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Dedicated to my parents and Henrik,
for giving me the courage and
believing in me…

ABSTRACT

Sevcan Hakyemez-Paul

Parental Involvement in Early Childhood Education: Turkish and Finnish Contexts

Research conducted in recent decades has highlighted the significant role of parental involvement in pupils' well-being, learning, and future academic success as well as their cognitive, social, and emotional development. Parental involvement practices not only improve parental confidence and satisfaction but also enrich educational programmes, enhance the climate of educational institutions, and ease teachers' work burden through responsibility-sharing and increased information flow. Even though the benefits of parental involvement are well-supported by various studies, some research reveals that a gap continues to exist between the recommendations of related research and what is actually practiced in educational institutions. This gap explains in part the persistence of insufficient parental involvement practices.

Gaining a better understanding of early childhood educators' self-reported reasons for insufficient practices as well as identifying their parental involvement practices and their views thereof are key to improving parental involvement. Furthermore, investigating the factors that affect the parental involvement practices and views of these educators can help to explain the gap between rhetoric and practice. In order to obtain insight into these areas, this dissertation aims to get a grasp of early childhood educators' views and practices of parental involvement in Turkish and Finnish contexts. Furthermore, self-reported reasons for potentially insufficient parental involvement practices are also investigated in order to shed light on the current state of parental involvement in these countries. Moreover, whether similarities or differences exist among early childhood educators' views on parental involvement and their practices regarding parental involvement are analysed with the aim of drawing conclusions related to cultural and educational policy aspects of parental involvement.

Regarding the selection of the educational contexts examined in this dissertation, the starting point was to identify countries that incorporate historical similarities regarding societal- and policy-level differences that, at the same time, most suitably lend themselves to feasible and objective research. In this regard, the physical and cultural frame of reference of the present researcher in relation to different contexts was considered. For this dissertation, the contexts settled on were Turkey and Finland partly for the straightforward reasons that the researcher's home country is Turkey and current residence is in Finland. In addition to the researcher's situation in relation to these contexts, the situation of these countries vis-à-vis each other also creates an interesting research opportunity. The two were founded around the same time; however, they followed different paths with regard to their educational administration in areas such as early childhood education and care governance, budget, and enrolment rates. Considering these factors, Turkey and Finland were chosen for this dissertation.

For different parts of this study, different methods were used, namely, mixed methods and quantitative methods. A representative sample of 287 early childhood educators from Helsinki and 225 early childhood educators from Ankara completed a questionnaire which provided quantitative data and qualitative material. The questionnaire was prepared by the researcher and translated into Turkish and Finnish. To ensure the reliability of translations and minimise the risk of losing relevant information, translator triangulation was carried out. The questionnaire collects background information including the participants' educational level, educational background, the age group of their pupils, and their experience in the field. The questionnaire includes five sections in addition to the background information section. The first of these five sections aims to obtain information about the participants' general views on parental involvement, while each of the remaining four sections focusses on parental involvement practices of a certain parental-involvement type. Each of these sections comprises five-point Likert scale items; in addition, the last four sections also include multiple-choice items with an open-ended option available.

The findings reveal that both the Turkish and the Finnish early childhood educators surveyed believed in the importance of parental involvement. However, they also stated that parental involvement practices are not adequate, in their opinion. The most common reason cited by the participants for this inadequacy is that the parents are not willing to be involved in their child's early childhood education process. On the other hand, as the least cited reason is that educators think that they are not well-educated enough to involve parents sufficiently, we can draw the conclusion that early childhood educators from both countries have high levels of self-confidence regarding their professional

training. An in-depth analysis by means of context analysis uncovered deeper aspects of these reasons in the Finnish context, the most prominent being lack of time on the part of both parents and educators. The similarity continues with the most practiced parental-involvement type, which is learning at home. However, the least used type differs between the two contexts: in the Turkish context, it is involving parents in decision-making, while in the Finnish context; it is involving parents as volunteers. Further comparative analysis uncovered that Turkish early childhood educators implement all types of parental involvement practices with significantly greater frequency than their Finnish counterparts. Additionally, early childhood educators from Finland are more critical of the parental involvement practices than those from Turkey, meaning that more Finnish participants claimed that their implementation of parental involvement was insufficient.

The correlations between the background variables such as participants' education level, educational background, work experience and the age group they are currently working with, and their view on parental involvement and their parental involvement practices were also investigated. According to results, Turkish and Finnish contexts present different cases. While Turkish participants' view on parental involvement and preferences of different parental involvement types are independent from their background information; Finnish participants' certain background variables affect their views on parental involvement and implementations of parental involvement types.

In conclusion, this dissertation presents the current state of parental involvement practices in early childhood education and care institutions in Turkish and Finnish contexts. Moreover, it explains the factors affecting these practices along with self-reported reasons for their inadequacy. All the findings are categorically discussed for each context, thus allowing for the highlighting of practical implications. In addition to country-centred interpretations, the comparative aspect of this study contributes to existing research into world culture vs. local culture discussions.

Keywords: parental involvement, early childhood education, teacher views, affecting factors, parental-involvement types.

TIIVISTELMÄ

Sevcan Hakyemez-Paul

Vanhempien osallistuminen varhaiskasvatukseen Turkissa ja Suomessa

Turun yliopisto, Kasvatustieteiden tiedekunta, Kasvatustieteiden laitos, Koulutuspolitiikan, elinikäisen oppimisen ja vertailevan koulutustutkimuksen tohtoriohjelma (KEVEKO)

Turun yliopiston julkaisuja, Turku, 2019

Viime vuosikymmenten tutkimustulokset viittaavat siihen, että vanhempien osallistuminen lastensa kodin ulkopuoliseen varhaiskasvatukseen vaikuttaa merkittävästi lasten hyvinvointiin, oppimiseen ja myöhempään opintomenestykseen sekä kognitiiviseen, sosiaaliseen ja emotionaaliseen kehitykseen. Kansainvälisessä tutkimuksessa englanninkieliseen käsitteeseen *parental involvement* (=PI) sisältyy ajatus siitä, että vanhempia rohkaistaan tulemaan mukaan ja osallistumaan päiväkodin tarjoamaan varhaiskasvatukseen. *Parental involvement* -käsitteelle ei ole vakiintunut sopivaa suomenkielistä vastinetta. Siihen viitataan tässä yhteydessä suomenkielisillä käsitteillä "mukana oleminen", "osallistuminen" tai "yhteistyö".

Vanhempien osallistuminen varhaiskasvatukseen vaikuttaa lasten lisäksi myös vanhempiin itseensä. Osallistuminen kohentaa vanhempien itseluottamusta, lisää tyytyväisyyden tunnetta ja tuo uusia hyödyllisiä näkökulmia varhaiskasvatukseen. Lisäksi vanhempien osallistuminen parantaa varhaiskasvatusyksiköiden ilmapiiriä ja keventää opettajien työmäärää jakamalla vastuuta ja parantamalla tiedonkulkua. Vanhempien mukana olemisen edut on tutkimuksissa selkeästi todettu. Tutkimustuloksiin perustuvien suositusten ja varhaiskasvatuksen käytäntöjen välinen yhteys on kuitenkin monin tavoin puutteellinen. Tutkimusperustaisilla kehittämisehdotuksilla ei ole ollut toivottua vaikutusta käytännön kehittämiseen, ja käytännöt vanhempien osallistumiseksi ovat jääneet riittämättömiksi.

Vanhempien osallistumisen laadun parantamiseksi on asianmukaista kysyä varhaiskasvattajilta, mitkä syyt käytännön työssä vaikeuttavat tai estävät vanhempien osallistumista ja saamista mukaan varhaiskasvatusyhteistyöhön. Tutkittaessa tekijöitä, jotka vaikuttavat varhaiskasvattajien näkemyksiin ja käytäntöihin vanhempien osallistumiseen liittyen, saadaan tietoa siitä ristiriidasta mitä tavoitellaan ja miten käytännössä toimitaan.

Tämän väitöskirjan tavoitteena on tuoda esiin varhaiskasvattajien näkemyksiä vanhempien osallistumisesta lastensa varhaiskasvatukseen sekä kartoittaa vallitsevia osallistumiskäytäntöjä kahdessa erilaisessa kulttuurissa, Turkissa ja Suomessa. Tutkimuksessa haetaan myös syitä erilaisille järjestelyille, osallistumiskäytännöille ja asenteille kulttuurisista ja koulutuspoliittisista tekijöistä.

Tutkimuksen kahden erilaisen kontekstin valinnan taustalla ovat maiden tietyt historialliset yhtäläisyydet sekä yhteiskunnalliset ja poliittiset eroavaisuudet. Ne antavat tälle tutkimukselle mielenkiintoisen näkökulman, joka auttaa havaitsemaan sellaisia kansallisia ja kulttuurisia itsestäänselvyyksiä, joita ei useinkaan tulla otetuksi huomioon vain yhden maan järjestelmään kohdistuvassa tutkimuksessa. Tätä taustaa vasten oli luontevaa hyödyntää tutkimuksen tekijän asema kummankin maan asukkaana ja niiden kulttuurit tuntevana. Turkki on tutkijan kotimaa ja Suomi asuinmaa. Tutkijan suhde kahteen kohdemaahan sekä käytännön kokemukset maiden varhaiskasvatuksesta luovat tutkimukselle harvinaislaatuisen tilaisuuden. Maat itsenäistyivät samoihin aikoihin, mutta koulutusjärjestelmät poikkeavat toisistaan opetustoimen hallinnon ja erityisesti varhaiskasvatuksen johtamisen, rahoituksen ja varhaiskasvatukseen osallistumisen aktiivisuuden suhteen.

Tämän tutkimuksen eri osissa käytettiin pääasiassa kvantitatiivisia menetelmiä ja yhdessä osatutkimuksessa yhdistettiin kvantitatiivista ja kvalitatiivista menetelmää (ns. mixed-metodi). Kyselyyn vastasi yhteensä 287 varhaiskasvattajaa Helsingistä ja 225 varhaiskasvattajaa Ankarasta. Väitöskirjan tekijä laati englanniksi kyselylomakkeen, joka sitten käännettiin turkin ja suomen kielille. Kolmikantakäännöksen avulla varmistettiin käännösten reliabiliteetti sekä se, että käännösprosessissa ei kadonnut mitään relevanttia informaatiota. Kyselyssä kerättiin taustatietoja, muun muassa vastaajien koulutustasosta ja -taustasta sekä kokemuksesta eri-ikäisten lasten kanssa työskentelemisestä. Taustatieto-osion lisäksi kyselyssä oli viisi varsinaisiin tutkimusteemoihin liittyvää osiota. Ensimmäisessä osiossa tiedusteltiin varhaiskasvattajien yleisiä näkemyksiä vanhempien osallistumisesta (*parental involvement*) varhaiskasvatukseen. Seuraavissa neljässä osiossa selvitettiin vanhempien osallistumisen ja yhteistyön käytäntöjä. Kussakin viidessä osiossa käyteiin 5-portaista Likert-asteikkoa. Lisäksi oli monivalintakysymyksiä, joiden lopussa oli avoin tila vapaamuotoiselle tekstille.

Tuloksista ilmenee, että sekä Turkin että Suomen varhaiskasvattajat pitävät tärkeänä vanhempien osallistumista lastensa varhaiskasvatukseen. He ovat kuitenkin myös sitä mieltä, että vanhempien mukana olemisen ja osallistumisen lukuisia mahdollisuuksia ei käytetä riittävässä määrin, mikä vastaajien mielestä johtuu yleensä siitä, että vanhemmat ovat haluttomia olemaan mukana lapsensa varhaiskasvatusprosessissa. Kummankin maan varhaiskasvattajilla näyttää olevan vahva

luottamus saamansa koulutukseen ja siihen, että oma koulutus antaa hyvät eväät tehdä yhteistyötä vanhempien kanssa. Syvempi analyysi paljasti, että Suomessa vanhempien mukanaolon ja osallisuuden puutteiden takana on erityisesti ajan puute - sekä vanhemmilla että varhaiskasvattajilla itsellään.

Toinen yhtäläisyys maiden kesken on kotona oppiminen, joka oli molemmissa maissa eniten käytetty tapa, jolla vanhemmat osallistuivat varhaiskasvatukseen. Turkkilaisessa kontekstissa vanhempien osallistuminen päätöksentekoon oli vähiten käytetty osallistumisen muoto. Sen sijaan suomalaisessa kontekstissa vähiten käytetty osallistumisen tapa oli vanhempien vapaaehtoinen kasvatustyö päiväkodissa. Turkissa varhaiskasvattajat hyödyntävät kaikkia vanhempien osallistumisen tapoja merkitsevästi useammin kuin heidän suomalaiset kollegansa. Suomalaiset varhaiskasvattajat olivat turkkilaisia varhaiskasvattajia kriittisempiä omaa toimintaansa kohtaan ja turkkilaisia useammin suomalaiset vastaajat toivat esiin, että heidän toteuttamansa osallistumiskäytännöt ovat riittämättömiä.

Tutkimuksessa selvitettiin myös taustatekijöiden, kuten vastaajan koulutustason, koulutustaustan, työkokemuksen ja lasten iän, yhteyksiä vastaajan näkemyksiin vanhempien osallistumisesta ja osallistumisen tavoista. Tutkimus todentaa lukuisia eroja Turkin ja Suomen välillä. Turkin varhaiskasvattajien näkemykset vanhempien osallistumisesta ja osallistumispreferensseistä eivät korreloineet vastaajien taustatietojen kanssa. Sen sijaan Suomessa useat taustatekijät olivat yhteydessä varhaiskasvattajien näkemyksiin vanhempien osallistumisesta ja siihen, millä tavoin osallistumisen toivottiin tapahtuvan.

Tutkimus tuo esiin vanhempien osallistumisen ja yhteistyön käytäntöjä lastensa varhaiskasvatuksessa Turkissa ja Suomessa ja valottaa, mitkä tekijät vaikuttavat näihin käytäntöihin. Tuloksia tarkastellaan konteksteittain, ja tehdään ehdotuksia varhaiskasvatuksen käytäntöjen kehittämiseksi. Maakohtaisten vertailun ohella tutkimus osallistuu laajempaan keskusteluun ylikansallisen ja kansallisten kulttuurien välisistä eroista ja vuorovaikutuksesta.

Avainsanat: Vanhempien sitoutuminen, Vanhempien osallistuminen, Varhaiskasvatus, Opettajien näkemykset, Vaikuttavat tekijät, Vanhempien osallistumisen tyypit

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ABBREVIATIONS

ECE	Early Childhood Education
ECEC	Early Childhood Education and Care
OECD	Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development
PI	Parental Involvement
MoNE	Turkish Ministry of National Education
MoFSP	Turkish Ministry of Family and Social Policies
MoEC	Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture
FMoFSH	Finnish Ministry of Family Services and Health
FNAoE	Finnish National Agency of Education
OSoI	Overlapping Spheres of Influence
SES	Socio Economic Status
VoC	Value of the child
THEC	Turkish Higher Education Council
PTA	Parent-teacher association
EU	European Union
SSCPI	Social services and child protection institution

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It was very challenging for me to start writing my acknowledgements, because this whole journey of PhD has involved many emotions, countless struggles, and more importantly a lot of support from various people. I instantly became very emotional by thinking about those moments, reliving the hard times, and feeling grateful for those around me; so much so that I cried at times when I was trying to put those memories into words. Today is a better day with warming, bright sun outside. Spring always gives me a sense of hope, so here I am sitting at a café and writing one of the most important parts of my PhD work…

I would like to start by thanking my lovely supervisors, who were more like my academic parents (Matter of fact, I accidentally referred to them as my parents on a number of occasions). My first supervisor Adjunct Professor Päivi Pihlaja, in other words my fairy godmother. I am and always will be grateful for having you by my side. I learned so much from you about the field of early childhood education and care, about academia, and also about myself. You always believed in me and trusted me even when I did not. It was a true privilege to work with you, thank you for all you have done for me. And my second supervisor Professor Heikki Silvennoinen, I would like to thank you for your kindness when I needed the most. Thank you for your advices when I was confused. And thank you for our friendly conversations about Turkish politics and your genuine interest in the subject. All in all, I owe you both my gratitude for the time and effort you spent for this dissertation and for making this journey more bearable for me.

I also would like to express my gratitude for my pre-examiners; Professor Anna Rönkä from University of Jyväskylä and Adjunct Professor Zeynep Berna Erdiller Yatmaz from Bogazici University for their insightful reviews and supportive suggestions, which further validated this work. I would like to thank Professor Anna Rönkä also for accepting the role of opponent at the public defense pf my dissertation despite your busy schedule. Special thanks must be given to Adjunct Professor Zeynep Berna Erdiller Yatmaz not only for her role in finalizing this work, but also for her undeniable role in my becoming of a kindergarten teacher and forming my education philosophy.

Statistician Eero Laakkonen is another person who I cannot thank enough, but I will try. I am truly grateful for your never ending support and limitless patience. I do not remember how many times I came to your office, feeling completely lost, doubting myself and panicking, but every time I left your office, my head was cleared up, I was full of ideas, and I felt encouraged. Thank you for all you taught me during your lectures and at our meetings. Without you, I could not succeed. I would like to extend my gratitude to our lovely coordinators Sanna

Niukko and Anne Niemimäki, because their endless patience and support made technicalities much smoother and less confusing. I am also grateful to the University of Turku Graduate School (UTUGS), University of Turku Department of Education and Mannerheim League for Child Welfare (MLL) for their financial support.

This dissertation could not be completed without the support I received from my fellow PhD candidates. Thank you Heikki for having an answer to all my technical questions. Knowing that your door is always open to me made me feel safer and less lost. Thank you Olli, my roomie, for being there for me at all times, thank you for your help and support whenever I needed it, thank you for our heated discussions about anything and everything, thank you for reading countless texts I wrote and giving me feedback, thank you all the answers and suggestions you gave me, thank you for encouraging me on my way to vintage, thank you for our lovely lunch breaks and shopping sprees, thank you for being my personal translator and thank you for reminding me of my appointments and meetings. I am very lucky that I shared an office with you and I truly enjoyed every moment of it. I know that I would not be the person that I am today without you, for you nurtured my intellect and made me feel better about myself. I want to extend a very warm thank you to Venla, Kalypso, Jenni, Marko and Sonia, for walking beside me in this journey, for your emotional and academic support and patience. Also a special and warm thank you must go to all the members of KasvaBeat for all the fun times and the wonderful musical experience. Last but not least, I want to thank Hülya Ekström; my best friend, 'ahiretliğim', from the bottom of my heart. You have been an incredible support all these years. You are my companion, you are my forever-friend.

I am extremely privileged for having such a wonderful, supportive and encouraging family. I will always be indebted to my mother and father for raising me up, providing me, and encouraging me. On countless occasions when I thought I could not handle it anymore, they always told me that they do not think whether or not I can do it, but they know that I can do it. This immense trust made me want to keep on going. I owe a big, whole-hearted thank you to my loving and caring father Kadir Hakyemez, who put me and my brother always before anything and everyone, gave us all he has so that we would have a good future. Another big, whole-hearted thank you must go to my superhuman mother Serpil Hakyemez, who cared for us, taught us, fed us, dressed us, involved in our education and cheered for us with her whole heart and soul. Having parents who are teachers might put a lot of pressure on individuals in their pathway of learning, however as I grew up to be a teacher myself, I realised that it was also a great luck since they provide me with their immense experience in teaching, Turkish educational policies, history of education in Turkey and so on. They also made it

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1. Hakyemez, S. (2015). Turkish early childhood educators on parental involvement. European Educational Research Journal, 14(1):100-112. DOI: 10.1177/1474904114565152.

2. Hakyemez-Paul, S., Pihlaja, P. & Silvennoinen, H. (2018). Parental involvement in Finnish day care – What do early childhood educators say? European Early Childhood Education Research Journal, 26(2):1-16. DOI: 10.1080/1350293X.2018.1442042.

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1   INTRODUCTION

Early childhood is recognised as a developmentally crucial period during which young children develop linguistic, cognitive, social, emotional, and physical skills (Berk, 2003; Sommer et al., 2013; Bakken, Brown, & Downing, 2017), and early childhood education (ECE) is understood to provide both short- and long-term benefits for young children in every developmental domain (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). One longitudinal study, the Perry Preschool Project (Schweinhart, 2004), shows that ECE can decrease the ability gaps between young children by creating an equal opportunity for children from all social classes, implying that children's experiences in ECE can shape their future academic attitudes and success (Alexander, Entwisle, & Dauber, 1993; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 1997; Fan, 2001; Rimm-Kaufman et al., 2003; Galindo & Sheldon, 2012; Martin, Ryan, & Brooks-Gun, 2013; Bakken, Brown, & Downing, 2017). In addition to the long-term impact of ECE, the significant adults surrounding children affect their present well-being, which increases the importance of ECE in the present. In early childhood settings, children participate in meaningful interactions with peers and adults in specifically prepared environments that best suit their needs. Such interactions and environments have positive long-term effects on children's well-being (Pianta et al., 2009) while also decreasing the need for special education (McCoy et al., 2017). Aside from these developmental benefits, every child has the right to a quality education, which without a doubt includes early childhood education, according to United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child (1989). Hence, the research targeting the effectiveness of ECE continues to proliferate (Gomez, 2016) while investigations into the factors affecting the success of ECE continue to play a crucial role in improving it (Galindo & Sheldon, 2012).

Particularly considering young children's need for care in the early childhood period, educators unavoidably need to work with parents as partners (Morrow & Malin, 2004). The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) project (Sylva et al., 2004) demonstrates that good-quality ECE combined with parental support in home-learning play a positive role in pupils' social and cognitive development and result in fewer special needs among young children. Likewise, involving the parents in decision-making processes creates a positive difference in children's intellectual gains.

As one of the quality determinants in ECE, parental involvement (PI) and its effects have been investigated by a considerable number of researchers. Past studies have presented compelling proof of the positive impact of PI on educational institutions, parents, and children's current well-being and future success. Ac-

cording to Jeynes' meta-analysis (2005), which included 41 quantitative studies that examined the effects of PI, the relationship between PI and children's learning achievement was significant. In a meta-analysis of 51 studies published later, Jeynes (2012) once again affirmed the significant positive relationship between PI programmes and pupils' success. Furthermore, past research suggests that involving parents also increases children's motivation to learn along with their learning performance; moreover, it has been noted that PI leads students to take more personal responsibility for their learning (Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems, & Doan Holbein, 2005). According to the findings of a longitudinal study (Martin, Ryan, & Brooks-Gunn, 2013) investigating the effects of PI through early childhood, higher levels of parental support resulted in higher levels of interest in learning and cognitive persistence at early ages, which led to better academic skills at the age of five. Along with escalated academic skills, increased PI is also a significant factor in the school readiness of children from immigrant backgrounds (Lahaie, 2008).

The benefits of PI are not limited to increasing the academic success of children; PI can also be highly beneficial for educational institutions, educational programmes, educators, and parents. The results of a study conducted in the United States indicated that the best way of improving an educational institution's climate is to involve parents in decision-making processes and educational activities (Haynes, Comer, & Hamilton-Lee, 1989). Besides enhancing the climate of educational institutions, PI can also strengthen educational programmes. Çakmak (2010) argues that with PI, the effectiveness of a programme can be assessed and the necessary adjustments made according to feedback from parents to refine an educational programme; moreover, any kind of contribution from parents would tend to enrich a programme.

A corollary benefit of the role of parents in strengthening educational programmes is that PI also has positive outcomes for participating parents. According to Akkok (1999), as parents become more involved in the education of their child, they become more adapted to the cultural environment of educational institutions. This allows them to overcome cultural differences and provides greater equality of means for parents to understand the expectations of educators. Hill and Taylor (2004) explicitly explained that by being involved in educational activities, parents can learn from other parents and educators. As a result, parental confidence and satisfaction increases (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). PI also helps parents to adopt more complex strategies to collaborate with educational institutions and to support their child's learning and development (Baker & Stevenson, 1986).

This enhanced information flow created by the involvement of parents is also advantageous for educators. When parents and educators work on building a common framework of conduct that is mutually carried out at home and at the educational institution, pupils' learning is promoted (Hill & Taylor, 2004). By sharing relevant information, parents and educators work together to agree on the goals and strategies they will adopt to enhance children's learning and development. Apart from the sharing of knowledge, PI also engenders shared responsibility for educating pupils. This shared responsibility lifts some of the burden off educators' shoulders and allows them to focus more on educational activities (Akkok, 1999). With effective parent-educator relationships, educators' morale also rises (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011).

The positive impacts of PI have been highlighted in recent decades in several studies; however, there is still a gap between what the research endorses and how PI practices are carried out in reality (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Educational institutions and parents often fail to work together, leading to insufficient PI (Henderson & Berla, 1994; Christenson & Sheridan, 2001). This gap between rhetoric and practice calls for close examination in order to identify the factors that may affect PI practices. Consequently, the doctoral study summarised in this report aims to deepen understanding of current PI practices, early childhood educators' views on PI, and their self-reported reasons for insufficient PI practices. Consequently, the doctoral study summarised in this report aims to deepen the understanding of current PI practices, early childhood educators' views on PI and their self-reported reasons for insufficient PI practices. In order to accomplish these aims, this study takes an explanatory stance by adopting variety of educational research techniques, such as descriptive, correlational and survey studies (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). Even though this research draws its conclusions mainly from quantitative data, it still cannot be considered in a positivist paradigm. This study rather belongs to a post-positivist paradigm due to inclusion of qualitative material in some extent (Willis, 2007; Creswell, 2008).

The educational research as a whole is 3-dimentional clusters of various paradigms within itself, rather than a 2-dimentional series of paradigms. With this being noted, it is only expected for the studies under educational research to involve some residues from a number of different paradigms even though the main focus would fall into one paradigm. With the focus on ECEC and PI, this research falls in ECEC research with strong ties to family research in educational research paradigm. Regardless of narrowed and concise focus, in a broader perspective, this dissertation can be located in the centre of this paradigm due to its aim to reveal certain practices in educational institutions and educator viewpoints in order to support the future transformation in the field (Pring, 2015). In addition to those, this study touches the policy research and comparative research due to

the supporting aspects of it. Albeit the comparative section of this study and the policy documents reviewed during the progress, as whole this research cannot be considered nor as a comparative study neither as a policy research, since the comparative approach is only used to locate Turkish and Finnish context in relation to each other and review of the policy documents were limited to being a small proportion of literature resource.

1.1   Defining Parental Involvement

Even though parents are considered as the first teachers of their children from the first day of their existence (Larocque, Kleiman, & Darling, 2011), by the mid-1990s, there was a strict division of roles between the educational institution and the home. While institutions were to focus solely on academic matters, parents dealt with moral, cultural, and religion education (Hill & Taylor, 2004). However, this distinct division has blurred in today's society. Berger (2008) mentioned that it is hard to deny the significant role of parents in a child's education in the period before children begin formal education[1]; for example, general skills that build the groundwork for academic learning are acquired with the help of the parents. Even after formal education begins, this important role does not diminish; on the contrary, it expands since children's social environments and learning become more complex. Against a backdrop of intense pressure on children to achieve, Hill and Taylor (2004) asserted that educational institutions and parents have built a relationship that allows them to share responsibility for children's education.

A healthy relationship between the home and the educational institution based on equal responsibility is the foundation of PI (Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2001). PI includes various forms of activities in the educational institution and at home, such as assisting with home assignments, parent-teacher meetings, and participating in school events (Bower & Griffin, 2011). PI can be generally defined as parents' involvement in their children's schooling (Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994). Alternatively, it is the sum of the investments of the parents in the education of their child in a variety of ways, such as volunteering, participating in school activities, visiting the educational institution, etc. (Larocque, Kleiman, & Darling, 2011). From these traditional definitions, it can be inferred that PI requires time and money (Harris & Goodall, 2007) in addition to certain skills on the part of parents to support children's learning.

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[1] In this context, formal education includes day care as well as preschool and kindergarten.

Even though broad definitions of PI have been formulated, it is still challenging to fully describe it in one succinct statement. Since it is a loaded and vague term in general (Bakker & Denessen, 2007), parents and educators might view this concept differently (Rapp & Duncan, 2012; Moore & Lasky, 1999), which makes it troublesome to encapsulate in one assertion. For instance, while for parents, being involved in their child's education might mean taking them to school and providing them with what they need for their educational activities, educators might consider PI as active participation in those activities and hands-on support for children's learning at home (Anderson & Minke, 2007; Lau, Li, & Rao, 2012). In particular, the perceptions of minority parents or those of low socioeconomic status might differ from the general understanding of PI. According to research conducted in the United States, low-income African-American, Hispanic, and Pacific Islander parents see the division of roles in parent-school collaboration as one in which the educational institution is responsible for academic education while parents provide the moral education (Smrekar & Cohen-Vogel, 2001).

Since the understanding of this relationship differs and educational views change over time, this relationship has been referred to in a variety of ways: *parental involvement, parental participation, parental partnership*, and *parental engagement* (Karlsen Bæck, 2010a, 2010b; Alasuutari, 2010; Share & Kerrins, 2013; Cottle & Alexander, 2014). These terms are often used interchangeably (Paz-Albo Prieto, 2018); however, there are definite nuances. As Evangelou et al. (2008) argued, while PI is a reaction to the initiatives of educational institutions, parental engagement is more proactive as the parents' motivation is more intrinsic. Goodall and Montgomery (2014) explained the difference between *involvement* and *engagement* through their lexicon of meanings and argued that engagement has a deeper, more personal meaning than *involvement*. Since it covers more than being a part of the activity, *engagement* would require a greater commitment than *involvement* (Goodall & Montgomery, 2014). Epstein (2016), as a long-time advocate of PI, has in fact shifted to *parental partnership* because this term emphasises the equal roles of school and family in the enrichment of children's learning processes.

Goodall and Montgomery (2014), on the other hand, approached this idea of equal roles with a concept of a continuum. According to their explanation, this continuum starts with involving parents in the curriculum and evolves into parental engagement as the parent-school relationship strengthens over time. This dissertation focusses on the first phase of this continuum and investigates the views and practices of early childhood educators. For this purpose, the term *parental involvement* is preferred as the research focusses on educator initiatives aimed at establishing collaboration between the home and the educational institution. De-

riving from the focus of the study, PI is defined as multi-faceted collaboration between parents and educational institutions in various activities designed to support children's healthy development.

1.2   Theories of Parental Involvement

Bronfenbrenner (1994) describes in ecological model how human development takes place in reciprocal interactions. These interactions occur between surroundings and these surroundings are characterized as 'nested system of environments' (Beveridge, 2005 p.7). Bronfenbrenner (1977) divides these environments into four levels—microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macro system—depending the closeness to the child. As the innermost level, microsystem includes the relationship between the child and his/her immediate environments such as home, school and other regular social encounters. The second level, mesosystem covers the relationships between the elements from microsystem such as home-school and family-peer relationships. At the third and the fourth level, broader environmental effects are explained. This explicit theory of human development, however, not only explains the effects of interactions between the child and their surrounding elements but also stresses the interactions among these surrounding elements. In this way Bronfenbrenner creates a theoretical explanation of the importance of home-school relationship (Beveridge, 2005).

There have also been a number of other theories proposed to explain the home-school relationship as it specifically relates to PI. Hornby and Lafaele (2011) summarised the different models proposed by researchers in recent decades and adopted by institutions as they pertain to PI. Each of these models represents a specific trend imposing certain types of parental and institutional roles. These models are (a) the 'protective model', in which the conflict between home and educational institution is avoided by separating the duties of these contexts; (b) the 'expert model', in which the educators assume the expert role while parents are the passive recipients of information; (c) the 'transmission model', in which the benefit of parental support is recognised but the assumption of expertise is still reserved for the educators; (d) the 'curriculum-enrichment model', in which the goal is to enrich the curriculum with the expertise of parents as well as that of the educators; (e) the 'consumer model', in which parents decide what action to take while consulting the educators since parents are considered as the consumers of the educational services; and finally, (f) the 'partnership model', which is based on a partnership between educators, as educational experts, and parents, as experts on their child.

According to Hornby and Lafaele (2011), the 'partnership model' is the most desirable of all because it is based on equality and allows both parents and educators to contribute to children's academic success and development. This equal relationship also improves the outcomes of PI. This model incorporates the ideas behind various theories on PI that have been introduced at different times; however, the types of PI proposed in these models often exhibit similar features. For instance, Cervone and O'Leary (1982) explained PI as a rather fluid form of interaction in which parents can be passive recipients of information provided or active partners in the educational process. In their model, four types of PI are classified: reporting progress, attending special events, becoming educated, and teaching. Each of these categories includes both passive and active roles for parents. On the other hand, rather than classifying types of PI, Williams and Chavkin (1989) presented six parental roles. These roles include audience, home tutor, programme supporter, co-learner, advocate, and decision-maker. In taking on these roles, parents are expected to be part of the educational process as active partners and as passive supporters. Similarly, according to Hill and Taylor (2004), crucial aspects of PI in terms of parental roles include volunteering in the classroom, communicating with the teacher, participating in academic-related activities at home, communicating the positive value of education, and participating in the parent-teacher relationship. All of the theories outlined above represent PI focussed around parental roles.

In addition to its manifestation in parental roles, PI can be classified into various other types. For instance, in the broadest terms, PI can be divided into two types: home- and school-based involvement (Pomerantz, Moorman, & Litwack, 2007). On the one hand, school-based PI comprises practices requiring parents' actual contact with the educational institution, such as attending parent-teacher meetings and participating in school activities. Home-based PI, on the other hand, encompasses the school-related activities that take place mostly at home. Although this broad distinction is easy for teachers and parents to work with, more meaningful distinctions exist regarding different forms of PI (Pomerantz, Moorman, & Litwack, 2007).

The abovementioned theories of PI are evidently formed around the parents and the different roles they assume in various form of involvement; however, they remain unidimensional. Elsewhere, several models have been developed that circumscribe a broader conceptualization of how parents can be involved in their children's education and which advocate for a more multidimensional perspective on PI (Fantuzzo, Tighe, & Childs, 2000). For example, Grolnick and Slowiaczek (1994) approached PI from a multilevel perspective and explained three types of PI: school involvement, intellectual involvement, and personal involvement. School involvement includes actions voluntarily engaged in by the

parents, such as talking to the teacher, attending school events, and participating in parent-teacher conferences. Intellectual involvement comprises intellectual activities conducted by parents with their child, such as visiting libraries, museums, and the like. According to Grolnick and Slowiaczek (1994), children's exposure to these kinds of activities reduces the gap between home and school while facilitating the practice of skills needed for school. Finally, personal involvement involves the assessment of the interest of parents in their child's academic state and school work. The focal point of all three PI types is the child's perceptions of the PI and experiences with the resources provided to them by their parents (Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994).

As an example of multidimensional theories of PI, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) presented a comprehensive model to explain PI from the parents' point of view based on psychological and educational grounds. They proposed a five-level parent-involvement model that was partially inspired by Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological systems theory. In this model, rather than classifying PI, they aim to reveal the reasons for parents to become involved in their child's education. Each of the five levels addresses a different aspect of PI. The first level of this model focusses on the general motivation of parents to be involved in their child's education, comprising the parental role construct for PI, parental efficacy in helping their child learn, and parental perceptions of invitations to get involved from the school and the child (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). The second level explains the factors related to parents' choice of involvement, such as parents' perception of their skills, other demands on time and energy, and specific invitations from the school and child (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). At the third level, the focus shifts towards the outcomes of PI. Here, three mechanisms are proposed through which PI impacts child outcomes, namely, modelling of school-related skills, reinforcement of children's learning, and instruction for school-related tasks (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). The fourth level involves revisiting previous PI experiences and refining PI choices, while the focal point of the fifth level of this model is the child; thus, the outcomes of PI for the child are central (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997).

Conversely, Epstein et al. (2002) proposed a comprehensive framework which concentrates on the part played by educators in PI (Tekin, 2011). In her theory, Epstein (2016) explained the interaction of elements surrounding the child in terms of overlapping spheres. Each sphere represents an element: family, school, and community. Similar to the ecological model of human development of Bronfenbrenner, Epstein's model stresses the importance of the interactions of these spheres. The three spheres overlap when the child starts attending the educational institution, thereby connecting it with his or her family and the community in which they live. However, the extent and the depth to which the spheres overlap

depend on the choices the school makes and the actions within these spheres taken individually. Epstein names these contingencies forces and divides them into four groups: time, experience of families, school, and community.

In her *overlapping spheres of influence* (OSoI) model, six types of PI are suggested that strengthen the overlapping of home, school, and community (Epstein, 2016);

1. **Parenting**. This type of PI focusses on helping parents to establish a supportive environment for their children. Parenting covers all of the actions that parents take in order to raise happy, healthy children who are well-developed in every domain. Considering that parents have a life-long connection with their children unlike teachers, it is important to keep them informed about how to support their children's development and learning. This type of PI provides information to parents about their child's development, health, safety, or home conditions that can support student learning.

2. **Communication.** Communication as a PI type includes all possible ways of informing parents about educational activities and their children's progress. This communication occurs in multiple ways such as notes and flyers about important events and activities, monthly newsletters for learning goals, daily journals for children to keep up-to-date with their progress, phone calls, and face-to-face conversations. Besides of receiving information from the educational institutions, parents also give information about their child's health and activities at home.

3. **Volunteering.** Volunteering is the contribution coming from the parents for educational activities or improvement of educational institutions. There are three basic ways that parents can volunteer. First, they may volunteer in the educational institution or classroom by helping teachers and administrators as tutors or assistants. Second, they may volunteer for the educational institution for the activities such as fundraising or promoting the institution in their community. Third, they may volunteer as a member of an audience, attending programs or performances held in the educational institution.

4. **Learning at home.** This type of PI consists of activities given to parents to support their children's learning at home such as helping their children with an educational project or homework, taking them to a museum, and repeating some of the educational activities at home to reinforce the learning. The aim of these activities is to encourage par-

ents to interact with the school curriculum. These activities also pro-
vide parents with information on what children are doing in the class-
room and how to help them with their learning.

5. **Decision making.** With this type of PI, parents become involved in
   decision-making process of educational institutions. This might occur
   in several ways such as joining the school governance committees or
   the parent/teachers associations, taking on leadership roles that in-
   volve disseminating information to other parents or simply giving
   their opinions regarding educational activities, topics to be covered
   and such.

6. **Collaborating with the community.** Collaborating with the commu-
   nity as a type of PI refers to integration of the community resources
   and services for educational programmes. Through this collaboration,
   it is aimed that the schools, parents and students would benefit from
   community while contributing to improvement of the community in
   return.

1.2.1   Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This study explores the multidimensional nature of PI within the context of Bron-
fenbrenner's ecological systems theory of human development, Epstein's con-
ceptual model, and Goodall and Montgomery's model. In this way, this research
aims to explain the current state of PI perspectives and practices from the educa-
tor's point of view in two contexts: Turkey and Finland. In addition to getting a
grasp of viewpoints on PI and how it is practiced, potential insufficiencies are
also investigated.

In his ecological systems theory of human development, Bronfenbrenner (1977,
1994) discussed the importance of the interactions between the child and her or
his surrounding elements, such as family, educational institution, neighbours and
different social settings. He also stressed the significance of interactions between
these surrounding settings at the mesosystem level, which points to the need for
PI in educational institutions (see Figure 1). In the early years, considering a
child's need for care, it is especially important for early childhood institutions to
work with parents (Morrow & Malin, 2004). However this interaction cannot be
isolated from the exosystem, which hosts education system, and macrosys-
tem,which hosts the education policies and cultural values, therefore the relation-
ship between the mesosystems will be discussed under the light of their connec-
tion to exosystem and macrosystem.

Parental involvement

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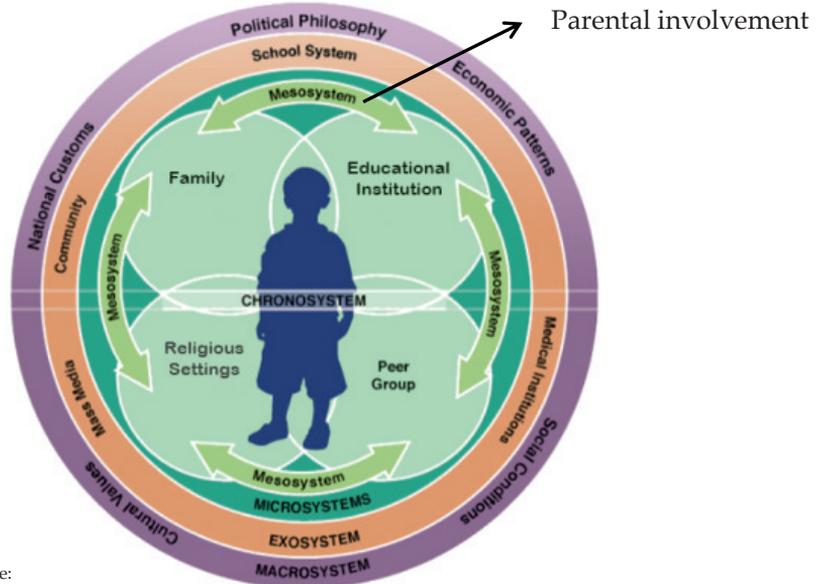
Figure 1. First tier of the conceptual framework – Ecological Systems of Human Development

As mentioned above, PI can be broadly divided into two types: home-based PI, such as helping with school-related tasks, supporting learning at home, and discussing school events; and school-based PI, such as volunteering at the educational institution and participating in the educational institution's events (Pomerantz, Moorman, & Litwack, 2007). Given the benefits of PI for pupils, parents, teachers, and educational programmes, PI may be taken as a necessity, and opportunities for involvement should be provided by educational institutions and educators. Goodall and Montgomery (2014) proposed a model in order to explain the evolving nature of the collaboration between home and school. According to this model, such collaboration is a continuum that begins with involving parents in education through opportunities provided by the school and the educators (See figure 2). As the relationship grows stronger, parents become engaged in their children's learning. Starting from parental involvement in school activities, this

progression is not a straight forward path; rather, it is a complex web of interactions in which the educational institutions might find themselves in different levels for different activities. The combination of first two segments of this model creates the second tier of the conceptual framework as shown in Figure 2. By adopting the model of Goodall and Montgomery (2014) for the involvement of parents, this study attempts to map PI by placing early childhood educators' views and practices in focus.

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┌─────────────────────┐     ┌─────────────────────┐     ┌─────────────────────┐
│ Parental involvement │     │ Parental involvement │     │ Parental engagement  │
│ with schools         │─────│ with schooling       │─────│ with children's learning│
└─────────────────────┘  │  └─────────────────────┘     └─────────────────────┘
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        Focus of the current study
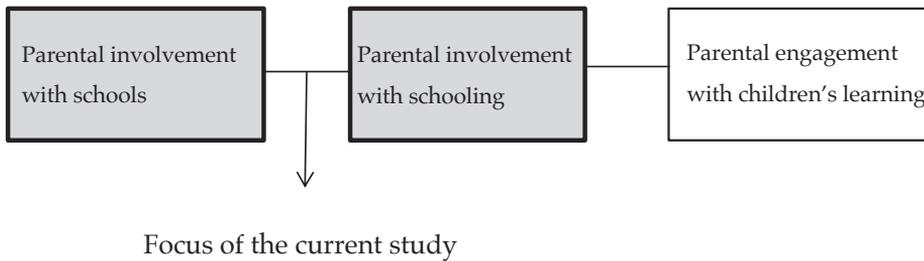
Figure 2. Second tier of the conceptual framework – Parental Involvement Continuum

In terms of PI practices, Epstein's framework (Epstein et. al., 2002) of OSoI suggests six types of PI (parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaboration with the community), starts by encouraging from schools to increase the "overlap" among school, home, and community (See figure 3). This model emphasises school, family and community as "spheres of influence" (Epstein, 2016, p. 32). . Because they represent significant aspects of healthy development, if these spheres collaborate, a child's educational development is enhanced (Epstein, 2016).
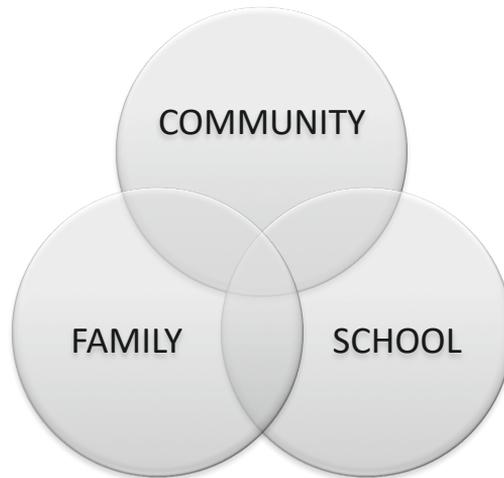
Figure 3. Third tier of the conceptual framework – Overlapping Spheres of Influence

In this dissertation, the focus has been narrowed down to the interactions between the educational institutions and home. The purpose of this more limited focus is to leave out the other influencing factors, thereby allowing the discovery of the basic state of PI in early childhood educational institutions. In addition to this narrowed focus on the interacting elements of the mesosystem, the types of PI have also been narrowed down and four types of PI (communication, learning at home, volunteering and decision making) have been chosen from Epstein's model (See figure 4). This selection of PI types enables this dissertation to focus solely on the educators' side of the process through educational activities that are established based on their initiatives. This conceptual framework enables the investigation of early childhood educators' perceptions of the current state of PI and the barriers they face in terms of PI in day-care centres; such an investigation, according to Karila (2005), is needed as the views of educators shape practices.

Parenting
Communication
Volunteering
Learning at home
Decision making
Collaborating with the community

Parental involvement types of Epstein's Model

Parental involvement types adopted for this study
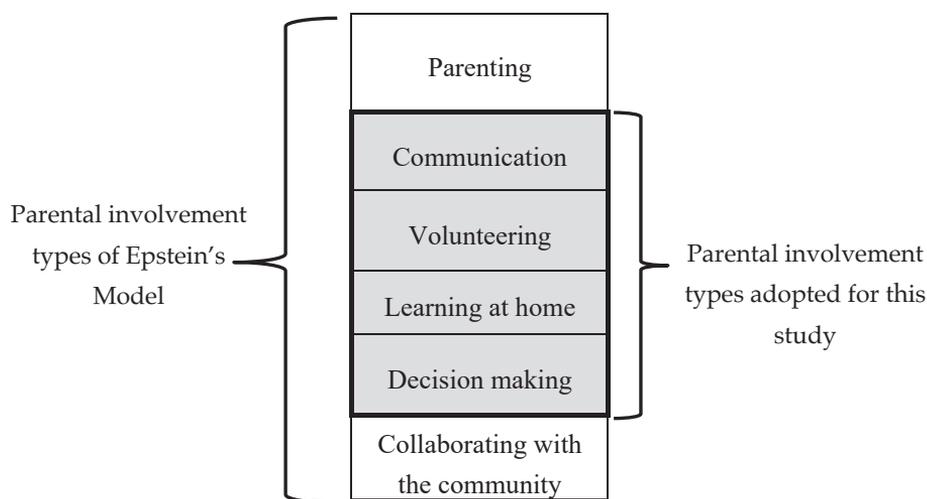
Figure 4. Fourth Tier of Conceptual Framework - Adopted Parental Involvement Types from Epstein's Model

1.3 Affecting Factors of Parental Involvement

The benefits of PI have been well-documented by a number of researchers over the decades (Jeynes, 2005; Jeynes 2012) and are also well-recognised by the policy actors (Borgonovi & Montt, 2012; OECD, 2001) and policy makers (Beveridge, 2005; AITSL, 2011; TDA, 2008). In the Turkish and Finnish contexts, the implication of this recognition is that early child education curricula include the significance of PI (Early childhood education programme, 2016; National core curriculum for early childhood education and care, 2016). Despite the widely accapted advantages of PI, there is still a gap between what research suggest and what is actually implemented (Hornby & Lafaele 2011, Epstein, 2016). As there is still a struggle between educational institutions and families in terms of collaboration, this difference between rhetoric and practice leads to insufficient PI (Henderson & Berla 1994; Christenson & Sheridan 2001). There are number of affecting factors for PI, such as cultural and language differences, educational level and background of parents, social class and socio-economic status of parents, workload, group sizes and so on. These factors can be grouped as the ones on societal level, on familial level and on educational institution/educator level, however the distinction between these levels are not distinct, they are rather intertwined. The aim of this chapter is to explain these factors starting from the

societal level, eventually shifting to familial level followed by institution-al/educators' level. As well as further explanation regarding the affecting factors on these levels with regard of their overlapping nature, some suggestions in order to eliminate them are provided in this chapter based on previous studies.

As the starting point of PI, equal division of roles of parents and educators in children's early learning is assumed (OECD, 2001). For such division of roles, mutual respect and open communication need to be established. Parents, teachers and the school organization share the common goal of children's healthy devel-opment, and to be able to reach this goal, they ought to respect each other's opin-ions and maintain open channels of communication (Driessen, Smit & Sleegers, 2005). This might be challenging considering the increased migration in recent decades; migrants travelling over increasingly long distances have created much more diverse communities in terms of individual origins (Arango, 2000). Ver-tovec (2007) explained this phenomenon with the term *super-diversity*, referring to multi-origin societies. These multicultural communities encounter attendant language issues. According to previous research on home-school collaborations, language differences stand as a barrier between schools and parents (Joshi, Eber-ly, & Konzal, 2005; Peña, 2000; Denessen, Bakker, & Gierveld, 2007). It is quite understandable that attempts at PI would be interrupted due to the lack of a common language, resulting in segregation among parents in terms of their in-volvement. The barriers created by language, however, are not limited to cases involving immigrant families. Such issues may surface with ethnic minority par-ents as well (Peña, 2000; Menon, 2013). In order to overcome the struggles caused by a lack of fluency in a common language, educational institutions can take certain actions. Making interpreters available for parent meetings is one ef-ficient method (Denessen, Bakker, & Gierveld, 2007) whereby language differ-ences are overcome and parents become more involved in discussions. In addi-tion to interpreters for face-to-face encounters, it is also of value to translate newsletters and announcements. Such accommodations create a stronger link between home and educational institutions in multinational communities (Denessen, Bakker, & Gierveld, 2007).

However, clear communication is not only about having a common language but also about finding effective ways of making sure that the desired message is re-ceived. Differences between educators and parents regarding educational goals and expectations can cause problems for PI practices (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Healthy communication allows both parties to express themselves and agree on certain agendas for the children. Additionally, differences in language often ac-company cultural differences, which also creates barriers to achieving sufficient PI (Joshi, Eberly, & Konzal, 2005; Berger, 2007; Sy, Rowley, & Schulenberg, 2007; Denessen, Bakker, & Gierveld, 2007). In culturally diverse societies, it

might be difficult for both educational institutions and families to accept differences and to understand them (Berger, 2007). Culture can affect the parents' understanding of education and their place in this process (Sy, Rowley, & Schulenberg, 2007). As a result, culturally shaped ideas of education might lead to the stereotyping of minorities and immigrants as non-interested (Gunn-Morris & Taylor, 1998). A previous study (Denessen, Bakker, & Gierveld, 2007) demonstrated the frustration of educators regarding the unresponsiveness of immigrant families towards invitations for parent meetings. However, they discovered that asking immigrant parents to provide food and drinks for these meetings resulted in an increased involvement rate. This might have been due to the desire to represent their own culture in their children's school. In fact, such activities serve an important purpose in the process of learning about and understanding different cultures, thus leading to decreased discrimination (Berger, 2007).

In addition to cultural background, the educational level of parents also plays a significant role of educators' PI practices. The more educated the parents are, the more comfortable they feel about being involved in their child's learning, while parents with little or no formal education often feel helpless about assisting their child's education at home (Peña, 2000; Joshi, Eberly, & Konzal, 2005; Sy, Rowley, & Schulenberg, 2007). According to Peña's findings, these struggles are not limited to educational support at home; they also affect parents with no formal education in parent meetings when they are supposed to read or complete a task involving basic reading and writing skills. This situation might be quite trying for adults, causing them to keep their distance from school-related events, whereas more educated mothers are more involved in their child's learning not only because they know more about school subjects but also for two more reasons: (1) they have more knowledge about their child's school performance, and (2) they maintain better contact with school personnel (Baker & Stevenson, 2012). Cooper (2010) argued that poor families are less involved in their child's learning and that education level plays a bigger role in this situation than it does in the case of more affluent parents' involvement. Among parents, the impact of education level is greater for mothers than for fathers (Cooper, 2010), resulting in a larger difference between the involvement of less-educated and more-educated mothers'.

There is also a negative association between PI and parents' income (Cooper, 2010; Menon, 2013). While mothers of higher socioeconomic status (SES) have a greater tendency to be involved in their child's education (Grolnick, Benjet, Kurowski, & Apostoleris, 1997), parents of lower SES are involved less (Cooper, 2010). One reason for this is that low-income parents often work at jobs which do not provide paid leave or flexibility of working hours (Heymann & Earle, 2000). This situation makes it hard for low-income parents to take time off from

their work to participate in PI activities; however, apart from the negative effect of strict working schedules, the SES of parents affects their involvement in school-related activities in a variety of ways. Hornby and Lafaele (2011) provided examples of these effects, such as being too tired after work, not being able to afford a car and/or a babysitter for school-based PI, and living in bad neighbourhoods, which direct parents' attention to keeping their children safe rather than getting involved in their education (Waanders, Mendez, & Downer, 2007). In addition to these effects, according to Crozier (1999), low-income families tend to assume that educators are the "experts" and leave the education of their child to them.

Along with SES, the social class of the parents plays a key role in PI. Lareau (1987) argued that educational institutions favour middle-class parents due to their family culture being more suitable to the school's culture. Even though this often doesn't occur deliberately, families from certain social classes end up being excluded. Reay (2002) explained this relationship between the social class of parents and their PI by highlighting changes in education policies. With the increasingly consumer-oriented perspectives in education, the study found that parents were more and more encouraged to be a part of this process. However, such involvement remained more available to certain social classes than to others. Reay (2002) argued that parents' past experiences influence their involvement and are rooted in their social class. The closer these past experiences are to the teachers' own experiences, the closer the relationship they maintain. Furthermore, for teachers belonging to the middle class, connections with working-class families remained minimal. Similarly, Ringenberg, McElwee, and Israel (2009) claimed that higher cultural capital leads to higher levels of PI. Even though middle-class families are more advantaged than working-class families in terms of PI, belonging to a higher class does not necessarily affect PI (Ringenberg, McElwee, & Israel, 2009). According to educators, parents belonging to the upper classes are less involved and tend to drop off and pick up their child quickly, without allowing any opportunities for interaction with the educators, which makes them hard to reach (Mahmood, 2013). Mahmood's (2013) study also reveals that in some cases, educators do not even have the chance to see the parents because nannies are responsible of children's transportation to and from school. This situation might be caused by busy work schedules as a result of increased working hours.

In addition to families' SES and social class, the form of the family influences PI practices. According to Grolnick et al. (1997), two-parent families tend to be more involved than single-parent families. Special attention is also required to involve blended families and grandparent-maintenance families for the benefit of the child's development (Berger, 2007). Aside from the parental influences on

PI, the behavioural problems of the child might also present obstacles to PI. However, in the case of the child displaying disruptive behaviours, parents are inclined to interact with the educational institution in order to avoid conflict (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011).

Parents' own past experiences in educational settings determine their involvement as much as do their experiences with their child's behaviour. As parents prepare their children for the school, their past experiences resurface; thus, positive memories of school experiences encourage them to become involved in their child's schooling (Taylor, Clayton, & Rowley, 2004; Menon, 2013). In addition to past experiences, the current psychological state of the parents affects PI; for example, a parent suffering from depression or anxiety tends to exhibit a lower level of PI (Hill & Taylor, 2004).

Reduced involvement is also potentially attributable to parents' varying attitudes towards their child's education and PI. Greenwood and Hickman (1991) explained how parents differ in terms of their attitudes: some parents do not value their child's education; others do not believe that their involvement would influence the educational institution; still others believe that the education of their child should be left to professionals; and there are those who think that they do not have sufficient knowledge to be involved. These attitudes are rooted in their beliefs about parenting and their child's education, and these beliefs might act as barriers to PI (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) suggested three types of parental beliefs that shape parents' involvement decisions. The first is the parental construct, in which parents determine their parental roles in their child's education; this construct develops over the course of their experiences related to schools (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 2007). The second is parental efficacy with regard to helping their child achieve academic success, which is tied to the parents' belief that they are able to help their child succeed at school (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 2007). The third and final belief pertains to the child's ability and way of learning (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). Apart from these beliefs, parents' perceptions of invitations from others also shape their involvement in their child's education. Such invitations come from the school, educators, and their child (Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 2007).

In addition to effects on societal and familial level, there are some factors originating from the educators and the institutions. For example the content of teacher training plays a significant role in PI practices. Educators who receive education regarding the importance of PI become more supportive of PI practices (Swick & McKnight, 1989). Gunn-Morris and Taylor (1998) claimed that many educators

lack knowledge of how to effectively involve parents, the benefits of PI, and necessary attitudes towards parents. Greenwood and Hickman (1991) also emphasised the significance of teacher training in the future PI practice of educators and suggested that teacher-training programmes should include research- and practice-based rationales for motivations and techniques for PI practices.

Teachers' attitudes towards PI are as important as parents' attitudes in terms of ensuring adequate levels of PI (Swick & McKnight, 1989). Teachers' attitudes towards parents also inevitably influence PI even though those attitudes may not be openly visible (Peña, 2000). In some cases, teachers might consider PI activities as 'extra work' and thus fail to take advantage of opportunities for PI if it is not compulsory for them to do so (Peña, 2000). This might give the impression that the staff of the educational institution does not value parents, resulting in a negative experience. On the other hand, teachers' encouragement of parents to engage in home-school interaction is associated with higher levels of PI (Epstein & Dauber, 1991). Alasuutari (2010) brings another perspective to teacher attitudes and claims that educators' assumed place in home-school relationships happens in two frames; horizontal and vertical. In horizontal frame educators recognise the parents' knowledge about their child and establish a practice based on equal role division between home and school. On the other hand, in vertical frame educators locates themselves on a higher place than parents because of their education and training in ECEC, as a result creating an obstacle for PI practices.

Teachers' attitudes also affect the school climate, which is an important factor affecting PI. Berger (2008) argued that a welcoming climate should be established by the school to comfort parents when they step into an educational institution, while a negative mood that makes them feel unwelcome should certainly be avoided. A school environment which feels like it primarily supports teachers and students and parents only secondarily creates tensions (Harris & Goodall, 2008). In such cases, these barriers can be lifted with the support of administration as well as coordinators or leaders who focus on PI practices in educational institutions (Greenwood & Hickman, 1991). In order to accomplish that, the administrative policies should not be overly restrictive; on the contrary, they should be open to and supportive of PI opportunities (Gunn-Morris & Taylor, 1998). Swick and McKnight (1989) affirmed that administrative support positively affects teachers' support of PI.

As mentioned above, there is a sufficient body of evidence pointing to the beneficial effects of PI; however, there are also plenty of factors affecting the sufficiency of PI. Previous research on these affecting factors focuses on societal aspects, parental aspects and institutional/educator related aspects, and provides a

very solid ground for further research Although the literature provides a robust stream of research on these affecting factors, it falls short when it comes to the influence of the background of individual teachers. This dissertation focusses on aspects of teacher background such as education level, educational background, and age groups educators work with. This focus is especially significant in Turkish and Finnish contexts where teacher backgrounds vary widely.

2 CONTEXTS OF THE STUDY

This dissertation adopts a contextual view with a comparative aspect and focuses on Turkey and Finland as its contexts to investigate their PI practices in ECEC. By doing so it is aimed to map out the PI practices in separate contexts and finally to bring them together to understand their differences and similarities (Bray, 2007). This targeted outcome, however, is not limited to the Turkish and Finnish contexts, due to the comparative portion of this study for comparative studies contribute to the current understandings by providing a comparative view of education on both policy and practical level (Şahin, 2011).

2.1 Defining the Niche for the Study

There is a recent trend of increased emphasis on early childhood education and care (ECEC) services in Europe. The reason for this growing interest stems from demographic changes and public demand on the local level as well as the effect of policy actors on the international level such as the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the United Nations (UN), and the European Union (EU). Although different countries have adopted different ECEC policies based on their historical and social contexts (Fleer, Hedegaard & Tudge, 2009), Kamerman (2000) claimed that these historical origins are quite similar: initially private ECEC services later became the responsibility of the state. The extent of the state's responsibility, however, greatly correlates with the number of women in the workforce. Especially with industrialisation and the decline of family land ownership, many women entered working life outside of the home in the 19th century (Berg, 1991; Horrell & Humphries, 1995). This societal change resulted in a need for the placement of children while their parents were out working (Salminen, 2017). For Finland (*Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in Finland*, 2000) and Turkey (Kasarci, 1994), the larger impact of these changes occurred especially after the Second World War. In response, the state initiated ECEC services; however, at first, these services were limited to parents with low incomes and those who had children with special needs or illnesses (Kamerman, 2000).

Although they were created to meet public needs such as the child care needs of working mothers, educational systems are also shaped the international developments; therefore, with increasing globalization, education systems around the world seem to be growing more alike (Akboga, 2016). This global convergence has generated a debate to explain the nature of this trend. On one end of this debate is the world culture explanation, according to which this convergence is

grounded in scientific findings that are creating a common belief in progress; on the other end is the local culture explanation, according to which the reason for this trend is adaptation to a global phenomenon (Carney, Rappleye, and Silova, 2012). In other words, while the world culture explanation claims that the main driving force behind reforms in educational systems is the desire to progress because of heightened interest in certain ideas and principles worldwide, the local culture explanation considers domestic changes to be the focal point of these reforms, which are seen as adaptations of these ideas and principles to the society (Akboga, 2016). For example, today, many OECD countries are expanding the resources devoted to ECEC services, resulting in growing numbers of women joining the workforce (Verry, 2000). This global trend may seem to indicate the establishment of a world culture for ECEC services; however, there are still differences when it comes to establishing ECEC at the local level (Gormley Jr., 2000). These differences may manifest themselves in the perceived meaning or the governance of ECEC.

Even though modern ECEC policies and practices are based on the 'best interest of the child' statement from the United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child (1989, 3rd article), the perceived meaning of this statement differs. Due to the historical roots to support for the underprivileged families, in some countries ECEC is considered as a mean of guidance given to those who need help in upbringing of their children (Kamerman, 2000). This guidance targets to give children a growing environment suited for their best interest by assisting parents and by early interventions, however it may overlook the education factor of ECEC by prioritizing the aspect of care. Additionally, it creates a dilemma whether ECEC is provided for children or for the benefit of strengthening the economy via making it easier for parents to take place in workforce (Kamerman, 2000). Governance of ECEC also hints to the nature of its perceived understanding. Differing from country to country, governance of ECEC may be affiliated with education ministries or other ministries regarding families, wellbeing of children and so on. The scope of the affiliated ministry also gives the direction to the practices in accordance to their interpretation of ECEC. Besides the affiliation to varying ministries, ECEC can also be divided between those ministries (Kamerman, 2000; Rutanen, de Souza Amorim, Colus and Piattoeva, 2014). And last but not the least, some differences may also arise from the level at which the policies being made; more precisely whether the governance of ECEC policies are centralised or decentralised. While in some countries ECEC policies is made in the local level in accordance with a national framework, in others these policies come from top to bottom and applied nationwide (Kamerman, 2000).

Despite the local-level differences, there is a recognizable global trend regarding the increasing importance attributed to ECEC services. Almost all countries are

promulgating laws and regulations especially aimed at increasing the number of children receiving ECEC, which is shifting from its original purpose of taking care of children whose parents are employed outside home to serving a variety of purposes, such as supporting the progress of children in 'social', 'educational', and 'developmental' areas (Mialaret, 1976). Many OECD countries have structured their ECEC services via policies designed to suit varied contexts (Neuman, 2005), which creates a diversity of governance within the global trend of the growing value of ECEC. This diversity and related policies create a niche for the exploration of differences and similarities between countries (Neuman, 2005).

2.2 Justifying the Selection of the Contexts of the Study

This dissertation focusses on PI practices in ECEC in Finnish and Turkish contexts and explores the pertinent similarities and differences between these countries. Turkey and Finland were selected based on their membership in the OECD. Since the OECD collects data related to educational systems, programmes, and practices from member countries and then publishes reports, some of the associated statistics and literature were easily accessed. Their membership in the same international organisation represents a valid justification for the dual focus of this dissertation (Hantrais, 2009).

Beyond their membership in the OECD, certain aspects of the histories of Turkey and Finland also lend themselves to comparison. Although these two countries were founded around the same time—Finland gained independence in 1917 (Meinander, 2011) and Turkey was founded in 1923—they followed different paths afterwards. In newly founded Turkey, the Finnish large literary movement, which was in its early years (Meinander, 2011), was noticed by the founder of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, and might have had an impact on the Turkish large literary movement; however, these reforms came to an end a couple of decades later, and Turkish education culture followed its own path. Although they possessed similar educational values at the beginning, they drifted apart throughout their maturation process. This creates an opportunity to investigate the extent of this drift in terms of PI practices in ECEC, therefore it is significant to draw a historical timeline of evolvement of ECEC would be significant. Besides the age of these countries and Turkish admiration for Finnish education, their geographic locations also create an interesting opportunity to investigate the Nordic Western and Eastern European cultures that are intertwined with their ECEC practices involving PI.

The main difference in terms of their ECEC structures arises from ECEC governance even though both countries are examples of unitary systems

(Gormley Jr., 2000), in which the governance is administered by a single power. In the Turkish case, the responsibility is divided between two administrative agencies, namely, the Ministry of Education (MoNE) and the Ministry of Family and Social Policy (MoFSP), whereas Finnish ECEC administration is unified under the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC) (Turkish Ministry of Education, 2004; Turkish Ministry of Family and Social Policies, 2015; Neuman, 2005; Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, 2018). Prior to 2013, Finnish ECEC services were affiliated with the Finnish Ministry of Family Services and Health (FMoFSaH), which lent ECEC a more 'care'-based meaning as it targeted the support of families; however, this relatively recent switch of affiliation points to an 'education'-oriented direction. The difference in governance is not limited to affiliations but extends to the organizational structure of education. In the Finnish context, decentralisation provides freedom to the local authorities, and within the frame of the ECEC programme prepared at the ministry level, local authorities determine their own ECEC practices. On the other hand, in Turkey, the educational structure follows a top-down pattern in which the decisions are made at the ministry level and are followed by institutions nationwide (Sahin, 2011).

In addition to governance and structural differences, the budgets these countries provide for ECEC services also drastically differ. According to Official Statistics Finland (OSF) (2018b), 3% of the total education budget is spent on ECEC. In Turkey, in contrast, only 1.1% of the total education budget is used for these services (Saklan & Erginer, 2016). This budgetary difference stands out in greater relief when ECEC service fees and national populations are considered. ECEC services are not provided for free in either of these countries, but in Finland, the fees depend on the income of the family, and they can be waived for those who cannot afford them (Saklan & Erginer, 2016; *Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in Finland*, 2000). Regarding population, there is a marked difference between the two countries: the Turkish population exceeds 80 million (TUIK, 2017c), while the Finnish population is just 5.5 million (OSF, 2017). These numbers reveal that even though the population of Finland is 14 times smaller population than that of Turkey, the percentage of the budget allocated to ECEC is nevertheless almost three times higher than that provided by Turkey. Without a doubt, the employment rate of women still has a significant effect on the amount of resources allocated to ECEC services and on how prevalent and easy to access they are (Kamerman, 2000). Even though today, more women around the globe are joining the labour force than ever before, the rate of women in work life still differs from country to country (Forssén, Haataja, & Hakovirta, 2005). According to the Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK) (2017a), 37.6% of the female population aged 15–64 is a part of the workforce in Turkey, whereas

in Finland, 71% of the corresponding population participates in the workforce (OSF, 2018a).

Possible effects of ECEC being free or not may be observed in the enrolment rates. Enrolment in ECEC institutions in Turkey is quite low: 11.74% for three-year-olds, 33.58% for four-year-olds, and 67.7% for five-year-olds (TEDMEM, 2015). These are well below Finland's enrolment rates, which were 68% for three-year-olds and 74% for four-year-olds in 2014. Since preschool education became compulsory in 2015 in Finland, the enrolment rate for six-year-olds reached almost 100% (Kumpulainen, 2015). Turkey followed a different strategy to increase school enrolment rates. Instead of making ECEC compulsory, the compulsory age for primary schools was lowered to the age of five years, six months. This new regulation might give the impression of undervaluing ECEC and shifting the importance to starting schooling early rather than providing developmentally appropriate education for all ages (Oral, Yaşar, & Tüzün, 2016). Considering the findings of previous studies, which have revealed that ECEC plays a significant role in children's future academic attitudes and success (Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 2003; Alexander, Entwisle, & Dauber, 1993), ECEC enrolment rates might also affect Programme for International Assessment (PISA) scores, which report that Finland is maintaining a successful trend while Turkey is struggling (PISA, 2003, 2009, 2012).

Besides differences in governance, budgeting, and the cost of ECEC, these two countries also exhibit some contrasting features at the societal level. Undoubtedly, these dissimilarities cannot be handled separately, since societal structure and values influence the regulation of ECEC services. In his six-dimensional national culture theory, Hofstede describes nations in terms of their values (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). These six dimensions are 'power distance', 'individualism', 'masculinity', 'uncertainty avoidance', 'long-term orientation', and 'indulgence'. Although the Finnish and Turkish cases do not exhibit significant differences in all the dimensions, four out of six dimensions do provide a compelling result in terms of differences between the Turkish and Finnish societies (Hofstede Country Comparison Tool).

Power distance refers to inequalities in a society and how that society handles this situation. This dimension can be described as the extent to which less-powerful people in a country believe that the power distribution is unequal. In this regard, Turkey exhibits a more hierarchical society in which people with more power are harder to access than those with less power. On the other hand, Finnish society exhibits less power distance (Hofstede Country Comparison Tool). This difference may also be evident in the decentralization of education in Finland, which creates a situation in which more powerful people are easier to

access, whereas in the Turkish context, due to the centralised administration, the power distance remains large. Additionally, power distance reflects upon the relationships in educational context; placing a distance between the teacher and students/parents based on the authority of educators secured through their pedagogical expertise (Denessen et. al., 2001).

Aside the difference in power distance, Turkey and Finland also contrast significantly in terms of individualism/collectivism. The core of individualism vs. collectivism lies in the degree of independence members of a society exhibit. The more independent the individuals are, the more individualistic a society is; the more dependent they are, the more collectivistic the society is (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). In the Finnish context, where members of the society are only expected to take care of themselves and their immediate family, individualism is more prominent (Hofstede Country Comparison Tool). On the contrary, Turkey is a more collectivistic society (Aksoy, 2011). Whether a society is individualistic or collectivistic might affect the enrolment rates of young children in ECEC. In Turkey's collectivistic society, child-care support is relatively easy to obtain from friends, neighbours, relatives, and kin than in Finland, which might decrease the need for placement in an ECEC institution in the Turkish context. In Finland, however, families with young children receive this support mostly from ECEC institutions and maternal grandparents (Danielsbacka, Tanskanen, & Rotkirch, 2015).

Masculinity/femininity is another dimension in Hofstede's six-dimensional national culture theory (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). In this context, these terms do not refer to the gender or ratio of men and women in a population. A masculine society is competitive and achievement- and success-focussed, while a feminine society values caring for others more than competing with others. Most distinctively, masculine societies define success as being the best, while for feminine societies, success refers to living a high-quality life. According to the Hofstede Country Comparison Tool, both Turkey and Finland fall on the feminine side of the scale; however, the extent of feminine societal qualities differs depending on precisely where they fall on this scale. For example, in the Finnish context, life quality, equality, and solidarity are valued more, while in the Turkish context, which is closer to a masculine society, status along with sympathy for inferiors are more important (Pellegrini & Scandura, 2006). On the other hand, both of these societies value leisure time, which indicates the importance of quality of life in Finland. In connection with leisure time use, togetherness and family time are more prized in Turkey.

The next dimension is uncertainty avoidance, which is, as is evident from its name, how societies deal with the uncertainty of the future (Hofstede, Hofstede,

& Minkov, 2010). Not knowing what the future will bring creates different levels of stress and different reactions in different societies. In the Turkish and Finnish contexts, both societies avoid uncertainties via keeping old traditions and routines intact and establishing and following rules. However, the way they achieve uncertainty avoidance differs. In Turkish society, rituals play a significant role in uncertainty avoidance, and although these rituals seem to be religious acts, they actually stem from traditions that are deeply rooted in Turkish culture. Finns, on the other hand, deal with this issue by making sure to follow known procedures precisely, working hard, and being punctual (Hofstede Country Comparison Tool).

Even though the six-dimensional model is based on the working culture of societies (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010), these societal characteristics also manifest themselves at every level of a society, such as family culture. However, family culture is not limited to characteristics of these six dimensions. Since this dissertation deals with PI in day care, looking into differences and similarities in family culture is inevitable for the purpose of context selection. With regard to their family cultures, Turkey and Finland present surprising results when compared.

The family along with the army have been seen as the most important aspects of a nation for Turkish people, so much so that family strength has been associated with the strength of the country (Aksoy, 2011). Although there has been a shift from large families to nuclear families over time, the change in terms of the level of dependence of family members has not followed at the same speed (Sayin, 1987). Members of Turkish families still exhibit some level of interdependence (Kagitcibasi & Ataca, 2005). By combining this fact with the current mainstream size of the family, it can be inferred that Turkish family culture is going through a transition period from the so-called Eastern family type to a Western family type. Similarly, Finnish families have also taken on the nuclear family form (OSF, 2016; Moring, 1993). In fact, in today's Finnish society, the most common family form is a married couple without children (OSF, 2018d). The conceptualization of the family in these countries is also undergoing change in this transformative process. There has been a continuous change in the conceptualization of the family in Finland; though in the past, *family* only meant married couples, cohabiting couples and single parents are now also included in this definition (*Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in Finland*, 2000). On the other hand, in the Turkish context, based on articles in the Turkish civil code (2001), a family is formed only by married couples.

As a sign of the interdependence of family members, most Turkish parents with young children receive child-care support from other immediate family members,

relatives, and even neighbours (Aksoy, 2011). Contrarily, Finnish parents receive such support mostly from the government in the form of paid parental leave or from private foundations as babysitting services. These support channels are a result of the state's long-term goal of ensuring the well-being of children and families and is a sign of their shift towards the independent family type. Additionally, even though the number of children per family has decreased over time (Aksoy, 2011), having children has maintained its importance in Turkish families (Kagitcibasi & Ataca, 2005). In contrast, the latest statistics from Finland (OSF, 2018c) show that the overall fertility rate is at a historical low. A concise representation of the similarities and differences, which fall in the matter of interest for this study, can be found in table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Differences and Similarities of the Study Contexts

	TURKEY	FINLAND
Prominent Family Type	Psychological Interdependent Family	Independent Family
Societal Culture	Collectivist	Individualist
ECEC System		
Governance	Shared between MoFSP and MoNE	Recently passed on to MoEC from MoSAH
Beginning of Obligatory Education	Elementary school at the age of 5.5	Kindergarten at the age of 6
Staff	-Kindergarten teacher (4yrs university) -Early childhood educator (2yrs higher education) -Classroom helper (4yrs high school)	-Kindergarten teacher (3yrs university) -Social worker (3yrs university of applied sciences) -Practical nurse
Parental Involvement Policies	-Explicitly states the importance of PI -Includes examples	-Explicitly states the importance of PI -Does not include examples

It is evident that Turkey and Finland exhibit certain historical similarities along with societal differences and distinct patterns of governance of ECEC; however, these alone may not be enough to justify the selection of these two contexts as there are many other countries that share such similarities and differences. However, based on the elucidation of Philips and Schweisfurth (2008), the researcher's position relative to the selected context represents valid support to justify the selection of contexts in comparative studies. To explain the place of the researcher's position in this justification, Philips and Schweisfurth (2008, p. 54) used a diagram that consists of four quadrants, each explaining a different group of contexts in relation to the researcher (see Figure 5).
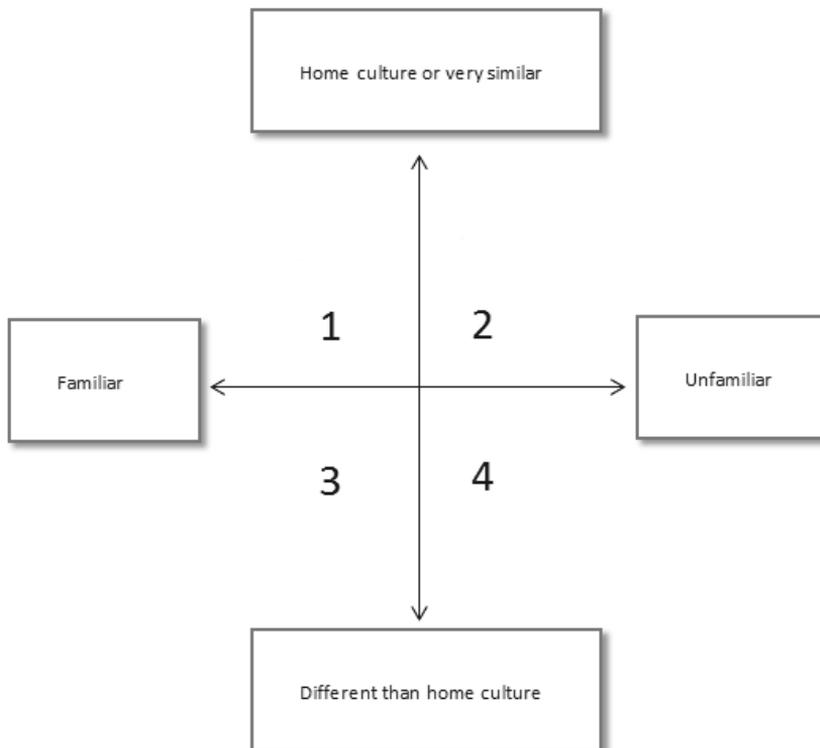

Figure 5. Philips and Schweisfurth's diagram for research circumstances and potential responses

In this diagram, the first quadrant represents a context with which the researcher is familiar and is the researcher's home culture or something very similar to it.

This context would provide a research opportunity that is easy to navigate and interpret. The second quadrant represents a context with which the researcher is unfamiliar, although it is similar to her or his home culture. Conducting research in a context that falls into this quadrant has positive and negative sides. According to Philips and Schweisfurth (2008), similarity to the home culture would help a researcher to understand the context and interpret the findings easily; however, this similarity also entails certain potential pitfalls, such as overlooking fundamental points for the sake of highlighting minor differences or believing that observed similarities are in fact identical things. Contexts in the third quadrant are those about which the researcher has a deep understanding and familiarity even though they are very different from the researcher's home culture. The danger for research conducted in contexts in this quadrant is that the researcher might become so familiar with the context that she or he might fail to observe important nuances. Finally, the fourth quadrant includes contexts which are unfamiliar to the researcher as well as those that are very different from the researcher's home culture. Conducting research in this quadrant can be tricky because gathering and interpreting data, adjusting oneself to the new culture, and overcoming culture shock are all more difficult. However, leaving aside the tricky aspects of this context, in this quadrant, the researcher might become very sensitive to differences, which would improve the research results.

Regarding the contexts selected for this dissertation, Turkey falls in the first quadrant because it is the researcher's home country. Additionally, the researcher is familiar with the ECEC practices and regulations in Turkey, having earned a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education from a Turkish university and garnered work experience in the field. Finland, where the researcher has resided long term, fits into the third quadrant, as the researcher has work experience in ECEC in the Finnish context in addition to having earned a master's degree from a Finnish university. Nevertheless, Finland is still a very different culture compared to the researcher's home country. By virtue of these connections, the foundation for the selection of the contexts is further validated and the research conducted thereby strengthened.

2.3   Introduction to the Turkish Family

Studies that have aimed to uncover Turkish family life extend back to the pre-Islamic period; however, the information gathered from that period is mostly based on historic inscriptions, legends, and folk tales (Aktas, 2015). According to these findings, the family has always occupied an important place in Turkish culture, so much so that Aksoy (2011) claimed that the family and the military were

the founding components of the Turkish nation in the course of its history. In the past, family unity was considered a component of national unity and understood as the smallest unit of the military. Family ties, however, were not only limited to those in the nuclear family but also included the larger circle of relatives. The richness of the Turkish vocabulary regarding terms for relatives might indicate the significance of such relationships as well (Aksoy, 2011).

During the pre-Islamic and post-Islamic periods, similar emphasis was placed on the family. Although the respect shown by children to their parents regardless of their age and status in the society remained the same, the society changed with conversion to Islam (Yasar Ekici, 2014). Along with switching from a nomadic lifestyle to permanent settlements, Islamic rituals were added to daily routines. Nevertheless, the family remained at the centre of the society, and children were highly valued since having offspring meant the continuation of the bloodline (Aksoy, 2011). However, the value of the child (VoC) to families changes over time due to the industrial advancement of societies, the effects of socioeconomic improvements on families, and the level of education of the parents. While in the past, having children was imbued with economic and/or utilitarian value, nowadays, it carries more of a psychological value (Kagitcibasi & Ataca, 2005). Even though the change in the VoC is not unique to the Turkish case, due to the diversity in Turkish society, this shift can be observed along a spectrum rather than as a dichotomy. A three-decade-long longitudinal study revealed that in Turkish society, families follow three models: (1) the interdependent family, (2) the psychologically interdependent family, and (3) the independent family.

Interdependent families are commonly observed in the less-developed regions of the country, where the economy is more likely to depend on agriculture. Especially during the first years after the foundation of the Republic of Turkey, since the economy was based on agriculture, this type of family was the most prominent (Aktas, 2015). These families exhibit close-knit relations within the family (Kagitcibasi & Ataca, 2005, p. 319). Independent families, which stand at the opposite end of this spectrum, are more common in urban settings, where industrialisation is more prominent. Unlike the collectivism found in interdependent families, independent families adopt individualism. These two models also can be considered to be the 'Eastern' and 'Western' (Jose, Huntsinger, Huntsinger, & Liaw, 2000) or Euro-American and Asian (Tõugu et al., 2017) family patterns; as industrialization increases, families become more independent from the upkeep of the land; therefore, family ties become less closely knit. In this regard, Turkey can be seen as a country which is becoming more of a Western industrialised country even though a considerable amount of its land area is still dedicated to agriculture (Tezel Sahin & Cevher, 2007). In addition to the industrial advancements over the years, starting in the 1950s, high rates of migration from rural

areas to urban areas intensified the transformation of family types in Turkey (Kasarci, 1993; Aktas, 2015). This diversity, however, did not result in a switch from interdependent large families to independent nuclear families. Instead, a new pattern has emerged which combines these two family types: the psychologically interdependent family (Kagitcibasi & Ataca, 2005).

In the psychologically interdependent family pattern, the difference in the value given to the child is evident, while a middle ground is maintained regarding family dynamics. Unlike interdependent families, in which children carry an economic/utilitarian value, in psychologically interdependent families, children are of psychological value. For example, in the case of a family for which the main source of income is farming and physical work, children become members of the domestic workforce by helping their parents perform work in the fields or household chores. On the other hand, in a family that lives in the city, while parents' work at some sort of office job, children become more of a source of joy rather than of economic gain. The effect of this difference not only applies to childhood but also continues into adulthood. The parents of an interdependent family rely on their adult children's support in their old age as well; however, in psychologically interdependent families, children are raised to be more autonomous since there are other means of support for the elderly (Kagitcibasi & Ataca, 2005).

Along with the difference in the place of the child within the family, the number of children each family pattern has also differs. Further away from the rural areas, where interdependent families are more common, the number of children per family decreases (Aksoy, 2011). This decrease can be linked back to the VoC on the grounds that the need to have children changes. Considering that they need the extra financial and physical support children provide, interdependent families have more children compared to psychologically interdependent families as the desired psychological satisfaction and joy can be provided by fewer children.

The change in the VoC over the years is also reflected in the child-parent relationship. For instance, although corporal punishment of the child was common in the past, today, most parents prefer reasoning with the child and discussions (Tezel Sahin & Cevher, 2007). This change in method of discipline and conflict resolution tactics is also linked to the education levels of parents. Tezel Sahin and Cevher (2007) explained this link in terms of the easy access to information due to increased education levels and technological advancements. The increase in education levels in the Turkish population is also evident in the three-decade longitudinal study conducted by Kagitcibasi (Kagitcibasi & Ataca, 2005).

Based on this analysis of the changes in family types, it can be concluded that the place and the value of children in the family are also affected by the social class

to which a family belongs. A child's place and success in society is also linked to the parents' status in society through their education, vocation, and income (Eroglu, 2001). The education level of the mother especially impacts whether a child will attend an early childhood education institution and how much further the child will pursue his or her education (Kagitcibasi & Ataca, 2005; Smits & Hosgör, 2006). Additionally, based on Kagitcibasi and Ataca's (2005) claim that the number of children in a family is linked to the socioeconomic status and education level of the parents, it is safe to assert that families from lower social classes tend to have more children compared to those from middle or higher social classes.

All in all, it would be reasonable to claim that Turkish families have started to move towards an independent family model from an interdependent family model due to economic and technological improvements as well as increased education levels in the population. Increasing divorce rates and decreasing marriage rates might also be taken as indicators of this change (TUIK, 2017b). However, this transformation has not resulted in a completely novel change; rather, it has created a new family model by combining the other two. There are still close relationships among family members and relatives (Republic of Turkey Executive General Directorate of Family and Social Research, 2010) that provide channels of support for the upbringing of children (Aksoy, 2011).

Such support channels become even more beneficial considering the maternity and paternity leaves in Turkey. According to existing labour law (2003, article 74), female workers are eligible for eight weeks prenatal and eight weeks postnatal maternity leave. After completing their maternity leave, they may either have breastfeeding allowance which is 1.5 hours a day, until the child is one year old or unpaid motherhood leave for two more months. Male workers, however can only have a 7 day-long compassionate leave right after the birth of their child (Labour law, 2003, additional article 2). The situation is slightly better for the government officials due to changes implemented in 2011. According to the law pertaining to government officials (*Devlet Memurlari Kanunu*, 1965, article 104), as with other types of workers, female government officials are allowed eight weeks off prior to birth and eight weeks after birth. However for the breastfeeding allowance they receive three of leave a day for the first six months and 1,5 hours a day for the next six months. They also have the option of taking two months of unpaid leave instead of the breastfeeding allowance. Male government officials receive 10 days of paternity leave after the birth of their child. In the case of multiple births, mothers receive two additional weeks of prenatal leave in addition to one additional month of unpaid leave or breastfeeding allowance (1.5 hours/day).

2.4   Turkish Early Childhood Education and Care

The practice of ECEC in Turkish history dates back to imperial Ottoman times. The first examples can be found during the 15th century in the Ottoman Empire; however, those institutions were mostly focussed on caregiving for young children along with religious education (Akyuz, 1996, as cited in Çelik & Gündoğdu, 2007 and Deretarla Gül, 2008). Later on, at the beginning of the 19th century, private early childhood education institutions started to spread in major cities, but their private nature was an obstacle to families of low socioeconomic status who wished their child to obtain the ECE therein provided. The first formal kindergartens were instituted in 1913 with legislation passed by the Ministry of Education; however, finding educated female teaching staff appears to have been a big problem, which implies that the kindergartens were instituted without the necessary preparations (Akyuz, 1996, as cited in Çelik & Gündoğdu, 2007 and Deretarla Gül, 2008). Nevertheless, these institutions continued to function, with the Ministry of Education allocating budgetary resources for them for the first time in 1914 (Akyuz, 1996, as cited in Çelik & Gündoğdu, 2007 and Deretarla Gül, 2008).

After the foundation of the Republic of Turkey, fundamental changes were implemented in the education system and a large literacy movement was started; as a result, the importance of elementary schools was recognised, and resources were allocated to them rather than to early childhood education institutions (Deretarla Gül, 2008). Even though the budget for early childhood education institutions was transferred to elementary education from 1925 to 1930 (Ergin, 1977, as cited in Deretarla Gül, 2008), the first educational institution to train early childhood educators was founded in 1927. However, in 1930, it was shut down along with the remaining early childhood education institutions due to insufficient resources (Oguzgan, 1982).

After a long period, ECE was efficiently instituted by the VII. National Education Council (the highest advisory organization, the one which decides what to suggest to the Ministry of Education) in 1962 (VII. National Education Council). Early childhood educator training also gained importance in this period, and graduates from child development and education departments of girls' vocational high schools were assigned as early childhood educators (Oktay, 1990). After 1980, the teacher training for early childhood education institutions was transferred to universities; thereafter, previously assigned vocational high school graduate teachers earned their bachelor's degree through a series of courses (Oktay, 1990). According to the law and relevant legislation (Law of Government Officials, 1977, Article 48; Legislation of Teacher Deployment and Replacement, 2015, Article 5), early childhood educators needed to hold a higher educa-

tion degree (bachelor's or associate's degree) in the field to be able to be assigned as a teacher.

In today's education system, despite initiatives by policy actors, ECE is still not compulsory, as stated in the Constitutive Law of Turkish National Education (Article 19). However, there was a pilot implementation of obligatory ECE in selected cities during the 2009–2010 academic year (Aydagul, 2009). According to Article 19, ECE functions as the preparatory stage for young children under the compulsory school age. The Early Childhood and Elementary Education Legislation of the Ministry of Education (11th Article, 2014) states that the compulsory school age is 66 months (5.5 years). However, it is also mentioned that if the parents submit a written application for their children (when they are between 60 and 66 months old) attesting to their sufficient school readiness, these children can start elementary school before the compulsory school age. Similarly, if parents do not agree that their child (between 66 and 68 months old) is ready for elementary school, they may submit a written request to postpone the beginning of elementary schooling. In the case that parents want to postpone their child's start at elementary school, they may do so up until their child is 71 or 72 months old with a doctor's report stating that the child is not yet ready. With this regulation, the compulsory school age was lowered from seven years old to 5.5 years old, resulting in controversy among public and national policy actors. The Mother Child Education Foundation (*Anne Cocuk Egitim Vakfi*, ACEV) and the Educational Reform Initiative (*Egitim Reformu Girisimi*, ERG) presented their concerns by stating that the new compulsory school age is causing confusion and gives the impression that ECE is not as important as starting elementary school (Oral, Yaşar, & Tüzün, 2016).

Nevertheless, there are different options for early childhood education institutions for the targeted age group and which ministry they will be affiliated to since the governance of ECEC is shared between the Turkish Ministry of Family and Social Policies (MoFSP) and the Turkish Ministry of National Education (MoNE). Even though the regulations for these institutions are given in legislation sponsored by these ministries (MoFSP, 2015; MoNE, 2014), they follow the curriculum provided by MoNE (*Early Childhood Education Programme*, 2016), and ECE/ECEC is not free for either MoFSP- or MoNE-affiliated institutions. The following figure (Figure 6) provides more detailed information about the early childhood educational institutions available in Turkey.
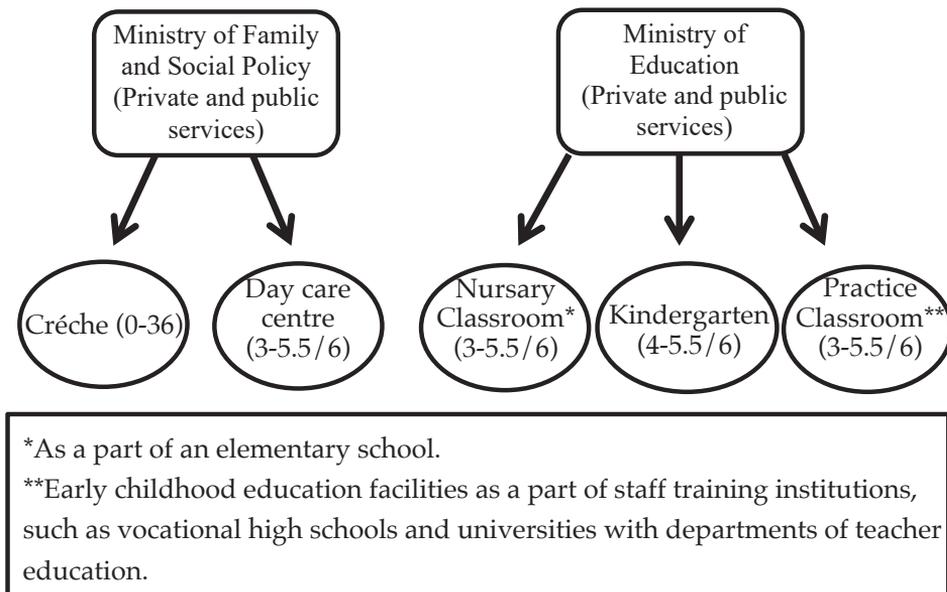
Figure 6. Current Turkish ECEC System

While some of these institutions run two half-day sessions, some provide a full-day session; however, kindergartens and practice classrooms may offer both full-day and half-day sessions. The full-day session covers nine consecutive working hours (a working hour is 50 minutes) with a 60-minute lunch break, while a half-day session consists of six consecutive working hours without any breaks (Legislation of Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education Institutions, Article 6, 2014). A half-day educational institution serves two half-day groups: one morning group and one afternoon group. Every early childhood educator has one group throughout the year. Since data collection for this study was completed, there have been some changes in the legislation. With these changes, all early childhood education institutions provide only half-day education sessions (Legislation of Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education Institutions, Article 6, 2014).

As shown by evidence from Ottoman Empire times, ECE developed in Turkey both at the public and the private level; however, the number of public institutions is still significantly higher than private ones (MoNE, 2016). Despite the availability of both public and private ECEC institutions, the enrolment rate in Turkey is quite low, at 11.74% for three-year-olds, 33.58% for four-year-olds, and 67.7% for five-year-olds, giving an overall average of 32.68% (TEDMEM, 2015). According to the statistics provided in another report, the enrolment rates

increased for the 2016–2017 academic year, bringing the total average to 35.52% (EGITIM SEN, 2017), which is still well below the OECD average, which was 71% for three-year-olds and 86% for four-year-olds in 2014 (Aktan & Akkutay, 2014; OECD, 2015). Additionally, the vast majority of these institutions are located in cities, while villages remain underequipped to offer early childhood education. Besides the enrolment rates, the teacher-pupil ratio in Turkey is also quite different than in other OECD countries. According to the Legislation of Early Childhood Education Institutions, the teacher-pupil ratio is targeted to be no less than 1:10 and no more than 1:20; however, it can be as high as 1:25 if the resources of the institution allow (Article 6, 2014). However, on an as-needed basis, at least one support staffer is assigned for every two child groups. According to the current statistics, there is an average of 18.28 students per early childhood educator in Turkey (TEDMEM, 2015).

To increase the enrolment rates and the quality of education, the MoNE has made a significant number of reforms over the years. Although Turkish educational organizations follow a top-down structure and so most of the decisions regarding educational practices are regulated by the MoNE (Aksit, 2007), ACEV's report claimed that there are inconsistencies among the policy documents regarding the targeted enrolment rates (Oral, Yaşar, & Tüzün, 2016). Nonetheless, the MoNE is responsible for decisions and reforms such as the recruitment of personnel for public schools, which is done via a centralised series of exams; teaching methods; student assessment; supplies of educational tools and budgeting; as well as the national curricula (Aksit, 2007). The curricula that the MoNE designs are the normative guide for all the schools.

The first ECE draft programme that was put into action in 1989 provided normative guidance for the practitioners. Later, it was updated to meet societal needs and current trends in 1994, 2002, 2006, and 2013 (Tican Basaran & Ulubey, 2018). The aims of ECE are stated exclusively in the Constitutive Law of Turkish National Education (1973). Article 20 of this law enumerates these aims as supporting children's physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development and helping them acquire good habits as well as aiding their language skills. In addition to developmental aspects, the same law also calls for the creation of a common nurturing environment for disadvantaged children. Preparing young children for elementary school is another aspect of ECE, according to the Law of National Education, Article 20 (1973).

2.4.1 Staff Education and Training for Early Childhood Education and Day Care in Turkey

After the VII. National Education Council included ECE in their agenda in 1962, the training of staff for these institutions gained importance. The MoNE drafted a number of regulations pertaining to ECE personnel in the Legislation of Experts and Masters (1977). Articles 3 and 4 of this legislation state that kindergarten teachers with a bachelor's degree (four years of university education) in Early Childhood Education or an equivalent field will be deployed to the institutions affiliated with the MoNE. The same legislation also calls for these institutions to have assistants on staff who must have earned an associate's degree (two years of junior college education) in Early Childhood Education or an equivalent field. In addition to these personnel, educational institutions affiliated with the MoFSP can hire 'child-sitters' who have a vocational high school degree from child-care-related departments or hold a child-care certificate (Legislation of Private Crèche, Day Cares, and Private Children's Clubs' Foundation and Functioning Guidelines, 2015, Article 28). The personnel qualifications are clearly outlined in the related legislation. According to these pieces of legislation, vocational high school graduates and associate's degree holders may work in a responsible role with regard to classes in private institutions (Legislation of Private Crèches, Day Cares, and Private Children's Clubs' Foundation and Functioning Guidelines, 2015, Article 26), and university graduates merit the title of *Teacher* (Legislation of Early Childhood Education and Primary School Education Institutions, 2014, Article 45). However, there are still misconceptions about personnel qualifications, especially in private institutions, in which vocational high school graduates and associate's degree holders may be addressed using the title of *Teacher*. Further information regarding the qualifications and training of early childhood education and care personnel are presented below.

Vocational high school degree. Vocational education in Turkey dates back to the times of the Ottoman Empire. The early examples of these institutions were more or less based on a master-apprentice tradition and meant to meet the need for a trained workforce in the society. After the republic was instituted, due to the extreme need to reconstruct the cities and improve industry, there was an immense and immediate need for a qualified workforce. This resulted in the opening of new vocational schools that were more structured and formal. During the early years, in order to improve the quality of these schools, experts were invited to Turkey, and Turkish people were sent abroad to be trained. Today, vocational high schools still continue to train qualified workers to meet the society's needs (Kilinc, 2016).

There are three types of vocational high schools: Anatolian vocational and technical, Anatolian vocational, and Anatolian technical. They follow the same educational programme framework, but the fields in which they offer training may vary. Vocational high schools may provide training in a wide range of fields and consist of four years of education, including internships. The fields in which vocational education and training are offered are implemented depending on the needs in the sector. One of the fields available is Child Development and Education. Under this title, there are two options: Early Childhood Education and Special Education programmes. Of the two, the graduates of Early Childhood Education may work in the role of assistant at early childhood education institutions.

According to the programme framework for the field of child development and education in Anatolian vocational and technical, Anatolian vocational, and Anatolian technical high school programmes (2017), the education they provide consists of a number of shared courses, which are the same courses available in regular high schools, and a number of field courses designed to train the students for a specific vocation. Students choose their field after the first year, which consists of shared courses. From then on, as students pass through the grades, the weekly hours of shared courses decrease while the weekly hours of field courses increase. The graduates of these high schools are equipped with practical knowledge of ECE and young children's needs; however, there is only one course that covers families in their curriculum. This course is more about monitoring the family-child relationship than involving parents in the educational process. According to the programme framework (2017), on the other hand, the elective courses are designed by the school administration and teachers; therefore, the possibility of offering an elective course on PI differs from school to school.

Associate's degree. An associate's degree can be earned from so-called junior colleges, which are two-year-long higher education programmes that are divisions of universities (Higher Education Law, 1981, Articles 3 and 5). The scope of these institutions is more practical than theoretical compared to universities. Additionally, enrolling in them requires fewer university exam points than universities. According to the information guide prepared by the MoNE and the Turkish Higher Education Council (THEC) (2002), vocational high school graduates may enrol in the related departments of vocational junior colleges without taking the university exam.

Higher education institutions have autonomy (Higher Education Law, 1981, Article 3) in their curriculum and programme design; therefore, it is difficult to determine whether these programmes include courses regarding PI. Nonetheless, graduates with an associate's degree may work as early childhood educators at

crèches and day-care centres and as group educators at special education and re-habilitation centres affiliated with the MoNE as well as work as child development specialists at institutions affiliated with the Social Services and Child Protection Institution (SSCPI). Additionally, they may pursue a carrier in the private education sector as *uzman öğretici* (master teacher)[2] or in public schools as convenanted educators (The Legislation of Experts and Master Instructors will be deployed to the institutions affiliated with the Ministry of National Education, 1977, Articles 3 and 4).

University degree. The Higher Education Law (1981, Article 3) describes universities as higher education institutions which possess scientific autonomy and public community, provide high-level education and instruction, publications, and consultation, and consist of faculties, institutes, junior colleges, and so on. A university degree (bachelor's degree) takes four years to complete. Compared to a junior college, a university education provides theory-rich instruction as well as practical training via internships. There are two different departments that train future ECE teachers: Child Development and Education and Early Childhood Education. Even though graduates from either of these departments can work in early childhood education institutions as teachers, there is a difference between them. While the Early Childhood Education department focusses deeply on the early childhood period (ages 0–6), Child Development and Education adopts a broader perspective on children and adolescents (ages 0–18). In other words, varied carrier paths are open to Child Development and Education graduates, while Early Childhood Education graduates are trained to teach young children.

In order to study at a university in Turkey, candidates need to take the standardised two-part university exam, which is a multiple-choice exam that includes all the main subjects taught at high schools, such as Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, History, Geography, the Turkish language, and so on. Both parts of the exam are held on the same day, consecutively. Based on candidates' high school GPA and score on the entrance exams, they gain the right to enrol in a department at a university.

As mentioned previously, as part of a higher education institution, departments of universities are granted autonomy in designing their programmes, however this

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[2] *Teacher* here is not used with its mainstream meaning. *öğretici* translates to 'person who teaches' because they do not gain the title of *Teacher*. The term *master* also does not indicate that they are above teachers with regard to their knowledge of the field or their status in the educational institutions in which they work.

does not apply to faculties of education and departments for teacher training. Teacher education must follow undergraduate programmes prepared for each teacher education programme by Council of Higher Education (CHE) with partial contribution from teacher educators from several universities (Higher education law, 1981, article 7). Even though the overall look of curricula is the same for all universities, some of the courses might differ. For example, some might offer Family Education, while others might offer a course entitled Parents; however, it is not reasonable to assume that every department offers a course on PI, especially considering that the 'Early childhood education undergraduate programme' no longer includes a course on this subject after the recent revisions in 2018 (CHE Early childhood education undergraduate programme). Even if they have courses that sound as if they are related to the subject matter, it is not certain how the course is designed without going through it all. Since the aim of this study is not to evaluate teacher training on PI, such a curriculum review for each department nationwide has been omitted.

2.4.2   Parental involvement in Turkey

In the ECE programme prepared by the MoNE General Directorate of Basic Education in 2013, involving parents in the education process is listed as one of the 18 main principles as normative guidance. Moreover, the programme clearly explains the importance of PI and, additionally, provides a guidebook for sustaining relationships with families (*MoNE Guidebook for Family Support Education Integrated with Early Childhood Education* [OBADER]). This programme not only informs early childhood educators about the benefits and importance of PI but also states that PI activities must be a part of the education and planned for in advance.

This is not the first mention of PI in Turkish education. De facto first initiatives to introduce PI to teachers took place in 1940 with a memorandum sent by the Minister of Education at the time (Bayrakci & Dizbay, 2013). Later on, the Constitutive Law of Turkish National Education (1973) included PI practices by stating that school-family unity is needed to be able to reach the goals of education. Even though PI was included in basic education programmes already in 1952 (Bağçeli Kahraman, Eren, & Senol, 2017), for ECE, it wasn't included until 2002 (Yazar, Celik, & Kök, 2008). However, an increasing interest in PI along with examples of PI activity can be observed over the years in early childhood education programmes (Bağçeli Kahraman, Eren, & Senol, 2017) and they include some PI activity examples as well.

Along with PI activities, the MoNE also regulates parent-teacher associations (PTAs) through the MoNE PTA legislation (2012). According to Article 5 of this legislation (2012), the purpose of the PTA is to promote the integration of families and the school, to create a link between parents and the school for communication and cooperation, to support activities that enhance the education and instruction at the school, and to provide the necessary educational tools to underprivileged students. The members of this association include the administrators and teachers for as long as they continue working at the school, parents as long as their child studies at the school, and the temporary instructors during the time they work for the school. Although the association includes all parents and the school's entire teaching and administrative staff, there are three boards, two of which consist of a certain number of members who form the administration of the association. According to the MoNE PTA legislation (2012, Article 8) these boards include a general board, an administrative board (five elected parents [Article 12]), and a supervisory board (one elected parent and two assigned teachers [Article 14]). The MoNE PTA legislation (2012) states that every year, the latter two boards must be re-elected (Articles 12 and 14). The duties of the PTA are listed in the MoNE PTA legislation (2012, Article 6) and can be grouped under three main duties, namely, administrative duties, organizational duties, and educational duties. These duties revolve around the idea of supporting the school, helping school administration with paperwork, and providing volunteers for activities.

Besides the regulations regarding PI on governmental level, there are also a number of initiatives taken by non-governmental organisations. These organisations often target underprivileged families with their projects in order to reduce the developmental gaps and unequal access to resources. As an example, one of the most active organisations in the field of education; Anne Çocuk Eğitim Vakfı (AÇEV-Mother Child Education Foundation) conducts several projects for parents' involvement in their child's education and development as well as publishing annual reports regarding the state of early childhood education (https://www.en.acev.org/who-we-are/about-us/).

2.5   Introduction to Finnish Family

Before the 19th century, Finland differed from Western and Northwestern European countries in terms of its family structure. Compared to these countries, Finnish families were more crowded and took extended or multiple family forms. There were, of course, regional differences within the county; however, the general trend continued until the 20th century, which was that large families were

prominent where the labour was intense, such as among landowners (Moring, 1993). With the increase in the population after the Great Northern War (1720s), the number of households also increased. However, the increased number of households resulted in a decrease in the size of those households, so much so that by the 19th century, nuclear families were the most common type family in Finland other than solidarity households, which consist of a widowed or a single parent (Moring, 1993).

Before the 19th century, while the extended (which includes one or more relatives other than offspring) and multiple (which includes two or more families connected by kinship or marriage) family forms were the most common, these forms also exhibited characteristics of the interdependent family type. The reason is that the main source of income for these families was the land they owned; running the farm required the work of many people, and the farm was capable of providing for them all (Moring, 1993). With the advent of industrial improvements, however, the number of people who obtained their income from agriculture declined (*Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in Finland*, 2000). With many parents working in industry, the need for a large family rapidly decreased. The transition from the extended/multiple family to the nuclear family form can also be considered an indicator of a change in the perceived VoC (Kagitcibasi, 2017). Characteristically, in larger families, children carry an economic value due to the harsh nature of the family's main source of income, whereas in small families, children have more psychological value (Kagitcibasi & Ataca, 2005; Kagitcibasi, 2017). This is also indicative of the transition of family type from interdependent to independent (Kagitcibasi, 2017). Today, young people leave their family home sooner than before to start an independent single household (Forssén, Laukkanen, & Ritakallio, 2002); however, this does not affect the degree to which they treasure their family (Turtiainen, Karvonen, & Rahkonen, 2007).

The transitioning from the interdependent to the independent family type was not the only outcome of industrialization in Finland. There was also a series of changes in the societal structure that led to middle-class families increasing in number and occupying a larger percentage of the economy (Solsten & Meditz, 1988). Finland is still an exemplary country in terms of providing equal opportunities for individuals from every social class (Käyhkö, 2015) since even though upper- and lower-middle-class families comprise the majority, there is still a prominent working class (Erola & Moisio, 2007; Solsten & Meditz, 1988). Although class differences do not affect the education a child receives due to the Finnish welfare system, nevertheless, similar to the Turkish context, how far a child pursues education is affected by the family's social class (Käyhkö, 2015). Social class not only has an impact on the education level of a child but also on

the child's education path due to the choice of school (Kosunen & Carrasco, 2014).

Single parent families are a factor in the formation and transformation of social classes nowadays (Szelewa, 2013), especially considering that divorce is one of the leading causes of poverty among single mothers (Forssén, 1998a). Similar to other OECD countries, divorce rates and the number of single parents have increased in Finland, and cohabitation has become more common for those who do not have children (Forssén, Laukkanen, & Ritakallio, 2002). Different reasons such as individualism, economics, career plans, or simply a desire for a certain type of family life are factors in young people's future decisions regarding type of family, having children, and child care (Rorkirch, Tammisalo, Miettinen, & Berg, 2017; Huttunen & Eerola, 2016). Even though the most common family type in Finland is independent, creating a solid family policy to support the well-being of children and families has been a long-term goal for decades.

 In Finland, the support channels for families with children through extensive parental leave and financial aid are well-established (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland). Women are entitled to maternity leave starting from 30–50 workdays prior to the birth. Once the child is born, while mothers receive 55–75 workdays, fathers receive 18 workdays of paternal leave that can be taken at the same time as the mothers. However, since the total paternal leave is 56 workdays, in the case that 18 workdays are taken immediately after the birth, then the remaining 38 workdays should be used when the mother is not on maternity leave. If no paternal leave is used right after the birth, all 56 workdays of paternal leave can be used when the mother is not on maternity leave. After the maternity leave period, a parental leave of 158 workdays can be used by either the mother or the father until the child is 9-10 months old. Mothers and fathers can also split the parental leave so that one parent at a time stays at home with the child. In the case of multiple births, an additional 60 workdays for each child are added to the parental leave. During these periods, mothers and/or father receive financial support from the state (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland; Ministry of Social Affairs and Health; The Social Insurance Institution of Finland). Today, parental leave is provided by most EU countries; however, Finland was a pioneer among the Nordic countries as it had already established parental leave by the 1970s (Lammi-Taskula, 2008).

After using up the parental leave, parents may take unpaid child-care leave from work. Either the father or the mother can take such child-care leave, but they may not take it at the same time. This leave can be used until the child is three years old. Employers are obliged to offer parents who have taken child-care leave a job that is the same as or similar to the job that they had before the leave once they

return to work. During this time, families receive a child home-care allowance. The child-care leave can be taken on a part-time basis, for which they would receive a partial care allowance (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland; The Social Insurance Institution of Finland, 2018). Even though parental leave and child-care leave can be taken by fathers as well as mothers, it has been mainly used by mothers (Lammi-Taskula, 2008). Unlike other Nordic countries, fathers' use of parental or child-care leave has not developed as planned despite the high education levels of women and high rates of women participating in the labour market (Lammi-Taskula, 2008; Hakyemez-Paul & Pihlaja, 2018).

2.6   Finnish Day Care and Early Childhood Education

ECEC initiatives date back to the mid-19th century in Finland when the 'kindergarten' activities developed by Fröbel created the foundation of Finnish ECEC (Alila, 2015). These initiatives were first started by Uno Cygnaeus, who proposed that those kindergarten activities be part of the public school system; however, this proposal didn't attract much attention at the time (*Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in Finland*, 2000). Later in the century, in 1888, Hanna Rothman started to introduce the kindergarten concept as a private activity, again based on Fröbel's teachings (Salminen, 2017). The aim of these new private kindergartens was to support the well-being of children of poor families, especially the ones whose mothers were working (*Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in Finland*, 2000). These institutions started spreading from urban areas to rural areas. Similarly, there were crèches established for children under the age of three, the purpose of which was to care for working mothers' children. Although crèches were not considered educational institutions at the time, they soon became a part of kindergartens (Salminen, 2017). However, they were somehow left out of the budget when kindergartens were included in the state budget in 1917, and this continued until 1970 (*Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in Finland*, 2000).

The Kindergarten State Subsidy Law (1927) was the first normative attempt to introduce requirements to be followed in order to receive state day-care subsidies, such as the obligation of a kindergarten teacher to work in a day-care child group. There followed the first legislation on day-care centres in which the responsibility for kindergartens was delegated to municipalities' welfare boards (Alila, 2015). This included crèches, day-care centres, and kindergartens in addition to playgroups; however, family day care was only partially accepted as a socially oriented care form. The reason was that the legislation's description of day care was based on social policy as well as on work policy to include women

in the labour market (Välimäki, 1998). In 1973 came the reformed legislation under the name of the Act on Children's Day Care, which focussed on regulating day care under one piece of legislation that guaranteed state funding for all forms of day care and included family day care as an official form of day care. The same act also regulated the fees of all forms of day care at a more equal level (Forssén, 1998).

In the 1990s, with decentralisation, state regulatory authority decreased and the decision-making power of municipalities increased regarding their services and in determining fees for those services (Forssén, 1998b). One of the services that municipalities are responsible for is providing forms of care according to the level of demand from the parents (Day Care Act, 1973). Despite it not being compulsory, every child in Finland has the right to a half-day placement in day care once the parents' parental allowances end, regardless of the parents' situation and finances (Salminen, 2017). Up until 2013, these services were provided by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health; then, they were transferred to the Ministry of Education and Culture, starting a new era for ECEC in Finland in which its educational aspect began to be recognised at the state level (Paananen, Lipponen, & Kumpulainen, 2015). In 2015, the Day Care Act was revised and its name was changed to the Act on Early Childhood Education and Care. Thus, Finnish ECEC reached its current state with a completely new piece of legislation: the Act on Early Childhood Education and Care (Law 540/2018).

With the changes begun in 2013, pre-primary education, which starts one year prior to elementary school, became a part of basic education, and it has been compulsory since 2015 (Kumpulainen, 2015). Pre-primary education is provided both in kindergartens and schools. Even though pre-primary education is free, the rest of the ECEC services are subject to fees which are arranged based on the family income (Kumpulainen, 2015). The costs of these services are either paid by the municipalities or via private day-care allowances. Because of the economic recession in the 1990s, many public administrations terminated their day-care services (Forssén, 1998b). The recession also resulted in a reduction in the number of private day-care services due to outsourcing. Today, however, with private child-care allowances, parents can choose either private or municipality day-care centres, depending on their preference (*Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in Finland*, 2000).

Family day care is also a form of child-care service which is not available in Turkey; hence, it is worthwhile explaining this difference between Turkey and Finland. This form of day care can either be a single group at home or multiple groups in a facility with two or three caregivers working together. The history of family day cares dates back to the 1960s, when the number of women in the

workforce was increasing and therefore were in need of day-care services (*Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in Finland*, 2000; Salminen, 2017). During that era, while some women got jobs in the labour market, others preferred to work at home and started to take care of the children of the others along with their own in their own home. The first regulations regarding family day cares came in 1971, when they were considered as a complementary service to the state services. However, with the Act on Day Care in 1973, family day cares were recognised as equal to other day cares (*Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in Finland*, 2000). Family day care is still one of the preferred types of day care in Finland even though it is not as popular as day-care centres. According to statistics from 2014, the percentage of enrolments in day-care centres was 82%, while in family day cares it was 14% (THL, 2015). A possible reason for this is that they were more available in scarcely populated areas back in the 1970s. Family day cares were also considered more suitable for 'emotionally sensitive children and children prone to illness' in that decade (*Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in Finland*, 2000, p. 21) because of the relatively small number of children per adult and the fact that they are in a home environment. For group family day cares, again, the municipalities designate the facilities where two or three caregivers can work together (*Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in Finland*, 2000).

According to *Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in Finland* (2000), in a family day care, one caregiver can only provide four children with full-time care, which includes their own children if they are under school age and being cared for at home. Similarly, in a group family day care, each caregiver can be responsible for as many as four children in full-time care. However, a family day care may also offer part-time care. The number of children in municipal day-care centres, however, depends on the size of the facilities and may vary between 10 and 100. In these day-care facilities, the children are divided into small groups (Salminen, 2017). Furthermore, they are divided according to age. However, for sibling groups, the ages of the children are not taken into consideration. Nevertheless, in each group, there might be only four children under 36 months old or eight between 36 and 72 months old per adult in full-time care (Salminen, 2017). In part-time care, there could be as many as 13 at the age of three or above per adult. In addition to full-time and part-time care, round-the-clock care is also available in Finland for children whose parents work irregular hours together (*Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in Finland*, 2000). In addition to day-care centres for enrolled pupils, there are also open day-care centres for parents and caregivers to visit along with their children. The purpose here is to provide networking opportunities for adults and different activities for children. The structure of ECEC in Finland is shown in Figure 7.
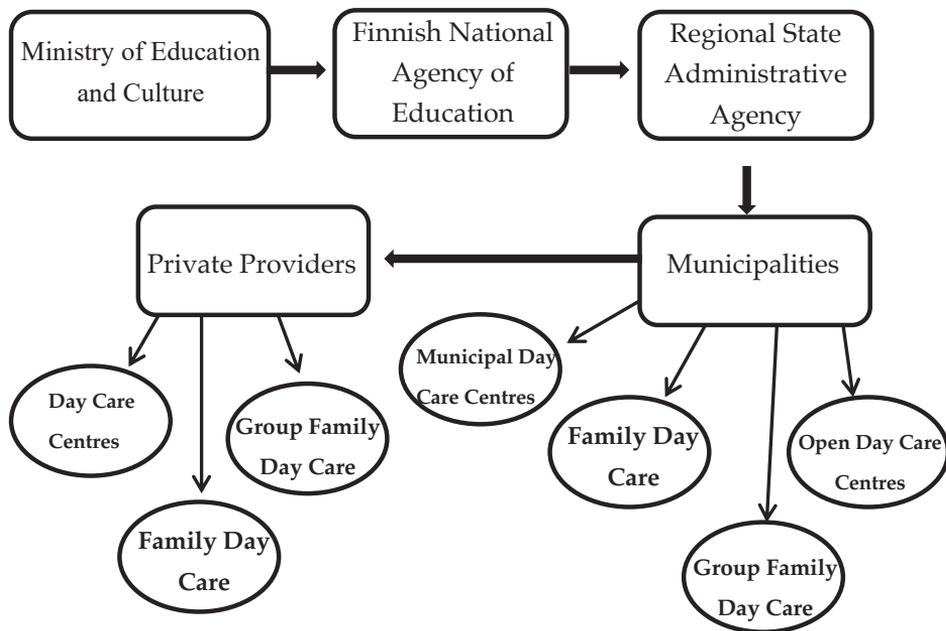
Figure 7. Current Finnish ECEC System

In Finland, one year of early childhood education (for six-year-olds) is compulsory; hence, the enrolment rate was 98.5% for six-year-olds in 2014 (Kumpulainen, 2015). On the other hand, the enrolment rate for three-year-olds was 68% and for four-year-olds was 74% in 2014, which was slightly below the OECD average of 71% and 86%, respectively (OECD, 2015). The reason for these low enrolment rates may be that there is a variety of care forms and support available to parents provided by the state (Kumpulainen, 2015). Depending on how parents view the need for ECEC, they may also choose a care-based option.

According to the Early Childhood Education and Care Act (540/2018), which is the most recent relevant legislation, the purpose of ECE is to support children's development in each developmental domain and to ensure their well-being. That legislation also mentions the importance of working with parents and supporting them in the upbringing of their children. To be able to achieve this, The Finnish National Agency for Education prepared the *National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care* based on the Early Childhood Education Act. This core curriculum represents the national regulations for ECEC and is used as the normative guideline to design curricula at the local level (*National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care*, 2016).

In Finnish ECEC, learning through play is taken as the core of learning (Salminen, 2017). A personal ECEC plan is prepared for each child at whichever form of day care they are attending. This plan includes objectives and measures to support the child's development, learning, and well-being on a personal level as well as special support if the child needs it. While preparing the ECEC plan, the child's opinions and wishes are also taken into account (Salminen, 2017). Additionally, parents must be included in their child's ECEC.

2.6.1   Staff Education and Training for Early Childhood Education and Day Care in Finland

ECEC staff in Finland comes from a variety of educational backgrounds and include 'kindergarten teachers, special kindergarten teachers, social pedagogues or Bachelors of Social Sciences, Bachelors and Masters of Education, practical children's nurses, kindergarten practical nurses and practical nurses' (*Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in Finland*, 2000, p. 42). All in all, the Finnish day-care system aims to employ well-educated and multi-disciplinary staff (Salminen, 2017). To ensure the quality of ECEC services, the required qualifications are explicitly stated in the Act on Children's Early Childhood Education and Care (540/2018). Today, the number of kindergarten teacher posts comprises half the number of the entire staff working in the ECE field (Pihlaja, Rantanen, & Sonne, 2010; THL, 2011), and only 30% of those working in this field are trained as kindergarten teachers (Karila, 2010).

Teacher education for kindergarten teachers is provided by universities in Early Childhood Education and Care programmes, and the social pedagogue title is obtained from a university of applied sciences in social pedagogy. Both are three-year bachelor's degree programmes. Practical nurse education, on the other hand, is a degree from an upper-vocational school in Social Services and Health Care, requiring about two years (Act on Qualification Requirements for Social Welfare Professionals, 272/2005). In each day-care centre, one in three early childhood educators must be a kindergarten teacher, according to the Social Welfare Professional Act (272/2005). For family day cares, on the other hand, up to a one-year training programme leading to family-day-care nurse training is required (Finnish National Agency for Education,[3] 2013). In the case of a group family day care, however, if there are three caregivers, one of them must at least hold an upper-secondary-level degree related to child care (Law 36/1973). In the follow-

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[3] Previously known as the National Board of Education.

ing section, detailed information about personnel qualification and training is provided.

Upper-secondary vocational education and training. The practical nurse programmes of upper-secondary vocational education and training schools prepare day-care staff. There are several specializations under the practical nurse title because, in the 1990s, 11 vocational degrees in social and health fields were consolidated under this title (Lasonen & Stenström, 1995). In order to work in day cares, one must choose the Children's and Youth Care and Education programme. The graduates of this programme may become support staff for ECEC institutions, according to *Vocational Qualification in Social and Health Care, Practical Nurse*, published by the Finnish National Board of Education (now known as the Finnish National Agency for Education) in 2011. Practical nurses are trained to work with and advocate for people and focus on the well-being of individuals. In day-care contexts, practical nurses plan, implement, and assess the care of children and promote their well-being. In terms of conducting PI activities, this programme takes an 'assisting' standpoint in supporting families and family-centred practice (Finnish National Board of Education, 2011).

Old kindergarten seminars. With the introduction of kindergartens to Finnish society in the late 19th century, the need for staff to work in these institutions grew rapidly, which led to the opening of 'old kindergarten seminars' (Meretniemi et al., 2017). These seminars started with the initiatives of Hanna Rothman and Elisabeth Alander (Meretniemi et al., 2017), and the content was based on Fröbel's teachings (Nurmi, 1981). The very first kindergarten seminar was opened in Helsinki, and male students were not allowed to participate since a kindergarten teacher was considered to be a professional mother and thus not a suitable position for men (Meretniemi et al., 2017).

These seminars started as a social support because in the time of industrialisation, children of some working families were left at home unattended. To address this problem, Rothman and Alander aimed to care for these children, ensure their well-being, and support their mothers in raising their children. When they started training future nursery staff, they kept social service and motherhood support as their core elements. As Kinos and Virtanen (2008) summarised, their main goal was teaching pedagogy and didactics.

Rothman and Alander opened the first kindergarten seminar in 1892. The language of instruction was Swedish (Nurmi, 1981), which was later switched to Finnish, and a new kindergarten seminar was opened for Swedish speakers by the same founders (Meretniemi et al., 2017). The participants were required to be 18 years old, but the age limit was later raised to 19, and they were also required to be graduates of girls' schools, which were on the same level as today's middle schools (Nurmi, 1981). The duration of the training in these seminars was at first one year but then was extended to two years.

They branched out to Jyväskylä in 1947, and new initiatives followed in Tampere and Oulu. Up until 1977, kindergarten seminars were the only institutions for the education of kindergarten staff (Meretniemi et al., 2017). In the early 1950s, there was an attempt to link kindergarten seminars to universities, and even though it was not successful, this attempt helped kindergarten seminars to develop their curriculum (Karila, Kinos, Niiranen, & Virtanen, 2007; Meretniemi et al., 2017). Between 1973 and 1993, kindergarten staff education continued in a divided form in which kindergarten seminars remained active in addition to temporary training programmes at the universities. However, by 1995, kindergarten staff training was left completely to universities (Kinos & Virtanen, 2008).

In conclusion, these seminars, derived from Föbel's teachings, regarded kindergarten staff more as caregivers than teachers, assigning them the role of surrogate mothers. Therefore, for a long time, males were not allowed into this field even though they were able to work in primary education (Meretniemi et al., 2017). Since ECEC started as a social responsibility and support for mothers in Finland, it was more linked to developmental psychology than to education (Kinos & Virtanen, 2008). After becoming a part of the education curricula of universities in the mid-90s, kindergarten staff training adopted educational aspects, creating today's understanding of kindergarten educators.

University degree (BA., Kindergarten teacher). Completing the Early Childhood Education programme at a university entitles the candidate to a bachelor's degree along with the title of *Teacher* and qualification in ECEC. As with most university graduates, Early Childhood Education graduates can also further their studies by pursuing a master's degree. Admissions procedures to B.A. programmes differ depending on the type of education. As with the mainstream route, the matriculation exam score necessary for finishing high school would help in gaining admission, but it mostly depends on the entrance examination and aptitude assessment conducted by the higher education institutions. Even though teacher education institutions are granted autonomy in deciding on their admissions procedures, nowadays, many institutions collaborate in student

selection. Universities enjoy autonomy in deciding on the details of course content as well as their curricula and forms of instruction.

Kindergarten teacher education is organised concurrently, which means that students take their pedagogical training and subject studies together. Kansanen (2003) stated that PI is a much-stressed issue in Finnish teacher education. Therefore, courses focussing on this issue are included in their curricula; however, it is difficult to generalise and state that every programme includes these courses since universities decide on the content of their programmes autonomously. Additionally, kindergarten teacher education programmes include teaching internships aimed at introducing the candidate to different types of early childhood education institutions. Along with theory and practice, these programmes also integrate research into teacher training, and they aim to provide the skills future kindergarten teachers will need to implement education based on the child's needs (Kansanen, 2003). Qualified kindergarten teachers can continue their studies to become special education teachers as well.

University of applied sciences. Universities of applied sciences award bachelor's degrees, and if desired, candidates can continue their studies to obtain a master's degree in applied science. Even though the admissions procedure is much the same as in universities, it is still considered easier to enrol in a university of applied sciences than in a university, depending on the demand for the programme. Undoubtedly, this demand mostly correlates with current job opportunities in the labour market.

In terms of the programmes training staff to work in kindergartens and day cares, the difference between a university of applied sciences and a standard university lies in the content of the programmes; while a university of applied science provides a more practice-based education on general aspects of social services, standard universities include more theoretical education in their programmes and focus more on education. In addition, university of applied sciences graduates do not receive the *Teacher* title; instead, they become social service officers. In order to be qualified to work in the ECEC field, participants need to earn 60 study points related to ECEC and social pedagogy in addition to the programme's core courses, whereas the study programme of university graduates includes only courses related to education and the ECE field ('Social sciences, journalism, and information in UAS').

2.6.2   Parental involvement in Finland

Finnish ECEC is based on the idea of supporting parents in the upbringing of their children (Law 36/1973; Law 580/2015; Law 540/2018; *Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in Finland*, 2000), and the importance of PI is made explicit in ECEC legislation. For example in Finnish National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care (2016, p.31) includes a dedicated section for 'co-operation with home', in which the importance of parents' place in their child's education and development is explained as well as the objectives of this co-operation. The core guidelines presented in this section focuses on active initiations of early childhood educators and a flow of information towards parents from educators.

Even though the significance of PI is stressed in official documents, they do not provide guidance on how PI should be implemented (Hirsto, 2010). Only in the instructions for the child's individual ECEC plan, recently published by the Finnish National Agency of Education (FNAoE) (2017), are a couple of examples of PI presented. On the other hand, it is clearly stated that the parents' role in designing individual plans is a must. As a result, most PI activities revolve around this plan, which is designed to determine the child's individual needs and how to facilitate the child's development in the group context in accordance with the curriculum (FNAoE, 2017). Another goal here is to increase parent-teacher communication (Salminen, 2017). The preparation of this plan includes open discussion between the parents and educational staff; furthermore, the child's opinion is also considered important for this plan.

In addition to giving parents the right to express their opinions to educational staff, the instructions for the child's individual ECEC plan also give parents the opportunity to discuss their children's development and education. Another important aspect of this individual plan is that it provides the opportunity for early identification of the child's need for special attention regarding their development, learning, and growth. In this way, a common strategy can be designed to support the child (STAKES, 2004). The monitoring and assessment of the individual plan are also carried out by parents and educational staff together (STAKES, 2004) and on a daily basis when parents drop off and pick up their children (Salminen, 2017). In addition to these daily conversations, assessment discussions are also held during and at the end of the year (*Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in Finland*, 2000). In the *National Curriculum Guidelines on Early Childhood Education and Care in Finland* (STAKES, 2004), the involvement of parents in their child's education is classified as a partnership to emphasise the equal relationship between parents and educational staff. However, while establishing a partnership with parents, educators often retain their pro-

fessional autonomy (*Finnish National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care*, 2016; *Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in Finland*, 2000; Alasuutari, 2010).

Besides involving parents in the preparation of individual learning plans for their child, national core curriculum (2016) also includes the necessity of guidance for parents given by the educational institutions. Such parental involvement would be a valid example of 'parenting' from Epstein's model (2016), which focuses on guiding parents regarding their options for their child's education as well as informing parents in terms of parenthood.
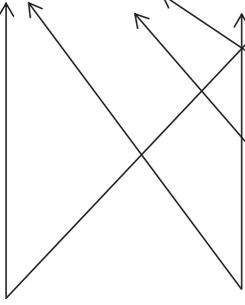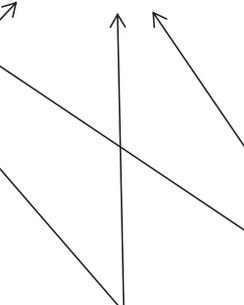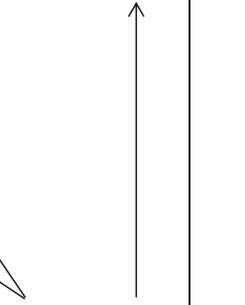
3   AIMS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The experiences children gain through ECE affect how successful they will become in their future academic life. PI is one of the factors affecting children's academic achievement and their cognitive, social, and emotional development (Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Alexander, Entwisle, & Dauber, 1993; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Fan, 2001; Kim, 2002; Rimm-Kaufman et al., 2003; Galindo & Sheldon, 2012; Martin, Ryan, & Brooks-Gun 2013). Given the importance of ECE in children's healthy development and their future academic success, it is important to investigate the factors which play a crucial role in establishing sufficient PI practices in ECE (Galindo & Sheldon, 2012).

The opinions of teachers, as one of the main factors shaping education, have significant implications for PI; therefore, the overarching goal of this study is to investigate the general views of early childhood educators regarding PI and their attitudes towards different types of PI. Another goal of this study is to find out why specific types of PI are not used to a sufficient extent.

As mentioned previously, Finland and Turkey adopted different governance strategies for their ECE programmes. This raises the question of to what extent their ECE programmes differ and how the difference in governance reflects on PI practices. Therefore, the following research questions are proposed. The research questions proposed for each sub-study included in this dissertation are explained in Table 2.

1. What are early childhood educators' views of parental involvement?

2. What types of parental involvement are used and what are the reasons for insufficient implementations?

3. How are early childhood educators' views on parental involvement associated with their experience in the field, education level, educational background, and the age group of pupils they are working with?

4. How do PI practices relate to early childhood educators' experience in the field, education level, educational background, and the age group of pupils they are working with?

5. What are the difference and similarities between Finnish and Turkish contexts?

Table 2. Research Questions for individual studies and for the dissertation

Main Research Questions	Specific Research Questions for Sub-studies
1. What are early childhood educators' views of parental involvement?	**Sub-study I** 1. What are Turkish early childhood educators' opinions of parental involvement? 2. What types of parental involvement is use and what are the reasons for insufficient implementations? 3. Are Turkish educator's views of parental involvement affected by their experience in the field, their education level and background or the age group which they are working with? 4. Are Turkish educator's attitudes towards parental involvement types affected their experience in the field, their education level and background or the age group which they are working with?
2. What types of parental involvement are used and what are the reasons for insufficient implementations?	**Sub-study II** 1. What are Finnish early childhood educators' opinions of parental involvement? 2. What types of parental involvement is use and what are the reasons for insufficient implementations?
3. How are early childhood educators' views on parental involvement associated with their experience in the field, education level, educational background, and the age group of pupils they are working with?	**Sub-study III** 1. How do early childhood educators relate to parental involvement and different types of parental involvement? 2. How are early childhood educators' views on parental involvement associated with their experience in the field, education level, educational background and the age group of pupils they work with?
4. How do PI practices relate to early childhood educators' experience in the field, education level, educational background, and the age group of pupils they are working with?	**Sub-study IV** 1. To what extend do Finnish and Turkish early childhood educators' views of parental involvement relate? 2. How do associations between Finnish and Turkish early childhood educators' views on parental involvement and their characteristics relate? 3. To what extend do the types of parental involvement they use and their reasons for insufficient practices relate?
5. What are the difference and similarities between Finnish and Turkish contexts?	

4   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research consists of two parts corresponding to Turkish and Finnish context. Even though the initial research was designed as mixed and quantitative methods throughout the study, due to lack of interest for the open-ended option in Turkish context, mixed method could be adopted only for Finnish context. As a result, for the first sub-study presenting findings only from Turkish context, only quantitative methods were used and the limited amount of received qualitative material was only used to get some insight. On the other hand the data collected from Finland presented a rich amount of qualitative material. This large amount of data resulted in extended results, which in return made it quite hard to present in one sub-study. The results from the Finnish context, therefore, split into two sub-studies; one adopting mixed methods and the other one adopting quantitative methods (See figure 8. for visual representation of methods adopted for each sub-study). The reason of aiming for mixed method was that it reduces the limitations of single-method studies and to confirm the study (Greene & Caracelli 1997; Creswell et al. 2008) and it allows a combination of measurements and interpretations through data-adequate ways (Biesta 2010, 101). Although the mixed method approach was only adopted in one part of the whole study, it still provided valuable insight to deepen the understanding of the topic at hand for Finnish context.

Nonetheless quantitative method was pursued as the leading research design, because this dissertation aims to gain knowledge to be able to draw a picture of PI views and practices in ECEC institutions in Turkish and Finnish context. In order to make reliable conclusions of such, large amount of data were needed, and quantitative methods are suitable for collecting such data and using a questionnaire is the most common, the easiest and the fastest way of acquiring large amount of data. Most importantly quantitative method provided a cost- and time-efficient way of data collections, since the data were collected in Ankara/Turkey and Helsinki/Finland, while the study was carried out in Turku/Finland.

The aim of this dissertation was to get a grasp of early childhood educators' views and practices of PI. In order to understand the level of PI and affecting factors, various dependent and independent variables are included in the research instrument based on previous research on PI. Dependent variables were formulated in line with the theoretical and conceptual framework, targeting to gain information about educators' view and preferred PI activities. The independent variables, on the other hand, were designed to explore the possible affecting factors of educators' views and practices of PI, such as their experience in the field, age group they were working with at the time of data collection and their education

level and background. More detailed explanation of the research tool is presented under the subtitle 'Instrument'.

This research includes total of four sub-studies, two of which are quantitative, one is mixed methods and the last one is comparative. At the beginning of this research, each country is explored separately, due to the contextual nature of the research design. In this way explicit information regarding these countries' PI practices and educators' views on PI were aimed to be presented in the country context. The last sub-study on the other hand was a comparative research with the idea of melting the information gathered from these countries in one pot and presenting the current proximity between them in order to correspond to their historical progress relative to each other. This comparative sub-study adopted the synchronic research criterion. Synchronic research focuses on a cross-section in which cross-national comparison takes place for the same time period. There are some aspects of cross-national research to be considered, such as conceptual equivalence, language equivalence and measuring equivalence (Hantrais, 2009). Conceptual equivalence for PI in Finland and Turkey was established via policy documents and legislations mentioning this concept. Both Turkey and Finland are members of OECD, which creates a common understanding of PI in these countries. The research instrument for this this dissertation was prepared in accordance with conceptualisations of PI in these countries.

The research tool was developed by the researcher, the validation of the instrument was necessary. The questionnaire was first prepared in English since it was the medium language throughout the study; however the questionnaire later was translated to Turkish and Finnish for distribution. In order to establish the language equivalence and to increase the reliability of the results, translation triangulation was pursued, for which another native speaker was asked to translate the questionnaire and then the translations were compared. For they were mostly the same, there was no need to change the formulation of the sentences. In addition to translator triangulation, a pilot study conducted to further validate this instrument. One small group of participants from each country answered the questionnaire and this pilot study proved that the instrument was suitable for both Turkey and Finland. According to results the items in the questionnaire was clear and unambiguous, thus no further alteration was found necessary.

The selection of the location for data collection was also made in regard of supporting the reliability of the results. In terms of keeping the data sets from Turkey and Finland as similar as possible, the capitals of these countries were chosen. Besides, the capital is the biggest city in Finland and second biggest in Turkey, providing richer data comparing to small cities. With these selected locations, the homogeneity of the participant pool was also expected.

Besides the homogeneity, data for this dissertation also gathered with ethical considerations. Participation was voluntary and participants have the right to withdraw from this study at any time. The loss of confidentiality does not exist as this research did not gather participants' names. To further reduce the risk of confidentiality, data were stored on a secure network server. Finally, data gathered for this research did not include any information about minors or required interaction with them.
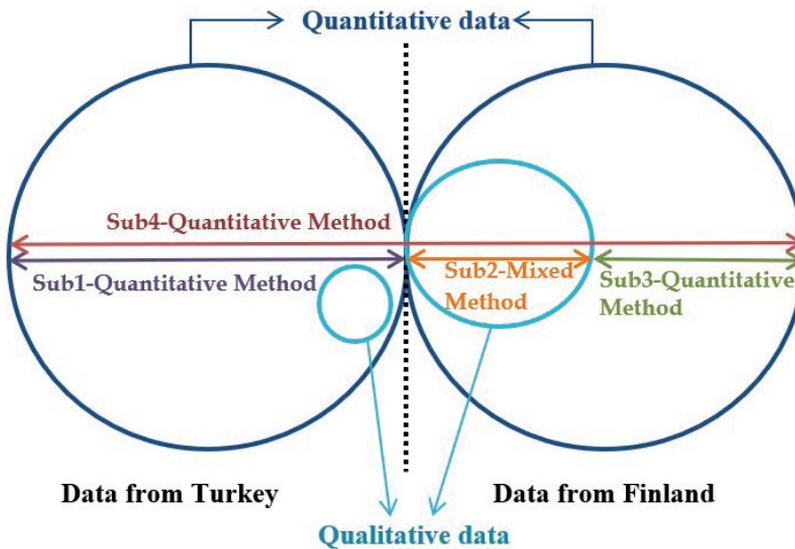
Figure 8. Visual representation of methods adopted for each sub-study

4.1 Participants and Data Collection

Three of the four studies presented in this dissertation employed quantitative methods, while one study applied a mixed-methods research design, collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. The data source for all the studies was a questionnaire prepared by the researcher in English to facilitate clear communication between the co-authors of the sub-studies. The questionnaire was then translated into Turkish by the researcher, and to establish a reliable translation, the back-translation method was used. The Finnish translation, on the other hand, was done by a professional translator, and the back-translation method was again carried out by a native Finnish speaker afterwards. The questionnaire included not only multiple-choice but also open-ended questions with the aim of gathering both quantitative and qualitative material.

Total of 287 early childhood educators from Helsinki and 225 early childhood educators from Ankara completed a questionnaire. These numbers are repre-

sentative of these cities; however, due to the significant differences between urban and rural settings in both Turkey and Finland, the data collected from these large, metropolitan cities would come short. The following section provides a more detailed explanation of the participants of each study and participant demographics.

4.1.1   Study I

One hundred and thirteen early childhood educators who were employed at various early childhood education institutions in Ankara, the capital of Turkey, participated in this research in 2012, which was the first set of data collected from Turkey for this study. The participants were included regardless of whether their institution was private or public. The data were collected in two waves. In the first wave the snowball method was used via online communication tools; after identifying 30 participants, the questionnaires were sent via e-mail to them, and those participants were requested to send the questionnaire to other early childhood educators in Ankara. Snowball method was chosen for the data were started to be collected while the researcher was in Finland. However the response rate was low (20%) and we did not receive any additional participants from the snowball sampling, therefore the distribution method was changed and the questionnaires were distributed by hand. Snowball method was still followed in a way that contact information of possible participants was received from the ones who had already participated.

This time, face-to-face communication is established and educators from 30 different schools were visited in Ankara in their free time. During these visits, the aims of the research were explained and the educators were asked to share the questionnaires in their educational institutions. After the orientation of the first group of participants, additional educators from 25 of these institutions agreed to participate in the study by completing the questionnaire. The demographic details are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of Turkish participants' (1ˢᵗ set) background variables

Variable	Number	Percent
Gender		
Female	113	100
Male	0	0
Experience in the field		
0-5 years	32	28.3
6-10 years	33	29.2
11-20 years	47	41.6
21-40 year	1	0.9
Education level		
Vocational High School	11	9.7
Two-year institutions	5	4.4
Bachelor's	93	82.3
Master's	4	3.5
Age group		
0-3 year-olds	7	6.2
4-5 year-olds	40	35.4
6-7 year-olds	52	46
Mixed age group	14	12.4
Total	113	-

4.1.2   Studies II and III

For study II and III, the same data was used, which was gathered from early childhood educators working in Helsinki, the capital of Finland. The data collection was completed in two waves over approximately five months in 2015 using Webropol as the online data-gathering tool.

Firstly, the questionnaire and a brief explanation of the research were sent to the Helsinki ECE manager for permission to conduct the research. After research permission was granted, a link to the questionnaire was sent to the ECE expert in Helsinki, who forwarded it to all ECE institutions in Helsinki (approximately 300 at the time). The intention was that the principals of those institutions would distribute the link to the educators employed in their institution. The total number of educators in these institutions was approximately 1,200 at the time, and the number of respondents who contributed to the acquisition of the final data was 287. A

reliable response rate could not be calculated because how many actually received the questionnaire is unknown. Table 4 presents demographic information of the respondents.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of Finnish participants' background variables

Variable	Number	Percent
Gender		
Female	280	97.6
Male	7	2.4
Experience in the field		
0-5 years	92	32.3
6-10 years	33	11.2
11-20 years	57	20.0
21-40 year	104	36.5
Educational background		
Kindergarten teacher	203	70.7
Social pedagogue*	77	26.8
Other	7	2.4
Education level		
University of applied sciences	75	26.1
University	132	46.0
Old kindergarten teacher seminars	67	23.3
Master's degree	10	3.5
Age group		
0-3	68	23.7
3-5/6	147	51.2
6-7	58	20.2
Mixed age	14	4.9
Total	287	-

Note: Social pedagogy is a bachelor's degree of social services gained from universities of applied sciences in Finland.

4.1.3 Study IV

This study compares the Turkish and Finnish contexts; therefore, the data from Ankara and Helsinki are combined and treated as one data set, creating a background variable for the country. Even though the same questionnaire was used in both contexts, due to differences in early childhood education legislation, the background variables varied. To overcome this obstacle, some background variables were adapted for education levels and educational backgrounds. As a result, some of the new groups consisted of small numbers of participants and needed to be excluded from further analysis. Table 5 presents the comparable variables of this final data set used in the analysis.

Table 5. Comparable background variables of Turkish (combined) and Finnish data sets

Variable	Turkey (N= 228)		Finland (N= 287)	
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*
Gender				
Female	225	99.1	280	97.6
Male	2	0.9	7	2.4
Experience in the field				
0-5 years	65	29.0	92	32.3
6-10 years	60	26.8	32	11.2
11-20 years	53	23.7	57	20.0
21-40 year	46	20.5	104	36.5
Education level				
University	164	71.9	132	46.5
Master's degree	16	7.0	10	3.5
Age group				
0-3	16	7.2	68	23.7
4-5/6	104	46.6	147	51.2
6-7	69	30.9	58	20.2
Mixed age	34	15.2	14	4.9
Total	227	-	287	-

4.2   Instrument

As noted above, survey method was adopted for this dissertation and there several reasons for this decision; such as spatial freedom, fast data gathering, easy distribution, and possibility of gathering wide range of information. In the case of this study, the data were collected outside of the researcher's residential area; therefore the spatial freedom provided by survey study was an important factor. Additionally, due to the aims of the research, wide range of information was needed to be gathered. Most importantly both quantitative and qualitative research aspects were needed to be included into the research tool, which survey study offers at ease (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). As a result, the instrument was decided to be a questionnaire.

Although there are questionnaires available in accordance with Epstein's frame work, such as the one developed by Fantuzzo, Tighe and Childs (2000), they were needed to be validated in both Turkish and Finnish context. In addition to validation process, available instruments also needed to be tailored to fit the aims of this research. Considering the time these procedures would consume, preparing a questionnaire targeting specifically the aims of this dissertation was decided to be more beneficial. Considering the familiarity of the researcher in both Turkish and Finnish early childhood education due to the prior work experience in the field, the questionnaire was preferred to be prepared by the researcher. Due to

developing the tool specifically for these countries and the familiarity of these contexts, confirming the validity of the questionnaire was easier (Johnson & Christensen, 2014).

The questionnaire was distributed in Finnish and Turkish. For the translations of the questionnaire, translator triangulation was conducted. For each language, two native speakers translated the questionnaire and then the results were compared. Even though the results were highly similar, in order to achieve 100% matching, further discussions were held. Finally, a translation upon which both translators agreed was used for this study. The translation of the qualitative material from the Finnish context, on the other hand, was translated by a professional translator.

The questionnaire was designed to measure general views on PI and attitudes towards its types, which are based on Epstein's (2012) OSoI model, which includes six types of PI: parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community. Only four types of PI (communication, learning at home, volunteering, and decision-making) from Epstein's model were used because our study specifically focusses on the educators' side of the process, which originates from educational institutions. The quantitative data and the qualitative material were collected simultaneously with the same instrument.

The questionnaire includes five sections. The first section, General View (nine items), explores the respondents' general attitudes towards PI using a Likert scale (1= 'totally disagree' to 5= 'totally agree'). The other four sections of the questionnaire focus on the PI types and the reasons for insufficient practices if any. The second section, Communication (seven items), measures the frequency of PI through communication. The third section, Volunteering (five items), focusses on the frequency of involving parents as volunteers. The fourth section, Learning at Home (six items), assesses the frequency of encouraging parents to support educational activities at home. Finally, the fifth section, Decision-making (five items), examines the frequency of involving parents in decision-making processes. The last four sections were based on a Likert scale (1= 'never'; 5= 'always'), except for one multiple-choice question with an open-ended choice in each section (participants were allowed to choose more than one option).

These multiple-choice items targeted the reasons underlying insufficient PI practices; the participants were only asked to answer these if they believed practice was insufficient. Among the multiple-choice items, there was an open-ended option to allow participants to explain their reasons for insufficient practices in their own words. The open-ended answers formed the qualitative material. Since this qualitative part was concurrently collected with the quantitative data, it was possible to obtain new knowledge of PI in greater depth (see Lund, 2012). This qual-

itative material provided insight into different aspects of PI practices and supplemented the quantitative part (Erzberger & Kelle, 2003, p. 473).

In order to ensure the validity of the instrument a number of steps were followed. Assessment of content and construct validity was achieved via non-statistical approaches such as peer review and pilot testing. Pilot study was conducted with ten early childhood educators. Under the light of results of pilot study and the peer review, necessary corrections and adjustments are done in order to overcome any weaknesses in relation to the topic under study.

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Reliability tests were conducted separately for each data set and combined for all items in the questionnaire, and they were found to be reliable (30 items; $\alpha_{turkish}$ = .86, $\alpha_{finnish}$ = .79, $\alpha_{combined}$ = .85). The test was then repeated for each section for each data set, both separately and combined; the Cronbach's alphas are given in Table 5. The cut-off point for reliability for this tool is .60 (Tähtinen, Laakkonen, & Broberg, 2011), and the reliability of the data for each section was assessed against this value.

Table 6. Cronbach's alpha levels of each section for 3 different sets of data

Cronbach's alpha (α)	Turkish Data	Finnish Data	Combined Data
General view	.72	.6	.55
Communication	.74	**.45**	.62
Volunteering	.80	.77	.82
Learning at home	.78	.66	.80
Decision-making	.85	.62	.69

As seen in the Table 6, the alpha levels of some sections were not high enough; therefore, some of the Finnish and combined data items in the General View section were excluded from further analysis. Since the Communication section with the Finnish data had a low alpha level even when we removed some items, the items were therefore examined separately and the sum score for this section was not computed.

4.3   Analysis

The different statistical analyses which were used in this dissertation are presented in this section (see Figure 9 for detailed information). Data analyses occurred in two stages. First, for quantitative data, all of the analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics 22. Second, to analyse the qualitative data, a content analysis method was used that followed grounded theory, and the categories were derived from the data (see Strauss & Corbin, 1996). Investigator triangulation was used. For this purpose, the qualitative material was also coded by the co-author of the sub-study. After the separate coding, the results were compared, and the inter-rater correlation was found to be high (>90%).
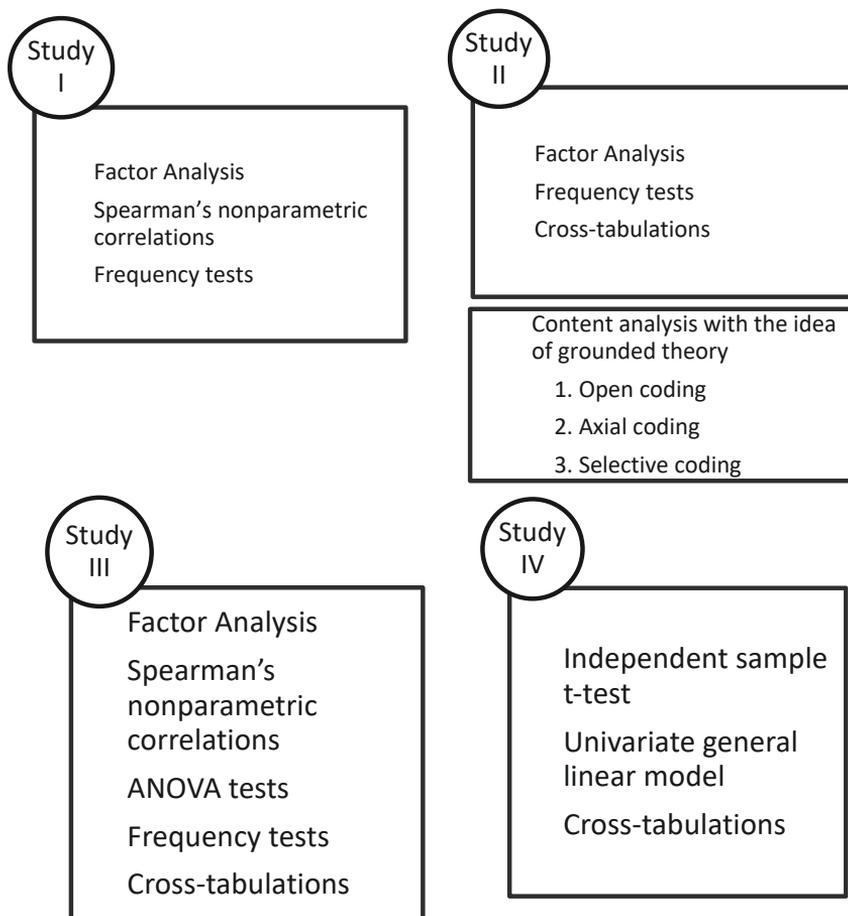

Figure 9. Different Analysis Methods used in this dissertation

For the quantitative analysis, the first step was to convert all negative items. The purpose of this step is to be able to compute the sum scores for the rest of the analysis. Then, the following tests were run to analyse the data.

Factor analysis. Factor analysis of each section was carried out to assess that the items measured the desired factors by showing how the items cluster into factors. This analysis was repeated for Turkish and Finnish context but also for the combined data which was used in sub-study 4. The sum scores were calculated according to the results of factor analysis.

Frequencies and descriptive statistics. Due to the exploratory nature of some parts of the studies in the present dissertation, descriptive statistics were conducted. This method is employed with the aim of describing what the data shows and uncovering existing trends.

Spearman's nonparametric correlations. This test is used in Study I for the purpose of measuring the strength and direction of association between background variables, such as educational level, experience in the field, age group of pupils, and PI views and types.

Analysis of variance (ANOVA). ANOVA (one-way) was used to test for significant differences between the means of various item groups (such as general views and PI types) and for each variable (such as educational level, educational background, and the age groups of the pupils in Study III).

Independent sample *t*-test. After testing for the normality of the data, independent sample *t*-tests were used in Study IV to determine if there was a significant difference between Finland and Turkey in terms of PI practices and the way early childhood educators view PI. This test was repeated for each group of items, including the factors that emerged from the factor analysis.

Univariate general linear model. A univariate general linear model was used in Study IV to examine whether the country context plays a role in the associations between the background variables of participants and their PI views and practices. Post-hoc analyses (Fisher's LCD) were used in Study V to examine specific differences between subgroups of background variables.

Cross-tabulation. Several cross-tabulation analyses were conducted to identify the differences in reasons for insufficient practices of particular PI types between Finland and Turkey.

Content analysis. To deepen our understanding regarding the reasons for insufficient PI practices, subsequent qualitative analyses were conducted to explore this in greater depth in sub-study II. For the open-ended options, there were 84 statements in the Communication section, 76 statements in the Volunteer Works section, 41 statements in the Home Support section, and 43 statements in the Decision-making section. The qualitative analyses employed content analysis. The analyses followed a three-step process: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding.

- Open coding. For this step, each of the responses was read in a holistic and open way. Identifying words, phrases, and/or sentences was the aim for this step as well as determining the ways to label them.
- Axial coding. This step took place after open coding to identify relationships among the open codes. Related labels were sorted into new codes. Next, categories were highlighted throughout all the data.
- Selective coding. In this final stage, qualitative material was gathered to construct an explanation of the overall phenomenon by determining a central category under which all categories could be organised. Later, qualitative materials within each of the categories were combined to establish more structured evidence.

5   SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS

In this section, the main findings from the four empirical studies will be summarised to answer the research questions (RQs) proposed for this dissertation. There are five RQs through which the early childhood educators' views and practices of PI were investigated in Turkish and Finnish contexts.

RESEARCH QUESTION 1- What are early childhood educators' opinions of parental involvement?

Turkish context (Study I)

According to the results of Sub-study I, most of the Turkish early childhood educators who participated in this study have a generally positive view of PI. Item-based analysis shows that they believe that parents, teachers, and principals share quite equally in the responsibility for establishing a connection between school and home ($M_{educators'\ duty}$ = 3.69, $M_{administration's\ duty}$ =3.54, $M_{parents'\ duty}$= 3.34).

Finnish context (Study II)

The results of Sub-study II show that Finnish early childhood educators view PI quite positively. Their answers to certain items show that Finnish early childhood educators believe that the responsibility for involving parents resides mainly with educators. ($M_{educators'\ duty}$ = 3.56, $M_{administration's\ duty}$ =2.95, $M_{parents'\ duty}$= 2.83).

RESEARCH QUESTION 2- What types of parental involvement is used and what are the reasons for insufficient implementations?

Turkish context (Study I)

The results of Sub-study II show that Finnish early childhood educators view PI quite positively. Their answers to certain items show that Finnish early childhood educators believe that the responsibility for involving parents resides mainly with educators. ($M_{educators'\ duty}$ = 3.56, $M_{administration's\ duty}$ =2.95, $M_{parents'\ duty}$= 2.83).

Finnish context (Study II)

Descriptive statistics of the PI types were provided to determine how commonly they are used. The most common method is to involve parents in supporting their children's learning at home (M=3.43), while the least popular type is to involve parents as volunteers (M=2.39).

Seventy-two percent (72%) of the participants (Fig. 2) thought that communication was not practiced sufficiently as a PI type. Involving parents as volunteers was considered more problematic, with 81% of participants reporting insufficient practice. Although it is the most common PI type, home support was also thought to be practiced insufficiently (63% of participants), while 66% claimed that involving parents in decision-making was not practiced sufficiently. The most common reason listed for the insufficient practice for all PI types was *Parents do not want to be involved*. The least common reason was *My education is not enough to practice this PI type*.

This sub-study followed a mixed-methods approach in order to obtain a more in-depth understanding of the results regarding insufficient PI practices. The results from the analysis of the qualitative material reveal that Finnish early childhood educators mostly associate the reasons for insufficiency with parents or the conditions of day-care centres, rarely with themselves or their practice. This in-depth approach also found that time management stands as the biggest problem for PI. Time-management issues included the heavy workload of the educators and busy schedules of parents.

Besides the lack of time, the data also reveals that personal differences between educators and parents create a reason for insufficient practices. These differences originate from differences in language and culture and as well as interest in ECE and PI.

RESEARCH QUESTION 3 - How are early childhood educators' views on parental involvement associated with their experience in the field, education level, educational background, and the age group of pupils they are working with?

Turkish context (Study I)

The results of Sub-study I show no significant association between the participants' views on PI and their education level, their experience in the field, or the age group of pupils with which they work.

Finnish context (Study III)

In Sub-study III, the results show that while education level and experience in the field affect general views on PI, educational background and the age group of the pupils do not play a role.

A statistically significant difference was found between the least experienced group and the most experienced group in their general views on PI, revealing that the most experienced group of participants are significantly more positive towards PI than the least experienced group. The results also point to a significant

difference between the graduates of a university of applied sciences and graduates of old kindergarten seminars, showing that graduates of old kindergarten seminars have a significantly more positive attitude towards PI than the university of applied sciences graduates.

RESEARCH QUESTION 4 - How do PI practices relate to early childhood educators' experience in the field, education level, educational background, and the age group of pupils they are working with?

Turkish context (Study I)

The results of Sub-study I show no correlation between the background variables, such as educational background, teaching experience, and the age group they are working with, and the use of different types of PI.

Finnish context (Study III)

According to results of Sub-study III, years spent in the field, the educational background of the participants, and the age groups they work with affect certain types of PI. For example, there is a statistically significant difference between the least and most experienced groups in terms of involving parents as volunteers, revealing that the most experienced group of participants is significantly more positive towards the volunteering of parents as a PI type than the least experienced group.

The number of years spent in the field also affects the tendency to involve parents in decision-making processes. The results indicated a statistically significant difference between groups with different levels of experience. The more-experienced participants were more positive about involving parents in decision-making processes than those with the least experience. PI in decision-making is also affected by the participants' educational background. The results showed that social pedagogues involve parents in decision-making significantly more than do kindergarten teachers.

Besides experience and educational background, the age group of the pupils with which the participants work also plays a role in the practice of different types of PI. A significant difference between the groups was found, indicating that those participants who work with the youngest pupils tend to involve parents as volunteers significantly less than those who work with 3–5-year-olds and 6–7- year-olds. Additionally, the pupils' age group also impacts the use of learning at home as a type of PI. The results reveal that participants working with the youngest children favour learning at home as a PI type less than those who work with 6–7-year-old children.

RESEARCH QUESTION 5 - What are the difference and similarities between Finnish and Turkish context?

Although the results of Sub-study IV indicate similarities at first glance, further analysis reveals significant differences in almost every aspect of PI, which indicates that educators' views and practice of PI are significantly different in Turkey and Finland. According to the results, although no significant difference was found between general views on PI, there is a significant difference in negative views. Furthermore, there are significant differences in every PI type, which indicates that Turkish early childhood educators use PI more frequently than Finnish educators.

Certain differences were found between Turkey and Finland regarding the use of communication as a PI type. According to these results, Turkish early childhood educators who work with the younger groups of children use communication more often than their Finnish counterparts. Additionally, the least experienced Turkish early childhood educators use communication methods for involving parents more than their least experienced Finnish counterparts. Similar differences were found for two-way communication as a PI as well.

Although participants from both countries think PI practices are insufficient overall, Finnish participants voiced more concern regarding learning at home and volunteering as they felt they are not practiced sufficiently. For a deeper understanding of insufficient PI practices, the reasons chosen were compared. Regarding communication as a PI type, the results revealed that Turkish participants reported that the insufficiency was caused by the educational system and asserted a lack of support from the administration with significantly more frequency than their Finnish counterparts. Finnish participants mentioned the lack of willingness of parents significantly more often than did Turkish participants. Finally, as reasons for insufficient use of communication as a PI practice, while the Turkish participants did not consider it important, the Finnish participants considered it difficult to deal with.

With regard to involving parents as volunteers, the results are quite similar to those for communication. While Turkish participants expressed lack of support from administration as a reason for the insufficiency more frequently than did Finnish participants, Finnish participants were more troubled by the lack of willingness of parents and the challenging nature of this PI type than were Turkish participants. As a reason for the insufficient use of learning at home as a PI type, the results indicate that Finnish participants mentioned the lack of willingness on the part of parents significantly more often than did Turkish participants.

KEY POINTS OF THE RESULTS

1. Educators in both countries have quite a positive view on PI and they recognise the importance of involving parents. While Turkish participants consider this process as a shared responsibility between educators, administrators and parents; Finnish participants take themselves as the main responsible although they state the role of administration and family is also significant.

2. The frequency of implementing the parental involvement is significantly different, and Turkish participants appear to use PI more often than Finnish participants. Although Turkish participants' general views on PI and their PI practices are not affected by their education level, field experience or the age group they are working with; for Finnish case some correlations are found.

3. As well as acknowledging the significance of PI, participants from both countries also report a high rate of insufficiency in their PI practices. Even though insufficiency appears to be an issue for the both context, Finnish educators more critical than Turkish educators.

4. The most commonly given reason for both Turkish and Finnish educators' insufficient PI practices is: 'Parents do not want to be involved' and the least commonly given reason is 'My education is not enough for this' in both countries. Further analysis shows that Turkish participants are more worried about the educational system and administrative support; while Finnish participants are more convinced that parents are not willing to participate.

5. In depth analysis in Finnish context brings out the 'time management' as another common reason for ineffective PI, while 'personal differences', 'lack of resources' and 'regulations' also play a role. Finally there is a conflict on conceptualisation of early childhood education, which interferes with PI practices.

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This dissertation aimed to present a general yet in-depth overview of PI practices in Turkey and Finland. In order to obtain the necessary information for this general picture, certain research questions were proposed, which were mentioned and explained previously. Answers to these questions provided insights into PI practices on a rather deep level in these countries. In this section, main findings, theoretical and practical implications will be discussed.

6.1 Main Findings

6.1.1 General Views on PI

According to the country-based results, both Finnish and Turkish early childhood educators believe in the significance of PI. Considering that the importance of PI is in fact widely recognised around the globe (OECD, 2001; Beveridge, 2005; TDA, 2008; AITSL, 2011; Borgonovi & Montt, 2012), the fact that they share this view regarding PI is not a surprising result. As Akboga (2016) argued, education systems of different countries are growing similar, creating a shared culture around the globe. Even though this similarity between Turkey and Finland points to a global education culture as it derives from the desire to improve the quality of education based on scientific results (Carney, Rappleye, & Silova, 2012; Akboga, 2016), there are differences beneath this outward similarity that manifest themselves in the establishment of PI at the local level (Gormley Jr., 2000). For example, even though the overall views on PI are similarly positive, when positive and negative items are analysed separately, the data reveal that Finnish early childhood educators hold more negative views than their Turkish counterparts.

The group of items measuring the negative views also includes the sense of vertical frame of professionalism, meaning that high scores in negative items also points at high professionalism in vertical frame among participants. In this context, professionalism refers to interpretations of duty of ECEC and the role divisions (Karila, 2010), while professionalism frames explain the self-placement of early childhood educators in relation to parents, regardless of their education level and background. According to Alasuutari (2010), educators assume their place in home-school relationships in two possible frames; horizontal and vertical. While in horizontal frame educators acknowledge the value of information coming from the parents and establish a practice where parents have an equal place,

in vertical frame educators place themselves higher than parents due to their education and training in early childhood education, therefore creating a barrier for PI practices. In this context, high professionalism in vertical frame describes the distance in levels between practitioners and parents, who are assumingly, do not have education or training in early childhood education. As also discussed in previous research (Alasuutari, 2010), there seems to be a trend among Finnish early childhood educators for possessing high level of professionalism on the basis of their professional training. As a result, they tend to claim educational activities and consider parents as a passive component (Hujala et. al., 2009), and this role division may sever the link between educational institution and home. This type of role division is not only limited to parents and educators, but it is also becomes prominent in regard with responsibility of PI. The findings reveal that while Turkish early childhood educators regard PI as a team work with shared responsibility among educators, administrators and parents; Finnish early childhood educators believe that they have a slightly bigger responsibility in this teamwork. This might be a result of the fact that Finnish early childhood educators are the sole responsible for establishing one of the biggest PI activities, which is the personal plan for the child.

When influences that might affect the views of early childhood educators on PI were tested, the Turkish and Finnish data revealed different results with regard to the effect of participants' backgrounds, such as their educational background, education level, and work experience. In the Turkish context, there was no correlation between participants' general views on PI and their experience in the field of ECE, which is in line with another study conducted in Turkey (Sabanci, 2009). However, in the Finnish context, the more experienced early childhood educators were, the more positive their views on PI were. This not only contradicts the Turkish case but also an Israeli case in which less-experienced early childhood educators appeared to be more positive about PI (Fisher & Kostelitz, 2015). This contradiction regarding the effect of work experience in different countries may be the result of cultural differences or the education levels or educational backgrounds of early childhood educators. While in Turkish and Israeli contexts, ECE educators mainly hold a university degree, the Finnish context is complicated by the diverse educational backgrounds of its educators and their training in old kindergarten seminars, universities, and universities of applied sciences (*Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in Finland*, 2000). The results from the Finnish context also revealed that old kindergarten seminar graduates are more positive about PI, and they happened to be also the ones with the most experience in the field. In order to validate the causality of this contradiction, further research ought to be conducted focussing on the content of different early childhood educator training programmes and the educational culture in these institutions.

6.1.2   Use of Different PI Types

In both Turkish and Finnish contexts, general views and the frequency of PI practices are related, which is an expected outcome considering that the more positively they regard PI, the more they would practice it, regardless of differences at deeper levels. For both contexts, the most preferred PI type is learning at home. Similar results were found in another study in Turkish context (Şad & Gürbüztürk, 2013), in which results revealed that parents report learning activities at home as their most common way of involvement. There might be several factors that account for this preference, such as the availability of parents. This means that even though some parents would not be interested or able to participate in activities in educational institutions, pretty much all of them are involved with their children's learning in the home environment (Epstein, 1987). This availability would ease the PI process for both educators and parents. Besides the benefit of availability, this kind of PI requires neither educators nor parents to spare any extra time. Since lack of time was often mentioned as an obstacle to conducting PI activities, it is no surprise that educators would prefer learning at home over other types of PI.

Turkish and Finnish educators part ways when it comes to the least preferred PI types. While Turkish educators favour involving parents in decision-making processes the least, Finnish educators use volunteering the least as a PI type, although for Finnish educators, involving parents in decision-making processes closely followed volunteering in terms of popularity. Similar results were evident in Venninen and Purola's (2013) research, in which they stated that early childhood educators do not want to include parents in decision-making, activity designing, or daily activities because they believe that parents do not possess the knowledge required. Another reason for this preference is that educators believe that allowing parents to participate in these kinds of PI would cause confusion and make things more complicated (Sakellariou & Rentzou, 2007). All in all, this preference may point to the professional self-confidence of educators which, in this case, leads a division of roles between parents and educators originating from the level of knowledge of ECEC (Venninen & Purola, 2013). On the other hand, the extent of educators' decision-making power must be kept in mind since the results of this study also reveal that they might not have enough control over such decisions to be able to involve the parents as well.

6.1.3   Reasons behind Insufficient PI practices

Other than searching for the views on PI and preferred PI types, this dissertation also deals with the possible insufficiencies and the reasons behind them. The results drawn from both quantitative and qualitative material is analysed to uncover the reasons behind in sufficient PI practices. Turkish participants did not provide a large enough qualitative material to analyse, however the answers they gave still shed some light to understand this insufficiency in PI. The reason for the lack of qualitative material from Turkey might be that the data was collected in the capital, where many universities are conducting research. Considering the heavy workload of early childhood educators and the number of surveys coming from these universities that they are asked to fill in, they might simply want to avoid extra work of writing further reasons for insufficiency in PI practices. Another reason might be that they did not want to be explicit about their struggles due to the unstable political state of the country. Nonetheless the analysed materials provided a detailed account of their reasons for insufficient PI practices. According to the results, on the contrary of stated positive views and use of PI types, a staggering amount of participants from both countries believe that PI practices are not sufficient in their institutions. For their belief of significance of PI, participants seem to be unsatisfied with their PI practice, which stands as sign for the gap between the rhetoric and practice (Henderson & Berla, 1994; Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). These findings are in line with of Cottle and Alexander (2014), which also point at difference between educators' views and practices. When compared Turkey and Finland, data reveals that Finnish early childhood educators mention this insufficiency more strongly. This might seem normal, considering that Turkish early childhood educators use any given PI type significantly more frequently than Finnish educators; however, it might also be a sign of a tendency towards self-criticism and/or higher self-expectations among Finnish early childhood educators.

The reason behind this perceived insufficiency appears to be same for both countries, which is parents' unwillingness to be involved. These findings are in line with another research (Ünal, 2012) conducted in Turkey, showing that educators find parents unwilling to be involved and uninterested in their child's education. The unwillingness of parents regarding their involvement was also presented in other research such as comparing Finnish and Estonian kindergarten teachers (Ugaste & Niikko, 2015) and exploring Greek educators PI practices (Koutrouba et al. 2009), however this conception might be rooted from the possibility of educators and parents conceptualising PI in different ways (Moore and Lasky, 1999; Rapp and Duncan, 2012). As a result, even though the educators see parents as unmotivated towards PI, parents might not be aware of what is expected of them in terms of their involvement in their child's education. For example, according

to a research report from the United Kingdom (UK), more than half of the participating parents with children in ECEC stated that they were fairly involved in their child's education, but more interestingly, 72% of parents wanted to be more involved. On the other hand, another study from Finland revealed that 80% of the parents expressed their dedication to being involved; however, only 40% were actually willing to take part in children's group activities (Pihlaja, Kinos, & Mäntymäki, 2010).

In addition to the differences in understanding of PI or unwillingness of the parents, there are several other factors that affect PI negatively. One, and maybe the foremost, of these reasons are the rapidly changing work environment and the extension of work hours, which are becoming more mentally stressful (Turtiainen, Karvonen and Rahkonen, 2007, Koutrouba et al. 2009). Similar findings were also reported in the Spanish (Paz-Albo Prieto, 2018), UK (Smith, J. and Wohlstetter, P., 2009), Turkish (Ünal, 2012; Erdener, 2014) and, Finnish and Estonian contexts (Ugaste and Niikko, 2015), where long working hours restricted PI opportunities (Smith, J. and Wohlstetter, P., 2009) or directed parents' focus towards less time-consuming ways of involvement (Drugli and Undheim, 2012). Epstein (2016) also discusses the work arrangement of parents as a possible challenge for PI activities. The findings of this dissertation not only further support the claim of parents' work situation as an affecting factor of PI, it also reveals that educators' workload also takes part in insufficient PI practices. Although this conclusion could not be reached in the current study for Turkish context due to the lack of qualitative material in Turkish data; Ünal's research (2012) reveals that educators and administrators find it challenging to spare time for PI in also Turkish context. Addition to their workload, educators also mentioned the lack of resources and lack of time due to the crowded groups. The recent changes in Finnish education funding might be the reason for this struggle, which increased day-care group sizes as well as decreasing the number of employees and the ratio of qualified day-care teachers (Pihlaja & Junttila 2001; Pihlaja, Rantanen, & Sonne 2010). For Turkish case, the crowded groups and lack of resources might be more evident. Turkish Legislation of early childhood education and primary school education institutions (2014, article 6) states that a child group cannot be formed with less than 10 or more than 20 children, while it does not clarify how many adults and/or educators to attend those groups. As a result the child groups might become overwhelmingly crowded and understaffed. Also considering the low budget allocated for early childhood education might cause severe lack of resources, especially for the underprivileged and low socio-economic neighbourhoods. This type of struggle is also evident in Drugli and Undheim's (2012) research in Norway, in which they state that parents think that the communication is not sufficient due to the small number of staff and their busy schedules. Differently in Turkish context, the effects of challenging work

life might be milder in PI activities since that it is commonly women who partic-
ipate in such activities and only 37.6% of the women (aged 15-64) are employed.

Besides the changing dynamics of working life, which are becoming more in-
tense, societies are also changing to become more multicultural. With increasing
multiculturalism, diverse cultural settings in education are also becoming promi-
nent, and this might be a challenge for education professionals (Gunn-Morris &
Taylor, 1998). Considering the increasing immigration rates in the 2000s in Fin-
land (OSF, 2018e), the results of this dissertation indeed exposed cultural and
language differences as obstacles to PI in the Finnish context. The most basic
challenge in such multicultural settings is the lack of fluency in a language medi-
um for effective and clear communication between the home and educational
institutions (Peña, 2000; Joshi, Eberly, & Konzal, 2005; Denessen, Bakker, &
Gierveld, 2007; Menon, 2013). In the Finnish context as well, early childhood
educators mentioned their struggle with the language barrier, although they were
mostly referring to the fact that parents who cannot speak Finnish make it very
challenging for educators to involve them in the educational process of their
child. Even though Turkish data did not shed light on this issue, there is also a
rising multiculturalism there, especially with the recent wave of immigration and
refugees and considering that there are over four million refugees residing in
Turkey, almost half of which are under 18 and of which around 40% are under
12 (Sirin & Rogers-Sirin, 2015). These statistics indicate a large number of chil-
dren at the primary and early childhood education levels who are from outside
Turkey. This not only implies language differences but also cultural ones as well
as psychological and educational needs since the majority of these children have
experienced trauma and intense stress (Sirin & Rogers-Sirin, 2015).

As mentioned above, the language difference is not the only aspect in multicul-
tural societies which may create difficulties in PI practices. Cultural differences,
from a broader perspective, create a much deeper gap between the parties (Joshi,
Eberly, & Konzal, 2005; Berger, 2007; Sy, Rowley, & Schulenberg, 2007;
Denessen, Bakker, & Gierveld, 2007). Without a doubt, the kinds of traits and
skills parents value (Tulviste & Ahtonen, 2007) and their understanding of edu-
cation (Sy, Rowley, & Schulenberg, 2007) are shaped by their cultural back-
ground (Ojala, 2000). If these values are not similar to those possessed by the
educators, possible conflicts may affect the PI practices negatively, and accord-
ing to Okagaki and Bingham (2010), the possibility of such cultural differences
existing is quite high, considering that teachers are quite a homogeneous group
regardless of the heterogeneity of the society. Similar to this study's findings for
the Finnish context, Denessen, Bakker, and Gierveld (2007) reported that educa-
tors became frustrated and believed that the immigrant parents were not interest-
ed in being involved in their child's schooling. These stereotypical ideas, howev-

er, do not necessarily reflect the reality as once both parties start to explore the foreign culture in question, they soon discover the reasons for these misconceptions (Denessen, Bakker, & Gierveld, 2007; Berger, 2007).

Another reason for insufficient PI practices as shown by the findings of this study originates from the least often mentioned reason itself: *My education is not enough to practice this type of PI*. This further supports the previous claim that early childhood educators in both Turkey and Finland possess high levels of professional self-confidence. Based on the findings of this study, it seems like Finnish early childhood educators place themselves in a vertical frame more than do those from Turkey; however, these results seem to conflict with those of Alasuutari (2010), which show that the vertical frame has started to be replaced by the horizontal frame. However, that study presents the results from a case study; therefore, it is difficult to compare with the results of this dissertation, which follows a different method.

Aside from the distance created by professional identity, the conceptualisation of ECEC's purpose in society stands as an obstacle to PI in the Finnish context, especially for involving parents as volunteers. As mentioned previously, volunteering as a PI type is least practiced in Finnish early childhood education institutions, based on the data collected for this dissertation. This might be because of the still widely held conception of ECEC as a social service to improve the national economy by increasing the number of women in the workforce (Välimäki, 1998) rather than as an educational institution (Hujala et al., 2009). This traditional view paints a picture of ECEC as primarily available to parents who work outside the home (Onnismaa, 2001), and this misconception is still evident not only in the Finnish context but also in some other European countries, such as Greece (Rentzou 2011). As a result, both parents and educators may fall into the trap of thinking that PI, especially volunteering, is unnecessary or unfair to expect since it runs against the initial purpose of ECEC institutions as a place for working parents to place their children.

6.2   Theoretical Implications

This dissertation represents the reflections of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1994) in early childhood education. Based on the prior research indicating the importance of the relationship between home and school on mesosystem level, current study shows the interrelationship between mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem as well. According to the findings of this research, the complex interrelationships between the nesting systems are observed, in which the home-

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Besides the of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, this research was partially structured based on Epstein's OSoI model, from which four types of PI types (communication, learning at home, volunteering and decision-making) were chosen to build the research items around. According to the findings, the PI types taken from Epstein's model were supported in the early childhood education field as well as in Turkish and Finnish context, except for the communication as PI type, which had issues in Finnish context. Even though individually taken in hand, the items regarding the use of communication as a PI type would shed light on the Finnish educators PI practices; the items as a single factor addressing these practices did not fit in the Finnish context. The reason for this issue might be the communicative traditions of the Finnish society and their preferences of communication methods. As also evident from the findings of this study, Finnish early childhood educators choose face-to-face communication to inform and involve parents, likewise, Finnish primary school teachers (Hirsto, 2010), which occurs in unofficial encounters during pick-up and drop-off (Venninen & Purola 2013). This trend seems to support Onnismaa's (2001) claim that day care considers the home and the day care as two unrelated contexts regarding their privacy; therefore the official meetings for communication practices are reserved for the times when something needs to be addressed specifically.

In addition to supporting and validating the theory itself, this study also falls in line with the challenges Epstein (2016) proposes in PI practices, which are listed separately for each type of PI. However, in this dissertation, it is revealed that those challenges often overlap among different types of PI rather than being specific to one type. For instance, the language barrier is not only a challenge for communication but also for volunteering and decision-making, since communication is the basis of any interaction. When looked at in a broader perspective, on the other hand, the results of this study align well with the previous literature reviewed by Morris and Taylor (1997) regarding PI. In their literature review, barriers to sufficient PI practices were collected under three main groups: limited

skills and knowledge, restricted opportunities, and psychological and cultural barriers. This similarity constitutes another proof for the gap between rhetoric and practice regarding PI since, for the past three decades, although the challenges of PI practices have been documented by the research, these challenges are still evident today in early childhood educators' practice.

Due to its comparative aspect, this research also presents some theoretical implications regarding the discussion of world culture vs. local culture. In today's world, globalisation is often brought up, sometimes as something to be afraid of and sometimes something to be excited about (Dale, 2000); however, one thing that seems to be certain is that societies are growing more similar and are following similar trends. Naturally, education systems receive their fair share of this discussion because, depending on the national economy trajectories, policymakers and policy actors direct their attention to educational systems to improve the state of affairs (Dale, 2000). Due to their centrality, it is safe to claim that education systems are revised not only to best fit national needs but also to respond to international developments (Akboga, 2016). As discussed in earlier sections of this work, there are two schools of thought to explain the dominant actor in these changes: the world and local culture explanations.

In the Turkish and Finnish contexts investigated in this dissertation, the effects of world culture are quite visible regarding early childhood educators' views and practice of PI. There is quite a positive view of PI in international research affirming its benefits. Such positive views are possibly formed by professional training and educational policies, which are shaped by the outcomes of international research and the stances of policy actors and policymakers. All in all, considering that PI is mentioned and strongly encouraged in policy documents of both of these countries, regardless of their economic state, geographic position, political stance, or governance of ECEC, there is a strong indication of the penetration of world culture, which might be claimed to be a process that has been going on since long before recent trends resulting from internationalism or globalization.

These two countries are connected to each other through the OECD, which is a powerful policy actor in the field of education. However, world culture explanations claim that this cultural convergence spreads from the dominant cultures, such as the currently dominant Western culture (Dale, 2000). Through deeper investigation, this dissertation reveals that Turkish early childhood educators are more accustomed to PI practices, while Finnish educators experience significantly more issues, according to their self-reported answers based on their perceptions. This leads to the conclusion that world culture is implemented rather locally in these contexts and shaped by their traditional cultures and societal beliefs

and values. Similarly, Steiner-Khamsi (2012) reported findings from a Mongolian example in which global policies were adopted and adapted to local culture. In conclusion, while evidence of world culture is found in Turkey and Finland, the way those trends are implemented is bound to local variables and the social cultures of these countries individually (Akboga, 2016). This also proves that PI is more of a fluid concept which requires different approaches for different parents, different neighbourhoods, different ethnicities, and different cultures. It is unreasonable to impose PI practices on every individual based on a Western mindset without considering what others' values are.

6.3   Practical Implications

The findings of this dissertation reveal an interrupted flow in PI practices. Early childhood educators from both Turkey and Finland agree on the importance of PI and recognise the benefits; however, they also report high levels of insufficient PI practices. Through these findings, this study provides some practical implications, some of which would be applicable to both countries, whereas some would be only suitable for one of them.

One of the issues raised by this dissertation is the hypothetical distance between early childhood educators and parents. Hindman et al. (2012) claimed that the most commonly preferred PI type among teachers is receiving parental support for the child's learning at home, while the least preferred one is involving parents in decision-making. In the Finnish context, according to Alasuutari (2010), Finnish early childhood educators have a high level of competence in their profession based on the fact that they are trained in the field of ECEC. On the other hand, while they consider themselves experts, they may overlook the importance of parents' knowledge about their child. Hujala et al. (2009) added to this claim by stating that Finnish early childhood educators tend to conserve education as their expertise and perceive parents as passive components in their child's educational journey. The situation is quite similar in the Turkish context. Sabancı's (2009) findings reveal that teachers favour learning at home as a PI type over including parents in decision-making. This trend further strengthens the territorial division between educational institutions and homes.

In order to overcome this separation, the first thing to achieve would be eliminating titles such as 'father of A', 'mother of X', 'teacher', or 'administrator'. After the participants are stripped to their first names, social gatherings would create an appropriate environment for information flow. These social gatherings would also enable deeper understanding of the home and school cultures. With these social gatherings, the aim should be to create a platform based on equality.

Teachers often assume the role of distributor of knowledge and consider parents as receivers because they think that they are the ones with training and parents need their expertise (Karlsen Bæck, 2010b). Even though this assumption is correct up to a point, it may also create a risk of undermining the significance of the immediate relations of children with their surroundings (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). This new approach, as an addition to the classic parent-teacher meetings, would keep teachers and parents on the same level, free from their assumed roles to allow them to connect with each other on a different level: a level where they learn about each other's way of thinking, culture, and understanding.

In addition to informal social gatherings, in-service training sessions would be beneficial, based on the findings of this dissertation. Even though the results reveal a high level of professional self-confidence among both Turkish and Finnish early childhood educators, further analysis showed a lack of coping strategies in challenging situations, such as in multicultural encounters or convincing unwilling parents. PI is a fluid concept; it requires different approaches for different parents, neighbourhoods, ethnicities, and cultures. It is unreasonable to build parental collaboration with every individual based on a Western mindset without considering what others' values are. In order to support educators in these tough situations, in-service training sessions, constructed more like a workshop rather than theoretical lectures, might be beneficial. The preparation of these in-service training sessions could include tailored activities prepared according to teachers' requirements along with a pre-prepared package regarding common troubles.

Even though these in-service training sessions would benefit early childhood educators who are already employed in ECEC institutions, there is a need for multiculturally oriented PI courses in teacher-training programmes, based on the findings of this dissertation. With increasing globalization, there is a high degree of mobility, which is creating diverse cultural settings for education professionals. Without thorough training on how to deal with multicultural settings, educators might fail to give due consideration to parents from other cultures unwilling for PI activities (Gunn-Morris & Taylor, 1998). According to the findings of this study, although Finnish early childhood educators showed high levels of self-confidence in their work, they also mentioned how their PI practices were negatively affected by cultural differences, namely, language differences and differences in ideas on education and the upbringing of children. Such obstacles may only be overcome by becoming familiar with different cultures and how to develop strategies in multicultural settings where there might not even be a common language.

The final practical implication drawn from this dissertation is the issue of lack of time. The results deriving from this study show that lack of time is not only caused by the active lives of parents but also by parents' and educators' over-loaded work schedules. Working life is becoming more taxing and time- and en-ergy-consuming, inevitably affecting parenting behaviours (Malinen et al., 2017). This issue needs to be addressed at two levels: the place of parenthood in work life and support for early childhood education and care institutions. Regarding parents' work life, the results show that they cannot be involved in their child's ECEC because when the child is at day care, they are working. This implies that parents' cannot use a day or some hours off from work to attend PI practices. As a social welfare state, one of the long-term practices in Finland for decades has been to provide support for the well-being of children and families. Under this practice, Finnish family policy enables both mothers and fathers to take different types of work leave to care for their children. However, this policy seems to overlook the importance of the parents' role in early childhood when the child is in day care. Educators' lack of time, on the other hand, seems to be the result of increased workloads due to budget cuts and increased numbers of pupils in the groups. According to educators' self-reported reasons for insufficient PI practic-es, they choose to focus on learning activities with children over PI because, with the limited time and energy they have, they want to make sure the children are taken good care of. Considering that they regard PI as an important aspect for children's development, with increased resources, smaller child groups and more trained staff, their PI practices might improve.

6.4   Limitations and Directions for Future Research

There are some limitations to this dissertation due to its data collection process. The response rate for Finnish dataset was not possible to be calculated for third parties were needed to be involved in distribution of the questionnaire due to re-search permit regulations. The questionnaire was first sent to the ECEC director of Helsinki city for distribution to the administrators of ECEC institutions, fol-lowed by early childhood educators receiving it from the ECEC administrators. At the time of the data collection there were approximately 1,200 educators em-ployed in the institutions where survey was sent in Helsinki, however there is no information on how many of these educators received the questionnaire. The lack of response rate may create a limitation by restricting the interpretations of the results on a minor level. Nonetheless, the size of the data is substantial and sup-ports the validity of the results. Even with the large data, decentralisation of edu-cation in Finland must be considered for further generalisation of the findings. To overcome this limitation, the Finnish dataset for this dissertation was collected

from Helsinki to reach the most generalisable results in an urban setting; well corresponding to the data collected from Turkish data, since both are the capitals with a dense population. In addition to the lack of response rate, data collection process also made it impossible to know whether only one educator from each group or all answered the questionnaire, because in Finland depending on the size of the group and the type of institution, the number of staff changes. Even though more than one educator from a group would have participated, this still enriches the data rather than limiting the results, since the questionnaire is based on personal views.

Additionally, while gathering data from Turkey, participants needed to fill in the questionnaires in their free time. As a result, the participants did not have the chance to consult the researcher face-to-face in case they had any question regarding the survey items. Even though the contact information of the researcher and brief explanation of the research were provided beforehand, face-to-face interaction may have been preferable. This limitation also may explain some of the missing data in this dataset. On the other hand, Finnish data gathering was conducted via online questionnaire tool (Webropol). Although Finnish participants also did not have the chance to consult the researcher face-to-face, such problem was not observed. In addition to difficulties in reaching out to Turkish early childhood educators, qualitative material received from Turkey was also a minor setback since it was not sufficient for further analysis, therefore this material only used to gain insight for interpretations of the results. Additionally, 'communication' as one of the PI types did not work for Finnish context. As a result this section was removed from sum-scores As a result this type of PI from Epstein's OSoI model could not be validated in Finnish context. Even though this section was removed from sum-scores, item-based analysis still revealed valuable information about this type of PI.

Beside the limitations of data collection process, it is also important to mention the possible issues with the analysis methods used with respect to comparison of Turkish and Finnish contexts. For the sub-study IV, univariate general linear model was pursued, which is considered as a traditional method. Even though using this method is not wrong, nowadays structural equation modelling (SEM) is used more commonly. Considering that the instrument was separately validated for Turkey and Finland, as well as the sum-scores used for univariate general linear model were calculated based on factor analysis run for the combined data set; the pursue of this method is considered valid. That being said, for future studies SEM would be a more complete and stronger method to adopt.

Another important point to be mentioned is that Turkish education system has gone under a number of revisions, some of which was major, during this study

being conducted. Due to this fluid state, there are inevitable limitations to this study. For example, the change in compulsory school age and the new structure of basic education directly affected the age groups of pupils in early childhood education institutions. For the sake of continuity, the original groups are kept in the study. This decision was further supported with the parents' possibility of postponing the school age for their child, which resulted in older groups to remain in ECEC even if in small numbers. More importantly the significant place of PI in curriculum has not change albeit these revisions in educational system. Aside from those changes happened during the course of this research, Turkey continues to undergo other changes regarding the parenting, specifically motherhood. There is an increasing discussion regarding their participation in the caregiving process of their child. Future studies in this field and context could include these aspects as well.

Furthermore, as a future direction, this research can be repeated in different municipalities or regions since for this dissertation only capital cities of Turkey and Finland were chosen. Considering the differences between different regions in Turkey and the differences between the municipalities in Finland, this future study may be significant. Especially with the decentralisation of education in Finland municipalities possess a notable amount of autonomy, creating dissimilarities within the country.

Additionally, this dissertation does not make a distinction between private and public educational institutions or the different types of early childhood institutions (family day care centres, day care facilities, kindergartens, crèches, etc.) in either Turkish nor Finnish contexts. Both data sets include private and public institutions as well as different types of ECEC services. With this approach, a wider scope was targeted; however future research including these variables may deepen the state of PI in different contexts within the same country. For example, comparison of PI practices in private and public institutions would shed light on what privatization of ECEC services may bring for PI.

The aim of this dissertation was to open a window into early childhood educators' minds to see their PI practices regarding children's education originating from the educational institutions. For this reason, some of parental involvement types from Epstein's model were not included in this dissertation. Even though this choice was made in order to keep to focus narrow and observe the PI practices related to child's learning, which originates from the educational institutions; this partial adaptation might be seen as a limitation. With this approach, only early childhood educators' PI views, attitudes, and reasons for insufficiency were addressed. This narrow focus creates further possibilities for future studies. For instance, administrators' understanding of PI and their strategies to strengthen the

PI practices may deepen the knowledge on practices and problems of PI in educational institutional level. Particularly in the Finnish context, the results spot on some troubles regarding the administrative and legislative implementations. To be able to investigate these issues further, the application of new ECEC regulations to these institutions could be analysed. In addition to investigating views of administrators' views, the parents' view on PI, their preferences with types of PI and their opinions about the state of PI in their child's ECEC institution is another possibility for a future research. The results of this dissertation revealed that early childhood educators considered their PI practices insufficient and they stated the unwillingness of the parents as the reason. Conducting a research on parents' side of the story would function as a bridge between home and educational institution and could assist in finding solutions for insufficiencies and to improve PI in ECEC. Another research topic deriving from this dissertation is adopting Epstein's model in its entirety. This way a broader perspective regarding PI can be studied. This broader perspective would also enable understanding the PI practices in a wider context such as parenthood and community.

Finally, cultural differences were repeatedly mentioned by the Finnish participants as a reason for insufficient PI, introducing a new platform for further studying migrant families and their position in the Finnish educational system. With increasing mobility, Finland's population is becoming more multicultural, therefore the integration of these individuals in to the society has become even more important. This integration process is not only limited to introducing the Finnish culture to new comers, but also includes informing the locals about multiculturalism. Considering that PI is strongly related to human relations, mediation between different cultures plays a significant role in improvement of PI.

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APPENDICES

Research Tool: QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS

General views	
1. Parental involvement plays an important role in children's development.	Totally disagree – Totally agree
2. Early childhood educational institutions should have an open door policy for parents.	
3. Building a relationship between early childhood educational institutions and parents is the teachers' duty.	Five-point Likert scale
4. Building a relationship between early childhood educational institutions and parents is the administration's duty.	
5. Building a relationship between early childhood educational institutions and parents is the parents' duty.	
6. Education is only the teacher's duty.	
7. Parental involvement is not needed in the education process, because they are not competent in this area.	
8. Parents and teachers should work as a team.	
9. Parent meetings organised twice a year are enough to inform them about their child's development.	
Volunteering	
10. I invite parents to educational institution trips.	Never-Always
11. I invite parents to join in classroom activities with their child.	Five-point Likert scale
12. I invite parents to present their hobbies to the class.	
13. I invite parents to present their jobs to the class.	
14. If you think this type of PI practices are insufficient, what are the reasons (you can choose more than one option)	a) Our education system is not suitable for this b) Educational institution principals do not support teachers for this c) Parents do not want to involve d) My education is not enough for this e) I do not believe the benefits of parental involvement f) Parental involvement is hard to deal with. g) Other (please specify):………
Learning at home	
15. I give home activity ideas to parents to support the educational institution's activities.	Never-Always Five-point Likert scale
16. I assign the children simple homework to do with their parents.	
17. I encourage parents to talk to their children about their day in the educational institution.	
18. I ask parents to help their children with subjects that they have trouble with at the educational institution.	
19. I ask parents to play the same games at home that we play at the educational institution.	
20. If you think this type of PI practices are insufficient, what are the reasons (you can choose more than one option)	a) Our education system is not suitable for this b) Educational institution principals do not support teachers for this c) Parents do not want to involve d) My education is not enough for this e) I do not believe the benefits of parental involvement f) Parental involvement is hard to deal with. g) Other (please specify):………

Decision making		
21. I ask for parents' opinions with regard to planning trips.	Never-Always Five-point Likert scale	
22. I ask for parents' opinions with regard to classroom activities I am planning.		
23. I ask for parents' opinions with regard to monthly lunch menus.		
24. I ask for parents' opinions when deciding disciplinary methods to follow in the classroom.		
25. If you think this type of PI practices are insufficient, what are the reasons (you can choose more than one option)	a) Our education system is not suitable for this b) Educational institution principals do not support teachers for this c) Parents do not want to involve d) My education is not enough for this e) I do not believe the benefits of parental involvement f) Parental involvement is hard to deal with. g) Other (please specify):………	
Communication		
26. I phone parents to talk about their child's development.	Never-Always Five-point Likert scale	
27. I talk to parents face to face to discuss their child's development.		
28. If the child does not attend class, I phone their parent the very same day to enquire about the child.		
29. I share my weekly or monthly activity plans with parents.		
30. I write journals for each child to inform their parents about their child's day-to-day performance at the educational institution.		
31. I prepare monthly newsletters to update parents on educational activities like trips, project work and study topics that will be focused on.		
32. If you think this type of PI practices are insufficient, what are the reasons (you can choose more than one option)	a) Our education system is not suitable for this b) Educational institution principals do not support teachers for this c) Parents do not want to involve d) My education is not enough for this e) I do not believe the benefits of parental involvement f) Parental involvement is hard to deal with. g) Other (please specify):………	

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