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A REVIEW OF GRADUATE THESES IN THE FIELD OF SELF-REGULATION IN PRESCHOOL IN TURKEY

Bahar Gümrükçü-Bilgici  (0000-0003-2303-7247)

Kastamonu University, Turkey

bgbilgici@kastamonu.edu.tr

Biodata:

Bahar Gümrükçü Bilgici is an Assistant Professor at Kastamonu University, Kastamonu Vocational School of Higher Education, Division of Child Development in Turkey.

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Bahar Gümürükçü-Bilgici

bgbilgici@kastamonu.edu.tr

Abstract

Document analysis, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in the study in which graduate theses in the field of self-regulation in preschool in Turkey were examined according to the determined criteria. The sample of the research, which was determined by using the criterion sampling method, which is one of the purposeful sampling methods, consists of a total of 76 graduate theses, 59 master's theses and 17 doctoral theses, which were in the field of self-regulation in preschool in Turkey between 2012-2023. The quantitative content analysis method was used in the analysis of the data. The data obtained are presented in graphs and tables. According to the results of the research, there was no graduate thesis about the field of education and training in the field of preschool self-regulation in Turkey until 2012, the most thesis was done in 2022, the most studied type of thesis was master's thesis, the most quantitative research method and relational survey model were used in theses. It was concluded that the highest number of theses were at Gazi University, the provinces with the highest number of theses were Istanbul and Ankara, the highest number of children were working groups/samples in theses, and 23 different categories were studied in the field of self-regulation. Considering the results of the study, it is recommended to study more doctoral theses in the preschool period and to prepare theses using qualitative research methods.

Keywords: self-regulation, preschool education, document analysis

1. Introduction

Self-regulation is the ability of an individual to manage himself to reach a predetermined goal (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2008; Aslan & Özgün, 2017). Self-regulation consists of planning, taking action, and self-reflection phases before taking action (Ader, 2014). Many factors affect an individual's ability to self-regulate. Problem-solving, attention, motivation, and social interaction are just a few of these factors (Bronson, 2019).

Working memory, attention, and inhibitory control are the three basic components of self-regulation (McClelland et al., 2007). Inhibitory control is one of the building blocks of self-regulation. In the process of realizing a cognitively determined goal, inhibition of responses to non-goal-related stimuli can be defined as inhibitory control (Carlson & Moses, 2001).

When the self-regulation skills are examined theoretically, it can be said that the psychoanalytic theory focuses on emotional development, the behavioral theory focuses on learned self-control, the social cognitive theory focuses on the individual's potential for personal control over the environment and behavior, the social-cultural theory focuses on the social and cultural environment, and the cognitive development theory focuses on cognitive and emotional components (Freud, 1965; Bandura, 2005; Fox and Riconscente, 2008; Sakız and Yetkin Özdemir, 2014; Bronson, 2019).

The development of self-regulation begins in infancy and continues in preschool and adolescence (Bronson, 2019). Since the development of self-regulation begins in infancy and continues in the preschool period, parental practices have an important role in self-regulation due to the high level of parental support in this process (Kopp, 1982; Demetriou, 2000). The

development of self-regulation, which begins with the interaction of parents and the environment, continues to develop with the support of teachers in the preschool period. Therefore, it is concluded that the guidance of the teacher is also very important for self-regulation skills. Teachers should have high self-regulation skills to be more effective (Aydın & Demir Atalay, 2015). Positive attributes enable more effective use of self-regulation (Schunk, 1995).

Self-regulation skills enable children to be socially and academically successful both in preschool education and in later education levels (Ladd, Birch, & Buhs, 1999; McClelland, Morrison, & Holmes, 2000; McClelland et al., 2007). The continuation of the performance of the students is related to the result they encounter after performing their performance. While the students who encounter positive results continue to perform, the students who encounter negative results may not perform in order not to encounter the same result again and to protect their self-esteem (Sakız & Yetkin Özdemir, 2014).

Tutkun, Filiz and Akbaba (2022) conducted a study in which the general tendencies of all studies conducted in Turkey on self-regulation skills, including master's theses, doctorate theses and articles between the years 2000-2020. It has been determined that all studies are taken into account here, and graduate studies in the field of self-regulation in preschool alone are not considered. Kazu and Yavuz (2021) examined graduate studies conducted in Turkey between the years 2010-2020. In this study, it was determined that the theses in which all graduate studies were taken into account as the subject area was not selected from the theses whose subject area was education and training in the field of self-regulation alone. Barış (2022), in his master's thesis, in which he examined the graduate studies conducted in the preschool period between 2012-2021, determined that the theses in which all graduate studies were taken into account in the preschool period were not selected from the theses whose subject area was education and training in the field of self-regulation in pre-school. It is thought that it is necessary to examine the graduate studies on self-regulation in the preschool period, the subject area of which is education and training, and will contribute to the field.

When the scientific perspectives on self-regulation are examined, it is revealed that the development of self-regulation, which starts very early, continues in the later years of life. It is seen that parents, teachers and the environment have a very important role in the development of self-regulation. Considering the graduate studies in the field of self-regulation in the preschool period in detail from the start of the study to the period when the study was prepared will enable to analyze the situation of the child, parent, teacher and environmental components, to reveal the deficiencies, if any, and to make suggestions for their support. With this study, by examining the graduate education theses in the field of self-regulation in preschool, the subject area of which is education and training in Turkey, according to the determined criteria, by revealing the current situation, to prevent repetition in the studies to be prepared in the field of self-regulation in the preschool period and to enable researchers to study more effectively and completely. For this purpose, answers to the following questions are sought:

1. What is the distribution of graduate theses in the field of self-regulation in preschool in Turkey by years and types?
2. What is the distribution of research methods used in graduate theses in the field of self-regulation in preschool in Turkey?
3. What is the distribution of research models used in graduate theses in the field of self-regulation in preschool in Turkey?

4. What is the distribution of graduate theses in the field of self-regulation in pre-school in Turkey according to the universities?

5. What is the distribution of the cities where the study was conducted in the graduate theses in the field of self-regulation in preschool in Turkey?

6. What is the distribution of the study group/sample in graduate theses in the field of self-regulation in preschool in Turkey?

7. What is the distribution of the subjects studied in graduate theses in the field of self-regulation in preschool in Turkey?

2. Method

2.1. Research Model

Document analysis, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in the study in which graduate theses in the field of self-regulation in preschool in Turkey were examined according to the determined criteria. Document analysis is the collection of various documents as the primary source of research data, reviewing, querying and analysis of the collected documents (Sak et al., 2021).

2.2 Universe and Sample

The universe of the research consists of graduate theses conducted in Turkey between 2012-2023 and archived as self-regulation, the subject area of which is education and training. The criterion sampling method, one of the purposeful sampling methods, was used to determine the sample of the study. In the research, the subject area of the graduate theses was education and training, they were in the pre-school period, they were between 2012-2023, they were registered on the website of the Higher Education Council (YÖK) National Thesis Center and they had access permission. In line with these criteria, the sample of the research consists of a total of 76 graduate theses, including 59 master's and 17 doctoral theses, in the field of self-regulation in preschool in Turkey between 2012-2023.

2.3 Data Collection and Analysis

The document analysis method was used to collect the data for the research. To collect the data of the research in which the graduate theses in the field of self-regulation in Turkey were examined according to the determined criteria, a search was made on the website of the National Thesis Center (<https://tez.yok.gov.tr/UlusalTezMerkezi>) of the Council of Higher Education (YÖK). First of all, the graduate theses in the sample were downloaded from the website of the Higher Education Council (YÖK) National Thesis Center and saved on the computer. Then, the collected data were analyzed in detail using the content analysis method.

The data were processed into the preschool self-regulation graduate theses content table previously prepared by the researcher. In the table, the year in which the master's and doctoral theses were studied, the type of thesis, the research method used in the thesis, the research model used in the thesis, the university, the city where the thesis was conducted, the study group/sample of the thesis, and the subject information in the thesis. The data were categorized and analyzed according to the criteria in the table. Then, the findings obtained from the data were given with tables and graphs by calculating frequency and percentages, and finally, the results were discussed and suggestions were presented.

3. Results

In this part of the study, the findings obtained from the graduate theses conducted in the field of self-regulation in preschool in Turkey between 2012 and 2023 were analyzed and

presented in graphs and tables. A total of 76 theses, 59 master's (77.6%) and 17 doctoral (22.4%) theses, were determined between 2012 and 2023. It was determined that the majority of graduate studies (77.6%) consisted of master's theses.

The distribution of graduate theses in the field of self-regulation in preschool in Turkey by years is given in Figure 1.

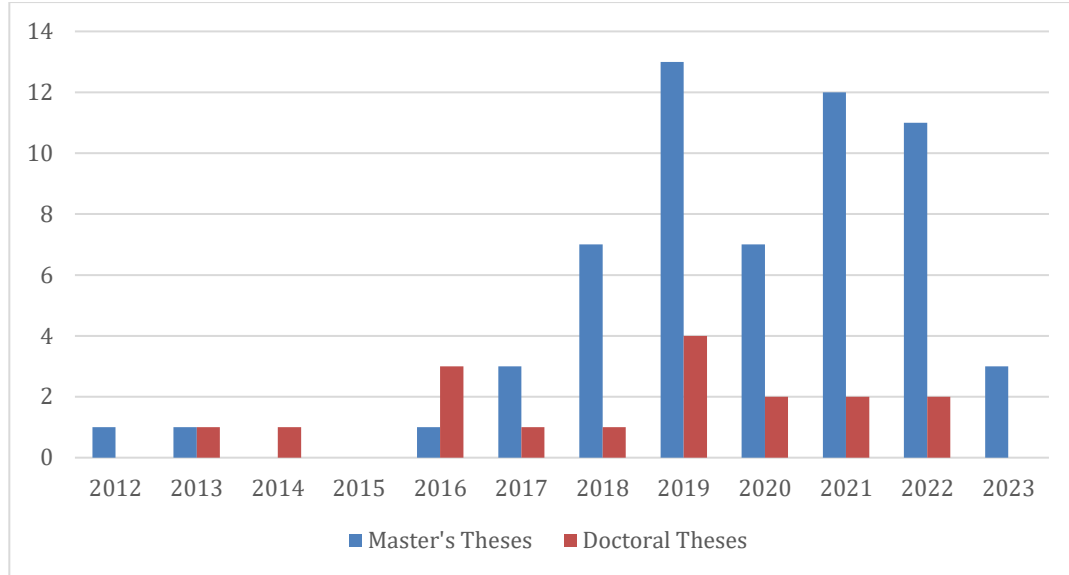


Figure 1. Distribution of graduate theses by years

From Figure 1, it was determined that the first graduate study in the field of self-regulation in preschool was a master's thesis conducted in 2012. There is no study in the field of self-regulation before 2012 in the Archives of the National Thesis Center. A total of 76 graduate studies, including 59 master's and 17 doctoral theses, were conducted in the 2012-2023 period. Most graduate studies in the field of self-regulation were in 2019 and 2022. In 2019, 17 theses (13 master's, 4 doctorate) and 14 theses in 2021 (12 master's, 2 doctorate) were conducted. There are only 12 theses (6 master's, 6 doctorate) in the field of self-regulation until 2018. In 2015, there were no graduate studies in the field of preschool self-regulation. Considering the results, it is thought that self-regulation in the preschool period in the graduate field started late. It can be said that the studies showed slow progress in the first six years between 2012-2018 and started to increase in recent years.

The distribution of research methods used in graduate education theses in the field of self-regulation in preschool in Turkey is given in Figure 2.

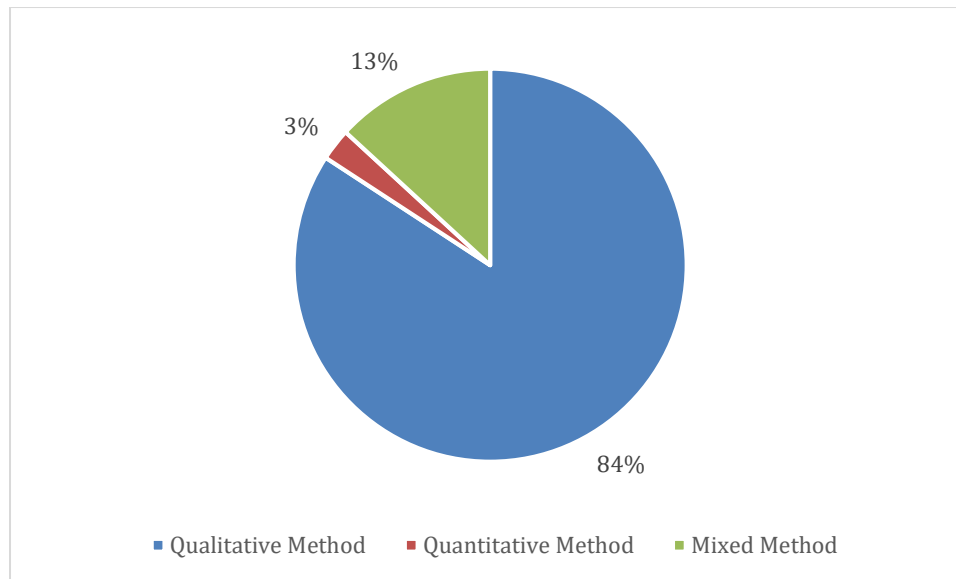


Figure 2. Distribution of research methods in graduate theses

In Figure 2, it was determined that quantitative, qualitative and mixed research methods were used in graduate education theses in the field of self-regulation in preschool. In the graduate studies in the field of self-regulation in preschool, 84% (64 theses) quantitative methods, 13% (10 theses) mixed methods and 3% (2 theses) qualitative methods were used. While the quantitative method was used at most (64 theses) in graduate studies, at least (2 theses) used the qualitative method. It is noteworthy that the qualitative method is rarely used in graduate studies.

The distribution of research models in graduate theses in the field of self-regulation in preschool in Turkey is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of research models used in graduate theses

Research Model	f
Relational Screening Model	35
Survey model	12
Mixed Pattern	8
PreTest/PostTest Semi-Experimental Model with Control Group	7
Correlational Pattern/ Causal Comparative Model	5
PreTest/PostTest Experiment-Control Group Trial Model	2
Descriptive Survey Model	2
PreTest-PostTest Control Group Random Model	2
Document Analysis	1
Non-synchronized Pretest-Posttest Control Group Model	1
Case Study Model	1

When the distribution of research models used in graduate education theses in the field of self-regulation in preschool is examined, The most used research models are the relational screening model (35 theses), survey model (12 theses), mixed design (8 theses) and pretest-posttest quasi-experimental model with control group (7 theses). The least used research models were document analysis (1 thesis), non-synchronized pretest-posttest control group model (1 thesis), and case study model (1 thesis). Considering the data, it can be said that the relational screening model is used much more (35 theses) than other models.

The distribution of graduate education theses in the field of self-regulation in preschool in Turkey according to the universities is given in Figure 3.

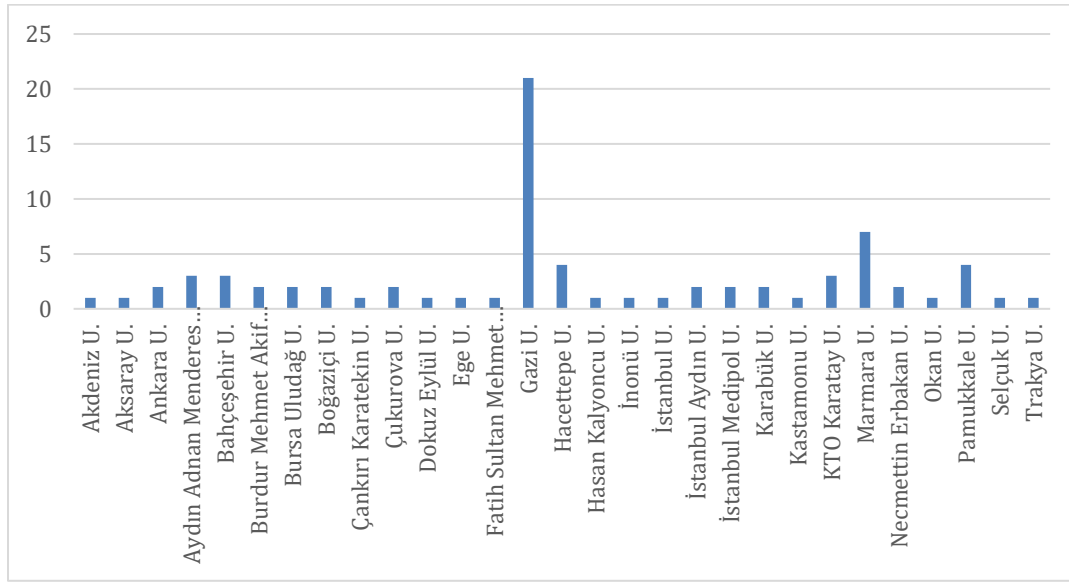


Figure 3. Distribution of graduate theses by universities

From Figure 3, it was determined that the studies were conducted in 29 different universities in Turkey. Among these universities, self-regulation was mostly studied at Gazi University (21 theses), Marmara University (7 theses), Hacettepe University (4 theses), and Pamukkale University (4 theses). Universities where self-regulation in preschool is studied at least (1 thesis) are Akdeniz, Aksaray, Çankırı Karatekin, Dokuz Eylül, Ege, Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakıf, Hasan Kalyoncu, İnönü, İstanbul, Karabük, Kastamonu, Okan, Selçuk and Trakya Universities. It was determined that much more (21

theses) studies were conducted at Gazi University than at other universities. More studies in the field of self-regulation in pre-school in other universities will enable different perspectives and different research results to be brought into the field.

The distribution of the cities where the graduate theses were conducted in the field of self-regulation in preschool in Turkey is in Figure 4.

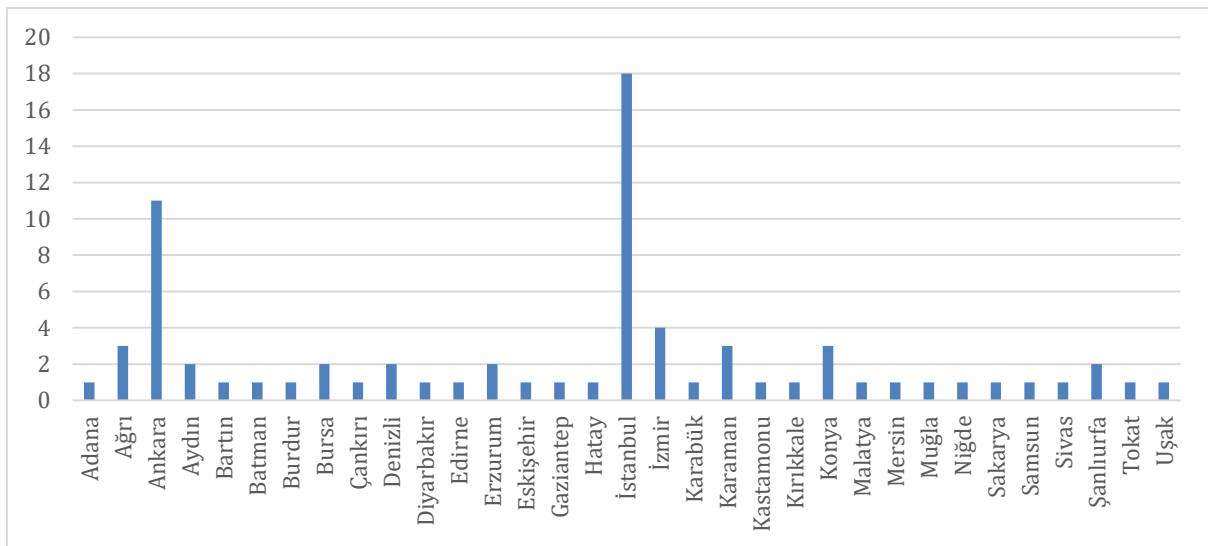


Figure 4. Distribution of cities where the studis were conducted in graduate theses

Figure 4. Distribution of cities where the studies were conducted in graduate theses

It was determined that the graduate studies were conducted in 33 different cities in Turkey. Three graduate studies were not included in this distribution, since online data were collected from various cities in three graduate study (Akcan, 2021; Serttaş Franzini, 2021; Cengiz, 2022), and document analysis was conducted in the other graduate study (Şahin, 2022). The cities where most of the studies are conducted in graduate education theses in the field of self-regulation in preschool are Istanbul (18 theses), Ankara (11 theses), İzmir (4 theses), Ağrı (3 theses), Karaman (3 theses), Konya (3 theses), Aydın (2 theses), Bursa (2 theses), Erzurum (2 theses), Şanlıurfa (2 theses), and Denizli (2 theses). The 22 cities in Figure 4 are the cities where at least one thesis was conducted in the graduate theses in the field of self-regulation in preschool. It is noteworthy that there are more studies in the provinces of Istanbul (13 theses) and Ankara (10 theses) than in other provinces. Şahin (2022) was not included in this distribution, since he did document analysis in his master's thesis, and Akcan (2021), Serttaş Franzini (2021), Cengiz (2022) collected data from multiple cities of Turkey in his master's thesis. In addition, since Turgut (2021) and Mutlu (2022) studied in two different cities in their master's theses, the distribution of cities was coded twice.

The distribution of the study group/sample in the graduate theses in the field of self-regulation in preschool in Turkey is given in Figure 5.

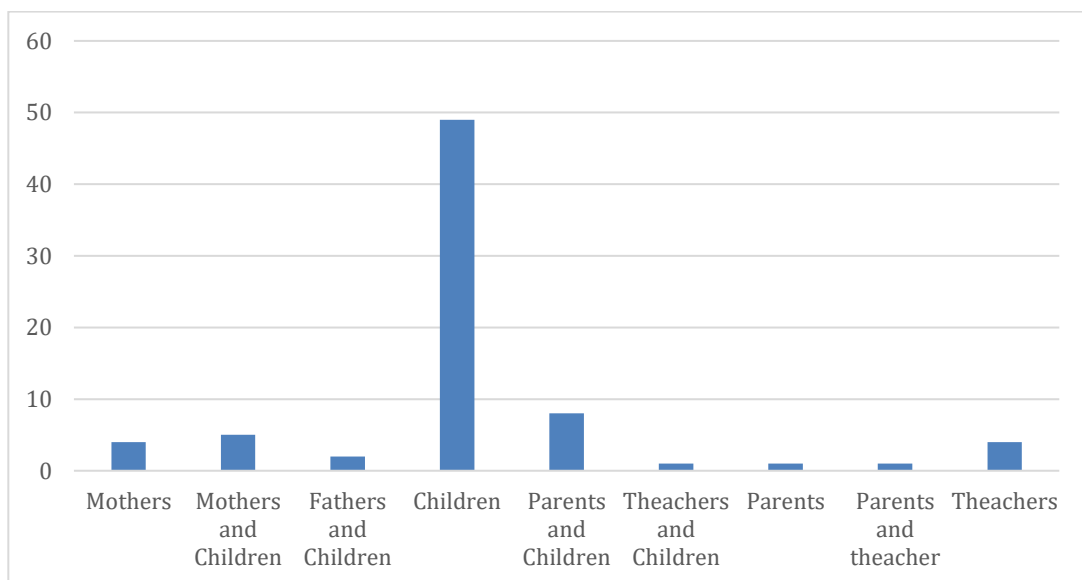


Figure 5. Distribution of the study group/sample in graduate theses

When Figure 5 is examined, it is striking that the distribution of the study group/sample in the graduate education theses in the field of self-regulation in preschool is mostly (49 theses) children. The distribution of the study group/sample of the graduate theses in the field of self-regulation in preschool is children and parents (8 theses), mothers and children (5 theses), mothers (4 theses), teachers (4 theses), fathers and children (2 theses), teachers and children (1 thesis), parents (1 thesis), parents and teachers (1 thesis). Since the research model of Şahin (2022) was document analysis, his thesis was not included in the distribution of the study group/sample in the graduate theses.

The subjects studied in graduate theses in the field of self-regulation in preschool in Turkey are given in Table 2.

Table 2. *Topics studied in graduate theses*

Subjects Studied	Thesis type		Total Frequency
	Master's (f)	Doctorate (f)	
Program/activity preparation	5	11	16
Parents	10	2	12
Teachers	4	2	6
Cognition	5	-	5
Mothers	5	-	5
Social competence	5	-	5
Readiness	2	1	3
Only self-regulation	3	-	3
Language skill	2	-	2
Scale adaptation	2	-	2
Peer bullying	2	-	2
Games	1	1	2
School adaptation	2	-	2
Emotional intelligence	2	-	2
Technology	1	-	1
Anxiety	1	-	1
Creativity	1	-	1
Aggression	1	-	1
Document	1	-	1
Early literacy	1	-	1
Social values	1	-	1
Father	1	-	1
Learning	1	-	1

When the subjects studied in the postgraduate education theses in the field of self-regulation in preschool in Turkey are examined in Table 2, it has been determined that the program/activity preparation related to self-regulation is studied in a total of 16 graduate theses, including 5 master's theses (Canol, 2021; Çelik, 2017; Kıyaker, 2017; Kayalı, 2019; Turgut, 2021) and 11 doctoral theses (Keleş, 2014; Bayindir, 2016; Kalıpçı Söyler, 2019; Ertor, 2022; Ezmeçi, 2019; Özkür, 2019; Şahin, 2019; Gümrükçü Bilgici, 2021; Köyceğiz Gözeler, 2021; Gündüz, 2022).

Table 2 shows 10 master's theses (Öztabak, 2017; Eroğlu, 2018; Uykan, 2019; Soyoğlu, 2019; Temiz, 2019; Ün, 2021; Ertem Başkan, 2021; Cengiz, 2022; Mutlu, 2022; Yılmaz, 2022) and 2 doctoral theses (Sop, 2016; Eren, 2022), a total of 12 graduate theses have been studied about parents.

A total of 6 graduate theses, including 4 master's theses (Yılmaz, 2016; Ceylan Esentürk, 2018; Yılmaz, 2018; Elma, 2022) and 2 doctoral these (Ertürk, 2013; Kurt, 2022), have been studied about teachers.

Table 2 shows that there are 5 master's theses associated with each of cognition (Adagideli, 2013; Özbek, 2021; Ayvaz, 2018; Yıldız, 2022; Akay, 2023) and mothers (Atmaca, 2019; Aktaş, 2022; Bilek, 2021; Çevirme, 2022; Uluğ, 2023) and social competence (Mercan, 2019; Samar, 2019; Işıksolu Aysel, 2020; Çalış Toktanış, 2021, Hoçur, 2021).

There are 3 graduate theses associated with each of readiness, including 2 master's (Tekin, 2018; Yılmaz, 2021) and 1 doctoral thesis (Adagideli; 2018), and self regulation (Arabaci, 2019; Astarlar, 2019; Akcan, 2021).

It has been determined that there are 1 graduate thesis and 1 doctoral thesis on games (Özcan, 2020; Sezgin, 2016), and 2 master's theses associated with each of subjects language skills (Karakurt, 2019; Turhal, 2023), scale adaptation (Fındık Tanrıbuyurdu, 2012; Serttaş Franzini, 2021), peer bullying (İleri, 2019; Mercan, 2020), school adaptation (Şepitçi, 2018; Şamlı, 2019) and emotional intelligence (Aydın, 2018; Vardi, 2021).

Only one master's thesis associated with each of the subjects of learning (Erdem, 2022), creativity (Çomak, 2022), early literacy (Kısaoğlu, 2022), technology (Koyuncuoğlu, 2022), anxiety (Öksüz, 2020), aggression (Suna Şaka, 2022), document review (Şahin, 2022), social values (Orhan Taşköyan, 2020) and fathers (Özsoy Yanbak, 2019).

4. Conclusion and Discussions

The sample of the research, in which the graduate theses conducted in the field of self-regulation in preschool in Turkey between 2012-2023 were examined according to the determined criteria, consists of 76 graduate theses. The data of the research collected through document analysis were analyzed in detail using the content analysis method. The data of the research were obtained from the Higher Education Council (YÖK) National Thesis Center. The data were categorized and analyzed according to the year, the thesis type, the research method used in the thesis, the research model used in the thesis, the university where the thesis was conducted, the city where the thesis was conducted, the study group/sample of the thesis, and the subjects studied in the thesis. Afterward, the results were interpreted and suggestions were made.

It was determined that graduate studies were conducted in the field of self-regulation in preschool at 29 different universities in Turkey, and most studies were conducted at Gazi University with 21 theses among these universities. Similar to the results of the study, Şahin (2022); Çifçi, Dere and Eren (2021), Ağmaz and Ergülec (2020), Avar and Ilıcan (2018) also concluded in their studies that the highest number of theses conducted at Gazi University. Can-Yaşar and Aral (2011) stated in their studies that Gazi University is the second university where the most theses are conducted. In the distribution of graduate theses made in the field of self-regulation in preschool, according to the universities, the fact that Gazi University has more studies than other universities suggests that the university is a well-established university in the field of education. Conducting more studies in the field of self-regulation in pre-school in other universities will ensure that different perspectives and different research results are brought into the field.

Quantitative, qualitative and mixed research methods were used in graduate theses in the field of self-regulation in preschool in Turkey. It is noteworthy that the quantitative method is used mostly in graduate studies with 84% (64 theses). It is noteworthy that only 3% (2 theses) of graduate studies use the qualitative method. It is possible to find similar study results in the literature. Avar and Ilıcan (2018) found that quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods are used in graduate theses and that the most used research method is quantitative and the least used research method is qualitative. Çifçi, Dere and Eren (2021) stated that the qualitative method is used more in their studies. While the quantitative method is used more in graduate studies in the field of self-regulation in preschool in Turkey, the very little use of the qualitative method shows that the studies are conducted with similar methods. It is thought that researchers will contribute to having in-depth knowledge in the field of self-regulation in preschool by using different research methods.

It has been determined that the most used research model in graduate theses in the field of self-regulation in preschool in Turkey is the relational screening model. Çifçi, Dere and Eren (2021) and Kiremit (2019) also found that the relational screening model is used more in their studies. It can be concluded that the use of other research models in the studies that the researchers will carry out in the field of self-regulation in the preschool period will increase the use of other working models in research.

It has been determined that the studies of graduate theses in the field of self-regulation in pre-school in Turkey took place in 33 different provinces. The studies were mostly conducted in the provinces of Istanbul (18 theses) and Ankara (11 theses). Using the data of the research, it can be said that the studies are concentrated in the same provinces. It is thought that it is necessary to conduct studies in other provinces in Turkey in the field of self-regulation in preschool. Conducting studies in different provinces will ensure that different demographic structures are included in the process. In this way, it will pave the way for identifying self-regulation skills in preschool children in different provinces and taking steps to increase it if necessary.

When the distribution of the study group/sample in the graduate theses in the field of self-regulation in preschool in Turkey was examined, it was concluded that the children were mostly studied. This is important in terms of detecting and developing self-regulation skills. Avar and Ilcan (2018) also stated that they mostly work with children as participants in their studies. After children, the most studied study group/sample is children and parents. They are followed by mothers, mothers and children, teachers, fathers and children, children and teachers, parents, parents and teachers, respectively. Parents and teachers play a very important role in the development of self-regulation skills in children. The fact that parents and teachers as the study group/sample are in only one graduate thesis is seen as a gap in the study area. Working with less-studied groups will enable the child's self-regulation skills to be better determined and eliminate deficiencies.

The subjects studied in the graduate theses in the field of self-regulation in preschool are categorized and grouped into 23 different categories. It was concluded that the theses about self-regulation or the programs/activity prepared to develop self-regulation skills were sixteen more. It was determined that only one graduate thesis was written in the fields of learning, creativity, early literacy, technology, anxiety, aggression, and social values. To fully comprehend self-regulation skills and to reveal new perspectives, it is necessary to conduct graduate studies in the field of self-regulation in these areas.

5. Recommendations

From the results of the research examining the graduate studies in the field of self-regulation in preschool in Turkey, the following are suggested:

When the theses in the field of self-regulation in preschool in Turkey are examined, the scarcity of doctoral theses has clearly emerged. To reveal qualified and in-depth studies on self-regulation, studies should be conducted in the field of self-regulation in preschool in doctoral theses.

Examining the field of self-regulation in preschool in Turkey, it was determined that the qualitative research method was used very little. Increasing the use of qualitative and mixed methods in research to be conducted will enrich the field of study.

When the universities in Turkey that conducted theses in the field of self-regulation in preschool are examined, it is seen that Gazi University is far ahead of other universities. In other universities, graduate theses should be prepared in the field of self-regulation in



preschool. Theses prepared in different universities will also provide the presentation of different perspectives of different consultants.

It has been determined that studies are carried out in the field of self-regulation in preschool only in 33 provinces in Turkey. Studies should be carried out in different provinces to enable children to gain more self-regulation, promote self-regulation in preschool, increase families' knowledge about self-regulation, and support families and teachers regarding self-regulation.

In Turkey, only one thesis has been prepared in the field of self-regulation in preschool in which the working group/sample is fathers and children. No study was found in which the study group/sample was only the fathers. It is thought that the researchers' preparation of the thesis that the study group/sample is fathers will contribute positively to the child's self-regulation skills.

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