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Researching The Relation Between The Alternative Thinking Skill And Consequential Thinking Skill Of Preschoolers [1]

Okul Öncesi Dönemde Alternatif Düşünme Ve Sonuçsal Düşünme Becerisi Arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi

Lecturer Fatime Sabahat IŞIKTEKİNER [2] Prof. Dr. Fatma ÇAĞLAYAN DİNÇER [3]

[2] Hitit University, Sungurlu Vocational School, Department of Child Care and Youth Services, Çorum, Turkey
[3] Hasan Kalyoncu University, Faculty of Education, Department of Basic Education, Gaziantep, Turkey

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to research the relation between the alternative thinking skill and consequential thinking skill of the 48-72 months of preschoolers. The participants of this study are 48-72 months of 48 children (21 girls, 27 boys) who live in Ankara and have education in a kindergarten under a public institution. The relational screening model was used for that study. As data collection tools; for the alternative thinking skill, Preschool Interpersonal Problem Solving Test (PIPS) which was created by Spivack and Shure (1974), adapted by Dinçer (1995) to Turkish was used, and for the consequential thinking skill, What Happen Next Game (WHNG) test which was created by Shure (1990), translated by Dinçer (2014) into Turkish was used. According to the results of the study, it was observed that there is statistically no significant relationship between total scores of alternative thinking skills and total scores of consequential thinking skills, however; there appears to be a low positive correlation. In addition, while there is no significant relationship between the gender and alternative thinking and consequential thinking skills; alternative thinking skill scores indicate a significant difference depending on the age and the period of preschool education. After all, it is seen that consequential thinking skill scores of children do not differentiate significantly depending on the age and the period of preschool education.

Key words: Interpersonal Problem Solving, Alternative Thinking Skills, Consequential Thinking Skills

ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın amacı, okul öncesi 48-72 ay çocukların alternatif düşünme becerileri ile sonuçsal düşünme becerileri arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektir. Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu, Ankara ilinde yaşayan, bir kamu kurumuna bağlı kreş ve gündüz bakımevinde eğitim gören 48-72 aylık 48 çocuk (21 kız, 27 erkek) oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmada ilişkisel tarama yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Veri toplama araçları olarak, alternatif düşünme becerisi için Spivack ve Shure (1974) tarafından geliştirilmiş ve Türkçeye uyarlaması Dinçer (1995) tarafından yapılmış olan Preschool Interpersonal Problem Solving Test (PIPS), sonuçsal düşünme becerisini belirlemek amacıyla Shure (1990) tarafından geliştirilen ve Dinçer (2014) tarafından Türkçeye çevrilen What Happen Next Game (WHNG) Testi kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın sonuçlarına göre, çocukların alternatif düşünme becerisi toplam puanları ile sonuçsal düşünme becerisi toplam puanları arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir ilişki olmadığı, ancak düşük düzeyde pozitif yönlü bir korelasyon olduğu görülmektedir. Ayrıca çocukların alternatif düşünme ve sonuçsal düşünme beceri puanları ile cinsiyet arasında anlamlı bir ilişki bulunmazken, alternatif düşünme beceri puanları yaşa ve okul öncesi eğitim alma süresine göre anlamlı bir farklılık göstermektedir. Bununla birlikte çocukların sonuçsal düşünme beceri puanlarının yaşa ve okul öncesi eğitimi alma süresine göre anlamlı bir şekilde farklılaşmadığı görülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kişiler Arası Problem Çözme, Alternatif Düşünme Becerileri, Sonuçsal Düşünme Becerileri

1. INTRODUCTION AND AIM

Early childhood education is an important period forming the first stage of human life from zero to six years, in which learning and development is most rapid, acquisitioning of certain habits and social values, to learn how best to communicate with people, as well as laying the foundation of personality because of the inclusion of developmental tasks. Children, in terms of theory of psychosocial development (Erikson, 1968) discover his autonomy and independent being; and, realize that he is an individual. Besides, with some problem behaviors in children, increasing initiative has been observed during this period. When looking from the window of cognitive development theory (Piaget, 1969), child is egocentric in early childhood education period; and expects from all the individual around him to act and think the same with himself in many ways. Furthermore, Vygotsky's socio cultural theory (1978) mentions that children are learning form their social context and this context affects child's cognitive structure.

During this period, children are being socialized by sharing, waiting the line, co-operation, accepting other's feelings and comments and controlling aggressive behaviors of themselves. Problem solving skills of child should be supported in order to make him to learn about how to communicate effectively in different social

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situations and to make him developing harmonious personality. Katz (1995) stated that if preschool children establish a well-nurturing and mutual relationship between their peers and adults around them, then they can easily adapt to their future life experiences. Moreover to that, peer relationships in this period play an important role in their problem solving skills and understanding the concept of interaction among people. Being successful in peer relationships requires being part of a group and interpersonal problem solving skills. These skills are social problem solving strategies including recognizing the problem, creating alternative possible solutions to that problem and implementing the best solution on it (Erwin, 1993).

Shure and Spivack (1982) defines social problem solving as systematic thinking skills that child uses in his daily life to handle with faced problems. They identified a series of interpersonal problem-solving skills supporting nurturing human relationships as an end product of several longitudinal studies. The research contains two experimental and one control group of four and five-year old children who are attending day care center and kindergarten. It is observed that children in day care education (as experimental group) make progress in three different kind of interpersonal cognitive problem solving skills; thinking alternative solutions, consequential thinking skills and causal thinking skills. The other experimental group, in which there are children attending a preschool, shows improvement in thinking alternative solutions and thinking results consideration skills. As a result, it is observed that both of the two groups have significant progress in thinking alternative solutions and consequential thinking abilities depending on social cohesion (Shure and Spivack, 1980). Alternative thinking skills are the capabilities that child is able to generate multiple alternative solutions in problem situation. Whether the solution is beneficial or not is not an important issue while observing this skill. The crucial cornerstone is child's finding different and alternative ways to handle with a problematic situation. Consequential thinking skills are the abilities which allow child to foresee long and short term results of a founded solution; and using this vision in decision making process (Dinçer, 1995; Shure and Spivack, 1982).

Interpersonal cognitive problem solving thinking skills program teaching the necessary techniques to solve a problem in which children understand their own and other's feelings, develop empathy skills are aiming to gain children to the vision of analyzing more than one solution to a problem and capacity to evaluate the results. Many of research have proven the effectiveness of the cognitive problem solving thinking skills program (Anlıak, 2004; Dinçer, 1995; Dinçer and Güneysu, 2001; Erwin and Ruane, 1993; Işıktekiner, 2014; Işıktekiner and Dinçer, 2015; Shure and Spivack, 1982). In addition to this, multi-faceted and the effectiveness of various programs have been proven in accordance with the studies rather than one intervention program (Dereli, 2008; Domitrovich, Cortes and Greenberg, 2007; Ocak and Arda, 2012; Webster-Stratton, Reid and Hammond, 2001).

Our pre-school education institutions should have the responsibility to offer the opportunity to create an environment in which children can gather together; and to teach how to use the thinking skills in their peer relationships. These children benefiting from the training period will encounter problems in their relationships with their peers in a natural environment, to express their feelings to solve these problems, to try to understand the feelings of their peers; and they will seek alternative solutions and perhaps learn to think consequential most importantly. Children, capturing interpersonal problem solving skills with these approaches, will practice how they cope with conflicts and angry feelings, how to go from hurting other people; and thus, they will perform even more desirable behaviors and attitudes in relationships with peers. Pre-school education provided in educational institutions should primarily emphasize to train children' alternative thinking skills, and determining what kind of results will be reached with these alternatives; and finally, deciding the best solution and act it to reach desired result. Unfortunately, the children in our preschool institutions are expected to apply the adult-guided solutions to a problem without practicing the alternative and consequential thinking skills. As a result of this, children behave without considering the results of his acting. In their study, Roseth et al (2008) investigated the impact of teacher intervention on children' ability to solve conflicts, they concluded that teacher's effect prevents the conflict resolution skills of the children. In addition to this, it is confirmed that teacher are not apply the behavioral appliances to make children be able to solve their future problems. Teachers apply it as an instant solution (Jenkins, Rıtblatt, Jeffrey and McDonald, 2008).

The aim of this study is to research the relation between the alternative thinking skill and consequential thinking skill of the 48-72 months of preschoolers. For this purpose, it has been sought answers to the following questions: Is there a significant difference between alternative thinking skills and consequential thinking skills in comparison with their genders, age and the period they have attended preschool education?

2. MATERIAL AND METHOD

2.1. The Design of The Research and Research Group

The relational screening model was used for that study. The participants of this study are 48-72 months of 48 children (21 girls, 27 boys) who live in Ankara and have education in a kindergarten under a public institution.

2.3. Data Collection Tools

2.3.1. Preschool Interpersonal Problem Solving Test -PIP

Which was created by Shure and Spivack (1992), adapted by Dinçer (1995) to Turkish; and then, validity and reliability analysis has been made by Anlıak and Dinçer (2005), Dinçer, Anlıak, Şahin and Karaman (2009) was used in this research. This test was developed to assess the alternative solutions thinking skills that preschool children bring for interpersonal problems. It is composed of two parts, including problems with problems with peers and with parents. The first part of the test consists of at least seven stories involving peer problems. Each story passes in the situation of one of the children playing with a toy for a long time, and other children would like to play with the same toy. What could do or say is asked to children to find possible different solutions on a problem that they can face in their daily lives. The second part of the test including the mother-child problem consists of at least five stories. In these stories, there is a child who accidentally damage one of his/her mother's goods (for example, a vase). Children are empowered to create a solution to say this situation to the mother without letting her to get angry.

2.3.2. What Happens Next Game (WHNG) Test

This was created by Shure ahd Spivack (1990), translated by Dinçer (2014) into Turkish is a similar test with PIPS and conducted together. This test was developed to measure four-to-six aged children' consequential thinking skills. It is similar to PIPS according to its operation and format. Children are asked what could be happen next in order to make them aware of more than one solution on a problem and more than one result of this solution in this test. It is mentioned that this test cannot be used with accompanied with PIPS (Shure, 1990). Test consists of two sections: "peer-peer" and "peer-adult" stories. In first part, there are stories describing the peer-peer problems (a child takes the toys from the other child's hands without permission) to children. In second part, there are the stories describing the peer-adult problems (child takes the objects from adult without permission). In all the stories that describe the problems between peers, tests are shown to children by a picture of the same-gender child. In adult stories, only adult illustration is shown to children. The first section 7, the second part has 8 stories. Initially PIPS Test has been conducted with children; and then, WHNG Test has been applied to children. Applications are made on an individual basis and in a quiet room. The implementation of the test took about 30 minutes.

While scoring in PIPS Test, the solutions are divided into categories. The divided categories of solutions that give children are divided into groups. Only one point is given by the solution within each group; different groups in different categories are graded different in terms of points for consideration different thinking skills. Thus, there is possible for one child to get more than one points within these categories. While scoring the WHNG Test, the similar techniques are used with PIPS. The results are classified into categories; receiving multiple points for a result it has been possible within the given categories in scoring process. PIPS score consists of the total number of different solutions to the peer-mother problems in given stories; whereas, WHNG Test score consists of the total number of different consequences to the peer-mother problems in given stories.

2.3.4. Data Analysis

Pearson Moments Multiplication Correlation Technique is used in order to reveal the relationship between alternative and consequential thinking skills. Also, t test is used for independent samples according to gender and age variables. One way analysis of variance is performed for the variable of the duration of pre-school education. The LSD Test is used to determine what caused the difference. The level of significance is taken as 0.05.

3. RESULTS

The aim of this study is to research the relation between the alternative thinking skill and consequential thinking skill of preschool children. For this purpose, alternative thinking on the relationship between children's scores and consequential thinking skills scores were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment

Correlation. In analysis, there was not found any statistically significant correlation between total scores of alternative and consequential thinking skills of children. However, it is seen that there is a low positive correlation (r = .213, p > .05).

Table 1. Pearson Moments Multiplication Correlation Results of the Relationship Between Children' PIPS and WHNG Test Scores

Variable	N	R	p
PIPS Test WHNG Test	48	0.213	0.147

P< .05

t- test results of children' PIPS and WHNG scores according to gender is given in Table 2. When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that there is no significant differences between mean total score of PIPS and WHNG test according to gender (t=-0.330; t=-0.884, p>.05). Yet, the girls have higher total scores than the boys from two of the tests.

Table 2. t- Test Results of Children' PIPS and WHNG Scores According to Gender

	Gender	N	$\bar{X}$	SS	t	p
PIPS						
Test	Girl	21	9.14	1.90	-0.330	0.743
Total	Boy	27	8.13	2.50		
WHNG						
Test	Girl	21	8.10	1.95	-0.884	0.381
Total	Boy	27	7.67	1.41		

P< .05

t-test results of children' PIPS and WHNG scores according to age is given in Table 3. The difference between PIPS test scores and age has found statistically significant (t=-2.838 p<.05). Based on this information, it can be expressed that there is a development in alternative thinking skills depending on age of children. On the other hand, WHNG Test scores has no significant differences; still however, total score appears to be relatively higher (t = -0.430 p> .05).

Table 3. t- Test Results of Children' PIPS and WHNG Scores According to Age

	Age	N	$\bar{X}$	SS	t	p
PIPS						
Test	48-60 months	24	8.14	2.26	-2.838	0.007*
Total	60-72 months		9.88	1.90		
WHNG						
Test	48-60 months	24	7.75	1.92	-0.430	0.669
Total	60-72 months		7.96	1.40		

P< .05

Consequential thinking and alternative thinking skills of preschool children were analyzed using one-way analysis of variance to determine whether it differs depending on the period. This process is then supported by the LSD test to examine significant differences among groups. The results of the findings are given in Table 4. Children's alternative thinking skills, varies significantly according to the spent period in pre-school education (F = 2.832, p <.05). After LSD results of one way variance analysis to determine the scores of PIPS Test considering the period of preschool education, children' scores are found statistically significant between 2-3 years and 3 years of preschool education (p <.05). In this case, more than three years of preschool education of children (X = 10.40) and 2-3 years of pre-school education of children (X = 8.15) shows more significant differences from the scores of the children in the other two groups of alternative thinking skill points. Children consequential thinking skills does not show a statistically significant difference respect to pre-school education period (F = 0.552, p> .05).

Table 4. One Way Analysis of Variance Test Results According to The Period They Have Attended Preschool Education According to Total Scores of PIPS and WHNG Tests

	Period	N	$\bar{X}$	SS	F	p
PIPS Test Total	6 mths-1 year	4	10.00	3.16	2.832	0.049 Significant difference *2-3 years *More than 3 years
	1-2 years	14	9.00	1.66		
	2-3 years	20	8.15	2.06		
	More than 3 years	10	10.40	2.37		
WHNG Test Total	6 mths-1 year	4	7.50	0.58	0.552	0.649
	1-2 years	14	8.14	1.56		
	2-3 years	20	7.55	1.96		
	More than 3 years	10	8.20	1.48		

P< .05

4. DISCUSSION

Results did not differ genders by means of alternative and consequential thinking skills. Erwin, Firth and Purves (2004) study carried out by the children's interpersonal problem-solving skills (thinking and consequential thinking of alternative solutions) has been tested and found not differ by gender. These results are consistent with the results of another study conducted in Turkey (Akbaş, 2005; Anlıak and Dinçer, 2005; Bal and Temel, 2014; Bozkurt Yükçü and Demircioğlu, 2017; Kargı, 2009; Özyürek, 2018). Also, it is observed that girls score higher than boys. This finding is similar to findings in a Dinçer, Güneysu and Etikan's (1997) work. Walker (2004) has revealed that boys are more likely to use aggressive and destructive strategies while solving conflicts in a peer group more than girls. In addition, Tozduman Yaralı and Özkan (2016) determined in their study that there is a significant relationship between the gender of children and their social problem-solving skills. Arı and Yaban (2012) also stated in their study that girls are better in social problem-solving skills than boys and that they produce more solutions to problems.

Alternative thinking skills of children by age showed differences, there are no differences according to the age in terms of consequential thinking skills. Scores of children 60-72 months seems to be higher than the scores of children of 48-60 months. In many studies in the literature, it has been determined that children's interpersonal problem-solving skills differ according to age (Arı and Yaban, 2012; Bal and Temel, 2014; Bozkurt Yükçü and Demircioğlu, 2017; Özyürek, 2018; Yaban and Yükselen, 2007; Yılmaz and Tepeli, 2013). It is seen that the age variable is effective in children's thinking skills, and the reason for these age related differences is due to the rapid change in the child's cognitive development in early childhood. It is expected from child to observe the results of different strategies, to understand the others as a function of cognitive development, to look at different perspectives for analyzing the situation and to think abstract to evaluate the results with the experiences related to age (Rubin and Rose- Krasnor, 1992, as cited in Arı and Yaban, 2012).

Alternative thinking of the children show significant change over the period of pre-school education; however, although consequential thinking skills, shows no statistically significant change. Özyürek (2018) found in the study that interpersonal problem-solving skills of children do not differ according to the duration of preschool education. Dinçer and Göktaş (2019) examined the interpersonal problem solving skills of 4-6 years old children who received and did not receive pre-school education, and found that children who received pre-school education had higher interpersonal problem solving skill scores than children who did not receive pre-school education. Preschool education institutions create an environment for children to gather together with their peers, make them to be in mutual conversation and socialize. Problem-solving skills should be one of the basic skills needed to gain the children in these institutions. In this context, in order to develop social and interpersonal problem-solving skills of children should be used widely by preparing various training programs. Bilir Seyhan, Ocak Karabay, Arda Tunçdemir, Greenberg, and Domitrovich (2019) applied PATHS to 48-72 months old children, and at the end of the study, it was observed that children showed high improvement in their social emotional skills, interpersonal relations and emotion regulation skills. In the study of Kayılı and Erdal (2021), in which they examined the effect of Problem Solving Education given with the Drama Based Storytelling Method, it was seen that it had a positive effect on the problem-solving skills of five years old children. With this method, it is aimed to provide children with a positive perspective as well as skills such as encouraging creative thinking, developing critical thinking, developing listening skills, developing empathy skills, cooperation with the group and respecting peers. Zorlu and Öğülmüş (2020) emphasized that I Can Problem Solve Program (ICPS) is effective in interpersonal problem solving skills of 4-5 years old children and that these trainings should be expanded in the pre-school period. Balda and Sangwan (2018) examined the effect of the intervention program they prepared to improve children's alternative and consequential thinking skills in order to regulate their aggressive behavior revealed that they prefer solutions.

Widely used programs, especially promoting socio-emotional and cognitive problem skills in preschool years; such as, Promotion of Alternative Thinking Skills –PATHS, Incredible Years Program, I Can Problem Solve Program-ICPS, Second Step, have been proven by both domestic and abroad studies as preventive basic intervention programs for children with problems in mutual relations in a constructive way support solving interpersonal problem-solving skills, like being in friendly cooperation and pro-social behavior has developed, as well as increase social and emotional competence (Arda and Ocak, 2012; Dereli, 2008; Dinçer, 1995; Domitrovich, Cortes and Greenberg, 2007; Durmuşoğlu Saltalı and Deniz, 2010; McMahon, Washburn, Felix, Yakin, Childrey, 2000; Nix, Bierman, Domitrovich and Gill, 2013; Shure and Spivack, 1982; Webster-Stratton, Reid and Hammond, 2001).

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

As a result of this research, children have a low level of positive correlation between consequential thinking skills with alternative thinking skills, but the relationship between the scores was not statistically significant. This result indicates the rising of the scores of consequential thinking while also rising the scores of alternative thinking skills. Still however, due to the fact that this finding was not statistically significant, generalizing the relationship between the scores may not be accurate. It is thought that this situation is related to the limitations of the study. Keeping the selection and limited number of working groups from one school prevents a comprehensive assessment and generalization. Test scores of children PIPS seems to be higher than the average of WHNG Test scores. In this case, interpersonal problem-solving skills stands in priority as the advent of alternative thinking skills, while the next process is interpreted as the arrival of consequential thinking skills. However, both teachers and parents influencing of the development of these skills in guiding them in what could be a negative result without producing solutions to problems rather than opportunities for their children's thinking has negative effects.

In the way of obtained results; In situations of problems, the activities should be arranged for children to show them that there are more than one solution, alternative solutions are existing and all the solutions have their own consequences. Especially consequential thinking skills activities for development should be regulated. Long-term studies with larger sample sizes can be made.

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