

A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON THE PERCEPTIONS OF EARLY
CHILDHOOD TEACHERS TOWARDS PHYSICAL DESIGN FOR
CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON THE PERCEPTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS TOWARDS PHYSICAL DESIGN FOR CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

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The aim of this study is to examine the perceptions of early childhood teachers in relation to the influence of the physical environment of the classroom on classroom management. More specifically, the present study examined teachers' perceptions about the factors which influence their classroom management practices, how the physical environment of the classroom influences their instructional processes and teacher-student interactions.

To collect the data for the study, a semi-structured interview schedule was developed by the researcher. The interview schedule contained 16 questions; six pertained to demographic items, while the remaining ten open-ended questions aimed to investigate the perceptions of teachers about the physical environment of the classroom and its influence on classroom management.

The participants of this study consisted of 36 female early childhood education teachers who taught children from age 3 to 6. Twelve of them were employed in private schools and 24 worked in public schools.

Qualitative analysis was performed at the end of the study and according to findings, 7 themes were categorized. These are were (1) factors influencing classroom management, (2) physical environment, (3) interest areas in the classroom, (4) strengths and weaknesses of the physical environment, (5) remedies for weaknesses of the environment, (6) the influence of the physical environment on instructional process and teacher-student interaction, and (7) suggestions for the improvement of the physical environment.

Keywords: classroom management, physical environment of early childhood education classrooms, teachers' perceptions.

ÖZ

SINIF YÖNETİMİNDE FİZİKSEL ORTAM KONUSUNDA OKUL ÖNCESİ ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN ALGILARI ÜZERİNE NİTEL BİR ÇALIŞMA

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Bu çalışmanın amacı, sınıf yönetiminde fiziksel ortam konusunda okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin algılarını ortaya koymaktır. Özellikle, öğretmenlerin, sınıf yönetimini etkileyen faktörler, sınıfların fiziksel ortamı, fiziksel ortamın etkinlikler ve öğretmen-öğrenci iletişimi üzerine etkisi ile ilgili algıları incelenmiştir.

Çalışmada, araştırmacı tarafından geliştirilen yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu kullanılmıştır. Form, toplam 16 sorudan oluşmaktadır. Bunların, 6 tanesi demografik bilgilere ait olmakla birlikte, kalan 10 tanesi öğretmenlerin, sınıflarının fiziksel ortamına ve bunun sınıf yönetime etkisine dair algılarını anlamaya yönelik açık uçlu sorulardır.

Çalışmanın katılımcıları, 3-6 yaş gruplarında çalışan 36 okul öncesi eğitim öğretmeninden oluşmaktadır. Öğretmenlerin 12 tanesi milli eğitime bağlı özel okul öncesi kurumlarında çalışırken, 24 tanesi yine milli eğitime bağlı devlet okullarında görev yapmaktadır.

Çalışmanın sonunda yapılan nitel analize göre 7 temel tema belirlenmiştir. Bunlar (1) sınıf yönetimini etkileyen faktörler, (2) fiziksel ortam, (3) sınıftaki ilgi köşeleri, (4) sınıf ortamının iyi ve zayıf yönleri, (5) ortamın zayıf yönleri için çözüm yolları, (6) fiziksel ortamın sınıf içi etkinliklere ve öğretmen-öğrenci iletişimine etkisi ve (7) sınıf ortamının genel gelişime dair öneriler şeklindedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: sınıf yönetimi, okul öncesi eğitim sınıflarının fiziksel ortamı, öğretmen algıları

TO MY FAMILY

Hilal Güşta, Behiye, and Tahir ŞAHİN

İlay, Betül Kübra, and İlkan ÇİÇEK

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Classroom management which can be defined as the provisions and procedures essential to establish and maintain an environment in which instruction and learning can occur (Unal & Unal, 2006) is an important issue for teachers, administrators and students (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006). Brophy (1986) also defines effective classroom management as “the ability to establish, maintain and restore the classroom as an effective environment for teaching and learning” (p. 192) and he says it is a necessary element for a teacher to be successful (Brophy, 1986). Dinsmore (2003) stated that classroom management was one of the most complex and difficult aspects of teaching and it was a significant task that teachers must learn if they were to be effective in the classroom. Furthermore, Burden (2003) reported that classroom management included teacher actions to create a learning environment that supported positive social interaction, active engagement, and self-motivation. Thus, from the teacher’s perspective classroom management includes the arrangement of time, space, materials, pupils and herself/himself into various constellations of a learning environment (Rashid, 1968). Effective classroom managers should focus on the dimensions of classroom management which include; choosing a philosophical model of classroom management and discipline, student behavior management, creating a respectful, supportive learning environment (management of relations and communication), managing and enhancing instruction (management of planning and programming activities), interacting with colleagues, parents, and others to achieve classroom management goals, time management, facilitating classroom safety and wellness, and physical environment (Başar, 1999; Çelik, 2003; Burden, 2003; Demirtaş, 2007; Sabancı, 2008; Groves, 2009).

Firstly, teachers should choose a philosophical model which reflects their philosophy concerning students' development, teaching and learning, and classroom management. This model is also essential to teachers in order to understand and manage students' behavior (Burden, 2003).

Another dimension is behavior management. This includes setting rules, establishing a reward structure, and providing opportunities for student input. Thus, teachers should formulate and implement classroom rules for effective classroom management. Furthermore, it is essential to encourage students to motivate themselves in order to adhere to the rules (Martin et al., 1998).

Creating a respectful and supportive learning environment is another dimension of classroom management. According to the literature, the quality of the teacher-student relationship has an effect on productive behavior. Teachers should discover who their students are, their characters and behavior (Martin et al., 1998). Moreover, the teacher should explain their expectations of the students and make clear the type of behavior that will not be tolerated in the classroom and school. Furthermore, they must monitor their students carefully for signs of confusion or inattention (Brophy, 2006).

In terms of planning and managing, for effective classroom management, less time should be spent on getting organized or accomplishing the transition between activities. Student attention and task engagement should be the most important focus (Brophy, 2006). Hence, teachers should plan and assess activities appropriate for the level of their students (Burden, 2003; Demirtaş, 2007).

Working with parents and interacting with colleagues and other interested individuals is another dimension and this interaction is necessary to maintain order in the classroom and to achieve effective classroom management because these interactions provide students with needed guidance for self-control (Burden, 2003).

Time management is another dimension. It is important to effectively manage the duration of the teacher's active instruction and the time allowed for student learning in relation to the task. Furthermore, the teacher should consider the amount of time required for assessment and feedback (McLeod et al., 2003). Furthermore, there should be a regular slot for the students to work in groups and independently, and specific time set aside for feedback on the student's activities (Brophy, 2006).

Another dimension of classroom management is facilitating classroom safety and wellness. In order to give full attention on instructional tasks, students need physically and emotionally safe classroom. Thus, teachers should deal with problems that threaten classroom order and the learning environment (Burden, 2003).

The physical environment is last dimension of classroom management. Classroom management starts when the students' first walk through the classroom door. Thus, it is the teacher's responsibility to make the best use of the classroom space within the limits imposed by the architecture of the building. Furthermore, s/he must decide on the kinds of the activity that can occur in the classroom (Cantrell & Cantrell, 2003; Deemer, 2004; Manke, 1994). Thus, Cantrell and Cantrell (2003) define the teacher as the CEO (Chief Executive Officer) of classroom as s/he can transmit her/his vision to the students and manages the physical environment of the classroom.

The physical environment dimension of a classroom is defined as "the shape of the site in which learning occurs, the number and types of participants, the arrangement of participants in the available space, and the props or objects available to the participants" (Carter & Doyle, 2006, p.379). This is an important element of classroom management (Tabanali, 2007) because the physical environment has an immediate impact on students (Hardin, 2004). The arrangement of the furniture, types of materials, color of the walls and the placement of bulletin boards, and the presence or lack of clutter give out messages to the students (Partin, 2005). Moreover, Carter and Doyle (2006) commented that

physical environment has an important effect on classroom events such as spelling tests, reading activities or the morning song in preschools. Thus, facilitating traffic flow and communication, ease of access to supplies and equipment and the creation of private spaces are necessary for the continuity of classroom activities and for maintaining the teacher's control. It is possible that problems with the teaching environment may negatively impact on the teacher's ability to effectively manage the classroom (Carter & Doyle, 2006).

Classroom Management in Early Childhood Education. The early childhood education period is very important both in terms of a child's development and as the foundation of an individual's adult life, therefore, classroom management and the physical environment of the classroom are very important. For instance, the environment and the curriculum should support all aspects of student's development. His/her needs should be met and skills should be reinforced. The student should be encouraged to acquire self-discipline and an appropriate learning and play environment should be created to facilitate socialization through interaction with other students and adults (Oktay, 2000).

Jalongo and Isenberg (2000) define early childhood education as not only an exercise, a schedule or a mechanical process but also a time when young students can thoroughly explore their world in a sensory manner, experimenting with people, places and materials, supported by a teacher who respects and uses their ideas and ways of learning to encourage them find their own meaning in the society in which they live. Since the primary learning of students is increased and strengthened by each new idea they have, early childhood education is important. Moreover, if a student misses out on certain parts of her/his development there can be no compensation for this in later life (UNICEF, 2009).

In keeping with the global trend, Turkey has begun to recognize the importance of early childhood education in 1980s. These periods were times of economic difficulties that particularly influenced health and education in Turkey. Despite this situation, an increase in development of early childhood programs and education were reported (Haktanır, 2005).

In Turkey, although preschool education began in 1952, it only became part of the Turkish educational system in 1973 (UNICEF, 2009). After 1963, there was an increase in the number of early childhood education centers. In the academic year 1962-1963, there were 146 centers, this reached 20,675 in the 2006-2007 academic year (Ministry of National Education Statistics, 2007; Oktay, 2000). In 44 years, the number of the centers increased 99.2%.

The process of compliance with the European Union for Turkey to achieve full membership had an impact on the development of early childhood education. It was reported that since social, psychological and intellectual development started from the first years of the life, early childhood education should be made available in all regions of Turkey and there should be equal opportunities for all students. In the European Union the aim was to achieve the schooling ratio of early childhood education (National Programme, 2003). The basis for the necessary documents in the EU accession process was formed in the Ninth Development Plan; “goals were determined and measures were proposed to develop the spread of preschool education” (UNICEF, 2009, p.16)

According to the UNICEF (2009) report a significant part of public policy and services of educational provision should be devoted to early childhood education. Therefore, the Ministry of National Education in Turkey (MONE) aims to increase the number of students who attend early childhood education centers. In the government plan all 5 year old children should be registered in schools in 32 of 81 Turkish cities by the year 2010. The target ratio of schooling is 80% for 5 year olds, 39% for 4 year olds and 18% for 3 year olds in the 2013-2014 academic year (UNICEF Press Centre, 2009). These plans incorporate the need to organize classrooms that meet the needs of pre-schooling.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

The teacher has an important role in terms of the physical environment of the classroom and the relationship between that environment and classroom management. Thus, this study aims to examine the perceptions of a group of early

childhood teachers in relation to the influence of the physical environment of the classroom on classroom management.

This study aims to answer the following questions:

- a. What are the teachers' perceptions about the factors that influence their classroom management practices?
- b. What are the teachers' perceptions concerning the physical environment of their classrooms?
- c. What are the teachers' perceptions about how physical environment of the classroom influences their instructional processes and teacher-student interaction?

1.3. Significance of the Study

Some studies have been conducted about classroom management and the physical environment of the classroom. A study conducted by Proshansky and Wolfe (1974) reviewed the physical setting and open education for Grade 5 students. Brophy (1983) investigated the physical environment of classroom and classroom management for elementary school students. Another study conducted by Finn and Achilles (1990) showed the influence of class size on the academic achievement of kindergarten students. Martin et al., (1998) researched the relationship between classroom management and class size. Moreover, another study by Blatchford et al., (2002) reported on the relationship between class size and teaching for students aged 4 to 7. Although these studies are very important they were not conducted in Turkey and they focused on only one dimension of the physical environment of the classroom such as the relationship between class size or the physical environment and academic achievement. Hence, in the literature there is a lack of studies on early childhood teachers' perceptions related to the physical environment for classroom management.

Although there has been some research in Turkey concerning classroom management in early childhood education, this work examined the opinions of

teachers and students with respect to the teacher's communicative skills in managing the class (Arslantaş, 1998), the opinions of teachers on classroom management styles (Terzi, 2001) and misbehavior occurring in preschool education institutions and ways of dealing with them (Karaoğlu, 2002). This current study is significant because it emphasizes the relationship between the physical environment and classroom management and focuses on the perceptions of a group of early education teachers in Ankara, Turkey. Furthermore, in Turkey, the importance of the physical environment for classroom management in early childhood classrooms has not yet been fully recognized. The information collected in this study about teachers' perceptions can be used to improve the physical environment of early childhood classrooms.

Lastly, this study is important because the recognition of the significance and impact of early childhood classrooms is increasing. Therefore, the physical environment of these classrooms and its influence on classroom management should be determined to improve early education centers and programs. Moreover, teachers are responsible for the organization of their classrooms environment in which education takes place can directly impact on classroom management, therefore, their perceptions should be investigated.

1.4. Limitations of the Study

This study has some limitations. Firstly, fifteen schools were visited and 76 early education teachers were approached concerning their involvement in the study, however, only 36 volunteered to participate in the study. Furthermore, in the interview type of data collection, factors such as stress, illness and location can impact on the interviewees' ability to give their true responses (Bailey, 1987). In this study, in particular the location sometimes could cause stress although interviews were conducted in private there were occasional interruptions. Finally, one teacher had only two weeks teaching experience and this may have affected her responses since her perceptions of the physical environment of her classroom and the impact on classroom management were probably not formulated.

1.5. Definition of Terms

The following terms need to be defined for the purpose of the study:

Classroom management: This refers to “the actions and strategies teachers use to maintain order” (Burden, 1995, p. 3). It is complex and has many dimensions which need to be considered (Burden, 1995) such as choosing a philosophical model of classroom management and discipline, student behavior management, creating a respectful, supportive learning environment (management of relation and communication), managing and enhancing instruction (management of planning and programming activities), interacting with colleagues, parents, and others to achieve classroom management goals, time management, facilitating classroom safety and wellness, and physical environment (Başar, 1999; Burden, 2003; Çelik, 2003; Demirtaş, 2007; Sabancı, 2008; Groves, 2009). This study focused on relationship of dimension of physical environment and classroom management.

Physical environment of the classroom: Classroom is not only a place for instruction but also a place which has some basic functions such as security and shelter, social contact, symbolic identification, task instrumentally, pleasure and growth. Moreover, some features which make classroom environment more complex can be pointed out as multidimensionality, immediacy, unpredictability, lack of privacy and history (Weinstein, 1996).

Public and Private School: Public and private schools are the schools that are opened either by a person or state. The Ministry of National Education regulates and supervises educational activities in the both types of schools (Basic Ministry Education Law, Law Number: 1739)

Early childhood teacher: This is “a person who works in early childhood centers, who prepares and applies annual and daily plans according to educational programs, and who prepares educational materials for activities” (Öztürk, 2008, p.11). In this study, teachers who taught 3 to 6 year old students were participants.

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

In this chapter, the literature related to classroom management, dimensions of classroom management, different classroom arrangement, elements, variables and dimensions of the physical environment of classroom and the teacher's role in environment of the classroom will be reviewed.

2.1. Definition of Classroom Management

The basic definition of a classroom is the center or the context in which learning occurs. It can also be defined as the place in the school or the environment where teacher and students come face to face, where teaching and learning occurs (Çakmak, 2001). For teaching and learning to be successful, the teacher should be skilled in the management of the classroom since this is one of the most important factors influencing students' academic achievement. Further, it is reported that students cannot learn in chaotic and unsystematic classrooms (Wang, Haertel & Walberg, 1993). However, in well-managed classrooms, more time is spent on activities and students participate actively. Thus, the students can be more successful (Wilks, 1996).

Formerly, classroom management was thought to be synonymous with discipline. It was defined as the maintenance of on-task student behavior and the reduction of off-task or disruptive behavior. However, there is a new understanding of classroom management, which is not concerned with observing and punishing misbehavior but encompasses the process of creating a positive social and emotional climate in the classroom (Hardin, 2004) and according to Lemlech (1988) it can be compared with conducting an orchestra. Well-managed classrooms can be seen as a harmony of decisions and physical factors. Classroom includes various decisions such as the student's seating plan, planning of

classroom activities as time and content, organizing of materials and encouraging of each student's active participation (Emmer & Gerwels, 2005).

Emmer and Stough (2001) defined classroom management as the “provisions and procedures necessary to establish and maintain an environment in which instruction and learning can occur” (p. 103). According to Burden (1995), classroom management is defined as the actions and strategies teachers use to keep order and he stated that the focus of classroom management was to establish workable systems for the students.

There are also important elements of classroom teaching that create complexity in terms of classroom management, including multi-dimensionality (varied events and persons), simultaneity (many things happening at the same time), immediacy (the rapid pace of events limits reflection), unpredictability of events and outcomes, publicness (events that are witnessed by many or all the students), and history (assimilation of past events) (Emmer et. al., 2001, Weinstein & Mignano, 2007; Zabel & Zabel, 1996). Furthermore, the wide dimensions of classroom management complicate the meaning of this term.

2.2. Dimensions of Classroom Management

There are various dimensions to classroom management. Burden (2003) proposes seven dimensions: choosing a philosophical model of classroom management and discipline, managing student behavior, creating a respectful, supportive learning environment, managing and enhancing instruction, facilitating classroom safety and wellness, interacting with colleagues, parents, and others to achieve classroom management objectives and organizing the physical environment. However, Başar (1999), Çelik (2003), Demirtaş (2007), Sabancı (2008) and Groves (2009) offer the following 5 dimensions; behavior arrangement, management of relation and communication in the classroom, management of planning and programming activities, time management and the physical environment of classroom. In this study the dimensions proposed by Başar (1999), Çelik (2003), Burden (2003), Demirtaş (2007), Sabancı (2008) and Groves (2009) are combined as described below.

Choosing a philosophical model of classroom management and discipline.

Teachers choose different models of classroom management and discipline such as teaching with love and logic, cooperative discipline and assertive discipline (Burden, 2003). Various philosophical views of student development, teaching and learning, and classroom management are reflected by these models. The teachers' preferences change depending on whether they want a low or high level of teacher control. For teachers' these models are useful in terms of analyzing, understanding and managing student and teacher behavior, Furthermore, they provide teachers with a way of assessing their position and selecting a philosophical model that is consistent with their beliefs (Burden, 2003; Burden, 2004).

Student behavior management. This can be defined as creating a positive classroom climate, predicting problem behaviors and taking precautions against them, providing rules and encouraging students to obey those rules and changing disruptive behaviors (Demirtaş, 2007; Sabancı, 2008). Behavior management is important because teaching and learning are supported by rules and procedures that create a safe and secure atmosphere (Burden, 2004) furthermore; classroom rules support productive and effective education. (Burden, 2003; Demirtaş, 2007).

Creating a respectful, supportive learning environment (management of relation and communication). This dimension includes developing the teacher-student and student-student relationships to make classroom life easier (Burden, 2004; Demirtaş, 2007). Further, management of relations and communication aims to promote students' self-esteem and build group cohesiveness. Thus, the teacher supports the students in assuming appropriate classroom behavior and reinforces desired behaviors (Burden, 2003; Burden, 2004).

Managing and enhancing instruction (management of planning and programming activities). Students have different cognitive processes so they understand, remember and apply what they have learned in different ways, thus, it is essential that teachers plan and assess activities according to their students individual learning styles. The adequate planning of all activities is important in

the prevention of disruptive behaviors (Burden, 2003; Demirtaş, 2007; Sabancı, 2008).

Interacting with colleagues, parents, and others to achieve classroom management goals. Good parent teacher communication facilitates a mutual understanding of the home and classroom environment, thus supporting the students. Through interaction with their colleagues and others on issues such as classroom management and student behavior can assist teachers' in resolving classroom problems and working towards goals. (Burden, 2003; Burden, 2004).

Time management. The preparation, prioritizing, application and evaluation of activities are some of the components of time management. Timing and planning activities are significant factors for classroom management (Demirtaş, 2007; Sabancı, 2008).

Facilitating classroom safety and wellness. In order to pay full attention to the activities, students need to feel physically and emotionally safe. It is important that strategies for classroom safety and wellness are supported by methods of managing students' behavior, creating a supportive classroom, and managing and enhancing instruction (Burden, 2003; Burden, 2004).

The organization of physical environment. Instruction and order in the classroom are influenced by the organization of the desks, tables, equipment and other elements in classroom (Burden, 2003; Burden, 2004). The seating plan, placement of the teacher's table, instructional areas, visual materials and arrangement of classroom traffic are factors that need to be taken into account (Sabancı, 2008). In addition, in order to create a positive learning environment various other factors must be considered, such as; room temperature, acoustics, color of the walls, storage spaces for equipment and materials.

2.3. Different Classroom Arrangements

The structure of the school buildings and the environment of the school and classrooms and is important because it directly influences variables such as

attitudes/beliefs, interests, motivation, curiosity, temperament, social sensitivity, coping strategies, cognitive styles, creativity and values. Furthermore, the significance of these variables on instruction and learning cannot be ignored (Randhawa, 1991). Moreover, the architecture of the classroom affects the physical requirements for lighting, ventilation and safety of access (Getzels, 1974).

The rectangular classroom. Formerly, the student was thought to be a cognitively empty organism (Getzels, 1974) and Locke who described the student's mind as a tabula rasa, a blank slate (Jalongo et. al., 2000). From this perspective, primary drives such as hunger or thirst, or external motives such as reward or punishment direct the organism to learn or think. The role of the teacher is to determine what was supposed to be learned and what was actually learned. The materials and methods of instruction and the form of the classroom are teacher-centered. Thus, teacher should be in front of the classroom and the students sitting in chairs rigidly fastened to the floor in straight rows facing forward so they would be in contact with teacher - only source of learning (Getzels, 1974).

The square classroom. Over time, the conception of the student as a learner changed from empty organism to active organism. Thus, the center of learning process became the learner. This means that student determines what was to be learned and what will be learned. The teacher's desk was moved from the front of the classroom to the side and there were movable chairs for students since discipline was easier than with fixed chairs (Getzels, 1974).

The circular classroom. The conception of the student as a social being (Getzels, 1974) is similar to Vygotsky's idea in which learning is the construction of knowledge within a social context (Brewer, 2001), and occurs through interpersonal actions and reaction. Thus, each person in the classroom should be stimulus for every other person. If learning is accepted as a social process, the most sensible and practical learning environment is a circular classroom where everyone faces each other (Getzels, 1974).

Open classroom. Getzels (1974) stresses that “with respect, specifically to learning (or thinking, problem solving, and other forms of intellectual activity), the organism is similarly said to be driven” (p.534) (it is called motivated in education). This position can be described as the drives that stimulate the organism’s behavior but not with learning. Learning always includes the reduction of a drive and decline in tension and stimulation. Thus, the effective interaction of the student with the environment supports a student’s curiosity and encourages their exploratory activity (Getzels, 1974). Social interaction enhances active learning, in open classrooms the student can engage in learning interactions and talk about what s/he is thinking, learning, and what difficulties s/he meets (Edelson, Pea & Gomez, 1996).

2.4. Elements of the Physical Environment of Classroom

The physical environment of the classroom is influenced by various factors, which can be categorized as physical, psychological and social. Physical factors include acoustics, temperature, lighting, and classroom size. Motivation and feedback are elements of the psychological factors. Lastly, the relationship between teacher and student and student to student are social factors (Çakmak, 2001; Tayfur & Çelikten, 2008).

2.5. Physical Environment of the Classroom in Early Childhood Education

The classroom where a wide variety of activities occur is not a place for only instruction, it is also an environment for social interaction such as making friends, trying new roles, and developing trust and confidence. This means that the physical environment of a classroom has some important functions such as security and shelter, social contact, symbolic identification, task instrumentality, pleasure, and growth. Security and shelter includes physical and psychological security (Weinstein, 1996). While physical security is the first condition which must be satisfied, psychological security is “the feeling that this is a safe, comfortable place to be” (Weinstein, 1996, p.29). The function of social contact includes interaction among students and interaction between the teacher and

students. Thus, the placing of chairs or tables and group activities are important for social contact. Another function is symbolic identification this is the personalizing of the classroom environment. Task instrumentality is another function of the physical environment which includes the many ways in which the physical environment can help teachers and students to accomplish the planned activities. In terms of the function of pleasure refers to whether the students and teachers think their classroom environment attractive and satisfying. Lastly, the function of growth means supporting students' development and includes all areas such as increasing self confidence and learning cooperation (Weinstein, 1996).

When the functions of the physical environment are considered, it can be seen as a third teacher in that students can also learn from their interactions with their environment. Vygotsky (Maxwell, 2007) stated that opportunities and challenges are important for young students' learning. Thus, the physical environment of the classroom should create an appropriate level of challenge and support the critical development of competency (Maxwell 2007). Moreover, students' behavior and learning are directly influenced by the physical environment of the classroom (Partin, 2005).

Classrooms, which are responsive to students' needs and enhance the development of competence, should have properties of control, privacy, complexity, exploration, restoration, personalization and legibility. For the learners having control over their environment is important. This can be achieved firstly, by students being able to select their own level of challenge through their choice of a variety of materials and equipment. Secondly, their control over the environment can be enhanced by the reduction of behavioral limitations. Finally, students can gain a sense of environmental control via their ability to personalize their space (Maxwell, 2007; Nielsen, 2006).

Privacy is another property and should not only be thought as the absence of people but involving the ability to control interactions with other people. Hence, small or large groups, or private spaces are important for students so that they can be alone or interact with others people (Jalongo et. al., 2000; Maxwell,

2007). Moreover, complexity and variety can be accepted as the range of objects and materials in the environment, which can allow students to gain a sense of competency and mastery (Maxwell, 2007).

The students' development of competency is encouraged by exploration in which a key component is discovery. Moreover, one of the contributions to the development of competency can be expressed as opportunities for restoration. Lastly, a legible classroom supports students' development of competency by helping them to better comprehend how to use the space (Jalongo et. al., 2000; Maxwell, 2007).

Furthermore, experienced and well-trained teachers state that the high-quality early childhood classrooms should be designed for appropriate group sizes, and in such a way that a safe and responsive physical environment is created. Competency from an environmental perspective can be defined as the ability to interact effectively with one's surroundings. Effective interaction should be understood as using opportunities within the environment to act independently at a level appropriate for the person's physical and cognitive developmental stage (Maxwell, 2007).

Bothmer (2003) asks various questions which the teacher should answer in order to plan the physical environment:

- a. Where is the best place for teacher's desk?
- b. What should I consider as individual needs of my pupils?
- c. How can the furniture be organized to meet their needs?
- d. What should I consider as needs connected to the experiences that my pupils will have in each space?
- e. How can the furniture be organized to meet their needs?
- f. Where should quiet and active areas be?
- g. Where can private workspaces be created for students who are easily distracted?
- h. Where should the major pathways be located?

- i. Where should classroom and teacher materials be stored?
- j. Where should the students' materials be stored?

2.5.1. Variables of the Physical Environment

The physical environment of the classroom influences the density of students, opportunities for interaction and the visibility of behavior. How furniture is arranged, for example, circles, U-shapes or straight rows, the types of desks and chairs (tables or booths in art and laboratory rooms vs. conventional desks), and room dividers such as bookcases, file cabinets are important (Doyle, 1986). Furthermore, traffic flow, student interaction, noise level, attention or disruption is influenced by the placement of desks, bookshelves, pencil sharpeners, and cabinets (Partin, 2005). There are some variables of the physical environment of the classroom that are related to the comfortable use of the classroom and include class size, lighting, temperature, color, noise regulation, seating pattern and hygiene.

Class size: Considering the size of the class is important for the types of activities that will be undertaken. There should be adequate storage for student and classroom materials, also the areas to be used for activities and movement of students should be large enough. These factors are important for motivating students, gaining their attention and for the teacher to retain control. An appropriate class size can mitigate disruptive behavior, allowing a teacher to save time and focus on activities (Tabançalı, 2007).

Research shows that in larger classes, the teacher spends more time on procedural and domestic matters such as taking attendance, seating students, putting on coats, dealing with toileting and accidents. However, in smaller classes, there is more time for learning, more time for instruction and more individualization such as more one-to-one help (Blatchford, et al., 2002).

Moreover, studies show that student interaction connects the characteristics of the individual, group, setting, and achievement. Small groups

support interaction between students and from student to teacher. However, in large groups, students stay in their seats and are instructed by the teacher thus, the interaction is usually teacher to student (Blatchford et. al., 2002; Finn & Achilles, 1990; Finn & Achilles, 1999; Shapson et al., 1980; Webb, 1982). Moreover, Finn et al., (1990) emphasize that small class sizes are necessary for continuous student evaluation and to achieve a greater flexibility in teaching strategies.

A small class size decreases teacher's responsibility for administration and allows them to focus on more planned activities. Since all students are more easily kept under a watchful eye, discipline problems are minimized (Finn et al., 1990). Furthermore, in smaller classes, students having the opportunity to participate directly in classroom activities can be another factor in behavior management (Stasz & Stecher, 2000). Shapson et al., (1990) asked teachers about class sizes. Those with 16 students in the class thought that they were able to run their classrooms more smoothly and efficiently furthermore, that their students took more responsibility for working on their own, handling supplies, and they behaved appropriately. In a class of 37 students, teachers stated that rules had to be strictly enforced to restrict the physical movement of the students.

Moreover, having smaller classes increases teachers' morale and job satisfaction (Stasz et al., 2000). According to Shapson et al. (1980), teachers who went from a large to a small class size said that they preferred their current class size, had higher personal energy and noticed that their students paid more attention to, and had greater participation in activities.

Lastly, Finn et al., (2003) found that students' social and academic behaviors were directly influenced by class size. There are two important criteria for measuring students' social behavior; these are visibility of the individual and sense of belonging. Visibility of the individual means that each student in a small class can easily be seen and s/he cannot be ignored by the teacher. Thus, students are highly engaged in learning activities. Furthermore, the sense of belonging means that small size classes are more unified in the educational aim and the

teacher will have a closer relationship with each student leading to students being more supportive of each other.

Lighting: The level of illumination should be appropriate for students to see each other. Insufficient or too much lighting can strain the eye and can result in inattentiveness, nervousness and inefficiency (DiGiulio, 2007; Tabançalı, 2007; Taş, 2007; Tayfur et al., 2008). Lighting should be similar to natural sunlight and the windows of the classroom should be large enough to benefit from natural light (Jalongo et al., 2000; Tabançalı, 2007). Dinsmore (2003) reported that establishing a positive and comfortable atmosphere is influenced by soft lighting. 76% of 54 students surveyed said that lighting has an important role on creating a pleasant environment.

Temperature: Studies show that temperature in a classroom influences students' performance and behavior, in rooms that are too hot or too cold students have difficulty in focusing on the lessons. That is, the classroom should not be so warm as to put students to sleep nor should it be so cold that they have to wear coats, scarves and gloves to keep warm. According to the research, the ideal temperature of classroom is 20°C (DiGiulio, 2007; Imer, 2001; Tabançalı, 2007; Tayfur et al., 2008).

Colors: Students are influenced by the colors in their environment (Jalongo et al., 2000; Tabançalı, 2007; Tayfur et al., 2008). Breathing, blood pressure, pulse and muscular activities are all influenced by colors (Tayfur et al., 2008). Since color is the basic factor which provides the aesthetic interest, light shades should be chosen for walls. Moreover, the colors of wall and furniture should be consistent (Tabançalı, 2007). Classroom should have an ambiance (DiGiulio, 2007; Imer, 2001) this is important in softening hard architecture.

Noise regulation: Noise from outside or inside the classroom is a factor that influences physical and psychological health. Limiting external noise from entering the classroom is difficult and it needs to be considered when the building is planned and being constructed. However, reducing noise in the classroom is

possible by determining rules about the amount of noise the students make (Tabançalı, 2007) it is also necessary to take into account that the acoustics of the room may exacerbate the noise problem (Tayfur et al., 2008).

Seating pattern: An appropriate seating pattern positively influences classroom interaction and education. Moreover, it is important for organizing classroom traffic and accessing resources. The seating pattern should change according to the placement of tables, chairs, activities, class size and students' characteristics (Taş, 2007).

Hygiene: Since classrooms are areas that are used collectively, the cleaning and ventilation of the classroom are important for the health of the students and teacher (Imer, 2001; Tabançalı, 2007).

2.5.2. Dimensions of the Physical Environment

Appropriate materials and equipment should be provided for students in early childhood environments. These materials and equipment should suggest to students the activities can engage in and enhance their physical, intellectual, social and emotional skills. Thus, they have criteria or dimensions (Jalongo et al.; 2000).

Gestwicki (1999) described 7 dimensions to consider in physical environment of an early childhood education center: softness / hardness, open / closed, simple / complex, intrusion / seclusion, high mobility / low mobility, risk / safety and large group / individual. Jalongo et al. (2000) proposes the following 6 dimensions for the infant / toddler and pre-school environment: simplicity, softness, seclusion, senses, stimulation and stability. However, in this study Gatwick's dimensions are used.

Softness / Hardness: Soft, malleable, and responsive to the touch materials provide the softness in an environment. Softness provides students with a variety of tactile sensory stimulation such as finger paints, play dough, clay, couches, pillows, rugs, grass, water, sand, dirt. However, students should also come into

contact with more unyielding elements and encouraged to adapt themselves to the environment (Gestwicki, 1999).

Open / Closed: Openness in an environment means the presence of materials can be used in various ways. Open materials include sand, blocks, collage and art materials. Closed materials include puzzles and various Montessori materials have only one way to be used (Gestwicki, 1999; Nielsen, 2006).

Simple / Complex: Simple materials have only one aspect and one obvious use. However, two or three different kinds of materials can be combined in more complex units. A swing or tricycle may be examples of simple materials, whereas examples of complex materials are rolling pins with lumps of play dough, water and the sandpit (Gestwicki, 1999).

Intrusion / Seclusion: The dimension of intrusion / seclusion means the boundaries and opportunities for privacy and control over personal territory. That is, every classroom should include areas for group and individual activities (Gestwicki, 1999; Jalongo et al., 2000).

High mobility / Low mobility: Mobility can be defined as the freedom of students to move around. While gross motor active movement such as running, climbing and tricycle riding are encouraged by high mobility, sitting activities such as during story time, working on puzzles and other fine motor experiences are enhanced by low mobility (Brewer, 2001; Gestwicki, 1999).

Risk / Safety: In the classroom students should be protected against obvious dangers such as fire and electricity. However, there must be some elements of risk taking such as swinging and climbing (Brewer, 2001; Gestwicki, 1999).

Large group / Individual: There must be a balance between large group and individual activities to support the healthy development of a social structure. A student should be a member of the group that listens to a story, but also engage

in individual activities such as reading a book in the library corner (Gestwicki, 1999).

2.5.3. Other Components Related to the Physical Environment

In the classroom, facilitating traffic flow is important. Some Areas in the classroom where many students are gathered and in constant use should be far away from quiet areas to avoid distracting and disrupting the students working there. Group work areas, the pencil sharpener, trash can, water fountain, certain bookshelves and storage areas, computer stations, student's desks and teacher's desk are high-traffic areas. These areas should be appropriately and completely separated from each other (Evertson et al., 2006; Partin, 2005; Tabançalı, 2007). Trussell (2008) reported that ideal classrooms should have barriers or ample walkways to divide the areas. Doyle (1986) stated that especially in early childhood classrooms, areas should be divided clearly to prevent dissatisfaction, aggression and inattentiveness.

Another important point to consider is that of the interest centers where students engage on a special activity or topic. Each center usually has special equipment such as a computer, television, puppets, and blocks thus the location for each should be considered. For example, if there is a library as a separate center, it should be divided from the rest of the class. Furthermore, all basic materials and equipment of the center should be available and functioning properly also these items should be able to be removed and replaced easily (Brophy, 1983; Evertson et al., 2006). In addition, materials and furniture in the centers should be suitable esthetic, hygienic, educational and in accordance with the needs of the students (David, 1974).

The benefits of the interest areas can be expressed as: (1) providing students the opportunity to relax and learn more easily, (2) offering discovery learning for active preschoolers (İmer, 2001), (3) giving students the opportunity to choose in their free time (Sabancı, 2008), (4) allowing the teacher to easily accomplish transition between activities with a brief signal or a few directions

(Brophy, 1983). Getzels (1974) comments that “in the traditional classroom the student learns at his desk, in the open school the locus of learning is where something of particular interest to the student happens to be” (p. 537).

Maxwell (2007) proposed that the activity area where messy materials are used such as paint should be near hand washing facilities thus, interruption of the activity is prevented and intended activity is supported. Furthermore, Gestwicki (1999) stated that students’ idea development is supported by the environment, therefore, activity areas should be logically combined and located near one another such as the library and writing areas.

The selection of the interest areas appropriate for their students is the teacher’s decision, typical examples of the areas are; creative art, building blocks, dramatic play, books, music, math, science, gross motor activity, writing and water/sand play (Gestwicki, 1999).

It is important to have display areas for student work within the classroom. Hence, a positive physical environment of the classrooms is created through sending several significant messages to students by the teacher such as I am proud of you and your work (Trussell, 2008).

All the basic materials in a classroom need to be clearly visible and accessible to the students so they can complete an assignment with ease and efficiency (Trussell, 2008). Thus, when students can access what they need, the teacher is saved from being the sole distributor of commonly used materials such as scissors, staplers, tape and crayons (Stronge, 2007).

2.6. Teacher’s Role in Physical Environment of Classroom

A classroom is a complex world with many actors, voices and genres (Pettersen et al., 2004) with the teacher being one of the most important actors. Moreover, s/he is active, potent and energetic learner and teacher in the classroom (Sedgwick, 2008).

The teacher's first responsibility is to design an environment that supports exploration, discovery and investigation; encourages students to critically analyze problems, find solutions and make decisions. An environment that is planned around the integration of understanding, skills, attitudes and appreciation about significant real-life themes. In an organized classroom, the teacher has the roles of guide, questioner, listener, interactor, motivator, planner, researcher and resource person (Heck & Cobes, 1978).

An effective teacher must design an overall environment that supports student learning through instructional techniques, contains interesting materials and s/he must facilitate a rapport with the whole class. In order to do this, the teacher must have the skills of organizing and manage the physical environment of the classroom and management in order to orchestrate a supportive environment. In the well-organized classroom, the teaching program runs effectively; students know what they are to do, when to do it, how/ where to access the materials and equipment (Stronge, 2007) and the teacher has ensured that students are on task and productive (Bondy, Ross, Gallingane & Hambacher, 2007). Moreover, since the interaction between teacher-student and student-student is important, the teacher should design appropriate seating plans so that students can interact with, and see each other (Boyacı, 2008).

The teacher should be aware of the fact that the classroom is not his/her sole territory and effective use of the classroom areas must be planned and understood by students and teachers together (Proshansky & Wolfe, 1974). Students should be involved in decorating the classroom, displaying their own work on the walls. In this way the students will feel part of the overall classroom's physical environment (DiGiulio, 2007).

2.7. Research about Classroom Management in Early Childhood Education

Students are not born with all skills and abilities they need. The relevant opportunities and conditions should be provided for his/her experiences during the

period of intellectual, emotional and physical development. Thus, early childhood education is important for students' success in the future (Ünal, 2000).

Developed countries attach importance to early childhood education, for example, the number of students aged 3 to 6 attending school in Sweden is 100%, 95% in Belgium and 92% in Italy. For 5 year-olds, the percentage for school attendance is 100% in Ireland and Spain, 93% in the USA and 92% in Japan. In Turkey, early childhood education was suspended during the early years of the newly created republic and today the number of younger students in education still lags behind many other countries in the developed world. In Turkey in the 2000-2001 academic year only 9.8% of younger students were in early childhood education, this rose to 25% in the 2002-2005 academic year (Çetinkaya, 2006).

One of the important factors in early childhood education is the teacher. The teacher has two roles, manager and educator. The first step to successful classroom management is creating an appropriate classroom order (Gezgin, 2009). Although classroom management is significant in early childhood education, there is a lack of research about the knowledge that early childhood educators possess about classroom management and how they use it. Gezgin (2009) undertook a study about the thoughts and beliefs of preschool teachers, and fourth grade students teachers enrolled in the preschool teacher education department at university. He found that 81.9% (n=77) of teachers in the study said that they were successful in dealing with problem behavior. The physical environment of the classroom is one of the major dimensions of effective classroom management because a well-designed environment is the most efficient way of changing behavior. Furthermore, when it is considered that most education occurs in classroom, students should be physically and psychologically comfortable in the classroom (Saraçoğlu, 2002). In research carried out in different districts of Kutahya by Saraçoğlu (2002) the views of 55 primary school teachers and school administrators, and 105 parents were examined. He found that of the teachers who participated in the study only 16.4% said that physical organization of their schools was sufficient. Furthermore, 47.2% of the teachers thought that in terms

of the physical environment the schools did not have enough equipment. Serin (2001) made observations of elementary classrooms in Ankara based on a classroom management scale. It was stated that adequacy of tables and desks in the classrooms were rated as being very good by researcher. Further, use of classroom environment, hygiene and renovation of classroom, colors of furniture and walls, and changeability of desks and tables were also assessed. Lastly, temperature of classroom was rated as too high and the level of noise in the classroom was considered to be disturbing. Both Saraçoğlu (2002) and Serin (2001) carried out their research in primary and elementary schools in Turkey, however, there appears to be no available research which has studied physical environment of early childhood classrooms and the relationship to classroom management.

2.8. Summary

In this chapter, classroom management is defined as a complex and difficult aspect of teaching (Dinsmore, 2003) and has various dimensions, which include: choosing a philosophical model of classroom management and discipline, student behavior management, creating a respectful, supportive learning environment (management of relation and communication), managing and enhancing instruction (management of planning and programming activities), interacting with colleagues, parents, and others to achieve classroom management goals, time management, facilitating classroom safety and wellness, and physical environment (Burden, 2003). The functions of physical environment including security and shelter, social contact, symbolic identification, task instrumentality, pleasure, and growth were explained (Weinstein, 1996). In addition, what influences physical environment of the classroom and what is influenced by physical environment were stated in detail. Furthermore, how early childhood education classrooms should be designed was examined. The variables of class size, lighting, temperature, colors, noise regulation, seating pattern and hygiene and dimensions of softness/hardness, open/closed, simple/complex, intrusion/seclusion, high mobility/low mobility, risk/safety and large

group/individual for the classroom environment were explained. Lastly, other components of the environment such as traffic flow, interest centers, displaying student work and accessibility of basic materials, and teacher's roles in physical environment of classroom were outlined.

CHAPTER III

Method

This chapter presents the method of the study. It describes the overall design, the reasons behind the choice of design, participants in the study, the data collection and data analysis procedures.

3.1. Overall Design of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate early childhood teachers' perceptions of classroom management and the role of the physical environment.

This is a qualitative case study which comprised a population of early childhood teachers working in schools in different districts of the city of Ankara, namely, districts of Çankaya, Gölbaşı, Keçiören, Yenimahalle, Altındağ and Mamak. The teacher's in the sample varied in levels of experience and the types of school. The main data for this study was acquired through interviews in which the teachers were asked about the factors that influenced their classroom management. Special emphasis was placed on the impact of the physical environment on teachers' classroom management practices. Ultimately, issues related to their classroom teaching practices were revealed to relate it to their classroom management approach.

3.2. Participants

The selection of the early childhood education teachers participating in this study was based on maximum variation sampling. Yıldırım and Simsek (2005) define this method as a small sample chosen to reflect the variety of individuals who could be part of a problem. This sampling method was chosen since teachers from different districts in Ankara and teaching in different type of schools would reflect the variety of individuals appropriately.

The participants of the study were 36 early childhood education female teachers; 12 were employed in private schools and 24 worked in public schools (Table 1).

Table 1

Districts of Schools

	Çankaya	Gölbaşı	Keçiören	Yenimahalle	Altındağ	Mamak
Private School	6	1	2	1	1	3
Public School	1	4	7	2	6	2
Total	12		12		12	

The educational background of teachers shows that most of them were early childhood education graduates (n=20, %=55.5), some were child development graduates (n=15, %=41.6) and two teachers had graduated from other departments (Table 2).

Table 2

Teachers' Level of Education

	Private School	Public School
University	10 (27.7%)	21 (58.3%)
Vocational School of Higher Education	1 (2.7%)	1 (2.7%)
Vocational High School	3 (8.3%)	X
Total	14 (38.8%)	22 (61.1%)

While public schools teachers' work experience varied from 2 weeks to 9 years, the work experience of the private school teachers was between 1 year and 26 years.

The teachers in the study taught students from age 3 to 6 (as shown in Table 3). Most of the teachers worked in public schools (n=22, %=61.1) and taught age 6 classes (n=19, %=52.7).

Table 3

Age groups taught by teachers

Age(s)	Private School	Public School
6	9	10
5- 6	X	7
5-	4	4
4-	X	1
3	1	X
Total	14	22

The student population of the schools ranged between 14 and 380. Some of the early education centers were independent from the primary schools and they had more than one classroom. Thus, population of students in these independent early childhood centers was higher. However, there were some primary schools with fewer students since they only had one or two classrooms.

Table 4 gives the number of students in the classes in the different schools. There was no great difference in the populations of classrooms in the public and private schools. However, the highest number of students in a class was in the public school.

Table 4

Number of the students in the class

	Private School	Public School
Çankaya	11-22	25-30
Gölbaşı	23	16-23
Keçiören	18-27	20-22
Yenimahalle	20	23-26
Altındağ	12	14-24
Mamak	19-23	21-22

3.3. Instrument

In this study, the data was collected with a schedule of semi-structured interviews designed by the researcher. In order to develop it several steps were undertaken. Firstly, the literature related to classroom management in early childhood education was reviewed (Maxwell, 2007; Partin, 2005; Sylvia et al., 2006). Then from the literature review, the dimensions and variables of classroom environment in classroom management were determined. The following dimensions of classroom environment were selected; choosing a philosophical model of classroom management and discipline, student behavior management, creating a respectful, supportive learning environment (management of relation and communication), managing and enhancing instruction (management of planning and programming activities), interacting with colleagues, parents, and others to achieve classroom management goals, time management, facilitating classroom safety and wellness, and physical environment (Başar, 1999; Burden, 2003; Çelik, 2003; Demirtaş, 2007; Sabancı, 2008; Groves, 2009) and variables of classroom environment were class size (Tabanlı, 2007), lighting (DiGuilio, 2007), temperature (Imer, 2001), colors (Jalongo et al., 2000), noise regulation (Tabanlı, 2007), seating pattern (Taş, 2007) and hygiene (Imer, 2001). Finally, an interview schedule comprising 21 open-ended questions was created. The content and face validity of the semi-structured interview schedule was conducted

by two field experts in the departments of Early Childhood Education and Educational Sciences.

After the approval of the interview schedule, three pilot interviews were carried out to provide structure validity. Next, some items of the schedule were modified. The questions; ‘To what extent does the narrowness/width of the movement area influence your classroom activity? (*Hareket alanının dar/geniş olmasının yaptığınız etkinlikler üzerinde nasıl bir etkisi var?*)’ and ‘Which problems in teaching/learning result from inadequate equipment and services in the classroom (*Sınıf içerisindeki donanım ve hizmetlerin eksikliği eğitim-öğretim sürecinde ne gibi olumsuzluklara neden olur?*)’ were combined and question was rewritten as ‘Can you talk about influences of the physical environment on your classroom practices? (*Sınıfın fiziksel düzeninin, uyguladığınız etkinlikler üzerinde nasıl bir etkisi olduğunu anlatır mısınız?*)’. The orders of some of the questions were rearranged to increase the clarity for the reader.

The final interview schedule contained 16 questions; six pertained to demographic items, while the remaining ten open-ended questions aimed to investigate the perceptions of teachers about physical environment of the classroom and its influences on practices for classroom management. The final version of the interview schedule was piloted with five teachers and again, expert opinions were obtained. After this thorough checking procedure, the semi-structured interview schedule was utilized for data collection purposes (See Appendix A).

3.4. Data Collection Procedures

In order to carry out the research, firstly the researcher took measures to receive approval from the Applied Ethics Research Center in Middle East Technical University. After receiving approval from Ministry of National Education of the Turkish Republic (MONE) as a formal requirement, appointments were made with teachers from the schools in approval list via the school secretaries or direct contact with the teachers. Then, the researcher visited

schools and met the teachers to explain the aim of the study and asked if they wished to participate. If they agreed, the teachers signed a volunteer participation form. Next, interviews were made in appropriate areas in the school. In fifteen schools, contact was made with 76 teachers of which 36 agreed to volunteer for the study. It was planned to audio record all the interviews to ensure that all the information was obtained and to reduce the time taking in the interview due to handwriting the teachers' responses. (Yıldırım & Simsek, 2005). Although the rationale behind using audio recording was explained, some of the teachers (n=19) did not accept the method, and those interviews were transcribed by hand. The duration of interviews varied between 20 and 55 minutes, this was due to the time difference between audio recording and hand writing the responses.

3.5. Data Analysis

In this study, content analysis was used to reach concepts and relations that explain the data. According to Yıldırım and Simsek (2005), in content analysis, the data are firstly coded and then are arranged logically. Lastly, themes to explain the data must be determined. Based on the themes, relevant direct quotes from the participants are selected to give further detail.

More specifically, transcripts were prepared from the recordings and together with the handwritten record of certain interviews. They were carefully read several times by the researcher and the content analysis began. First, the coding was carried out. This is the process of naming the meaningful parts (words, sentences, paragraphs) of the data then examining, comparing, conceptualizing data and making connections between data (Yıldırım & Simsek, 2005). Then, the determined codes were listed and related codes were combined. After the researcher had examined all the thematic codes and compared data, the following main themes were determined:

(1) factors influencing classroom management

A. School infrastructure

a. Rotation system (n=2)

- b. Location of classroom (n=2)
 - B. Teacher characteristics
 - a. Experience of teachers (n=3)
 - b. Love of their profession and students (n=3)
 - c. Unplanned meetings of teachers (n=2)
 - C. Student profiles
 - a. Socioeconomic status and educational level of parents (n=3)
 - b. Students' school experience (n=3)
 - c. Mainstreaming students (n=4)
 - D. Physical environment of classroom
 - a. Physical features of classroom (n=21)
 - b. Security of the classroom (n=2)
 - c. Furniture of the classroom (n=1)
- (2) physical environment,
- (3) interest areas in the classroom,
- (4) strengths and weaknesses of the physical environment,
- (5) remedies for weaknesses of the environment,
- (6) influence of the physical environment on instructional processes and teacher-student interaction,
- (7) suggestions for the improvement for physical environment (See Appendix B).

Lastly, in accordance with Creswell's (2007) emphasis on the importance of participants' ideas, besides reporting the themes, the codes and their frequency, in this study some clarifying quotes were directly taken and incorporated into the results in order to enrich the description of the themes.

CHAPTER IV

Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of early childhood teachers in relation to the impact of the physical environment on classroom management. The perceptions of teachers working with students between the ages of 3 and 6 in public and private schools in Ankara were investigated by a semi-structured interview schedule. The research questions of the study were:

- a. What are teachers' perceptions about the factors that influence their classroom management practices?
- b. What are teachers' perceptions about physical environment of their classrooms?
- c. What are teachers' perceptions about how the physical environment of the classroom influences their instructional processes and teacher-student interaction?

The participants of the study were 36 female early childhood teachers who worked in public (n=22) and private (n=14) schools teaching younger students whose ages range from 3 to 6 years old. The teachers graduated from the departments of early childhood education (n=20), child development (n=5), handicrafts (n=1) and preschool education (n=1) of universities, vocational schools of higher education and vocational high school. Their teaching experience varied between 2 weeks and 21 years.

Qualitative analyses were performed in the study and the following 7 themes were categorized; (1) factors influencing classroom management, (2) physical environment, (3) interest areas in the classroom, (4) strengths and weaknesses of physical environment, (5) remedies for weaknesses of environment, (6) the influence of physical environment on instructional process

and teacher-student interaction, and (7) suggestions for improvement for physical environment. These 7 basic themes and sub-themes are explained below:

4.1. Classroom Management Practices

What are teachers' perceptions about the factors which influence their classroom management practices?

When asked to name the factors had an influence on classroom management, the teachers stated that school infrastructure, teacher characteristics, student profiles and physical environment of classroom were the main items.

School infrastructure. In relation to the infrastructure, two issues emerged: the rotation system and location of classroom. The rotation system was expressed as an important factor in classroom management. Teachers (n=2) said that students could not easily adapt when they had to change classrooms for different activities. Thus, teachers have to motivate them for each classroom and it results in a loss of time and some disruptive behaviors occur. A teacher (private school) stated that since students did not have their own chairs and materials in the rotation system, they could concentrate more on the activities. Moreover, two of teachers stated the location of classroom as a factor related to school infrastructure. A public school teacher said that preschool units which were parts of the primary schools were not appropriate to engage in various activities. However, they did not clarify which activities could not be undertaken.

Teacher characteristics. Teachers (n=10) stated that teacher characteristics as another factor which influenced the classroom management. They said that the teacher played an important role in many elements from planning to carry out activities in the classroom. In particular, the experience of teachers (n=3), their love of their profession and students (n=3), and unplanned meetings of them (n=2) were expressed as factors related to teacher characteristics. Teachers said that the classroom management of an inexperienced teacher and that of an experienced teacher would not be same. Furthermore, the teachers' love of students and their

profession, patience and tolerance were essential for early childhood teachers. A teacher (public school) said that for successful classroom management, the teacher should firstly love his/her profession. Then, s/he should love the students. However, the significance of patience for teachers cannot be ignored because s/he should listen to students and understand them. Furthermore, in private (n=1) and public (n=1) schools, unplanned meetings of teachers were stated as another factor that influenced classroom management. They said that unplanned meetings and visits to classroom caused a reduction in motivation and attention for students.

Student profiles. Another factor that influenced classroom management was the profiles of the students. This was the factor stated by teachers in public schools (n=16) more than the teachers who worked in private schools (n=4). Teachers mentioned socioeconomic status and education level of parents (n=3), students' school experience (n=3) and mainstreaming students (n=4) in relation to students' profiles. They said that if the socioeconomic status of parents was high, they cared more for their children and they were more motivated in school. However, parents with low socioeconomic status were less interested in their students and motivation of these students is lower. Public school teachers, in particular, stated that the socioeconomic status and education level of parents (n=3) had a direct relationship with students' behavior and consequently influenced classroom management. A teacher (public school) also stated that most of her students learn discipline and rules in the classroom because parents were not interested in their children. Hence, some disruptive behaviors occurred in the classroom. Another point related to the students' profiles was the students' experience of school. Teachers (n=3) stated that if students had attended an early childhood center, they were familiar with group work, interacting with other students and obeying rules. However, if the student lacked that experience it could result in some disruptive behaviors. The final factor connected to the student profile stated by teachers (n=4) was mainstreaming students, which is the inclusion of students with special needs in 'regular' classes. While three teachers from public schools mentioned that this influenced classroom management, only one teacher from private schools mentioned it. Since mainstreaming students need

special attention and care, teachers may not be able to easily focus on the other students. Thus, problems and disruptive behaviors can occur in the classroom.

Physical environment of classroom. In relation to the physical environment, three issues emerged: physical features of classroom (n=21), security function of classroom (n=2) and furniture of classroom (n=7). Most teachers stated large class size (n=17) and small movement area (n=17) as factors related to the physical features of the classroom. In particular, the public school teachers mentioned the small movement area (n=12) and large class size (n=11) as factors.

A teacher commented:

“As I see it, two points are very important: small movement area and large class size because an overcrowded classroom prevents me from reaching all the students. Also, in small classrooms, movement is not easy. (Bana göre 2 şey çok önemli; sınıf ortamının dar olması ve öğrenci sayısının çokluğu. Çünkü sınıf kalabalık olduğunda öğrencilerin hepsine ulaşmakta zorlanıyorum... Bir de sınıf ortamı dar olduğunda hareket de zorlaşıyor)” (Private School)

Teachers elaborated on the influences of small movement area and large class size. Firstly, they stated that an over crowded classroom resulted in the teacher exhausted, reduced the movement area, complicated the classroom management and monitoring of the students. A teacher (public school) said:

“I think my classroom is overcrowded and I feel tired before entering the classroom. However, when the number of students is less, I feel more willing to carry out activities. (Sınıfımın çok kalabalık olduğunu düşünüyorum ve sınıfa girmeden kendimi yorgun hissediyorum. Fakat, öğrenci sayısı daha az olduğunda, kendimi etkinlikleri uygulamak için daha istekli hissediyorum.)”

Furthermore, in overcrowded classrooms, students cannot move freely and disruptive behaviors can occur. Teachers focused on particular problems which resulted from overcrowding, these were the increase in time it took to carry out an activity: problem behaviors of students and the need to divide students into groups. Two teachers (public school) said that large class size and only one teacher to a class resulted in spending more time on a particular activity and prevented one to one attention from teacher to student. Furthermore, they stated

that it was hard to help, monitor support and identify the students' problems in these classrooms.

Where the movement area is small this restricts the freedom of students and their ability to work alone in certain activities. Students whose freedom is limited become irritated. However, in order to widen the movement area for a particular activity, teachers need to continually reorganize furniture and this is time consuming. During this the students lose motivation and attention. Hence, noise increases and positive communication is reduced in these classrooms. A teacher said:

“Since the students cannot move comfortably, they become more negative and irritable. Furthermore, they do not feel free. (Çocuklar daha rahat hareket edemedikleri için yani daha olumsuz, hırçın oluyorlar, kendilerini özgür hissedemiyorlar).” (Public School)

However, there were teachers (n=4) who stated that too large movement areas negatively influenced classroom management in that the teachers lost control of the students. A public school teacher said that a large movement area made class management difficult. The larger classroom is, the harder it is to retain control of students. She stressed that she could manage the class hardly in large classroom. Furthermore, students cannot control themselves easily.

Another feature was shape of the classroom. Teachers (n=3) stated that this was significant for classroom management because the shape of the classroom influenced students' seating plan, the lighting and organization of furniture and equipment. Three private school teachers said that a classroom with four equal length walls was more functional than other types of rectangular classroom. Also the division of interest areas is not possible in these classrooms. Furthermore, square classrooms get more sunshine than rectangular classrooms.

The security function was another factor which was mentioned by teachers. They particularly commented on lighting (n=1) and temperature (n=1) as important factors. Teachers stated that the motivation of students and teachers was influenced directly by factors of security. A private school teacher said that if she

felt comfortable and safe in the classroom, she could meet students' needs more patiently. However, if she is not comfortable, she feels stressed and reflects her stress onto students.

Teachers also said that classroom management was directly influenced by the furniture in the classroom (n=1). For instance, the organization of chairs and tables are important. A teacher (public school) stressed that if tables and chairs were placed appropriately, it saved the teacher's time. However, if the furniture needed to be reorganized for the activity, it distracted the students and they lost motivation.

Teachers (n=6) also stated that lack of equipment and materials had an affect on classroom management. For private school teachers (n=4) it was an important factor. For example, one teacher (private school) said that lack of materials caused loss of time in that she had to change her plans or try and find other materials. A public teacher said that when there was enough equipment and materials it had a positive influence on the students. Thus, she, as a teacher, was able to manage the class easily.

4.2. Physical Environment

What are teachers' perceptions about physical environment of their classrooms?

In order to understand their perceptions about the physical environment of their classrooms, the teachers were asked to describe them. The teacher's were also asked which interest areas they had in their classroom and how they used these areas. In addition, they were asked about the advantages of these interest areas in terms of classroom management. The remaining questions concerned the strengths and weaknesses of the physical environment of their classroom and they were asked to offer ideas to remedy any weaknesses they identified. The teachers gave various responses; some referred to physical features, and furniture and equipment, others to functions of the physical environment: security and growth

Physical features. In relation to the physical features of their classrooms, teachers stressed the adequacy of the movement area in their classrooms. Some (n=5) commented that their classrooms were large enough. However, one public school teacher said that although her classroom was large, since there were more students on the register than the room could comfortably hold, the movement area of the classroom was diminished. Most of the teachers (n=4) who said that they have large classrooms worked in public schools. However, there were two public school teachers and one private school teacher who stated they had small classrooms. A public school teacher stated that students were not comfortable in the small classrooms since they could not move about easily.

Furniture and equipment. In terms of the furniture and equipment in the classroom, teachers mentioned items such as chairs and tables (n=8), cupboards for various purposes (n=12) and CD-player (n=4). Moreover, while some (n=4) determined that the equipment and materials were adequate, three said there was a lack of materials. Two teachers who said they did not have enough equipment worked in public schools and they stated that, in particular, the materials in their areas were inadequate. Some teachers (n=7) also stated that their furniture and equipment reflected the purpose of the classroom and it made easier the use of the classroom. A private school teacher also said that students knew where the materials were in the classroom and how they should be used. Furthermore, since equipment and cupboards were child size, students could use them easily. For example, a teacher (private school) stated that bookshelves in their classroom were child size and open so students could easily access the books. Also some teachers (n=3) said that if the materials were not easily accessible then this could limit the students' activities and thus, their development. It also means that the teachers have to spend extra time taking and returning the materials from storage.

There were some teachers who referred to functions of security and growth.

Security. Firstly, lighting and temperature of their classrooms were stated by teachers as related to security. Three (public school) said that lighting and

temperature of their classrooms were appropriate. However, only one teacher (public school) commented that her classroom was clean and hygienic.

Growth. Firstly, that physical environment of their classroom was appropriate for students' development was stated by some of teachers (n=4). However, they did not elaborate on the appropriateness of the environment. Teachers particularly focused on the wall design of their classrooms and interest areas in the classroom. Two teachers (public school) said that the wall design was simple. Teachers also referred to the display boards in their classrooms. They stated that there were number boards (n=13), daily activity display (n=10), season bands (n=8), Atatürk areas (n=7), color boards (n=6), geometrical shape boards (n=5) and pictures of areas (n=5) on their walls. However, two public school teachers said that since there were cupboards on the wall, they could not hang activity and bulletin boards. Furthermore, some teachers (n=10) commented that exhibiting students' work on the walls of the classroom motivates the students, in particular displaying the results of group work has a positive influence.

Another point that was mentioned by most of teachers was the interest areas referring to existing areas in the classroom, placement, separation use and importance of the areas.

In some schools interest areas are created as small corners while in others there is a rotation system where there is a specific classroom for each interest area. Several teachers (n=4) worked in private schools that applied the rotation system had different classrooms for activities such as drama and Turkish (n=4), art and music (n=4), social science and reading-writing (n=2), and science and math (n=2). A private school teacher said that they did not think of having interest areas in the classroom because the rotation system was applied in their school. This means that students are not in same classroom all day. Further, because of the rotation system, not all the interest areas are in a classroom. Of the teachers who had interest areas in their classrooms the most mentioned were dramatic play (n=26), book/library (n=25), science/math/experiments (n=21), puppet (n=17), music (n=16), blocks/Lego (n=11), educational play materials (n=10), table play

materials (n=5), Atatürk (n=4), repair materials (n=4) and drama (n=3). The teachers consider some of these areas such as those for dramatic play, books, science, puppet, music and blocks to be standard in the early childhood education classroom. For instance, a public school teacher said that they did not have different areas but they had standardized areas such as dramatic play area, book area and educational play materials area.

Furthermore, some teachers (n=2) stated that they created some areas according to their daily activities because they believe that changing areas is more interesting and motivating for the students. It means that the topic of the day may sometimes determine changing the area. A teacher said:

“I sometimes create a special area for that day’s activity. For instance, a jobs area... Students can use this area during that day or that week, however they want (Zaman zaman o günün etkinliğine özel bir köşe oluşturunuyorum. Mesela meslekler köşesi... O köşeyi de o gün ya da o hafta istedikleri gibi kullanabiliyorlar).”
(Private School)

Another important point related is the placement and separation of the interest areas. According to the teachers (n=4), they should be placed in an adequate space. Many teachers (n=13) commented that the appropriate location of the areas saved time for the teachers. A private school teacher said that although the placement and separation of areas seemed utopian, it would save time and energy of teacher and was beneficial for use of the areas. Also, teachers said that the appropriate separation of interest areas was important and provided order in the classroom, this results in the teacher being less tired (n=6). Other teachers explained the importance of the appropriate separation of areas in terms of classroom control (n=5) and student observation (n=3). A private school teacher said that this separation provided her with easy control of students, this view was also held by a public school teacher who also stated that it saved time. However, according to a private school teacher, there was no direct relationship between time saving and the separating the interest areas.

The way in which the teachers and students use these areas is important, several teachers (n=7) stated that the students used these areas in their free time

activities. In particular it was the drama play area that was mostly chosen by teachers for free time activities whereas the science and math area (n=7) and book area (n=5) were usually reserved for planned activities (n=7). In some classrooms, the areas are used sequentially (n=3), for instance, if blocks and book areas are used today, tomorrow's areas will be science and puppets. Teachers (n=3) stated the same reason for sequential use, a teacher (public school) said that since the areas were not divided, they could use only one or two areas in a day. If they want to use all the areas at the same time, all materials got mixed up therefore, it was hard for the students to find what they wanted and also it was not easy for students to tidy up. Some teachers (n=8) stated that students used all the interest areas enthusiastically, but the dramatic play area (n=6) was a favorite with the students. However, gender influenced the students' choice of interest areas, teachers saying that girls usually preferred dramatic play whereas the blocks and Lego areas were the boys' favorites.

The importance of the interest areas was stressed by teachers with many (n=11) stating that the interest areas were indispensable for early childhood education. A public school teacher said that if there were no interest areas in the classroom, directing students to various activities would be hard. Interest areas were also important for order in the classroom (n=6) and they are essential to decrease disruptive behaviors (n=2) and reduce chaos (n=2). The teachers' comments on the benefits of the interest areas in effect mean that the teacher exerts less effort in managing the class. Thus, interest areas prevent teachers from becoming exhausted (n=3). For example, a private school teacher said that lack of interest areas meant a lack of interesting materials to catch the students' attention. This exhausts teachers and causes disruptive problems among the students. Several teachers stated that interest areas are useful for students because these areas support creativity (n=5) and social/emotional development of students (n=2). According to a teacher:

“There must be areas where the students' imagination is supported. Furthermore, they think and produce in different ways. Of course, it is important for order of the classroom. Students focus on something and that means fewer problems (Köşeler

mutlaka olmalı. Çünkü çocukların hayal gücü destekleniyor, düşünmeleri ve farklı şeyler üretebilmeleri sağlanıyor. Tabii ki bu da düzenin sağlanması için çok önemli. Çünkü çocukları meşgul ediyor. Çocuklar ne kadar meşgulse sorun o kadar az olur” (Private School)

While teachers expressed their ideas concerning the physical environment of their classrooms, they stated some strengths and weaknesses of their classrooms.

Strengths of the physical environment. The teachers in the study mentioned various strengths of their classrooms’ physical environment related to the location, and physical features of the classroom, furniture and equipment, and security function.

Some teachers (n=4) also stated the location of their classroom as a strength and said that the early childhood classrooms being separate from the primary schools was an advantage for the safety and comfort of students. Moreover, they said that classrooms at the entrance (n=1) to the building and close to the toilets/sinks (n=2) were also strengths of the physical environment.

In relation to the physical features of the classroom, firstly, many teachers (n=11) stated that width of their classroom was appropriate in that there was sufficient space for number of students and the students could move easily. Furthermore, a teacher (public school) expressed that her classroom had equal sides and that gave the advantage of being able to easily reach all the students. This type of room also can be divided into different areas. It was mostly public the school teachers (n=9) said that they had wide classrooms.

When the data about furniture and equipment in the classroom were analyzed, of the teachers (n=5) who said they had enough materials four worked in public schools. A private school teacher said that there were enough materials and the students could see and touch them. Teachers stated that there were enough cupboards (n=6) to store various materials and objects (n=5) to use in activities. Several teachers said that they had a TV (n=3), computer (n=2) and VCD (n=2).

A public school teacher stated that the overhead projector supported more effective story telling and the students could watch educational films on TV.

Lastly, some strengths were stated related to the security function of the classroom. For instance, many of teachers were happy with the lighting (n=15) and the temperature (n=9) a public school teacher said that her classroom was well heated and she did not feel cold. She also commented that it was well-lit and spacious; she was able to carry out all the activities she planned without turning on the lights. Only one public school teacher expressed stated the hygiene of her classroom as a positive aspect.

Weaknesses of the physical environment. The teachers' responses concerning the weaknesses of the physical environment included; the system in the school, the physical features of the classroom, furniture and equipment, the security and growth function.

In relation to system in the school, some teachers (n=2) said that the rotation system was a weakness because it limited materials and this restricted the students' creativity. Furthermore, they stated that the sense of attachment to the classrooms, equipment and materials could not be developed and this could result in lack of motivation for students.

Another issue which teachers raised was the physical features of the classroom. A small movement area (n=15) and large class size (n=4) were mentioned as weaknesses by teachers, a public school teacher said that these two problems prevented the appropriate placement and divisions of interest areas. Furthermore, a private school teacher stated that small movement area meant that she had to divide her students into two groups. She stated that if she did not do this, students had to sit too close each other and this disturbed their attention. Most of the teachers (n=11) who commented negatively on the small movement area worked in public schools. However, a large class size was seen as an inadequacy by two public school and two private school teachers.

In relation to furniture and equipment, some teachers reported a lack of activity materials (n=7) and toys (n=6). They particularly focused on the fact that a lack of materials results in a loss of time. For instance, a public school teacher said that there was a considerable lack of materials which meant she could not do some activities, or carry out planned lesson and this resulted in a loss of time. Another teacher from a public school also stated that the lack of materials limited the activities that the teacher could implement stating that if teachers do not have the materials, they can teach nothing.

Security function was another issue connected to the weaknesses of the physical environment. Although lighting and temperature were given as a positive aspect, others were reported them as a problem. While nine teachers stated that darkness and poor lighting were problem another four teachers said that the heating system was inadequate. A teacher (public school) said that the windows were too high so the classroom was dark and gloomy. Another teacher (private school) stated that her classroom was on the ground floor but the adjacent building blocked the sunshine thus, the room was dark and too cold in winter and summer. The teachers felt that dark and cold classrooms were not attractive and had a negative impact on the students. Two teachers (public school) also said that their classrooms were in the basement and the ceilings were too high resulting in poor acoustics and thus, too much noise in the classroom.

Lastly, teachers focused the growth function. Overall the teachers' comments about interest areas were positive but some stated the weaknesses of these areas. Two teachers stated in larger classrooms, they can place materials for each area appropriately but in small and overcrowded areas, there are problems in the students being able to easily access the materials in the interest areas. A teacher said:

“Since there are a large number of students in my class, the puppet area is not ready to use at any time. I have to organize these areas again every day for students to use them comfortably in the free time activities. (Sınıfım kalabalık olduğu için örneğin kukla köşemiz veya sahnemiz her an kullanıma hazır şekilde durmuyor. Çocukların serbest zaman saatlerinde bu köşeleri rahatça

kullanabilmeleri için her gün yeniden düzenleniyorum)” (Middle SEL-Public School)

Another point stressed by the teachers (n=4) was inadequate interest areas. A private school teacher explained that a lack of interest areas resulted insufficient activities, disruptive student behaviors and loss of time. A few of teachers working in public schools (n=3) complained that the materials in the interest areas were insufficient. Two of commenting that in particular, materials in the dramatic play area were inadequate.

Remedies for weaknesses of the physical environment. The teachers stated various remedies to compensate for the weaknesses of physical environment which could be applied by teachers, school administrator and other people or organizations.

a. The Teachers. Several teachers (n=6) said that if the weakness was related to the architecture of the classroom there was nothing they could do. It was notable that all teachers who mentioned architecture as a weakness worked in public schools.

If the weakness was related to the features of the physical environment such as a small movement area, some teachers (n=6) said that they could do nothing. However, two public school teachers stated that they could rearrange chairs or tables, one of these teachers said that she would push the tables and chairs back to create more space.

However, other teachers (n=3) said that moving chairs and tables, changing the plan, using materials sequentially and dividing students into groups were only temporary solutions and they would face similar problems the next day. A private school teacher said that she could only solve the problems for that day. She tried to reduce the problems in that day's free time activities.

If the weakness was furniture and equipment, teachers said that they could solve this in different ways. Firstly, they (n=10) encourage an administrator or the students' parents to buy materials. Furthermore, they could use their own supply

of materials (n=6), change their plan (n=2) and use materials sequentially (n=1). Public school teachers (n=5) mentioned using their own supply of materials. Another public school teacher said that if there was a lack of materials, she changes her plan.

Lastly, for all weaknesses in the environment, teachers said that they could discuss their problems with the administration of the school (n=8) and with the parents (n=4). Most teachers (n=6) who said that they could communicate with the administration and all (n=4) who said they could take to parents (n=4) were from public schools.

b. School Administration. When teachers were asked what school administration could do about the weakness of the school, they first focused on re-planning or re-arrangement of the classrooms. They said that school administration could open a new classroom (n=2) or plan the classroom again (n=5). For instance, two private school teachers said that the school administration should re-plan the classroom and this planning should include areas, equipment and materials.

Furthermore, teachers stated purchasing materials and communicating with parents and teachers as other remedies. While some teachers (n=6) said that school administration could buy more materials, some (n=3) thought that the administration should use the money collected from parents and belonging to the preschool department should only be used for the early education classrooms. Moreover, the solution that the school administration should buy the materials if they were needed was mostly offered by public school teachers (n=5). They also said that the school administration could also ask teachers and parents for ideas as how to resolve the problems (n=3).

Lastly, some teachers (n=3) stated that especially in private schools, the administration could do whatever they wanted. There were teachers (n=4) who said that they could do nothing for the weakness of the classroom.

c. Other People and Organizations. When teachers were asked who could solve weakness of classrooms apart from teachers and the school administration, they named the MONE and General Directorate of Preschool Education, other school personnel, parents, students, humanitarian organizations and publishers.

Some teachers (n=9) stated that the MONE and General Management of Early Childhood Education would supply additional resources, but the teachers had reservations about this. While a public school teacher said that she knew that MONE helped many schools and supplied toys and materials, if the school was under their administration, another teacher (public school) said that MONE could be more effective in providing materials and dividing the classrooms.

Furthermore, according to teachers (n=2), the personnel in the school such as office staff and caretaker help solve the problems. For example, a public school and a private school teacher said that these people could repair equipment or photocopy worksheets for activities.

Moreover, half the teachers (n=18) claimed that parents could contribute to remedy the lack of resources in the classroom. For instance, a private school teacher stated that parents could support them related to their occupations. A public school teacher also said that students could bring materials from home. Lastly, according to a teacher (public school), humanitarian help organizations and publishers could supply materials and equipment.

4.3. Instructional Processes and Teacher-Student Interaction

What are teachers' perceptions about how the physical environment of classroom influences their instructional processes and teacher-student interaction?

Instructional processes. In order to answer this question, firstly teachers were asked if they could talk about the affect of the physical environment of classroom on classroom activities. The teachers stated that the classroom, physical

features of the classroom, and security function were important for the selection and application of activities in the classroom.

Firstly, teachers (n=3) emphasized that organized classrooms supported the creativity and physical development of students. Furthermore, since students have opportunity to choose and make decisions in organized classrooms, they will be encouraged to participate in and continue the activity. A teacher (private school) said that an organized classroom provided students with comfortable movement and effective group work. Furthermore, fewer accidents and disruptive behaviors occur in these classrooms. In disorganized classrooms, there is a negative impact on the students' motivation. A public school and a private school teacher stated that when their students' motivation decreased, students did not complete their activities.

Teachers also commented on the influence of the physical features of the classroom and emphasized the width of the movement area. They stated that in large classrooms, activities could be applied according to plan. Thus, it is easy to complete an activity in the time allocated. However, in small classrooms, teachers (n=2) have to reorganize chairs and tables for the activity which takes up valuable of time.

Moreover, teachers referred to class size as an important factor in planning their classroom activities. Teachers (n=2) complained that students were limited to the interest areas they organized for that specific day. For instance, a teacher (public school) said that they could not offer a free choice for the students to select any interest area to work on

Lastly, according to the teachers, security is important for activities. The lighting (n=3) and temperature (n=3) were mentioned as having an influence activities because they are significant factors in the motivation of the teachers and their students. A teacher (public school) stated that when there was lack of heating in the classroom, teacher would focus on the cold and not on the students. If a

classroom is cold and dark then the teacher may have to change her activity plans in cold and dark classroom. A private school teacher said:

“The temperature of classroom and sufficient sunshine are very important especially for preschool students. In a gloomy classroom, students are not eager and motivated to carry out activities. (Özellikle bir anasınıfındaki çocukların bulunduğu ortamın sıcaklığının, güneşi alıp almadığının çok büyük bir önemi var. Karanlık bir ortamda çalıştığımızda çocuklar hakikaten etkinliklere karşı duyarsız oluyorlar, isteksiz oluyorlar)” (Private School)

Teacher-student interaction. When the data were analyzed, it was reported that the physical environment of the classroom influences interaction of teacher and students both positively and negatively. Firstly, some teachers (n=5) said that their classrooms were appropriate for one to one interaction and other types of communication. Furthermore, for good communication, all the students need to be able to see teacher and the materials in the teacher’s hand, hear the teacher and each other, and the teacher should be able to see all of the students. Half the teachers (n=18) said that the environment of the classroom did not prevent the teacher from making eye contact with the students and many teachers (n=16), said that the students could easily see the teacher or objects.

However, a public school teacher stated that her classroom was disorganized and there was chaos. This made her feel aggressive and she was unable to create satisfactory communication with her students. A small movement area (n=5) and large class size (n=1) were considered to be other factors that influenced communication. Teachers (n=4) especially commented that in restricted areas, in order to reach one of the students, they inevitably disturb the other students. When a student is disturbed this may result in problem behavior which in turn has an impact on the overall classroom management. A teacher said:

“In order to reach a student, you disrupt five students. Of course, those 5 students get annoyed because you have to pass those students to reach sixth student. (Bir çocuğa ulaşmak için 5 çocuğun dikkatini dağıtıyorsunuz. İster istemez o 5 çocuk sizden rahatsız oluyor. Çünkü siz onların üzerinden geçerek 6. çocuğa ulaşıyorsunuz)” (Private School)

Lastly, the sound proofing in the teaching room is very important. For effective communication in the classroom, students and the teacher need to be

able to hear each other clearly. In this study, some teachers (n=3) commented on the noise problem. Two public school teachers said that since the ceiling was too high in her classroom, their voices echoed too much creating a loud noise.

Improvement of physical environment of their classroom. The teachers' suggestions for the improvement of physical were related to various features of the classroom, furniture and equipment, security of the classrooms.

Some teachers (n=7) focused on the idea of a large movement area and small class size, especially stressing that the administration should consider the capacity of the classroom when students are registered for the school.

Teachers also stated adequate furniture, equipment and materials (n=8) should be provided and interest areas (n=7) should be supported. It is interesting that only one private school teacher said that her interest areas in the classroom should have better facilities.

Furthermore, teachers made suggestions for the security of the classroom. For instance, they said that classrooms should be light and spacious (n=5). Four of these teachers were from public schools and one said that the lighter and more spacious classrooms should be organized as preschool classrooms because it is not possible to reduce height of the ceiling, lower the windows and widen the classroom area.

Furthermore, teachers commented on the involvement of the teaching staff in the organization of the physical environment of the classroom. A public school teacher said that school administration and teachers should always be in contact for the arrangement of the classroom's physical environment. Moreover, a private school teacher said that the arrangement of the classroom environment should be reviewed again by teachers and new materials should be added to some areas. Lastly, teachers said that they should be guide in the classroom (n=1) and interact with her students (n=1). They also should observe students and classroom carefully.

CHAPTER V

Discussion

From the data obtained in the study, seven main themes were determined: factors influencing classroom management, physical environment, interest areas in the classroom, strengths and weaknesses of physical environment, remedies for weaknesses of environment, the influence of physical environment on instructional process and teacher-student interaction and suggestions for improvement for physical environment.

This chapter presents the findings, implications derived from the study, and recommendations for further studies.

5.1. Classroom Management Practices

What are the teachers' perceptions about the factors that influence their classroom management practices?

The findings of the study showed that physical environment of the classroom was influential in terms of classroom management. Although the physical environment of the classroom did not directly affect certain aspects of classroom management such as the rules or routines, it had an impact on both the students and teachers' motivation and concentration related to the activities and daily life of the class. Hence, while the strengths of the classroom support positive behaviors of the students and effective management of teachers, the inadequacies cause disruptive behavior. In the literature, it was reported that in early childhood classrooms a good physical environment of the classroom can prevent disruptive behavior and support classroom management in three ways. Firstly, a well-designed classroom provides students with many choices for their activities and while they are actively engaged in their work and interest areas, they will display less disruptive behaviors. Furthermore, in well-planned environment, students

have opportunity to engage in activities that help them manage their emotions. Lastly, a teacher can design the layout of environment in such a manner as to prevent some problem behaviors (Bullard, 2009). Thus, the literature supports the findings of the study. Moreover, it can be said that teachers recognize the importance of the physical environment dimension of classroom management.

Teachers also gave different perceptions of the factors that influence classroom management. These were school infrastructure, teacher characteristics, student profiles and the physical environment of the classroom. In relation to school infrastructure, problems of the rotation system were referred to by teachers. In particular, they said that changing rooms meant that the students did not have ownership of the classroom and materials and this lack of belonging decreased their motivation to be involved in activities. This can result from the function of symbolic identification of the classroom. This is supported by Weinstein (1996) who stresses the importance of the personalizing the classroom and physical environment of the classroom for motivation of the students.

As mentioned in the literature, teacher characteristics are an important factor including the relationship between teaching experience and classroom management. It was reported that teachers faced many problems in terms of classroom management during the first years of teaching but experienced teachers could manage their classrooms more effectively and easily (Tezcan & Demir, 2006). In fact, the characteristics of the teacher are an important factor for classroom management at all grade levels (Ritter & Hancock, 2007). The extent of the teacher's experience may account for the difference in their responses to the questions in the study. According to a study by Çakmak and Ercan (2006), experienced teachers stated that the physical environment, class size and economic status of students had the most influence on classroom management; however, the disruptive behavior of the students, attitudes of teachers, disconformities and negative criticism were the responses of student teachers. It can be expressed that a teacher's experience and characteristics are important for them to determine their philosophical model of classroom management and

discipline. That is, one of the dimensions of the classroom management is directly influenced by teachers' characteristics.

According to the findings of the study, it was mostly public school teachers stressed that the profiles of the students influenced classroom management and they said that the socioeconomic status of students was important. Furthermore, teachers said that parents with low socioeconomic levels did not care for their children and this influences the children's motivation and can lead to disruptive behaviors. Moreover, disruptive the behaviors of students may result of the children wanting to catch teacher's attention. Students' experience of school also was mentioned by teachers as a significant factor especially in preschool classrooms because for most of students, it is the first school experience. In which case, the students are not familiar with working in a group, being aware of, and obeying rules. Thus, the profiles of the students and their behavior are an important factor in classroom management for the teachers in this study. Also, behavior management dimension of classroom management can be mentioned at this point and the importance of determining rules and routines and directing students to obey them can be stressed.

The physical environment of the classroom was considered to be important and many of the teachers agreed that the movement area and class size were the most significant points. Both these elements have an affect on other areas of classroom management. In this study teachers commented that fewer students and larger movement areas increase teachers' enthusiasm and satisfaction, positively impacts on teacher-student interaction and enhance the students' ability to maintain attention on, and involvement in, learning activities. This may result from the fact that with fewer students since the teacher is able to spend more time with the students on a one to one basis and this has positive effect on the students' motivation. Hence, positive motivation and interaction can support successful classroom management and reduce disruptive behavior. The literature supports this finding (Finn et al., 1990). Lastly, it can be said that these answers of teachers were related to two dimensions of classroom management: physical environment

and supportive learning environment (management of relation and communication). Furthermore, in terms of the students' developmental characteristics in the early childhood years students are very active, thus, a large movement area is necessary for the students' safety. However, interestingly, some teachers stated that if the classroom was too large this could create classroom management problems in that the teacher may not be able to adequately maintain control. Although the literature did not mention the negative influence of large classrooms, the appropriate ratios of the movement area to class size were stressed (Blatchford et al., 2002). A classroom may be considered too large when there are a small number of students, furthermore, when there are not enough adults in the classroom; a large movement area may have a negative influence on management. In the literature, it was stated that students' developmental characteristics and outcomes should be considered and class-student ratio and teacher-student ratio should be regulated appropriately (Bullard, 2009).

5.2. Physical Environment

What are teachers' perceptions about physical environment of their classrooms?

When the teachers asked their physical environment of the classroom, firstly they described the physical features, and the furniture and equipment. They also referred to some functions of the physical environment such as security and shelter, and growth. However, they did not mention functions of social contact, symbolic identification, task instrumentality and pleasure in connection with this question.

When referring to the physical features of their classrooms the teachers mentioned movement area and class size. According to findings, it can be said that some of the teachers experience some difficulties about properties of well-designed classrooms such as control and privacy (Maxwell, 2007). For instance, classrooms should decrease behavioral limitation (control). However, especially in small movement areas, students' behaviors are limited. Furthermore, students

need private spaces to be alone or to work in a group but teachers complained that they did not have enough space to organize various areas and move easily. This is also related to dimension of large group/individual of physical environment. Mobility/low mobility is another dimension of the physical environment and this is related with the freedom of students to move around (Brewer, 2001). However, findings of this study show that in many classrooms it is not possible to provide high mobility and low mobility because classrooms' movement areas, size and organization is not appropriate for students to have that freedom. Finally, another important component of the physical environment in early childhood education classrooms is traffic flow. However, according to the findings, classrooms are not large enough to use traffic flows and barriers for high-traffic areas. Thus, it can be said that it causes chaos and also aggression and inattentiveness in the classrooms.

Within the physical environment it is important to display of students' work. The significance of exhibiting the outcome of the students' activities in the classroom was noted by many of the teachers. The fact that displaying students' work on the walls of the classroom improves the environment and creates a positive atmosphere is supported in the literature, for example in the study by Çakmak, (2001).

Teachers who participated in this study also stated that the furniture and equipment of their classroom was important. This maybe because they felt there was little they could do about the architecture of the classroom. They also stressed the significance of lighting and temperature for students' activities and motivation. Similarly, Bullard (2009) stated that especially the lighting of the classroom has an influence on visual acuity and the mental health of students. Natural light is essential in early childhood education classrooms for students' motivation and mood. This shows the importance of security and shelter function of physical environment.

Teachers' stressed that interest areas in the classroom were significant in the growth function of the physical environment. In particularly they stated that the environment should support the students' creativity and imagination but also

facilitate the implementation of the teachers' learning program. Furthermore, interest areas were considered to be indispensable for early childhood education classrooms. Moreover, the teachers stated that the interest areas were important for all the student's developmental skills and should extend the possibilities for exploration and create opportunities for transmission of knowledge. These views were supported by research in which it was reported that each learning center supported students' unique content knowledge, skills and dispositions, and also enhanced different social skills (Bullard, 2009).

However, the teachers stressed that these areas should be well equipped; otherwise interest areas can create more chaos and problems. They said that appropriate and qualified interest areas were necessary for preventing disruptive behaviors and enabling effective classroom management. In the literature, Getzels (1974) in his study said that students who were engaged in various activities were unlikely to create problem behaviors. In addition, Bullard (2009) stated that students working in areas could work without interruption and concentrate on their work better. This may provide teacher with a tool for effective classroom management and reduce disruptive behaviors. However, small classrooms present problems in terms of the separation of interest areas and teachers in the study commented that the clear differentiation of these spaces is necessary for students to work without interruption. Moreover, some teachers expressed that appropriate separation of areas were important for teacher's to maintain control of the class and thus teachers got would be less tired . In the literature, the significance of the separation of areas was that students could easily use materials and work independently (Bullard, 2009). However, it can be stated that since the teachers in this study were working with younger children, the discipline and behavior elements were more important.

According to findings, teachers recognized the necessity and importance of interest areas in then early childhood classroom. However, in this study, only one private school teacher said that she had interest areas in her classroom. This may be result from the fact that the rotation system is applied in some private schools

or teachers in some private schools in this study had interest classrooms, not interest areas. Several teachers considered interest areas to be standard in early education and these areas were found in most of the classrooms. The teachers strongly stressed the importance and the positive aspect of creating new areas or changing the areas according to daily activities. They agreed that new materials and new areas attracted students' attention and increased their motivation.

Teacher reported the strengths of their classrooms as being physical features, furniture and equipment, and security. Firstly, in relation to physical features, it can be accepted as an interesting finding that most of teachers who said they had a wide classroom worked in public schools. Although most of private school teachers had interest classrooms, only a few said that their classrooms were wide enough. In terms of furniture, most teachers stated their satisfaction about the number of the cupboards in the classroom. Moreover, in early childhood classrooms, for function of security, hygiene is a particularly important point because risk of illness is greater in this age group (Bullard, 2009). However, it is notable that only one teacher stated that she had a hygienic classroom. Most teachers were satisfied with the lighting and temperature.

When asked about the weaknesses of their classrooms the most serious problems which teachers mentioned were related to physical features of the classroom such as the large class size and small movement areas. Some teachers clearly stated that it directly affected the students. In small classrooms the teacher's access to individual students was restricted and often they had to disturb other students in order to have one to one communication. The same problem was stressed in the literature (Trussel, 2008), upsetting a student's concentration may result in disruptive behavior.

The findings of the study showed that the teachers felt that they and the school administration could eliminate certain problems related to the security of the classroom such as lighting and temperature. However, in terms of the dimensions and placement of windows and other fixed elements there was nothing that the teachers could do. In order to resolve these problems of the architectural

design of the classroom, the teachers thought, they could be solved by the school administration, MONE or the General Management of Early Childhood Education. The teachers working in private schools saw the school administration as being able to solve all problems in the school whereas public school teachers stressed that the MONE was a the main problem solver. The difference in the teachers' perceptions may result from the different way in which their schools are governed.

Teachers also focused on some temporary solutions such as rearranging the chair and tables to widen the movement area and using their archives to compensate for the lack of materials. However, it should be stated again that the teachers felt that these solutions could solve only that day's problem and help them complete that day's activity. Next day, they face would face a similar problem.

5.3. Instructional Processes and Teacher-Student Interaction

What are teachers' perceptions about how the physical environment of the classroom influences their instructional processes and teacher-student interaction?

According to findings of the study, there was an important relationship between physical environment and activities in the classroom. The teachers said that the physical environment had a influence on the teacher's and students' performance and motivation. Furthermore, the planning, timing and application of the activity are influenced by the environment. In the literature, it was reported that organization of the physical environment played a direct role in how the teacher was able to control the class and the type of learning activities undertaken, the relationship and interaction of teacher and student, and their motivation (Tabancalı, 2007). Thus, when the physical environment of the classroom is appropriate, the teacher and students are motivated and this in turn can increase the students' desire to engage in and complete the activities. In the literature, it was mentioned that in early childhood education classrooms, the physical

environment should support and invite students to join the activity. They should experience spirit of mastery and independence (Bullard, 2009). This experience is important for students' social/emotional development, their motivation and the acquisition of appropriate behaviors. However, it should be expressed that weaknesses related to the physical features of the classroom such as movement area and class size prevent teachers from focusing on the design of an attractive classroom environment.

The findings of this study also showed that there is a relationship between the physical environment and teacher-student interaction. Teachers said that the benefits of appropriate sized and well-organized classroom were the raised level of students' active interaction with teachers and visa versa, increased one-to-one teaching, and the teacher being able to focus on individual students. The focus of the teacher's attention on each student and active interaction between teacher and student are important for the teacher's control and management of the class. These findings are parallel with the results of a study by Blatchford et al., (2002). It was also referred to the social contact function of the classroom.

Another important point is that the physical environment and interaction of teacher and students are two important dimensions of classroom management. It can be said that the physical environment and teacher-students interaction influence each other and thus, classroom management is influenced directly by this relationship.

5.4. Implications

The findings of the study have contributed to the literature on the influence of physical environment on classroom management in early childhood education providing information for early childhood education teachers, schools, teacher education programs, and the MONE. Firstly, this study has offered important information about general perceptions of a cohort of early childhood education teachers about the physical environment and its influence on classroom management. This can provide early childhood education teachers with

information regarding the design of the physical environment and explain the importance of this environment in achieving effective classroom management. Furthermore, this research may help develop teachers' awareness of the necessity of creating an appropriate physical environment and its impact on students' behavior; thus, help them in the administration, delivery and application of teaching / learning activities. Moreover, teachers may be encouraged to work closer with the administration of the school and specialists together in order to reorganize the physical environment.

The findings of this study also have implications for school administrators who need to find ways of providing the necessary support for teachers to manage their classes more successfully. Moreover, this study has shown that there are important implications about this issue for teacher education programs both in initial and in-service training. Several of the teachers in this study did not always know what they could do to improve the physical environment or whom they should contact for help. Others were not fully aware of the factors that affected classroom management. Thus, it is hoped that this study will encourage teacher training departments, especially those involved in early childhood education, to place more importance on classroom management and physical environment by adding more courses or enriching the content of the courses such as "classroom management and discipline in Early Childhood Education". In-service courses should also be run to support teachers working in schools, especially those with particular problems in the physical environment of the early education centers. In addition to teacher education programs, MONE should take into account the importance of the physical environment on classroom management of early childhood education teachers and work towards modifying existing premises and plan more appropriate new buildings for the early education of students.

5.5. Recommendations for Further Studies

This study can be developed by evaluating the perceptions of a more diverse and representative sample of early education teachers and schools. Furthermore, to create a wider picture of the issue, observations of classroom

practice can be combined with the semi structured interview method. Further research can also add various items to the interview questions related to barriers, benefits and reasons for some perceptions related to classroom management to obtain more data. Lastly, the same study could be applied to teachers working at other grade levels to examine the similarities and differences in their beliefs toward influences of physical environment of classroom on effective classroom management.

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Appendix A: Permission to Use Instrument in Schools in Ankara

T.C.
ANKARA VALİLİĞİ
Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü

BÖLÜM : Strateji Geliştirme
SAYI : B.B.08.4.MEM.4.06.00.04-312/37202
KONU : Araştırma İzni
İkbal Tuba ŞAHİN

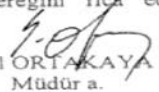
28/04/2009

ORTADOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİNE
(Öğrenci İşleri Daire Başkanlığı)

İLGİ : a) Ortadoğu Teknik Üniversitesi Öğrenci İşleri Daire Başkanlığının 16.03.2009 tarih ve 3730 sayılı yazısı.
b) 27.04.2009 tarih ve 36615 sayılı Valilik Oluru.

Üniversiteniz Okul Öncesi Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı Yüksek Lisans öğrencisi İkbal Tuba ŞAHİN'in "Sınıf Yönetiminde Sınıf Donanımına İlişkin Okul Öncesi Öğretmenlerinin Görüşleri" konulu tez ile ilgili çalışma yapma isteği ilgi (b) Valilik Oluru ile uygun görülmüş ve araştırmanın yapılacağı İlçe Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğüne bilgi verilmiştir.

Mühürlü anketler (10 tıfadan oluşan) ekte gönderilmiş olup, uygulama yapılacak sayıda çoğaltılması ve çalışmanın bitiminde iki örneğinin (CD/disket) Müdürlüğümüz Strateji Geliştirme Bölümüne gönderilmesi hususunda, bilgilerinizi ve gereğini rica ederim.


Erol ORTAKAYA
Müdür a.
Müdür Yardımcısı

EKLER :
1 : Valilik Oluru (1 sayfa)
2 : Anketler (2 sayfa) 2
3 : Okul listesi (1 Sayfa)

İl Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü-Beşevler
Strateji Geliştirme Bölümü
Bilgi İçin: Kamil COŞGUN

Tel : 215 15 43- 413 36 66- 212 66 40/110
Fak: 215 15 43
strateji06@mcb.gov.tr

Appendix B: The Interview Schedule Used in the Study

GÖRÜŞME FORMU

Görüşmeci:

Gün-saat:

Süre:

Yer:

Değerli Meslektaşım,

Bu çalışma “Sınıf yönetiminde sınıf donanımına ilişkin okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin görüşleri” ile ilgili tez çalışması kapsamında okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin sınıf ortamı ve donanımı ile ilgili görüş ve deneyimlerini anlamak amacıyla yapılmaktadır. Görüşmemiz yaklaşık olarak 30 dakika sürecektir. Hem daha fazla zamanınızı almamak, hem de aktardığınız bilgilerinin tam ve doğru olarak kaydedebilmek için, eğer izniniz olursa ses kayıt cihazı kullanmak istiyorum.

Kaç yıllık öğretmensiniz?

Hangi okul ve hangi bölümden mezunsunuz?

Çalıştığınız okul devlet okulu mu, özel okul mu?

Okulunuzda toplam kaç öğrenci var?

Çalıştığınız okulda kaç yaş grubuna giriyorsunuz?

Sınıfınızda kaç öğrenciniz var?

1. Sınıf ortamınızdan biraz bahseder misiniz? (duvardaki resimler, objeler vs.)
2. Sizce sınıf yönetimini etkileyen faktörler neler olabilir? (Örneğin hareket alanının geniş ve dar olmasının ya da sınıfın kalabalık olmasının yaptığınız etkinlikler üzerindeki etkileri nelerdir?)
3. Sınıfın fiziksel düzeninin etkinlikler üzerindeki etkisinden bahseder misiniz?
4. Sınıfınızda bulunan farklı etkinlik köşeleri / mekânları nelerdir? Bu köşeleri nasıl kullanıyorsunuz; bu köşelerde neler yapıyorsunuz? Bu mekânlarla ilgili öğrencilerinizin tepkileri ve davranışları hakkında neler söylersiniz? Bu köşelerin olmasının/olmamasının olumlu/olumsuz yönleri ile ilgili neler düşünüyorsunuz? (Sınıfınızda ilgi köşelerinin birbirinden uygun

bir şekilde (sanat köşesinin yanında su, blok köşesinin yanında raflar) ayrılmasının\ayrılmamasının olumlu\olumsuz yönleri ile ilgili neler söylersiniz?)

5. Sizce sınıf ortamınızın iyi yönleri nelerdir? Böyle düşünmenizin nedenlerini açıklar mısınız?
6. Sınıfınız fiziksel ortamı ile ilgili eksiklikler nelerdir? Bu eksiklikler sizce öğrencilerinizi/öğretiminizi nasıl etkilemektedir?
7. Bu eksikliklerle ilgili neler yapılabilir?
 - a. Öğretmen tarafından?
 - b. Yönetim tarafından?
 - c. Diğer?
8. Sınıfınızdaki eksikliklerin iyileştirilmesi için önerileriniz nelerdir?
9. Sınıfınızın mevcut fiziksel düzenlemesi öğretmen-öğrenci iletişiminizi nasıl etkilemektedir? Bunu değiştirmek için neler söylersiniz?
10. Görüşmemizin sonunda eklemek istediğiniz bir şeyler var mı? Fikirleriniz, okul öncesi sınıflarının fiziksel mekânlarının iyileştirme çabaları açısından çok yararlı olacaktır.

Katılımınızdan dolayı çok teşekkür ediyorum.

Appendix C: Thematic Codes of Data

Factors influencing classroom management	A. School infrastructure	a. Rotation system	K23 S2	K26 S2			
		b. Location of classroom	K1 S1	K21 S2			
	B. Teacher characteristics	a. Experience of teachers	K11 S1	K34 S1	K35 S2		
		b. Love of their profession and students	K18 S2	K22 S2	K30 S1		
		c. Unplanned meetings of teachers	K6 S2	K2 S2			
	C. Student profiles	a. SES and educational level of parents	K18 S2	K19 S2	K21 S2		
		b. Students' school experience	K19 S2	K22 S2	K36 S2		
		c. Mainstreaming students	K4 S1	K21 S2	K29 S1	K34 S1	
	D. Physical environment of classroom	a. Physical features of classroom	K1 S1	K2 S2	K3 S2	K4 S1	K7 S1
			K8 S2	K9 S1	K11 S1	K12 S2	K13 S1
			K14 S2	K15 S1	K17 S2	K18 S2	K19 S2
			K20 S2	K22 S2	K27 S2	K28 S1	K30 S1
			K31 S2				
		b. Security of the classroom	K4 S1	K27 S2			
		c. Furniture of the classroom	K1 S1	K2 S1	K10 S2	K17 S2	K33 S1
K35 S2			K36 S2				
Physical Environment	A. Physical features	Movement area/class size	K2 S1	K3 S2	K4 S1	K12 S1	K20 S1
	B. Furniture and Equipment	a. Chairs and tables	K10 S1	K17 S1	K18 S1	K19 S1	K28 S1
			K30 S1	K34 S1	K35 S1		
		b. Cupboards	K18 S1	K31 S1			
	c. CD-player	K29 S1	K30 S1	K33 S1	K35 S1		
	C. Security	a. Lighting and temperature	K5 S1	K12 S1	K14 S1		
		b. Clean and hygiene	K12 S1				
	D. Growth	a. Wall design	K1 S1	K7 S1	K9 S1	K11 S1	K14 S1

								K15 S1	K17 S1	K22 S1	K28 S1		
								K29 S1	K30 S1	K31 S1	K33 S1		
		b. Interest areas											
Interest areas	A. Existing areas	K1 S2	K2 S3	K3 S4	K5 S3	K6 S3	K7 S2	K8 S3	K9 S1/2	K11 S2	K13 S2	K14 S2	
		K15 S2	K18 S1/3	K19 S1	K21 S3	K22 S3	K23 S5	K27 S4	K28 S2	K29 S2	K30 S2	K31 S3	
		K32 S2	K33 S2	K34 S2	K35 S3	K36 S2							
	B. Placement and separation of the areas	K3 S5	K5 S4	K6 S5	K7 S3	K13 S3	K14 S3	K15 S3	K17 S6	K18 S5	K19 S5	K22 S5	
		K23 S6	K28 S3	K30 S3	K31 S4	K34 S2	K35 S4						
	C. Use of the interest areas	K1 S2	K13 S2	K14 S2	K15 S2	K17 S4	K18 S4	K28 S2	K30 S2	K32 S2			
	D. Importance of the areas	K4 S3	K8 S4	K13 S3	K15 S3	K17 S5	K18 S4	K19 S4	K20 S4	K21 S3/4	K28 S2	K30 S2	
		K32 S2	K33 S2										
	Strengths and weaknesses of the physical environment	A. Strengths of the physical environment	a. Location of classroom						K2 S5	K14 S3	K15 S3	K22 S5	K26 S5
			b. Physical features of the classroom						K33 S3				
K1 S3			K5 S4	K6 S6	K8 S5	K11 S4		K13 S4	K14 S3	K22 S5	K29 S3	K31 S5	
K32 S3			K34 S3										
c. Furniture and equipment						K4 S4	K9 S3	K11 S4	K12 S3	K13 S4			
K21 S4			K27 S6	K32 S3									
d. Security function						K1 S3	K5 S4	K6 S6	K8 S5	K9 S3			
K10 S4			K11 S4	K12 S4	K13 S4	K18 S5		K19 S5	K20 S5	K21 S4	K23 S7	K27 S6	
K28 S3			K31 S5	K35 S4	K36 S4								
B. Weaknesses of the physical environment			a. System in the school						K25 S7	K26 S5			
		b. Physical features of the classroom						K1 S3	K2 S6	K4 S4	K7 S4	K14 S4	
		K15 S4	K17 S7	K18 S5	K19 S5	K20 S5		K21 S5	K28 S3	K29 S3	K30 S3	K31 S5	
		K21 S5	K28 S3	K29 S3	K30 S3	K31 S5							
	K33												

			S3						
		c. Furniture and equipment	K8 S5	K9 S4	K10 S4	K11 S5	K14 S4		
			K18 S5	K19 S5	K21 S5	K24 S4			
		d. Security function	K2 S6	K14 S4	K15 S3	K21 S5	K27 S7		
			K30 S3	K32 S3	K33 S3	K34 S3			
		e. Growth function	K2 S5	K9 S3	K12 S4	K28 S3	K32 S3		
			K36 S4						
		Remedies for weaknesses of physical environment	A. The teachers	a. For weaknesses related to architecture	K7 S4	K10 S4	K14 S4	K15 S4	K17 S8
					K20 S6				
				b. For weaknesses related to features of physical environment	K5 S5	K12 S4	K18 S6	K28 S3	K29 S3
K31 S5	K36 S4								
c. For weaknesses related to furniture and equipment	K1 S3		K2 S6	K3 S7	K4 S5	K5 S5			
	K13 S4		K14 S4	K15 S4	K21 S5/6	K33 S4			
	K36 S4								
d. General remedies	K3 S7		K4 S5	K5 S5	K8 S5	K9 S4			
	K11 S5		K13 S4	K14 S4	K26 S6	K32 S3			
	K33 S4								
B. School administration	a. Re-planning/re-arrangement		K2 S6	K7 S4	K8 S6	K14 S4	K15 S4		
			K34 S3	K35 S5	K36 S4				
	b. Purchasing materials		K3 S8	K9 S4	K11 S5	K12 S4	K13 S5		
			K14 S4	K15 S4	K21 S6	K24 S5	K35 S5		
c. Communicating parents and teachers	K8 S6		K11 S5	K14 S4					
C. Other people and organization	a. MONE and General Directorate of Preschool Education		K7 S5	K9 S4	K14 S4	K15 S4	K19 S6		
		K29 S3	K32 S3	K33 S4	K34 S4				
	b. Personal of schools	K22 S7	K24 S5						
	c. Parents	K1 S3	K2 S7	K3 S8	K5 S5	K6 S7			
		K11 S5	K12 S4	K13 S5	K14 S4	K15 S4			
		K17	K21	K24	K26	K27			

			S8	S6	S5	S5	S8						
			K28 S3	K33 S4									
		d. Students	K14 S4										
		e. Humanitarian organizations and publishers	K17 S8										
Physical environment for instructional processes and teacher-student interaction	A. Instructional process	a. Organization of the classroom	K2 S3	K23 S5	K33 S2								
		b. Physical features of the classroom	K2 S3	K14 S2	K15 S2	K20 S2							
		c. Security function	K11 S2 K32 S2	K13 S2	K22 S3	K24 S3	K25 S4						
	B. Teacher-student interaction	a. Positive points	K4 S5	K5 S5	K6 S7	K9 S4	K10 S6						
			K12 S5	K18 S7	K19 S6	K21 S6	K22 S8						
			K24 S5	K25 S9	K27 S8	K28 S4	K30 S4						
			K31 S6	K32 S3	K34 S4	K35 S5	K36 S5						
		b. Negative points	K4 S5	K7 S5	K12 S5	K17 S9	K21 S6						
	K22 S8	K23 S10	K29 S3	K36 S5									
	General improvement of physical environment	A. Features of the classroom	K2 S7	K17 S9	K19 S6	K24 S5	K26 S7	K30 S4	K31 S6				
B. Furniture and equipment		K1 S3	K2 S7	K8 S6	K10 S5	K12 S5	K13 S5	K18 S7	K19 S6	K21 S6	K28 S4	K30 S4	
		K32 S3	K36 S5										
C. Security of the classroom		K15 S5	K16 S4	K18 S7	K19 S6	K34 S4							
D. Suggestions for teachers	K5 S5	K6 S7	K25 S8	K27 S8									