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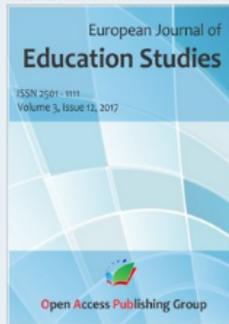


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PRESCHOOL TEACHERS' VIEWS TOWARD HOME VISITS IN THE ACTIVITY OF FAMILY PARTICIPATION WITHIN THE PRESCHOOL CURRICULUMⁱ

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Abstract:

The aim of this study is to determine preschool teachers' views on home visits. The study used a semi-structured interview to collect data. The form was developed by the researcher and it consists of two sections: a demographic information section and the views on home visits of preschool teachers' section. Thirty preschool teachers participated in this study. The results of the research suggested that the pre-school teachers thought that they needed to make home visits to children with problems, to get information about the child's home environment, to get to know the child, and to learn about their family relations.

Keywords: preschool teachers, family participation, home visit

1. Introduction

The preschool period, a period in early childhood, starts with the birth of the child and ends when the child starts primary school. This period has an important role to play in an individual's life; it is responsible for providing that child with necessary skills across all developmental areas, while also enabling their development. Preschool is the period in an individual's life in which educational development and learning are most rapid; the experiences gained throughout this period form a basis for their future education (Senemoğlu, 2004). For a child to grow and develop in a healthy way, and so they can develop positive attitudes toward learning, they require an environment in which their

ⁱ This article was presented as an oral presentation at the International Symposium on Social Sciences held in Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University between October 26-28, 2017.

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independence is supported, and in which qualified cognitive stimuli and positive social and affective experiences are provided. This is only possible through a healthy familial environment and a qualified preschool education (Çelik & Daşcan; 2014, p. 4). During preschool, growing children who can express their feelings and thoughts freely who are also investigatory, curious, entrepreneurial, autonomous, respectful their own and others' rights, have the skill to use their abilities, and who can develop self-control as required per contemporary and economic society requires may be attainable through the cooperation their school and family (Ömeroğlu & Yaşar, 2005). Since preschool teachers have a direct effect on a child's social and affective behavior, personality, and academic development, and because such individuals know the child personally, an active cooperation between parents and preschool teachers must be established in preschool education. A teacher should be aware of the natural, socio-cultural, and economic characteristics of the school's environment and should be able to integrate and introduce these into the education process. Teachers should effectively use all environmental opportunities to enable the child's development (Özen, 2012, p. 283); they should provide the necessary importance to studies enabling greater and more effective cooperation between families and schools to increase the efficacy of the child's development and education. Cooperation with families or, to use a more popular term family participation should comprise an important part of the preschool education curriculum, and must be conducted according to a particular plan. The reasons for this include the importance of continuity regarding the education provided at the institution, utilization of familial knowledge regarding the child which is often and in many respects better than the school's and ensuring the child's family are knowledgeable regarding the child's educational curriculum/program (Oktay & Polat-Unutkan, 2003, p.152). The families' participation in their child's preschool program, and dealing with the child and the family as a whole is a necessary facet of preschool education (Temel, Aksoy, & Kurtulmuş, 2015, p.329). During early childhood education, family participation is comprised of numerous factors including family training activities, such as training meetings and conferences; family communication activities, such as telephone calls/SMS services, booklets, tape and video recordings, photos, bulletin boards, bulletins, newsletters, correspondences and communicative notebooks, portfolios and development folders, meetings, school visits, visit times, e-mail, social media, internet-based applications such as webpages and request boxes; the participation of parents regarding educational activities; individual interviews; parental participation in management and decision-making processes; family support programs; and home visits (Çelik & Daşcan, 2014, pp. 265–275; Temel et al., 2015, pp. 327–330).

By means of home visits involving familial participation, teachers have the chance to know the child and family better, and may even gain the family's confidence regarding their child's education and care. The dynamics of relationships change in home visits; the teacher is perceived as a guest rather than as a "power" figure (Çelik & Daşcan, 2014, p.276). During this process, attention should not be paid accepting or not accepting food or drink offers but rather on observing the child (Temel et al., 2015, p.355). The duration of home visits should not exceed one hour; five to ten minutes of this time should be spent in greeting, 20–30 minutes should be spent in the child's room or in another place wherein families and their children usually interact. The rest of the time can be spent on certain routine activities such as taking photos and talking about suggestions regarding the school. After the home visit, the teacher should leave by expressing their thanks and pleasure at the meeting. It is important that the information that teacher obtains during such home visits should only be used in supporting the child's education (Decker & Decker, 2005).

Home visits should be planned beforehand and conducted accordingly. The best method for scheduling such a meeting involves the teacher calling the parents of the child and making an appointment. It is important that the time chosen for the visit is one in which the family members are together; the teacher must be punctual and to spare enough time for the meeting. As parents will probably be wearing casual clothes during the home visit, the teacher should dress less formally than they would in school (Aktaş-Arnas, 2013, p.107). An activity that can be conducted with both the child and the parent should be prepared prior to the visit. If there are any developmental areas regarding the child that need particular support, such activities should target this area. It is stated that during home visits teachers should not take notes, but rather should subsequently record their observations on a "Home Visit Observation Form" (Temel et al., 2015, p.355). Teachers should start home visits after the child's adaption period to the school, after the point at which they have come to know the child, after informing others about home visits during the first group meeting of the first term, and after conducting individual interviews with parents. Each child's home should be visited, but priority should be given to those children with special needs and children who have experienced behavioral change. Another individual such as a consulting teacher, teacher, manager, or vice manager should accompany the classroom teacher. This helps to support and strengthen school–family relationships while enhancing a family's loyalty towards the school while developing a sense of belonging (Çelik & Daşcan, 2014, p.276, Temel et al., 2015, p.355). During home visits, parents feel more comfortable and communicate with the teacher more, sharing their ideas and feelings and asking questions. In this way, the teacher learns the family's values, their attitudes and

behaviors towards the child, and their expectations of the child. On the other hand, a child's self-respect is enhanced since they believe that the teacher cares about them and values them (Çelik & Daşcan, 2014, p.276). The purposes of home visits are to observe the child's home environment and collect information about the child and their family; this is done by observing the relationship between the child and their family, as well as their relationship with other people in the child's home environment. Information is also collected on the child's adaptation to the school environment and regarding areas in which the child shows promise and development; the teacher can inform the child's family about their interests, needs, and abilities, as well as any activities their child may have taken part in at school. This helps the family to develop a positive perspective toward the school and propounds the idea that, in order for the school to reach its goals, common actions should be taken. This enables familial participation in regard to solving any problems the child might have while developing the child's behavior, enabling the child's participation in educational activities and establishing communication between teacher and child. It also helps the teacher assess and utilize the house as a learning environment, allowing them to try and enriching the environment of those children whose home conditions are insufficient (Çelik & Daşcan, 2014, p.276).

During home visits, teachers can show the parents how to use routine household chores as a learning experience. They can plan games or activities that the child and family can play together; for example, the making or devising of a toy using a process in which the child has contributed. The teacher plays games, tells stories, and observes the child and their parents. The teacher can give information or feedback on any point regarding the child's education while evaluating the home visit experience and planning their next visit (The Ministry of National Education (MoNE), 2006). During particular visits, teachers can exchange information with parents and provide them with beneficial resources; they can guide parents on how to access and where to find the information they need regarding further issues (Cömert & Erdem, 2011, p.32).

The home visit is a family participation activity that provides several benefits for the child and their teacher and family. According to educators, successful schools encourage family participation and use applications that help families voluntarily participate in classroom activities and evaluate their children's schoolwork. These efforts enhance the child's academic success (Loomans, 2014). It is thought that those families who are willing to resolve and address issues concerning their child's education, and who cooperate more readily with their child's school, include children who are more effective in cognitive, social, and affective aspects. Additionally, during home visits, teachers and families can develop their knowledge and understanding of

each other through mutual interaction, aiding and potentially achieving continuity of learning for their child. In addition to these considerations, the aim of this study is to evaluate the perspectives of preschool teachers towards home visits.

The research question for this study is: *“What are the perspectives of preschool teachers regarding home visit practices?”*

2. Importance of the Study

This study will reveal the perspectives of preschool teachers toward home visit practices and will pioneer the curricula regarding family participation. Some teachers use home visits more frequently than others, though some state that they do not make visit homes due to the certain reasons, such as safety concerns. Sometimes home visits may not be conducted in an appropriate way. This study will contribute existing literature in the field regarding the importance of home visits and the practices concerned.

3. Research Aim

The main aim of this study is to evaluate the perspectives of preschool teachers regarding home visit practices. In this respect, certain sub-aims shall be evaluated:

1. Do preschool teachers conduct home visits?
2. What are teachers' perspectives regarding the necessity of home visits?
3. When do the teachers conduct home visits?
4. How often do the teachers conduct home visits?
5. How do teachers plan home visits?
6. What do teachers think about the benefit of home visits from their own perspective, the perspective of the child and the perspective of the child's parents?
7. Who accompanies the teachers during their home visits?
8. What is the duration of a home visit and how does this duration differ from one home visit to the next?
9. What are the issues upon which teachers perform observations and interviews during home visits?
10. What do the teachers do in terms of food and drink offers during home visits?

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Model

This is a qualitative study and uses a general survey study approach. A qualitative study can be described as a study in which the qualitative process is followed during the data collection stage; it utilizes methods as observation and interviews, among others. Qualitative research generally intends for the cases or subjects under investigation to be investigated in their natural environments through a realistic and holistic perspective. This study uses an interview technique, one of the most widely used data-collection methods among qualitative research studies. Interviews are powerful techniques that are used to reveal human experiences, and emotions. By means of content analysis, it is hoped that interviews will allow the researcher to access those concepts explaining the collated data (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006).

4.2 Sample and Population

The population of this study is comprised of preschool teachers working in Mersin city center. The sample used in this study is composed of 30 preschool teachers working in nursery classes and kindergartens under the Mezitli and Yenişehir districts directorate of national education. The maximum variation method was used to select the same for this research; this method is a selected through purposive sampling method and is determined on a voluntary basis and per ease of access.

The demographic information regarding the preschool teachers who participated in this study is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Information of Preschool Teachers Who Participated in the Study

Demographic characteristics		N	%
Gender	Female	30	100.0
Age	25–35	12	40.0
	36–45	13	43.3
	46–55	4	13.4
	56+	1	3.3
Teaching experience (in years)	0–4	1	3.3
	5–9	9	30.0
	10–14	9	30.0
	15+	11	36.6
Marital status	Married	25	83.3
	Single	5	16.7
Classroom population	10–15 people	3	10.0
	16–20 people	7	23.3

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	21–25 people	9	30.0
	26–30 people	10	33.4
	31+ people	1	3.3
Institution	Independent kindergarten	7	23.3
	Nursey Class	23	76.7
Education Status	Associate Degree	2	6.7
	Bachelor's Degree	27	90.0
	Master's Degree	1	3.3
Inclusive Student	Present	6	20.0
	Not Present	24	80.0
Total		30	100.0

4.3 Data Collection Tools

This study used a general information form and semi-structured interview form; the forms included questions developed according to the expert opinions of the researcher. The interview form was composed of two sections: the first section included questions regarding the participants' background, such as information concerning their age, gender, educational status, marital status, the type of institution they worked at, teaching experience, classroom population, and the presence of inclusive students; the second section was composed of 13 questions on the perspectives of preschool teachers regarding home visits.

To ensure its internal validity, the form was subjected to assessment by three field experts. Data collected in the interviews were coded separately by both the researcher and a faculty member with qualitative research experience; these were then compared and the consistency rate calculated. At the end of the consistency rate calculation, the Cohen's kappa coefficients mean score was found to be .84. This reveals that the experts had a high level of coherence.

4.4 Data Collection and Analysis

Within the scope of this study, all preschool education institutions under the Mezitli and Yenisehir districts directorate of national education in Mersin were first contacted. Subsequently, teachers working in the nursery classes and kindergartens within these institutions were informed about the importance and purpose of the research. Overall, 30 preschool teachers were selected as participants on a voluntary basis, and the semi-structured interview forms were copied by the researcher. Interviews were conducted by the researcher at silent and secure locations within the schools. The researcher asked the interview questions to the interviewee sequentially and received their responses and feedback. Each interview took 30 minutes. The most frequently mentioned concepts for each research question were handled, quantified, and their frequency and

percentage values calculated. The obtained data were coded and reported. The collected data were analyzed using a descriptive analysis method wherein the data were summarized and interpreted according to the literature-driven predetermined themes. Responses from participants were presented in quotation marks in the study so to highlight their significance.

5. Results and Discussion

Within the scope of the study, the teachers were first asked whether they conducted home visits and, if so, whether there was a particular group of students for whom they home visits. Data regarding this question are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Frequencies and percentages of the teachers' perspectives regarding home visits

Perspectives regarding doing home visit	f	%
I do it for all children	10	33.3
I do it for children with problems	10	33.3
I visit enthusiastic parents	6	20.0
I do not do home visit	4	13.4
Total	30	100.0

As seen in Table 2, 26 of participants stated that they conducted home visits, while four of them stated that they do not. Of those participants who said they conducted home visits, some said they conducted them for all children (f=10) while others said they conducted them for children with problems (f=10). Security concerns and the disregard for the importance of home visits (f=3), and being unwilling to allocate time for parents out of school time (f=1), were among the reasons given by those participants who preferred not to conduct home visits. Some of the participants' perspectives regarding this issue are as follows:

T.3. *"I don't do it. It is hard to make time for this."*

T.12 *"I do home visits for all children in turn."*

T.23. *"I do it in order to facilitate the adaptation of students with problems to the classroom."*

It was reported that a vast majority of teachers conducted home visits. Teachers attached priority to home visits for those children whose behaviors had changed at school or at home, and those children with special needs (Çelik & Daşcan, 2014).

Teachers' perspectives regarding the necessity of home visits are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Frequencies and percentage distributions regarding the necessity of home visits

Perspectives Regarding the Necessity of Home Visits	f	%
Home environment is observed and information about the home environment is obtained.	9	30.0
Information regarding family and familial affairs is obtained.	5	16.7
It enables one to identify the child.	5	16.7
It provides information exchange between the teacher and parent and develops the cooperation.	5	16.7
It supports the development of the child.	3	10.0
It encourages the teacher and parents to consider themselves as valuable.	2	6.6
It facilitates the adaptation of the child to the society.	1	3.3
Total	30	100.0

Considering the participants' perspectives regarding the necessity of home visits, perspectives regarding the observation of the home environment and obtaining information about the environment (f=9) were the most frequently mentioned points highlighted by participants.

T.8 *"It is necessary because of the reasons such as observing their home environment, making them feel that I care about them, and communicating without any difficulty."*

These results are consistent with those of existing literature. Home visits provide children and their parents the ability to express themselves comfortably, and helps teachers to come to know parents better. Furthermore, it supports the development of children, facilitates the adaptation of children into the school, and improves the school-parent cooperation. Parents can express their thoughts and feelings more comfortably during home visits and students' self-esteem can be improved with the thought that their teachers care about them (Aral et al., 2002).

Participants' perspectives about their timing of home visits are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: The frequencies and percentages regarding the timing of home visits

Timing of home visit	f	%
Out of school	24	80.0
Within school time	5	16.7
At weekends	1	3.3
Total	3	100.0

As seen in Table 4, the distribution regarding the participants' timing of home visits is as follows: out of school time (24), within school time (5), at weekends (1).

The results revealed that most teachers conducted home visits at an appropriate time. Teachers might conduct home visit within school time due to the insufficient education and the consideration of parents' requests. It is thought to be more appropriate to conduct home visits outside of school time since the intent is to support the child they are visiting. Teachers should get an appointment for time in which all family members are present, and the parents are available (Aktaş-Arnas, 2013, p.107).

Participants' perspectives regarding the frequency of their home visits are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: The frequencies and percentages regarding the frequency of home visits

Frequency of home visits	f	%
Once a week	11	36.7
Three times a week	9	30.0
Two times a week	6	20.0
Never	4	13.3
Total	30	100.0

As seen in Table 5, of the participants consulted; 11 teachers conducted home visits once a week, nine teachers conducted home visits three times a week, and six teachers conducted home visit two times a week. Four teachers stated that they did not conduct home visits.

Considering the frequency of the teachers' home visits, it can be asserted that they conducted a sufficient number of home visits. However, these results may not reflect the actual situation as, even though some studies underlined the family participation, they revealed that teachers do not conduct home visits with sufficient frequency. Abbak (2008) conducted a study with 288 parents and 61 preschool teachers in Adana when investigating the effect of family participation in preschool educational programs in terms of teachers' and parents' perspectives. The results of her study revealed that the participation in management and decision-making processes and home visits are not adequately included. Ünüvar (2010) reported in her study that family participation practices carried out in schools failed to meet the intended purposes and that, even though teachers claimed that they put in effort regarding family participation, parents indicated otherwise. Eğmez-Köksal (2008) highlighted differences in the perspectives of parents and teachers regarding family participation practices; according to the parents in the study, teachers seemed to be putting in effort for family participation; in fact, they did not adequately apply the methods and techniques needed to successfully attain achieve family participation.

The participants' perspectives regarding the number of home visits for each child during an academic year are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Frequencies and percentages regarding the number of home visits for each child during an academic year

The number of home visits for each child during an academic year	f	%
Once	14	46.7
Twice	12	40.0
Never	4	13.3
Total	30	100.0

As seen in Table 6, 14 teachers conducted a home visit for each child once each academic year, 12 teachers conducted a home visit for each child twice each academic year, and four teachers conducted no home visits during an academic year. Some participants' perspectives regarding this issue are as follows:

T.1. *"I have not done yet. I will do it once."*

T.30. *"I do it twice."*

The number of home visits teachers completed for each child might vary depending on the situation in question. Conversely, the teachers might conduct fewer home visits due to large classroom sizes ranging between 16–30 students. It is recommended that teachers visit each child separately, that these visits should be conducted twice a year or as much as possible with priority given to those behavioral changes and those with special needs (Çelik & Daşcan, 2014).

The results on participants' perspectives regarding the appropriate time for home visits are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: The frequencies and percentages regarding the appropriate time for home visits

Appropriate time for home visits	f	%
When appropriate in the academic year	12	40.0
After knowing the children	6	20.0
Once a date is determined with the parents	5	16.7
I cannot reply	4	13.3
When the parents deem appropriate	3	10.0
Total	30	100.0

The data regarding the teachers' plans of home visits are presented in Table 7. As seen in the table, teachers scheduled particular times for home visits for the following reasons: when they are appropriate (f=12), after they have come to know their students (f=6), once a date has been determined with the parents (f=5) and, when the parents

deem appropriate (f=3). Four teachers opted not to answer this question. Some of the participants' perspectives regarding this issue are as follows:

T.30. *"According to students' level of development and their progress in the first 1.5 months of the academic year."*

T.26. *"I order the visit according to my students' situation in the classroom."*

Teachers should make planning and set particular purposes prior to conducting a home visit. Teachers should start home visits after students' adaptation to the school is ensured; students are—without doubt—known by the teacher; parents are informed of home visits during a parent meeting in the first term; and they make one-to-one interviews with parents in these meetings (MoNE, 2013, p.80; Temel et al., 2015, p.355). Home visits must be conducted in a planned way because due to certain reasons such, as the importance of continuity in preschool education, the fact that parents know their children much better than anyone else, and because this presents parents' with the chance of them being informed about the educational program (Oktay & Unutkan, 2003).

Participants' perspectives regarding the benefits of home visits to children are presented in Table 8a.

Table 8a: The frequencies and percentages regarding the benefits of home visits to children

Benefits of home visits to children	f	%
Solves children's problems	9	30.0
Supports children's development	7	23.3
Increases children's self-confidence	6	20.0
Makes children feel that they are valued	5	16.7
Provides the adaptation to the school	2	6.7
I do not think that it is beneficial	1	3.3
Total	30	100.0

As seen in Table 8a, the participants indicated that home visits are beneficial to children in terms of: solving their problems (f=9), supporting their development (f=7), increasing their self-confidence (f=6), making them feel valued (f=5), and facilitating adaptation to the school (f=2). One participant stated that home visits were not beneficial. Some of the participants' perspectives regarding this issue are as follows:

T.13. *"It makes the child happy to see the teacher at his or her home."*

T.2. *"It is beneficial in terms of measuring students' behavior in his or her family environment."*

Home visits are effective educational implementations in terms of observing children in their natural settings, providing the opportunity to know them better, and

overcoming problems through cooperation with parents. Parents can express their thoughts and feelings comfortably during home visits and students' self-esteem can be improved with the thought that their teachers care about them (Aral et al., 2002).

Yaşar-Ekici's (2017) study was conducted using 400 children in the 5–6-year age group from a total of 12 preschool educational institutions (seven public and five private) in İstanbul reported that the general social skills, social cooperation, social independence-acceptance and social interaction skills of the children whose parents participated in the parent participation programs were higher than the skills of the children whose parents do not participate. Furthermore, the study found that there is a significant difference between the children whose parents do and do not participate in the parent-participation programs.

Participants' perspectives regarding the benefits of home visits to teachers are presented in Table 8b.

Table 8b: The frequencies and percentages regarding the benefits of home visits to teachers

Benefits of home visits to teachers	f	%
Knows children, solves their problems more easily	19	63.4
Knows parents and receive support from them	4	13.3
Not beneficial in terms of spending time	3	10.0
I don't find it beneficial	3	10.0
Becomes more experienced	1	3.3
Total	30	100.0

As seen in Table 8b, while 24 teachers thought that it is beneficial to teachers, six teachers thought that it was not beneficial. Of the teachers who did not think that it was beneficial to teachers, three thought that it was not beneficial in terms of spending time and three thought that it was not a beneficial implementation. Overall, 19 teachers considered it beneficial because it helped them solve their students' problems more easily because it helped them know their students better (f=19). Four teachers indicated that they receive parents' support and one teacher indicated that they became more experienced. Some of the participants' perspectives regarding this issue are as follows:

T.17. *"I meet people from different social, cultural etc. backgrounds, I know my students."*

T.6 *"It is beneficial in terms of providing me to know the child's home environment and parents"*

Home visits help the teacher to know the child and their parents better. Therefore, in considering the conditions in the child's house the child's educational

experiences can be better organized, their problems more easily overcome, and greater parental support received.

The participants' perspectives regarding the benefits of home visits to parents were presented in Table 8c.

Table 8c: Frequencies and percentages regarding the benefits of home visits to teachers

Benefits of home visits to parents	f	%
Establishes cooperation with the school	13	43.3
Feel valued	8	26.7
Knows the teacher well	3	10.0
Motivates them	3	10.0
Raises awareness	3	10.0
Total	30	100.0

As seen in Table 8c, the teachers proposed the following benefits of home visits to parents: establishing cooperation with the school (f=13), feeling valued (f=8), knowing the teacher well (f=3), motivating them (f=3), and raising awareness (f=3). Some of the participants' perspectives regarding this issue are as follows:

T.8. *"Parents can notice their attitudes regarding their child and the environment they provide for their child."*

T.17. *"Parents feel more comfortable since they know the teacher to whom they entrust their children better."*

These results corroborate those of the existing literature. Home visits facilitate the formation of the school–parent cooperation. Parents can find opportunities to share the issues related to their child during home visits. Problems can be overcome easily with cooperation. In home visits, teachers can guide parents on how and where they can assess the information they need concerning other issues (such as health and social rights) (Cömert & Erdem, 2011, p.32).

Participants' perspectives regarding who accompanies them during their home visits are presented in Table 9.

Table 9: Frequency and percentages regarding who accompanied teachers during their home visits

Accompanying individuals during home visits	f	%
Visited alone	20	66.6
Some of my colleagues	5	16.7
The entire classroom	2	6.7
Some other parents	2	6.7
A few students I selected from the classroom	1	3.3
Total	30	100.0

As seen in Table 9, preservice teachers preferred to conduct home visits either alone ($f=20$), with some of their colleagues ($f=5$), with the entire classroom ($f=2$), with some other parents ($f=2$), and with a few students they selected from their classroom ($f=1$). Security concerns might be the reason as to why a teacher prefers not to conduct home visits alone. A further individual—such as a school counselor, a teacher, principal or vice principal should be present during a home visit. Therefore, the school–parent cooperation can be supported and improved and, subsequently, parents' feelings of attachment toward the school may increase (Çelik & Daşcan, 2014, p.276).

Participants' perspectives regarding the duration of their home visits are presented in Table 10a and their perspectives regarding those factors affecting the duration of the visit are presented in Table 10b.

Table 10a: Frequencies and percentages regarding the duration of home visits

Duration of home	f	%
35–45 minutes	9	30.1
1.5–2 hours	7	23.3
20–30 minutes	6	20.0
50–60 minutes	4	13.3
It depends	4	13.3
Total	30	100.0

As seen in Table 10a, the duration of the teachers' home visits ranged from 20 minutes to two hours. The distribution of the ranges is as follows: nine teachers spent 35–45 minutes, seven teachers spent 1.5–2 hours, six teachers spent 20–30 minutes, and four teachers spent 50–60 minutes for their home visits. Four teachers avoided stating a time interval and merely stated that “it depends”.

The duration of the teachers' home visits was found to vary. However, a home visit should last between 30–40 minutes. During this period, the focus should be on the parent–child observation (MoNE, 2013, p. 81).

Table 10b: Frequencies and percentages regarding the factors affecting the duration of their home visits

Factors affecting the duration of home visits	f	%
Insistence of the parents	25	83.3
Information exchange about the child	2	6.7
Observations made	2	6.7
Activities conducted at home	1	3.3
Total	30	100.0

The insistence of parents (f=25) was the most frequently mentioned factor concerning the factors affecting the duration of home visits. In addition, the information exchange about the child (f=2), observations made (f=2), and the activities conducted at home were among the other factors the participants highlighted.

The insistence of parents was found to be the most effective factor determining the duration of a home visit. This result may stem from teachers' desire to get along with parents because parents' willingness is a prerequisite of efficacious teacher-parent cooperation. It is easier to establish this cooperation between parent and teacher if there is a close relationship between them.

Participants' perspectives regarding the topics of observations and interviews during home visits are presented in Table 11.

Table 11: The frequencies and percentages regarding the topics of observations and interviews during home visits

The topics of observations and interviews	f	%
Home environment	26	26.0
Child's behavior and adjustment disorders	24	24.0
Child's health and development	22	22.0
Family affairs	9	9.0
Child's behaviors in the home environment	8	8.0
Informing about preschool education	5	5.0
Child's and parents' thoughts and expectations regarding the school	4	4.0
The activities parents can conduct at home	2	2.0
Total	100	100.0

As seen in Table 11, the home environment is the most frequently observed/interviewed topic during teachers' home visits (f=26). Additionally, the child's behavior and adjustment disorders (f=24), child's health and development (f=22), family affairs (f=9), informing about preschool education (f=5), the child's and parents' thoughts and expectations regarding the school (f=4), and the activities parents can conduct at home (f=2) were among other topics participants mentioned. Some of the participants' perspectives regarding this issue are as follows:

T.10. *"I observe the child's room, belongings, and parents' behaviors. We make an activity. I guide them how to make such activities at home."*

T.22. *"I observe the child's behaviors in the family. I interview on the differences between the school and home life."*

These topics indicate what a teacher should do during a home visit. As stated in the Preschool Education Program and the Integrated Family Support Education Guide (OBADER) published by MoNE in 2013, the following can be observed in a home visit:

the general social and emotional environment at home; parents' behaviors towards the child; the child's behavior towards their parents; relationships among siblings; the presence of a grandmother, grandfather, or other adults at home and their communication with the child; the child's communication with the aforementioned adults; the child's problems at home; the ways to overcome the aforementioned problems; home rules; home rules set up with the child; the child's responsibilities at home; whether the child maintains their school responsibilities at home; the activities that the child enjoys partaking in at home; the activities parents partake in when spending time with their child; the appropriateness of the educational materials the child uses regarding their age and developmental characteristics; conditions in the house, such as the presence of a personal room, bed etc.; the child's nutrition and health, and the cleanliness and hygiene of the child's home (MoNE, 2013, p.81).

Participants' perspectives regarding food or drink served by parents during home visits are presented in Table 12.

Table 12: Frequencies and percentages regarding food/drink served by parents during home visits

Perspectives regarding food-drink served during home visits	f	%
I do not accept	17	56.7
I accept	9	30.0
It depends on the family	4	13.3
Total	30	100.0

As seen in Table 12, most participants stated that they do not accept food/drink served during their home visits (f=17). Nine participants stated that they accepted food/drink served, while four participants stated that their decision depends on the family. Some of the participants' perspectives regarding this issue are as follows:

T.18. *"I do not accept food/drink served except cologne and candy."*

T.19. *"I inform my own family about the date and place and tell parents that I will come to drink a cup of coffee prior to the visit. The visit lasts approximately an hour. Parents sometimes serve food/drink. In such cases, I say that I cannot stay too long. I leave excusing time; yet, I try to be careful in order not to make them feel that I do not like them."*

The service of food/drink is important in home visits. Parents sometimes might not accept home visits because of the necessity to make food/drink service during the home visit. Prior to their visit, teachers should definitely inform parents that there is no need to plan any food/drink service and that the visit is conducted only to discuss the issues regarding their child. Aktaş-Arnas (2013, p.107) highlighted that teachers' respect for the hospitality of the cultural group to which parents belong is of critical importance

for a visit to be effective. The fact that the teacher accepts a cup of tea or coffee—a simple refreshment—means a lot to many families; therefore, teachers should not refuse simple refreshments. If they do not accept any refreshments, they should politely inform the family about this in a way that does not hurt their feelings.

6. Conclusion and Implications

This study was conducted to determine the perspectives of preschool teachers regarding home visits; the following results were obtained:

Of the 30 preschool teachers who participated in this study, 26 stated that they conducted home visits, while four of them stated that they did not conduct home visits because of security reasons. Of those teachers who did conduct home visits, some stated that they only visited the children with problems ($f=10$), while others visited all children ($f=10$).

Regarding preschool teachers' perspectives on the necessity of home visits, the perspectives that home environment is observed and information about the home environment is gathered were most frequently mentioned.

When teachers were asked about the timing of their home visit, 24 of them stated that they visited homes outside of class hours, five teachers stated that they visited homes during class hours, and one teacher stated that they conducted visits during the weekend. As a result, it was found out that most of the teachers conducted home visits at an appropriate time.

When the frequency of home visits was evaluated, 11 teachers stated that they conducted a visit one a week; nine stated that they conducted a visit three times a week, six stated they conducted a visit twice a week, and four teachers said they did not conduct any home visits. When teachers were asked about how many times they visited each child's home during an academic year 14 of the teachers stated that they visited each child's home once, 12 stated that they visited each child's home twice, and four teachers said that they made no such visit.

When the data regarding teachers' planning of home visits were analyzed, 12 of the teachers stated that they conducted home visits when they were available, six teachers stated that they conducted home visits after they had come to know the children better/well, five teachers stated that they conduct home visits at a time they had determined with the child's family, three teachers stated that they selected a time when the family of the child was available, and four teachers declined to answer the question, stating that they found it inappropriate.

Teachers' perspectives on the benefits of home visits regarding the child are as follows: solving a problem for the child, supporting the development of the child, enhancing the self-confidence of the child, enhancing the child's feeling that they are considered to be important, and the adaptation of the child to the school. One of the teachers considered visits to be without worth or use. When the perspectives regarding the benefits of home visits for teachers were analyzed, 24 teachers considered them to be beneficial, and six teachers considered them to be useless. Of the latter group, three of the teachers who found home visits stated that this was because they wasted teachers' time, while the remaining three teachers stated that they did not consider them to be beneficial. Overall, 19 of the teachers considered visits to be beneficial because they were able to solve problems regarding the child easily once they had got to know them better (f=19). Additionally, four teachers stated that they gained parental support and that they gained experience as a teacher. When home visits were investigated in terms of their benefits for parents, some teachers thought that parent-school cooperation was improved by means of home visits (f=13), some teachers thought that it made parents feel important (f=8), some teachers thought that it made the parent think they knew the teacher (f=3), gets motivated (f=3), while others thought that it increased parental (f=3).

When the findings concerning those individuals who accompanied teachers during home visits were analyzed, the majority of teachers (f=20) stated that they visited alone, five teachers stated that they visited with other teachers, and one teacher stated that they usually visited homes with a few other children selected from the child's class.

The duration of home visits ranged from 20 minutes to two hours, this duration mostly depended on the parental insistence. Excepting this, informational exchange about the child, observations, and the activities conducted at home also affected the duration of home visits.

Teachers mainly conducted observations and interviews on the home environment (f=26) during home visits; additionally, they also observed behavioral and adaptation problems of the child (f=24), the child's health and development (f=22), family relationships (f=9), the child's behavior in their home environment (f=8), informing parents and the child about the preschool education (f=5), discussions regarding the child's and parents' thoughts about and expectations from the school (4), and those activities the family can conduct at home (f=2).

When preschool teachers' behaviors about the food/drink offers during home visits were investigated it was found that 17 of the participating teachers did not accept

such offerings during home visits, while nine stated that they accepted the offers; a further four teachers said that it depended on the family serving.

In line with the results of the study, some recommendations and implications for practice and further research are made by the author per the findings of this study. Further studies regarding home visits of preschool teachers should be conducted.

Legal regulations that will enable the participation of preschool teachers should be explored and teachers can be supported regarding this issue.

More comprehensive studies regarding the perspectives of preschool teachers can be conducted and the perspective of parents can also be analyzed. Additionally, the perspectives of teachers and parents can be analyzed and compared.

In addition to collecting data based on interviewing, observation can also be conducted for data triangulation.

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