

# A Comparison of Turkish and South Korean Mothers' Views About Preschool Education and Their Expectations From Preschools

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The preschool period which comprises the years from birth to age of six, is one of the most critic periods of life because of its future effect on the formation and shaping of the personality, moulding the social and emotional life, and the acquisition of basic knowledge, skills, and habits. Most of the behaviors which are acquired in the childhood shape one's personality, attitudes, habits, beliefs, and values in the adulthood. Although Turkey and South Korea are geographically distant countries, there is a close relationship between them in terms of their late history. The paths of historical development of preschool education in these countries are similar, but their current schooling rates are different. Their development levels, cultures, and systems of education are also different. This study aims to compare the views of mothers' with children in preschools about preschool education and expectations from preschools in both of these countries. This study includes mothers in the neighborhoods where families with middle socio-economic levels live in Istanbul (Turkey) and Seoul (South Korea), whose children are between three and six years old and go to the preschools registered under the Ministry of Education. A survey with closed-ended questions was administered to 279 mothers (139 Turkish mothers and 140 South Korean mothers) who were included in the study according to the principle of voluntariness. The research results indicated that Turkish and South Korean mothers have some similar views as well as some different views. Their answers to six questions which seek their views about preschool education show that mothers from both countries consider preschool education as an important issue; they do not consider preschools as a caring institution; they think rather than themselves, preschools affect their children, and they try to learn about preschool education and children in this period. According to the mothers' answers to seven questions about their expectations from preschools, both Turkish mothers and South Korean mothers sent their children to preschools and were against strict discipline. While most South Korean mothers supported that their children go out and play in summer and winter, and learn how to read and write in preschools, few Turkish mothers agreed with this view. Both Turkish mothers and South Korean mothers supported teaching simple add-subtract operations, foreign languages, and computer, but this rate was higher in the latter.

*Keywords:* preschool education, Turkish mothers, South Korean mothers

## Introduction

Children develop and change rapidly during the preschool period which can be considered the foundation of life. It is during this period that children gain their basic habits, start to socialize through various experiences,

and advance their cognitive skills and talents. Preschool education may be defined as:

A systematic education that ensures healthy development of children from birth to elementary school, sets the foundations for the development of a positive character, promotes creativity and self-confidence and involves educators and families by considering children's development levels, individual differences and talents. (Zembar, 2001)

Opportunities and positive adult support offered to children during this period prepare children for life in the best way possible, while depriving children of these causes them to experience difficulties in the process of preparation for life (Oktay, 2002).

Hence, preschool education services, which should be planned in a scientific and systematic way, are a crucial part of all educational systems (Ari, 2003). The relevant literature and practices in the field of contemporary education proved that education should start at earlier ages to train qualified and healthy people who conform to the required behaviors (Zembar, Yıldız, Önder, & Fathi, 1994).

In the preschool period, parents and preschool educators have great duties. To train healthy and modern generations, parents and educators in preschools should be in contact and know each other's expectations (Metin & Ari, 1993). A cooperation between family and school allows teacher to know better the parents and child, and also allows parents to know school, program, and teacher. Thus, parents have the opportunity to learn about the educational environment, and the conditions of school and teacher (Argon & Akkaya, 2008).

Even though the importance of early childhood and the education offered in this stage has long been emphasized, preschool education only became commonly accepted in the 20th century even in developed societies (Oktay, 2003). The approximate preschool education rate of 65% in Turkey for five to six years old children (Aktan & Akkutay, 2014) does not match the current development level of the country or the rate in developed countries. Considering that the preschool education rate in most European Union member states is close to 100%, it is evident that necessary steps should be taken immediately (Ari, 2003).

Parents' concern for preschool education has an important role in the spreading of preschool education. This study aims to compare the views on and expectations from preschools of the mothers in Turkey with the mothers in South Korea, which is a developed country with different cultural and economic characteristics, and has a schooling rate of 87% for five to six years old children (Aktan & Akkutay, 2014) despite its similar historical process of development of preschool education with Turkey.

### **Preschool Education in Turkey**

The historical development of preschool education in Turkey can be treated under two headings: "Ottoman Empire" and "Turkish Republic".

#### **Ottoman Empire Era**

Even though the empire did not have preschools in their current sense until the beginning of the 20th century, there were several institutions that undertook the education of children in this stage. To illustrate, "sıbyan" schools were elementary level schools but some parents also sent their younger children to these (Oktay, 1983a).

The opening of proper preschools in various provinces of the empire coincided with the period just before the Second Constitutional Period (1908) (Akyüz, 1996; Öztürk, 1998). The renowned educator Mustafa Satı opened a private kindergarten in Istanbul which quickly became a school for the children of rich families. This school offered education in light of the views of highly acclaimed educators, such as Pestalozzi, Froebel, and

Montessori. Likewise, educator Kazım Nami Duru travelled to the Austro-Hungarian Empire during the Constitutional Period to observe schools that educated “kindergarten” teachers, and opened a kindergarten himself in Selonica on his return (Oktay, 2002).

Even though the Balkan Wars may have largely hampered these efforts, public kindergartens were also launched within the empire between 1913-1917. The biggest problem of both private and public kindergartens in this era was the difficulty of finding teachers educated in line with selected education methods (The Froebel method stood out among these) (Oktay, 2002). With the Temporary Elementary Education Law passed in October 6, 1913, certain legal arrangements were made in the field of preschool education. Item 3 of this law listed kindergartens and “sıbyan” schools as elementary schools and Item 4 defined them as “institutions which contributed to children’s physical and psychological development by offering them appropriate games for their age group, organizes trips, engages them in handcrafts, and involves discussions on psalms, patriotic poems and nature studies” (Ergin, 1977). The law also mentioned that kindergartens would be established for four to seven years old children and that new regulations are needed for these schools (Akyüz, 1996). In 1914, while the Ministry of Education budget was being drawn, money was set aside for opening kindergartens, and a total of 10 schools were planned for different parts of Istanbul that year (Oktay, 2002).

As a result of these regulations concerning preschool education, the number of kindergartens in big cities increased quickly; however, when the Ottoman Empire lost World War I with Mondros Ceasefire Agreement signed on October 30, 1918, most of it was conquered including the capital city of Istanbul (Akyüz, 1982). The one-year Kindergarten Teacher Education School opened by the state in 1915 in Istanbul was closed down in 1919, followed by the public kindergartens around the empire (Ministry of Education, 1993).

### **Era of the Turkish Republic**

Between 1919-1922, Turkish people fought for their independence led by Atatürk, won their War of Independence, and finally proclaimed themselves a republic on October 29, 1923, and established the new Turkish state. After 1923, the country witnessed more important political, economic, legal, and cultural changes than ever (Akyüz, 1982).

In 1923 in Turkey, a total of 5,880 children were being educated in 80 preschools with 136 teachers (Yılmaz, 2003). However, the difficult circumstances of the country and the efforts spent on increasing literacy and creating a new type of citizen during the early years of the republic resulted in the majority of resources being spent on elementary schooling (Ministry of Education, 1993).

With two circulars issued on October 25, 1925, and January 29, 1930, schools were notified that the Ministry of Education would shift its kindergarten budget to elementary education, which resulted in the closing of the kindergartens which had been opened in the provinces (Ergin, 1977). However, owing to the statement in these circulars that “Kindergartens can only be opened in exceptional cases and in provinces with an adequate budget, for mothers who work in factories and fields and have no one to take care of their children while they are working”, daycares were opened in Istanbul for the children of working class mothers (Oktay, 1983b). Consequently, preschool education was left to families and local authorities (Oktay, 2002).

The National Education Council, which is the highest advisory board of the Ministry of National Education and discusses educational issues and makes recommendations, is also effective in the shaping of the Turkish national education system (Ergun, 2008). Ever since 1939, 18 National Education Councils have been convened, some of which included preschool education on their agenda.

Item 6 of the Temporary Elementary Education Law which was effective in 1961 mandated that preschool education would be offered to those who demand it within elementary schools (Barkçin, 1991). The National Education Law of 1973 included preschool education within the formal education system and listed the scope, aims, and responsibilities of preschool education (Sapmaz & İlhan, 2008). In 1977, the “Preschool Branch” was established within the Ministry of National Education General Directorate of Elementary Education (Yangin, 1991).

As social purposes had a major role in the opening of preschool education institutions in Turkey, laws and regulations issued by other ministries than national education, particularly the Ministry of Health, also included resolutions about childcare for working women. With a law that passed in 1983, the Social Services and Child Protection Agency, which is affiliated with the Ministry of Health, was given the task of opening and inspecting childcare and education institutions for zero to five years old children. In addition, the Civil Servants Law guaranteed *crèche* and daycare centers within public institutions so that working mothers could be more efficient in the work place (Öktem, 1986).

The Ministry of National Education’s Preschool Branch which was opened in 1977 was reorganized in 1992 as the “General Directorate of Preschool Education” in order to better coordinate preschool education in Turkey and meet the increasing demand from the society (Yılmaz, 1992). This General Directorate was disclosed in 2013.

Today, preschool education in Turkey covers the education of pre-elementary children and is the first stage of the Turkish national education system. Preschool institutions can be established by private initiative or the state in line with the laws and regulations of the country, and are supervised by the relevant bodies of the Ministries of National Education and Health. Those affiliated to the Ministry of National Education include independent kindergartens, kindergartens of elementary schools, and practice kindergartens at girls’ vocational high schools. Preschools allow three to six years old children while kindergartens allow five to six years old children (the year prior to starting elementary school). Those affiliated with the Ministry of Health Social Services and Child Protection Agency include *crèches*, daycare centers, children’s clubs, and children’s houses. These admit zero to six years old children. The preschools opened by universities and large-scale work places for their employees may also be added to these. As it can be seen from this classification, there are differences between the management, aims, programs, and equipment of preschool institutions in Turkey (Oktay, 2002).

The Ministry of National Education made preschool education compulsory for children between the ages of five and six (before the age at which they start school) in the 33 cities of Turkey, which has 81 cities in total, in 2009, and planned to make it widespread over the country. Moreover, it began to register all preschools under the Ministry of National Education. Yet, the Ministry of National Education of the same government released these studies in the year of 2013.

As a result, the schooling rate in the preschool period is 4% at the age of three, 19% at the age of four, and 67% at the age of five according to the data of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) for the year 2013 (Aktan & Akkutay, 2014).

### **Preschool Education in South Korea**

The history of education in Korea, before B.C. 50 until today, is analyzed in terms of five periods including “Three Kingdom Period”, “the Kingdom of Koryo”, “the Dynasty of Coson (Yi)”, “Modern

Education Period”, and “Post-World War II” (İpek, 2013).

Preschool education began in the period of Coson Dynasty. The first article of Coson Yeohakyo Law dating 1908 was the legal basis of establishing a preschool institution. Busan Preschool, which is the first preschool of Korea, was established for the Japanese children who lived in the region of Busan. The Kyung Sung Preschool is a private school for the children of Korean families who cooperated with Japanese, and it was opened in 1913. A preschool was opened by an American missionary woman, Brownlee, for only Korean children in 1914 (Choi, 2013).

After the World War II, Korean was freed from being a colony of Japan. Since then, the Korean Ministry of Education assigned Primary Education Department for the preschool education. The articles 146, 147, and 148 of the Law of Education which was adopted in 1949 concern preschool education. It is obligatory that children who would be registered to preschool are four years old (Choi, 2013).

Although the government’s plan about establishing preschool institutions was announced in 1950, it was not applied due to war. The effect of war and social destruction made it difficult to increase the number of preschool institutions. In 1960, there were 16,315 children who were educated in the 297 preschool institutions in South Korea. The Law of Preschool Equipment Standardization concerns the location, building, equipment, and materials of preschool institutions. In 1963, there were changes made in the Law of Education. In 1968, the number of preschool institutions was 470 and the number of children who were educated there was 21,685 (Choi, 2013).

In 1969, the Preschool Education Curriculum to be applied in preschool institutions was prepared. After then, preschool education developed in a more rapid way. In 1982, the Law of Preschool Education Promotion was introduced. The preschool education programs were constantly reviewed in these years (Choi, 2013).

The preschool education is not compulsory in South Korea. However, the schooling rate is 82% at the age of four and 86% at the age of five (Aktan & Akkutay, 2014).

## **Methodology**

### **Participants**

The participants were the mothers of three and six years old children who go to the preschools under the Ministry of Education, in the neighborhoods where families at middle and high socio-economic levels live in Istanbul (Turkey) and Seoul (South Korea). The number of mothers who were included in the study according to the principle of voluntariness was 279, including 139 Turkish mothers and 140 South Korean mothers.

### **Procedure**

In this study, a survey with 18 closed-ended questions prepared by the researcher was administered to the mothers. The participating mothers were asked to mark the answer they find most appropriate for themselves.

The survey questions can be grouped under three titles according to their content (subject):

1. Questions about mothers’ personal information (Questions 1-5);
2. Questions about mothers’ views on preschool education (Questions 6-11);
3. Questions about mothers’ expectations from preschools (Questions 12-18).

The survey was translated into Korean language by a South Korean Ph.D. student Jeongsuk Choi. She sent the surveys to her friend, a teacher in Seoul and asked the surveys to be administered to mothers. Then, when she went to Seoul, she collected the surveys and brought them to Turkey. In Istanbul, the surveys were brought to

preschools by the researcher, and teachers were asked to give them to mothers who were voluntary. After a week, they were collected from schools.

## Results and Discussion

The frequency and percentage distributions of the survey answers of 139 Turkish and 140 South Korean mothers were calculated. Since some questions were unanswered, the frequency and percentage for each question were subtracted from the number of mothers who answered the related question. The results were grouped under three titles.

### The Results About the Personal Information of Turkish and South Korean Mothers

This section includes the answers of Turkish and South Korean mothers who participated in the research to the five questions about their personal information (see Table 1).

Table 1

#### *Personal Information of Turkish and South Korean Mothers*

Question	Answer	Turkish mother		South Korean mother	
		<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
1. Your age	20 years or younger	1	0.7	-	-
	21-25 years	11	7.9	4	2.9
	26-30 years	35	25.2	14	10.0
	31-35 years	50	36.0	53	37.9
	36-40 years	34	24.5	47	33.6
	41 years or older	8	5.8	22	15.7
2. Your education	Secondary school graduate	3	2.2	-	-
	High school graduate	72	51.8	36	25.7
	Two-year or four-year university graduate	62	44.6	103	73.6
3. How many children do you have?	One	44	31.7	33	23.6
	Two	75	54.0	94	67.1
	Three	20	14.4	11	7.9
	Four	-	-	2	1.4
4. Are you working?	Yes	52	37.4	65	46.4
	No	87	62.6	75	53.6
5. Did you attend preschool when you were a child?	Yes	21	15.1	92	65.7
	No	118	84.9	47	33.6

According to the answers given to the first question about the age of the mothers, almost the same percentage of Turkish mothers (36%) and South Korean mothers (37.9%) are between 31 and 35 years old. Other age groups that Turkish women most frequently belong to are 26-30 (25.2%) and 36-40 (24.5%). The second age group that South Korean mothers most frequently belong to is 36-40 (33.6%). With regard to the age of the participants, Turkish mothers are younger than South Korean mothers.

The second question, which was asked to determine mothers' educational levels, was unanswered by two Turkish mothers and one South Korean mother. With regard to the educational levels of mothers who answered this question, 44.6% of Turkish mothers and 73.6% of South Korean mothers were graduated from two- or four- year universities, and 51.8% of Turkish mothers and 25.7% of South Korean mothers were high school graduates. There were three Turkish mothers who were secondary school graduates whereas there were no South Korean mothers who were secondary school graduates. These results show that Turkish and South

Korean mothers who participated in the research have higher educational levels, and that South Korean mothers' educational levels are higher than those of Turkish mothers.

The answers given to the third question, which was asked to determine how many children mothers have got, show that more than half of the mothers (54% Turkish and 67.1% South Korean) have two children; and 44 Turkish mothers (31.7%) and 33 South Korean mothers (23.6%) have one child. There were no Turkish mothers who had four children whereas two South Korean mothers had four children.

The fourth question was about whether mothers had a job. According to the answers, 52 Turkish mothers (37.4%) and 65 South Korean mothers (46.4%) had a job. The number of Turkish and South Korean mothers who do not have a job is higher than those who have.

The fifth question "Did you attend preschool when you were a child?" was unanswered by a South Korean mother. This question was answered "Yes" by 21 (15.1%) Turkish mothers and 92 (65.7%) South Korean mothers. As these results indicate, there is great difference in the answers of Turkish and South Korean mothers from two different cultural and economic levels. Given that most of the mothers were above 31, preschool education became widespread in South Korea before it did in Turkey.

### The Results About Turkish and South Korean Mothers' Views on Preschool Education

This section includes the answers given by Turkish and South Korean mothers to the six questions about their views on preschool education (see Table 2).

Table 2

#### *Turkish and South Korean Mothers' Views on Preschool Education*

Question	Answer	Turkish mother		South Korean mother	
		<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
6. Do you participate in the seminars and meetings about education which take place at the preschools your children attend?	I always participate	67	48.2	45	32.1
	I sometimes participate	51	36.7	88	62.9
	I do not participate	20	14.4	6	4.3
7. Do you read books about preschool education and the characteristics of children in preschool period?	Yes	101	72.7	124	88.6
	No	36	25.9	16	11.4
8. If there is someone at home to care for children, preschool education is not needed.	I agree	8	5.8	3	2.1
	I do not agree	125	89.9	120	85.7
	Undecided	3	2.2	17	12.1
9. Preschool education positively affects children's future education.	I agree	130	93.5	135	96.4
	I do not agree	3	2.2	1	0.7
	Undecided	3	2.2	3	2.1
10. What do you think the most appropriate age for your child to start a preschool institution?	Before one year	-	-	-	-
	One year	2	1.4	-	-
	Two year	6	4.3	11	7.9
	Three year	27	19.4	55	39.3
	Four year	42	30.2	22	15.7
11. Preschool education should be compulsory for all children.	Five year	60	43.2	52	37.1
	I agree	115	82.7	111	79.3
	I do not agree	13	9.4	22	15.7
	Undecided	9	6.5	7	5.0

The sixth question, which was about whether they participate in seminars and meetings about education at preschools their children attend, was not answered by a Turkish and a South Korean mother. This question was

answered "I always participate" by 67 (48.2%) Turkish mothers and 45 (32.1%) South Korean mothers; it was answered "I sometimes participate" by 51 (36.7%) Turkish mothers and 88 (62.9%) South Korean mothers; and it was answered "I never participate" by 20 (14.4%) Turkish mothers and six (4.3%) South Korean mothers. Accordingly, most of the both Turkish mothers and South Korean mothers participate in seminars and meetings. Another study conducted in Turkey showed that of 110 parents whose children go to public (state) schools, 56.4% said that they would always go to parents' training programs organized for them, and of parents whose children go to private preschools, 52.8% said that they could sometimes participate in them (Argan & Akkaya, 2008).

The seventh question was about whether mothers read books on preschool education and characteristics of children in preschool period. Two Turkish mothers did not answer this question. It was answered "I read" by 101 (72.7%) Turkish mothers and 124 (88.6%) South Korean mothers. Hence, the number of South Korean mothers who read books on preschool education and characteristics of children in preschool period is higher.

The answers to the sixth and seventh questions show that both Turkish mothers and South Korean mothers try to be informed about preschool education and children in preschool period, and that they rather prefer to read related books. This passion for knowledge can be considered as an indication of the importance that mothers give to preschool education. A study done with 300 Turkish and 300 Japanese mothers who had middle and higher socio-economic and socio-cultural levels found that almost half of the mothers prefer participating in seminars and meetings, this means listening, instead of reading books, to be informed (Sakai, 2006).

The eighth question "If there is someone at home to care for children, preschool education is not needed" was not answered by three Turkish mothers. Almost the same percentage of Turkish mothers (89.9%) and South Korean mothers (85.7%) answered this question "I do not agree". Almost all of the mothers said that even though there is someone at home to care for children, children should go to a preschool institution. This indicates the importance given by mothers to preschool education, and is promising and pleasing in terms of the spreading of preschool education in Turkey. In another study done with 417 mothers in Turkey, which had similar results, 98.1% of mothers said that they would take their children to preschools even if they do not have a job (Tokuç, 2007). In a study done with Japanese and Turkish mothers, 96% of Japanese mothers and 96.4% of Turkish mothers said that they would take their children to preschool institutions even if there were someone at home to care for children (Sakai, 2006).

The ninth question was about whether mothers agreed that preschool education positively affect children's future education. This question was not answered by three Turkish mothers and one South Korean mother. Of the mothers who answered this question, almost all of them (93.5% of Turkish mothers and 96.4% of South Korean mothers) said that they agreed this statement. This result can indicate that mothers give importance to preschool education; they do not consider it as a caring institution and think that what a preschool institution can do is more than what they can do for their children's education.

The tenth question was about the most appropriate age to start preschool according to mothers. This question was not answered by two Turkish mothers. It was answered "five years" by 60 (43.2%) Turkish mothers and "four years" by 42 (30.2%) Turkish mothers. South Korean mothers answered it "three years" and "five years" in almost the same percentage (39.3% and 37.1% respectively). This result may indicate that Turkish mothers think it is more appropriate to care children at home in the first three years and South Korean mothers think it is more appropriate to care children at home in the first two years. A study done with 35 Turkish parents who have higher levels of education and whose children go to private preschools, also found

similar results. In this study, there were different answers to the question about the most appropriate age to start preschool. Yet, the answer was often “four to five years”. The parents who gave this answer said also that it was more appropriate that their children would be at home in the first three years (B. K. Şahin & İ. T. Şahin, 2013). In a study done with 300 Turkish mothers and 300 Japanese mothers who have middle or higher socio-economic and socio-cultural levels, there were different results with regard to Turkish mothers. It was found that Turkish mothers believed that mothers should care for children in the first two years and children should go to preschool institutions at least three years (Sakai, 2006).

The statement “Preschool education should be compulsory” in the eleventh question was not answered by two Turkish mothers, whereas 82.7% of Turkish mothers and 79.3% of South Korean mothers answered “I agree”. Similar results were obtained in a study done with 417 mothers in Turkey. Of mothers, 89.7% said that preschool education should be compulsory (Tokuç, 2007). In both of these countries, preschool education is not compulsory. According to the data of the year 2013 given by OECD, in Turkey, the schooling rate in preschool institutions is 4% in three years old children, 19% in four years old children, and 67% in five years old children. It can be stated that Turkish mothers do not consider this schooling rate sufficient and think preschool education should be compulsory to make it available for all children. In South Korea, the schooling rate is 82% in three years old children, 83% in four years old, and 86% in five years old. However, the answers given by South Korean mothers show that they do not consider these rates sufficient.

As indicated above, the answers given by Turkish and South Korean mothers to the six questions about preschool education show that they do not consider preschools as caring institutions, know the importance of preschool education, and think that preschools should be available for all children. In another study done in Turkey, parents said that they view preschool institutions as a place which helps children’s development, and not as a place of caring where children only spend their time (Argon & Akkaya, 2008).

### **Results About the Expectations of Turkish and South Korean Mothers From Preschools**

This section includes the answers given by Turkish and South Korean mothers to seven questions about their expectations from preschool institutions (see Table 3).

The twelfth question “What is your reason to send your children to preschool?” was not answered by two Turkish mothers. More than half (61.9%) of Turkish mothers and 49.3% of South Korean mothers answered “For my child’s general development”. Turkish mothers (23%) preferred the answer “To make my child ready for primary school” at the second rank, whereas 29.3% of South Korean mothers preferred the answer “For my child’s intellectual development” at the second rank. These results indicate that most Turkish and South Korean mothers believe that preschools contribute to children’s development. They also support the objectives relating to preschool education in the system of education in Turkey and South Korea (Choi, 2013).

There are different studies which indicate that while most mothers have the same reason to send their children to preschools, the ranking of reasons varies. A study done in Turkey showed that 81.4% of 110 parents said that the duty of a preschool is firstly to prepare children for primary school (Argon & Akkaya, 2008). In a study done in Turkey with 35 parents who have higher levels of education and whose children go to private preschools, they were asked why preschool education was important. The answers include “For children’s social development” at the first rank and “To make children ready for primary school” at the second level (B. K. Şahin & İ. T. Şahin, 2013). In another study done in Turkey with 417 mothers, the answer “I send my child to preschool to make them ready for primary school” (15.6%) is just at the fourth rank after the other three

answers including “I sent them to preschool because I believe in the importance of preschool education” (44.6%), “I sent them to preschool to let them socialize” (22.8%), and “I sent them to preschool because I go to work” (17%) (Tokuç, 2007). In another study done in Turkey with 90 mothers, the answer “I sent my child to preschool to make them ready for primary school” (8.8%) comes just at the third rank after the other two answers “I sent my child to preschool to let them socialize” (58.8%) and “I sent my child to preschool for education” (16.6%) (Kuzu, 2006). In a study done in Japan, parents said that preschools should be able to allow children’s intellectual and social development (Çetinsoylu, 1998). In another study done in 300 Turkish and 300 Japanese mothers, mothers from both countries said that the reason to send their children to preschool was firstly “children’s development” and secondly “to make children ready for primary school” (Sakai, 2006). With regard to the results of research done with different cultures, it was found that parents think that primary duties of preschools include “providing children’s multidimensional development” and “making children ready for primary school”.

Table 3

*Expectations of Turkish and South Korean Mothers From Preschools*

Question	Answer	Turkish mother		South Korean mother	
		<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
12. What is your reason to send your children to preschool?	My child’s general development	86	61.9	69	49.3
	My child’s intellectual development	17	12.2	41	29.3
	To make my child ready for primary school	32	23.0	26	18.6
	There is none at home to care for my child	2	1.4	-	-
	To provide my child’s caring	-	-	4	2.9
13. There should be a strict discipline in preschools	I agree	25	18.0	26	18.6
	I do not agree	95	68.3	104	74.3
	Undecided	16	11.5	9	6.4
14. Children should play out every day in preschool in winter and summer.	I agree	30	21.6	86	61.4
	I do not agree	92	66.2	43	30.7
	Undecided	15	10.8	10	7.1
15. Children should start learning how to read and write in preschool.	I agree	47	33.8	128	91.4
	I do not agree	66	47.5	8	5.7
	Undecided	24	17.3	4	2.9
16. Children should start learning add-subtract in preschool.	I agree	92	66.2	131	93.6
	I do not agree	29	20.9	6	4.3
	Undecided	16	11.5	3	2.1
17. Children should start learning foreign language in preschool.	I agree	106	76.3	124	88.6
	I do not agree	16	11.5	6	4.3
	Undecided	14	10.1	9	6.4
18. Children should start learning computer in preschool.	I agree	70	50.4	93	66.4
	I do not agree	46	33.1	38	27.1
	Undecided	20	14.4	8	5.7

The statement “There should be strict discipline in preschools” in the thirteenth question was not answered by three Turkish and one South Korean mothers. The percentage of Turkish mothers who did not agree this statement was 68.3% whereas it was 74.3% in South Korean mothers. In this question, the term “discipline” was used by the researcher in the sense of teaching certain habits and preparing children to live in harmony personally and socially within the limits of rules. Regular behaviors called “discipline” in an educational sense

start at preschool period. The reason that a great number of Turkish and South Korean mothers did not agree the statement "There should be a strict discipline in preschools" can derive from the fact that they consider discipline in a different sense. In Turkey, the word "discipline" recalls behaving children in a harsh way and punishment, it may be the case in South Korea too. In a study done with Japanese and Turkish mothers, the percentage of Turkish mothers who did not agree the view that "There should be a strict discipline in preschools" was 80.8%, whereas it was 37.7% in Japanese mothers (Sakai, 2006). In another study done in Japan by Seikatsu Jouhou Center Henshuubu (2004), it was found that 75% of women who had children in preschool period consider most the issue of discipline (as cited in Sakai, 2006). A study done with 320 Japanese and 340 German mothers who had children between three and five years old showed that their primary expectation from preschool education was that their children learn to behave in conformity with society and make it a habit (Morita & Kondo, 1986, as cited in Sakai, 2006).

The statement "Children should play out every day in winter and summer" in the fourteenth question was not answered by two Turkish and one South Korean mothers. Of South Korean mothers, 61.4% agreed this statement, whereas 66.2% of Turkish mothers did not agree this. The percentage of those who were hesitant in Turkish and South Korean mothers was close to each other. Many studies prove that Turkish mothers are protective. This study supports this view. In a study done with Japanese and Turkish mothers, 75% of Japanese mothers said that their children should play out in winter and summer, whereas 60.7% of Turkish mothers did not agree this view (Sakai, 2006). In a study done with American and Korean parents, it was asked to put in order the activities which should take place in preschools according to their level of importance. The Korean parents marked the physical activities at the second rank among other activities (Lee, 2006). In another study done in Japan, the survey administered to 91 mothers who had children between the ages of three and five, to the question "What are your expectations from preschools?", the answer "Doing sufficient physical activities and develop a healthy body through playing games" was chosen at the second rank (Fukunaga, 1997). The places where children can move sufficiently and freely are often places out, therefore when children are not allowed to go out due to cold or hot weather or rain, they will not be able to release their energy, and their physical and psycho-motor development will not reach the desired level.

The statement "Children should start learning how to read and write at preschools" in the fifteenth question was not answered by two Turkish mothers. The percentage of Turkish mothers who agreed this statement was 33.8% whereas it was 91.4% in South Korean mothers. In the Turkish preschools, curriculum prepared by the Ministry of National Education and used in the preschools includes pre-studies of learning how to read and write, but does not include teaching how to read and write. The answers of Turkish mothers indicate that they know this situation and accept it. Almost all of the South Korean mothers wanted the teaching of how to read and write in preschools, the reason may be that their writing is difficult. In a study done with 300 Turkish mothers and 300 Japanese mothers, the percentage of Japanese mothers who agreed that preschools should include teaching how to read and write was 50.8% and that of the Turkish mothers was 28.5% (Sakai, 2006). In another study done about Japanese children who started the first class of primary school, it was found that 87.8% of children could read the Japan alphabet and 48.8% of them could write (Suda, 1980).

The statement "Children should start add-subtract at preschools" in the sixteenth question was not answered by two Turkish mothers. The percentage of Turkish mothers who agreed this statement was 66.2%. In a study done with Turkish and Japanese mothers, the percentage of Turkish mothers who agreed this statement (69.6%) was almost the same (Sakai, 2006). Although mathematics is one of the courses that most students are

afraid of and fail, and mathematics has a great place in the curriculum prepared by the Turkish Ministry of National Education and used in preschools, only 66.2% of Turkish mothers wanted the teaching of add-subtract. In the case of South Korean mothers, 93.6% of them wanted the teaching of add-subtract. The fact that almost all of the South Korean mothers wanted the teaching of add-subtract indicates the importance they give to mathematics.

The statement "Children should start learning foreign language in preschools" in the seventeenth question was not answered by three Turkish and one South Korean mothers. The majority of Turkish mothers (76.3%) and South Korean mothers (88.6%) agreed this statement. This result shows that they know that learning a foreign language is easier in earlier ages.

The statement "Children should learn computer in preschools" in the eighteenth question was not answered by three Turkish and one South Korean mothers. The percentage of Turkish mothers who agreed this statement was 50.4% and that of the South Korean mothers was 66.4%. South Korea is one of the most advanced countries in terms of technological developments, and technology is often used there in daily life and widespread, and children know computer as they come into the world. Yet, it is interesting that the percentage of South Korean mothers who wanted computer teaching in preschools is higher than that of Turkish mothers.

In a study done with American and Korean parents, it was asked to put in order the activities which should take place in preschools according to their levels of importance. Korean parents marked "foreign language education", "mathematical activities", and "computer teaching" at the last three orders, whereas they marked "activities of reading and writing" in the first four (Lee, 2006). The two studies have different results. Among other reasons, it needs to recall that Korean parents live in the United States and respond to the conditions available there. According to the results of Ikeda and Yamada's (2006) study, which compares preschool education in Japan, Korea, China, Taiwan, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, India, and Philippines, in the countries except Japan, topics, such as mathematics, foreign languages, and computer have priority (as cited in Sakai, 2006).

### **Conclusion**

Most of the behaviors which are acquired in the early childhood shape one's personality, attitudes, habits, beliefs, and values in the adulthood. In the preschool period, parents have great duties to train healthy and modern generations. A cooperation between family and school allows them to know better each other and each other's expectations. Parents have also an important role in the spreading of preschool education.

This study aims to compare the views on and expectations from preschools of the mothers in Turkey with the mothers in South Korea. It was found that mothers in Turkey and South Korea, which are two countries with different cultural characteristics and educational structure, had almost the same views on the importance of preschool education and expectations from preschools. They do not consider preschools as a caring institution, they know the importance of preschool education. According to the mothers' answers about their expectations from preschools, South Korean mothers supported that their children go out and play in summer and winter, and learn how to read and write in preschools, while few Turkish mothers agreed with this view. Both Turkish mothers and South Korean mothers supported teaching simple add-subtract operations, foreign languages, and computer, but this rate was higher in the latter.

It is supposed that the higher levels of education among mothers who participated in the research affected this result. It would be useful to repeat a similar study with parents who have lower socio-economic and cultural levels.

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