



Examining Peer Relationships in Transition to Primary School in the Pandemic Process with Teacher and Parent Opinions

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic, which emerged in the last days of 2019, continues to be effective until today. In terms of education, especially the 2020-2021 academic year has been almost entirely online. Considering that schools are the place where children are most together with their peers, peer relations are one of the most disrupted issues during the pandemic process. For this reason, this study aims to examine peer relations during the transition to primary school by taking the opinions of parents and teachers. A case study, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in the research. In the study, in which ten parents and six teachers participated, demographic information forms and interview questions were used as data collection tools. As a result of the research, in which content analysis was used in the analysis of the data, it was determined that parents and teachers thought that there were changes in the social-emotional and behavioural development of children during the pandemic process and that they thought that there were negative peer relationships as well as positive peer relationships during the transition to school. The findings are discussed in the light of the relevant literature.

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INTRODUCTION

Each child is different from another in physical, emotional, and mental aspects (Şahbaz and Yüce, 2021). And preschool and primary school period is the third-fastest period of development after infancy and adolescence. In this period, it is thought that the basis of children's future school success is parallel to their social and emotional development (Berk, 2017). And the transition to school is one of the most important milestones in this period. The child's transition from home to school environment is an important process for him/her. Because the child encounters an academic environment for the first time. Besides, he/she engages with his/her peers and tries to meet with teacher's expectations. At the beginning of primary school, children's ability to form and maintain strategies to cope with the social environment is important for academic and behavioral performance (as cited by Çomaklı & Koçyiğit, 2021, p. 177). However, a global epidemic in recent years has negatively affected children's social and emotional development, as in all developmental areas. The effects of the Covid-19 virus, which emerged in China in December 2019 and spread rapidly worldwide, showed its impact on our country in a short time (Can, 2020). A pandemic was declared by the World Health Organization (WHO), and this situation brought many changes in human life (Aral, Aysu, & Kadan, 2020).

Children, as well as adults, have been greatly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Restricting the environments where children can play, not being able to go to school, and not being together with their friends have caused emotional and behavioral problems in them (Sirem & Baş, 2020). Due to the pandemic, staying outside for a limited time, spending more time at home, and having limited interactions with their peers have negatively affected their social-emotional development and all development areas.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Education and training are planned and programmed process that continues throughout life. It may be necessary to interrupt the educational activities that progress within a specific plan and system for various reasons, such as earthquakes, epidemics, natural disasters (İnci Kuzu, 2020). This situation, which developed suddenly due to the rapid spread of the Covid-19 virus, has led to the search for alternative ways to continue education (Arslan, Görgülü Arı & Hayır Kanat, 2021). In this context, distance education was started in primary and secondary schools and universities, weekly course schedules were restructured, and many students continued their education and training activities in a digital environment (İnci Kuzu, 2020).

From preschool to primary school, children encounter a new environment, environment, and friends (Yazıcı, Nazik Kumbasar, & Akman, 2016). Children included in a new environment are expected to acquire social skills such as adaptation to school, communication and interaction with their peers in the first grade. The school environment is vital for socializing and gaining communication skills. The adaptation process to school and peer relations interact with each other (Bart, Hajami, & Bar Haim, 2007). Children begin to experience peer relationships with preschool education (Atış Akyol, Yıldız, & Akman, 2018). In primary school age, it is known that peer relations have critical importance in the child's life (Uz Baş & Siyez, 2011). It is known that peer relationships in early childhood also affect the child's social-emotional relationships in the future (Atis Akyol et al., 2018). The first weeks of school life are critical in obeying rules, establishing social-emotional relationships, and controlling emotional behaviors (Yoleri & Tanış, 2014). The child's peer relationships allow the development of a sense of belonging within the group. Children who adapt to the class and their friends adapt more easily to school and lessons (Gülay, 2011).

In the early years of school, negative relationships between children can last from childhood to adulthood (Uysal, Aydos, & Akman, 2016). Children's positive or negative behaviors are effective in choosing or not choosing them as friends (Uysal & Dinçer, 2012). According to Uysal et al. (2016),

children who can communicate well with their peers and their environment are more successful in their future lives. When the opposite situation occurs, fundamental problems are observed along with it. According to Kabasakal et al. (2008), children who do not have strong peer relationships are at risk for feelings of loneliness.

It is seen that the fact that schools continue their activities in face-to-face education helps students exhibit positive behaviors, while closing schools may cause adverse behavioral consequences (Brazendale et al., 2017). Some studies show that long-term school closures and quarantine periods may negatively affect children's social communication and mental and psychological health (Brazendale et al., 2017; Brooks et al., 2020).

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

When the relevant literature is examined, it has been found that there are quite a few studies on transition to primary school (Haktanır, 2018; Koçyiğit, 2014; Yazıcı, Nazik Kumbasar, & Akman, 2016; Yılmaz & Şekerci, 2016). As for peer relations (Çulhaloğlu İmrak & Sığirtmaç, 2010; Gülay, 2011; Uz & Baş & Siyez, 2011), it is seen that many studies have been conducted. With the introduction of the pandemic into our lives, it has been examined that there are a limited number of studies (Erol & Erol, 2020) investigating peer relations during the pandemic period in the transition to primary school. In their research, Erol and Erol (2020) determined peer relationships by taking parents' opinions. This research differs from other studies in that both parents and teachers observe the peer relationships of students who have passed from preschool to primary school during the pandemic process. For this purpose, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. According to the teachers, how are the peer relations of first-grade students before and during the pandemic?
2. According to the parents, how are the peer relations of first-grade students before and during the pandemic?

METHOD

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study was conducted with a qualitative research design to examine and compare the views of first-grade teachers and parents whose children are attending first grade. A qualitative research approach is a research approach that uses qualitative data collection methods such as observation, interview and document analysis, in which the research problem and facts are revealed in detail, realistically, and most of its aspects are revealed in their natural environment (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). This study was designed according to the case study model, which is one of the qualitative research methods. The case study seeks answers to the questions of how and why. The primary purpose of case studies is to reveal the results for a specific situation (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). The main reason for choosing this method is to do due diligence on the research questions and reveal information about this. In this context, the personal perspectives of teachers and parents, who are among the participants, are analyzed. In this direction, the fact that the peer relations of first-grade students will be discussed comparatively with the views of teachers and parents during the pandemic process in this study leads the study to a multiple case study.

STUDY GROUP

The study group of this research consists of six first-grade teachers working in Kastamonu and Samsun in the 2020-2021 academic year and ten parents whose children continue to the first grade. Criterion sampling, one of the purposive sampling methods, was used to determine participant teachers and parents. As a criterion, the condition of being a first-grade teacher in 2020-2021 and that parents' children attend first grade was set. In the data analysis, the teachers participating in the study

were coded as T.1-T.6, while the parents were coded as P.1- P.10. Information about the participants is given in Tables 1 and 2:

Table 1. Demographic Information on Parents

	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Educational status</i>	<i>Number of child</i>	<i>Job</i>
P.1	Male	35	Bachelor	2	Teacher
P.2	Female	34	Master	1	Nurse
P.3	Female	40	Bachelor	2	Sociologist
P.4	Female	39	High School	2	Housewife
P.5	Female	34	Bachelor	2	Housewife
P.6	Female	29	Primary School	1	Housewife
P.7	Male	34	Bachelor	2	Teacher
P.8	Female	32	High School	2	Housewife
P.9	Female	34	Bachelor	1	Teacher
P.10	Female	28	High School	1	Housewife

Table 2. Demographic Information on Teachers

	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Educational status</i>	<i>Seniority (year)</i>	<i>Number of children</i>
T.1	Female	31	Bachelor	6-10	21 +
T.2	Female	33	Bachelor	6-10	11-20
T.3	Female	40	Bachelor	16-20	21 +
T.4	Female	33	Bachelor	16-20	11-20
T.5	Female	31	Bachelor	6-10	11-20
T.6	Female	37	Bachelor	16-20	11-20

When Table 1 is examined, the gender of the parents whose children are attending the first grade is female, two males, their age ranges between 28-40, their educational status is five undergraduate, one associate degree, three high school, one primary school and among the findings, 1 of them had postgraduate education, 4 of them had one child, 6 of them had two children, 3 of them were teachers, 1 of them was sociologist, 1 of them were nurses, and 5 of them were housewives.

When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that all of the 1st-grade teachers participating in the research are women; they are in the 30-40 age range, 4 of them have 6-10 years of seniority, 2 of them have 16-20 years of seniority, and 4 of them have 11-20 years of seniority. It is found that the number of students in the classes of 2 of them is 20 and above.

DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

The researcher prepared a structured interview form as a data collection tool in the research. Before the interview questions were prepared, the relevant literature was scanned and the purpose of the research prepared open-ended questions. The prepared questions were presented to an expert academician in the preschool department and expert opinion was taken. After the expert opinion, "What comes to mind when you think of peer relations?" question was added to the interview questions. Afterward, pilot interviews were conducted with two classroom teachers to evaluate the clarity and relevance of the research questions, and the final form of the interview form was determined.

DATA COLLECTION TOOLS FOR PARENTS

Demographic information form and interview form were used for parents. In the demographic information form, there are questions about the gender, age, occupation and education level of the parents. In the interview form, there are questions that include determining the views of parents about their children's peer relationships.

DATA COLLECTION TOOLS FOR TEACHERS

Demographic information form and interview form were used for teachers. The demographic information form includes information about teachers' gender, age, last graduated education level, professional experience, and the number of students in their class. In the interview form, there are questions that include determining the teachers' opinions about their students' peer relations.

DATA COLLECTION

The data were collected in individual interviews organized online with the Zoom program due to the pandemic. During the data collection process, the participants were primarily informed that the interview would be recorded, and the recording was started after the participant's consent was obtained. At the beginning of the interview, the participants were asked to read aloud the consent form sent to them via e-mail in the virtual environment and verbally express their willingness to participate in the study. After obtaining consent, interview questions were directed to the participants.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data obtained within the scope of the research were analyzed with the content analysis method, one of the qualitative data analyses. Content analysis was carried out by converting the collected data into written form and reading them separately, bringing similar data side by side and determining categories and themes. The main purpose of content analysis is to reach the concepts that can help explain the data obtained and the relationships between these concepts (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). The interviews were transcribed and then verified by taking expert opinion. After the transcription process was completed, the analysis process was started. The findings were read many times during the analysis process, and themes and codes were created based on the research questions. Direct quotations from the participants' statements were included at the stage of interpretation of the findings obtained as a result of the analysis of the collected data. It was examined whether the findings were meaningful and consistent within themselves as a whole. The themes and codes created were re-examined with expert opinion, and the consensus was reached by discussing the points of disagreement. While direct quotations were included in the interpretation of the findings, codings such as "S1-S6" for teachers and "E1-M10" for parents were used. The codes given to teachers and parents are indicated in parentheses at the end of the quotation sentences.

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

This study is qualitative and it is difficult to analyze because there are no numerical data to prove the validity and reliability analysis (Başkale, 2016). For this reason, validity-reliability in qualitative studies is handled differently from quantitative studies (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). It is tried to give information about validity and reliability by mentioning expressions such as credibility, accuracy of results and competence of the researcher. In order to ensure validity and reliability in this study, the findings and results were communicated to some of the participants after the analysis of the data, and participant confirmation was obtained. Participant confirmation is one of the strategies that can be applied to ensure the internal validity of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; cited in Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018).

Due to the extraordinary conditions experienced, the interviews were conducted in the digital environment. Research produces reliable information that is closely related to the care and attention shown in their design and implementation (Merriam, 2015). It is stated that strategies such as long-term interaction, depth-focused data collection, diversification and expert review can be used to ensure internal validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; cited in Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). In this study, detailed description and purposive sampling were preferred in order to ensure external validity. Expert review and participant confirmation were used in this study to ensure internal validity. The external reliability method used in this study is short confirmation.

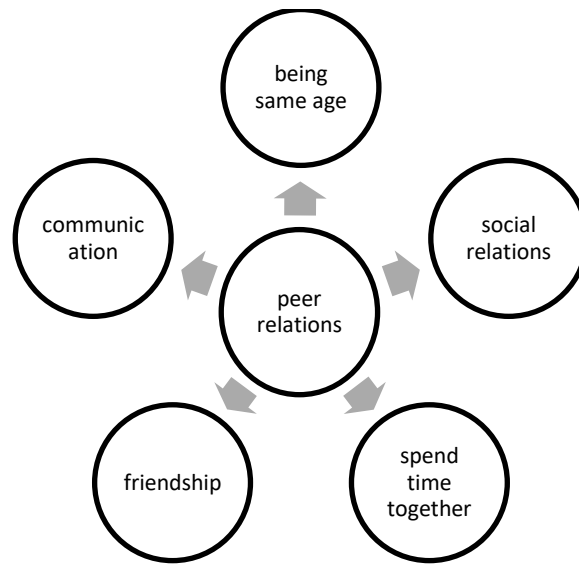
FINDINGS/RESULTS

In this section, we aimed to determine the opinions of teachers and parents on the examination of peer relations in the transition from preschool education to primary school before and during the pandemic. For this purpose, we first asked parents and teachers what peer relationships mean.

DEFINITION OF PEER RELATIONSHIPS

We have given the findings of the answers given by the participants to the question "What comes to your mind when you think of peer relations?" in Figure 1.

Figure 1. *Definitons of Peer Relationships*



When Figure 1 is examined, it is seen that teachers and parents primarily define peer relations as "being same age"; however, concepts such as "social relations", "spend time together", "friendship" and "communication" are among the findings obtained.

"Emotional or intellectual intimacy and socialization of people who are close to each other in age. (P.7)"

"I remember the relationships and interactions of children of the same age with each other. (T.3)"

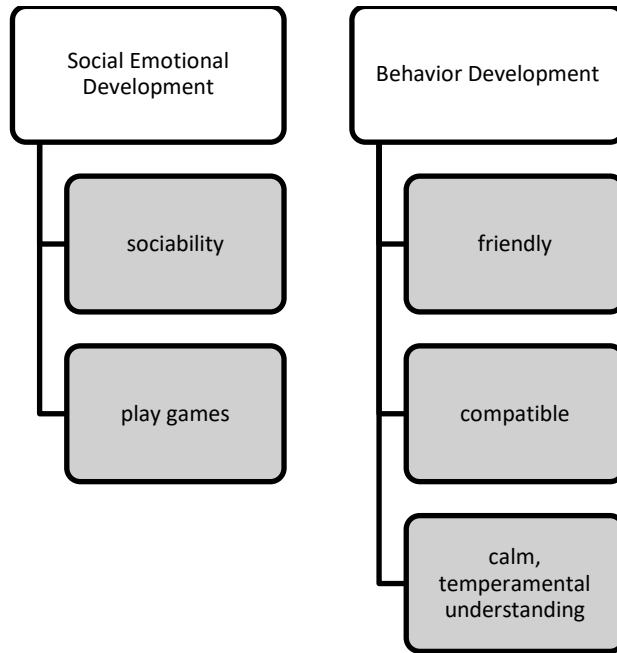
"Social relations with peers (P.9)"

"Peer relationships are the relationships that are very important for the social development of children, and that children can gain or lose self-confidence, which can not be established with adults but only with their own age group (T.2)"

PEER RELATIONS BEFORE PANDEMIC ACCORDİNG TO PARENTS AND TEACHERS

To determine the peer relationships of children before the pandemic, we only took the parents' opinions. Teachers were not asked for their views on this question because they did not know the students who transitioned from preschool to primary school before the pandemic. In line with the opinions received from the parents, we collected peer relations before the pandemic in two categories: "Social Emotional Development" and "Behavioral Development".

Figure 2. Views on Peer Relations Before the Pandemic



SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

When the answers received from the parents were examined, we determined that they gave the most "sociability" answer when expressing their peer relations before the pandemic process. It is among the remarkable answers that children were more social before the pandemic, spent more time with their friends, and played games. The views of the parents regarding these findings are given below.

"He used to play comfortably in the playground with his friends. He would go to their house, and sometimes his friends would come to our house. They played games together all day long. He eagerly wanted to go to school. Because they used to spend quality time with their friends there (P.7)."

"Before the pandemic, my child was spending more time with his peers. He was doing the activities he liked with his peers. Spending good time with their peers and playing games together made my child happy. (P.10)."

BEHAVIORAL DEVELOPMENT

When the answers received from the parents were examined, they stated that the children were more "friendly", "compatible," and "sometimes understanding, sometimes aggressive social-emotional friends before the pandemic. Regarding this issue, E.2 and E.8 stated the following:

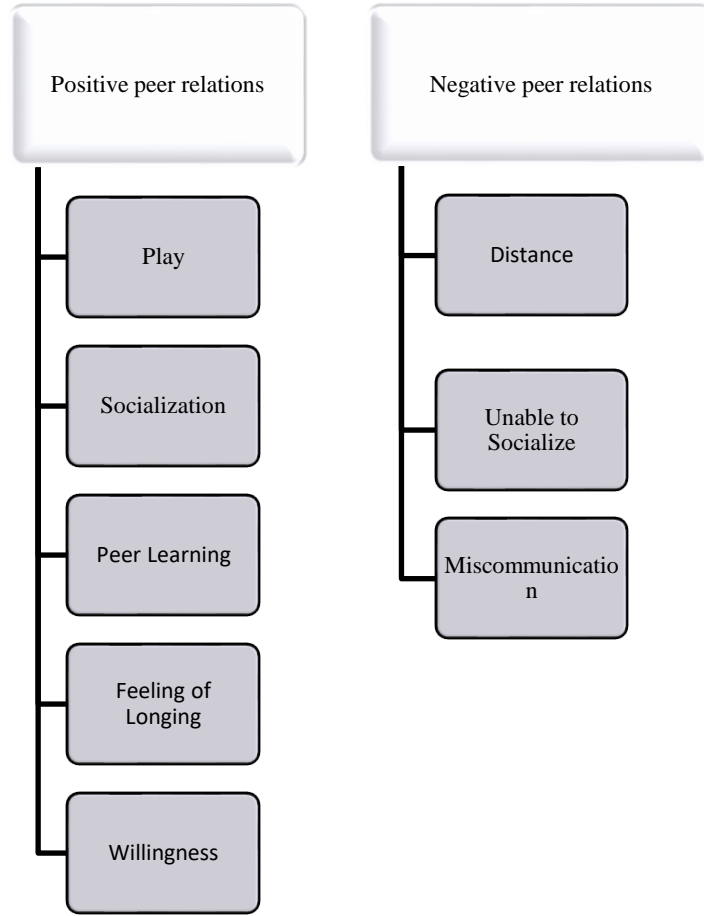
"Before the pandemic, my child was much more friendly, calm, harmonious and able to spend a lot of time with friends (P.2)."

"My child is friendly and adaptable. Before the pandemic, he was spending more time with his friends (P.8)."

PEER RELATIONSHIPS IN THE PANDEMIC PROCESS ACCORDING TO PARENTS AND TEACHERS

When we look at the opinions of teachers and parents regarding the peer relations of children during the pandemic process, we saw that they are divided into three themes: peer relations in the transition to school process, peer relations in the school process, and peer relations in the online education process. The themes related to the views of teachers and parents on peer relations during the transition to school are given in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Opinions on Peer Relations During the Transition to School



POSITIVE PEER RELATIONSHIPS OBSERVED IN TRANSITION TO SCHOOL

According to the answers received from the teachers, it is among the findings that students observed positive relationships in the direction of "playing games", "socializing", "sense of longing" and "peer learning" in the transition to the school process. One teacher stated that she did not observe any difference in this process. Examples of opinions on this subject are given below:

"With the reopening of the school, I observed how much children miss spending time with each other, chatting with each other, and doing activities with their peers by living in the classroom. Especially for children in this age group, since friendship means playing games, I think that peer relations are affected positively as they play and play together (T.2)"

"They always miss each other and me (T.6)"

According to the answers received from the parents, it is among the findings that they observed positive relations in the direction of "increasing self-confidence" and "socializing" in the transition to the school process. On the other hand, two parents stated that they did not observe any difference in the transition period compared to the past. Examples of opinions on this subject are given below:

"First of all, his self-confidence started to come back. He started to learn how to react to the behavior of his friends (P.4)"

"After starting school, he spends more time with children who are close to his character. He started competing with children of his own level. But in general, he has a good time in harmony (P.8)"

NEGATIVE PEER RELATIONS OBSERVED IN THE TRANSITION TO SCHOOL

According to the answers received from the teachers, it is among the findings that students observed negative relationships in the direction of "distance" and "non-communication" during the transition to school.

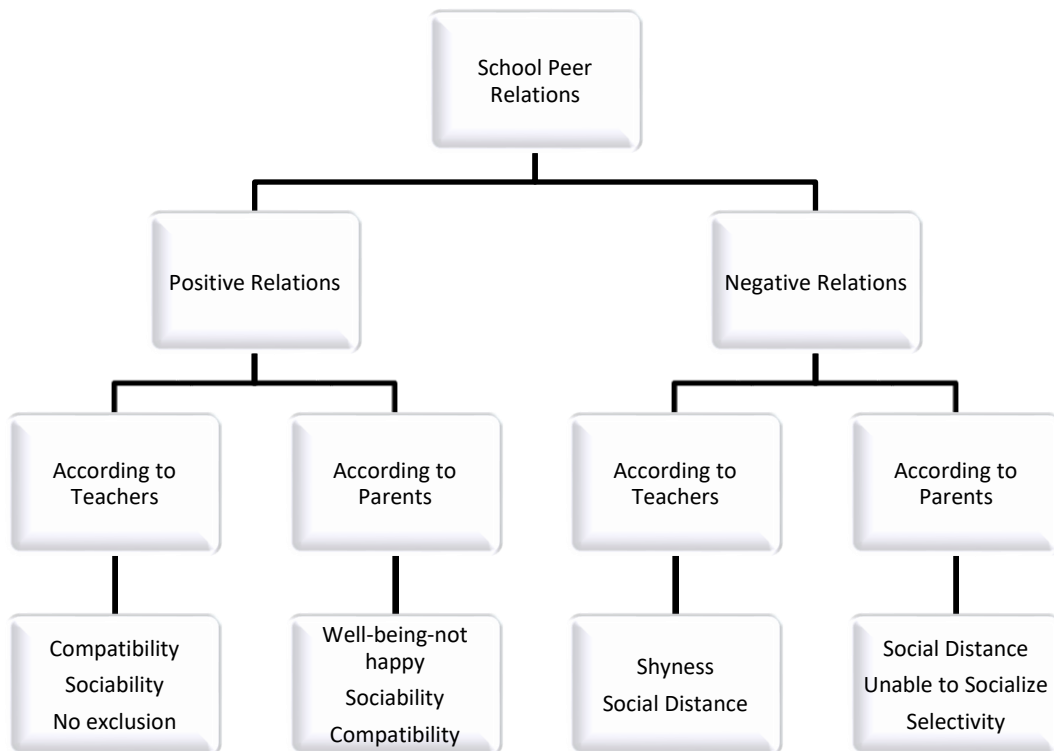
When the answers received from the parents are examined, it is among the findings that their children are faced with negative situations such as "not being able to socialize", "being confused", "not being able to make friends" during the transition to school. Sample comments on these findings are given below:

"In the past, they had good or bad communication during the transition to school, they learned a lot from each other's behavior. With the pandemic, they could not experience this process. I think that this reflected negatively on the behavior of the children (T.4)"

"Since he could not have a full-time education process, he could not have an efficient and sufficient process of making friends (P.1)"

The findings regarding the views of parents and teachers on peer relations in the school process are given in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Views of Parents and Teachers on Peer Relations in the School Process



POSITIVE SCHOOL PEER RELATIONSHIPS

According to the answers received from the teachers, it is among the findings that the students maintain positive relationships in the direction of "adaptation", "sociality" and "no exclusion" during the school process.

When the answers received from the parents are examined, it is among the findings that their children observed positive relationships in the direction of "well-being-happiness", "sociability" and "adaptation" during the school process.

Sample opinions on this subject are given below.

“In general, all the children were in harmony. The children provided support and trust in each other in their peer relationships. This increased the sense of belonging. Children who are aware that they are loved and accepted by their peers are happier and more willing (T.2).”

“He was very happy when he started school. He learned the names of many of his friends from the first day and played games with most of them. He loved being at school and was very happy to be with his friends and teacher (P.8).”

NEGATIVE SCHOOL-PEER RELATIONS

According to the answers received from the teachers, it is among the findings that students have negative relationships in the direction of "shyness" and "social distance" during the school process.

When the answers received from the parents are examined, it is among the findings that their children are faced with negative situations such as "social distance", "not being able to socialize", "selectivity" during the school process.

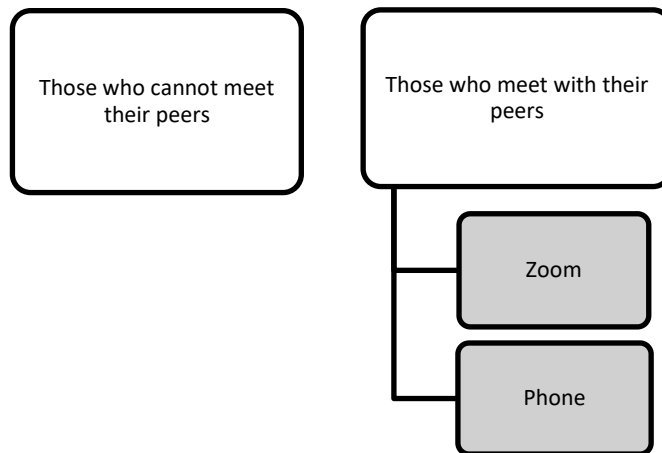
Sample comments on these findings are given below:

“My student had problems with integration in the first weeks. Because he was a bit shy, he waited for his other friends to take a step to socialize (T.3)”

“Since he spent a short time in face-to-face training, he did not have the opportunity to mingle with his classmates much. He could not establish close friendships because he had to keep a distance with his friends in class and during breaks (P.1).”

The views of parents and teachers regarding peer relations during the transition to online education are given in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Views of Parents and Teachers Regarding Peer Relations During the Transition to Online Education



CHILDREN WHO DO NOT MEET WITH THEIR PEERS

When Figure 5 is examined, it has been determined that the majority of children who cannot meet with their peers during the transition process of children to online education are in parental views. Examples of opinions on this subject are given below:

“Unfortunately, we do not make arrivals and departures due to the pandemic. Therefore, we did not have the opportunity to meet face-to-face (P.5).”

“During the online education process, my child could not meet with his friends except for the live lesson. He could only meet in class if there was a live lesson. There was no meeting other than that, unfortunately, this affects our children negatively (P.11).”

CHILDREN MEETING WITH THEIR PEERS

When the answers received from the parents were examined, it was determined that the children who were able to meet with their peers used telephone and zoom applications as interview channels. Examples of opinions on this subject are given below:

"Only our neighbor has two children and he sees them occasionally. Apart from that, he is video chatting with his cousins. They paint each other, tell stories, ask riddles to each other (P.8)."

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Peer relationships play a major role in the child's personality development. Because personality development starts in the transition to preschool and primary school, together with peer relationships (Erol & Erol, 2020). Transition is a natural process that we encounter in education programs and levels (Altın, 2014). The child who has just met the school environment needs peer relations and social skills in the transition process (Erten, 2012). This study aims to examine the peer relations encountered during the transition from preschool to primary school, with the introduction of distance education into our lives due to the pandemic. The findings are discussed, interpreted, and presented below within the research and interview questions framework in this part of the study.

It was seen that 4 of the 6 teachers who participated in the study interpreted the question as "the age of the children" to the question "What comes to mind when you think of peer relations?", while 9 of the parents defined it as "the age of the children with each other". . It was concluded that most of the teachers and parents understood "the age status of the children" from their peer relations.

In addition to being the same age, it was concluded that 4 of the parents emphasized the concept of "social relations". Erten (2012) also stated in his thesis study that while expressing peer relations, it is "the process that starts with the interaction of the child with other children of the same age or maturity". Erten's definition of peer relations in his thesis study is similar to the definition made by parents and teachers in our study.

When asked to the parents, "Can you tell us about your child's peer relationships before the pandemic?", most of the parents (7 of them) stated that their children were much more social and active before the pandemic, and that they used to play more games with their friends. Along with the pandemic, a parent expressed that children are more fond of communication tools such as phones and tablets, with the following words: "The pandemic process has made my child more accustomed to the phone and tablet (E.10)" It is concluded that they are social and active, and they play more games with their peers. Bozkurt and Duran (2021), in their study, concluded that the pandemic process had a negative impact on peer relations, in which children had to stay away from their friends in order to maintain social distance. This result is similar to our study.

Asked to the teachers, "Can you tell us about the peer relations in your class when you started the first semester of education? When the answers given to the question "Is there any exclusion, is everyone in harmony, are there children with introverted or externalized problems?", Three of the teachers stated that there is no exclusion, that the children are compatible and that they are more social. They also stated that there are introverted and shy children in their classrooms. In their study, Gülay Ogelman and Erten (2013) concluded that children's level of adaptation to school in transition shows changes during the academic year. It is normal for each child to show different behaviours in this process based on individual characteristics.

When asked to the parents, "How was your child's relationship with his/her peers (friends) in the classroom before the online education?", most of the parents (6 of them) stated that they were happy to attend school and that they had the opportunity to communicate easily with their peers in a social sense, while two parents stated that They stated that their children could not establish close

relationships with their peers in the classroom and during recess due to the distance. In his study, Karataş (2020) concluded that individuals increased their personal hygiene measures with the pandemic and avoided environments with close contact. The result reached by Karataş is similar to our study.

Asked to parents, "Did your child meet with friends during the online education process? What channels did they interview? What did they do?", most of the parents (6 of them) stated that they could not meet with their peers at all outside the live class hours due to the pandemic, which affected the children socially badly and that the children were very bored at home. On the other hand, 4 parents stated that their children met with their peers, played games through the zoom program, and that they could only meet in digital environments because they learned that face-to-face meeting is risky for children's health. As a result of the opinions received from the parents, although the students wanted to communicate face-to-face, they continued to communicate with each other through telephone or online games in this process. In their research, Akça and Akgün (2020) concluded that although there is no problem in bilateral meetings between students or with their teachers, students want to come together as a group and physically. This result is similar to our study. Asked to the teachers, "How do you think the online education process changes peer relations? In the transition to online education, what kind of activities did you do to integrate the whole class?" All of the teachers who participated in the research stated that their peer relations were negatively affected with the transition to online education. It is concluded that children cannot play games, make contact, spend time together and have limited communication. These reasons create feelings such as screen addiction, aggressive behaviour and longing for school in children. According to the opinions received from parents and teachers during the pandemic process, the boredom and psychological depression experienced by some children when they are away from school cause them to miss their teachers and friends, and as a result, feel bad. In her study, İnci Kuzu (2020) concluded that the distance education process negatively affects the psychological state of children, that they are aggressive and stressed in this process, and that this process is psychologically distressing for children because they are addicted to screens. Most of the teachers who participated in the research (4 of them) stated that they gave them the opportunity to chat with each other in order to integrate children during the transition to online education, while 1 teacher stated that he did not do any activity. When this result is examined, it is concluded that the teachers faltered in the transition to the distance education process and they had difficulties in inclusion activities.

Asked to the teachers, "Can you tell us about the peer relationships of the children in your class after school starts? When the answers given to the question "Can you make a comparison with the past?" were examined, it was concluded that most of the teachers stated that the children were very happy because they started face-to-face education, that they played games and missed, and that this situation also had a positive effect on peer learning. Development is a whole, social development will also positively affect academic development. Aral and Durualp (2010) concluded in their research that it is beneficial to use the game, a natural learning environment for children, by integrating it with activities to develop social skills. The fact that the two teachers who participated in our research stated that children learn to do activities with their peers at school and learn something from each other's behavior is similar to the result of this research.

When the answers given to the question "How did you observe the changes in your child's peer relations compared to the past," which was asked to the parents, were examined, it was concluded that some children faltered during the transition to face-to-face education, kept their distance from their friends due to the pandemic, and had difficulties in making friends in this process. On the contrary, it was concluded that some children spent time in harmony with their friends in this process, learned to share, discuss and talk, and played games with their peers. When these results are examined, it is concluded that the pandemic's levels of children are different. It is concluded that after

the pandemic, there are changes in children's peer relations, some children are more distant towards their friends and at the same time have difficulties in communication. When the study of Demir and Kale (2020) is examined, the positive and negative aspects of the distance education process were examined and similar results were obtained.

SUGGESTIONS

A quantitative study can be conducted to examine peer relations during the transition to primary school by taking the opinions of parents and teachers.

Studies on peer relations can be carried out with older age groups in the pandemic.

Studies on peer relations can be carried out during the transition to primary school.

Semi-structured in-depth interviews can be conducted.

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All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee, and also with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its subsequent amendments or comparable ethical standards. In addition, decision number 2021/296 was obtained from the Social and Humanities Ethics Committee of XXX University, Turkey, to conduct the current study.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

The authors contributed equally to the current research with both data collection and data analysis. All authors have read and approved the published final version of the article.

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