Investigating Childhood Fears during Preschool Period in terms of Child, Mother and Teacher Opinions

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Abstract: In this study, it is aimed to discover childhood fears of 60-72-month-old children through the opinions of preschool children, preschool teachers and mothers. Study group of the investigation consists of 52 participants; 18 children aged 60-72 months, 16 teachers and 18 mothers with preschool children, in Istanbul. An "Interview Form" which consists of 9 questions, was developed by the researchers. According to the findings, there are not significant differences in fear types among preschool children in different socioeconomic levels. In general, the most common fear types among all children are animals, robbery, natural events and nightmares. According to the mothers in lower and middle socioeconomic levels, children are mostly afraid of the dark and loneliness and to the mothers from upper socioeconomic level, they are afraid of strangers and unfamiliar settings, animals and loneliness. According to the teachers working in lower socioeconomic level schools, children are mostly afraid of animals; to the teachers from middle socioeconomic level schools, children are mostly afraid of the dark, strangers and unfamiliar settings; and according to the teachers working in high socioeconomic level schools, children are mostly afraid of separation, strangers and unfamiliar settings and loneliness.

Keywords: *Early childhood, preschool years, 60-72 months children, childhood fears, opinions of childhood fears.*

Introduction

Although it has been a concept examined by different researchers for many years, fear was first identified by Hall G. S. in his first research on fear in 1897. According to Hall, fear is a humane emotion which is necessary to motivate learning and protect oneself from danger. According to Gullone and King (1997), fear is a normal reaction towards a real or imaginative threat and it is a natural part of development. Fear is an essential emotion which is necessary for individuals to maintain their lives (Yorukoglu, 2011). Fear is a feeling aroused against a real or expected threat and it has symptoms like excitement, dry mouth, cardiac respiratory acceleration (Turkish Language Society, 2017).

Some researchers (Gilmore & Campbell, 2008; Sylvers, Lilienfeld & LaPrairie, 2011) pointed out that this feeling may become permanent. Fear, phobia and anxiety are largely different from each other. Some researchers claim that fear and anxiety cannot be distinguished from each other; others believe that these concepts are different (Steimer, 2002). Anxiety is a general response to an unknown threat or an internal conflict whereas fear focuses on external threats (Craig, Brown & Baum, 1995). Phobia is an unreasonable fear which is intensely felt towards to an object or situation that is unlikely to be dangerous (Bernstein, Penner, Clarke-Stewart & Roy, 2012).

In the modern world, children are living with many negative factors like; changes in social, emotional and physical responsibilities. Within this change, children constitute the group which is under risk because they are defenseless and vulnerable to danger (Kalatzkaya, 2015). In general, unknown and unfamiliar things frighten children. Due to increased experience as they grow and interaction with the environment their anxiety decreases, but differences can also be seen (Yorukoglu, 2011). In order to understand children's fears, it is important to look at the world with their eyes, because situations or objects that create fear for children may not be frightening for an adult. Sometimes the opposite happens; children may not be affected by the situations that adults fear (Eksi, 2011). Finding the source of fears may help to manage and control the level of the fear. Thus, causing a psychological dysfunction because of fears can be prevented (Serim-Yildiz, Erdur-Baker & Bugay, 2013). The important thing is to overcome fears with the help of reasoning (Eksi, 2011).

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Fears developed during growth should be overcome by taking child's self-esteem into account. Noticing fears and changes in the fears that are observed according to developmental periods is vital to support the children in this regard (Kavakli, 1992). Investigating childhood fears began to become popular with the work of Jersild and Holmes in 1935 (Jersid & Holmes, 1935). In 1977, research on childhood fears became widespread with the contributions of Zill (Zill, 1977). Many researchers believe that imaginary fears are dominant when compared to real fears during preschool period. However, the belief that imaginary fears gave their place to real fears in time gained importance (Zobov, 1983).

In a study conducted with children, Burhnam (2009) stated that, children's fears may vary according to daily events and topics. As a result of the study, it was observed that children developed new fears with the changing world in the 21st century. Due to this change researchers have been suggested to work on childhood fears in order to carry out preventive and intervening activities. In addition, researchers thought future fears of children might change as their current fears are different from the past. Considering the changing circumstances and fears, researchers (Burnham, 2005; Gullone & King, 1993; Moracco & Camilleri, 1983; Owen, 1998; Shore & Rapport, 1998). were called to investigate fears of 21st century continually.

Methodology

Research Goal

In this research, was aimed to examine the fears of today's preschool children with the opinions of preschool children, preschool teachers and mothers, and searched answers to the following questions.

- What are the fears of preschool children?
- What are the fears of preschool children according to teachers' and mothers' point of view?
- What are the fears of preschool children in home environment?
- What are the fears of preschool children in school environment?
- What are the fears of preschool children in out-of-home and out-of-school environments?

Sample and Data Collection

Generic qualitative research method is used in this study where opinions of children, teachers and mothers on childhood fears during preschool period is examined. It is one of the basic principles that the information gathered in the qualitative research is holistic. The research topic is determined with a holistic approach and the collected information is analyzed with a holistic approach (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). In this research, qualitative research method has been used because it is aimed to collect data from children, mothers and teachers towards childhood fears and to reach conclusions with a holistic approach. The study group of this study was determined by using appropriate sampling method. One of the most widely used sampling types in social sciences is appropriate sampling. In appropriate sampling, the researchers select participants from easy to reach and voluntary individuals (Gravetter & Forzano, 2012). Study group consists of 52 participants; 18 children aged 60-72 months who are educated in public and private schools selected from lower (Sultanbeyli), middle (Atasehir) and upper (Kadikoy) socioeconomic levels in Istanbul province, 16 teachers working in these schools and 18 mothers with children in these schools. Socioeconomic levels of schools were assigned by considering the districts and fees.

Age average of children participated in the study was 66 months. Teachers in the study group have at least four years of professional experience. Demographic information of participants is presented in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table.1: Gender Data of Participants

Variable	Group	(f)
Gender (Child)	Girl	9
	Boy	9
	Total	18

* All the teachers participated in the study were female and were not included in the table.

When table 1 is examined, it is seen that 9 of the 18 children included in the study are boys and 9 of them are girls.

Table 2. Data on Socioeconomic Level of Participants

		(f)		
		Child	Mother	Teacher
Socioeconomic Level	Lower	6	7	5
	Middle	6	6	5
	Upper	6	5	6
	Total	18	18	16

According to Table 2, 6 of the children who participated in the study were from lower socioeconomic level, 6 of them were from middle and 6 of them were from upper socioeconomic level.

Of the mothers participated in the study, 7 mothers were from lower, 6 mothers were from middle and 5 mothers were from upper socioeconomic level. Of the teacher participants, 5 of them were working in lower socioeconomic level schools, 5 of them were working in middle socioeconomic level schools and 6 of them were working in upper socioeconomic level schools.

Ethical Consideration

During the data collection phase, official permits were obtained from the Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education and school administrations. Teachers working in schools and mothers with children at school were informed about the study content. Researchers worked with teachers and mothers who wanted to participate in the research. In the course of interviewing children, permission was first obtained from the children's teachers and their mothers. Children who are allowed to be practiced by the teacher and mother are informed about the research according to their level of development. Only interviews were held with the children who agreed to participate in the investigation. During the interview, the children who did not want to answer some questions or do not want to complete the interviews were not forced. These children's responses were not included in the data analysis.

Data Collection

The data were collected in May and June of the academic year 2016-2017. Data were obtained by visiting the schools and interviewing children, mothers and teachers individually. In the interviews done with children, each child was shown a picture of a happy child and then a picture of a scared child before applying the procedure.

Questions like; "What does this child feel? Why could he be happy? and Why could he be scared?" were asked to children while talking about the pictures. Afterwards, interview questions were applied. In order to make them express themselves easily, children were provided with necessary examples and explanations of the questions that they might not comprehend.

Interviews were recorded by the researcher with the permission taken from teachers and mothers in order to take all the information correctly and to prevent time loss which can occur during note taking. Interviews were held in quiet place where teachers, mothers and children feel comfortable. Duration of the interviews ranged from 10 to 15 minutes.

Data Collection Tools

Interview Form:

In this research, where qualitative data collection techniques were used, a semi-structured interview method was applied. Semi-structured interviews provide both fixed-choice answers and in depth research (Buyukozturk, Kilic-Cakmak, Akgun, Karadeniz & Demirel, 2016). While preparing the interview form used in the study, attention has been paid to ensuring that the form is understandable, simple and one-dimensional in order to communicate more effectively with the participants. To create the interview form, first of all literature review was done (Burnham, 2005; Serim-Yildiz, Erdur-Baker & Bugay, 2013; Muris, Merckelbach & Collaris, 1997; Sahin & Erol, 1995; Konkabayeva, Dakhbay, Oleksyuk, Tykezhanova, Alshynbekova &Starikova, 2016; Kildan, 2012; Oghii, 2015) and main topics were determined for the questions to be directed to children, mothers and teachers. The draft form was examined by four preschool education specialists and after the feedbacks were taken, some questions in the form have been modified and changed. Interview forms, which were formed separately for mothers, teachers and children, have 5 questions for children and 2 questions for mothers and teachers.

Questions directed to children;

- What are you afraid of?
- In which situations/when do you fear?
- What frightens you at home?
- What frightens you outside/on the street?
- What frightens you at school?

Questions directed to mothers;

- What is your child afraid of?
- In what situations is your child afraid?

Questions directed to teachers;

- From your teaching experience, what do you think your preschool age children are generally afraid of?
- In what situations do you think preschool children are frightened?

Analyzing of Data

Descriptive analysis and content analysis were used to analyze the research data. Data obtained from interview technique were evaluated through descriptive analysis. Descriptive analysis is defined as summarizing and interpreting the obtained data according to previously determined categories (Yildirim & Simsek, 2016). The usage of more than one methods for data collection, in other words, benefiting from multiple data sources is one of the triangulation methods which increases the reliability and validity in qualitative researches (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Creswell, 2007). In this study data triangulation was applied by using interview techniques with children, mothers and teachers.

Data obtained from the interview forms were read and coded several times. Generated codes were gathered and descriptive and content analyzes were made after themes (categories), which forms the main lines of research findings, were revealed. Consistency between coders is calculated to ensure reliability in content analysis.

To achieve this, researchers conducting the study and five independent experts out of the study performed coding independently. Then, inter-encoder reliability (Number of agreement / Number of agreement + Number of disagreement) was calculated by using the formula X 100 (Miles & Huberman, 1994). According to Yildirim and Simsek (2016), in reliability calculations, reliability is considered acceptable when the percentage of correspondence is 70 percent. In this study, percentage of correspondence was found .90 for theme of fear type; .87 for theme of home environment fear type; .75 for theme of school environment fear type and .78 for theme of out-of-school and out-of-home fear type.

Overall correspondence in all themes was calculated as .83 (Yildirim & Simsek, 2016). Exceeding the .70 ratio in all questions suggests that researchers are sufficient for coding reliability.

Since it is important for validity to give quotations about the content of interviews where descriptive analysis is used (Yildirim & Simsek, 2016), the opinions of children, mothers and teachers are given at the end of the table. In citations the names of the participants were kept confidential and they were cited as UC2 (upper socioeconomic level child), MM5 (middle socioeconomic level mother), LT1 (lower socioeconomic level teacher).

Findings

Table 3. Findings on fears according to opinions of children.

	Lower	Middle	Upper
Fear type	f	f	f
Supernatural beings	1	2	1
Fear of separation	3	-	-
Animals	5	2	5
Height	-	-	1
Noise	2	-	-
Darkness	2	1	2
Movies	3	1	-
Strangers and unfamiliar settings	-	1	-
Accidents	1	-	1
Loneliness	2	1	-
Getting lost	1	-	-
Natural events	4	-	-
Being kidnapped	3	-	-
Toys	1	-	1
Robbery	4	-	-
Verbal violence	1	-	1
Nightmares	2	4	1
Physical injury	1	-	-
Death	1	-	-

Table 3 shows that fear types of children in the lower socioeconomic level are; animals (5), natural events (4), robbery (4), fear of separation (3), being kidnapped (3), movies (3), noise (2), darkness (2), loneliness (2), nightmare (2), supernatural beings (1), accidents (1), getting lost (1), toys (1), verbal violence (1), physical injury (1) and death (1) respectively.

"I'm afraid of horror movies, dark, voices of the thieves, snakes and if somebody kidnaps me, LC3", "I'm afraid of dogs and earthquakes and also horror movies".(LC6)

Fear types of children in the middle socioeconomic level are; nightmares (4), supernatural beings (2), animals (2), darkness (1), movies (1), strangers and unfamiliar settings (1), loneliness (1) respectively.

"I'm scared when I see nightmares or a monster, MC5", "I am not afraid of anything, I am only scared when I see a scary nightmare, MC3", When I see scary things in my dreams I'm scared, I'm scared to see a monster when I put on three-dimensional glasses". (MCI)

Fear types of children in the upper socioeconomic level are animals (5), darkness (2), supernatural beings (1), height (1), accidents (1), toys (1), verbal violence (1) and nightmares (1) respectively.

"I am afraid of cats and dogs, UC2", "I am afraid of dark, insects, dogs and nothing else, UC4", "Dogs, monsters and cats from scratching me..". (UC5)

Table 4. Findings on fears according to opinions of mothers.

Type of Fear	Lower f	Middle f	Upper f
Supernatural beings	2	1	1
Fear of separation	2	1	-
Animals	2	1	2
Height	1	1	-
Noise	1	1	1
Darkness	4	7	1
Confined spaces	1	1	-
Movies	2	1	-
Strangers and unfamiliar settings	1	-	2
Accidents	1	-	1
Loneliness	4	5	2
Getting lost	1	-	-
Natural events	-	1	-
Robbery	-	1	-
Verbal violence		1	1
Clowns	2	-	-
Conflict between parents	1	-	-
Death	1	-	-
Bathroom	-	-	1

According to Table 4, types of fears stated by the mothers in lower socioeconomic level are; darkness (4), loneliness (4), supernatural beings (2), fear of separation (2), animals (2), movies (2), clowns (2), height (1), noise (1), strangers and unfamiliar settings (1), confined spaces (1), accidents (1), getting lost (1), conflict between parents (1) and death (1) respectively.

"They are afraid of the dark, being alone and they are afraid of cats and dogs, LM2", "They are afraid of being in a dark place, unfamiliar settings and being alone, they are also afraid of clowns, LM5"

Types of fears indicated by the mothers in the middle socioeconomic level are; darkness (7), loneliness (5), supernatural beings (1), animals (1), fear of separation (1), height (1), noise (1), confined spaces (1), movies (1), natural events (1), robbery (1), verbal violence (1) respectively.

"He's afraid of dark. When he's alone and he hears a sudden noise he's frightened, too, MM6", "He's afraid of the dark. And when he's alone and feels insecure he's frightened, MM3".

Types of fears stated by the mothers in the upper socioeconomic level are; loneliness (2), animals (2), strangers and unfamiliar settings (2), supernatural beings (1), noise (1), darkness (1), accidents (1), verbal violence (1) and bathroom (1) respectively.

"He's afraid of some animals and the dark. He's also frightened when he's with strangers in an unfamiliar setting, UM1", "He's afraid of strangers. He is also afraid when he feels he's alone, UM4".

Table 5. Findings on fears according to opinions of teachers.

Type of Fear	Lower f	Middle f	Upper f
Supernatural beings	2	2	1
Fear of separation	2	3	3
Fear of school	2	1	-
Animals	3	1	1
Height	1	1	-
Noise	1	3	2
Darkness	2	5	2
Confined spaces	2	-	-
Movies	1	2	-
Strangers and unfamiliar settings	-	4	3
Loneliness	2	2	3
Natural events	-	-	1
Nightmares	-	-	1
Clowns	1	2	-
Fear of parents	2	-	-
Death	1	1	1
Hospital	-	1	-

According to table 5, types of fears indicated by the teachers working in the lower socioeconomic level schools are; animals (3), supernatural beings (2), fear of separation (2), fear of school (2), darkness (2), confined spaces (2), loneliness (2), fear of parents (2), clowns (1), death (1), movies (1), noises (1) and height (1) respectively.

"They are afraid of things like monsters and bogeys. They are afraid of losing their parents and darkness, LT4", "They are afraid of the dark, bogeys, seeing insects and being confined in the toilet, LT2".

Types of fears indicated by the teachers working in the middle socioeconomic level schools are darkness (5), strangers and unfamiliar settings (4), fear of separation (3), noises (3), movies (2), supernatural beings (2), clowns (2), death (1), hospital (1), loneliness (2), height (1), animals (1) and fear of school (1) respectively.

"They are afraid of clowns, darkness, being alone and being with strangers in the same place, MT1", "They are afraid of the dark, movies on the television, especially horror movies, and being alone, OT5".

Types of fears indicated by the teachers working in the upper socioeconomic level schools are strangers and unfamiliar environments (3), fear of separation (3), loneliness (3), noises (2), darkness (2), animals (1), supernatural beings (1), death (1), nightmares (1) and natural events (1) respectively.

"They are afraid of the dark and being alone. When their mothers are not there they are afraid of death and darkness, UT4", "They are afraid when they hear loud noises or when they are in unusual situations and settings. Due to their imagination and creativity, they are affected and are afraid of unreal beings and heroes, UT1".

Table 6. Fears in the home environment according to opinions of children

Home environment fear type	Lower f	Middle f	Upper f
Noises	1	2	2
Height	1	-	-
Accidents	2	1	-
Darkness	5	1	1
Loneliness	2	-	1
Darkness	2	5	2
Conflict between parents	-	1	-
Animals	-	1	-
Toys	-	1	2
Being kidnapped	1	-	-
Illness	1	-	-
Robbery	1	-	-
Verbal violence	1	-	-

* Some of the children who participated in the study stated that they are not afraid of anything in the home environment.

According to table 6, fear types indicated by children in lower socioeconomic level are; darkness (5), accidents (2), loneliness (2), noises (1), height (1), being kidnapped (1), illness (1), robbery (1) and verbal violence (1) respectively.

"It is dark, nobody is at home. I am scared because it is dark. Bad things come to my mind. I am afraid someone might kidnap me, LC2", "I am scared when I am alone. My mommy goes for a walk sometimes, I stay alone at home and I'm scared, LC5".

Types of fears indicated by children in middle socioeconomic level are; noises (2), accidents (1), darkness (1), conflict between parents (1), animals (1) and toys (1) respectively.

"I am afraid of my Barbie dolls at home. I am afraid of the noise of the chair when it falls down, MC1", "I am afraid of dark places, I am scared at night most, MC4", "I am afraid of the animals at home (flies, bees) and when my mommy and daddy have argument I am afraid that they will break up, MC2".

Types of fears indicated by children in upper socioeconomic level are; noises (2), darkness (1) and loneliness (1) respectively.

"My toy's name is Timmy, it's a sheep. I'm afraid of it, sometimes when my mommy and aunty call me 'Leveeeeeent', they are very loud, it frightens me, UC1", "I'm afraid of the noise when glass breaks, UC4".

Table 7. Fears in the school environment according to opinions of children.

School environment fear type	Lower f	Middle f	Upper f
Verbal violence	3	2	1
Loneliness	2	-	-
Accidents	1	-	-
Noises	1	-	-
Animals	-	1	-
Physical violence	-	1	1

* Some of the children who participated in the study stated that they are not afraid of anything in the school environment.

When table 7 is examined it can be seen that types of fears in the school environment indicated by the children in lower socioeconomic level are; verbal violence (3), loneliness (2), accidents (1) and noises (1) respectively.

"If everyone leaves me I'm afraid that I would be all alone, LC2", "I'm afraid of my friend when he gets angry with me and yells at me, and I am afraid of the noise when there is loud music, LC5".

Types of fears in the school environment indicated by the children in middle socioeconomic level are; verbal violence (2), animals (1) and physical violence (1) respectively.

"I'm afraid that my friend will beat me, MC1", "I am afraid of my friends' yelling at me all the time, I'm afraid of seeing bugs at school, MC3".

It can be seen that types of fears in the school environment indicated by the children in upper socioeconomic level are; verbal violence (1) physical violence (1).

"I am afraid that my teacher is angry with me, UC4", "It frightens me that my friend will hit me, UC1".

Table 8. Fears outside home and school environment according to opinions of children.

Fear Types Out-of-home and Out-of-school Environment	Lower f	Middle f	Upper f
Height	2	1	1
Animals	2	3	2
Getting lost	1	-	-
Loneliness	3	-	-
Being kidnapped	1	-	1
Darkness	1	-	-
Accidents	4	2	-

* Some of the children who participated in the study stated that they are not afraid of anything out-of-home and out-of-school environment.

According to table 8 types of fears out-of-school and out-of-home environment indicated by the children in lower socioeconomic level are; accidents (4), loneliness (3), height (2), animals (2), getting lost (1), being kidnapped (1) and darkness (1) respectively.

"I'm afraid of dogs and getting lost in the supermarket LC5", "I'm afraid I will be hit by a car when I'm alone, LC1".

Types of fears out-of-school and out-of-home environments indicated by children in middle socioeconomic level are; animals (3), accidents (2) and height (1) respectively.

"I'm afraid of the dogs on the streets, MC6", "I'm afraid when the slide is very high, MC1", "I'm not afraid of anything, because I usually stay at home, MC2".

Types of fears out-of-school and out-of-home environments indicated by children in upper socioeconomic level are; animals (2), toys (2), height (1) and being kidnapped (1) respectively.

"I'm afraid of mosquitos and bees that they will bite me outside, UC2", "I'm afraid of cats, dogs, insects and people outside because they might kidnap children, UC5".

Discussion and Conclusion

Looking at the findings of the research it can be concluded that there are not significant differences between type of childhood fears according to socioeconomic levels. It can be seen that children in middle socioeconomic level are mostly afraid of nightmares, animals and supernatural beings. Children in lower and upper socioeconomic level are mostly afraid of animals. When researches through which socioeconomic level variable is analyzed are examined, no researches have been found conducted in recent years. Gullone (1996) pointed out some researches in previous years held on socioeconomic level and stated that, fears of children in lower socioeconomic level are animals, strangers, separation from parents, death, violence, police and being beaten; and fears of children in middle and upper socioeconomic level are height, illness, animals and vehicles. Mentioned research results and results of this study show some similarities on the conclusion that common fear of children from all socioeconomic levels is animals.

It can be concluded that children from lower socioeconomic level are also highly afraid of natural events, robbery and being kidnapped. This may be the result of robbery and kidnapping events are highly occurring in lower socioeconomic level districts. As a matter of fact, Graziano et al. (1979), have indicated that children in lower socioeconomic level districts are more likely to develop fears when compared to children in middle and upper socioeconomic levels because they live in more dangerous districts.

In general, the most common fear types of all children are animals, robbery, natural events and nightmares. Fear of animal is stated by researchers as the most common type of fear in the ages of five and six years (Mauer, 1965; Derevensky; 1974). In Oghii's (2015) study, the fears of children between the ages of 4 and 9 were examined and, it was concluded that, in general, children were afraid of death, animals, natural events and nightmares. The results are in agreement with the results of this study. But in Bauer's (1976) study, among the fear types of preschool children were supernatural beings, night fears and nightmares; animals were not involved.

According to the results, the number of fear types of children in lower socioeconomic level is higher than the number of fear types of children in upper socioeconomic level. In other words, it was found that children at lower socioeconomic level had more fear than children at upper socioeconomic level. Studies have shown that children at lower socioeconomic levels tend to have more fear than children at upper socioeconomic level (Jersild& Holmes, 1933; Angelino, Dollins & Mech, 1956; King,Gullone ve Ollendick, 1990; Erol & Sahin, 1995; Muris, Meesters ve Knoops, 2005).

According to the mothers in lower and middle socioeconomic level, children are mostly afraid of the dark and loneliness. According to the mothers in upper socioeconomic level children are mostly afraid of strangers and unfamiliar settings, animals and loneliness. For the research conducted by Muris et al. (2001), which was examining nightmares of children aged between 4-9, opinions of children and their families were obtained. While the majority of children participating in the survey indicated that they were afraid of nightmares, most of the families did not express this fear of their children. These findings are similar to the results of this study. Because, when the results are examined, children in all socioeconomic levels stated that they had nightmares whereas the mothers have not indicated that their children were afraid of nightmares. This may be because children are not sharing their nightmares with their mothers. Teachers working in lower socioeconomic level schools stated that children are mostly afraid of animals. According to the teachers working in middle socioeconomic level schools, children are mostly afraid of dark and strangers and unfamiliar places.

Teachers from upper socioeconomic level schools expressed that children mostly have fears of separation, strangers and unfamiliar settings and loneliness. Opinions of teachers from all socioeconomic levels vary widely. This can be due to asking them their opinions of childhood fears in general, without mentioning the socioeconomic level differences.

Children in lower socioeconomic level stated that they were mostly afraid of the dark at home environment. It can be seen that children in middle and upper socioeconomic levels are mostly afraid of the noise. Children from upper socioeconomic level also mentioned that they are afraid of toys. It can be said that fears at home environment vary the most in the lower socioeconomic level. Studies conducted on fears of children in home environment have not been found in the literature. The reason of children's fear of darkness from lower socioeconomic level might be because they were being frightened by supernatural beings and darkness by their families. Fear of toys in upper socioeconomic level

can be attributed to the fact that parents in this socioeconomic level buy toys with high technological functions for their children and children prefer playing more with these kinds of toys (sound of the toy, light and moving abilities of the toy).

Looking at the school fears, it can be seen that children from lower and middle socioeconomic level are mostly afraid of verbal violence whereas children from upper socioeconomic level stated that they are not afraid of anything at all in school environment. In Lentz's (1985) study on childhood fears between the age of 4-6; it was found out that children's school related fears are associated with being shouted at, scolded and being punished. This finding is similar to the results of this present research.

Children in the lower socioeconomic level stated that they were mostly afraid of traffic accidents and loneliness out-of-school and out-of-home environments while children from middle and upper socioeconomic levels indicated that they were mostly afraid of animals. Children in the lower socioeconomic level have more fears outside the school and out-of-home environments than the children from middle and upper socioeconomic level. Studies conducted on children's fears outside the school and out-of-home environment have not been found in the literature. Children's fears on traffic accidents from lower socioeconomic level might be caused by witnessing traffic accidents while playing outside. Similarly, children's fears on outside environment from lower socioeconomic level might be more than other socioeconomic groups, due to the fact that children from this socioeconomic level spend more time outside. It can be said that children in the middle and upper socioeconomic levels are afraid of animals because they spend less time in outdoor environments and they do not spend enough time with animals than children in the lower socioeconomic level do.

Suggestions

- As the socioeconomic level variable is addressed in a limited number of studies on childhood fears, it can be suggested to conduct research with study groups at different socioeconomic levels.

- It can be recommended to teachers to be good observers to prevent or reduce verbal and physical violence in the school settings and to do appropriate interventions when necessary.

- It may be suggested to teachers to provide children opportunities to interact with animals within science activities and field trips, and to guide them in order to cope with their anxiety by getting to know animals more closely.

- Mothers should be in constant relationship with their children, they can help their children cope with their fears, and they can be advised not to use fear as a tool while raising their children and against behavioral problems.

- Mothers can be given that training on what developmental children can fear and how they should react in these fear situations.

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