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## Parents with children in preschool children's picture book review elections

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### Abstract

This study illustrated that parent with children 3-6 years old children's book aimed to examine the views of the elections. Subjects of the study in Mersin, Gaziantep, located in the provinces of Ankara, 190 parents with children 3-6 years old constitutes. The data was collected using the public survey method, and the database was formed in qualitative form. Parents were asked to fill both the personal information part and the part about illustrated children's books. The qualitative data was analyzed by content analysis.

*Keywords:* Child Literature, Illustrated Children's Books

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### 1. Introduction

The first years of a children's life are significant in terms of development and education. These years when children start to explore the world around and acquire the basic knowledge, skills and habits are of great importance. Preschool children are very sensitive towards their kith and kin, and a restless, curious and investigative personality is observed. They have a vast imagination, they try to link cause and effect of things they come across in their daily lives and constantly ask questions (Küçüküran, 2005). The experiences of this period dramatically change their future habits and their view of life. Raising healthy, happy and creative individuals depend on identifying and correctly evaluating this period (Aral, 2000). Glossary (1943) defines picture story books as "the books including pictures partially or wholly and adopted according to the needs and interests of young children"; Montresor(1971) defines them as "the books the content of which are enriched by pictures". Celia(1988) depicts the picture story books as, "the books where illustration has a great importance and which are created for the children aged 0-7 years and also which can cover almost every subject" (Indorser: Hunt, 1991). Gönen indicates that the reason why Illustrated Children's Books are called so, due to the fact that there are as much as, if not more, illustrations than writing (Akt.Tuğrul, 2006). Picture story books tell stories through word and picture combinations enrich a concept and give various information. Pre-school and school-aged children start to develop concepts of literature and reading by listening to the picture story books read to them. Picture story books are the first books that children experience (Cullinan and Galda, 1994; Gönen, 1991). There are different definitions for picture books and illustrated story books, and there have been many opinions on their differences and similarities. In general, all books that target

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preschool period children which have or lack a narrative context are called “picture books”. However, if the emphasis is supposed to be on the narrative, it is called a “illustrated story book” (Uzmen, 2001).

Yılmaz, who has drawn a general framework for the individual and social conditions providing opportunities for gaining the habit of reading and using a library and developing them, indicates that families and teachers who can act sensibly and wisely play an important role on laying the foundation of these habits (Yılmaz, 2000:281-282). The habit of reading books, which helps mental and social development, should be gained at an early age. The family’s selection of the right kind of books help children internalize the reading habit and adapt it as a lifestyle.

The other factors affecting reading positively are the libraries. Libraries contribute people’s obtaining knowledge in different subjects, supporting their assignments, developing the reading skills and acquiring the like for reading (Bayram, 1990:11). According to Yalçın (2004), a decrease in the like for reading particularly among the children and the young people may cause problems in the future of the society as well as the cultural, scientific and art world of the country.

During the preschool period where children show significant improvement in many areas such as social, language, cognitive and psycho-motor, the correct choice of books is significant. The role of a good book is quite important especially in the language development and cognitive development field. At this stage, acquiring experience in any kind of literature will contribute to the development of preschool children's language skill. Both listening to the book being read and discussing while looking at the illustrations will not only contribute to the child’s language and cognitive development, but it will also enrich his imagination. A book which is appropriate for the development of the child, fascinates him and meets his needs, helps him understand himself and his values as well as develop respect and commitment to his cultural heritage. Children find themselves in a properly selected book, discover their own talents and develop self-confidence. In the study based on these facts, the opinions of parents of 3 to 6 year old children on picture books are determined and activities which can be done to raise awareness of their view on this subject are proposed.

## **1. 1Method**

Qualitative and quantitative research methods were used in the study. The study group was composed of parents of 3 to 6 year-olds living in Ankara, Mersin and Gaziantep. The study was done on a total of 190 parents.

### **1.2. Data Collection Tools**

A questionnaire consisting of 54 questions was used as the data collection tool. It was developed by researchers and based on expert opinion. It collects the opinion of parents with children of ages 3-6 on choosing illustrated children's books. The questionnaire consists of two parts. In the first part of the survey, parents filled out a form where their demographic information, the status of parents buying child’s books, and the parents’ book, newspaper, magazine habits are evaluated. In the second part, the cover, illustration and interior features necessary for them to choose the book is questioned. The data in this study was collected in year 2010. Surveys were filled with parents during one on one interview.

### **1.3Analysing Data**

“SPSS 15.0 package program” was used to analyze the collected data. Frequency and percentage distribution were calculated in the description of personal information of the parents of preschool children and their opinion on how to select illustrated children’s books.

## 2. Tables

In this part there is some demographic information on the parents who participated in the study. While the study participation rate of mothers is 68,9%, the rate for fathers is 31,1%. When we look at the level of education, we see that parents with university degrees come first with 42,1%, and high school degree comes second with 27,9%. When the status of book purchasing is observed, 88,9% of the parents stated that they bought their children books. And more than half of the parents (69,5%) say they have a library at home, and 87,9% stated they read books themselves.

According to the findings from the research data, when book purchasing for their children and level of education is analyzed, the best buyers of books are shown to have a masters degree (100%), bachelors degree (98%), and high school degree (86,21%). When observing the children's book purchasing based distribution by cities, it is detected that parents in Ankara purchase the most books for their children with a rate of 96%. When looking at the distribution of the parents' book, magazine, newspaper etc. reading habits according to their level of education, it is seen that all parents with masters degree, 96,20% of parents with bachelors degree come first, while the literate come last with 50%.

The table below covers the parents' opinion on the external appearance of a children's book

Table-1- The opinion of the parents about child book's external appearance

The opinion of the parents about child book's external appearance	PARTICIPATE		NOT PARTICIPATE		UNSTABLE	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
A Picture should be at each page	130	68.4	22	11.6	38	20
Illustration should be more than writing at the book	69	36.3	81	42.6	40	21.1
Paying attention to the binding while buying a book	143	75.3	15	7.9	32	16.8
Paying attention to the paper quality (opaque, shockproof, water durability etc..)	132	69.5	15	7.9	43	22.6
The book cover should be interesting	156	82.1	10	5.3	24	12.6
The book should be at portable size suitable for child but not very small	157	82.6	16	8.4	17	8.9
Colours should be live and shiny	169	88.9	7	3.7	14	7.4
The importance of the sewing or combining with bonding.	67	35.3	87	45.8	36	18.9

In Table 1, 88,9% of the 190 participants stated that the colors used should be live and shiny. This indicates that using live and shiny colors for the external designing is an important criterion according to parents. In this sense, visual language is as efficient as written expression in terms of the child's perception of the book. Abacı (2003) has also underlined the importance of illustration in children's books. Gönen (2000) stressed that the characteristic of a children's book is that it contains the same amount of, or even more illustration than writing. 35,3% of the parents stated that the book being stitch-binded, hard covered or glued-together is influential as well. However the percentage of parents who think that the binding of the book, weather it is stitched or glued, is insignificant is higher (45,8%) than the one who think it is. Therefore, we can come to the conclusion that the stitch or glue binding of the book is of least significance when it comes to the external design.

The parents' opinion on the illustrative features of a children's book according to the data from the research is listed in Table 2.

Table-2- The opinion of the parents about child book's illustration features

The opinion of the parents about child book's illustration features	PARTICIPATE		NOT	PARTICIPATE		UNSTABLE	
	f	%	f	f	%	f	%
Illustration should be suitable with reality	153	80.5	16	8.4		21	11.1
Only one culture should not reflect at the book.	144	75.8	27	14.2		19	10.0
Illustration should not be against the society's morality rules	170	89.5	11	5.8		9	4.7
Illustration should be enough to tell the story	108	56.8	41	21.6		41	21.6
Main hero should be choose at the illustration.	157	82.6	9	4.7		24	12.6
Illustration should be close environment	93	48.9	45	23.7		52	27.4
Illustration should not be connected story	26	13.7	153	80.5		11	5.8

As seen in Table 2, 80,5% of parents stated that the illustrations should be real-like. Similar to this view Kiefer et al. (2007) indicate that the writings in the book should be fully consistent and parallel with the illustrations; picture books with narrative should send the message correctly through illustrations and words. 89,5% of the 190 parents who participated in the questionnaire, have checked the entry that says "book should not contain illustrations that go against established moral principles". This entry was the most highly scored entry with a rate of 89,5%. This shows that illustrations appropriate to established moral principles is the most important feature to parents. 48,9% of the parents agreed on the outlook that the illustrations in the book should be of the surroundings of the child.

The parents' opinion on the content of a children's book according to the data from the research is listed in Table 3 below.

Table-3- The opinion of the parents about child book's internal structure features

The opinion of the parents about child book's internal structure features	PARTICIPATE		NOT PARTICIPATE		UNSTABLE	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Book's content should be suitable with child's development features.	186	97.9	3	1.6	1	0.5
Book language should be understandable	188	98.9	2	1.1	0	0.0
Book content should be support child's development area .	186	97.9	2	1.1	2	1.1
Book should include the enough knowledge for child to prepare the life	172	90.5	3	1.6	15	7.9
Book should not make feel the violence and fear feelings to the child	172	90.5	10	5.3	8	4.2
Giving knowledge is not necessary, it is necessary to feel funny feelings	23	12.1	127	66.8	40	21.1
Book should reflect a specific world opinion.*	71	37.4	87	45.8	31	16.3
Book should talk about the different cultures*	149	78.4	9	4.7	31	16.3
Questions and activities should be at end of the book*	166	89.2	4	2.2	16	8.6

\*This materials are evaluated on 189 subjects because of a loss data.

Almost all parents agree on the book being appropriate for children's development (97.9%), the language of the book being understandable (98.9%) and supporting the children's development areas (97.9%). Tür and Turla (1999) stress on the benefit in dealing with a single issue which is simple and clear in a children's book. According to Aslan (2006), a direct, clear, easy to understand and fluent language should be used in a children's book. The narrative should be easy to understand for the one who is reading it. 66,8% of the 190 parents who took place in the questionnaire, did not agree with the "It is not important that the book gives information, it's important that the book amuses the child" entry. According to this result, most of the parents think that the book should be informative. 37,4% of the parents agree with the "A book should reflect a single point of view" entry, while 45,8% do not agree

on this, and give similar responses. 78,4% of the parents share the idea of books giving information on different cultures, and 89,2% say there should be questions and activities at the end of the books.

## Acknowledgements

The results based on the research findings from parents with preschool level children who live in Ankara, Mersin, Gaziantep are as follows: as the level of education of the parents increase, the habit of reading books, magazines, newspapers etc. increase. There is a positive correlation between the parents' habit of reading books, magazines, newspapers etc. and purchasing books for their children. According to the research findings, most parents read books, magazines, newspapers etc. There is no significant relation between the city the parents are living in and the habit of reading books, magazines, newspapers etc. There is no significant relation between the city the parents are living in and the status of purchasing books for their children. There is no significant relation between parents' status of purchasing books for their children and their level of education.

In the light of these findings, parents should firstly be aware of the significance of preschool period education. Parents should be informed on the importance of their children's gaining the habit of reading and a love for books just as much as any other basic habits. Conferences, symposiums, panels and similar activities should be held for parents and teachers, informing them on the importance of children's books in the preschool period and point to take into consideration when choosing these books. Parents should be initiated into activities that would help them increase their reading habits. Parents should also be positive role models reading-wise. They should take their children to libraries and book stores, and raise awareness of their children to read more. Specialist on this field should train parents on the characteristics of children's books and on how to choose them. Families with low socio-economic levels should be provided with children's books with campaigns arranged by NGOs, universities, ministries, local authority and preschool teachers. The media has a great role regarding this issue as well.

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