif Düşünce ve İyi Oluş" açısından incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Nitel araştırma modeli ve doküman incelemesi yöntemi kullanılan çalışmada alanyazına dayalı olarak Pozitif Düşünme ve İyi Oluş Analiz Formu hazırlanmıştır. Formda beş ana öğe altında 57 alt öğe yer almaktadır. Araştırmanın bulgularına göre Okul Öncesi Eğitim Programı'nda en fazla kendini tanıma öğesinin sonra sırasıyla kendini gerçekleştirme, empati, grupla iletişim ve etkileşim ve toplumla iletişim ve etkileşim ana öğelerinin; alt öğeler açısından ise en çok sorumluluk alma, bağımsız düşünme, gelişim ve öğrenmeye açık olma, farklı bakış açılarına sahip olma, aldığı kararlara uygun davranma, belirlediği amaç doğrultusunda çaba gösterme, duygularını tanıma ile yaratıcı olma öğesinin yer aldığı görülmüştür. Ayrıca Programda Pozitif Düşünme ve İyi Oluş Analiz Formu'nda yer alan 12 alt öğenin az yer aldığı ve 12 alt öğenin ise hiç yer almadığı anlaşılmıştır. Elde edilen sonuçlar doğrultusunda yeni program geliştirme süreçlerinde, pozitif düşünme ve iyi oluşa ilişkin öğelerin dikkate alınması ve pozitif düşünme ve iyi oluşu destekleyecek kazanım ve göstergelere daha fazla yer verilmesi. öğretmenlerin pozitif düşünme ve iyi oluş hakkında bilgilendirilerek farkındalık kazanmaları sağlanmalıdır. Bu anlamda güncellenen 2024 yılı Okul Öncesi Programı'nda pozitif düşünme ve iyi oluş ile ilgili içeriğe daha fazla yer verildiği görülmüştür.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Okul Öncesi Eğitim Programı, Pozitif Düşünme, İyi Oluş

* This study, which was presented as a paper at the I. International Positive Schools and Well-Being Congress held in TRNC-Girne on 16-17 May 2023, has been updated and reorganised.

Introduction

Preschool education is a systematic educational initiative in which children's development is followed in terms of all developmental areas based on their developmental characteristics, interests and needs, individual differences and abilities in the period from birth to the age of starting primary school, supported with appropriate environments and tools and their curiosity, questioning and research aspects are revealed; the school is active together with the family (MEB, 2016). In the preschool period, the foundations of a strong brain development are also laid for the versatile development of the child. In this period when the learning rate is very high, brain development and the rate of establishment of synaptic connections are also intense and fast. In this context, environmental influences deeply affect the child's brain development and learning motivation, and the conditions for the child to realise his/her own potential and become a happy member of society emerge (MoNE, 2013). With the education given in the preschool period, children's development is shaped and the developmental characteristics they will have begin to be determined. Due to their importance, these years are defined as a critical period in terms of child development. Therefore, the quality of the education to be given to the child in these years becomes very important (Kocalar & Bay, 2020).

The scope and quality of the education the child receives in the preschool period leaves positive or negative traces on the child's future life. In these years, it is possible to ensure the child's progress in the field of emotion and thought by guiding him/her and encouraging him/her to continue his/her development in a positive direction (Poyraz & Dere, 2011). All these features make it necessary for education to be based on a programme, away from coincidences. Education programmes are comprehensive plans that include learning experiences for students through activities organised inside and outside the educational institution (Demirel, 2015).

It is possible to achieve the planned goals in educational institutions at all levels and to carry out educational initiatives effectively only if the activities are handled and carried out within the framework of programmes (Erden, 1998; Şıvgın, 2005). The activities related to meeting the needs of the society and achieving the goals envisaged by educational policies (Büyükkaragöz & Çivi, 1999) are included in the education programme in a coordinated manner (Varış, 1991; Gözütok, 2020; Gürkan, 2006).

Preschool education programme is an educational document that evaluates where, how, how long and with which materials children will gain the objectives determined in accordance with the developmental levels of children, and that also foresees feedback (Hirsh, 2004). Education programmes that organise the development and education of children cover all the experiences of children at school (Güler, 2001; Tuncer, 2015). In our country, the 2013 Preschool Education Programme is still being implemented. As a natural requirement of the curriculum development process, it is inevitable to evaluate education programmes to determine the effectiveness of the programmes (Tican Başaran & Ulubey, 2018). In this sense, the Preschool Education Programme dated 09/09/2013 and numbered 132, which is being implemented in preschool education institutions, was revised and put into practice within the scope of "Increasing Quality and Access in Early Childhood Education" (MoNE, 2024).

Providing the individual and the society with the opportunity and ability to evaluate right and wrong, good and bad, beautiful and ugly, and presenting the achievements that will adopt this are also among the subjects of examination of education programmes. Therefore, it is expected that the institutions responsible for education policies in the country update the education programmes on the required subject. In this sense, thinking skills, which have been on the agenda increasingly in recent years, have started to take place in education programmes and sample activities have started to be included (Kamışlı, 2022).

The preschool period is important years in terms of the brain's ability to adapt to structural or physiological changes (Taştan, 2020). During these years, the brain is very sensitive to the stimuli in the environment. With the positive stimuli given to the child, synaptic connections between the nerve cells in the child's brain can reach easier and more effective learning. It is now possible to prove that every experience and similar experiences and practices related to this experience or gains affect the brain structure, that new synaptic connections are formed after the first experience, that each new experience affects these connections, and that this turns into a network as the experiences increase (Gür, 2021). Based on these findings, it can be said that the education programmes developed for preschool children should be prepared for the working principles of the brain and for the versatile development of the brain, taking into account positive thinking (Polat et al., 2021).

Positive thinking is a thinking skill that has an effective role in the development of the individual and significantly affects the quality of life. In this context, in general terms, positive thinking is to accept the positive and negative experiences encountered in life as a whole and to develop methods for a better quality life by valuing the good and beautiful aspects of life more without ignoring the negativities (Kamışlı; 2022; Seligman, 2012).

Another concept related to positive thinking is "well-being". According to Tov (2018), well-being includes everything that causes lifelong experiences and evaluations to be positive (Cited in Tunç, 2022). Seligman (2012) considers well-being within the scope of components such as experiencing positive emotions, having positive relationships and collaborations, and making life meaningful. As one of the determining concepts of positive psychology, well-being is related to a good life and the meaning of life (Yener & Çankır, 2017). Well-being, as a subject of interest in positive psychology, is the ability to feel good and to be positively functional; to cope with negative emotions and to look at life positively (Kardaş & Yalçın, 2019). Well-being is also struggling and striving for personal development. In this sense, well-being foresees the individual's awareness of his/her current potential and goals and positive interaction with the environment and cares about the achievement of the basic tasks of the period in which the individual is in (Cenkseven & Akbaş, 2007; Atan & Buluş, 2021).

As a requirement of the process of updating education programmes, it is necessary to evaluate the programmes from different perspectives in order to meet the expectations in general, to measure their impact and to identify the areas that need to be improved (Demirel, 2015). In this study, it was aimed to investigate what the elements related to "Positive Thinking and Well-Being" are and how often they are included in the 2013 Preschool Education Programme and whether they support "Positive Thinking and Well-Being" education. In addition, the approach to positive thinking and well-being in the updated 2024 Preschool Education Programme was also examined.

Although there is a relatively positive development in the number of studies on "Positive Thinking and Well-being Education" in Turkey, it can be said that it has not yet reached a sufficient level. While the 2013 Preschool Education Programme, which has been used for 10 years, has been evaluated in terms of visual art activities (Kandır et al., 2017); values education (Aral & Kadan, 2018); character education (Kocalar, 2020); brain-based learning (Polat et al., 2021); 21st century skills (Koçin & Tuğluk, 2020); no evaluation of the 2013 Preschool Education Programme on "Positive Thinking and Well-Being education" was found. Therefore, it is important and necessary to examine and evaluate how "Positive Thinking and Well-Being education" is included in the 2013 Preschool Education Programme. In addition, this study is expected to contribute to the development of the preschool education programme with the dimension of positive thinking and well-being and to future programme development studies.

The aim of the study is to examine the 2013 Preschool Education Programme in terms of "Positive Thinking and Well-Being". In line with this purpose, answers to the following questions were sought.

1. What are the elements related to "Positive Thinking and Well-Being" in the Preschool Education Programme in terms of the aims and basic principles of preschool education and the basic features of the programme?

2. What are the elements related to "Positive Thinking and Well-Being" in the attainments and indicators of cognitive, language, social-emotional, motor development areas and self-care skills in the Preschool Education Programme?

Method

In this study, the qualitative research model (Büyüköztürk et al., 2016), which allows qualitative data to be handled and analysed in detail as a whole, and the document review method were preferred. Document review, which is also known as documentary review in the literature (Karasar, 2005), involves the analysis of documents containing information about the phenomenon or phenomena to be investigated (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006). In the study, the currently implemented MoNE 2013 Preschool Education Programme was examined and analysed in terms of "Positive Thinking and Well-Being".

Data Collection Tool

In this study, in order to carry out the content analysis through more concrete data, the literature on Positive Thinking and Well-being was reviewed and five main elements were determined. In order to make the analysis with more comprehensible data, sub-items were also determined for the five main items by adhering to the relevant literature. The researcher developed a Positive Thinking and Well-Being Analysis Form based on the main and sub-items; in order to ensure the validity of the developed analysis form, three experts were consulted about the analysis form. One of them is currently a professor in the field of child development, one is a professor in the field of preschool and one is an assistant professor in the field of special education. In line with the corrections and suggestions received from the experts, the Positive Thinking and Well-Being Analysis Form was updated and made ready for application. There are five main elements in the Positive Thinking and Well-Being Analysis Form developed by the researcher. These main elements are also the main elements of the *Thinking with Multidimensional Perspectives* approach discussed by Gür (2021). In this context, the first main item in the Positive Thinking and Well-being Analysis Form is related to self-recognition. The second main element is related to knowing the other person and making sense of their behaviours, and the concept of empathy is addressed within this dimension. The third main item is related to belonging to the group. In-group communication-interaction and in-group productivity are addressed within this dimension. The fourth main element is included in the dimension of social-cultural-large group belonging; cultural elements, a harmonious perspective on society and sensitivity to the needs of society are addressed in this dimension. Finally, the fifth main element is related to holistic perspective and self-realisation. Universal thinking includes plans for the individual's self-actualisation, in other words, for contributing to the environment. In order to identify the sub-elements in the context of the main elements, a more comprehensive literature review was conducted and 57 sub-elements were identified under the five main elements. Thus, the five main elements listed above and included in the analysis form were tried to be made more understandable with a total of 57 sub-elements as shown in Table 1.

Analysing the Data

Two types of data analysis processes, thematic data analysis and content analysis, are recommended for document analysis (Toker, 2022). In this study, content analysis process was preferred. Content analysis is used to determine the presence of certain words or concepts in a set of one or more texts.

The researcher analyses the existence of these words and concepts by determining their meaning and relations. Thus, it makes inferences about the message or messages intended to be given with the text (Büyüköztürk et al., 2016). The work to be done with this is to analyse and interpret similar data under common concepts and themes.

Table 1. Main items and number of sub-items in the Positive Thinking and Well-Being Analysis Form

Main elements	Number of sub-items
1. Self Recognition	16 sub-items
2. Empathy	8 sub-items
3. Communication and Interaction with the Group	6 sub-items
4. Communication and Interaction with Society	8 sub-items
5. Self-actualisation	19 sub-items
Total 5 main elements	**57 sub-items**

In order to improve the reliability of the research, the reading, analysis and evaluation process was repeated by the researcher at two-month intervals to ensure that the research was protected from deficiencies and errors.

In accordance with the purpose of the study; 2013 Preschool Education Programme;

1. Objectives of Preschool Education (4 objectives)

2. Basic Principles of Preschool Education (18 basic principles)

3. Basic Features of Preschool Education Programme (16 Basic Features) and the statements under the titles

4. 63 outcomes and 242 indicators belonging to cognitive, language, social-emotional and motor development areas and self-care skills in the Preschool Education Programme were analysed according to the Positive Thinking and Well-Being Analysis Form prepared by the researcher and developed with expert opinions. The codes in the Positive Thinking and Well-Being Analysis Form were subjected to content analysis, frequency values were presented in graphs, and the results obtained were discussed within the scope of the literature and inferences were made.

As mentioned above, the 2024 Programme was developed and put into practice with the aim of supporting children's healthy growth, maximising their development in cognitive, language, physical, social and emotional areas, and making them ready for primary school and life by putting their own experiences to work during the preschool education period (MoNE, 2024). In this context, the aims, basic principles and basic features of the Programme developed and put into practice, as well as the areas of *cognitive, language, physical development and health and social-emotional* development included in the Programme were briefly evaluated.

Findings

1. **When the elements related to "Positive Thinking and Well-being" in terms of the aims of preschool education in the Preschool Education Programme are examined;** the aims and duties of preschool education in the Preschool Education Programme are defined in accordance with the general

aims and basic principles of national education;

1. To ensure the development of children's body, mind and emotions and the acquisition of good habits,

2. Preparing them for primary school,

3. Creating a common upbringing environment for children from unfavourable backgrounds and families,

4. To enable children to speak Turkish correctly and beautifully..." as four items. Objective items are naturally general statements. When the achievements and indicators of the curriculum are examined, it is seen that these objective items are discussed in detail within the development areas. Therefore, a separate analysis was not deemed meaningful here.

2. When the elements related to "Positive Thinking and Well-being" in the curriculum are examined in terms of the basic principles of preschool education, it is seen that 5 of the 18 basic principles in the curriculum include elements related to Positive Thinking and Well-being. The findings obtained when the basic principles in the programme are evaluated in terms of the five basic elements in the Positive Thinking and Well-Being Analysis Table are shown in Graph 1.

Graphic 1. Main Elements Related to Positive Thinking and Well-Being in the Programme in Terms of Basic Principles of Preschool Education
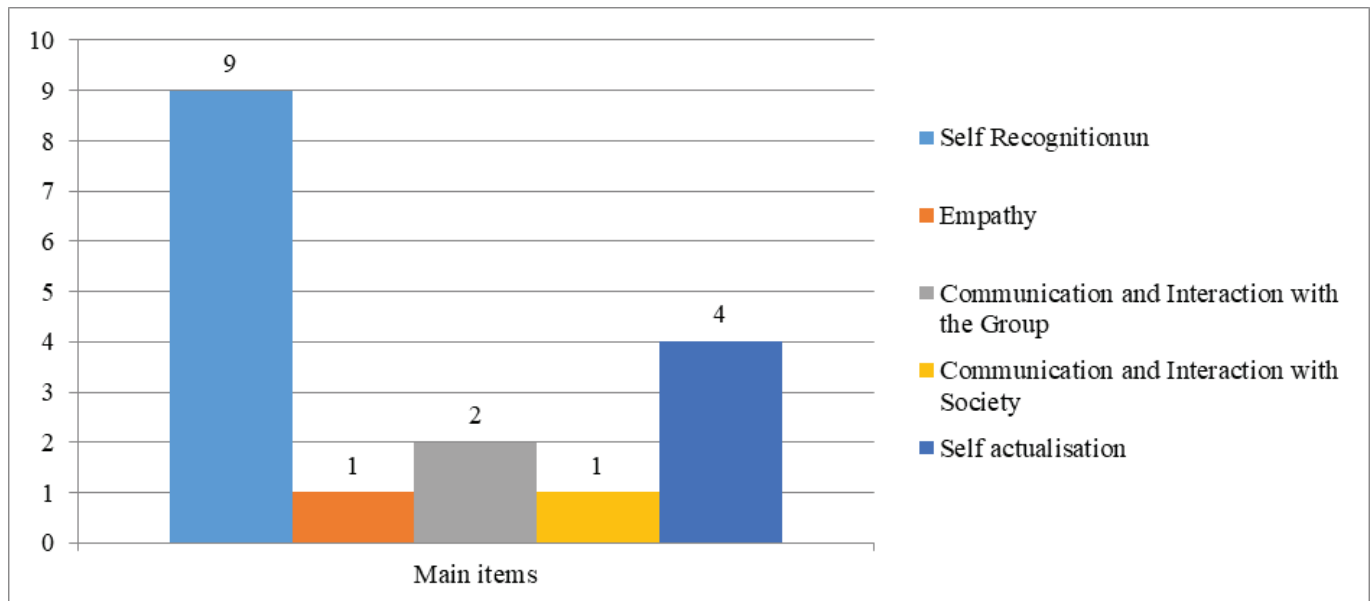
When Graph 1 is examined, it is seen that in the basic principles of preschool education, the main element of Self-recognition is mentioned 17 times in total, followed by Self-actualisation, Communication and Interaction with Group, Communication and Interaction with Community and Empathy.

3.When the elements related to 'Positive Thinking and Well-Being' in the programme are examined in terms of the basic features of the Preschool Education Programme, it is seen that 4 of the 16 basic features in the programme include elements related to 'Positive Thinking and Well-Being'. The findings obtained when the basic features in the programme are evaluated in terms of the five basic elements in the Positive Thinking and Well-Being Analysis Table are shown in Graph 2.

Graphic 2. Main elements related to Positive Thinking and Well-being in the programme in terms of Key Features of Preschool Education

When Graphic 2 is examined, it is seen that **the** main element of Self-recognition is mentioned 34 times in the main features of the Preschool Education Programme, followed by Self-actualisation, Communication and Interaction with Groups and Empathy, and the least item is Communication and Interaction with Society.

4.1. In the examination of the elements related to Positive Thinking and Well-Being in the achievements and indicators of the cognitive development area in the Preschool Education Programme, it is seen that the main elements in the Positive Thinking and Well-Being analysis table are included 14 times. The findings obtained when the achievements and indicators of the cognitive development area are evaluated in terms of the five basic elements in the Positive Thinking and Well-Being analysis table are shown in Graph 3.

Graph 3. Main Elements of Positive Thinking and Well-Being in the Cognitive Outcomes in the Preschool Education Programme

When Graph 3 is analysed, it is seen that the achievements and indicators belonging to the field of cognitive development in the curriculum mostly include Self-Actualisation, followed by Self-Recognition and Communication and Interaction with Society, while Empathy and Communication and Interaction with Group are not included at all.

4.2 In examining the elements related to "Positive Thinking and Well-being" in the gains and indicators of the language development area in the Preschool Education Programme; it is seen that the main elements in the Positive Thinking and Well-Being analysis table are included 20 times in the objectives in the language development area. The findings obtained when the language objectives in the curriculum are evaluated in terms of the five main elements in the Positive Thinking and Well-Being analysis table are shown in Graph 4.

Graph 4. Main Elements Related to Positive Thinking and Well-Being in the Language Outcomes in the Preschool Education Programme

When Graph 4 is examined, it is seen that in the attainments and indicators belonging to the Language development area in the curriculum, Self-recognition is the most common item, followed by Self-actualisation, while Empathy, Communication and Interaction with Group, and Communication and Interaction with Society are not included at all.

4.3 In the examination of the elements related to Positive Thinking and Well-Being in the outcomes and indicators in the field of social-emotional development in the Preschool Education Programme, it is seen that the main elements in the Positive Thinking and Well-Being Analysis Table are included 47 times in the outcomes and indicators in the field of social-emotional development in the programme. The findings obtained when the social-emotional outcomes in the programme are evaluated in terms of the five main elements in the Positive Thinking and Well-being Analysis Table are shown in Graph 5.
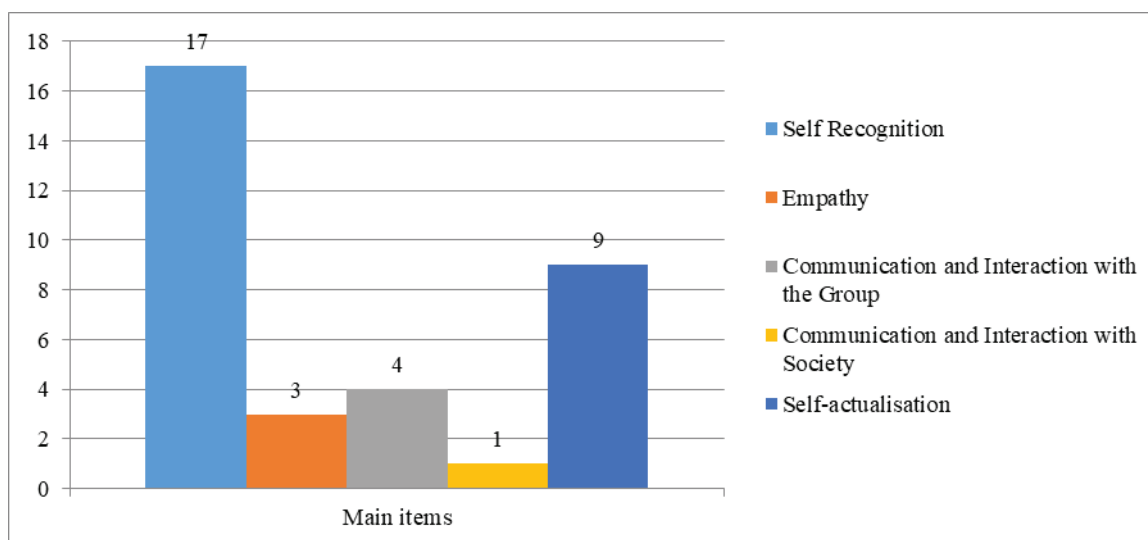
Graph 5. Main Elements of Social-Emotional Outcomes in the Preschool Education Programme Related to Positive Thinking and Well-Being
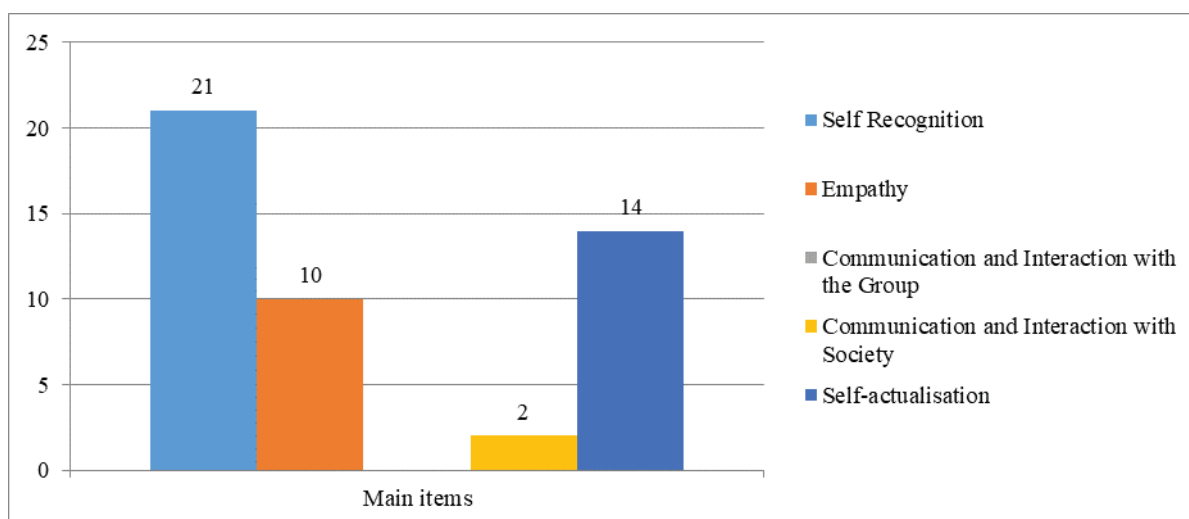
When Graph 5 is examined, it is seen that the most common element in the attainments and indicators of the social-emotional development area in the curriculum is Self-Recognition, followed by Self-Actualisation and Empathy, while the element of Communication and Interaction with Society is very rarely included, and the element of Communication and Interaction with Group is not included at all.

4.4 In the examination of the elements related to "Positive Thinking and Well-being" in the outcomes and indicators of the motor development area in the Preschool Education Programme: When the outcomes and indicators of the motor development area in the programme were examined, it was not found meaningful to directly associate them with the elements related to positive thinking and well-being. However, in general, as a component of healthy life, motor development is related to the child's cognitive, mental, social-emotional and psychological health as well as physical health. In this context, it can be said that achievements and indicators related to motor development provide valuable opportunities for positive thinking and well-being.

4.5 When the elements related to Positive Thinking and Well-Being in the outcomes and indicators of self-care skills in the Preschool Education Programme are examined, it is seen that the main elements in the Positive Thinking and Well-Being Analysis Table are included 27 times in the outcomes and indicators of self-care skills in the programme. The findings obtained when the outcomes of self-care skills in the programme are evaluated in terms of the five main elements in the Positive Thinking and Well-Being Analysis Table are shown in Graph 6.
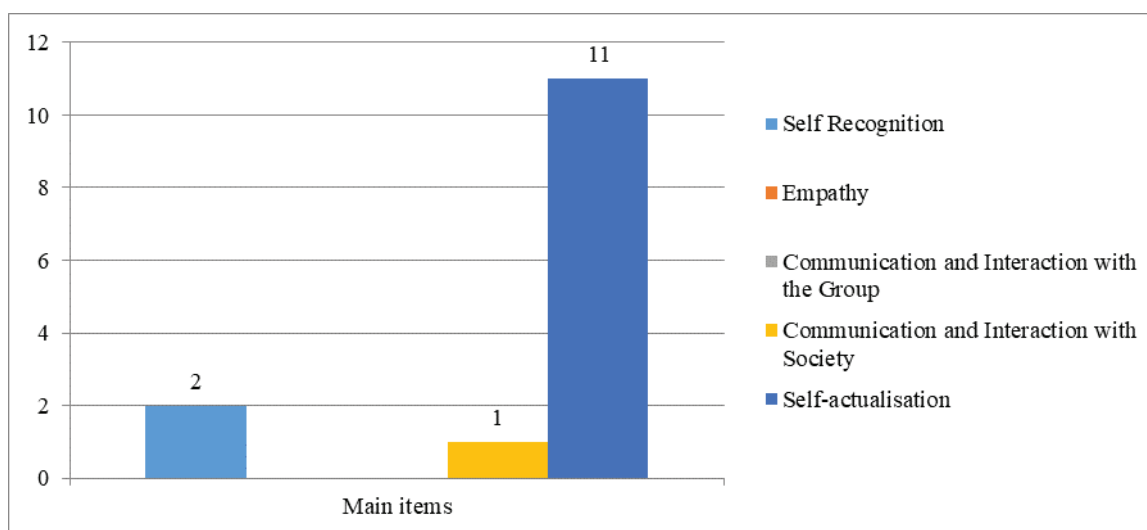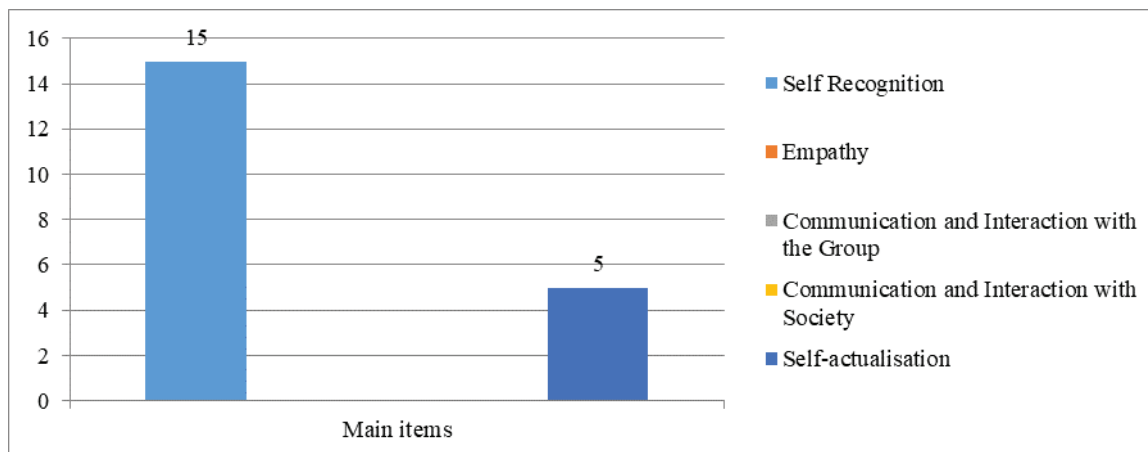
Graph 6. Main Elements Related to Positive Thinking and Well-Being of the Outcomes Related to Self-Care Skills in the Preschool Education Programme
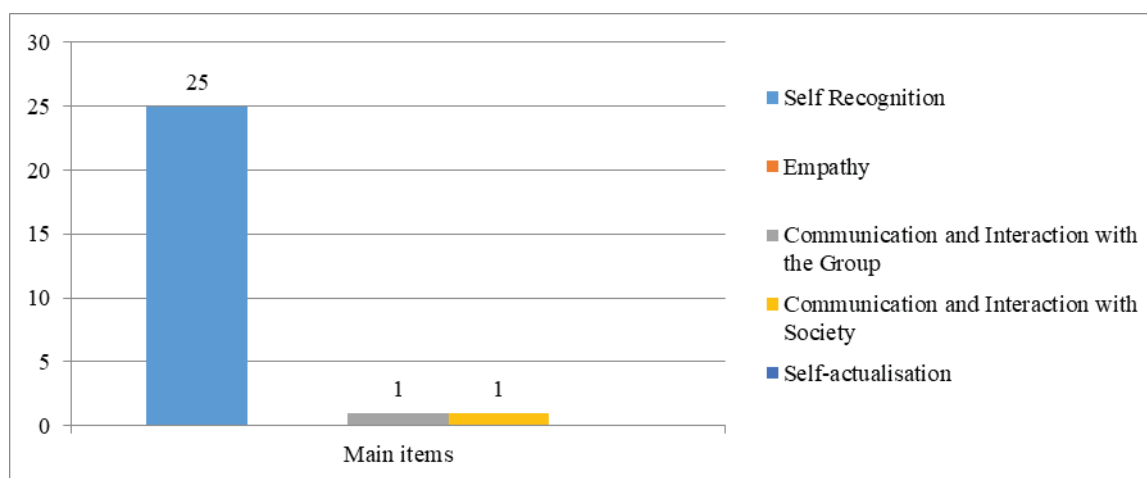
When Graph 6 is analysed, it is seen that in the achievements and indicators of self-care skills in the curriculum, Self-recognition is the most common element, followed by Communication and Interaction with Group and Communication and Interaction with Society with one time each; Empathy and Self-actualisation elements are not included at all.

Looking at the Preschool Education Programme as a whole, it is seen that 5 main elements **related to Positive Thinking and Well-being are** included 159 times in the Basic Principles, Basic Features, developmental areas and self-care skills of the Programme. The general distribution of this situation is shown in Graph 7.

Graphic 7. The Inclusion of the Main Elements of Positive Thinking and Well-being in the Programme
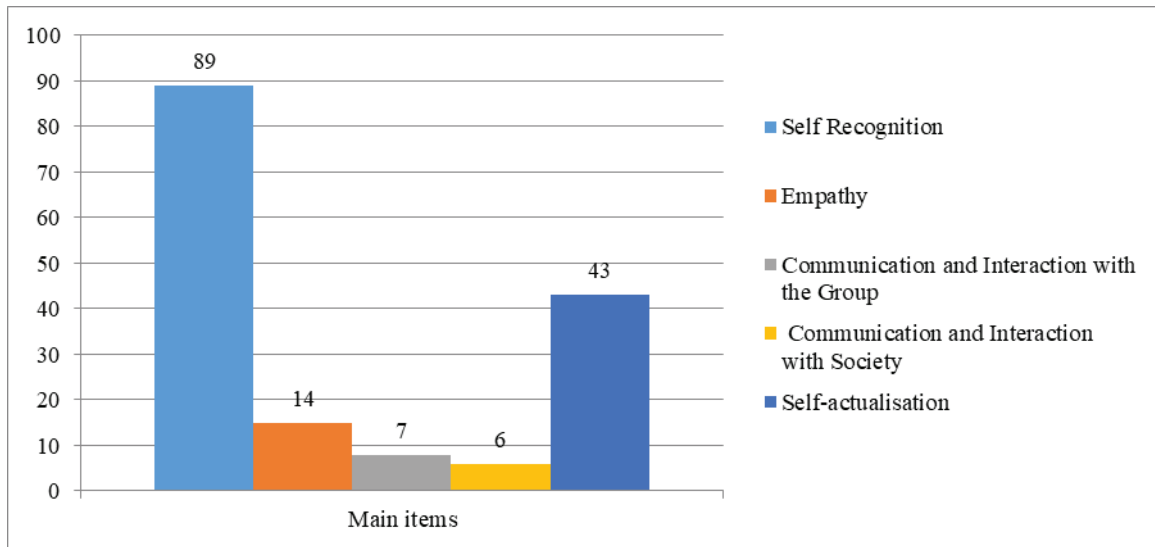
As can be seen in Graph 7, when the main elements of Positive Thinking and Well-being, which are included in the Basic Principles, Basic Features and Development Areas of the Programme and self-care skills, are examined, it is seen that the most common element is Self-Recognition, followed by Self-Actualisation, Empathy, Communication and Interaction with Group, and the least common element is Communication and Interaction with Society.

As mentioned above, the study was carried out by taking into consideration the 5 main items in the Positive Thinking and Well-Being Analysis Form developed by the researcher and a total of 57 sub-items within the aforementioned main items. The distribution of the findings obtained in this context according to the sub-items is shown in Graph 8.

Graph 8. The General Inclusion of the Sub-elements of Positive Thinking and Well-being in the Programme
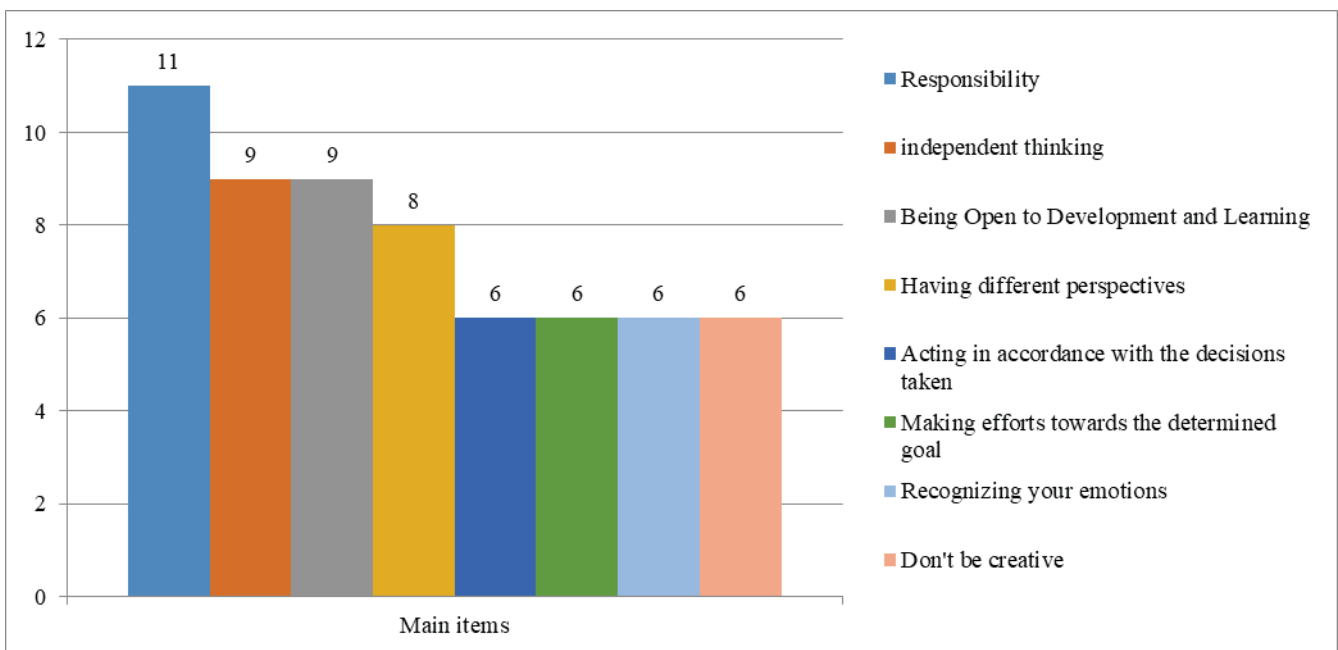
As can be seen in Graph 8, when we look at the 57 sub-items of Positive Thinking and Well-being in the Basic Principles, Basic Characteristics, Development Areas and Self-Care Skills of the Programme, it is seen that the sub-item of taking responsibility is the most common; the second sub-items are independent thinking and being open to development and learning; these are followed by the sub-item of having different perspectives, and then these sub-items are followed by acting in accordance with the decisions made, making efforts in line with the purpose they set, recognising their emotions and being creative.

In terms of the sub-items included in the Positive Thinking and Well-being Analysis Form in the programme, the 12 sub-items that are least included in the programme are; knowing that someone else may have different feelings in the face of an event, explaining that someone else may think differently from oneself, being open to cooperation, developing friendship relations, feeling safe in a group, realising/understanding the value of living together, motivating oneself for a purpose, pursuing one's dreams, thinking critically, showing wisdom characteristics, being sensitive to environmental problems and problem solving.

In addition, the Positive Thinking and Well-Being Analysis Form developed by the researcher in the Preschool Education Programme examined; Being a partner to the feelings of others, explaining the feelings of others, gaining group belonging, being sensitive to social problems, having a sense of solidarity in the community, expressing the needs of the community, expressing the needs of the community, expressing the needs of the community with reasons, making suggestions appropriate to the needs of the community, taking a role in line with the solution suggestions (appropriate to the level of development), having a sense of dedication, having aesthetic (beautiful) concern/aesthetic perspective, having an ethical perspective in activities and relationships.

In addition, as mentioned above, the 2024 Programme was developed and put into practice with the aim of ensuring that children who have the opportunity to receive education in pre-school education institutions grow up healthy with a wide range of learning experiences; that their development in the fields of cognitive, language, physical, social and emotional development reaches the highest level, and that they are ready for primary school and life (MoNE, 2024). In this context, the 2024 Programme was examined only in its main lines and the findings obtained within the scope of the purpose of the study are given below.

1. Article 2: "*To support their adaptation to social life*" has been added to the aims of pre-school education.

2. The basic principles of preschool education have been enriched in terms of content as well as number. For example, Article 5: *"The preschool education programme is sensitive to diversity and multiculturalism. Children should be encouraged to recognise individual, social and cultural differences and to respect others."* Article 13: *"Preschool education should support children to develop a positive and realistic sense of self, to respect and trust themselves, to gain impulse control and self-control, and to feel that they have freedoms within limits."* Article 14: "Preschool education should support *children to develop a positive and realistic sense of self and others, to respect and trust themselves.* Article 14: *"Children should be supported to recognise their own and others' emotions, and they should be enabled to develop empathic skills and solve interpersonal problems constructively."* These principles can be associated with many main and sub-items in the "Positive Thinking and Well-Being Analysis Form" prepared within the scope of the study.

3. While explaining the basic features of pre-school education, the philosophy of the Programme was also mentioned and the statement *"Programmes that will serve to raise individuals who can solve problems, think critically and creatively, wonder, research, cooperate, empathise, have communication and prosocial skills, take responsibility, use imagination and produce, which the 21st century needs;*

should have philosophies that adopt the principle of active learning rather than a structure that only presents information" was included and the feature *"Family and community participation is important"* was added independently for the first time among the features and extensive explanations were given.

4. In the cognitive development area of the programme, the outcome *"Makes planning to reach a goal"* was added and the outcome was expressed in an observable form with indicators and teachers were guided. For example: *"Sets a goal for himself/herself, explains his/her motivation to achieve the goal, expresses the necessary steps to achieve the goal, takes action towards the goal..."*

In the new Programme, many new acquisitions have been added especially in the field of social-emotional development. For example: *"Explains the relationship between his/her emotions and behaviours, acts independently when necessary, enjoys carrying out his/her duties, tells what needs to be done to cope with emotionally challenging situations, appreciates the characteristics of others, tolerates and respects differences. Defends values related to differences, recognises others' perspectives/ emotions, makes friends with peers, maintains friendships, explains the importance of friendship, helps children with different characteristics, makes helping children a habit, produces alternative solutions to interpersonal problems, acts in a compromising manner to reach a solution, shows respect for living beings, protects living beings, uses the resources necessary for sustainable life efficiently, protects the resources necessary for sustainable life, explains the rights of himself/herself and others, distinguishes between fair and unfair situations, tells the beautiful / uncomfortable situations he/she sees around him/ her, organises his/her environment in different ways, values the beauties in the environment."* These added outcomes can be strongly associated with many main and sub-items in the "Positive Thinking and Well-Being Analysis Form".

5. With the 2024 Programme, the concept of "community participation" was introduced to the preschool programme for the first time along with the concept of family participation, and it was ensured that community participation was included in the activity plans along with family participation and community participation was explained with examples. This innovation is directly related to the main item "Communication and Interaction with the Community" in the "Positive Thinking and Well-being Analysis Form".

Discussion

In the research conducted on the extent to which the five main elements of Positive Thinking and Well-Being are included in the Preschool Education Programme, it is understood that the main element of Self-Recognition is the most included in the Programme, followed by Self-Actualisation and Empathy, and the main elements of Communication and Interaction with Group and Communication and Interaction with Society are less included. Since it was the first time in the literature to examine the Preschool Education Programme in terms of positive thinking and well-being, the discussion was based on close examinations and theoretical explanations in the literature.

The first main element in the programme in terms of Positive Thinking and Well-being is self-knowledge. Self-knowledge, which includes concepts such as self-knowledge, self-understanding or self-awareness, is the process of cognitively and emotionally realising, perceiving, feeling and experiencing one's own feelings, thoughts, beliefs and values, feedback from others. At the core of this process are the concepts of personality and self, which describe the integrity of the characteristics that shape and direct the personality, make the individual an individual, and distinguish them from others (Turan et al., 2021). How an individual can utilise his/her skills, knowledge, abilities and creativity at the highest level is within the scope of the self-knowledge dimension (Gür, 2021). The child who knows himself/herself evaluates his/her feelings, interests, values and strengths objectively and gains a sense of self-confidence. Children need a sense of self-confidence in every period of life (Sümer & Anafarta Şendağ, 2009). In

the research, self-confidence is included as a sub-item within the main element of self-recognition. Factors such as self-knowledge, positive interaction with the immediate environment, a life in harmony with society, self-realisation and life satisfaction are among the effective determinants of the well-being process (Kındıroğlu, 2018; Gür, 2021; Turan, 2002). In this case, according to the research findings, it is positive that the self-knowledge element is included in the programme the most and it shows that the programme has sufficient elements that will allow the child to know himself/herself.

The second main element identified most in the research is self-actualisation. According to Rogers, the most important source of motivation for the organism, which is a dynamic system, is the desire for self-actualisation and this motivation is sufficient to explain all human behaviours (Cited in Kuzgun, 1972). Self-actualisation, which is explained with different expressions such as the ultimate goal to be achieved, self-fulfilment, psychological well-being, autonomy, creativity and productivity, is a need for people (Maslow, 2001). In addition, self-actualisation includes the search for the completion, development and maturation of the organism (Aydın, 2008). Self-actualisation is not only a motive that directs and manages human attitudes and behaviours, but also a process that continues throughout life as a desired level of development. In this respect, self-actualisation is a key concept in the context of positive thinking and well-being. While the sense of well-being provides energy to the individual for self-actualisation, the self-actualised individual feeds the society by reflecting his/her positive energy to the group and society. In this sense, according to the results of the research, it can be said that the main element of self-actualisation is included in the programme to a considerable extent and this is a positive feature for the programme.

Empathy is one of the main elements, which ranks third in terms of Positive Thinking and Well-being in the programme and can be counted as a few. Empathy is the emotional reaction of an individual to the conditions and feelings of another person as a result of recognising and understanding the emotional state of another person or the conditions they are in (Gökçe Ersoy & Köşger, 2016). Empathy, which is included in the field of emotional intelligence, is recognising the emotions of others and understanding the perspective of others (Goleman, 1998). Empathy is about recognising the other person and making sense of their emotional state. For this, empathic thinking is an inevitable phenomenon (Gür, 2021). Empathy skill can be developed as an important life skill by supporting it in the family and educational institutions from an early age. Parents and teachers frequently encounter opportunities to develop both cognitive and affective empathy in children in the daily flow of life. Sharing happy life experiences encountered at home, at school and even on the street, thinking about unwanted unpleasant events, and guidance in trying to understand feelings and thoughts are important for the development of empathy. In terms of Positive Thinking and Well-being, the fact that the main element of empathy ranks third and at a low level can be considered as an open area in terms of the Programme. In this context, it can be said that the Programme should include more outcomes and indicators to support empathy skills in children.

According to the findings of the research, it is seen *that* the fourth main element in the context of Positive Thinking and Well-being is communication and interaction with the group. Human beings are not created to live alone and to continue their lives without being in contact with other people. The mental and physical health of human beings is directly proportional to their solidarity with their fellow human beings and future generations. The fact that human beings cannot live without co-operation with others has made it compulsory for people in every society and culture to be in communication and interaction with their environment (Fromm, 1993). An individual's being valued in the society is directly proportional to his/her social competence and skills. Social competence is an indicator of positive interaction with the group and environment of which the person is a member (Karadağ, 2019). The most important component of interaction is communication. The importance of communication for human beings as a social being cannot be ignored and this is an acquisition that can be learnt and developed like other social skills (Yüksel, 2016). A healthy communication can make it easier for people to overcome the negative

situations they may encounter, and it also has a positive effect on the development of relationships between people. It is inevitable that people with intense positive emotions and thoughts will interact more easily with their environment and be well. In this sense, it can be said that the objectives, basic principles and characteristics, achievements and indicators to support *communication and interaction with the group* in the programme are not sufficient and should be improved.

The findings of the research show that another main element, which is ranked last in terms of Positive Thinking and Well-being, is communication and interaction with the society. Positive interaction of children with their immediate environment and the group they are in facilitates the realisation of their learning goals and provides suitable environments in terms of restructuring what they have learnt and integrating it with existing cognitive structures (Yılmaz, 2001). In this sense, children's positive communication and interaction with the group increases their problem-solving skills, positive attitudes towards family/school, communication skills, self-esteem, sense of belonging, tolerant attitude towards culturally different peers, better relationships among peers, and their desire to experience new experiences (Yalçıntaş Sezgin & Ulus, 2019). According to Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000), positive psychology can be analysed at three levels: subjective, individual and group. The subjective level is related to subjective experiences specific to the individual; the individual level is related to personal characteristics such as wisdom, originality, originality, forgiveness, courage, and love; and the group level is related to citizenship behaviours such as tolerance, responsibility, and helpfulness as a requirement of living together. In this sense, while positive psychology deals with the individual in different aspects, it does not neglect the relationship of the individual with the society in which he/she lives (Cited in Demir & Türk, 2020). Social-cultural institutions, facts and values in society affect the education process to which people are subjected; however, the institution that has a duty and responsibility in the education of the individual and is built to fulfil this duty is primarily education (Varış, 1991). Education deals with the individual from a broader perspective, including the social dimension, differences and the natural environment. In this respect, education is a social phenomenon. The aim of education is to influence individuals in a group and community environment in a way that is compatible and consistent with the values to which they belong, and to transfer these values to individuals deliberately. In this respect, it is a natural duty and responsibility for educators to expect the programme to be developed and strengthened. The examined programme also aimed to develop the child in terms of social-emotional dimension and included social-emotional outcomes and indicators. However, the fact that the elements of communication and interaction with the group and communication and interaction with the society related to Positive Thinking and Well-being were found at a very low level in the research findings can be evaluated as an area of the Programme open to improvement. Therefore, the Programme is expected to provide more opportunities for children to experience communication and interaction with the community in the preschool period, which is critical for development, and to guide teachers in this regard.

In the research conducted on the extent to which the 57 sub-elements of Positive Thinking and Well-being are included in the Preschool Education Programme, it is seen that the sub-element of taking responsibility is included the most, followed by independent thinking and being open to development and learning, and then the sub-elements of having different perspectives, acting in accordance with the decisions made, making efforts in line with the goal set, recognising/being aware of their emotions and being creative are included. Since it is the first time in the literature that the Preschool Education Programme has been examined in terms of Positive Thinking and Well-being, the discussion was based on close examinations and theoretical explanations in the literature.

Taking responsibility is to assume one's own attitudes and behaviours or the consequences of any event that occurs within one's own authority (TDK, 2023). While responsibility enables the individual to take an active role in life, it also enables him/her to perform the learning activity successfully (Sezer et al.,

2017). The behaviours to be gained by children in the preschool period should also be considered as an investment in the future, in this context, the development and support of the sense of responsibility constitutes the basis for the coming years (Dereli İman, 2014). In the study conducted by Aral and Kadan (2018) in which the 2013 Preschool Education Programme was examined within the scope of values, it was found that the most common value in the Programme was responsibility. Responsibility is also included among 21st century skills in different classifications (Koçin & Tuğluk, 2020). In the study on Values Education in the Preschool Education Programme conducted by Erkuş and Yazar (2013), responsibility is among the values that should be given to children in the preschool period. It is also understood that the value of responsibility is given the most place in the studies on the Examination of the 2013 Preschool Education Programme in the Context of Values conducted by Aral and Kadan (2018) and the Evaluation of the 2013 Preschool Education Programme in Terms of Character Education conducted by Kocalar and Bay (2020). The results of the research also support this research. In this case, the programme can be evaluated positively in terms of gaining the sense of responsibility and can be said to be sufficient.

Independent thinking, Thinking, which is a natural function of the human mind, is a critical element of the process of knowing, understanding, comprehending and learning about the subject. Thinking, which begins at birth, constitutes the first step of the efforts to question, interpret and evaluate the information presented to him/her; thus, it constitutes the first step of the efforts to reveal new information and is developed directly or by environmental factors in the following years (Güneş, 2012). It is a prerequisite to have an independent thought in order to think correctly, to evaluate different opinions, to have an original idea, to criticise and criticise other thoughts (Gözütok, 2020). Individuals are expected to develop thinking skills in order to create alternative options in life experiences, make independent decisions, and act more objectively in the face of environmental influences (Özdemir, 2005; Güneş, 2012). There are no studies directly addressing independent thinking for preschool children. However, in this study, the fact that independent work is frequently included in the Preschool Education Programme can be considered as a positive situation in terms of Positive Thinking and Well-being.

Openness to development and learning is the individual's readiness and willingness to increase his/her knowledge, skills and competence. An important factor in learning is the sense of curiosity. Curiosity increases the individual's interests and diversity, imagination, supports and strengthens cognitive processes. The sense of curiosity that activates intrinsic motivation motivates the child and leads to learning and development. The fact that the sub-item of being open to development and learning in the Positive Thinking and Well-being Analysis Table in the programme is among the most common sub-items can be considered as a positive feature.

Having different perspectives is also among the sub-elements that are included in the Programme. Having different perspectives is an important feature of creativity. According to Einstein, problems cannot be solved with the same level of thinking that creates the problem (Thorpe, 2001). In other words, different thinking already prevents the problem at its source. If people knew and understood that their approaches to events and life adventures could be shaped, developed and changed, the earth would be a more livable, good and beautiful place today. It is important to explain and make children understand that there are alternative ideas and thoughts, different perspectives and what they mean, their importance and value, their perspectives and attitudes towards life when they are faced with new information and ideas, and why they need to change them in some cases. In this context, the inclusion of the sub-item of having different perspectives in terms of Positive Thinking and Well-being in the Preschool Education Programme can be considered as a positive feature.

The sub-item of acting in accordance with the decisions taken is related to acting consistently without contradicting with the decisions determined by the individual's will. Decision making is the determination

of alternatives according to the preferences and values of the decision maker and making a free choice among them (Kıral, 2015). On the other hand, indecision is the dissatisfaction with the decision and the continuation of the search for changing the decision (Aygün, 2022). In this sense, the decision-making process of the individual and his/her behaviour in accordance with the decisions he/she makes is an important and positive feature in terms of his/her consistency, perseverance and determination. The fact that the sub-item of acting in accordance with the decisions made by the child in the context of Positive Thinking and Well-being in the Preschool Education Programme is among the frequently encountered sub-items can be considered as a positive finding for the programme.

One of the sub-elements that is over-represented in the programme is related to making efforts for the purpose that people set. For human beings, goals add meaning to life and bind them to life. Purpose gives strength and motivates people to live and overcome the difficulties they face. In this sense, goal setting has an important place among the variables that serve the individual's positive thinking and well-being. In the words of Frankl (2009), what is really important and what people need is to strive for a goal worth striving for, a goal that is freely preferred. The result of the effort is less important, because the effort will be reciprocated and the result will come, even if late. What is important is the satisfaction, happiness, in other words, the state of well-being experienced while endeavouring on the way to the goal. As in Orhan Veli's lines, it is to be able to feel *"the bliss of doing a job in it"*. In the context of Positive Thinking and Well-being in the Preschool Education Programme, the fact that the element of making effort for the purpose determined by the child is among the frequently encountered sub-elements can be considered as a positive feature in terms of the Programme.

Recognising the child's emotions was also found to be among the most common sub-items in the study. Teaching children to be aware of their emotions and to manage them within reasonable limits gives them the idea that any emotion they experience is normal and this has a very relaxing effect for them. In addition, children who can learn rational ways of expressing and dealing with their emotions feel more competent, equipped, experienced and sufficient. Research shows that children who are aware of, recognise and define their emotions are more comfortable and willing to enter into social relationships, have no problems in maintaining relationships and can empathise. On the other hand, children who are made to feel guilty or embarrassed and ashamed because of their recognised emotions are limited in their ability to communicate and interact with their peers (DBE, 2022). In the context of Positive Thinking and Well-being in the Preschool Education Programme, the fact that the features and achievements for children to recognise their emotions are frequently encountered can be considered as a positive feature in terms of the programme

Creativity as a process is the ability to develop new, different products and ideas. Among the prominent characteristics of creative people is the predominance of original, contrary, extraordinary, logical and critical thinking skills. At first, it was predicted that creativity was more of an inherited skill and would not change with the effect of environmental conditions; however, this perception started to change over time with the increase in studies on creativity in the 20th century and the positive results of educational programmes related to creativity. Learning that creativity can be acquired and developed has led to remarkable results. With the development of this awareness and the destruction of prejudices about creativity, the subject of creativity has found a place in the programmes of educational institutions (Sak, 2022). In the study titled Evaluation of the 2013 Preschool Education Programme in terms of Character Education conducted by Kocalar and Bay (2020), it is seen that talented and creative characteristics are included in the programme. The fact that the element of being creative is among the frequently encountered sub-elements in the context of Positive Thinking and Well-being in the Preschool Education Programme can be considered as a positive feature for the programme.

In addition, as partially mentioned in the introduction and findings sections, the Preschool Education

Programme was developed and put into practice in 2024 (MoNE, 2024). In this section, the 2024 Programme is examined only in its main lines and briefly interpreted. Examining and evaluating the 2024 Preschool Education Programme as a whole in the context of the purpose and scope of this study can and should be the subject of another study. In this sense, it is necessary to make a brief evaluation; the addition of the aim of *"Supporting their adaptation to social life"* among the aims of pre-school education is a positive development in terms of positive thinking and well-being in relation to the dimension of communication and interaction with society. Again, among the basic principles of pre-school education, it is stated that *"The pre-school education programme is sensitive to differences and multiculturalism; children should be supported to recognise individual, social and cultural differences and to respect others; pre-school education should support children to form a positive and realistic self-perception, to respect and trust themselves; children should be supported to recognise their own and others' emotions, develop empathic skills and solve interpersonal problems constructively."* These principles can be associated with many of the main and sub-elements in the "Positive Thinking and Well-being Analysis Form" prepared within the scope of the study. Similarly, while explaining the basic features of preschool education, the statement *"Programmes that will serve to raise individuals who can solve problems, think critically and creatively, wonder, research, cooperate, empathise, have communication and prosocial skills, take responsibility, use imagination and produce, which are needed in the 21st century, should have philosophies that adopt active learning as a principle rather than a structure that only presents information"* and the addition of the feature *"Family and community participation is important"* for the first time among the features will give teachers the opportunity to organise more activities in terms of positive thinking and well-being. In terms of developmental areas and outcomes, the Programme's new outcome in the field of cognitive development *"Makes planning to reach a goal"* and the indicators *"Sets a goal for himself/ herself, explains his/her motivation to achieve his/her goal, expresses the necessary stages to reach the goal, takes action towards the goal"* are also qualified to guide teachers about positive thinking and well-being. In the new curriculum, especially the social-emotional development area and new acquisitions draw attention. Especially the new acquisitions in the field of social-emotional development can be associated with many main and sub-elements in the "Positive Thinking and Well-being Analysis Form" prepared within the scope of the study. In addition, with the 2024 Programme, the concept of "community participation" was introduced to the preschool programme for the first time along with the concept of family participation, and it was ensured that community participation was included in the activity plans along with family participation and community participation was explained with examples. This innovation is directly related to the main item "Communication and Interaction with Community" in the "Positive Thinking and Well-being Analysis Form" and can be considered as a positive development.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In this study, which aims to examine the 2013 Preschool Education Programme in terms of "Positive Thinking and Well-Being", in line with the aim; what are the elements related to "Positive Thinking and Well-Being" in terms of the aims, basic principles and basic features of the programme in the Preschool Education Programme and what are the elements related to "Positive Thinking and Well-Being" in the achievements and indicators of cognitive, language, social-emotional, social-emotional, motor development areas and self-care skills in the Preschool Education Programme.

As a result of the research, in the pre-school education programme;

When the main elements of Positive Thinking and Well-being, which are included in the Basic Principles, Basic Characteristics, development areas and self-care skills of the Preschool Education Programme, were examined, it was found that *Self-Knowledge was mentioned* 89 times, followed by *Self-Actualisation* 44 times, *Empathy* 14 times, *Communication and Interaction with Group* 7 times and *Communication and Interaction with Society* 6 times.

When the Preschool Education Programme is examined based on the sub-items in the Positive Thinking and Well-Being Analysis Form, it is seen that taking responsibility is the most common item (11 times), followed by independent thinking and being open to development and learning (9 times), and then; having different perspectives (8 times), acting in accordance with the decisions made, making efforts in line with the purpose they set, recognising/being aware of their emotions and being creative (6 times).

It is understood that the sub-items of the Positive Thinking and Well-being Analysis Form, such as knowing that someone else may have different feelings in the face of an event, explaining that someone else may think differently from oneself, being open to cooperation, improving friendship relations, feeling safe in a group, realising/understanding the value of living together, motivating oneself for a purpose, pursuing one's dreams, thinking critically, showing wisdom traits, being sensitive to environmental problems and problem solving, are included less in the programme.

In addition, in the Preschool Education Programme, which was examined in terms of the sub-items included in the Positive Thinking and Well-Being Analysis Form developed by the researcher; In the Preschool Education Programme analysed in terms of the sub-items included in the Positive Thinking and Well-Being Analysis Form developed by the researcher, it is understood that 12 sub-items such as sharing the feelings of others, explaining the feelings of others, gaining group belonging, being sensitive to social problems, having a sense of solidarity in the community, expressing the needs of the community, expressing the needs of the community with reasons, making suggestions in accordance with the needs of the community, taking a role in line with the solution suggestions (appropriate to the development level), having a sense of dedication, having aesthetic (beautiful) concern/aesthetic perspective, having an ethical perspective in work and relationships are not included at all.

In addition, as a positive development in the updated and implemented Preschool Programme of 2024, it is clearly seen that the content related to positive thinking and well-being is included more in the programme.

The following suggestions can be made in line with the conclusions reached;

In order for children to closely identify the gains related to positive thinking and well-being from an early age and to associate them with their experiences, in the new curriculum development processes, more gains and indicators should be included to support the elements of Empathy, Communication and Interaction with Group and Communication and Interaction with Society, which are among the main elements in the Positive Thinking and Well-being Analysis Form, but are found to be less included in the curriculum.

When it is realised that there is a deficiency and there is a need, a learning outcome and/or indicator that is not included in the education programme can be identified and defined by the teacher and added to the education plan to be implemented. However, in such a choice, care and attention should be paid to ensure that the reasons and justifications are well and correctly determined, that the outcomes and indicators identified are consistent with the Objectives of Turkish National Education, the Objectives of Preschool Education, the basic objectives and philosophy of the programme, the objectives and characteristics of the programme, and that they do not overlap and contradict with other outcomes. In this sense, the main elements and sub-elements that are not included or not included at all in terms of positive thinking and well-being in curriculum development studies can be planned by taking into consideration by teachers.

Teachers can be informed about positive thinking and well-being to raise awareness and the updated Preschool Education Programme for 2024 can be the subject of a separate study in the context of "Positive Thinking and Well-being".

Declarations

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Opinions of Child Development Specialists Working in Health Institutions Regarding the Current Situation, Problems and Solution Suggestions

Sağlık Kurumlarında Çalışan Çocuk Gelişimcilerin Mevcut Durumu, Sorunları ve Çözüm Önerilerine İlişkin Görüşleri

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Abstract

The main purpose of this research is to examine the views of child development specialists working in health institutions regarding the current situation, problems and solution suggestions. A qualitative research model was applied in the study. The population of the research was child development specialists working in health institutions across Turkey. In order to determine the study group, child development specialists working in health institutions in different provinces were reached digitally; detailed information was provided about the scope and content of the research; data were obtained from child development specialists who volunteered to participate in the research. "Semi-structured Interview Form" and "Demographic Information Form" were used as data collection tools. The themes emerging from the views of the participants were tabulated; direct quotations were made from the views of the participants and supported by the literature. MaxQda 20 was used to organise, visualise and analyse the qualitative data obtained. Most of the participants in the study group were working in the Child Development Polyclinic. They most frequently apply Denver-II, AGTE and Metropolitan tests for the developmental evaluation of children. According to the data obtained; it was determined that the most common problems of child development professionals were the lack of knowledge about the profession of child development, the qualification problem caused by open education, insufficient physical facilities, unclear job description, and the inability of patients to make an appointment directly for child development. At the end of the study, suggestions such as establishing a professional standard, increasing social awareness about the profession, ensuring unity in the profession, and improving physical conditions were determined in order to provide more qualified service.

Keywords: Preschool Education Programme, Positive Thinking, Well-Being

Öz

Bu araştırmanın temel amacı; sağlık kurumlarında çalışan çocuk gelişimi uzmanlarının mevcut duruma, sorunlara ve çözüm önerilerine ilişkin görüşlerinin incelenmesidir. Araştırmada nitel araştırma modeli uygulanmıştır. Araştırmanın evrenini Türkiye genelindeki sağlık kurumlarında görev yapan çocuk gelişimi uzmanları oluşturmaktadır. Çalışma grubunun belirlenmesi amacıyla farklı illerdeki sağlık kurumlarında görev yapan çocuk gelişimi uzmanlarına dijital ortamda ulaşılmıştır. Katılımcılara araştırmanın kapsamı ve içeriği hakkında detaylı bilgi verilmiş ve veriler araştırmaya katılmaya gönüllü olan çocuk gelişimi uzmanlarından elde edilmiştir. Veri toplama aracı olarak "Demografik Bilgi Formu" ile uzman görüşleri alınarak oluşturulan "Yarı Yapılandırılmış Görüşme Formu" kullanılmıştır. Katılımcıların görüşlerinden ortaya çıkan temalar tablolaştırılarak literatürle desteklenmiştir. Elde edilen nitel verileri düzenlemek, görselleştirmek ve analiz etmek için MaxQda 20 kullanılmıştır. Çalışma grubundaki kişilerin büyük çoğunluğu Çocuk Gelişimi Polikliniğinde çalışmaktadır. Çocukların gelişimsel değerlendirilmesinde en sık Denver-II, AGTE ve Metropolitan testleri uygulanmaktadır. Elde edilen verilere göre; çocuk gelişimi profesyonellerinin en sık yaşadığı sorunların; çocuk gelişimi mesleğinin bilinmemesi, açık öğretimden kaynaklanan kalite sorunu, fiziki imkânların yetersizliği, görev tanımının belirsiz olması, hastaların doğrudan Çocuk Gelişmi Polikliniğinden randevu alamaması olduğu belirlenmiştir. Çalışmanın sonunda, meslekte hizmet kalitesini artırmak için çeşitli önerilerde bulunulmuştur. Bu öneriler arasında mesleki standartların oluşturulması, meslek hakkında toplumsal farkındalığın artırılması, meslekte birlik sağlanması ve fiziksel koşulların iyileştirilmesi yer almaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Okul Öncesi Eğitim Programı, Pozitif Düşünme, İyi Oluş

Introduction

Child development is a complex process of biological, psychological and emotional change resulting from the interaction between genetic and environmental factors. Knowledge about child development helps parents to tailor learning activities to their children's abilities and interests, identify their children's learning preferences, and recognise learning difficulties their children may experience (Bayhan & Artan, 2018). Research consistently shows that good early childhood development will have a direct positive impact on the child's long-term health outcomes (Gur et al., 2016; Kaçmaz et al., 2020; Shonkoff et al., 2012). All developmental areas of children can be supported by early intervention (Cömert et al., 2016).

It is very important to know the characteristics of a child's cognitive, language, social, emotional, sexual and moral development. The healthy development of the child requires that children with all abilities, including those in need of special health care, should be able to grow up in places where their social, emotional and educational needs are met (Kaçmaz et al., 2020). Child development specialists working in the field of child development science are of great importance in growing up in a safe and loving environment, healthy nutrition, healthy sleep, living in an environment with rich stimuli, having conscious parental attitudes, supporting the child's abilities, and living in accordance with all areas of development (Doğan Keskin et al., 2015). It is important to benefit from the knowledge and experience of child development specialists in order to learn more about how children grow and develop, and to gain new ideas about supporting children's cognitive, language, social, emotional, sexual and moral development (Akkas et al., 2022).

Child development specialists provide assistance to parents and children in motor, cognitive, self-care, language, social-emotional development departments for people who develop normally from the foetal period to the end of adolescence, whose development is at risk, who are hospitalised or have a disease, who are pushed to crime, refugees, people with special needs (Tarkoçin et al., 2019). Child development specialists serve in the education sector by working in private and public schools, pre-school education institutions, nursery and day care centres, special education institutions, special education kindergartens and nursery schools, child care centres, high schools, guidance and research centres (Çıngıloğlu, 2023). Child development graduates also work as social workers in provincial directorates providing social services. Child development graduates serve as social work officers in the justice system, depending on the practices of family and juvenile courts and public prosecutor's offices. Child development graduates can also work in the field of children with special needs (Doğan Keskin et al., 2020). However, although there is such a wide working area, the duties of child development graduates are not fully known, and it has been observed that there are uncertainties in their duties and responsibilities and problems in different areas. It is very important to evaluate the developmental status of children, to provide support and follow-up in line with their needs, to provide child-oriented counselling services to families, and to provide early intervention practices to children who are at risk and require early intervention (Shonkoff et al., 2012).

Child development specialists working in the field of health are trained to solve problems with an interdisciplinary approach by taking part in teamwork. This situation ensures that they have a very important place in health services. It is important for a competent and well-equipped child development specialist to follow up the developmental follow-up of children, to provide developmental support, to carry out studies in accordance with the age and developmental level of children and to respond to individual needs when necessary (Taştepe & Akyol, 2014).

When the development of children is supported and qualified child development services are provided, the global society will have healthier, educated individuals who are aware of their developmental areas. For this reason, it is important to provide qualified child development services and it is very necessary

to know the expectations and suggestions of professionals serving in the field of child development. For educational studies in the field of child development science and for professionals serving in the field of child development to provide more qualified services, it is necessary to know the expectations of child development professionals working in health institutions for the improvement of child development services. In this study, the views of child development professionals working in health institutions on the current situation, problems and solution suggestions were examined.

Method

A qualitative research model with a descriptive design was applied in this study in which the views of child development specialists working in health institutions on the current situation, problems and solution suggestions were examined. Qualitative research involves collecting and analysing non-numerical data to understand concepts, opinions or experiences. This research model is applied to collect in-depth information about a problem or to generate new ideas for research. Qualitative research does not involve collecting and analysing numerical data for statistical analysis, instead flexible interpretations are made and the focus is on maintaining the broad meaning of terms when interpreting data. Qualitative research provides an in-depth description of a research and is designed as a case study based on qualitative interviews and provides an in-depth analysis of a current event (Popee et al., 2000). Descriptive research is a type of research that describes an existing event quantitatively or qualitatively (Yin, 2011).

Working Group

The population of the research is child development professionals working in health institutions across Turkey. In order to determine the study group, child development specialists working in health institutions in different provinces were contacted via e-mail, telephone and social media; detailed information was provided about the scope and content of the research; data were obtained by interviewing the child development specialists who volunteered to participate in the research. In this context, the sample of the research was formed by selecting through 'convenience sampling'. Convenient sampling is the selection of environments, people or objects that are easily accessible and easily applicable in terms of characteristics such as transport and interaction with participants (Gill et al., 2010). Since it is not possible to examine the entire population, it is aimed to generalise the results obtained from the participants who volunteered to participate in the study.

Data Collection

In the process of obtaining the data, approval was obtained from KTO Karatay University Ethics Committee (approval dated 21.09.2023 and numbered 2023/014). Before the data were obtained, the literature was reviewed and studies on child development professionals working in health institutions were examined and the questions of the Semi-Structured Interview Form were created by using the results of the researches. In order for the data obtained to be successful in the desired quality, the opinions of three faculty members who received postgraduate education in the field of child development were taken. In addition, the opinions of lecturers from faculties of education were also taken in order to check the Turkish suitability and fluency of the prepared interview questions. The initial eight questions were combined into four questions in line with the opinions of the field experts.

The items of the Semi-Structured Interview Form and the form containing demographic information were rearranged and submitted to expert opinions, and the final version of the form was applied to the participants after the arrangements. Attention was paid to the fact that the participating child development specialists were from different geographical areas of the country, and child development specialists working in hospitals in different provinces were reached through the web pages of health institutions. The child development specialists reached via e-mail, telephone and social media were explained about

the purpose and scope of the research and its intended benefits, and data were obtained electronically by telephone and e-mail from the child development specialists who volunteered to participate in the research.

Data Collection Tool

Within the scope of the research, "Demographic Information Form" was applied to determine the demographic variables of the study group and "Semi-structured Interview Form" was applied to determine the opinions of child development professionals working in health institutions regarding the current situation, problems and solution suggestions.

Demographic Information Form

Information such as the age and gender of the child development specialists in the study group, the duration of their employment, the nature of the institution they work in, and the position they work in the institution were obtained with this form.

Semi-structured Interview Form

In line with the purpose of the study, according to the expert opinions and literature information, a form including questions such as "in which applications child development specialists are needed in the institution where you work; in which areas child development specialists should take part; the problems experienced by child development specialists and their suggestions for child development specialists to provide more qualified services" was applied to the participants. First of all, the form used in data collection was developed by the researchers after the necessary literature review, submitted to expert opinion to determine its validity, and the participants were interviewed after being rearranged in line with the expert opinions received. The interviews with the participants who volunteered to participate in the study were organised as detailed notes. Content analysis was made on the data received from the participants and direct quotations were included from time to time in order to present some original thoughts and opinions. The interview with a child developer lasted 30-45 minutes on average.

Validity and Reliability of the Data Collection Process

Some strategies were utilised in the process of ensuring the validity and reliability of the data. One of the strategies used to increase the validity of the research is the interaction strategy. In parallel with Yıldırım and Şimşek's (2013) opinion that the participant, who was made before the interview and during the implementation of the interview questions, was more influenced by the researcher in the first stage of the interview, and that healthier data could be obtained from the participants with the interaction of trust formed as a result of the importance of the information given by the participant, the formation of interest and the readiness of the participation; it was conveyed that the information they provided as a child developer in the interviews would be a source for other child development specialists, and sympathetic interaction was tried to be established with the participants within the possibilities. In this way, the validity of the research was tried to be increased. In order to increase the reliability of the research, researcher diversity was used, the data were examined by three different researchers and analysed through the themes and codes that were agreed upon. The data obtained from the child development specialists by the researcher were classified into themes. In order to determine the reliability of these themes, the data were coded by two researchers and the percentage of agreement suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) was used: (Reliability = Agreement/ (Agreement + Disagreement). At the end of this process, reliability was calculated as 89.4%. The views of the participants and the themes and sub-themes that emerged from these views were tabulated. In addition, the views of the participants were supported by direct quotations. In addition, although reliability is ensured in different ways by

considering the characteristics of the data in qualitative studies, ensuring credibility is considered the most important method (Başkale, 2016). In this study, in order to ensure credibility, firstly, the interview questions were based on the literature study. In the next stage, the level of credibility was increased by obtaining participant approval, which is expressed as internal validity.

Data Evaluation

Frequency and percentage ratios were used to show whether the expectations of child development specialists working in health institutions in the study group regarding more qualified work in institutions differed according to gender, education level, years of employment, institution and position in the institution. Content analysis was conducted on the qualitative data obtained. According to the results of the content analysis, the dimensions related to the expectations of child development specialists working in health institutions were determined with the pre-coding technique. In this study, qualitative data were analysed using MaxQda 20, a qualitative data analysis software designed to organise, visualise and analyse qualitative data. The second stage of the cycle is to analyse the data by separating them after collection. The third stage of the cycle is to integrate and make sense of the data separated by coding. As the last stage, the data are interpreted and finalised (Figure 1).
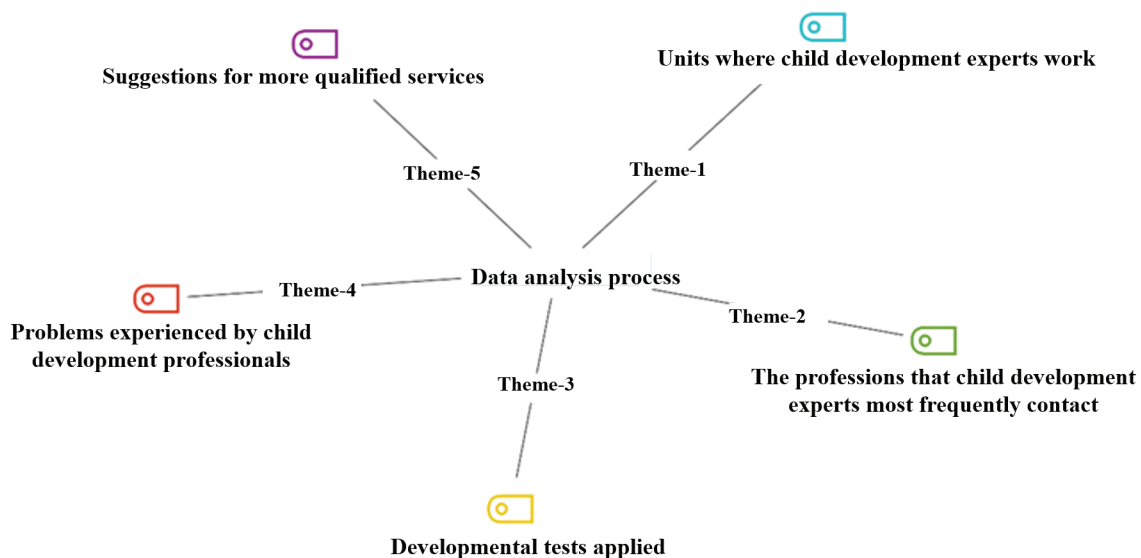
Figure 1. Data analysis process

As indicated in Figure 1, in the data analysis process; in this study, a pre-coding and thematic process was followed and analysed with the hierarchy of "themes > sub-themes > codes" by applying the inductive method. In this study, Statistics of Sub-Codes, Code-Theory Model, Code-Sub-Code-Sections Model and Hierarchical Code-Sub-Code Model modelling were applied.

Findings

The answers given by the participants to the questions posed to them were coded by content analysis within the scope of the themes created by looking at the items in the Interview Form, and the resulting themes and codes are presented in this section.

Table 1. Distribution of the study group according to the institutions they worked in (N=46)

		n	%
Organisation he works for	Education Research Hospital	19	41.3%
	State Hospital	11	23.91%
	Health Directorate/ Healthy Life Centre	6	13.04%
	City Hospital	5	10.86%
	Branch Hospital	5	10.86%

As shown in Table 1, it was determined that the study group mostly worked in training and research hospitals. It was found that the least number of branch hospitals were oncology and gynaecology-pediatric hospitals.

The distribution of child development specialists in the study group according to the regions of the cities where they work is given in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of the study group according to the institutions they work in (N=46)

	n	%
Marmara Region	7	15.21%
Aegean Region	6	13.04%
Mediterranean Region	5	10.86%
Black Sea Region	6	13.04%
Central Anatolia Region	8	17.39%
Eastern Anatolia Region	8	17.39%
Southeastern Anatolia Region	6	13.04%

As indicated in Table 2, the participants in the study group are child development specialists working in different regions of Turkey. Most of the participants were from Istanbul, Ankara, Kayseri, Samsun, Erzurum and Konya.

The distribution of the child development specialists included in the study according to the units they work most frequently is shown in Figure 2, which was created with the Code Matrix Browser in the MaxQda programme.
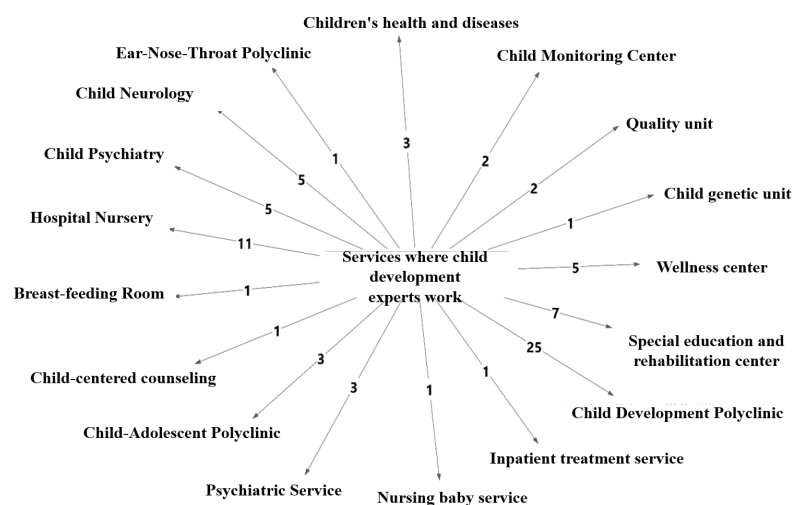
Figure 2. Distribution of the study group according to the units they work in most frequently

As indicated in Figure 2, when the units in which the participants in the study group worked most frequently were analysed, it was stated that they mostly worked in the Child Development Polyclinic. The nurseries of hospitals were mentioned by the participants in the second place. Participants also stated that they worked in different units by changing their duties.

The professions with which the study group interacted most frequently are given in Table 3.

Table 3. Distribution of the study group according to the professions with which they most frequently interacted (N=46)

Professions they work with	n	%
Doctors	21	45.6%
Minor branches	8	17.39%
Auxiliary health personnel	13	28.26%
Other	4	8.69%

As indicated in Table 3, it was determined that the participants in the study group mostly provided developmental support together with doctors and "health professionals" with the expression in the current regulations of the Ministry of Health. The findings regarding the professions with which the participants frequently interacted with child development specialists are shown in Figure 3, as created by the MaxQda Hierarchical Code-Subcode-Sections Model.
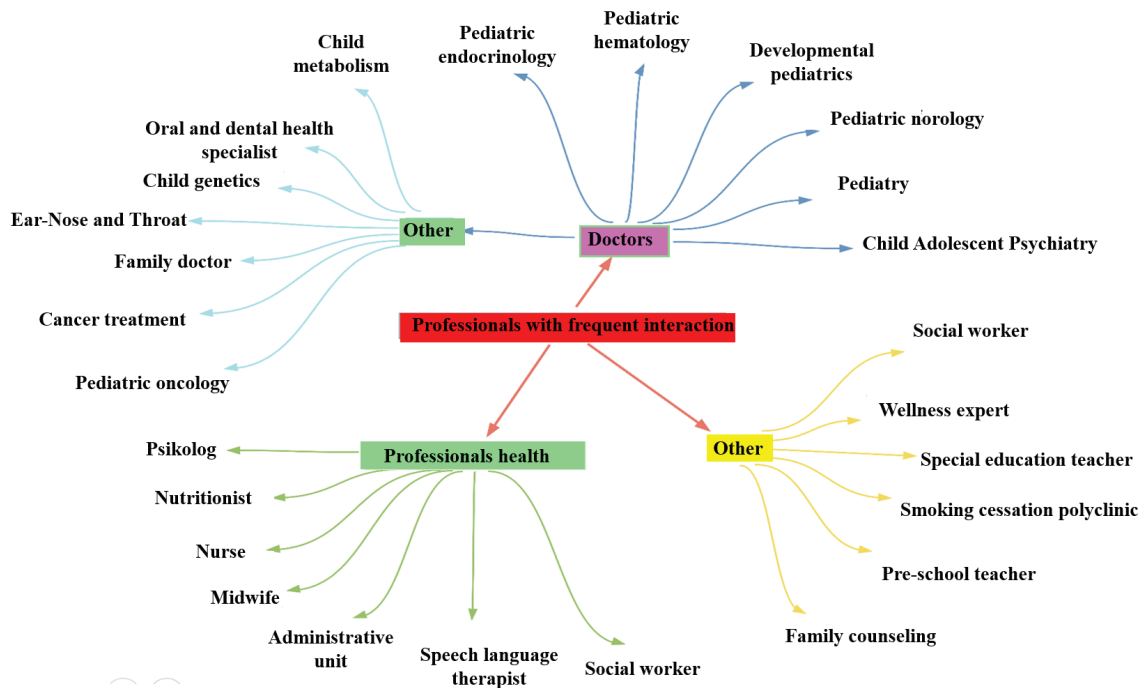
Figure 3. Professions that child development specialists frequently interact with

As indicated in Figure 3, the professional staff with whom child development specialists working in health institutions do teamwork are classified into three categories. The first one is doctors and it was determined that they interact with doctors from many different branches. The second one is auxiliary health personnel and a wide interaction network was observed. Finally, it has been determined that they do teamwork with professional groups other than doctors and auxiliary health personnel.

The child assessment tests most frequently applied by the child development specialists included in the study are given in Figure 4.
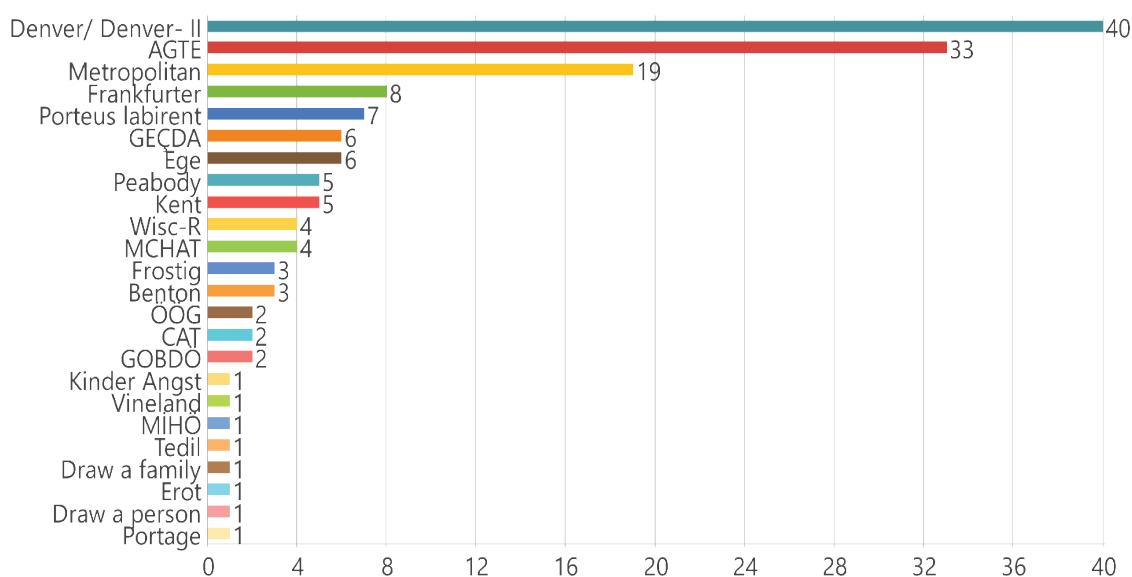
Figure 4. Child assessment tests frequently applied by child development specialists

As indicated in Figure 4, child development specialists most frequently apply the Denver-II Test. In addition, they also frequently apply tests such as AGTE, Metropolitan, Frankfurter. In addition, participants stated that tests such as Wisc-R, MCHAT, Frostig, Benton, CAT, Kinder Angst, Vineland, TEDİL, Draw a Family, EROT, Portage are also applied according to the developmental characteristics of the child.

The problems experienced by the child development specialists included in the study are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4. Distribution of the study group according to the problems they experienced (more than 1 answer was received)

Problems experienced	n	%
Not knowing the profession of child development	43	93.47%
The quality problem created by open education	42	91.30%
Inadequate physical facilities	42	91.30%
Lack of clear job description	42	91.30%
Patients cannot make an appointment directly for child development	36	78.26%
Inadequate wages	31	67.39%
Lack of financial support for professional development courses	25	54.34%
Failure to provide ease of leave for postgraduate education	12	26.08%
The work of child development specialists is not known by health personnel	12	26.08%
Failure to provide expert staff	11	23.91%
Mobbing	11	23.91%

As indicated in Table 4, the most common problems seen by child development teachers are the lack of knowledge about the child development profession, the quality problem caused by open education, and inadequate physical facilities. The suggestions of the study group for providing more qualified service are summarised in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Suggestions of child development specialists to provide more qualified service

In Figure 5, which was created with the Code-Theory Model, the suggestions of child development specialists for more qualified services are summarised. In this context, it was stated that physical conditions should be improved, close physical contact with the child health outpatient clinic should be ensured, open education should be terminated, financial conditions should be improved, in-service trainings should be provided, support services should be provided, professional definition should be made and practical training should be provided more in universities.

Discussion

In this study, which was conducted to examine the views of child development specialists working in health institutions on the current situation, problems and solution suggestions, similar results were obtained with the results of a small number of studies on the subject. It was determined that child development specialists working in health institutions in Turkey mostly work in Child Development Polyclinics, secondly in nurseries of hospitals, then in rehabilitation centres, healthy life centres, child psychiatry units, child neurology units, child adolescent psychiatry polyclinics, child health and diseases units, child monitoring centres, quality units of hospitals, child-centred counselling units, breastfeeding rooms, ENT polyclinics, inpatient treatment services and child genetics units. Conducting developmental assessments for children and families in health institutions is one of the most important duties of a child development specialist and it is already expected that most outpatient services are provided. Child Development Polyclinic services are the main unit for child development specialists working in health institutions. There is a consistency between the findings in the studies related to child development specialists across the country and the findings obtained in this study (Akar Gençer et al., 2016; Bilmez et al., 2018; Doğan Keskin et al., 2015; Karaaslan et al., 2017; Münüklü, 2021; Taştepe et al., 2014). It is thought that the reason why the participants stated that they work in different units within the hospital is due to the functioning order of the hospital and the hospital administration, which does not prefer to open units that cover the working areas of child development specialists and are not in the hospital.

It has been determined that child development specialists working in health institutions are most frequently in interaction with physicians, and that they cooperate with other health professionals and other professional groups in their work environments. According to the guidelines published by the American Academy of Paediatrics, children should be measured at certain intervals with standard screening tools and necessary developmental assessment tests should be applied (Kaçmaz et al., 2020). In addition to the developmental areas of children, the support given by child development specialists to the health of children is very important. Working together with specialist personnel in branches such as child and adolescent mental health, endocronology, oncology, haematology, neurology is necessary for the holistic evaluation of the child. The holistic care of the child can be realised as a result of the combination of the knowledge and experience of doctors specialised in these branches with the competencies of child development specialists. Specialists in different disciplines should proceed in harmony with each other and by having common denominators. It has been determined that Denver-II , AGTE and Metropolitan tests are frequently applied in developmental evaluations of children in health institutions. It is also emphasised in many studies that Denver-II, Ankara Developmental Screening Inventory (AGTE) tests are frequently used among the tools that comprehensively measure whether all developmental areas of children show normal developmental characteristics (Bilmez et al., 2018; Karaaslan et al., 2017; Münüklü, 2021; Tercan et al., 2016; Toker et al., 2022). The first step of early intervention is developmental screening (Doğan et al., 2015). Early intervention includes protecting infants and children from other complications and supporting their development in addition to their existing conditions. Within the scope of developmental assessment, determining the factors around the child and the child's family, including the child's family, and preparing and implementing a development support programme are among the most basic features of the field of child development (Kaçmaz et al., 2020). During the developmental assessment, formal and informal assessment tools are used according to the needs of the child's age and current diagnosis, the child's development profile is created, and education-based support is provided for the developmental support of their children in cooperation with the family (Tercan et al., 2016). In a study evaluating the consultations directed to the child development outpatient clinic in a state hospital, it was determined that the most common reason for application to the child development outpatient clinic was the request for developmental evaluation (Akkaş et al., 2022). In a study conducted by Doğan and Baykoç (2015), it was found that the most commonly used assessment test was the Denver-II Developmental Screening Test with a rate of 44.4% when children referred to the child development outpatient clinic were evaluated. The tests used other than this test were family interview, Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, Goodenough-Harris Human Drawing Test, Porteus Labyrinths Test, Kent E.G.Y. test, Berder Gestalt Test, etc. with a rate of 23.3%. In addition to these, Metropolitan School Readiness Test was found to be 18%, Projective Tests 3.7%, Gessel Developmental Figures Test 3.5%. It was found that the most common reason for referral of 425 children referred from child adolescent mental health and diseases outpatient clinic to child development outpatient clinic was evaluation of growth and application of AGTE test (Altıparmak et al., 2014).

In the study, the participants stated that the most important problem is that the child development profession is not sufficiently known in health institutions and by the public. Other main problems were expressed as the qualification problem experienced in the profession due to open education, insufficiency of physical facilities, lack of clear job description and as a result of this, intervention of different professional groups in their work, patients cannot make an appointment directly for child development, insufficient wages, lack of financial support for professional development courses. The duties, authorities and working areas of child development specialists in the field of health are hospitals and many units affiliated to hospitals. However, due to the low number of appointments, it can be considered as a problem that there are very few child development specialists among other health personnel working in the hospital or that there are still no child development specialists in some provincial and district hospitals. In addition, the quality problem caused by open education was frequently emphasised by the participants. There are risks such as lack of interactive learning in open education, limited materials, lack of communication

with experienced teachers, only book knowledge and no professional practice. Inadequate physical facilities were also frequently mentioned by the participants. The reason for this; it is thought that they are uncomfortable with this because of the lack of play rooms in the hospital, lack of materials, the fact that there are child development specialists working more than once in the same room, some child development specialists are not given a room or the location and physical conditions of the room for the hospital are bad. In addition to these, it is thought that the participants see this situation as a problem because of the statement that the job description is not clear, the intervention of different professional groups due to the lack of information in the job description of child development specialists, the lack of a professional law, and the problems experienced with the health personnel and the administration department in the hospital. Participants stated that wages were insufficient. It is thought that the participants expressed this problem because there is no performance evaluation in child development, and there are problems in the payment of additional payments and revolving fund additional shares to child development specialists. The finding of the participants that the child development profession is not known by the health personnel; It is thought that the participants expressed this problem due to reasons such as the low number of appointments to the hospital, the lack of cooperation of health personnel and management with child development specialists, not giving the necessary importance and value, the existence of provincial and district hospitals where child development specialists do not work, and the fact that health personnel do not recognise the profession and see child development specialists and their work as simple. Although there is not enough research on the problems of child development specialists, some studies express findings similar to the results of this study (Akar Gençer et al., 2016; Altıparmak et al., 2014; Bilmez et al., 2018; Çıngıloğlu, 2023; Doğan Keskin et al., 2020; Kaçmaz et al., 2020; Karaaslan et al., 2017; Münüklü, 2021).

When the suggestions made by the participants in order to provide more qualified service to child development specialists were analysed, it was stated that the professional standard should be established, social awareness of the profession should be increased, unity in the profession should be ensured, physical conditions should be improved, close physical contact with the child health outpatient clinic should be ensured, open education should be terminated, financial conditions should be improved, in-service trainings should be provided, support services should be provided, professional definition should be made and practical training should be provided more in universities. The reasons such as the lack of play rooms for the evaluation of children or the lack of a suitable environment and in-hospital location of the child development outpatient clinic, and the limitation of materials constitute the suggestion to improve the physical conditions. Child development units are important in terms of providing an area where child development specialists can easily carry out their activities related to children and their parents (Münüklü, 2021). Participants suggest that associations or unions should be used more actively to ensure professional unity. It is thought that the participants offer this suggestion in line with their desire to ensure professional unity, to defend the rights of graduates and employees, to enact a professional law, and to accept child development as a profession where there are children. The participants in the study group stated that there are quality problems when the open education system is compared with the service provided after receiving formal education. In a study conducted by Kaçmaz et al. (2021), it is emphasised that it is very important to give more weight to practices in undergraduate education institutions where child development students are educated and to provide individuals who receive undergraduate education with the opportunity to practice in institutions and organisations in order for students to graduate equipped. In addition to this, it is stated that it is important that the places where the undergraduate child development students practice during their education are in different institutions and organisations in order for the students to have more experience and to interact with various children. Open and distance education is a learning process in which the learners are distant in terms of time and space, the resources they learn and their interaction with each other are based on distance communication methods (Aydın, 2011). Course resources are generally in the form of books, videos and various e-resources (Filipi, 2019). The most important disadvantages of the

open education system are limitations in materials, lack of communication with experienced instructors, always memorising the subjects and trying to learn from practice, lecturing only from slides rather than from life, not giving lived examples in the open education system, always loading rote theoretical knowledge, and only theoretical knowledge instead of the knowledge and experience that may be necessary in professional life (Kekeç & Üstün, 2022). The participants' suggestion that more practical training should be given in universities; It is thought that the participants offered this suggestion because of the awareness that theoretical knowledge in child development is as important as practice, and that professional internships and practices directly affect the professional quality, knowledge and experience of graduates. The participants' suggestion that the definition of the profession should be made and the electronic system should be defined as child development as a type; It is thought that the participants offered this suggestion because the families do not know the child developer, the families cannot provide easy access, they cannot make an appointment directly to the child developer, and the child development specialists try to make better professional activities. Child development specialists working in health institutions participating in our research emphasised that one of their most important problems is that they have limited opportunities to participate in in-service training for their professional development. In a study conducted by Doğan Keskin and other researchers (2017), it was stated that child development specialists working in the health sector do postgraduate education for their professional development; attend symposiums, courses, seminars, trainings, share cases and follow current resources. It is also expected from professional personnel serving children to follow the changes in our age, to gain new perspectives and to use these acquisitions in services for children.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study, which was conducted to examine the views of child development professionals working in health institutions on the current situation, problems and solution suggestions, reflects the views of child development professionals working in different provinces in seven geographical regions of Turkey. Although many studies have been conducted on child development, since there is no study that examines the problems and solution suggestions of child development professionals working in different regions in Turkey, it is thought that the results of this study will create an information infrastructure for research on child development professionals.

Child development specialists can work with children with normal development, children with special needs, children dragged into crime, disadvantaged children and their families in different institutions and organisations in Turkey. While job descriptions are clearly defined in some institutions in this working process, the process is still ongoing in some institutions. However, in places where there are no job descriptions that child development specialists will contribute professionally, processes for the correction and development of this situation continue. Child development specialists working in hospitals are not able to provide services through direct appointment system. Within the scope of this study, it is recommended that child development specialists, whose primary task is to monitor and follow up the developmental evaluations of children, should work with a system where they can be more comfortable in reaching children.

It is thought that clearly defining the duties, authorities and responsibilities of child development specialists in all institutions with regulations will contribute to increasing the quality of the services to be provided.

Since the increasing number of Child Adolescent Mental Health and Diseases specialists in Turkey requires intensive labour force, the need to increase the employment of Child Developmentalists in the field of health has emerged. The need for child development specialists who perform developmental assessment has increased in parallel with this result.

It is recommended to establish a professional standard in order to provide more qualified and equipped services in the child development profession in health institutions. It is recommended that in-service trainings should be provided for child development specialists to increase their knowledge and skills, to follow new developments closely, to stay active in the professional field and to develop.

Declarations

*Competing interests***:** The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Ethical approval and permission to participate: Participation in the study was voluntary. Interviews were conducted after the participants' consent was obtained.

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Understanding the Effect of Preschool Learning Environments on Children's Well-Being from Teachers' Perspectives: A Case Study

Okul Öncesi Öğrenme Ortamlarının Çocukların İyi Oluşuna Etkisini Öğretmenlerin Bakış Açılarıyla Anlamak: Bir Durum Çalışması

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to reveal and understand the impact of preschool learning environments on children's well-being from the teachers' perspectives. The sub-goals determined within the scope of the research are to reveal teachers' opinions about general well-being and child well-being and the factors affecting children's well-being in the learning environment. The study was conducted using the qualitative research method and the case study design, one of the qualitative research models. The research was conducted with four preschool teachers working in four independent kindergartens in Efeler district of Aydın province, determined by the purposive sampling method. We collected the data using a semi-structured interview form that we prepared specifically for the research, and then we analyzed and interpreted it using the descriptive content analysis method. As a result of the analyses, themes and codes related to these themes were identified. To visualize the themes and codes obtained through the research, they were tabulated and presented in the findings section. According to the findings obtained from the research, teachers generally defined well-being with expressions such as being happy, having holistic health, and being useful to society, and expressed their views on children's well-being as self-expression, holistic development, individual differences, and individual development. Teachers expressed safety and appeal to the child as priority factors in learning environments, while they prioritized peer relationships in social interactions.

Keywords: Well-being, Preschool Period, Learning Environment, Teacher Opinions, Holistic Development

Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı okul öncesi öğrenme ortamlarının çocukların iyi oluşuna etkisini öğretmenlerin bakış açılarıyla ortaya koymak ve anlamaktır. Araştırma kapsamında belirlenen alt amaçlar ise öğretmenlerin genel olarak iyi oluş ve çocuğun iyi oluşu hakkındaki görüşlerinin neler olduğu ve çocukların öğrenme ortamında iyi oluşunu etkileyen faktörlerle ilgili düşüncelerini açığa çıkarmaktır. Çalışma nitel araştırma yöntemiyle gerçekleştirilmiş ve nitel araştırma modellerinden durum çalışması deseni kullanılmıştır. Araştırma amaçlı örneklem yöntemiyle belirlenen Aydın iline bağlı Efeler ilçesinde yer alan dört bağımsız anaokulunda görev yapan dört okul öncesi öğretmeni ile yürütülmüştür. Veriler araştırma kapsamında hazırlanan yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu ile elde edilmiş ve betimsel içerik analizi yöntemi ile analiz edilmiş ve yorumlanmıştır. Analizler sonucunda, temalara ve bu temalara ait kodlara ulaşılmıştır. Araştırmanın sonucunda ulaşılan tema ve kodların görselleştirilmesi amacıyla tablolaştırılarak bulgular kısmında sunulmuştur. Araştırma sonucunda elde dilen bulgulara göre, öğretmenlerin iyi oluşu genel olarak mutlu olma, bütünsel sağlık ve topluma faydalı olmak gibi ifadelerle tanımladıkları, çocukların iyi oluşunu ise kendini ifade etme, bütünsel gelişim, bireysel farklılıklar ve bireysel gelişim olarak görüşlerini belirtmişlerdir. Öğrenme ortamlarının özellikleri açısından güvenli olması ve çocuğa hitap etmesi öncelikli faktörler olarak ifade edilmiş, sosyal ilişkiler açısından öğretmenlerin daha çok akran ilişkilerine dikkat çektiği gözlenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İyi Oluş, Okul Öncesi Dönem, Öğrenme Ortamı, Öğretmen Görüşleri, Bütünsel Gelişim

Introduction

Well-being sheds light on a reality that aims to improve both individual and universal life and realize one's potential at the highest level. Well-being is closely related to positive thinking. Positive thinking points to a perspective that increases the individual's life quality and aims to perceive and evaluate opportunities and constructive solutions in life (Gür, 2022). In this context; the change in the understanding of the healthy individual towards positive development and preventing the negative parallels the emergence of the field of positive psychology (Seligman 2011; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Positive psychology aims to improve the quality of life and be healthy. It focuses on positive personal experiences and individual characteristics (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Conceptualizations of well-being are generally based on two traditions. The hedonic understanding defines well-being as a result, where a positive effect is defined as the absence of a negative effect. The other is considered eudemonic, psychological well-being (living life satisfactorily, realizing one's potential). It expresses well-being as a process (Deci & Ryan, 2008). This field draws on the idea of self-actualization (Seligman, 2011; Seligman & Parks, 2005). In this perspective, putting people at the center and the importance of experience and self-knowledge are emphasized. The individual is encouraged to use this knowledge to realize his or herself so that he or she can live to his or her full potential.

From a positive psychology perspective, well-being is expressed as a multidimensional structure consisting of positive emotions, participation, relationships, meaning, and success (Seligman, 2011). Again, according to Seligman (2019), physical well-being is related to an individual's health and vitality; it covers aspects such as exercise, nutrition and general body functioning. Emotional well-being involves experiencing positive emotions and effectively managing negative emotions, as well as developing resilience and a sense of contentment. Cognitive health refers to mental abilities such as problem solving, creativity, and critical thinking, as well as a person's intellectual engagement and capacity to learn and develop. Together, these components contribute to the holistic process of development, holistic health, and individuals' ultimate well-being. Positive relationships can be defined as the emergence of interactions between individuals in which they feel loved, supported, and valued by others.

Ryff (1989) defined well-being as the ability to use one's potential at the highest level, individual productivity and well-being. In addition, he stated that it also includes social, emotional, cognitive and physical health. Child well-being is recognized as being of key importance due to the strong link between children's early life experiences and adult health, social well-being and economic outcomes. Childhood is of critical importance in terms of the speed and intensity of development and learning among the stages that a person goes through throughout his life. The underlying reason why this period is described as critical is that progress in all developmental areas is related to well-being. In an environment where the child feels good, his development continues at his own pace without being interrupted. Supporting development in this period means supporting the healthy development of well-being.

Well-being is the child's development of his/her unique potential in relation to himself/herself, others and the environment (Beşpınar & Aybars, 2013). Child well-being is a comprehensive and multifaceted construct that encompasses various interrelated dimensions such as physical, social, emotional and psychological aspects. According to these views, well-being is best seen as a type of development consisting of various internal well-beings achieved through the development and use of unique human capacities (Archard, 2015).

For this development to occur, many interconnected psychological needs must be met. These needs a sense of attachment, belonging, being loved, and security—are considered essential for children's development

and well-being. Numerous studies show that children who receive approval and support from their environment achieve more positive emotional, behavioral, and cognitive outcomes (McGrath & Van Bergen, 2015). The child's psychological basic needs form the foundation of their well-being, and meeting other needs alone cannot make up for their lack of well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

The socio-ecological approach that Bronfenbrenner developed to understand child development draws attention to various factors that shape children's early experiences and affect their level of well-being (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). These are the microsystems (family, school and physical environment) with which the child has face-to-face communication and interaction. School is considered one of the most important environments that encourage positive development and general well-being (Hamre & Cappella, 2015). The teacher is the one who makes the learning environment functional for the benefit of the child. Teachers have a central role in students' development. Its vital importance in the child's development, learning and therefore well-being cannot be ignored. From the perspective of the child's well-being: qualified teachers, healthy child-teacher, peer interaction and communication, number of children in the classroom, a safe, rich stimulating environment, different social activities, initiative, self-regulation, ability to ask for help, emotional control, peer support, optimism, social problem-solving skills, Programs and developmentally appropriate practices that suit children's interests and needs are seen as important (Mother Child Education Foundation, 2009).

Remarkable qualities of childhood lies in their abilities to wonder, research, learn and change and develop under the influence of new experiences (Gopnik, 2010). Children spend most of their time at school, and therefore the experiences they have under the roof of school directly affect their daily lives. From this perspective, the educational programs implemented in schools and the educational environment offered are thought to be important in improving the psychological well-being of children. The level of psychological well-being in children is affected by family, personal characteristics, educational program, school (teacher, learning environment) and the interaction between these environments. For child welfare, teachers are required to create a classroom environment that supports positive development and learning outcomes among children (Falecki & Mann, 2021; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). At the same time, children's psychological well-being is considered an important indicator of the quality of developmental processes and educational practices (Van Sanden & Joly, 2003). From this perspective, well-being, holistic development and holistic health increase the opportunity to participate in education, as well as achieve the highest level of education and training outcomes and enable children to live the lives they value (Spratt, 2016).

According to the literature available in this context, studies on well-being in the field of pre-school education include Atan (2021)'s model proposal for children's psychological well-being, Çelik (2021)'s adaptation of 5–6-year-old children to school, and Aksel (2018), Özdemir (2021), YeniDünya (2020), Özoğul (2022)'s studies. It was determined that it was conducted with relational scanning and mixed research management (Erata & Özbey, 2023) The general trend in the studies is that they are quantitative studies. For this reason, it was decided to conduct a qualitative study to examine teachers' opinions on the relevant subject in depth. It is thought that the study will contribute to teachers' awareness and to the benefit of children. This research was planned to reveal teachers' opinions about the impact of preschool learning environments on children's well-being. In line with this main purpose, answers to the following questions will be sought:

1. What are the opinions of preschool teachers about general well-being and the well-being of the child?

2. What are the opinions of preschool teachers about the factors affecting children's well-being in the

learning environment?

Method

In this study, we employed a qualitative research method. Qualitative research can be used to understand and influence processes of social change. Understanding participants' experiences and views can make a valuable contribution to social policy formulation and implementation processes. For these reasons, qualitative research is widely used in the social sciences and many disciplines to understand human behavior. This research method provides in-depth understanding and directly addresses participants' perspectives and experiences. The research was conducted through the case study design, one of the qualitative research models developed by Creswell (2016). Yin (2004) suggested that a case study can be used to understand the role of any phenomenon within a system. This study was conducted as an instrumental case study to understand the process experienced in the case, the structure of the process and the activities implemented. Within the scope of this research, teachers' opinions about general well-being and the child's well-being were consulted. In addition, the characteristics of the learning environment, social-emotional characteristics, physical equipment, learning activities and opinions about evaluation, which are among the factors affecting the child's well-being, were examined. A case study can be used in research that deals with a current phenomenon within its real-life context (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2012). The study was carried out using a semi-structured interview technique.

Working Group

The study group for the research consists of 4 preschool teachers working in 4 different kindergartens in Efeler District of Aydın Province. Within the scope of this study, typical sampling, one of the purposive sampling types, was used to determine the participants in the study group (Merriam, 2013). Purposeful sampling is a carefully selected sample to achieve a specific purpose of a research. Researchers may use purposive sampling when they want to collect data to generalize about a particular population or to test a particular problem or hypothesis. A typical sample is a sample randomly selected to represent the purpose of a study. This sampling method aims to reflect the general characteristics of the population as best as possible (Büyüköztürk et al. 2019).

Table 1. Participant Information

Teachers' Code Names	Institution of Work	Professional experience	Type of Preschool Education Institution
T1	State school	14 Years	Kindergarten
T2	State school	13 Years	Kindergarten
T3	State school	16 Years	Kindergarten
T4	State school	22 Years	Kindergarten

Data Collection Tools

The research's data collection tools are interview forms prepared in line with the research's purpose. Interviews allow researchers to better understand participants' perspectives and gain more in-depth knowledge about a particular topic or phenomenon. Additionally, researchers can empathize with participants by listening directly to their feelings and experiences, which contributes to obtaining more qualified and comprehensive data. We prepared the interview form questions based on information from

national and international literature reviews on well-being. We sent the prepared interview questions for expert opinion and adjusted them based on their feedback.

The interview included ten semi-structured, open-ended questions designed to reveal teachers' thoughts about children's well-being and the effects of learning environment components that affect well-being. We prefer semi-structured questions because they provide a deeper understanding of teachers' opinions and thoughts, aligning with the study's objectives.

Table 2. Interview Questions and Objectives

Purposes	Interview Questions
Understanding teachers' thoughts about general well-being**.**	What do you think is well-being? Can you explain what well-being means to you?
	Do you think well-being is important? Why?
Understanding teachers' thoughts about children's well-being	What do you think about children's well-being? Can you explain?
	In your opinion, what is the behavior of a child who is in a state of well-being? What might he or she be thinking and feeling? Could you please explain what your thoughts are on this subject?
Understanding teachers' general thoughts about the impact of children's environment on their well-being	What do you think are the factors that affect children's well-being?
Understanding teachers' thoughts about the impact of the learning environment on children's well-being	What do you think about the impact of the learning environment on children's well-being?
	What are the effects of the physical features of the learning environment on well-being? How do you think it affects well-being?
Understanding teachers' thoughts about the impact of learning activities, which are among the components of the learning environment, on the well-being of their children.	What do you pay attention to when planning learning activities? Cause?
	What do you pay attention to when implementing learning activities? Cause?
	In your opinion, what is the relationship between the planning, implementation and evaluation stages of learning activities and well-being?
Understanding teachers' thoughts about the impact of social relationships and interactions in the learning environment on the child's well-being	What do you think about the impact of your relationship with children on their well-being?
	Do children's relationships with each other affect their well-being? What are your views on this subject?
To reveal teachers' suggestions in line with their views on children's well-being	What can be done to contribute to the child's well-being? What are your suggestions on this subject?

Collection of Data

Two experts who were knowledgeable about qualitative research and the study subject provided their opinions before the research began. Based on the feedback, suggested corrections to the interview questions were made and a pilot application was carried out with a volunteer preschool teacher. During the pilot application, the clarity of the questions and the consistency of the answers given were checked. After this stage, the consent of pre-school teachers working in independent kindergartens was obtained regarding their participation. The appropriate place and time for the meeting were determined together

with the teachers. The interview was held in a quiet environment free of distractions. After the interviewer gave descriptive information about the study, interview questions were asked to the participants. During the interview process, attention was paid to open communication and impartiality to ensure the comfort and reliability of the participants. In addition, care was taken to ensure that the questions asked by the researchers to the participants were understandable and could be easily answered by the participants. Each interview lasted approximately 20-25 minutes, and to prevent data loss, the interview data was audio recorded with the consent of the participants and stored as a transcript.

Analysis of Data

In examining the data obtained from teachers regarding well-being the following questions were primarily taken into consideration; Do the data obtained through interview questions contribute to the literature? Do the data obtained from the interviews support the research's purpose?

The data obtained was analyzed with the inductive content analysis method (Merriam, 2013). The data obtained in this research were analyzed and interpreted by coding in accordance with the themes determined based on the problem. The first step in content analysis is to collect relevant data for analysis. These data can be written texts, images, video recordings or other documents (Glesne, 2013). The data collected is coded to identify important concepts and themes. These codes allow the data to be used in the analysis to be categorized. The codes are then grouped and categorized. Similar concepts and themes are brought together to create a more meaningful structure for analysis. In other words, the coded data is carefully examined. In this context, themes, patterns and relationships are identified. Researchers use analytical techniques to extract the in-depth meaning of data. Finally, the findings are interpreted and given meaning. In this stage, researchers relate the information provided by the data to research questions and hypotheses and explain the meaning of their results. The importance of content analysis is that it provides researchers with the ability to systematically examine and make sense of complex data sets. This helps researchers develop in-depth understanding, test theories, and base their findings on a solid foundation (Creswell, 2019).

Before starting the research, Aydın Adnan Menderes University dated 03.05.2023 and 2023/4. It was found ethically appropriate with the decision numbered XVII taken at the Educational Research Ethics Committee Meeting.

To confirm the validity and reliability of the research, a pilot application was conducted with a volunteer teacher involved in the research and the clarity of the questions was checked. To increase the validity of the research, it was aimed at diversifying the sample and accordingly, the teachers who would participate in the interview were selected from different schools. For the internal validity (credibility) of the research, an interaction was established with the participants before the interview started, and the content of this interaction included the researcher introducing himself, introducing the study, and obtaining consent. For participant confirmation, during the interview, "Did you say these? "Am I understanding correctly?" or after the transcript, confirmation was received regarding the similarity of what was said and what was written. Then, an expert review was conducted, and the opinions of the participants were stated through direct quotations. For the internal reliability (consistency) of the research, the findings were presented without comment and a coding cycle was made by two experts. In the first and second coding cycle, the researchers worked separately, and in the third cycle, they worked together and reached a consensus among the coders (Merriam, 2013; Saldana, 2019). Encoder reliability was calculated with Miles and Huberman's

(2019) reliability formula. Miles and Huberman stated that the coding is reliable if the reliability of the research is above 70%. Consistency between coders in the study was determined to be 90%.

Results

The findings from the research are presented in the tables below.

Table 3. Theme, subtheme and codes for the general meaning of well-being

Theme	Well-being			
Subtheme	General meaning			
			Participants	
Codes	T1	T2	T3	T4
Happiness		+		
Mental health			+	
Physical health			+	
Environmental health			+	
Feel confident		+	+	
To be loved		+		
Achieving the best/Self-actualization	+			
Holistic development and health				+

Teachers provide a broad definition of well-being in Table 3, which includes aspects such as happiness, spiritual health, physical health, environmental health, confidence, love, achieving the highest level of self-realization, and holistic development and health. The statements made by the teachers are as follows:

T1 "… Being able to bring oneself to a better level", T2 "Well-being is the happiness of the individual…", T2 "It is very important for her to know that she/he is loved in the classroom and at home", T3 "… is the state of being mentally, physically and environmentally healthy…", T4 "Self-actualization at the highest level in all areas of social-emotional, mental, physical and development "

Table 4. The meaning of child well-being theme, sub-theme and codes

Theme	Well-being			
Subtheme	The meaning and importance of children's well-being			
			Participant	
Codes	T1	T2	T3	T4
Individual Development	+	+		
Being aware of one's achievements and being proud of them	+			
Be proud of oneself	+			
Positive support	+			
Self-expression		+	+	+
Trusting the environment		+	+	
Participating		+	+	+
Social and emotional well-being			+	
Adapting to the classroom environment				+
Being beneficial to society	+			+

When examined in Table 4, regarding the child's well-being, teachers expressed individual development, being aware of their achievements, being proud of themselves, receiving positive support, being able to express themselves, trusting the environment, ensuring participation, social and emotional well-being, adaptation to the classroom and being useful to society.

T1 "...we can achieve well-being because we pay attention to individual characteristics in the activities organized", T2 "...It is very important that the activity he does in the classroom environment appeals to him...", "Ensuring participation affects his success and increases his happiness", T3 " As an individual,

being beneficial to society and the environment ", T4 "... I think that the welfare of the child will increase in a social and egalitarian environment where everyone can express themselves. The child feels better when he expresses himself".

Table 5. Learning environment characteristics, theme, subtheme and codes

Theme	Factors			
Subtheme	Learning environment characteristics			
Codes	Participant			
	T1	T2	T3	T4
Arousing curiosity, attracting attention	+		+	
Large area	+	+		
Suitable for the child	+	+	+	+
A safe environment		+	+	
Access to materials			+	+
Bright environment	+		+	+
Positive peer communication and interaction				+
Constructivist environment	+			
Activity diversity		+		

In Table 5, teachers describe the characteristics of the learning environment arousing curiosity, attracting attention, having a large space, suitable for the child, a safe environment, access to materials, a bright environment, positive peer communication and interaction, constructivist environment, activity diversity, Teachers' statements regarding the codes in Table III are given below.

T1: "The learning environment is important in terms of arousing curiosity and attracting attention in children...", "....A size suitable for the number of children in the class allows children to move more easily and express themselves more easily.", "Instead of direct explanation in the learning environment, the child should think about this issue, If he is allowed to express his ideas, he will learn how to access information.",T2. "...There are so many personal differences, there should be diversity that appeals to all of them and that all of them can benefit from. If I cannot appeal to everyone in my activities, then the other person will get bored and withdraw, or will not be able to complete their development, or will have to find something according to their current interest." S3. "It is necessary to prepare a safe environment. It is necessary to arrange the materials in a way that children can see and according to their height. A clean, bright environment and activities that arouse curiosity are required. The child's liking, trusting the teacher, and trusting the school will be reflected in the positive classroom climate.", T4 "It should appeal to the child. Suitability for the child should be essential. It must be in a way that meets their physical, emotional and social needs. "Daylight, for example, is an element that greatly affects a person's mental state. It should be arranged in a way that allows them to communicate with their peers, and there should be an environment where they can play both as a group and individually."

Table 6. Theme, subtheme and codes for planning learning activities

Theme	Factors			
Subtheme	Learning activities			
Codes	Participant			
	T1	T2	T3	T4
Suitability for developmental levels	+		+	+
Individual differences		+		
Arouse curiosity	+	+		

Codes	T1	T2	T3	T4
Prompting research		+		
Children's interests and needs	+		+	+
Active-passive balance			+	
Attracting the child's attention	+	+	+	+
Equality of opportunity	+			+
Child-centered		+	+	+
Achieving gains	+	+	+	+
Teacher awareness			+	+
Values	+			
Supporting the child's strengths		+		
Peer relationships		+	+	
Learning through play			+	
Making observations and evaluations		+	+	+

When the table is examined, the codes related to planning learning activities are; suitability for developmental levels, individual differences, arousing curiosity, doing research, children's interests and needs, active-passive balance, attracting the child's attention, equality of opportunity, child-centered, achieving goals, teacher awareness, values, supporting the child's strengths, peer relations, and play. They expressed it as learning, observation, and evaluation. Quotations from teachers' statements regarding the codes specified in Table IV are as follows:

T1: "…We consider each child's own development level; we think about each child individually. We organize activities in a way that can contribute to the development of each child, considering the behaviors, concepts, and values we want to impart…", T2. "It is important for me to encourage children to be curious about their individual differences and to have activities where they can do research." S3: "I prepare activities in line with the interests of the children. If it is active, then I include more passive activities. Since they learn by playing, I try to teach them more through play, and I make sure that the activities are child centered.", T IV. "…. I primarily consider the gains. I do not approve of competition. We do every activity with play to make them feel good. I make sure that it is child-centered, appropriate to the level of the children, and suitable for the material and classroom environment..."

Table 7. Theme, sub-theme and codes regarding things to consider when implementing activities in terms of well-being

Theme	Factors			
Subtheme	Implementing Learning activities			
			Participant	
Codes	T1	T2	T3	T4
Give opportunity	+			
Child centered	+			
Attracting attention and interest	+			
Presenting a variety of materials	+			
Learning by doing and experiencing	+			
Listening, making eye contact	+			
Using tone of voice and facial expressions		+		
Being fair and equal				+

When Table 7 is examined, teachers, in the process of implementing activities, give opportunities to the

child, be child-centered, attract their attention, present different materials, learn by doing, listen, make eye contact, use tone of voice and facial expressions, be fair and egalitarian. They stated that they took these components into account.

Quotations from teacher statements, T1. "Giving opportunities to the child, being student-centered, the student must be actively involved, attracting children's interest and attention, and ensuring that they focus completely. "We use different materials while applying, provide opportunities for them to learn by doing, and we especially focus on listening. I make sure they make eye contact with me while listening." T2. "The teacher should convey his excitement through his tone of voice and facial expressions." T4. "...I think most of all that there should be fairness in the well-being of children, there should be equality. "Everyone should be equal, there should be no injustice while practicing, these affect well-being."

Table 8. Theme, sub-theme and codes according to teachers' opinions about the relationship between evaluating learning activities and the child's well-being

Theme	Factors			
Subtheme	Evaluating Learning activities			
			Participant	
Codes	T1	T2	T3	T4
Identifying children's situations and needs	+			
Guiding what we want to gain	+	+		
Track gains		+		+
Monitoring development and learning		+		
Writing a development report		+		+
Source for parent meetings		+		
Identifying children's strengths		+		+
directions that need support	+			
Communication with family			+	
Suitability for student level			+	+
Guidance in planning			+	+

As seen in Table 8**,** teachers are responsible for identifying children's situations and needs, guiding the goals we want to achieve, following the goals, monitoring development and learning, writing development reports, being a source for parent-teacher talks, determining children's strengths and areas that need support, communicating with the family, being suitable for the student level, and providing guidance in planning. Shared their views that evaluation has a relationship with the child's well-being. Quotations from teachers' opinions are as follows:

T1. "It will shed light on what we want to give to children. Changes and additions can be made according to the children's conditions and needs." T2. "You don't have to worry about determining whether the goals have been achieved or writing a progress report and meeting with the parents. The best thing about the child is that you don't miss any points. "It allows us to support the child's stronger side." T3. "...To evaluate and present what points are missing, knowing which gains should be given in the future." T4. "Is it appropriate for my student's level? isn't it? Where is my class in this achievement, how much have I achieved, how much have I not achieved, what can I do for this? "I use previous evaluations in subsequent planning."

Table 9. Theme, subtheme and codes for social-emotional relationships

Theme	Factors			
Subtheme	Social-emotional relationships			
		Participant		
Codes	T1	T2	T3	T4
Seeing value	+		+	
Creating love in the environment			+	
Gaining experience in the social environment	+			
Learning from peers	+			
Sharing	+		+	
Solidarity	+			
Collaboration	+		+	
Positive peer communication/relationships	+			+
Be accepted		+		
Bond of trust				+
Teacher support		+		
Positive classroom climate			+	
Seeing as an individual			+	

When we look at the codes belonging to the social-emotional relationships sub-theme in line with the teachers' statements in Table 9, they define it as being valued, creating love in the environment, gaining experience in the social environment, learning from peers, sharing, friendly, fraternal, cooperation, positive peer communication/relationships, being accepted, a bond of trust, teacher support, a positive classroom climate, and seeing yourself as an individual. Quotations from teachers' opinions are as follows:

T1 "...they gain opportunities by gaining experience in the social environment, and peer learning affects their well-being in the things they learn from each other. Like helping, sharing, cooperating...", T2 "...It is very important for it to be accepted. It is necessary to show that the child exists by making his friends feel his stronger aspects, rather than his weaknesses. To prepare the environment for children's relationships with each other. Showing love by touching" T3. "If you create an atmosphere by sharing in a friendly and brotherly way in cooperation, there will be no bullying and a state of well-being will occur. And this is reflected in education." T4. "Positive peer relationships positively affect well-being. Achieving peer communication significantly affects children's well-being. Positive teacher attitude is important. The child then accepts discipline. "The bond of trust is developing." T1. "The most basic need is to be valued, they want to feel that they are a valuable individual. Children who feel valued love the school and the teacher and come to school with pleasure. "It provides ease and comfort in communications." T3. "I see them as individuals. "Because they know that I see them as individuals, they feel valued and behave accordingly."

Table 10. Theme, sub-theme and codes for teacher suggestions for child well-being

Theme	Factors			
Subtheme	Suggestions			
Codes		Participant		
	T1	T2	T3	T4
Giving opportunity to social relationships	+			
Being a guide	+			
Kid-appropriate goals	+			
Observation	+		+	
Communicate and interact	+			
Creating a safe environment		+		

Family support	+		
School-family communication and cooperation	+	+	
Training qualified teachers			+

In Table 10, the codes under the sub-theme of suggestions for the child's well-being are shown. These are: giving opportunity to social relationships, being a guide, appropriate goals for the child, observation, communication and interaction, creating a safe environment, family support, school-family communication and cooperation, training qualified teachers.

T1 "…You need to be a guide, not a teacher. Setting appropriate goals for each child. Talking to children, communicating is important…", T2. "It is important for them to be in a safe environment where they can love each other or the adults here, and the child feels the cooperation of the school and the family. He comes to school more positive and motivated. T3 "…Observation and evaluation are very important… communication with the family is very important…it is important to include the family in the school…", T4 "Qualified teachers affect the child's well-being…"

Discussion

The research's first sub-purpose is to reveal teachers' awareness of well-being. According to the teachers' answers to the interview questions: Under the theme of well-being, codes were created according to sub-themes such as the general meaning of well-being and the well-being of children. The meaning of well-being for teachers; They defined it as being happy, mental health, physical health, environmental health, feeling confident, being loved, achieving the best self-realization and holistic development. The field of positive psychology is based on individuals and the idea of individuals' self-actualization. It supports the individual's efforts to realize the self, which is based on experience and self-knowledge, so that he can live his full potential (Schunk, 2012; Seligman, 2011; Seligman & Parks, 2005). In this context, according to the definition of the World Health Organization (WHO), health is defined as the absence of disease and disability only. Lee (2008) defined well-being as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being. According to Ryff (1989) well-being is being happy. Ryff (1989) expressed it as being healthy in all areas of development. It can be said that in this study, teachers' definitions of general well-being are supported by the literature.

Codes created for teachers' thoughts on the sub-theme of the meaning and importance of child well-being; They expressed this as individual development, being aware of one's achievements and feeling proud, being proud of oneself, positive support, expressing oneself, trusting the environment, ensuring participation, social and emotional well-being, adapting to the classroom environment and being useful to society. According to teachers, the meaning of child well-being can be said to be compatible with Seligman's PERMA model. The framework of positive emotion, participation, relationships, meaning and success can be considered a valid model for children's well-being (Cann, 2019; Holweek, 2019). The presence of well-being in children indicates their ability to interact positively and safely with their environment, benefit from learning opportunities (Marbina et al., 2015) and individual development. Seligman (2012) defines positive relationships as the emergence of interactions between individuals that foster feelings of love, support, and value from others. It is emphasized that having these relationships forms the basis of positive psychological growth and development (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Deci & Ryan 1985).

The second sub-purpose of the research is to reveal teachers' opinions about the impact of the learning environment on children's well-being. The themes and sub-themes that emerged regarding this sub-purpose are under the main theme of factors, there are sub-themes such as learning environment features, planning to learn activities, implementing learning activities, evaluating learning activities, social and emotional

relationships, and teacher suggestions. In this context, the codes for the learning environment characteristics sub-theme are given in Table 5; They expressed opinions such as arousing curiosity, attracting attention, large space, suitability for the child, safe environment, access to materials, bright environment, positive peer communication and interaction, constructivist environment, and diversity of activities. (Güleş, 2013; Ministry of National Education, 2013; MEB, 2024).As stated, for healthy holistic development in preschool children, a rich and encouraging environment, safe learning opportunities, a suitable physical environment, the child's choices, The emphasis on the importance of environmental features that will stimulate the child's curiosity and desire to explore their environment, use of educational materials and relationships with others, supports the views of teachers. As stated, for healthy holistic development in preschool children, a rich and encouraging environment, safe learning opportunities, a suitable physical environment, the child's choices, The emphasis on the importance of environmental features that will stimulate the child's curiosity and desire to explore their environment, use of educational materials and relationships with others, supports the views of teachers.

As shown in Table 6, the codes under the second sub-theme are suitability for developmental levels, individual differences, arousing curiosity, prompting research, children's interests and needs, active-passive balance, attracting the child's attention, equal opportunity, child-centered, achieving achievements, teacher awareness, values, supporting the child's strengths, peer relations, observation and expressing them in the form of evaluation. When the basic features of the preschool education program are considered, it is child-centered, considers individual differences, where children are active participants in the learning process rather than passive recipients of information, includes achievements appropriate to their interests, needs, competencies and characteristics, allows the use of different methods and techniques, and provides the teacher with a guiding role. The program fosters an understanding of a democratic education environment that fosters learning. In addition, the basic elements of daily plans, it can be said that the inclusion of achievements, concepts and values in teachers' opinions coincides with the pre-school education program (MEB- Pre-School Education Program, 2024).

Codes formed under the sub-theme of implementing learning activities, related to the things to be considered when applying activities for the well-being of children; they stated that they took into consideration elements such as giving opportunities to the child, being child-centered, attracting attention and interest, presenting different materials, learning by doing, listening, making eye contact, using tone of voice and facial expressions, being fair and egalitarian. In the comparison of the role of the teacher in different educational approaches by Ekici (2015), the basic role of the teacher is, it can be said that the roles of guiding the child's learning, being seen as an active learner and communicator, a careful observer and planner-environment organizer, revealing the true love of learning in every child, guiding the child according to the pace of development and learning, and being an observation expert support the views of teachers.

As can be seen in Table 8, the codes belong to the sub-theme of evaluating learning activities, which were formed as a result of teachers' opinions about the effects of evaluating learning activities on children's well-being; It is important to evaluate the child's situation and needs in terms of determining the situation and needs of the children, guiding towards what we want to gain, tracking the achievements, monitoring development and learning, writing a development report, being a source for parent-teacher talks, determining the children's strengths and areas that need support, communication with the family, suitability for the student level, and providing guidance in planning. They shared their views that it has a relationship with well-being. In the OECD (2021) report, one of the five basic components to improve quality in early childhood education are stated as research, observation and evaluation (Taguma & Makowiecki, 2012). Evaluation is a prerequisite for quality education and training. It is both a conclusion and a beginning to review what has been done. It provides guidance to the educator on what to do in subsequent activity planning (Demirel, 2023). As stated in the basic principles of pre-school education, it is recommended

that the evaluation results be used effectively for the development of children, teachers and the pre-school education program (MEB, 2024). It can be said that teachers' opinions are parallel to the content of the institutions directing pre-school education.

When Table 9 is examined, the codes formed under social-emotional relationship are: to be valued, creating love in the environment, gaining experience in the social environment, learning from peers, sharing, friendly, fraternal, cooperation, positive peer communication/relationships, be accepted, and bond of trust, receiving teacher support, having positive classroom climate, and being seen as an individual. Children's well-being is also considered an important indicator of the quality of developmental processes and educational practices (Van Sanden & Joly, 2003). It is known that well-being is necessary for the healthy development of children. Accordingly, the children most likely to experience school success are those with strong social and emotional foundations (Rock & Pollack, 2002; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Well-being and social-emotional competence depend on a complex set of skills and dispositions that develop in early childhood. From the first days of life, babies begin to rapidly develop their reactions to their environment and those around them (parents, teachers and peers) to make sense of the world (Lally & Mangione, 2006). The foundation of well-being lies in the development of strong foundations on which secure attachment and loving relationships can develop. It contributes to a range of long-term well-being competencies, including secure attachment, love of learning, and the ability to regulate emotions and social interactions (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009; National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2011). In this context, teachers' views on the elements of social-emotional relationships that shape well-being overlap with the literature.

Table 10, codes related to the sub-theme of teacher suggestions for the child's well-being; teachers; It is seen that they also make suggestions such as giving opportunity to social relations, being a guide, appropriate goals for the child, observation, communication and interaction, creating a safe environment, family support, teacher-family communication and cooperation, and training qualified teachers. When we look at the suggestions offered by teachers regarding the child's well-being, it can be said that they are parallel to both the aims and principles of the Preschool Education Program (MEB, 2013) (equality of opportunity, compatibility with the child) and the child well-being criteria of the OECD (2021). According to OECD (2021) data, being child-centered, setting child-appropriate goals, being sensitive to age and stage, capturing inequalities and turning them into opportunities are in line with the findings of the research.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This research was conducted to understand the impact of preschool learning environments on children's well-being from teachers' perspectives. In line with this purpose, there are two sub-objectives: 1. What are the opinions of preschool teachers about general well-being and child well-being? 2. What are the opinions of preschool teachers about the factors affecting children's well-being in the learning environment? An interview form was prepared to reveal teachers' opinions on this issue. Within the scope of the interview questions, for the first sub-goal, questions were asked to the teachers about general well-being and children's well-being. For the second sub-goal, questions were included to reveal the physical and human effects of the learning environment on children's well-being. These questions are about learning environment characteristics, planning, implementation and evaluation of educational activities, such as teacher and peer relations. Inductive content analysis was conducted based on the answers given by the teachers. As a result of the analysis, the main theme that emerged for the first sub-goal was well-being and sub-themes are the general meaning of well-being and the meaning of children's well-being. The main theme that emerged for the second sub-goal was factors. Sub-themes are learning environment features, planning to learn activities, implementing learning activities, evaluating learning activities and teacher suggestions.

The results obtained from the study are presented according to sub-objectives. According to the first sub-goal, codes belonging to the theme of well-being and the sub-theme of the general meaning of well-being are being happy, spiritual health, physical health, environmental health, feeling confident, being loved, achieving the best - self-realization and holistic development and health.

Codes belonging to the sub-theme of the meaning of children's well-being; individual development, being aware and proud of one's achievements, being proud of oneself, positive support, self-expression, trusting the environment, participation, social and emotional well-being, adaptation to the classroom environment and being useful to society.

According to the second sub-goal; codes according to the factors theme and learning environment characteristics sub-theme; Arousing curiosity, attracting attention, large space, suitable for the child, a safe environment, access to materials, a bright environment, positive peer communication and interaction, a constructivist environment, The and a variety of activities.

Codes for learning activities according to the planning sub-theme; suitability for developmental levels, individual differences, arousing curiosity, encouraging research, children's interests and needs, active-passive balance, attracting the child's attention, equality of opportunity, child-centered, achieving goals, teacher awareness, values, supporting the child's strengths, peer relations, play-based learning, observation and evaluation.

Codes learning activities according to the application sub-theme; giving opportunities, being child-centered, attracting attention and interest, presenting different materials, learning by doing, listening, making eye contact, using tone of voice and facial expressions, being fair and egalitarian.

Codes belonging to the sub-theme of evaluating learning activities include: identifying children's situations and needs, guidance on what we want children to acquire, tracking gains, monitoring development and learning, writing development reports, being a source for parent-teacher talks, determining children's strengths and areas that need support, communication with the family, suitability for student level, and guidance in planning.

Codes belonging to the social-emotional relationships sub-theme; being valued, creating love in the environment, gaining experience in the social environment, learning from peers, sharing, friendly, fraternal, cooperation, positive peer communication/interaction, being accepted, bond of trust, teacher support, positive classroom climate, being seen as an individual.

Codes belonging to the teacher suggestion's sub-theme: giving opportunity to social relationships, being a guide, appropriate goals for the child, observation, communication and interaction, creating a safe environment, family support, teacher-family communication and cooperation, and training qualified teachers.

The inference that can be made from the results of the study is that teachers have high theoretical awareness about general well-being, child well-being, the learning environment and the effects of the elements that make up the environment on the child's well-being. The limitation of this study is that it did not include questions that would reveal teachers' views on practice. The study was conducted with four preschool teachers from different schools. Not including the opinions of a larger number of teachers and conducting the study only with the interview method can be seen as lack of data diversication and triangulation which can be considered as limitations. (Merriam, 2013).

This study, which was conducted to learn the effect of learning environments in line with teachers' opinions on the child's well-being, can be repeated with a larger number of samples. In the interviews with teachers, it was observed that the well-being of teachers should also be emphasized. In this regard, a study can be conducted to examine the well-being of teachers. Seminars on well-being can be organized to inform teachers more about well-being and to raise awareness about this subject. Teachers' awareness of activities and practices that can be carried out (in-school and out-of-school) for the well-being of children can be examined. For teachers to provide guidance to families on this issue, teachers' opinions can be examined regarding the effects of families on children's well-being and the practices that should be followed. In the same context, parent training and participation studies can be carried out to raise awareness of the effects of families on children's well-being and what can be done in the home environment. Regarding the effects of the learning environment on children's well-being, activity plans such as document analysis can be examined. In terms of well-being, checklists can be prepared for the characteristics of the learning environment and the situation can be determined. One of the results obtained in line with teachers' self-reports is that teacher qualifications affect the child's well-being. For this reason, it has been recommended to train qualified teachers. For this purpose, it may be recommended to evaluate the suitability of the content of the preschool teacher education program in training qualified teachers. The child's opinions about the effects of the educational environment on the child's well-being can be learned. It can be revealed whether the teacher's opinions and the child's expectations are in line with each other. In this study, teachers' opinions are included. In future studies, it is recommended to diversify the data through observations, interviews and document review regarding the practices related to well-being in the learning environment.

Declarations

Ethics approval and consent to participate: Research titled "The impact of preschool learning environments on children's well-being: Revealing from teachers' perspectives"03.05.2023 tarih ve 2023/4. It was found ethically appropriate with decision no. XVII taken at our Educational Research Ethics Committee Meeting.

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Learning to Talk and Write: Developing Early Childhood Literacies in the 21st-Century Classroom

Konuşmayı ve Yazmayı Öğrenmek: 21. Yüzyıl Sınıflarında Erken Çocukluk Okuryazarlığını Geliştirmek

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Abstract

This study employed a literature review to explore the development of early childhood literacy skills in the 21st-century Classroom, focusing on the roles of parents, teachers, and guardians in children's well-being. The paper emphasizes the importance of devoting time, guidance, and teaching to children's passions and talents, highlighting the impact of these factors on children's intellectual abilities and character development. Moreover, this paper examines how literacy is facilitated and learned in diverse cultural contexts, including the influence of family, community, peers, mental wellness, family therapists, and institutions. Furthermore, the paper discusses the significance of creating learning-rich environments, the impact of technology on literacy development, and the interaction between nature and nurture in children's language learning. It also explores the actions and behaviours of teachers and parents that can support literacy development. Generally, the study underlines the crucial role of early guidance and support in fostering children's literacy skills and character development. In conclusion, supporting children's literacy development is essential for their academic success and prospects. Teachers can empower children to become proficient communicators, readers, and writers through a comprehensive strategy combining nature and nurture elements. By raising awareness among educators, parents and policymakers about the value of creating language-rich environments, collaborating with family therapists, involving family members in raising children, integrating technology in literacy education, and involving the community, the children will be proficient and thrive in their literacy skills.

Keywords: Early childhood literacy, 21st-century classroom, Parental guidance, Character development, Technology

Öz

Bu çalışmada ebeveynlerin, öğretmenlerin ve velilerin çocukların refahı konusundaki rollerine odaklanarak 21. yüzyıl sınıflarında erken çocukluk okuryazarlığı becerilerinin gelişimini araştırmak için literatür taraması yapılmıştır. Makalede çocukların tutku ve yeteneklerine zaman ayırmanın, rehberliğin ve öğretmenin önemi vurgulanmakta ve bu faktörlerin çocukların entelektüel yetenekleri ve karakter gelişimi üzerindeki etkisi dile getirilmektedir. Bunların yanı sıra, makale, ailenin, topluluğun, akranların, zihinsel sağlığın, aile terapistlerinin ve kurumların etkisi de dahil olmak üzere çeşitli kültürel bağlamlarda okuryazarlığın nasıl kolaylaştırıldığını ve öğrenildiğini incelemektedir. Ayrıca makalede, öğrenme açısından zengin ortamlar yaratmanın önemini, teknolojinin okuryazarlık gelişimi üzerindeki etkisini ve çocukların dil öğreniminde doğa ile beslenme arasındaki etkileşimi tartışılmaktadır. Tüm bunların yanı sıra, öğretmenlerin ve ebeveynlerin okuryazarlık gelişimini destekleyebilecek eylem ve davranışları da ele alınmaktadır. Çalışma, genel anlamda, çocukların okuryazarlık becerilerinin ve karakter gelişiminin desteklenmesinde erken rehberlik ve desteğin önemli rolünün altını çizmektedir. Sonuç olarak, çocukların okuryazarlık gelişiminin desteklenmesi, onların akademik başarıları ve geleceğe yönelik beklentileri açısından büyük önem taşımaktadır. Öğretmenler, doğa ve yetiştirme unsurlarını birleştiren kapsamlı bir strateji aracılığıyla çocukların yetkin iletişimciler, okuyucular ve yazarlar olmalarını sağlayabilir. Dil açısından zengin ortamlar yaratmanın, aile terapistleriyle işbirliği yapmanın, aile üyelerini çocuk yetiştirmeye dahil etmenin, teknolojiyi okuryazarlık eğitimine entegre etmenin ve toplumu dahil etmenin değeri konusunda eğitimciler, ebeveynler ve politika yapıcılar arasında farkındalık yaratarak, çocuklar kendi dillerinde yetkin olacak ve başarılı olacaklardır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Erken çocukluk okuryazarlığı, 21. yüzyıl sınıfları, Ebeveyn rehberliği, Karakter gelişimi, Teknoloji

Introduction

Raising self-confident, well-educated, and self-disciplined children is the most challenging responsibility every parent, educator, and guardian faces today (Kissee, 2013; Leman, 2008). While it's acknowledged that parents, guardians, and educators are struggling to build the characters and intellectual abilities of their children, devoting time to their passions and talents is one of the greatest gifts parents, educators, and guardians can ever give to their children as they grow up towards the pursuit of excellence. As educators working with children for many years, the authors acknowledge that acquiring literacy skills and developing children into children of character can be painful and complex without adult guidance, teaching and supervision. Although it is a complex and challenging job to raise and develop literacy skills in children, literature reminds us that persistence in devoting time, teaching and guiding the children is the most essential way of developing their literacy skills and characters.

> Kisee (2013) noted, "Worry not about the high cost of building men but be concerned about the high cost of failing to do so.' -Texas Prison Museum Wall Poster. Although this quote seems figurative, the message to parents, educators, and guardians emphasizes that to develop children's intellectual abilities and characters, devoting time to communicating, teaching, and motivating children should be considered a top priority. Parental involvement and support are critical in developing children's character and intellectual literacy from an early age.

Admittedly, the ability to read and write is a vital talent that influences a child's educational success and prospects in the future. Nevertheless, regarding cultural background, educators and parents must create environments supporting literacy development.

Methods

In preparing this study, the authors share their intimate knowledge of the Tanzanian Classroom as two authors are teachers and citizens of the country and, therefore, can discuss the classification of children in Tanzanian classrooms. The third author, a family therapist based in Kenya, examines the children's mental wellness perspective. The authors also relied on internet research using search engines, notably Google Scholar, using key terms like 'childhood literacy in Tanzania' to explore how literacy is mediated and learned in various cultural contexts, as well as the roles of family, community, peers, mental wellness, family therapists, and institutions in enhancing childhood literacy as children grow to be independent. In addition, the authors extensively used the books to explore how important it is to create environments rich in learning, how technology affects literacy development, and how children's language learning incorporates both nature and nurture. Finally, this study considers how a teacher's or parent's actions and behaviors might create circumstances that support literacy development.

Teaching children to read and write is one of the jobs parents and educators must do. Fostering basic skills in children is the cornerstone of other skills acquisition. The process of a child learning a language includes how nature and nurture play a part in this process (Dobson, 1997; Robin, 1980). A child learning to speak a language is challenging and involves both nature and nurture. Children have the innate ability to acquire a language from birth, but research shows that their environment significantly impacts this process. For instance, a study by Houen et al. (2022) discovered that early language exposure, both in quantity and quality, is a significant predictor of later language development. This emphasizes encouraging language development through interactions with caregivers and language-rich environments. Studies of genes associated with language show that heredity can also influence how people learn languages (James, 1970; Hollingdale et al. (2020). In this light, a complex interaction between nature and nurture plays a role in language acquisition.

As experienced teachers in the Tanzanian Classroom, the authors of this study have observed hand in hand that children differ significantly in learning and language acquisition. The authors captured several physical, heredity and environmental factors in the Classroom that contribute to children's intellectual development. Based on this point of view, the authors have classified children into three classifications based on their characteristics. The goal of categorising children into categories is to promote awareness among teachers, guardians, and parents so that they understand how important it is to invest their time and resources in developing their children's intellect. The authors of this study noticed that if parents and guardians want to build their children intellectually, they should create a habit of guiding, teaching, and talking with their children at an early age. Moreover, this study is intended to encourage parents, guardians, and educators to understand the difference between stimulation, guidance, and pressure when helping their children learn. For instance, the study of Gougou & Paschal (2023) noted that providing learning materials to children like books, pencils, and toys and helping them to read and write stimulates them to be able to read themselves. But strictly punishing children because they don't read or write is pressurizing them, affecting their learning abilities.

Categories of children in the Tanzanian Classroom.

The authors of this study made a categorization of the children based on the analysis of Thomas and Chess (1977) as follows:

Easy children: These children possess high esteem and a positive approach to the situation people, and they are always characterized by openness, freedom of expression, and eagerness to accept, grow and adapt to the new learning context. These children are easy to control. At the same time, they inspire their teachers and can acquire language skills quickly. Generally, these children are characterized by high academic performance because they cultivate an intellectual relationship with their teachers. The study conducted by Paschal & Mkulu (2020) pointed out that children who are appreciated and loved by their guardians, parents and teachers have high esteem and can develop intellectual abilities faster than children who are not loved and liked by their teachers and parents. The authors observed that easy children are being provided daily guidance and training by their parents and guardians. Interestingly, the children are given learning materials such as books and puzzles and are exposed to some fantastic places such as the zoo, airports, and museums

Slow-learners or shy children: Children in this category are slow to warm up and adapt to new situations. This group of learners respond negatively to learning situations, but their reactions are less potent than those of difficult children. The insufficiency of intellectual stimulation, growing up in deprived environments, and insecurity are the factors that contribute to their slow learning. Furthermore, in Tanzanian Classroom, the authors observed daily that slow – learners have not been given guidance by their parents and guardians. The lack of daily training, stimulation and guidance from adults seems to have slowed down the children's ability to talk and write (Thomas, Chess, & Birch, 1968)

Difficult children: These children are characterized by complicated behaviors, violence, mood swings and harmful reaction to people and learning. These kinds of children experience difficulties acquiring language and other academic abilities. Their challenges in developing skills like language learning are because they respond negatively to interactions and new situations (Thomas, Chess, Birch, Hertzig, & Korn, 1963). Some parents and educators give up on these children, failing to develop their talents and intellectual skills. In the view of the authors of this study, it's advantageous for teachers, parents and educators to teach and motivate children with guidance learning resources and read with them every day, as well as respond to the children's questions (James, 1970).

Disciplining children in the classroom

In this most globalized world, discipline has been largely misinterpreted. Yet, it has become the downfall of many educators because most school owners no longer act as educators but as parent pleasers who mainly support the guardians, parents and students against the educators or teachers. From this point of view, educators are very limited and can only work within the rules and regulations of the school. In most private schools in Africa, if a child or student complains about their teacher or educators, the teacher can quickly lose their job. In line with other observations, some educators have even lost their lives just because they were trying to correct the child portraying bad conduct in school. In this study, the authors draw an example from a scenario of how parents sometimes make discipline difficult for educators:

> '*The child comes to the exam hall at school with a phone even when it has been announced that phones are not allowed. The phone is seized, and the parent harasses the school to return an expensive phone immediately. The school owner was present and said, 'I have cameras in my school. Let me check how the phone disappeared. Then, the school owner saw from the CCTIV that the boy had snatched the phone. He later confessed to them that he gave the phone to the mother, who hid it at home and came to school to harass the teachers.*'

This is just one example. There are several other examples. It is too bad that the parent was only after the phone and not after the exam malpractice carried out by the child. From this noted scenario, it should be acknowledged that disciplining children who lack discipline at home can be challenging, but it is an essential aspect of teaching.

Strategies that can help educators as they model children who lack discipline
This study gives the following strategies to help educators model children who lack discipline.

Establish clear expectations: Teachers or educators should set clear rules and expectations for behavior in school and the Classroom by ensuring children understand the consequences of not following the school rules and regulations.

Recognize and praise good behavior: Positive reinforcement can encourage children in school to continue making positive choices that can lead to better academic performance

Provide unique educational service. As a teacher/educator, consider whether there must be underlying reasons for children's behaviors. Some may require additional support, such as counselling or special educational services

Develop strong relationships with the children, which goes a long way in modelling children who lack discipline. This is because when the children feel valued and respected, they are more likely to respond positively to teachers' guidance and counselling. Aultman, Williams-Jonson, & Schutz (2009) noted that the strong relationships between educators and learners are crucial to discipline development and successful teaching and learning processes. Thus, children with supportive relationships with their teachers attain higher levels of academic achievement than those with more conflicting relationships with their teachers. Moreover, Dianat & Abedin (2016) portrayed that teachers and educators must be motivated and encouraged to engage pupils in learning to make a disciplined child and effective learning happen.

The role of family, community, peers and institutions

In examining the role of family, community, peers, and institutions, as well as how literacy is mediated and learnt in various cultural contexts, Compton-Lilly et al. (2019) showed that ways in which literacy is mediated and learnt vary among cultural contexts and that functions of family, community, peers, and institutions may also shift. For instance, in the United States of America (USA), literacy growth was significantly influenced by suggested activities like storytelling and the use of written language in daily life. These studies stress the importance of a thorough approach to literacy training and understanding cultural contexts when examining literacy learning.

Storytelling is a powerful tool for engaging young children and promoting language development, literacy skills, and imagination. In this light, early childhood educators are encouraged to become skilled storytellers who can fully utilize this tool and provide enriching experiences for children in school organisations. There are several techniques educators can use to improve storytelling abilities. In this study, the authors suggest the following methods to help parents and educators enhance storytelling abilities.

Preparation is key. Take time to read and thoroughly plan the story you want to share. Think about how to bring it to life through expressive voices, gestures, and facial expressions. Visual aids like props or pictures can also capture children's attention.

Select the age of the children: In the home and school context, children's learning abilities differ. Educators and parents are encouraged to choose stories related to the age of the children they teach so that they can understand and pay attention to the developed lesson. The authors recommend selecting and developing simple stories with relatable themes and characters suitable for young learners.

Engage: Children have different perceptions and imaginations about a story they have listened to. From this point of view, parents and educators, both in school and at home, must encourage children to use their perceptions by asking closed and open-ended questions about the story. This can help them develop communication skills and other creativity

Introduce dialogues: Dialogues have been recognized to be an essential technique for developing creativity. Developing and telling stories that involve dialogue helps learners pay attention and be participative during storytelling time and in their future lives.

Then, make the story interactive: Get children involved by asking questions, assigning character roles, or having them perform drama actions. This helps keep them engaged and builds comprehension.

Focus on storyline clarity: Use precise sequencing and repetition so children can easily follow the narrative.

Maintain enthusiasm and energy in your delivery: This models expressiveness for children. Monitor their reactions so you can adjust the tone or pacing of the story as needed. In addition to how we tell stories, the types of stories we select matter, too. Select stories that relate to preschoolers' interests and experiences. Predictable, repetitive stories are great for early literacy development. Open-ended stories that allow for imagination and interpretation encourage abstract thinking skills. Multicultural stories foster social-emotional growth by building empathy and perspectives. Across all domains, children need both fiction and nonfiction selections. Teachers and children can become exceptional storytellers with thoughtful

planning and dynamic delivery. Our story times become rich, meaningful experiences where children's language flourishes, creativity ignites, and knowledge expands. Teachers have an invaluable opportunity to instil a lifelong love of stories in their children. Focusing on improving their storytelling abilities allows them to grasp this opportunity fully.

Environments that support literacy acquisition

The following are reflections on the deeds and practices of educators and parents and how they can be used to create environments that support literacy acquisition.

Creating language-rich environments is one of the most critical aspects of supporting children's literacy acquisition. This involves exposing children to diverse language experiences, such as reading aloud, storytelling, and conversation. Mol et al. (2008) claimed that fostering language-rich surroundings benefits children's language growth and literacy development. Reading aloud and storytelling are two language-rich activities teachers should include in their lessons. As a parent, one should engage in conversation with their children and should read books together. Also, singing some educational songs enables children to sharpen their language and understanding abilities. Parents should decorate their children's rooms with bright colors and age-appropriate games. Songs like "BINGO," "Number Counting," "Hide and Seek," and "Cards" are some examples of activities children and parents can do together.

The role of family and community in supporting children's literacy acquisition cannot be overplayed. Family and community members are crucial in creating environments that promote literacy development. Sénéchal and LeFevre (2002) and LeFevre and Sénéchal (2002) emphasize that parental involvement in their children's literacy development has a positive impact and enhances their acquisition of literacy skills. Parents can participate in their children's literacy development by reading aloud, giving them access to books, and promoting writing. Parents need to get involved in their children's school sports, games, and classroom activities to better understand their literacy needs and find time to communicate with their teachers. According to a study by van der Pluijim et al. (2019), community-based interventions can successfully foster children's oral language development from low-income families. In their evaluation, these authors of empirical treatments stress the value of including peers and community leaders in initiatives designed to help parents with less Education assist their children's language development. They also emphasize the significance of building supportive local communities, which include opportunities for parents to interact with their children in language-rich activities and safe and exciting areas for children to interact with others. Working with community-based organizations to create literacy-focused programs that support children's literacy development is crucial for an educator. Parents need to be encouraged to join community-based literacy programs with their children and to be actively involved in literacy activities such as community libraries, storytelling and singing

Positive home-school connection to ensure children's well-being

In today's rapidly changing world, building strong connections between home and school is more essential than ever for setting children's health and success. Positive home-school collaboration helps provide consistency across a child's two primary spheres of influence. This creates an integrated support that allows children to bloom socially, emotionally, and academically. Paschal & Mkulu (2020 a) noted that active parental involvement in Education boosts student achievement and motivation. When families show interest in school activities, events, and curriculum, children take more ownership of their learning. Parents who

communicate openly with teachers stay current on their child's progress. They can then provide adequate at-home support aligned to the Classroom. This continuity between home and school enables students to maximize their learning potential.

Beyond academic performance, positive home-school connections help children develop crucial life skills for the 21st century, such as problem-solving, responsibility, and teamwork. With parents and teachers working together, consistent expectations are set and reinforced. This provides stability while allowing children to practice adaptability across different environments. Such fluidity will prove valuable in our fast-changing world.

Home-school collaboration also models community engagement for impressionable young minds. When children see their primary role models—parents and teachers—working together toward a common goal, they learn the value of building relationships, sharing knowledge, and contributing to a larger purpose (Paschal, Nyoni, & Mkulu, 2020). This instils civic awareness and other prosocial behaviors that are beneficial for success.

Schools tap into one of their most valuable resources by keeping parents actively engaged in Education. And by welcoming school involvement, parents show the utmost investment in their child's future. This reciprocal relationship leads to optimal growth. In these complex times, a solid home-school connection provides children with the cooperative foundation to reach their full potential.

The role of technology

Technology has become an integral part of modern society, and its impact on children's literacy acquisition cannot be ignored (Paschal & Ismael, 2023). Technology can provide a range of opportunities for children to engage in literacy activities, such as reading e-books and writing on digital platforms (López-Escribano et al. 2021; Kanja, & Paschal, 2023). However, the impact of technology on literacy development is still a topic of debate. Eutsler et al. (2020) found that technology in literacy instruction had a small, positive effect on children's literacy skills. Teachers incorporate digital platforms and e-books to integrate technology literacy instruction (Owino & Paschal, 2023; Opondo &Paschal, 2023)). Children are also given access to online tools that help improve their literacy. Parents must monitor how children use technology to ensure they participate in a healthy mix of non-digital and digital literacy activities.

According to Biggs et al. (2023), creating environments that support literacy acquisition requires a multifaceted approach that involves the family, community, technology, and educators. Some parents and educators acknowledge the value of developing language-rich environments, family involvement, participating in community programs, and incorporating technology into literacy teaching. These tactics can be used in real-world situations to enhance children's literacy development, emphasising including children with various impairments. This implies that parents can help their children learn to read by engaging in language-rich activities like reading aloud or by using braille and sign language, making books accessible to them, and promoting writing. In addition, they can converse with their children and participate in community-based reading programs. Educators can support literacy acquisition by fostering language-rich environments, including technology in literacy lessons, and involving parents in their children's literacy development.

Mental health

Mental health permeates every aspect of human growth, including literacy development. This means that the mental well-being of each child impacts literacy development. For example, the slow learners described above can experience low self-esteem because of a lack of parental involvement in their literacy development. Low self-esteem affects children's capacity to learn literacy skills such as writing (Guban-Caisido & D. A. D., 2020). As such, parents and educators need to remember that children experience literacy acquisition challenges because of how they view themselves. Helping children feel better about themselves may help them acquire talking and writing skills more quickly. If not, such children and their parents can work with professional child therapists to address the root cause of low self-esteem. In the course of life, parents and educators can also experience mental health challenges. Diverse situations trigger mental health challenges. For instance, some parents and educators can blame themselves when children lag in literacy development. Yet, it may simply be that particular children experience delayed milestones. Thus, parents and educators need to be aware of their own, as well as their children's mental health status, and where to seek help. Children who are mentally well will likely achieve literacy development milestones, all other life circumstances notwithstanding. Professionals such as psychiatrists, psychologists, and family therapists should work to improve children, parents, and educators' mental well-being.

Neurodevelopmental disorders

According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (2013), some children experience neurodevelopmental disorders such as intellectual disabilities, communication disorders, autism spectrum disorder, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, among others. Such children experience literacy acquisition challenges and may require the services of specially trained educators. Additionally, children with dyslexia experience writing challenges (Hebert et al., 2018). In other words, delayed literacy development may indicate the presence of neurodevelopmental disorders, among other factors. Therefore, relevant professionals must screen children experiencing literacy development challenges for neurodevelopmental disorders and other conditions. Sometimes, children experiencing neurodevelopmental challenges are put on medications and may miss school from time to time. Missing school frequently may further delay children's literacy acquisition. Therefore, parents and educators need to know about the symptoms of diverse disorders in children so they can refer them for prompt evaluation and treatment. Delayed interventions may further slow down literacy acquisition in some children. These kinds of children require not only professional services but also extra parental and educator time and assistance if they are to achieve their literacy development milestones.

The attachment theory and literacy development

Research-based on attachment theory shows that children respond to perceived parents' behaviors differently (Ainsworth, 1979). Children who are allowed free expression in the presence of their parents are likely to fall in the category of easy children. In contrast, those who are afraid to express themselves may fall into the problematic children category. Children feel secure or insecure while interacting with their parents. Insecurity affects language competence (Dagan et al., 2022). For this reason, parental awareness of how attachment impacts literacy development would go a long way in promoting appropriate parent-child interactions. Secure children tend to achieve literacy development more quickly. Therefore, parental and educators' knowledge regarding attachment theory would enhance their skills in how to be with children.

The role of parents

Long before they go to school, parents facilitate their children's literacy development by talking to them and teaching them how to write. According to Bigozzi et al. (2023), children's ability to develop literacy skills is impacted by the hostile or friendly environments their parents create. Therefore, parents need to know that friendliness towards their children improves literacy acquisition, while hostility does the opposite. Although parents take their children to school and pay fees for them to learn, literacy development begins at home. One of the greatest gifts parents can give their children during their formative years is spending quality time talking and teaching them how to write. In other words, parental intentional involvement enhances children's literacy development beyond the home. However, not all children have the privilege of having parents. Some children's parents may have died, separated, divorced, or may work in far places where they cannot be at home every day. Children of absent parents may be disadvantaged in one way or the other as far as literacy development is concerned. Nonetheless, parents or guardians can arrange for someone else to step in their shoes to teach their children how to talk and write. To say it differently, parents need to be purposeful in teaching their children how to speak and write. Still, nothing is lost for children whose parents are absent because educators help them during classroom lessons.

Additionally, some parents may not be aware that they need to intentionally spend quality time teaching their children how to talk and write. This is because some parents think that literacy development is the work of educators alone, while others come home from work too tired to do anything else. In matters of literacy development, parents need to know that it is a collaborative effort and their role complements that of educators. However, the parental capacity to teach literacy development skills to their children should not be taken for granted. This is because, in some Low and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs), not everyone learns how to read and write (Crawford et al., 2023). When parents don't know how to write, family therapists or community social workers can be sought to equip them with parent-child communication skills. Towards this end, governments should avail literacy development classes for such parents. Attending adult literacy development classes would boost parents' capacity and confidence to teach their children how to talk and write.

The role of educators

Educators in classroom settings do a commendable job of developing children's literacy capacity. Educators are trained to help children excel in talking and writing. Educators advance the work of parents in the Classroom. Educators are also expected to identify and assist children who experience difficulty in literacy development (Paschal, 2022). However, a recent study found that some educators were ill-equipped to help children who struggle with literacy acquisition (Weadman et al., 2023). This finding suggests that educators' training needs to include a course on how to identify and help children who are not achieving their literacy development milestones as expected. Such knowledge would boost educators' confidence and collaboration with parents on children's literacy development issues (Paschal, 2022). Knowledgeable educators could call parents for a planning meeting on how to support struggling children. Educators would also be equipped on how to create and conduct parental support groups for parents whose children experience literacy development challenges. Sharing experiences in support groups regularly helps parents learn from each other and encourages them to keep helping their children (Paschal & Gougou, 2022).

Nevertheless, it is crucial to remember that each child is unique, and several factors may affect their capacity to excel in literacy acquisition. For example, a struggling child may be experiencing speech problems, physical and/or emotional abuse, or may have been born deaf and dumb. As such, educators need to know

when and where to refer parents for hearing and speech assessments, mental health evaluations, and child and family therapy. Parents need to be encouraged to accept reality and to allow their dumb and/or deaf children to learn sign language.

Additionally, not all parents and educators are physically or mentally healthy. This means that teachers and parents must be alert to their mental and physical health status. Ailing parents and educators must be willing to seek treatment if they expect to help children attain literacy development optimally. Parents and educators must also embrace other professionals when working with literacy-challenged children (Paschal, 2023). This is because life's challenges psychologically impact children and all human beings. As such, the services of family therapists, child psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, speech therapists, and policymakers should be incorporated as the need arises.

The best interest of the child

From a legal perspective, a child's best interest requires that the views of parents, educators, and children's rights be incorporated during decision-making (Salminen, 2018). Parents and educators must adhere to the above principles to aid children's literacy development. Children who experience challenges in literacy development have the right to all the assistance they can get. For example, children who cannot talk, hear, or write. Some parents may live in denial of the fact that their mute or deaf child may never speak, hear, or write. Such parents may hope, in vain, that their child will talk, hear, or write someday. Denying such a child the opportunity to learn sign language is not in the child's best interest. Struggling children have a right to be acknowledged for how they are and included in learning. According to Ranta (2023), such children have a right to voice how they feel and what they can do. However, some parents and educators may be ignorant of children's rights and need to be taught about them because they may not be aware that denying a struggling child the right to be heard and the right to literacy development is abusive (Murray et al., 2020).

In children's best interest, parents and educators need to be open to an interdisciplinary approach when working with children (Paschal, 2023). This is because parents and educators cannot know everything. Besides, the services of other professionals can enhance children's literacy development in one way or another. For example, family therapists can support children's parent therapeutically. Seeking the services of a family therapist can make a difference in the life of a child experiencing literacy development challenges. When a parent is frustrated because their child is lagging in literacy development, a family therapist can calm their fears by normalizing their experience and collaboratively exploring the child's needs. In therapeutic relationships, parents are reassured and/or referred to other professionals who help assess children's capacity to achieve their literacy development milestones. Together, parents, educators, family therapists, and other professionals can collaboratively help children surmount literacy development challenges in the best interest of children. Policymakers in LMICs can develop national guidelines on where and what services are available to literacy-challenged children, their parents, and educators.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, supporting children's literacy development is essential for their academic success and prospects. Teachers can empower children to become proficient communicators, readers and writers through a comprehensive strategy that combines elements of nature and nurture. By raising awareness among

educators, parents and policymakers about the value of creating language-rich environments, collaborating with family therapists, involving family members in raising children, integrating technology in literacy education, and involving the community, the children will be proficient and thrive in their literacy skills.

This study recommends encouraging parents to actively participate in their children's literacy development by reading and writing, discussing books with them and creating a healthy and supportive home environment for learning and well-being. Teachers and educators should participate in professional development to develop their literacy instruction skills and include the best teaching strategies. Teachers and parents should never cease to apply technology as they teach their children. It is also encouraged that educators and parents should conduct regular assessments of children's development.

Declarations

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