

*Full Length Research Paper*

# Teacher opinions on Ministry of National Education 2002, 2006, and 2013 preschool education curricula in Turkey\*

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This study was aimed to make a historical review by collecting and comparing teachers' opinions on target-behaviors/learning-objectives outcomes, content, plans, activities, practices and assessment of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), Turkey 2002, 2006, and 2013 preschool education curricula (PEC) in six categories. The sample group of the study was selected by easily accessible technique from eight districts of Ankara province. This includes a total of 40 teachers. The data collection tools of the study were semi-structured "Teacher Interview Form" and teachers' "Personal Information Form". In this study, content analysis was carried out by using interview technique from qualitative research methods. As a result of the study, it was determined that preschool teachers tend to regard preschool education curricula as becoming more effective, child-centered, easier to implement, teacher-guided, with active participation of the children. In the vast majority of teacher opinions on MoNE 2002 PEC, it is reported that the objectives of curriculum are appropriate for children and these objectives can be acquired by children. The practice category of the MoNE 2002, 2006 and 2013 curricula recommends that the practices are child-centered, the teacher serves as a moderator during activities, the activities are implementable and easy, and it is an actively participated curriculum.

**Key words:** Preschool education, curriculum, curricula, preschool education curriculum.

## INTRODUCTION

Preschool education is an education process that includes all the experiences of children starting from their

birth to the time they go to elementary school (Oktay, 2005). Preschool period creates a strong background in

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developing social, emotional, physical, language and cognitive development potentials of children and supports their holistic development (August, 2008). In order for children to grow up and develop in a healthy way within the holistic development sense, it is of importance that they attain various experiences (Blakemore and Frith, 2005). In this sense, children development in the process of growing up and learning through experiences could bring their capacities to the highest level (Goodwin, 2008). According to Albrecht and Miller (2004), the children in 0-6 age range, which is called preschool period, grow up and develop rapidly; their interest areas change rapidly and they are affected by the children around them. In this sense, the education curricula that will encourage the development, growth and learning of children at this age range are of great importance.

As Melendez et al. (2000) stated, features such as consistency, general and systematic learning, depth, appropriateness, balance, developmental appropriateness and flexibility should be emphasized when designing a qualified preschool education curriculum. In this regard, it is of great importance to design systematic, qualified, flexible, consistent and child-centered education curricula. Preschool education curricula are the organized educational frameworks or structures that have their own general and specific objectives and learning outcomes. These curricula, in which learning takes place, include the activities used by the teacher in order to achieve these objectives during the day. The aim of preschool education curriculum is to ensure healthy development of children and achievement of skills necessary for their future (Hirsh, 2004: 5). The nature and place of curriculum content in early childhood education have remained contentious, specifically the extent to which young children can and should engage with the subject matter, concepts, and skills. Furthermore, learning processes have been viewed as more important than either content or outcomes (Wood, 2014). National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has determined the principles for appropriate developmental curricula. These principles includes considering all developmental characteristics of the child, building the learning process on children's knowledge and experiences, allowing children to reflect their own culture, including observable and developmental characteristics appropriate for children's skills, and being able to integrate technological practices and teaching strategies in curriculum practices (Catron and Allen, 2003: 158-159).

It is seen in related literature that the contemporary approaches effective in preschool education today are child-centered approaches. These approaches require putting the interests, needs and expectations of children at the forefront and introducing different activities and learning experiences as far as possible, in order for them

to realize their own interests, skills and competence (Oktay, 2005). In Europe, which is the pioneer of preschool education, the focus of preschool education is on contributing to the social and emotional development of children. The basic learning areas in Finland preschool education curricula are language and interaction, mathematics, ethic and philosophy, environmental and natural studies, health, physical and motor development and art and culture (Eurydice, 2016). Preschool education curricula in Japan are developed on play-based learning and volunteer works are emphasized in order to achieve the objectives of preschool education curricula. These curricula adopt a holistic approach and attempt to ensure that children can express themselves, have high self-confidence, curious, and are both physically and mentally healthy (<http://www.ibe.unesco.org/Japan>). In the United States of America, drama, art, music and game activities are included in preschool education curricula as well as the activities for encouraging physical and language development of children (Güven and Efe-Azkeskin, 2012). In Russia, it is expected that the content of preschool education curriculum will cover all developmental areas including social, individual, mental, physical, artistic and aesthetic areas (World Data on Education, 2010/2011a,b,c). MoNe 2013 Preschool Education Curriculum in Turkey includes field trips and activities for Turkish, Art, Drama, Music, Movement, Play, Science, Mathematics and Preparing for Reading-Writing. It is seen that this curriculum is a child-centered, flexible, spiral, play based and eclectic curriculum and it aims at developing creativity and all developmental areas of the child (MoNE, 2013).

Different approaches and models are used in preschool education curricula in the world and Turkey. Head Start curriculum, which is widely used in United States of America, handle the social, emotional, physical and cognitive development of children from low-income families as an inseparable whole by encouraging their development and learning (Roopnarine and Johnson, 2013). On the other hand, the main objectives of High Scope curriculum are to support children's skills through active learning, to ensure that they take their own decisions and responsibilities and to help children acquire life-long learning habits through plan-do-assess strategy (Roopnarine and Johnson, 2013). According to Montessori approach, learning is a holistic process and play is the most ideal tool for children to learn. Children are both workers and producers (Isaacs, 2007). According to Reggio Emilia approach, children learn in a warm environment and learning occurs thanks to the rich relationships and interactions they have established with the adults and peers around them (MacNaughton and Williams, 2004). Waldorf and Montessori emphasize that child goes through a spiritual development as well as the

physical development and his/her spiritual development should be encouraged (cited in Ekici, 2015). Te Whariki curriculum in New Zealand is a national curriculum that promotes dual culture and is designed to protect children's ethnic cultures. This curriculum focuses on four main principles including "strengthening, holistic development, family and society, relationships" (World Data on Education, 2010a,b,c).

Placing the required amount of importance on a child's learning and development through PEC in preschool period will also have an impact on the child's adaptation and academic achievement in elementary school. In this regard, a child who experienced a qualified early childhood period will also be more likely to attend school, be successful in school and contribute to the community. The Preschool Education Curricula previously and currently implemented in Turkey are MoNE 1989, 1994, 2002, 2006, and 2013 PEC. While PEC in 1994 and 2002 was designed by adopting a behaviorist approach, MoNE 2006 PEC was designed by adopting multiple intelligences theory and a constructivist approach. In the latest curriculum, MoNE 2013 PEC, a synthesis was made using child-centered practices in different learning theories and models in order to meet national characteristics and requirements and to raise the individuals needed in 21<sup>st</sup> century, and an eclectic curriculum was designed (Gürkan, 2007; MoNE, 2002; MoNE, 2006; MoNE, 2013).

In MoNE 2002 PEC, developmental objectives for 36 to 72 months old children were included, the unit plan was removed and the preparation of annual and daily plan was made compulsory. MoNE 2006 Preschool Education Curriculum aims at supporting psycho-motor, social emotional, language and cognitive development of 36 to 72 months old children in preschool education institutions, acquiring self-care skills and ensuring their elementary school readiness. The developmental characteristics of children between 36 to 48 months, 48 to 60 months and 60 to 72 months old children were addressed separately in MoNE 2006 and 2013 PEC (Kandır, 2002:11; Şıvgın, 2005: 15; MoNE, 2006: 11; MoNE, 2013).

In Turkey, many research studies have been conducted on teacher opinions on preschool education curricula. The assessment of preschool education curriculums are based on objectives, content, process and assessment dimensions (Güler, 2001). In this study, it was aimed to make a historical review by collecting and comparing the teacher opinions on target-behaviors/goals-gains, content, plans, activities, practice and assessment categories of MoNE 2002, 2006 and 2013 PEC under six categories.

Considering MoNE 2002, 2006 and 2013 Preschool Education Curricula in Turkey; the research questions of

this study are as follows:

1. What are the teacher opinions on target-behaviors/objectives-learning outcomes?
2. What are the teacher opinions on the content categories of these curricula?
3. What are the teacher opinions on the plan categories of these curricula?
4. What are the teacher opinions on implementation categories of these curricula?
5. What are the teacher opinions on activities categories of these curricula?
6. What are the teacher opinions on assessment categories of these curricula?

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The method, population, sample group, data collection tools of the study and analysis of the data are presented in this part. Interview technique from qualitative research methods was used in this study. Briggs (1986) argues that interview is the most widely used data collection method in researches conducted in the field of social sciences and states that this is because the interview technique is an effective technique for obtaining information on the experiences, attitudes, opinions, complaints, emotions and beliefs of individuals. In this sense, interview technique was used in this study in order to obtain teacher opinions on target-behaviors/learning-objectives outcomes, content, plans, activities, practices and assessment categories of MoNE 2002, 2006 and 2013 Preschool Education Curricula in Turkey.

### Study group

The study group consists of 40 preschool teachers, 20 preschool teachers who worked during 2003 to 2004 academic years and 20 preschool teachers who worked during 2015 to 2016 academic years. The opinions of 20 preschool teachers on MoNE 2002 PEC were obtained from the author's (Durmuşoğlu, 2004) doctoral dissertation named as 'Investigation of the opinions on the implementation of MoNE 2002 PEC' published in 2004. On the other hand, the opinions of the remaining 20 preschool teachers on MoNE 2006 and 2013 PEC were obtained from different preschool teachers. Study group was selected with easily accessible technique from Çankaya, Yenimahalle, Altındağ, Mamak, Sincan, Etimesgut, Keçiören and Gölbaşı districts of Ankara province, Turkey. Participation in this study was based on voluntariness. One personal information form, interview form, voice recorder and pen were used for each teacher during the interviews. The teachers were coded as T1, T2 and T40 instead of using their names. Before the interviews, the participants were informed about the aim and characteristics of the study both verbally and in written form. Verbal permission of the participants was taken for recording their voices during these interviews. The interview times ranged between 20 to 30 min. The interviews with 20 teachers for MoNE 2002 PEC were completed within a month and the interviews with 20 teachers for MoNE 2006 and 2013 PEC were completed within two months. The distributions of personal information of the 40 teachers participating in this study are shown in Table 1.

The frequencies and percentage distributions of the personal information of teachers participating in this study about their age, gender, graduated curriculum, educational status and professional

**Table 1.** Distribution of personal information of the teachers (T) participating in this study.

<i>Teacher Number</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Graduated curriculum</i>	<i>Educational status</i>	<i>Professional experience(year)</i>
T1	Male	26	Pre-school education	Undergraduate	6
T2	Female	22	Child development and E.	Graduate	5
T3	Female	31	Pre-school education	Undergraduate	11
T4	Female	30	Pre-school education	Undergraduate	9
T5	Female	36	Child development and E.	Undergraduate	17
T6	Female	41	Child development and E.	Undergraduate	22
T7	Female	34	Pre-school education	Undergraduate	12
T8	Female	32	Pre-school education	Undergraduate	15
T9	Female	37	Child development and E.	Undergraduate	16
T10	Female	42	Child development and E.	Undergraduate	23
T11	Female	41	Child development and E.	Undergraduate	22
T12	Female	36	Child development and E.	Undergraduate	16
T13	Female	46	Child development and E.	Undergraduate	27
T14	Female	38	Child development and E.	Undergraduate	19
T15	Female	37	Child development and E.	Undergraduate	17
T16	Female	42	Child development and E.	Undergraduate	23
T17	Female	44	Child development and E.	Undergraduate	25
T18	Female	43	Female vocational high school	Associate degree	24
T19	Female	45	Child development and E.	Undergraduate	26
T20	Female	49	Child development and E.	Associate degree	30
T21	Female	26	Pre-school education	Undergraduate	6
T22	Male	31	Pre-school education	Undergraduate	12
T23	Female	32	Pre-school education	Undergraduate	13
T24	Female	28	Pre-school education	Graduate	8
T25	Female	33	Pre-school education	Undergraduate	14
T26	Female	37	Pre-school education	Undergraduate	17
T27	Female	42	Child development and E.	Undergraduate	21
T28	Female	34	Pre-school education	Undergraduate	14
T29	Female	46	Pre-school education	Undergraduate	26
T30	Female	38	Pre-school education	Undergraduate	18
T31	Female	35	Pre-school education	Undergraduate	15
T32	Female	27	Pre-school education	Graduate	7
T33	Female	44	Child development and E.	Undergraduate	23
T34	Female	31	Pre-school education	Undergraduate	12
T35	Female	38	Pre-school education	Undergraduate	18
T36	Female	35	Pre-school education	Undergraduate	15
T37	Female	36	Pre-school education	Undergraduate	16
T38	Female	40	Child development and E.	Undergraduate	19
T39	Female	34	Pre-school education	Undergraduate	14
T40	Female	39	Child development and E.	Undergraduate	18

experience (years) are shown in Table 2.

When the data regarding gender, age, graduated curriculum, educational status and professional experience information of preschool teachers who reported their opinions on MoNE 2002, 2006 and 2013 PEC are examined, it is seen that 95% of preschool teachers who reported their opinions on all education curricula were women and 5%, only one preschool teacher, was a man. The ages

of 35%, majority, of the teachers who reported their opinions during 2002 curriculum were between 41 to 45 years old and the 40% majority of the teachers who reported their opinions on 2006 and 2013 p curricula were between 31-35 years old. When the types of curricula teachers graduated from are examined, it is seen that 70% of the teachers who reported their opinions on 2002 curriculum were graduated from Department of Child Development and

**Table 2.** Teachers' personal information.

Categories	Sub- categories	Teachers who reported their opinions on MoNE 2002		Teachers who reported their opinions on 2006 and 2013 curricula	
		N	%	N	%
Gender	Male	1	5	1	5
	Female	19	95	19	95
	<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>
Age	21-25	1	5	-	-
	26-30	2	10	3	15
	31-35	3	15	8	40
	36-40	5	25	6	30
	41-45	7	35	2	10
	46 and over	2	10	1	5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>
Graduated curriculum	Female vocational high school	1	5	-	-
	Pre-school education	5	25	16	80
	Child Development and Education	14	70	4	20
	<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>
Educational status	Associate degree	2	10	-	-
	Undergraduate	17	85	18	90
	Graduate	1	5	2	10
	<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>
Professional experience	0-5 year	1	5	-	-
	6-10 year	2	10	3	15
	11-15 year	3	15	8	40
	16-20 year	5	25	6	30
	21 year and over	9	45	3	15
	<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>

Education and 25% were graduated from Department of Early Childhood Education, 80% of the teachers who reported their opinions on 2006 and 2013 curricula were graduated from Department of Early Childhood Education and 20% were graduated from Department of Child Development and Education.

When the educational status of the teachers are examined, it is determined that 85% of the teachers who reported their opinions on 2002 curriculum have a bachelor's degree and 90% of the teachers who reported their opinions on 2006 and 2013 curricula have a bachelor's degree. In addition to these, it is also determined that 5 and 10% of the teachers from both two groups have a master's degree. When the seniority status of the teachers who reported their opinions on 2002 curriculum are examined, it is determined that 45% of the teachers have been working for 21 years and more and 25% have been working for 16 to 20 years. When the seniority status of the teachers who reported their opinions on 2006 and 2013 curricula are examined, it is seen that 40% of the teachers have been working for 11 to 15 years and 30% have been working for 16 to 20 years.

#### Data collection tools

The data collection tools of the study were semi-structured "Teacher Interview Form" and teachers' "Personal Information Form". In addition to this, the verbal permissions of the preschool teachers in sample group of this study were taken before applying these forms.

**1. Personal information form:** A common information form was prepared in order to acquire some personal information (gender, age, graduated curriculum, educational status, professional experience etc.) about the teachers involved in this study. "Personal Information Form" consisted of a total of 5 questions.

**2. Teacher interview form:** The semi-structured interview form published in 2004 in the doctoral dissertation of the researcher who conducted this study, named as "Investigation of the Opinions on the Implementation of MoNE 2002 PEC", was employed in this study. The aim of semi-structured interview forms is to identify

reciprocity and difference between the information provided by the interviewed individuals and to make comparisons accordingly. The teacher interview form created after literature review was developed by receiving the opinions of three experts, one expert in preschool education, one expert in curriculum development and one expert in assessment and evaluation. The experts assessed the questions in terms of their clarity, clearness and whether they include the subjects to be investigated and their appropriateness for the teachers' levels. The necessary changes were made in line with their assessments. "Teacher Interview Form" consisted of six categories as target-behaviors/objectives-learning outcomes, content, plans, activities, practice and assessment. "Teacher Interview Form" consisted of a total of 6 questions.

### Data analysis

Content analysis was applied to the obtained data from "Teacher Interview Forms". According to Yıldırım and Şimşek (2016), the data collected by content analysis should be conceptualized, the concepts should be organized in a logical way, the categories explaining the data should be determined and the findings should be described and interpreted by organizing the codes and themes. After completing the data collection process, a transcript was created by naming every teacher as T1, T2...etc. The transcription and analysis of the data were made in the following order: The voice recordings were transferred to written interview form by the researcher without making any change. The written interviews were examined. The responses given to the research questions were examined separately by both the researcher of this study and an academic member. In line with the obtained data, categories and sub-categories were created. The subjects "agreed" and "disagreed" by the raters in these categories and sub categories were discussed and they were organized under the title of category created from questions and sub-category created from responses. The reliability formula suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) was used to calculate the reliability of this study. Inter-rater reliability was calculated by using the following formula:  $(\text{Agreement} / \text{Agreement} + \text{Disagreement}) \times 100$ . As a result of the calculation, inter-rater reliability average was determined to be 92.5%. The reliability averages over 70% are considered to be reliable for the researches. The participants provided more than one responses when reporting their opinions. Therefore, the frequencies of some responses were found to be higher than the number of participants. The teachers were coded as T1, T2, T3 and T40 when noting the findings. These code names were used to quote from the interviews.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings and interpretations obtained from the teacher opinions were grouped under six categories (target-behaviors/objectives-learning outcomes, content, plans, activities, practice and assessments of MoNE 2002, 2006 and 2013 PEC) and their subcategories. The expression 'targets and behaviors expected to be acquired' in MoNE 2002 PEC was changed as 'objectives, learning outcomes and indicators (sub-category of learning outcomes)' in MoNE 2006 and 2013 PEC (MEB, 2006:11; Şivgin, 2005: 15).

### Teacher opinions on target-behavior, objectives-learning outcomes and content

The opinions of the teachers on target-behaviors/objectives-learning outcomes and content categories of MoNE 2002, 2006 and 2013 PEC, which are the first and second research questions of this study, are shown in Table 3. Considering the teacher opinions on target-behaviors, objectives-learning outcomes and content categories of MoNE 2002 Curriculum, the majority of the teacher opinions (n:12) suggests that all of the curriculum targets are appropriate for children and they can be acquired by the children. The second majority of teacher opinions (n: 11) suggest that the curriculum includes the targets and behaviors for all developmental areas of children. In this regard, some of the teacher opinions are as follows:

*T 3: "...Some of the targets and behaviors in some developmental areas are not adequate in terms of number and quality. Therefore, I think the number of targets in some developmental areas should be increased..."*

*T 2: "... The targets and behaviors in curriculum are designed for the developmental areas of children ..."*

*T 6: "...The themes are determined according to the interests and needs of the children..."*

According to Kandir (2002), the use of the expression 'targets and behaviors expected to be acquired' started in MoNE 2002 PEC and this curriculum was designed by considering three developmental areas (Psycho-motor area, Social-Emotional area, Cognitive area and Language area) and one skill area (Self-care skills) rather than competence domains. Creativity was not considered separately as it was associated with all developmental areas, but it was suggested that it should also be included in all planned activities.

According to Hujala (2002), when targets and behaviors are clear, tangible, and comprehensive in a way that can make children successful in many aspects, there will be positive outcomes for children. The targets and behaviors should reach out to the standards required by different areas such as language, science, nature, social sciences, art and technology. It is determined that, in the majority of teacher opinions (n:12) on MoNE 2006 Curriculum, the targets, learning outcomes and indicators are clear and comprehensible, the learning outcomes include all developmental areas (n:12). Some of the opinions are as follows:

*T 34: "...The objectives and learning outcomes are clear and comprehensible..."*

*T 21: "...The learning outcomes include all developmental areas..."*

**Table 3.** Teacher opinions on target-behavior, objectives-learning outcomes and content categories of 2002, 2006 and 2013 PEC of MoNE

Categories	Sub- categories	MoNE 2002	MoNE 2006	MoNE 2013
		N	N	N
Target-Behavior and Objectives-Learning Outcomes	Clear, comprehensible, simple	11	12	9
	Not clear and should be reviewed	8	-	1
	Behaviors turned into indicators	2	-	7
	Includes all developmental areas	7	12	-
	Total social-emotional development skills were more, decreased in 2013	-	-	2
	The goals and gains were detailed	-	4	-
	There are not enough targets in each development area	5	1	-
	The objectives an learning outcomes are detailed and rich	-	2	12
	Appropriate for developmental areas and can be gained	12	-	15
	Adequate	11	-	-
	Not adequate in terms of scope	4	2	-
	The teacher can add objectives and indicators	-	-	10
	<b>Total Opinions</b>	60	33	66
Content	The subjects were divided into months	-	3	-
	The themes are determined according to the interests and needs of children	7	-	15
	The content is rich and intense	-	2	-
	Not flexible	-	2	-
	The subject is not a goal but a means	2	1	-
		<b>Total Opinions</b>	9	7

When the opinions of teachers on objectives-learning outcomes category of MoNE 2013 Curriculum are examined, it is seen that the majority (n:15) believe that all of the curriculum objectives are appropriate for the developmental areas of children and these objectives can be acquired by them. Some of the teacher opinions are as follows:

*T 40: "...While the learning outcomes related to language, movement and self-care skills were*

*increased in 2013 curriculum, the social-emotional skills were decreased..."*

*T 37: "...The curriculum is developed by targeting the developmental characteristics of children according to their age groups. There is a monthly plan and daily training flow. Integrated activities create a holistic approach in training flow..."*

When the opinions of teachers on content category in Table 3 are examined, it is determined that 7 teachers in 2002 and 15 teachers in 2013

PEC suggest 'The themes are determined according to the interests and needs of children'. In content category of 2006 PEC, it is seen that 3 teachers suggest 'The subjects were divided into months', 'The content is rich and intense' and 'The subjects are not flexible'. Some of the teacher opinions on these categories of 2002 and 2013 curricula are as follows:

*T 3: "...The themes are determined according to the interests and needs of children..."*

*T 35: "...The content is structured after determining the things that children are interested in such as animals or space...."*

### **Plans, activities and practices**

The opinions of teachers on plans, activities and practices categories of MoNE 2002, 2006 and 2013 PEC, which are the third, fourth and fifth research questions of this study, are shown in Table 4. When the opinions of teachers on MoNE 2002 PEC are examined, it is seen that 15 teachers suggest that 'There is a unit plan' and 'There is an annual plan', 12 teachers suggest 'there is a daily plan'. When the opinions of teachers on MoNE 2006 PEC are examined, it is seen that 12 teachers suggest 'There is a daily plan', 11 teachers suggest 'There is an annual plan'. When the opinions of teachers on MoNE 2013 PEC are examined, it is seen that 13 teachers suggest 'There is a monthly plan' and 10 teachers suggest 'There is a daily plan'. Some of the teacher opinions on these categories are as follows:

*T 8: "...There were annual, unit and daily plans in MoNE 2002 PEC..."*

*T 22: "...Unit plans and annual plans were not included in MoNE 2006 PEC; but monthly and daily training flow are included..."*

In support of these opinions, Kandır (2002) stated that developmental objectives are included in MoNE 2002 PEC, it was made obligatory to use subjects as means rather than adopting subjects teaching method, and in line with this, the unit plans were removed and it was made obligatory to prepare annual and daily plans. When the opinions of teacher on activities category of MoNE 2002 PEC are examined, it is seen that 5 teachers suggest 'The activities are predominantly based on games' and 4 teachers suggest 'The children actively participate in activities/practices'. When the opinions of teachers on practices category of MoNE 2002 curriculum are examined, it is seen that 5 teachers suggest 'The curriculum is child-centered', 5 teachers suggest 'The curriculum is teacher directed-guided' and 4 teachers suggest 'The children actively participate in activities/practices'. Some of the opinions are as follows;

*T 5: "...I consider the characteristics, interests, and needs of the students when I'm implementing the curriculum in order to acquire the targets and target behaviors. I pay special attention to ensure that the children are active participants in practices. I encourage them to do research. In practices, I focus on dramatization studies that children can express themselves ..."*

*T 6: "...I think MoNE 2002 curriculum is more effective as it is child-centered and teacher directed and the children are active participants..."*

In parallel with the opinions of T 6, Hujala (2002) identifies three items that should be emphasized in early childhood education as:

- a. Child-centered curriculum and active participation of children in curriculum,
- b. Well-established relationships and links between the developmental areas of children,
- c. Educators' awareness of their responsibility for creating a learning environment in which children actively participate.

The developmental preschool education curricula centering on the child emphasize the effectiveness of active environment for supporting the growth and development of the child (Egertson, 1987). When the opinions of teacher on activities category of MoNE 2006 PEC are examined, it is seen that 8 teachers suggest 'The activities are predominantly based on plays' and 5 teachers suggest 'The activities are focused on the interests and needs of children'. It is seen that 8 teachers suggest 'The practices are child-centered', 7 teachers suggest 'The practices are teacher directed-guided' and 6 teachers suggest 'The children actively participate in activities/practices'. In this, regard, the opinion of T 23 is quite remarkable:

*T 23: "...The curriculum is implemented as a teacher-centered curriculum although it is child-centered..."*

*T 22: "...The activities are implementable. The separation and enrichment of play and movement activities can be regarded as a good progress..."*

In a study performed by Gelişli and Yazıcı in 2012, it was determined that MoNE 1994, 2002 and 2006 PEC were child-centered, the objectives, learning processes and assessment processes of these curricula were determined by considering the ages, developmental characteristics, interests and needs of children (Gelişli and Yazıcı, 2012). The findings of their study are in parallel with the findings of this study.

In a study conducted by Durmuşçelebi and Akkaya on 'Assessment of the implementation of 2006 PEC According to Teacher Opinions' in 2011, it was determined that the participants assessed the content dimension of curriculum as positive. It can be concluded that the curriculum is successful at reaching the desired objectives and teachers adopt this characteristic of the curriculum as participants positively assessed the item 'The subject is a means rather than an end'. The positive assessment of 'The units are not included in curriculum'



**Table 4.** Teacher opinions on plans, activities and practices categories of 2002, 2006 and 2013 PEC of MoNE.

Categories	Sub-categories	MoNE2002	MoNE 2006	MoNE 2013
		N	N	N
Plans (Annual, Monthly, Unit and Daily)	Preparing a daily plan takes a long time	-	2	-
	There is an annual plan	15	11	-
	There is a monthly plan	-	2	13
	There is no unit plan	15	3	-
	There is a unit plan	-	8	-
	There is daily plan/daily training flow	12	12	10
	<b>Total Opinions</b>	42	38	23
Activities	The activities are focused on the interests and needs of children	3	5	6
	The activities are predominantly based on games	5	8	8
	Method and technique were added	-	1	1
	It is difficult to diversity the activities	-	1	-
	The child restructures the information himself/herself	-	1	-
	Good morning and daily assessment times were added	-	-	3
	Integrated activities are predominantly preferred	-	-	4
	There are more creative activities	-	1	3
	Predominantly focused on trip-observation-examination-experiment and drama	2	-	-
	Game and movement activities are separated	-	2	-
	Sufficient	2	6	10
	<b>Total Opinions</b>	12	25	37
Practices	Flexible	6	2	3
	Not Flexible	1	-	-
	Child-centered	5	8	10
	Active participation	4	6	5
	Teacher-centered	3	3	-
	Teacher directed-guided	5	7	6
	The activities are implementable and easy	2	5	5
	There is a learning environment where children can independently gain experience	-	1	3
	The environment is organized with rich stimulants	1	-	3
	Document works is intense, the teacher has to fill up many forms and this causes loss of time	-	4	1
	The area and environment differences are taken into account in practices	2	-	3
	The practices are creative	1	3	4

**Table 4.** Cont'd.

The children solve the problem	-	-	5
<b>Total Opinions</b>	30	37	49

item by participants shows that the core of the curriculum is understood by teachers.

The majority of the teacher opinions on activities category of MoNE 2013 PEC suggests that the activities are adequate (n:10) and the second majority suggests that the activities are predominantly based on games (n:8). Considering the practice category of the same curriculum, the opinions of teachers suggest that the practices are child-centered curriculum (n:10). Marcon (1999) conducted a study and investigated the effects of child-centered curricula and teacher-directed curricula on the development and basic skills of four-years-old group. In line with the responses of the teachers and as a result of the analysis conducted, it was determined that child-centered curricula were more successful and effective than teacher-directed curricula based on progress in development and basic skills instruction. Considering MoNE 2013 PEC, unlike other curricula, the opinions of teachers suggest that the children solve problems by making their own decisions (n: 5) and it is a creative curriculum (n: 4). Some of the teacher opinions on this category are as follows:

*T 36: "...In 2002 and 2006 curricula, 4-5 different activities were included in daily plans. However, 2013 curriculum provides the children with the flexibility to practice only one activity if it meets the interests and needs of children. The integrated activities ensure the continuity of children's' motivation without distracting..."*

*T 39: "...The children solve the problems by making their own decisions. And this allows them to think creatively..."*

Rosser's views are in line with the aforementioned teacher opinions. According to Rosser (1993), preschool education curricula should include expected behaviors and targets that improve flexible, innovative, creative thinking, problem solving skills, the ability to establish cause-and-effect relationships between events and decision-making skills of children.

**Assessment**

The opinions of teachers on assessment category of MoNE 2002, 2006 and 2013 PEC, which is the sixth research question of this study, are shown in Table 5.

**The assessment of 2002 preschool education curriculum**

The teacher opinions on this category were grouped as child, teacher and curriculum assessment.

**Child assessment:** When child assessment category is examined, it is seen that most of the teachers (n: 12) evaluate children by filling out observation forms and development files once a

month or every 3 months. Second, it is seen that the same number of teachers evaluates children using anecdote and daily records, learning outcome forms and projective tests, and using survey for families (n:3). Some of the teacher opinions in this category are as follows:

*T 14: "...When evaluating children, I fill out observation forms once a month or every 3 months and I record their developmental characteristics..."*

*T 7: "...Observation records, anecdote records, development control lists, portfolios and developmental reports were utilized when evaluating children. In addition to these, learning outcome assessment form and teacher self-assessment form were also developed.*

According to Poole (2001) portfolios include observations about children, works that child has done with different materials and photos taken during these activities, paints drawn by the child, video records, speech records, interviews made with family, teacher's and family's reviews about the child, letters sent to and by the family of child and projects completed by the child with his family or in school.

**Teacher assessment:** When teacher assessment category is examined, it is seen that teachers assess what children learned according to the annual and daily plans (n: 4), they use families' feedbacks (n: 4). It is also seen that teachers

**Table 5.** Teacher Opinions on Assessment Categories of MoNE 2002, 2006 and 2013 PEC.

Categories	Sub-categories	MoNE 2002	MoNE 2006	MoNE 2013	
		N	N	N	
Assessment	<b>Child Assessment:</b>				
	Observation form- file	12	13	15	
	Anecdote and daily records	3	3	-	
	Learning outcome assessment forms/ projective tests	3	11	8	
	Development reports	-	12	14	
	Portfolios	-	4	10	
	Survey for families	3	-	1	
	<b>Total Opinions</b>	21	43	48	
		<b>Teacher Assessment:</b>			
		Assessment of what children acquired according to the daily, monthly and annual plan	-	1	6
		Self-assessment at the end of day and month	4	5	5
		Assessment of families' feedbacks about teachers	5	-	1
		Assessment of whether a creative, entertaining and effective curriculum is prepared and implemented or not	4	8	9
		Self-assessment at seminars and meetings	3	-	-
		Self-assessment according to children's feedbacks	4	2	1
		Assessment of whether techniques, methods and approaches are utilized or not	-	3	4
		Assessment of material selection and time management	4	3	3
		Self-assessment in solving problems encountered in practice	-	1	3
		Use of self-assessment form	3	3	6
		Following new publications on self-assessment	1	-	-
		<b>Total Opinions</b>	32	25	38
		<b>Curriculum Assessment:</b>			
		Assessment of the applicability of activities	4	3	8
		Assessment of daily-monthly plans	2	2	3
		Assessment of target/objectives and behavior/learning outcomes	4	5	4
		Assessment of techniques-methods	2	2	4
		Assessment of whether activities are entertaining or not	2	6	6
		Assessment of materials, time and environment	4	2	5
		The observation of activities	1	1	1
		The curriculum was not evaluated very much	-	3	1
		The children are included in assessment	-	1	3
		Assessment questions are added to the curriculum	-	-	1
		<b>Total Opinions</b>	19	25	36

assess themselves on techniques, methods and approaches (n: 4) and assess themselves in terms of solving problems encountered in practice (n: 4). In this regard, T 16 expressed his/her opinions as follows:

*T 16: "...I evaluate myself and observe the adequacy and inadequacy of the plan I prepared by considering the curriculum, activities and children's feedbacks and by observing the appropriateness of the educational environment, material selection and time management. At the end of activities, I identify my deficiencies and ask myself 'How can I improve myself?'*

**Curriculum assessment:** When curriculum assessment category is examined, it is seen that teachers assess the applicability of the activities (n: 4), assess whether target/objectives and behavior/learning outcomes are acquired or not (n: 4), assess the use of materials, time and environment (n: 4). Some of the teacher opinions on this category are as follows:

*T 8: "...I identify the problems and requirements of daily plan and practice when evaluating activities. I also evaluate the materials selected for activities, time management and the appropriateness of tools and environment.*

*T 14: "...I identify positive-negative situations between plan and practice, problems and requirements when evaluating activities. I evaluate whether the material, tools and environment chosen are appropriate for the activities or not."*

### **The assessment of 2006 preschool education curriculum**

**Child assessment:** When child assessment category of 2006 PEC is examined, it is seen that teachers assess children by filling out observation forms (n:13) and development files (n:12), they use learning outcome assessment forms and projective tests (n:11). One of the opinions on this category is as follows:

*T 32: "...It is a curriculum that emphasizes the importance of how the process works rather than what is learned in school and allows us to observe and evaluate children by using observation forms..."*

While MoNE 2002, 2006 and 2013 curricula include assessment of children, teachers and curriculum, 2006 curriculum aims at assessing children with different assessment tools and methods by adding detailed anecdote records, developmental checklists and standard tests and portfolios (Kandır et al., 2009:22; MoNE, 2006:91; MoNE, 2013:53-54). The findings of the study

conducted by Kandır and others are partially in parallel with the findings of this study.

**Teacher assessment:** When teachers' assessment category of 2006 PEC is examined, it is seen that teachers assess whether a creative, entertaining and effective curriculum is prepared and implemented or not (n:8); evaluate themselves at the end of day and month (n:5); assess themselves on whether they utilized techniques, methods and approaches or not (n:2); assess material selection and time management (n:3), using self-assessment forms (n:3). In this regard, T 26 expressed his/her opinions as follows:

*T 26: "...We were trying to prepare a creative and entertaining curriculum according to the annual and daily plan and we were assessing the success in practice. In addition to this, we were criticizing ourselves in terms of the techniques, methods, materials and time management..."*

**Curriculum assessment:** In this category, it is seen that teachers evaluate whether the activities are entertaining or not (n:5), whether target/objectives and behavior/learning outcomes are acquired by children or not (n:4). One of the opinions in this category is as follows:

*T 31: "...I assess whether the activities in curriculum are entertaining and implementable or not..."*

As a result of the study conducted by Durmuşçelebi and Akkaya (2016) for assessing 2006 PEC in line with the opinions of teachers in Kayseri province of Turkey, it was concluded that the implementation of 'Assessment' dimension among the items of 2006 PEC was negatively assessed by preschool teachers. It can be said that, in 2012 Preschool Education pilot curriculum, making assessments with descriptive, emotional and learning outcomes-oriented questions and life-related questions in activity plan and assessing daily training flow in terms of teacher, curriculum and child were regarded as a positive change in assessment dimension by teachers. The findings of their study are partially in parallel with the findings of this study.

### **The assessment of 2013 preschool education curriculum**

**Child assessment:** When child assessment category of 2013 PEC is examined, it is seen that teachers assess children by filling out observation forms (n:15) and development files (n:14), they use portfolios (n:10). One of the opinions in this category is as follows:

*T 39: "...Observation records, anecdote records, development control lists, portfolios and developmental reports were utilized when assessing children. In addition to these, learning outcome assessment form and teacher self-assessment form were also developed..."*

**Teacher assessment:** In this category, it is seen that teachers assess whether a creative, entertaining and effective curriculum is prepared and implemented or not (n:9), assess what children acquired according to the daily, monthly and annual plan (n:6) and use self-assessment form (n:6). In this regard, T 24 expressed his/her opinions as follows:

*T 24. "...It is a significant detail to what extent the children acquired the learning outcomes. In this regard, the teacher should assess himself/herself too. The dimension of assessment was addressed in many ways..."*

**Curriculum assessment:** In this category, it is seen that teachers assess whether the activities in curriculum are entertaining or not (n:8), assess the applicability of the activities (n:6), assess materials, time and environment (n:5) and assess target/objectives and behavior/learning outcomes (n:4). In addition to these, there is an opinion indicating that children are also included in assessment process in 2013 curriculum. Some of the teacher opinions are as follows:

*T 39: "...I evaluate the curriculum by considering the applicability of the activities and to what extent children are entertained during activities.*

*T 28: "...While 2002 and 2006 curricula expect teachers to make assessments in just three categories, we include the children in assessment process in 2013 curriculum ..."*

In a study conducted by Özsirkinti et al. (2014) on the opinions of preschool teachers on preschool education (Adana province sample), it was determined that 2013 PEC was assessed as a curriculum that provides child-centered, flexible and active learning, the learning outcomes and indicators were clear, comprehensible and appropriate for the objective of the curriculum. The findings of their study are partially in parallel with the findings of this study.

In a study conducted by Sapsağlam in 2013 on 'Assessment Dimensions of PEC' (1952-2013), the assessment dimension in 2013 curriculum was found to be as versatile as it was in 2002 and 2006 curricula, in other words, includes the assessment of child, teacher and curriculum. Assessment activity in 2013 curriculum was referred to as 'Time to Evaluate the Day'. It has been foreseen that the teachers should create a 'Portfolio' (development file) from the beginning of the academic year and to organize 'Development File Sharing Day' by

inviting parents to school at the end of the academic year. New forms such as development observation forms and development reports have been developed and presented in curriculum as a basis for the assessment of children (Sapsağlam, 2013; MoNE, 2013). The findings of his study are in parallel with the findings of this study. If the curriculum is not efficiently implemented, it can be said that the system is unplanned. This situation also brings about great difficulties for the teacher. Therefore, the implemented education curriculum should be developed by assessing the curriculum periodically (Winter, 1994: 91-95).

## Conclusion

In this section, the conclusions were obtained from the teacher opinions on target-behaviors/objectives-learning outcomes, content, plans, activities, practice and assessment categories of MoNE 2002, 2006 and 2013 PEC. In the vast majority of teacher opinions on MoNE 2002 PEC, it is reported that the objectives of curriculum are appropriate for children and these objectives can be acquired by children. Second, it is reported that the curriculum has objectives and behaviors for all developmental areas of children. It is determined that more than half of the teachers suggest that targets/objectives and behaviors/learning outcomes are clear, comprehensible and simple. In addition to these, some teachers suggest that the target and behavior expression in curriculum are insufficient in terms of number and scope and, therefore, should be reviewed. Considering most of the teacher opinions on MoNE 2002 and 2006 Curriculum, it is suggested that objectives and learning outcomes are comprehensible and clear, and learning outcomes include all developmental areas. In the MoNE 2013 Curriculum, it is seen that the majority of teachers believes that all of the curriculum objectives are appropriate for the developmental areas of children and these objectives can be acquired by them. The second majority of teachers believe that the learning outcomes-indicators are detailed and are enriched. It is especially suggested that the learning outcomes for language, movement and self-care skills are increased and socio-emotional skills are decreased in this curriculum when compared to the previous curricula. Most of the teacher opinions on content category of MoNE 2002 and 2013 PEC suggest that the content and topics are determined according to the interests and needs of children. In MoNE 2006 PEC, some of the teacher opinions suggest that content is rich and intense, but the topics are not flexible. More than half of teacher opinions on plans category of MoNE 2002 and 2006 PEC suggest that there is a daily plan and most of the teacher opinions on plans category of MoNE 2006 PEC suggest that there is an annual plan.

It is also seen that the majority of teacher opinions on plans category of MoNE 2013 Curriculum suggests 'there is a monthly plan' and half of the opinions suggests 'there is a daily plan'. In activities category of MoNE 2002, 2006 and 2013 Curricula, it is seen that first majority of the opinions suggests 'The activities are predominantly based on games' and focused on the interests and needs of children. In practice category of the same curricula, it is suggested that the practices are child-centered, the teacher serves as a moderator during activities, the activities are implementable and easy and it is an actively participated curriculum. In activities category of MoNE 2013 PEC, the majority of teacher opinions suggests that the activities are adequate and unlike other curricula, the opinions of teachers suggest that the children solve problems by making their own decisions, it is a creative curriculum and integrated activities are predominantly preferred. In practice category of the same curriculum, it is suggested that the practices are child-centered, the teacher serves as a moderator during activities, the activities are implementable and easy and it is an actively participated curriculum.

Considering the teacher opinions on child assessment category of MoNE 2002, 2006 and 2013 curricula the two majorities suggest that teachers evaluate children by filling out observation forms and development files and the third majority suggests that teachers use learning outcomes assessment forms and projective tests. When opinions on teacher assessment category of the MoNE 2002, 2006 and 2013 PEC are examined, it is determined that first majority suggests teachers evaluate whether a creative, entertaining and effective curriculum is prepared and implemented or not, the second majority suggests teachers evaluate themselves at the end of the day and month. In addition to the MoNE 2013 Curriculum teacher assessment category is examined, it is determined that teachers evaluate what children acquired according to the daily and annual plans, they use the children's and families' feedbacks and assess themselves in terms of solving problems encountered in practice and whether techniques, methods and approaches are utilized or not. The majority of teacher opinions on curriculum assessment category suggest that teachers assess whether activities are entertaining or not, assess to what extent children acquired objectives and behaviors, assess the use of materials, time and environment and assess daily plans. In line with the results of this study, the recommendations for future studies were divided into four categories as recommendations for curriculum, teachers, researchers and MoNE General Directorate of Preschool Education.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In line with the results of this study, the implications for

future studies were divided into four categories as implications for curriculum, teachers, researchers and MoNE General Directorate of Preschool Education.

### a) Recommendations for curriculum:

- The objectives and learning outcomes in 2013 curriculum should be revised by subject area experts and the curriculum should be reorganized after removing the qualitative and quantitative deficiencies.
- The number of objectives and learning outcomes for social and emotional development areas should be increased and family involvement efforts should be carried out more effectively.
- The assessments and teacher opinions on curriculum should be obtained by using a healthy feedback method. These feedbacks should be taken into account by the authorities responsible for preparing curriculum and should be included in curriculum making process.

### b) Recommendations for teachers:

- Preschool teachers' information on associating activities with life, play activities, identification and assessment works, the use of different method and techniques and family involvement should be updated by receiving in-service training.
- Research studies should be carried out for identifying the problems and requirements of preschool teachers about the dimensions of curriculum and solutions should be provided for these problems.

### c) Recommendations for researchers:

- Research studies should be carried out for reorganizing the content and theoretical and practical lesson times of the courses related to the subjects that teachers in undergraduate preschool education curricula need to acquire.
- Research studies should be carried out on teachers' self-assessments, assessment of learning-teaching processes, assessment of curricula, being aware of different approaches and curriculum models, realizing their professional deficiencies and identifying the challenging issues for them. Then, in-service trainings on these issues should be provided for the teachers.
- This study can be conducted on a wide scale across Turkey in order to identify the problems and needs of preschool teachers.
- Longitudinal studies should be conducted with long-term and in-depth observations of the functioning and implementation of preschool education curricula. Data triangulation method should be applied by supporting these studies with surveys and interviews.

### d) Recommendations for MoNE General Directorate of

## Preschool Education:

- MoNE authorities and subject area experts such as teachers, administrators, inspectors, preschool experts, child development experts, curriculum development experts, assessment and assessment experts, and special education experts should be included in the development and revision process of preschool education curricula.
- In order to implement the curriculum in classroom environment effectively, the preschool teachers should be encouraged in terms of the resources for supporting learning materials and curriculum. The preschools should be equipped with technological tools, organized with materials, tables and chairs for supporting children's collaborative learning. In addition to these, comfortable working environments should be created.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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