

KNOWLEDGE ABOUT, PRACTICE IN, ATTITUDE TOWARD RISKY PLAY: A
CASE STUDY FROM A SCHOOL IN TÜRKİYE

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Dedicated to my Father..

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from a School in Türkiye

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ABSTRACT**KNOWLEDGE ABOUT, PRACTICE IN, ATTITUDE TOWARD RISKY PLAY: A
CASE STUDY OF TEACHERS FROM A SCHOOL IN TÜRKİYE**

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MA in Curriculum and Instruction

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This study was conducted to examine teachers' knowledge about, practice in, and attitude toward risky play. Participants of the study are coming from different cultures and educational backgrounds. With so, the study is to be examining the effect of culture towards risky play. This case study investigates a school that is using two different educational programs; the classes in the school are all taught by one national and one international teacher. Participants for the study are chosen via purposeful and convenience sampling methods. Data for the study collected via semi-structured and one-on-one interviews. Data analyses revealed that teachers' nationalities are not a determining factor on knowledge about, practice in and attitude toward risky play. Indirectly, their upbringing, the country they grew up in and the year of teaching experience influenced their attitudes towards risky play.

Keywords: early childhood education, play, risky play, international teacher, national teacher, teacher attitude

ÖZET

RİSKLİ OYUNLARA KARŞI BİLGİ, UYGULAMA VE TUTUM: TÜRKİYE’DE BİR OKULDAKİ ÖĞRETMENLER İLE VAKA ÇALIŞMASI

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Bu çalışmanın amacı Türk ve uluslararası okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin riskli oyuna yönelik bilgi, uygulama ve tutumlarını incelemektir. Öğretmenler farklı kültürlerden ve eğitim geçmişlerinden gelmektedir. Bu sayede çalışmada kültürün riskli oyuna bakış açısı incelenmiştir. Bu çalışma nitel araştırma olarak yürütülmüştür. Çalışmada sunulan okulun iki farklı eğitim programı kullanması ve her sınıfta bir Türk ve bir uluslararası öğretmenin görev alması nedeniyle durum çalışması yöntemi araştırmaya uygun yöntemdir. Araştırmanın katılımcıları amaçlı ve uygun örneklem yöntemleriyle seçilmiştir. Katılımcılar araştırmayı sürdürmek için uygun nitelikte katılımcılar arasından seçilmiştir. Araştırmanın verileri yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme sorularıyla bire bir görüşmelerde toplanmıştır. Veri analizleri, öğretmenlerin milliyetlerinin riskli oyunlara yönelik tutumları üzerinde belirleyici bir faktör olmadığını ortaya koymuştur. Dolaylı olarak, yetiştirilme tarzları, büyüdükleri ülke ve öğretmenlik deneyimi yılı, riskli oyunlara karşı tutumlarını etkilemiştir.

Anahtar kelimeler: erken çocukluk eğitimi, oyun, riskli oyun, uluslararası öğretmen, ulusal öğretmen, öğretmen tutumu

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Play has a significant role in children's life since it helps them to grow in a healthy way. It has been seen as children's work and as well to teach young children by their teachers (Paley, 2004). Play is a long-standing concept which has been mentioned in several resources by many researchers throughout history (Dockett, 2010). While play contributes to numerous developmental areas of children, it also allows teachers to observe this development over time (Saracho & Spodek, 1995). Play helps children to learn how to behave in a society while supporting their physical development, adaptation skills, creativity, and academic development (Ciolan, 2013). Besides, with games played in early years, children develop cause and effect relationships, learn about math and science concepts, and learn how to use their emotional skills (Somolanji Tokić & Borovac, 2020). To sum up, play is a vital tool for children to start exploring the world at an early age.

In the 21st Century, many changes have occurred in people's lifestyles. One of these changes is children's choice of type of play and therefore the way they explore the world through play (Mellecker et al., 2012). Technological games that require less physical activity have started to replace social emotional games, such as playing house and street games, which were predominantly in the world of children's life in the past (Torres et al., 2021). Both the transformation of children's play type with the development of technology and the adult's reaction to children's play due to safety concerns related with changing world conditions play a role in this change of play choice (Fletcher, 2020). This change is also observed in schools where children

spend much of their time during the day (Parinduri, 2014). Though children need to be exposed to play that helps them develop their social and emotional skills, it seems activities that aim to develop children's cognitive skills are receiving more attention from teachers in schools nowadays (Sevimli-Celik, 2017). In contrast to this trend, the school that took part in this study values the importance of play and their teachers make sure to add play to the daily schedule, which is why this school is important in this study. Considering the importance of play in children's development and in early childhood education, this study explores deeper in the literature and shares background, problem, purpose, research questions, significance, and definitions of the key terms.

Background

Play has always been a big part of children throughout history. It has been documented in several ways such as through paintings and literature. Play also has many definitions in the literature. While the historical definitions of play include more expressions and free play activities (Read, 2006), the modern definitions define play as part of children's development (Yiran Zhao et al., 2019).

Additionally, children's play is essential for children's social, emotional, and physical development. Play benefits children as they grow up and learn about social rules, physical development. It also helps them to develop adaptation skills, foster their creativity, and learn (Ciolan, 2013). In other words, play in the early years helps children in transitioning from the home environment to the school environment and to become ready for school by improving their cause-and-effect skills, allowing them to practice different social roles, teaching them literacy, mathematics, and sciences skills, and developing social and emotional skills (Somolanji Tokić & Borovac, 2020).

It is crucial that children play and discover the world through play. Risky play, a form of play, is considered as important and valuable when children are exploring the world through play (Di Norcia et al., 2018). Risky play involves climbing, running around, and using sharp items as tools to play with. Besides the activities and the tools, location of the play is also one of the factors that categorizes a play to be risky play. For instance, children can play next to a cliff and along waterways, they can explore unknown places with freedom (Hansen Sandseter, 2007). According to Stephenson (2003), many children like to involve themselves in the activities that allow them to take risks and they look for these types of activities to join in.

In addition, risky play is the best way to keep kids safe, as it encourages kids to take risks and learn to protect themselves at the same time (Cevher Kalburan, 2014). Stephenson (2003) notes that even schoolgrounds can be set up as risky play areas. Since children learn about the world through their experiences, it is important that they are provided with learning spaces that they can take risks in. Such spaces are essential and should be created and provided by teachers.

In recognition of the remarkable benefits of play for children, it is seen in many schools that teachers take play into consideration when offering learning experiences to children. According to a study, teachers expressed their desire to continue children's developmentally appropriate practices in early years level with the help of the play (Baker, 2014).

The Early Years Department of the school where this study took place implements two educational programs: the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program (IB PYP) and the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) Early Childhood Program. These two programs have supportive frameworks of play in

early childhood. MoNE Early Childhood Program states clearly that play is vital for this age group and learning activities should be designed in a play-based concept. Suggestions on examples of play are also provided in the guidelines of the MoNE Early Childhood Program (MoNE, 2013). Moreover, not only it supports interdisciplinary and child-centered learning, but it also includes cultural objectives such as learning about the founder of the Republic, Atatürk.

One aspect that IB PYP is different from MoNE is that IB PYP emphasizes on international mindedness where learners learn to appreciate their own cultures and accept other cultures for what they really are. It also aims to help children become more balanced, communicative, caring, and knowledgeable (IBO, 2009). Moreover, IBO aims to focus on risk taking skills on young children as one of its learner profiles (2009). These two programs, MoNE and IB PYP, and the Early Years Department's play-based philosophy are the frameworks that guide teachers at the school in this study.

Although many teachers value the importance of risky play in the early years (Stephenson, 2003), they have some concerns during the implementations. These concerns include the role of curriculum, policy, limited teacher education and qualification, and parental attitude (Bubikova-Moan et al., 2019). As the importance of risky play in early childhood is a known fact, adult interaction should be considered since it affects children's risk-taking behaviors in a positive or negative way (Cevher Kalburan, 2014). Therefore, even if education programs include play in their curriculum guides, some teachers may have mixed feelings about implementing play, especially risky play, as part of their teaching practice. In this study, opinions of teachers from different cultures were taken since two teachers from different nations work together in the same classroom of chosen school. Different cultures

have an impact on people's point of view regarding different issues (Dockett, 2010). The reason for this is to reveal the factors affecting knowledge about, practice in, and attitude toward risky play, if any, and thus pave the way for the inclusion of risky play in teachers' education plans.

Problem

One of the most important features of the play is that it contains risk by its nature; children especially crave this challenging, somewhat scary, and exciting experience during their games (Beate et al., 2011). The importance of risky play expands when it is considered that children explore the world with their senses in early ages and risky play is one of the most effective tools to achieve this (Sandseter, 2007). As noted, the most effective way to keep children safe is to let them take risks while playing (Cevher Kalburan, 2014). However, some adults are inclined to reduce children's risk during play because they think they are keeping them safe (2014).

In today's world, parents focus on protecting their children physically and emotionally. Therefore, they direct children to more non-physical and stable activities (Mani et al., 2012). Although it seems understandable for parents to keep children as safe as possible, children need opportunities to take responsible risks. Thanks to responsible risk, they have a chance to learn about their body limits and to be able to make decisions that will keep themselves safe in these situations (Sando et al., 2021).

Risky play should take place in schools and should be supported by the school community (Stephenson, 2003). As Little (2006) stated, children need to be encouraged to take responsible risks in their play in school settings and there should be policies to provide this opportunity. The encouragement of teachers who spend lots of time with children during the day, regarding risky play is also crucial.

According to the research, teachers are aware of how important risky play is in the early years and it should be included in the curriculum clearly (Baker, 2014). Although this is the fact, many teachers have reservations about adding risky play to their daily plans. These reservations are related to the lack of risky play in the curriculum or attitude of parents regarding risky play (Bubikova-Moan et al., 2019). Although risk taking has benefits to children, teachers, similarly to parents, hesitate to give children this opportunity because of the safety concerns. Teachers also hesitate to include risky play in their lesson plans as there is no clearly stated benefit of positive risk taking within the curriculum and there are no supportive activities that will guide teachers and students (Waters & Begley, 2007). It can be beneficial for children's development and teacher's planning if the benefits of risky plays and how risky play can be implemented in the lessons are clearly defined and included in the curriculum.

With the current changes in today's world, schools and parents started to put more focus on academic achievement of children. Academic achievement such as numeracy skills and letter sounds take precedence over the social development of young children. As a result of desired higher academic achievement, play is underestimated and limited. Play has started to be underestimated even in preschool and kindergarten ages (Bassok et al., 2016). Beside the focus on academic achievement, with the increasing safety issues in the world according to previous decades, adults started to concern more about children's physical safety in order to protect them in the future (Brussoni et al., 2012). These changes in the world end up with changing attitude of adults receding themselves from letting children take risks during play.

This trend is unfortunate since as Little stated in 2006, children need to be encouraged to take positive risks in their natural environments, such as schools. To estimate safety issues, these risk-taking opportunities can be guided by policies and be included in curricula.

It is important that training programs and curricula provide guidance to help teachers successfully and safely involve their students in risky play opportunities (Stephenson, 2003). Unless it is the teacher's own initiative, it is challenging for teachers to support their student's development in terms of risky play when there is a lack of information provided in the school curriculum. Even though several studies have mentioned the myriad benefits of risky play for children, there is no clear and supporting research to encourage teachers and adults to support them to take risk or to teach them how to take responsible risk during play.

With both safety reasons and academic development in schools, it has become vital that teachers' understanding of risky play, their support and awareness of the subject are essential. In the light of this information, this research focuses on this research focuses national and international teachers' knowledge about, practice in, and attitude toward risky play.

Purpose

The main purpose of this study is to examine national and international teachers' knowledge about, practice in, and attitude toward risky play in early years education. Therefore, the data were collected from an international preschool with help of interview technique from qualitative research strategies. As the participants of the study are from different nationalities, this study aims to identify national and international teachers' knowledge regarding risky play. With the participants' different educational backgrounds, the second aim of this study is to investigate the

national and international teachers' practices in risky play. Thirdly, this study also aims to explore the national and international teachers' attitude toward risky play. Variation of nationalities of participants allows the study to discover if nationality has an impact on teachers' knowledge, practice, and attitude.

Research Questions

This study addresses the following questions:

1. What is the teachers' knowledge about risky play?
2. What are the teachers' practices in risky play?
3. What is the teachers' attitude toward risky play?

Significance

Recent studies show that children's risky behaviors, playing games that involve elements of risk, and playground materials that are considered as dangerous are restricted by adults (Niehues et al., 2015). The aim of this study is to learn about the point of view of the teachers who teach in early years and come from different cultural backgrounds about children's risky play and to learn whether they support risky play or not. While learning about the teachers' attitude toward risky play in early childhood, the study undertakes the mission of raising the awareness of the concept of risky play among teachers and other stakeholders.

It is known that supporting children's risky play is important in terms of their social, emotional, and physical development as well as their decision-making mechanisms (Little et al., 2011). For this reason, raising the teacher's awareness about risky play contributes directly to children's development. Beside raising teacher awareness, considering teachers' concerns mentioned above, including risky play concept in IB Primary Years Program and MoNE Early Childhood Education programs clearly would be relieving for teachers and significant in terms of

supporting risky play at schools. It is known that the programs used in early childhood education as well as the teachers and the opportunities provided by the programs to teachers are vital and have an important effect on the quality of education (Currie, 2001). In this context, the findings about risky play will put an importance on the existence of risky play in the teaching programs, therefore in child development in early years.

Definition of Key Terms

Risky play: A breathtaking and exciting version of children's play that may also include physical injury (Sandseter, 2009). Risk has both negative and positive outcomes although it is thought as negative most of the time (Little & Eager, 2010). In this study, risky play takes place as a positive risky play unless it is written negative risky play.

International Baccalaureate Organization: It is an international organization that provides worldwide international education and diplomas and aims to grow students who are risk-takers, knowledgeable, self-confident, and kind. (International Baccalaureate Organization [IBO], 2009).

Primary Years Program: Within the scope of the International Baccalaureate Program (IB), it is a program for students ages between 3 to 12 that aims to create an internationally common curriculum framework and raise students who have the ability to think internationally (International Baccalaureate Organization [IBO], 2009).

International teacher: Teachers who are eligible for teaching out of their home countries and have assorted cultural background and teaching experiences (Zen et al., 2022).

National Teacher: Teachers who have Turkish citizenship are mentioned as national teachers in this study since the study was conducted at school in Türkiye.



CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

In a world that is changing constantly, it is important to support our children in all developmental areas and follow any necessary scientific progress to help the children adapt to these changes with the best practices. In the past, children were cared for at schools in early ages and the purpose of nursery schools was to keep children safe during the day while their parents were working (Peralta, 2011). Gradually, this need to be just cared for, evolved to a place for children where they were supported in their development. Through new scientific development in this field of child development, new practices have been added when necessary. The power of play is one of the new practices and a vast amount of research brings up the importance of play in early years (Skrzypczak, 2022). Lately, besides the importance of play, risky play is also a topic that needs to be examined in terms of its benefits (Brussoni et al., 2017).

Since play and risky play are important for children, as stated, the purpose of this study is to examine teachers' attitude toward risky play in early years. To do so, knowing about the history of early childhood education, role of play in early childhood, risky play and related literature regarding teachers' attitude toward risky play are crucial. This chapter offers an extended explanation of the following: early childhood education and its history, play in early childhood education, risky play in early childhood education and teachers' attitudes towards risky play in early childhood education.

Early Childhood Education

Early childhood education aims to establish a well-prepared plan for children ages between 0 to 6 to provide cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development (Lunenborg, 2000). Although these features are known by teachers and educators, early childhood schooling did not start with this purpose in history (Bates et al., 1994).

The need for early childhood education and care (ECEC) centers emerged when women labor started increasing in most European countries (Kamerman, 2000). Women started to take an active role in working life in the 90s, children needed to be cared for in a safe place. For this reason, day care centers and similar places were established to cater to children under the age of 3 (Theobald et al., 2013). They did not offer any formal educational programs for children to achieve specific learning outcomes for children, on the other hand, they existed for the good of community development (Kamerman, 2000).

Although it emerged from a place to care for children whose parents had to work during the day, after a while, governments started to create standardized early childhood education frameworks and established ECEC programs mostly with the goals of socialization, helping children cognitively and preparing children for school readiness (Kamerman, 2000). With the increasing awareness of early childhood education in history, experts update the outcomes continuously and the importance of play in early childhood education becomes more obvious over time although it was underestimated and ignored at the beginning (Nestor & Moser, 2018).

Play in Early Childhood Education

Play is defined as a core feature of childhood (Somolanji Tokić & Borovac, 2020). It has a vital role in children's development since it supports their physical,

social, cognitive, language and self-care developments. “Let my playing be my learning, and my learning be my playing” is a strong quotation told by philosopher Johan Huizinga that explains how play takes a place in children’s life. Beside the importance of child development, play also has educational benefits that makes it even more meaningful in the school setting of early childhood education (Singer, 2013). One of the findings of a research shows that school readiness is more effective on children who attend a play-based curriculum kindergarten rather than academic based one (Somolanji Tokić & Borovac, 2020). Research shows that children who have been given the opportunity to play have better mathematical skills (Reikerås, 2020). Moreover, it is found that there is a strong link between children’s play and their physical and mental health (Dodd et al., 2021).

Risky Play in Early Childhood Education

While talking about benefits of play, it is known that there are different types of play for children such as fantasy play, social play, constructive play, and games with rules (Reikerås, 2020). Risky play can be included in any of these play categories during the game. Risky play is mostly described as a breathtaking, exciting play experience that is done voluntarily by children (Sandseter et al., 2021).

Benefits of Risky Play

Risky play has a possibility for one to be subjected to hazard but at the same time, children learn to manage risk and their limits (Ball, 2002). Children have natural curiosity, and it makes them challenge themselves to satisfy their curiosity (Garrick, 2010). As taking risks is innate for children, they create their own opportunities for it. If the play is too easy, a child will challenge it by standing on a swing or jumping out of a swing (Sawyers, 1994).

Like play in general, risky play has positive impacts on children's well-being (Sando et al., 2017). Although there is numerous research about benefits of different types of play during early childhood education, risky play in early childhood education brings a different aspect of children's development. According to Cevher Kalburan (2014), risky play gives children an opportunity to understand the real world where they will face risky situations, need to find solutions to problems and make decisions to solve these problems. In the study, Cevher Kalburan explains the features of risky play as high-speed games, using dangerous tools, dangerous situations such as falling from high, watersides, rough and tumble games and staying away from adult's supervision (Hansen Sandseter, 2007). Definition and examples of the risky play allow teachers and adults to provide opportunities for children to experience risky play in a safe environment. However, there are some reasons for them to refrain from doing it. The main reason is to keep children safe and healthy.

Cleaning the way for the children while they are growing and helping them with risky situations is not a good way to keep them safe. Giving more opportunities to take risks during the early childhood years increases their self-confidence and self-awareness of themselves (Stephenson, 2003). By doing so, they will be able to make more balanced decisions in life in the future (Cevher Kalburan, 2014). Besides Cevher Kalburan's insight about the importance of risky play, there are studies indicating teachers' role and attitude toward risk taking in the classroom.

Teacher Role and Opinion of Risky Play

In addition to the importance of risky play in childhood, teachers' awareness about benefits of risky play is critical for children to be able to take these risks. Obee et al. (2021) studied with kindergarten students, teachers, and administrators over 2 months and took field notes. Moreover, they had semi structured interviews with four

teachers and four parents to find out the opportunities given to children regarding risky play. According to the results of observations and interviews, teacher and adult's perceptions are found critical to support risky play. The study findings show that encouraging children to take risks increases their ability to manage their own decisions in the long term (Obee et al., 2021).

As supported by the research, teachers' attitude toward risky play have an enormous importance in children's life (Little, 2006). It designates how children feel about risk taking during their lifespan. While the teacher's role is critical, a study by Davies (1997) explains teachers' position during children's risky play. According to the interviews he conducted with preschool teachers and his observations from children's play time, teachers tend to interfere with inappropriate and unsafe behaviors during play time. Teachers focus on the physical and social benefits of the play but ignore how important risky play is for children to improve their decision-making skills (Davies, 1997). Another research finding shows that teachers hesitate to allow children to make their decisions and attend risky play because of the government legislation that comes with safety concerns (Little, 2006). Taking physical risk and attending risky play is an individual choice that also affects teachers' decision whether to allow children to take risk or not (Cook et al., 1999).

All these studies show that adults' attitude toward risk taking is hindered by the safety issues of risky play. Although the best way to keep children safe is letting them take risks in early years as stated before, keeping children physically safe by not allowing them to play has become a priority for many parents.

Besides parents, teachers also share this concern as found in Hansen-Sandseter and Sando's research in 2016. In the research findings of a survey done by 876 early childhood managers, it is stated that teachers have concerns about allowing

children to join risky play. The fear of injury has an impact on teachers to prevent them from allowing risky play (Hansen-Sandseter & Sando, 2016). Risky play has a great importance in children's life for their healthy and safe development. Although adults are aware of this importance, their concerns regarding safety issues need to be resolved.

In the light of the research findings stated above, it can be claimed that encouraging risk taking can be provided by adults within a specific framework at school. Cultures can learn from each other, and studies conducted in how to embed risky play in the early childhood education.

Risky Play in the Turkish Context

Some preliminary works that are carried out in Türkiye generally investigate the parental perspective of risky play in early childhood. The study conducted with Turkish parents shows that parents with higher risk experience in their lives are more tolerant while letting their children play risky play (Yılmaz & Çığ, 2021). In contrast, another research reveals that most of the parents hesitate to let their children play the games that include risky play factors, even though these parents are tolerant to risky play and support their children to take risks (Ungar, 2009). Another study on risky play (Elmalı, 2021) stated that while allowing risky play in Turkish families, there is no link between their children's gender and allowing risky play. In addition, a positive correlation was found between parents' levels of allowing risky play and social skills, and a negative correlation with problem behavior (2021). Another study proposes that parents are not willing to let their children play risky plays since they think risky play is dangerous and they do not want their kids to be hurt (Tandoğan, 2022). On the other hand, another study carried out with Turkish teachers shows that teachers think that risky play helps children to develop gross motor skills and self-

confidence, yet schools do not have proper risky play materials or environment to enrich the games (Chancellor & Cevher-Kalburan, 2014).

Moralı (2019) conducted a thesis on risky play by teachers in Türkiye, considering the physical characteristics of the school. In the study, teachers' opinions were taken based on Sandseter's risky play categorization. It was concluded that while the teachers allowed some risky plays that support motor skills such as playing at height, they did not allow high-speed plays and rough-and-tumble games. Teachers in the same study stated that the physical environment in schools had deficiencies in the category of risky plays with dangerous tools and places where students can hide (2019). Banko et al. (2018) investigated playgrounds in Ankara, Türkiye and they concluded that playgrounds are not supporting children to experience risky play. Güler and Demir (2016) found in their study with Turkish preschool teachers that teachers approached risky play cautiously because of external factors. First, teachers provided justifications as to the situations that could threaten children's health, then the attitude of parents and administrators, and then the physical infrastructure problems as the justification for being cautious (2016). Turgut Kurt (2022), in her thesis, found that there are many factors affecting the attitude of preschool teachers working in Türkiye towards risky play and listed them as preschool type, presence of teachers' aides, and daily outdoor time. Similarly, the reactions of the administrative management and families also affected the teacher's attitude towards risky play negatively (2022).

CHAPTER 3: METHOD

Introduction

This chapter aims to convey the methodological procedures of the present study. It consists of research design, context, participants, instrumentation, method of data collection and method of data analysis.

Research Design

The study was designed with a qualitative research design approach. The data of the research was collected via semi-structured, one-on-one interviews. Data collection for qualitative research is done mostly by words via interviews and collecting ideas of how people make sense of their environment are the features of the qualitative research design (Fraenkel et al., 2019).

Studies that are sought for research questions regarding real-life problems, collecting data by involving participants and analyzing the data by themes with the help of the researcher's interpretations are defined as qualitative research (Fraenkel & Wallen 2009). Going along with the definition of qualitative research, this study aims to collect data via interviews with teachers from a specific school and so is conceptualized as a qualitative research design. Qualitative research uses strategies (research of methodology) such as narrative research, phenomenology, or case study (Creswell, 2013). Among these methodologies, case studies focus on the personal meaning of the deep inquiry of the problem (Haladyna & Rodriguez, 2013). It is a research strategy that involves the empirical questioning of a particular current phenomenon in its real-life context by applying multiple data sources (Yin, 2009). Case studies are also specialized by examining subjects such as events, settings,

programs, communities, and interdisciplinary systems (McMillan, 2000).

Researchers may use a variety of methods to conduct a study to get deeper information about one of these specialized subjects, but still specific methods have more advantages to conduct that study (Yin., 2009). This case study takes place in one of the unique schools in its district. Being one national teacher and one international teacher in every early years class and implementing two different educational frameworks to carry on the education at school are specific features of this school. This case study has its own real-world application which is an attitude of national and international teachers regarding risky play in this school. In this regard, it is important to not only focus on the meaning of the answers to the interview questions, which is one of the agencies of data collection of case study, but also to inquire deeper. To achieve these aims, the study focuses on the following research questions.

1. What is the teachers' knowledge about risky play?
2. What are the teachers' practices in risky play?
3. What is the teachers' attitude toward risky play?

By means of qualitative methods presented above; the study aims to gather critical information of national and international teachers' knowledge about, practice in, and attitude toward risky play.

Context

The study which is intended to be done as a case study, was carried out at a foundation school in Çankaya, Ankara. For case study, Fraenkel et al. (2019) stated "Typical cases are a student who has trouble learning to read, a social studies classroom, a private school, or a national curriculum project" (p.434). The basic principle of the case study is to gain comprehensive and meaningful knowledge

about the topic and the way to do this is to work in-depth with a particular group, school, classroom, or similar structures (Lodico et al., 2010). Therefore, this study focuses on deeply a school and teachers in there.

The school has its own unique features as a K-12 foundation school in Türkiye. It implements both the Ministry of National Education, Preschool Education Program and the International Baccalaureate, Primary Years Program. In IB PYP, play has an important role on children development in terms of inquiry, well-being and learning (IBO, 2009). Furthermore, children enjoy, practice and develop new skills while playing (2009). Also, there are adequate time for children to have play in daily schedule in the school. Moreover, each early year class has two homeroom teachers, one of them is a national teacher and the other one is an international teacher. Both teachers oversee the class responsibilities equally. Although the majority of the students have Turkish nationality, the school aims to create an international environment since it has international staff members and some international students. As so, it is recognized as an international school by Turkish Ministry of Education and CIS (Council of International Schools). The school uses English as a common language. The school aims to promote academic, aesthetic, physical and social growth within international culture. In addition, the preschool part of the school consists of a single-storey building. The building has a playground. In the lower part of the playground, there is a basketball court, an area for cycling and a sandpit. In the upper part of the playground, there is a playhouse, seesaw, toy kitchen and grass area. With all these components, the school has an appropriate environment to be a preschool.

Participants

The research was carried out with 10 teachers from different nationalities. Participants of the study are a group of early childhood teachers who work at the specified school in Ankara, Türkiye. All 10 teachers in pre-kindergarten attended the research voluntarily, and they are female. First five teachers who have Turkish nationality received their teacher training education from different national universities in Türkiye and the other five teachers with different nationalities who are recruited as international teachers received their teacher training from different universities around the world. Demographic information of five national and five international teachers participating in the study was obtained during the interviews and is shown in Table 1.

Participants were chosen via convenience and purposive sampling technique since they are the heterogeneous group to be able to collect data from teachers who have different nationalities. In other words, the researcher had a specific purpose as investigating national and international teachers who work in the same classroom and these participants served this purpose of the researcher (Fraenkel et al., 2019). It is also a convenience sampling since the participants attended the study voluntarily and they were available for the interviews (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Instrumentation

Semi-structured interview questions were formed via literature review by the researcher. Questions were generated to serve the purpose of the study and to answer research questions. Interview questions examined by the thesis supervisor and two experts in early childhood education. After their feedback and point of views, interview questions were reorganized and finalized to 26 questions. These questions were divided into three sections which were background questions, knowledge

questions and opinion questions. The first part of the interview questions was about the background of the participants and there were six questions. These questions elicited teachers' education level, teaching experience, nationalities and play and risky play choice when they are young. The second part of the interview questions was about teachers' opinions about play, risky play, and implementations of risky play at school setting and there were 11 questions. The third part was about teachers' opinion about risky play and there were nine questions. Interview questions are given at Appendix A.

Method of Data Collection

The data was collected via semi-structured interviews with preschool teachers regarding their knowledge about, practice in, and attitude toward risky play. To collect the data, interview questions were designed by the researcher with literature support and improved by the supervisor and two experts in the early childhood education field. Necessary permissions from the university ethical committee and Ministry of National Education were taken to implement the study (see Appendix C and D).

The interviews were conducted during the months of April and May in 2022. The interviews took place outside working hours and in a place where the teachers would feel comfortable, and the interview would not be interrupted by others. It was stated at the beginning of the interview that the teachers could leave this study, which they participated voluntarily, whenever they wanted. The interviews were audio recorded with the permission of the teachers and then transcribed. The teacher and the researcher sat opposite each other at a table and placed the tape recorder in the middle of the table. The researcher had questions on the paper in front of her. The interviews with the teachers lasted on an average of 25-35 minutes. Interviews were

conducted in Turkish language which is their mother tongue with national teachers (Turkish Teachers) and translated to English by the researcher. Since the researcher is able to use Turkish and English proficiently, translation would not be needed by third parties. Meanwhile, the interviews were conducted in English with international teachers since they teach in English, and they were proficient in English.

Methods of Data Analysis

In this research, thematic coding technique were used for data analysis from qualitative research techniques. The codes obtained from the data analysis are quantified within the categories in a logical framework and sometimes counting is assisted (Creswell, 2013). In this study, the data were systematically examined in the same way and made ready for interpretation. Creswell (2013) described a strategy for analyzing the gathered and transcribed data. According to Creswell (2013), transcribed data should be investigated in detail and codes should be created; then codes can be reduced into themes or categories to make the interpretation easier.

This analyzing process was done by the researcher. After the interviews were transcribed into text, another researcher who is also an expert in the early childhood education field analyzed the transcribed interviews collaterally the researcher for inter-coder reliability. The analysis of four of the interviews was done by another expert separately from the researcher to prevent threat of internal validity, researcher bias (Fraenkel et al., 2019). To ensure the reliability of the research, it is checked whether there is consistency between the coding of different researchers and whether the codes are handled in the same way (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). To carry out this analysis, the researcher informed the expert about the interview questions and the analyses were made after reaching a common point with four interviews about risky

play. The intercoder reliability should be over 80% (Patton, 2002). In the last case, the consistency between the coders was 89%.

In the upcoming section, the answers to the research questions derived from the analysis of the data collected from the interview questions. In line with these analyses, the findings were interpreted and compared by the researcher in the discussion section of this thesis.



CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter presents the results of qualitative data obtained from interview questions. Results of the interview questions were analyzed through thematic coding from qualitative analysis of transcribed texts. There are four parts in this chapter as follows: demographic information of the participants, knowledge of the national and international teachers about children's risky play, practice of the national and international teachers in risky play and attitude of the national and international teachers toward risky play. With all these parts in this chapter, it was aimed to present the national and international preschool teachers' knowledge about, practice in and attitudes toward risky play.

Demographic Information

This part presents the preschool teachers' demographic information who were the participants of the current study to better understand the context where the data were collected. Demographic information of the teachers covers their age, nationality, education level, whether they have a course or training related to risky play or not, years of teaching experience, games that they had played when they were children and whether they faced risky situations in their childhood.

There are 10 preschool teachers as the study participants, and they are teachers who work in the same school as the researcher. As mentioned above, the school applies a special program that requires one national and one international teacher in the preschool classroom at the same time. The context of school was

indicated in Chapter 3. Since all the participants are women, gender was not discussed in the study and was not mentioned in the demographic information.

The average age of teachers is 37,4 and all teachers are qualified for teaching in early years. In other words, most of the teachers hold their undergraduate degree in early childhood education or they have required certifications to be preschool teachers (see Table 1). According to the demographic information gathered during the interviews, teachers are from Türkiye (n=5), United States of America (n=2), South Africa (n=1) and Russia (n=2). National teachers are referred to as “TNx” (such as TN1, TN2, TN3, TN4, TN5) and international teachers are referred to as “TIx” (such as TI1, TI2, TI3, TI4, TI5) while sharing the results of the study.

Table 1

Demographic Information of the Teachers

Teachers	Nationality	Age	Undergraduate Degree	Year of Experience
Teacher 1 (TN1)	Turkish	32	Early Childhood Education	3
Teacher 2 (TN2)	Turkish	34	Early Childhood Education	12
Teacher 3 (TN3)	Turkish	30	Early Childhood Education	8
Teacher 4 (TN4)	Turkish	36	Early Childhood Education	6
Teacher 5 (TN5)	Turkish	35	Early Childhood Education	13
Teacher 6 (TI6)	USA	30	Elementary Education	5
Teacher 7 (TI7)	USA	28	Early Childhood & Special Education	5
Teacher 8 (TI8)	South Africa	64	Early Childhood Education	40
Teacher 9 (TI9)	Russia	42	Education & Linguistic	10
Teacher 10 (TI10)	Russia	43	Psychology with Pedagogic Formation	16

At the beginning of the interview, teachers were asked to introduce themselves including their age, nationality, education level, whether they have a

course or training related to risky play or not, years of teaching experience, games that they played when they were child and whether they faced risky situations in their childhood. Most of this information is summarized and presented in Table 1 and detailed explanations are presented below.

The first participant is referred to as TN1. She is 32 years old and from Türkiye. She received her high school degree from teacher's training school and received her undergraduate degree from the department of early childhood education. She also has a master's degree in the same department. Her graduate research focused on playgrounds, and she has published an article examining playgrounds in terms of allowing risky play of children. She has three years of teaching experience in early childhood education. When she was young, she played traditional street games, played with baby dolls and cars. She mentioned that since her family lived in a small neighborhood, she did not face any risk or did not attempt to play risky plays.

The second participant (TN2) is 34 years old and from Türkiye. She received her high school degree from teacher's training school and received her undergraduate degree from the department of early childhood education. She did not take any specific course about risky play during her 12 years of teaching experience. TN2 mentioned that as she did not have a chance to play outside a lot, she would play dramatic games and do coloring activities instead. In addition, she did not have risky play experience when she was young.

The third participant (TN3) is 30 years old and from Türkiye. She graduated from vocational high school in child development and received her undergraduate degree from the early childhood department and her master's degree from child development and education. She has eight years teaching experience and she remembered that risky play was slightly mentioned in one of her courses during her

undergraduate education. She played traditional street games like hopscotch when she was young, and she has memories of risky play such as jumping from high and playing places unseen by adults.

The fourth participant (TN4) is 36 years old and from Türkiye. She has her undergraduate degree from the department of early childhood education. She took a “play” course, but the content of the course did not include risky play in a specific way. She has six years of teaching experience. As a child, TN4 played outside a lot and she has memories of falling from high places, so she is scared of playing risky plays.

The fifth participant (TN5) is 35 years old and from Türkiye. She graduated from the department of early childhood education and has 13 years of teaching experience. She did not take any courses regarding risky play. When she was young, she played traditional street games. She also played in places where her parents could not see her and played rough and tumble games.

The sixth participant (TI6) is 30 years old and from the United States of America. She graduated from the education department, and she is qualified to teach pre-kindergarten through 2nd grade students and has five years of teaching experience. She did not take any courses about risky play in college, but she received training and read about it after she realized how important it is. She played football, board games when she was a child. She mentioned that she and her friends had walked on the ice, caught snakes, and run around as risky play.

The seventh participant (TI7) is 28 years old from the United States of America. She graduated from the department of early childhood and special education. She has five years of teaching experience. She did not take any course

about risky play. She played street games when she was a child such as hopscotch and hide and seek and has no memory of playing risk play.

The eighth participant (TI8) is 64 years old and from South Africa. She has a bachelor's degree in education specializing in early years and foundation stage. She has taught early years for 40 years. She has not taken any courses about risky play, but she has heard about it from some online courses. As a child, she played outside a lot. Also, she mentioned that she was in some risky circumstances; for example, she climbed trees, played in the road with a ball, and ate things that she did not know from trees.

The ninth participant (TI9) is 42 years old and from Russia. She has a bachelor's degree in Education and Linguistics, and she is qualified to teach English to children from early years. She has 10 years of teaching experience in early years. She did not take a risky play course. When she was young, she liked to play calm games like board games, and she has no memory of playing risky play.

The tenth participant (TI10) is 43 years old and from Russia. She is a clinical psychologist and has pedagogy education besides the certificate to teach English to young learners. She has 16 years of teaching experience. As a child, she played outside a lot. She slid down from very high places, walked on the ice and ate berries when she described risky play memories from her childhood.

Table 2

Participants' Experience of Childhood Games and Risky Situations

Teacher	Games Played during Childhood	Facing Risky Situations
TN1	Traditional street games Dramatic games	No facing risky situation

Table 2 (cont'd)*Participants' Experience of Childhood Games and Risky Situations*

Teacher	Games Played during Childhood	Facing Risky Situations
TN2	Traditional street games Dramatic games Coloring activities	No facing risky situation
TN3	Traditional street games	Jumping high Playing in places without adult supervision
TN4	Playing outside	Falling from high
TN5	Traditional street games	Playing in places without adult supervision Rough and tumble play
TN6	Football Boardgame	Walking on ice Catching snake Running
TI7	Traditional street games	No facing risky situation
TI8	Playing outside	Climbing tree Playing with ball in the road Eat things from tree without knowing what it is
TI9	Boardgame	No facing risky situation
TI10	Playing outside	Sliding from very high Walking on ice

Table 2 presents participants' experience of childhood games and risky situations that they have been in. All teachers in the study played outside and

generally preferred traditional street games. Three national teachers out of five experienced risky situations in their childhood, such as being in high places and playing without adult supervision. On the other hand, three international teachers out of five experienced risky situations in their childhood, such as walking on ice and being in high places. They also experienced dangerous situations such as catching snakes and eating possibly poisoned food from trees.

To sum up, all 10 preschool teachers (five national and five international) from different backgrounds and nationalities formed the participants of the study. Their demographic information was summarized in Table 1 and Table 2. After having participants' information, the data results were analyzed for their knowledge, practice and attitude regarding risky play. The next parts in this chapter present the analyzed results by comparing their nationalities.

Preschool Teachers' Knowledge about Risky Play

This study was designed to elicit the knowledge of preschool teachers from different nations about risky play by asking different types of interview questions. While examining their interview in general, comparison between national and international teachers' knowledge were explored.

Preschool Teachers' Definition of Risky Play

This part of the chapter presents the national and international teachers' knowledge about the definition of risky play. After examining their knowledge about play and risk as separate terms, risky play definitions by different teachers were derived. The analysis shows that there is no difference while defining the terms of play, risk, and risky play in regard to nationalities of teachers.

All teachers were asked to explain what play was, and most of the participants described the 'play' term frequently with joy, expression, instinctive and

freedom words. Apart from these frequent definitions, some definitions were shared below.

“Play is children’s work and children learn through play. It helps them to move out of their comfort zone.” (TI4)

“Play as a way to help children’s self-expression and it helps their development in many ways such as emotional and physical development.” (TN4)

“If you look at kittens and puppies, you see they are rough and tumble playing and rolling because it is innate, and children are born with that innate desire. If we take play away, something will not develop.” (TI3)

Briefly, all teachers from different nationalities generally indicate that play is innate, and it helps children to develop and express themselves and it has joy. Before moving on to the definition of risky play, the ‘risk’ term was examined during the interviews. Teachers often used “danger” while defining this term. Some teachers’ definitions toward the risk were presented below.

“Risk, my first thought is danger...” (TN1)

“I would say risk is something that is not entirely safe, sort of opposite of the safe.” (TI2)

Beside defining the risk as danger, some teachers mentioned that risk also means trying something new and leaving one’s comfort zone. The examples are below representing this analysis.

“...if you do something that is over your current ability and is you take risk and leave your comfort zone, you will move ahead and you will definitely win.” (TI4)

“Trying something you don’t normally do is risk.” (TI3)

Apart from all these, TN1, who trained specifically in this field since one of her research areas was risky play, categorized risk as being both positive and negative. While she defined negative risk as something dangerous, she defined positive risk as an opportunity for one to improve herself, a challenge. It can be concluded that teachers who have education on risky play are more aware of the impact of risky play.

To sum up, regardless of nationalities, some teachers believed that risk was something negative and verbalized it as danger while some of them defined it as trying something new, leaving their comfort zone, and improving oneself. On the other hand, the teacher who has a specific interest and knowledge toward the topic will be able to see both the positive and negative aspects of risk.

Finally, teachers' knowledge about risky play and the analysis are presented below. When answers given by the teachers regarding the terms of play, risk and risky play were analyzed, it was found that some teachers' definitions of play and risky play overlapped regardless of their nationalities.

In connection with the definition of risk, more than half of the teachers said that risky play was trying something new and children's moving out of their comfort zone. The examples below demonstrate their knowledge as trying something new and moving out of their comfort zone.

"Risky play is a challenge. When they see challenge, children need to think out of box and need to bear different situations." (TN1)

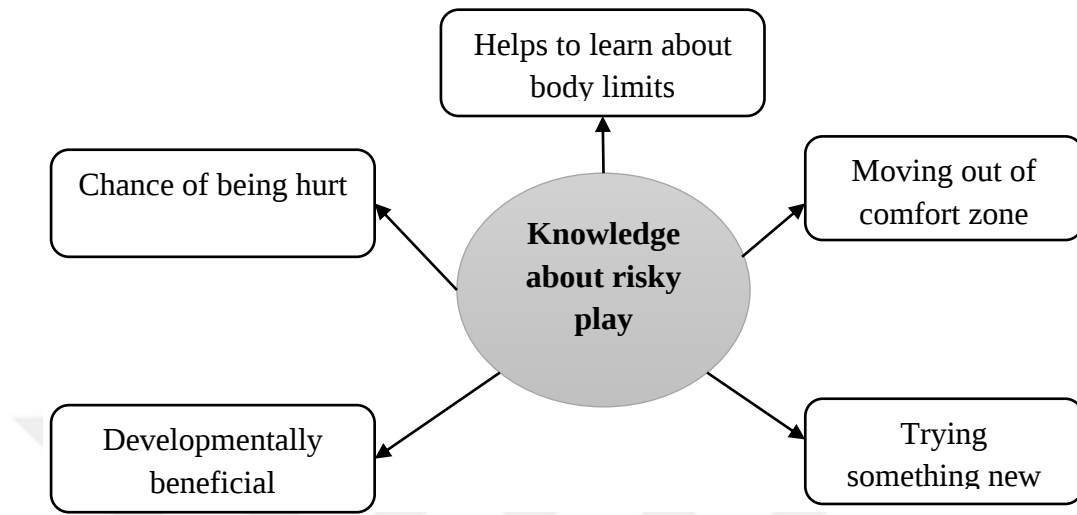
"It is something new, it could be new friend to play with, new material to try or even a new play/situation." (TI1)

"...something new and it could be even mixing colors." (TI2)

Besides these comments, only TN2 mentioned usage of different kinds of materials such as loose parts or toys while talking about risky play. She mentioned playground materials could be challenging for a child and it could be a risky play. The material topic was not mentioned before by other teachers while defining play or risk.

TN3 and TI3 mentioned that risky play includes the chance of being hurt and they highlighted that risky play should be happening in a secure environment provided by adults. Similarly, while defining the term play, none of the teachers mentioned adult supervision, even though they mentioned dangerous situations. Consequently, generally teachers relate the risky play definition with risk rather than play regardless of nationality.

Briefly, teachers generally stated that risky play is when children try something new and move out of their comfort zone which helps children in their development. The analysis of the data demonstrated that although teachers see risk as danger, they are more likely to support risky play in a secure environment condition. To sum up, there are overlapping concepts of risk and risky play definitions while there are no common points of play and risky play definitions. Also, some teachers brought up new points at risky play definition apart from combination of play and risk definition. Knowledge of preschool teachers about risky play summarized below in Figure 1.

Figure 1*Knowledge about Risky Play***Preschool Teachers' Practice in Risky Play**

At this part of the data analysis, preschool teacher's practices in risky play is presented. At some point of the interview, participants' experiences were supported by Sandseter's (2013) risky play category explanations such as walking on the ice, using sharp tools, and climbing up. It is found that some of the teachers include risky play into their schedule and some of them do not stop children when they see risky play is happening among them. Commonly, participant's comments were the requirement of adult supervision during risky play.

Some teachers from all nationalities admitted that they gave a place for risky play in their daily schedule. Below, teachers' supportive explanations toward allowing risky play in the daily schedule are presented.

"In daily life, risky play can be supported via providing different materials such as loose parts materials and using a hot glue gun, also using height in the playground." (TN1)

“Letting them climb, playing chasing games, using cutting tools, swinging opportunity are the examples that we are doing regularly.” (TI2)

Beside allowing risky play during the school hours, some teachers from all nationalities mentioned the importance of adult supervision and support during the risk play. They believed that adults can be role models for children to encourage them to perform risky play and with active supervision, adults can protect children from dangerous situations or injuries. A majority of teachers including national and international teachers mentioned that they do not interfere with risky play unless it is harmful for children, but they do not specifically add it to their activity plans. Some teachers were not actually creating an opportunity for risky play, but they were also not stopping them from doing it. Some quotations displayed below support this analysis.

“...there should be observation during risky play to prevent injuries.” (TN2)

“There was a child who was scared of climbing to the climbing equipment although he is capable, we encourage him, demonstrated for him and let him start with climbing to steps. Now he can climb all the way up.” (TN3)

Supervision and observation are also critical points while supporting children during risky play. Teachers are eager to stop the play if they feel someone is going to be hurt.

After having the information that preschool teachers have space for risky play in their daily schedule, the data analysis revealed when teachers allow risky play to happen. Daily schedules include in-class free play time, outside recess time, learning center time, lunch, snack time and quiet time. Teachers were also given freedom to mention any other time of the school hours that were not included explicitly in the daily schedule.

There were different time slots that were chosen by teachers, but the most common ones mentioned by the teachers were recess and free play time. All teachers mentioned that outside recess is the time where risky play is most visible. Examples for this recess focus are presented below.

“Recess is a good time for risky play since children have more space and a variety of equipment to use.” (TN2)

“Most of the accidents happen at recess time and it is evidence that risky play is happening during this time slot. (TN3)”

“Children have more opportunity to move when they go outside and they are exposed to things that can be counted as risky play.” (TI3)

After outside recess time, another most common time slot mentioned by teachers from all nationalities was in-class free play time. They stated that this time slot supports children's creativity and risk-taking skills as it provides different opportunities to play with different materials. Teachers' ideas toward in-class free play time to support risky play demonstrated below.

“Play time...It is kind of a creativity time and children are exposed to different kinds of materials that they do not know, and it is kind of risky.”
(TN5)

“When we think about the in-class activities, free play time where children take risks since they have more freedom to play with different kinds of materials and any friends that they want.” (TN2)

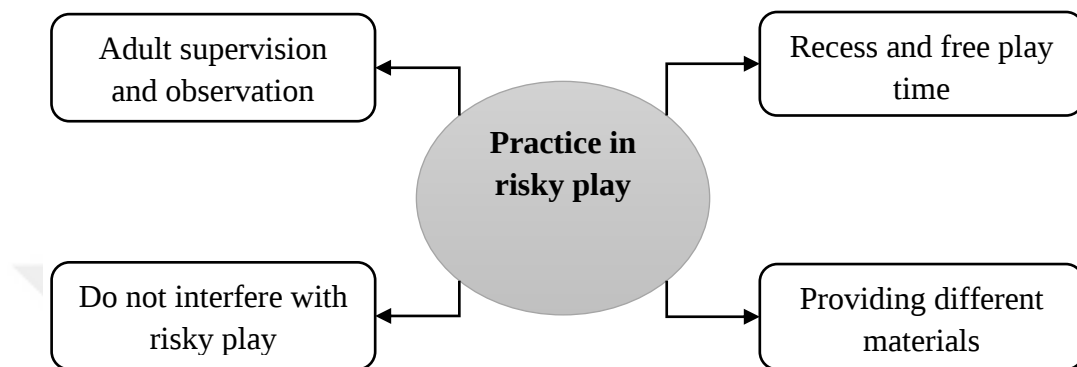
Apart from the recess time, teachers consider unstructured time periods (in-class free play time) are the time that children can have risky play. In other words, teachers emphasized that they did not plan an activity or a learning environment that

includes risky play, yet they allow children to enjoy risky play whenever it happens.

Practices of preschool teachers in risky play summarized below in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Practice in Risky Play



Preschool Teachers' Attitude toward Risky Play

This part of the chapter demonstrates the attitude of teachers toward risky play. Regardless of their nationalities, all teachers stated that they have a positive attitude toward risky play, and they believed it supports children's all developmental areas. Also, they mentioned that there should be risky play in early ages, even though they hesitate to apply it in their teaching career. Their attitude were transcribed as follows:

"It supports children at early ages and teacher training should be provided."

(TN1)

"It has benefits that prepare children for real life." (TN5)

"It is something good and I need to work on it as a teacher." (TI1)

"It is something good and I need to work on it to be more flexible." (TI2)

The analysis of the data revealed that all teachers believe that risky play has positive contributions to real life experiences and in all developmental areas. Some examples for this finding are presented below.

“If a child climbs high and fall off, she will learn about her limitations...

risky play experience leads children to create their own boundaries.” (TN4)

“A picture is worth a thousand words and even if they got injured, they would gain experience to be more careful or to try different solution next time.”

(TN3)

“General knowledge about the world, I think. If you are climbing and jumping, you are learning gravity. And if you are catching snakes you are learning about animals, if you are walking on the ice, you are learning about you know freezing and melting and force for cracking things.” (TI1)

“They learn how to step out of their comfort zone, when they feel courage in themselves, they look for something new that brings them new learning opportunities. Not many adults are doing it.” (TI5)

All teachers from all nationalities underlined the importance of the contribution of risky play to children’s development. For instance, some teachers believe that it helps to support the cognitive development of the children. They conclude that children learn about decision making, risk management, problem solving and being creative. The quotations given below exemplify attitude of teachers.

“One day, a group of preschool children were trying to get the ball from roof of school. They want it badly and find a solution as bring chair. Since a chair was not enough to get it, they started putting chairs onto top of each other

and climb to get the ball. When it was not enough, they found a stick to sweep the ball to floor.” (TI1)

“Moving out of comfort zone force children and people to be a little bit more creative than usual.” (TN2)

“It is valuable for a child to be able to think of a put another chair on one chair to reach something, it is problem solving and learning by yourself.”

(TN5)

Besides cognitive development, some teachers mentioned the benefits of risky play for the emotional development of the children. Some of the TIs touch upon self-esteem, resilience and self-confidence while talking about benefits of risky play as follow:

“When a child wanted to go on a swing that she had not try before and teacher supported her, it was a great feeling of self-worth and if she could not do it, it supported the resilience since she should accept the feeling and find different ways. If she achieved, it was great to develop self-esteem.”

(TI3)

Some teachers put focus on body awareness as physical development while talking about benefits of risky play. One teacher shared her ideas about the relation between body awareness and risk taking as below:

“When a child moved out of her comfort zone, she would figure out what she could do, and she could not do physically.” (TI1)

“Using cutting tools support kids in terms of eye-hand coordination and fine motor skills, she is thinking of how to hold it, where to cut it and so on.”

(TN3)

As a result, it has been found that teachers think that risky play has benefits such as making sense of real life for children and supporting physical, cognitive, and emotional development. Although teachers mentioned these benefits while expressing feelings toward risky play, surprisingly, the teachers did not dwell on this issue when describing risky play.

Teachers stated that they have positive feelings toward the idea of risky play as presented above. At this point, teachers were asked to share their emotions when their students were involved in risky play under their supervision. The feelings can be categorized in two groups which are positive and negative feelings. While the positive feelings were described with “happy” and “excitement”, the negative feelings were described with “getting anxious” and “uneasiness”. Some quotations from the data shared below as examples of feelings.

“Watching children playing risky play, taking risks makes the teacher happy since it is the beginning of investigation.” (TN1)

“I felt excited if it is under my supervision and everything is going well.”
(TI4)

On the other hand, some teachers had negative feelings toward risky play.

“I feel getting anxious at the beginning of risky play, I am thinking of the child and its outcomes, and trying to calm myself down.” (TN3)

“I do not have a calm personality, so I feel anxious, but I am trying not to show it to children.” (TN2)

“I feel anxious since I like to control but I wonder what was coming with this risky play and tried stop myself to interfere.” (TI1).

Whether teachers have positive or negative feelings toward risky play, they all see it is an opportunity that all children should experience. Some quotations that support this analysis are presented below.

“Children who were given risk taking opportunities are better prepared for life she thinks.” (TN2)

“There are some students who are super reserved, and they might need a little bit help or guidance in trying new things and taking risks in their learning and it is important to as a teacher support and guide these children.” (TI1)

To sum up, all teachers showed positive attitude toward risky play since they are conscious of benefits of it such as contribution to developmental areas and real-life experience. Although all teachers believed that risky play should be in early ages, they demonstrated hesitation while applying it in their teaching career.

Reasons Preventing from Risky Play

During the interviews, possible practices that could prevent risky play were also discussed and detailed explanation was asked to be given for the restrictions if they think so. There are some general points of teachers that could affect the allowance of risky play such as convenience of physical environment, adult supervision, rules, health and safety issues, readiness, and parent and school management attitude.

Common answers among teachers were about the arrangement of the physical environment of the learning/playing area and rules in the environment as they mentioned for restriction. Child health and safety took the first place for teachers as a reason to stop children playing risky plays. Some example quotes from the interviews exemplified below.

“...physical environment itself should invite them to play risky play, if we keep them in a totally safe environment as most of the schools are doing, will not be learning.” (TN5)

“...there is a tree with double branch where children climb and sit. It was a great invitation to risky play done by nature.” (TN4)

“A child may use monkey bars very well, but materials of floor is important in case a child fall off.” (TN1)

“Rules of the environment should be taught to children at the beginning of the school so that children will know about the boundaries while playing risky play. It can be like, they can walk on the ice but only with a proper winter boots.” (TN5)

Another concern of teachers was that adult supervision and observation should take place during risky play to interfere with them before serious injuries happen. Also, adults should organize risky play to prevent dangerous circumstances. To support this analysis, some exemplifications were placed below.

“We should not control or block them but to be able to interfere when needed, I would like to observe them. If the situation is dangerous, you should stop them.” (TN3)

“I think teachers’ role is to observe and guide them (children). I do not want to completely let them do whatever they want. There is a line for safety so teachers should manage it a little bit.” (TI2)

“I think you need to monitor. When they are in risky play and you know it is risky but there is no hazard like nails, broken glass, you need to step back and take a deep breath.” (TI3)

“Knowing children is important. If there is a child who has tendency to hurt others, and she is playing with sharp tools, I should direct her in an environment where she can no longer harm others but still play with sharp tools.” (TI5)

Some teachers also put more focus on child development or its readiness if a child’s physical and emotional development is enough for that risky play or not.

Some examples driven from interviews as follow:

“First thing is that they get hurt from it (risky play) and the second thing is can they do it? For example, some kids are doing things just to copy others but if they are not ready physically, it means it is not something to teach them but to destroy them.” (TI2).

“Not all the children will do it, some will do it a little later in their lives.”
(TI3)

Parent attitude and school rules and agreements were also other concerns mentioned by teachers that are connected to each other. Teachers brought up their concerns regarding parent attitude in a face of any injury at school. One quotation from the interview presented below to support this analysis.

“If a child gets hurt, child will be in a difficult situation in terms of her health, parents will mad and I will be in a hard situation by parents and school.” (TI4)

Gender was not the focus of the interview, generally. Different from other teachers, one teacher mentioned gender for risk taking.

“Boys take more risks than girls and kids who are independent at home take more risk than the others. It comes from home.” (TI3)

Throughout this study, teachers' attitude toward risky play were analyzed in relation to their experiences and nationalities. Since they were partnered up as teachers from two different nations, one of the focuses of the interview was the evaluation of the partners in terms of risky play attitude.

Preschool Teachers' Partner Evaluations for Risky Play

This section analyzes how working with a teacher from a different nationality in the same classroom affects their practices related to risky play. As mentioned above, education takes place in the classroom with two teachers, one national and one international. At this point, teachers were asked to interpret their own and their partners' attitude towards risky play based on their practices. They were not limited in comparison with their current partners. In other words, they were free to answer this question regarding their previous teaching partner at this school. Among TNs, two of them stated they are more comfortable than their international partners, two of them think their partners are braver and one of them said they are quite similar. TNs' answers were presented below for this comparison.

“System used to be more protective, now since we now benefit, we are allowing more. Now, we are aware that inquiry and discovery is important.

We are allowing more but it is a transition process... My partners are taking time to come to that point while I am open to allow.” (TN2)

“We are in harmony with this issue...She is a little bit more comfortable with risky play related with her age and experience.” (TN3)

“Some brave international partners that I have also taught me.” (TN4)

Among the international teachers, one of them stated she is more comfortable than their national partner, two of them think their partners are braver and two of

them said they are quite similar. The international teacher's answers were presented below for this comparison.

"My partner is better allowing risky play than me and she is also working on it not to get nervous when she face risky play." (TI1)

"My experience let me allow more to risky play...Turkish people love to children a lot that they want to cuddle them more." (TI3)

To sum up, the analysis of the data revealed that both TN and TI teachers' results are similar to each other. However, one international teacher revealed that nationality may be a negative factor for risky play practice such as being Turkish and having a different cultural background. Other than this, teachers underlined the importance of year of experiences, the system, and the individual differences regardless of their nationality.

Opinions of Teachers regarding Risky Play

In this part, data analysis was conducted to learn the factors other than themselves, which the teachers identified as obstacles to allow risky play. Their common concern was preventing any accidents or incidents. Child health and safety, children's individual development levels, physical environment, parents, and school attitude are factors that might prevent teachers from allowing risky play. Solutions told by teachers were organizing the environment as though nobody gets hurt because of environmental reasons, having active supervision by observing, monitoring, and guiding them and setting up the rules from the beginning.

Being from different nations brings different cultural backgrounds in just the same way as this study. By having opinions of teachers from different cultural backgrounds, this study aims to examine whether there is a difference between the attitude of teachers regarding risky play or not.

Teachers' different attitude regarding risky play, the effect of child raising style and its relationship with cultural background were the main categories of result of analysis. Almost all teachers mentioned that child upbringing style affects their current attitude toward risky play. Beside upbringing style, teachers believed that physical conditions of the country that they were raised in also affected their attitude toward risky play which is also pertinent to upbringing style.

There was a difference between national and international teachers' opinion toward upbringing style. While all national teachers see upbringing style as an obstacle for risky play, most of the international teachers approved their upbringing style to support risky play. Besides, international teachers added the effect of the physical condition of their country for this issue, unlike national teachers. TNs detailed the upbringing style, and they pointed out the effect of parenting style that they experienced from their parents. They stated that they come from protective family cultures, and it affected their attitude toward risky play.

"I see the characteristics of helicopter parenting —is extremely paying attention to children' needs, when I go to playground and how children are protected in Türkiye —is highly common, and how it is the opposite in Italy according to my observations." (TN1)

"...First couple years of my teaching career, I believe I was affected by my protected childhood years. After I learned more, I started letting more [pointing risky play]." (TN2)

"I grew up in a highly protective environment and it affected me...as a teacher, I believe I should change this cycle." (TN3)

"...This is a 'doctrine'. Growing in a protective family affected my attitude toward risky play. Parents in Türkiye interfere with children's play saying,

‘be careful, you may fall, your clothes may get dirty’ and I disagree to this culture saying children should play without thinking of their clothes.” (TN4)

“My parents were barely let us go places by ourselves and we grow up thinking going somewhere by ourselves, jumping from high or walking on the ice is dangerous and we would definitely get harm. So, it definitely affected my thinking style regarding this issue. I only change my attitude after hearing about its benefits and after gaining some experience in teaching.” (TN5)

On the contrary to the upbringing of national teachers, most of the international teachers expressed that upbringing style affects their opinion toward risky play in a positive way. For example, most international teachers stated that their childhood upbringing and experiences caused them to have a more positive attitude towards risky play.

Unlike national teachers, international teachers mention the effect of the physical condition of the country that they grew up in terms of supporting risky play. TI3 was from South Africa, and she mentioned the physical condition of the country that she spent her childhood and shared her opinion toward this issue as follow:

“Growing in South Africa means you spend time outside most of the time and it allows you, it encourages you to take most risks. Since there was not a proper playground, we played outside on the road, away from home and parents and that was risky.” (TI3)

Likewise, TI4 and TI5 who are from Russia, expressed that the physical conditions of the country affected their plays. Both stated that growing in a cold country leads them to take more risks and find more solutions while playing. The relation between physical condition of the country and parents’ attitude on risky play was mentioned presented below as follow:

“Children played on the ice when it was minus 15-20 degrees, and no one warned us about the cold or danger of playing on the ice. Accidents would happen of course, but we would find a way to keep ourselves warm or how to protect us on the ice just to keep playing.” (TI5)

Briefly, teachers’ notion is that their upbringings and their countries’ physical conditions affect their attitude toward risky play. According to TNs, their parents were more protective toward risky play unlike international teachers’ parents, and they developed a negative opinion toward risky play when it is compared to international teachers.

Besides teachers’ upbringing and countries’ physical conditions, education was also found as one of the factors that affect teachers’ opinion regarding risky play. At the demographic information, it was revealed that all participants have an appropriate background for teaching as preschool teacher. However, teachers from different nationalities interpreted their education in different ways in terms of supporting risky play. For example, international teachers interpreted their education as a supportive factor for risky play while national teachers mentioned that their education did not influence their opinion towards risky play, not as much as their year of experience. TNs stated that it is not the education that makes them more constructive and positive about the risky play but the year of teaching experience that they have throughout the years.

“We have different points of views toward risky play with teachers whom we graduated from the same university by taking the same courses...it [risky play attitude] was the effect of experience and personality.” (TN1)

“There was not any specific course that was introduced to us about the topic to encourage us.” (TN2)

Unlike national teachers, all the international teachers stated that education opens their minds regarding benefits of risky play and so it affects their way of thinking indirectly.

“As it is called occasional background, I had trainings and I know that is beneficial for children where you see parents who do not have training and do not know how beneficial it is, they stop their kids even they get a chance to learn.” (TI1)

Beside the education received, one teacher highlighted the school system's encouragement for risky play as follow:

“Current school system has an effect on my attitude towards risky play...IB school is a bit different and open to use different strategies and explorations.” (TI4)

All in all, while all the national teachers think that not their education, but their teaching experiences affected their attitude toward risky play, all the international teachers stated education has effect on it by raising awareness of what is beneficial for children even if it is indirectly.

All teachers agreed that children have a tendency toward risky play and most teachers thought that this tendency is innate. They described this innate feeling as children are curious by nature, they are born to explore, they like to try new things and they want to see the capacity of themselves, it is an adventure for them and is always fun and exciting. Apart from the innate reason, one teacher highlighted social relations for risk taking as:

“Some kids take risks because of peer influence, just because their friends are doing it.” (TI1)

According to the analysis of teachers' attitude toward risky play, it was concluded that teachers' nationalities and cultural backgrounds affect their attitude towards risky play indirectly. In detail, their upbringing and physical condition of their country which forms their culture have an impact on attitude of risky play. Moreover, preschool teacher's education does not have a positive impact on their risky play attitude for national teachers while the education has a positive impact for international teachers. Furthermore, there are ample components that shape preschool teachers' attitude toward risky play. Attitude of preschool teachers toward risky play summarized below in Figure 3.

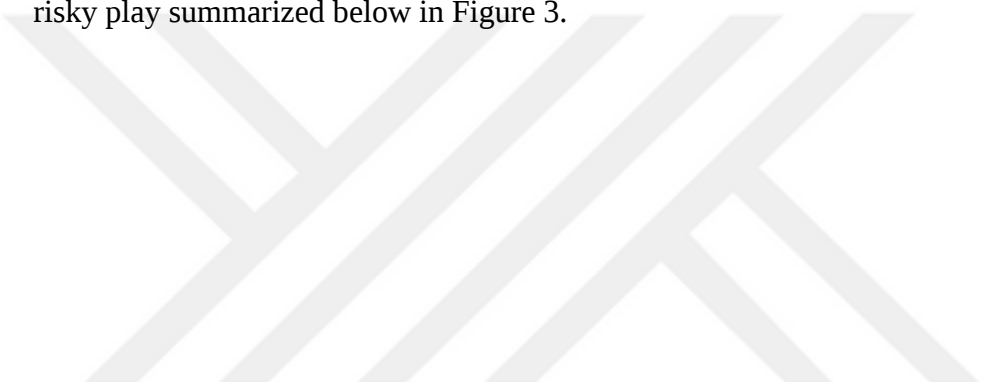
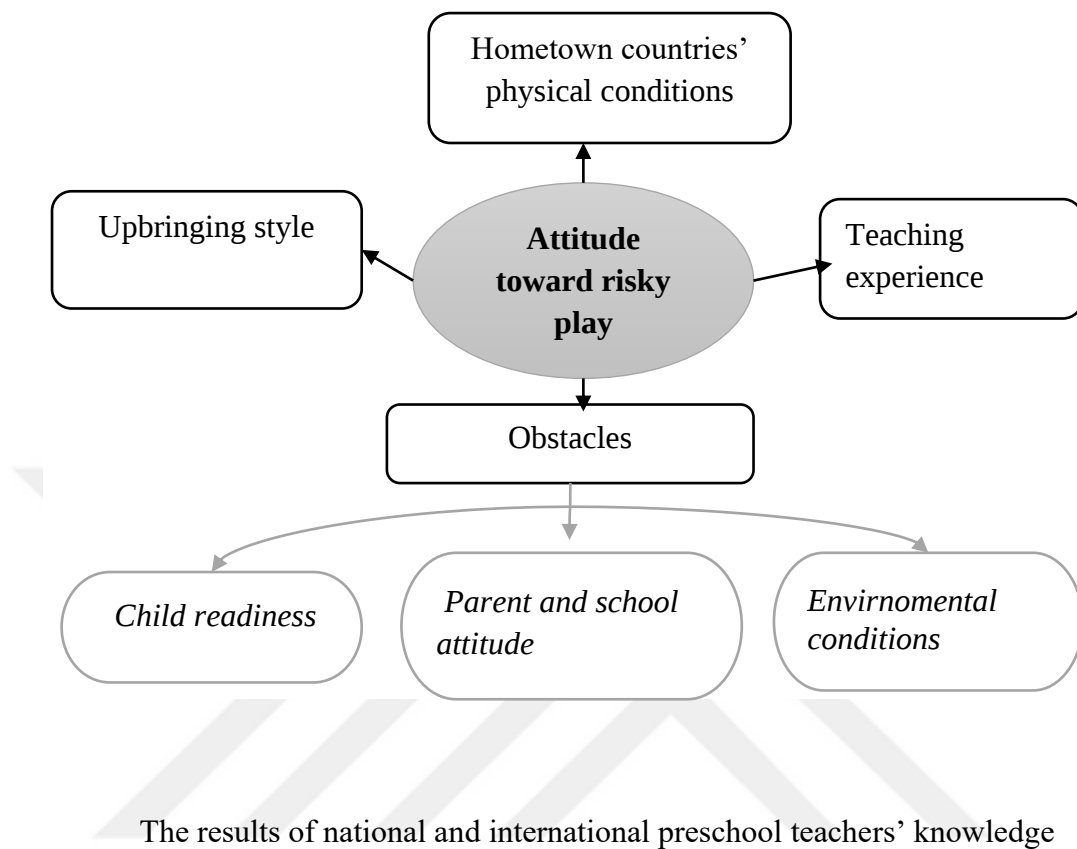
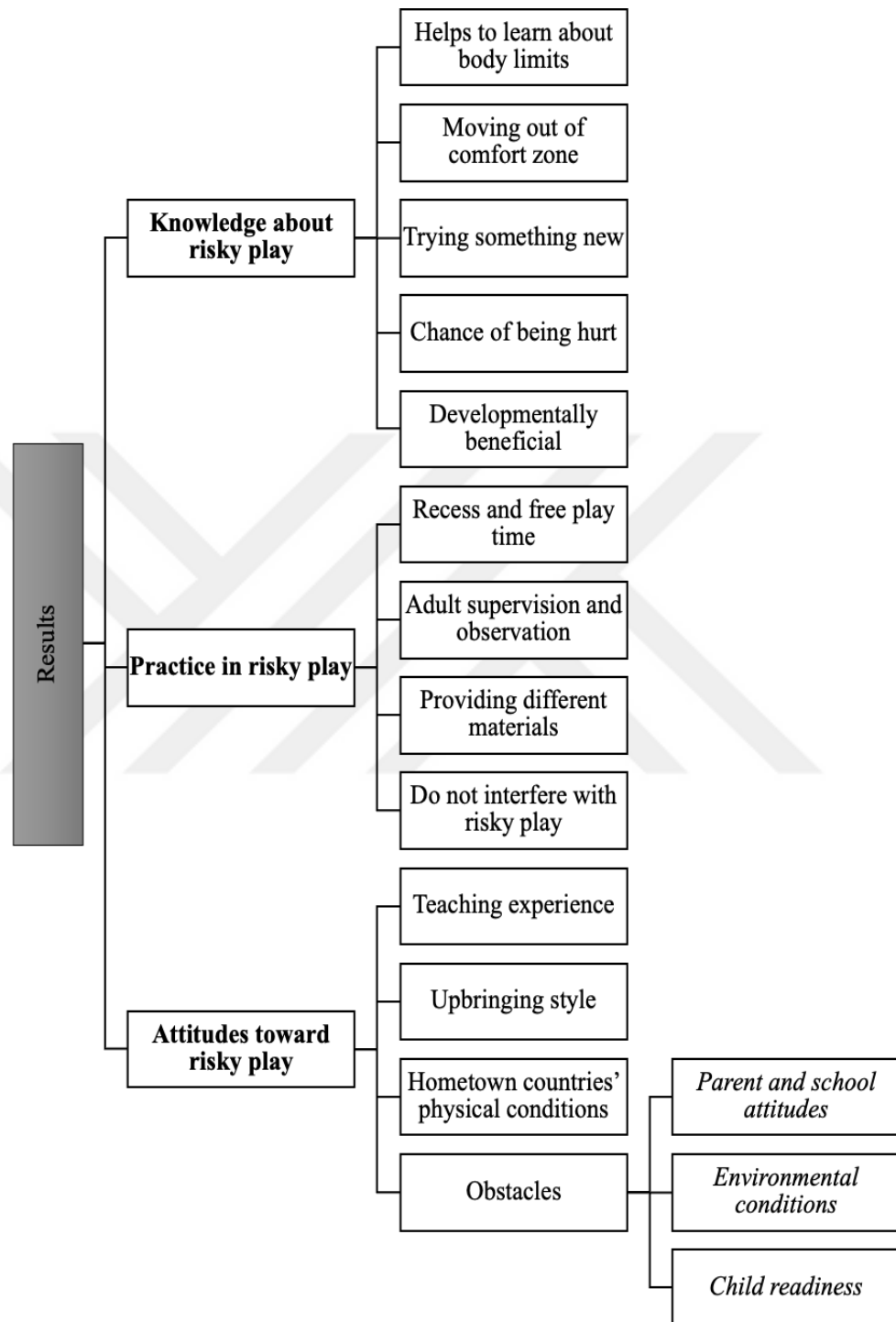


Figure 3*Attitude toward Risky Play*

The results of national and international preschool teachers' knowledge about, practice in and attitude toward risky play summarized below in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Teachers' Knowledge about, Practice in and Attitude toward Risky Play



CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion in relation to relevant studies and to the conclusion of the current study. For this reason, an overview of the whole study is given. Then, major findings of the study are discussed. Afterwards, the implication of the study for the people who work in the early childhood education field are presented. Finally, implications for further research and limitations are stated.

Overview of the Study

The current study was conducted with the purpose of identifying early childhood teachers' knowledge, practice, and attitude towards risky play and discovering whether their nationality affects their attitude toward risky play or not. According to Sandseter (2009), many studies investigate risky play topics such as why children are interested in and how they feel while playing risky play.

Participants of this study were teachers from a foundation school located in Ankara, Çankaya, Türkiye. They are co-teaching partners in the school, one national and one international teacher. The school implements two different educational programs which are MoNE, Early Childhood Programs and IB, Primary Years Programs. These features of the school make the study unique and case study.

Increasing concerns about risky play in western societies, many studies on worried parents and childcare workers create a discussion environment by sharing the statistics of injuries caused by risky play (Sandseter, 2009). This current study, on the other hand, is very important as it aims to obtain the knowledge, practice, and

attitude of the teachers from different nationalities working in Türkiye, which is recognized for being a meeting point of the eastern and western societies. The data of the study was collected via interviews with 10 teachers from different nationalities such as Türkiye, USA, Russia, and South Africa. Diversity in nationalities. There were 26 questions on the semi-structured interviews. Questions were grouped into categories to align with the research questions which are:

1. What is the teachers' knowledge about risky play?
2. What are the teachers' practices in risky play?
3. What is the teachers' attitude toward risky play?

The answers of the teachers were coded with the help of thematic coding, and findings presented in the previous chapter of the study. Discussions regarding the major findings of the study are conferred below.

Discussion of Major Findings

In parallel with the research questions, the current study revealed notable results regarding national and international teachers' knowledge, practice, and attitude toward risky play in early years. The teachers agreed on most of the points, but they were not in line with their colleagues on some points. Most of the teachers' disagreements emerged due to their cultural backgrounds, upbringing style, and education.

The cultural backgrounds of teachers influence their current teaching practices regarding risky play. Cultural differences have impacts on child raising styles and consequently, parenting styles affect child safety during risky play situations (Sandseter et al., 2021). In this current study, while national teachers believe that their culture affected them negatively toward risky play, international

teachers considered their culture supported them positively regarding risky play.

Cultural background is discussed under the titles of upbringing and parenting style.

Elaborately, preschool teachers' upbringing style is effective the way they think regarding risky play. In other words, their parents' attitude when they join risky play or attempt to do it and how they have been raised is also important. The parenting style of teachers' parents influences them and indirectly preschool teachers' attitude toward risky play in their adulthood. In parallel with this current study, recent research also indicates that parenting style has an inevitable impact on children's development, well-being, and their future life (Delvecchio et al., 2020). Similarly, children's risky play opportunities are hindered especially by their parents' negative attitude and fears (Brussoni et al., 2018). Cevher-Kalburan (2014) pointed out this impact on risky play and she mentioned Turkish parents generally have hesitation toward risky play and their parenting styles affects their attitude toward it. Upbringing is influenced by culture, and this difference alters teachers' opinion on risky play.

As upbringing style, parenting style is also influenced by culture. Children's life satisfaction depends on many environmental factors such as culture, residence, stress, situational factors, and parenting (Suldo & Huebner, 2004). Furthermore, the parenting style of children positively affects their development and well-being (Delvecchio et al., 2020). A study examining the Turkish parenting styles revealed helicopter parenting, which have increased recently, is the common type out of other parenting styles —authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, in the country (Yılmaz, 2020). Helicopter parenting defined as controlling children, limiting their autonomy, and prioritizing children's academic results, thinking it is the best for their children according to parents (2020). It is known that such parents [helicopter parenting]

generally decrease their children's playtime, increase extracurricular activities, and mostly attach importance to academic achievements (2020).

National teachers of this current study described their parents and their parenting style as helicopter parenting or protective parenting. In the literature, researchers have posited reasons why some parents become more protective of their children and may limit opportunities for risky play. For example, Morrongiello et al. (2010) concluded that injuries in young children aroused 'protective' parenting style in mothers and fathers.

Compared to national teachers, international teachers described their parents as having an authoritative parenting style. There are varying opinions in the literature regarding the advantages and disadvantages of this parenting style. According to Baumrind (1991), families with an authoritative parenting style—balancing responsiveness and demandingness—raise children who are socially, socially competent, self-reliant, and responsible. Baumrind wants that if the demands are too high, students may become less responsive and become less self-reliant and self-confident.

A key finding of this study is that different cultures have their own parenting styles. These varying parenting styles affect teachers' willingness to incorporate risky play into their practice. If teachers are faced with protective or helicopter parenting style as national teachers in the current study, they tend to avoid risky play practices in their classes. On the other hand, teachers who were raised in an authoritative parenting style, who were mostly international teachers in the current study, were more flexible in the environment and had more courage to implement risky play in their teaching life. There is an undeniable connection between children's courage to take risks and parents' support for their children's risk-taking behaviors

(Wells et al., 2012). For example, when parents are more tolerant of their children's risky behaviors, children have more consistent behaviors toward risk taking. On the other hand, when parents efforts to keep their children safe result in protective parenting style, children demonstrate less predictable behaviors regarding risky play (Wells et al., 2012).

Besides the child upbringing style, the physical conditions of the teachers' hometown country also affected teachers' opinion toward risky play. Both environmental and individual factors affect children's risk play, so attention should be paid to the harmony in the combination of these two factors (Sandseter, 2009). Wyner (2022) conducted a study with pre-service preschool teachers and sought out their considerations toward children's education and its relationship with natural environments such as forest and grassy areas. She concluded that a teacher's negative experiences toward nature during their early years may affect their choices. Furthermore, she found that if teachers grew up in harsh conditions, such as living in a country that is extremely cold or hot, or were disadvantaged economically, they may not have had opportunities for quality play time during their childhood years. Copeland et al. (2012) stated that teacher's own personal preferences such as in the case of disliking dirt or cold weather influence their attitude toward outdoor activities. Teachers who spend their childhood in such countries are more open to the risky play practices while teaching rather than the ones who lived in a moderate condition. In conclusion, teacher's previous interaction with nature affects the way they teach (Wyver, 2022).

The teacher training that they had was another component for the risky play attitude of teachers. National teachers stated that their undergraduate education did not include a risky play course or seminar and they stated that their early childhood

education has no impact on their attitude. On the other hand, international teachers believe that early childhood education raised awareness regarding what is beneficial for children although they also did not attend a risky play course or seminar. The views of teachers on a subject can be shaped by the training they receive during undergraduate level (Wyver, 2022). Moreover, national teachers stated that rather than their education, their experience influenced their attitude towards risky play. They expressed that the more years they have taught affected their comfort levels regarding allowing children's risky play. Teacher's attitude is important since teachers' attitude toward risky play affect their allowance for their student's risky play (Stephenson, 2003).

Risky play was defined as what encourages a 4-year-old to engage in risky play is "...attempting something never done before; feeling on the borderline of 'out of control' often because of height or speed and overcoming fear" (Stephenson, 2003, p.36). On the contrary to the different opinions of national and international teachers regarding risky play, all the teachers gave similar definitions for risky play in this current study. Teachers defined the risky play as joyful, freedom, expression, and innate while they are describing the risk as dangerous. Besides this definition, they expressed that trying something new and moving out of comfort zone were also highlighted while defining risky play in parallel with Stephenson (2003). The common results of the study findings from all nationalities are that teachers believed that children are curious and their tendency to risky play is innate behavior that comes from this curiosity.

Although teachers defined risk as a dangerous phenomenon, they used positive words in their definitions of risky play. On the contrary of this study's finding, another study conducted in Türkiye concluded that preschool teachers

perceived risky play as negative and matched the concept of risk with danger (Güler & Demir, 2016). However, children can distinguish between risk and danger (Cevher-Kalburan, 2014). Although former studies indicated that the negative beliefs toward risky play in early childhood settings, this current study which was conducted in 2022 found that teachers' opinion started to alter currently to positive direction.

Teachers in the current study also stated that they support risky play if it is in a safe area. Preschool teachers believe that it is important for children to take risks physically, but this should be in balance with safety and challenge within the scope of adult supervision (Stephenson, 2003). According to Sandseter (2009), there are two elements that make risky play risky; environmental factors and individual characteristics and both should be in harmony. In environmental factors, she states that the preschool teacher requires the supervision of the child during risky play (2009). Teachers from different nationalities agreed on the safe arrangement of the environment and adult supervision for risky play.

Regardless of their nationality, teachers have positive attitude towards risky play in this current study. Risky play has many contributions such as mental health, self-confidence, allowing greater physical activity, and risk-management skills, especially for positive development (Brussoni et al., 2018). Teachers in the current study think that risky play supports children in terms of cognitive, physical, and emotional development areas. Preschool teachers know that outdoor play contributes to positive risk-taking skills, and this is important for the health and development of children (Little et al., 2012).

Despite acknowledging the value of risky play, some teachers hesitate to provide students with opportunities to be involved in risky play. Reasons for this hesitation include concerns about lack of adult supervision, safety issues, school

rules, readiness of children, and parent and school administration attitude. Besides, there should be a proper physical environment that fosters risky play, but is not harmful, and adult supervision should be done actively. Children's safety comes first for teachers, families and legislators therefore laws that primarily ensure the safety of preschool children are created and used (Little, 2006). Also, as children explore and play, the risk and potential for being injured are inevitable (Sando et al., 2017). At this point, preschool education institution administrators are responsible for providing safe environments that provide physical challenges to them (2017). On the other hand, Stephenson stated “Young children will frequently seek out and enjoy physical challenges in their play, yet safety regulations can make it very difficult for teachers to provide children with experiences that feel satisfyingly ‘risky’” (2003, p.35). However, preschool teachers of the current study revealed that the administrations tend to just prohibit challenging situations instead of providing them safe environments.

However, despite all these contributions, it is also known that teachers have some reservations about risky play due to the danger issues (Little, 2012). The current study concluded that teachers generally do not add risky play in their daily activity plans but instead they do not prevent children who are involved in an activity that can be counted as risky play. Just because of the benefits of it, it is not right to force children to be into risky plays. At this point, children should involve to this type of play in a safe environment that allows risky play, in line with their own choices and under the appropriate supervision of the teacher (Sando et al., 2021). Moreover, it is thought by teachers that examples of risky play are mostly encountered in recess time and free play time. Children often participate in risky play during free play time when their well-being and physical activity levels are positively

supported (Sando et al., 2021). Recent research emphasizes on the importance of outdoor risky play on child development (Harper, 2017). Similar to the result of the current study, previous research findings also prove that most of the risky play occurs in outdoor free play times at school (Sandseter et al., 2021).

Most of the teachers in the study, regardless of the nationality, mentioned that major regulations need to be provided during risky play of children. However, at this point, it should be considered as “Too often the concern to remove all hazards (situations where there is a danger of serious injury or death) from a playground can inadvertently also lead to the removal of all opportunities for risk-taking.”

(Stephenson, 2003, p.35). Active supervision, observation, playground rules and secured environment are the regulations that are mentioned in teachers’ interview to provide the optimum risky play experience for children. The most important factor in supporting children's risky play is the active observation of teachers (Little, 2012). As stated in other risky play research, early childhood services should provide guidelines for risky play to prevent unpleasant injuries and eliminate the harmful environmental factors (Little, 2006). If children are to be safer, adults must expose them to greater risk (Cevher-Kalburan, 2014). All children are competent for handling the environment, challenge, and risk (Obee et al., 2021). Moreover, they believed that practitioners should trust children that they are capable of doing these. They stated that trusting children would be more effective than teaching them risk and developing adequate resources by their own experiences (2021). Moreover, observation and active supervision is also one of the critical precautions that teachers agreed on (Stephenson, 2003). In parallel with the findings of this study, the importance of a safe environment for risky play stated in the research (Sando et al., 2017). The interaction between the child and the teacher depends only on the

policies, regardless of the characteristics of individuals or their contexts (Little, 2006). With respect to their nationalities, they were asked to criticize their partners' attitude toward risky play who are from a different nationality. According to the findings, teachers from different nationalities expressed no differences regarding each other's risky play practices.

Implications for Practice

The current study contributes to the cross-cultural literature on preschool teachers' knowledge about, practice in, and attitude toward risky play in preschool children. Since risky play is known to contribute positively to the well-being, involvement, and physical activity levels of preschool children, here-and-now experiences and for their future health and learning are important in pre-school education institutions (Sando et al., 2021). Moreover, preschool teachers admitted "...there is a connection between successful physical risk-taking and a willingness to undertake risks in other areas of learning" (Stephenson, 2003, p.42). It has been emphasized throughout this current study that the risky play, whose contribution to developmental areas and learning is shared above, should be in pre-school education and should be supported by teachers.

It was often underlined in this study that the cultural and educational background of the teachers affected their attitude towards risky play. It can be said that it is not possible to deal with the effect of culture with a single element, and the most important thing to do for this is to touch education. Thus, it can be concluded that culture can be changed in a positive way indirectly by making the necessary arrangements in education. As participant international teachers stated education makes them think more what is beneficial for child development and so they are more open for risky play, in the education that preschool teachers receive at

undergraduate level, their awareness and knowledge level on this subject can be increased with courses or training that include risky play as a topic. The content of these trainings may include the importance of risky play, how teachers can include risky play in their activities, and examples of risky games suitable for age groups. With so, teachers should be adding risky play elements in their daily schedule clearly.

When arranging outdoor playgrounds, all dangers that children may be exposed to are tried to be eliminated. However, in this case, the opportunities for children to challenge themselves are also eliminated (Stephenson, 2003). Teachers who comes from the country with harder physical conditions stated that they were brave to play on the street, on the ice and it effected their attitude toward risky play positively. Therefore, the settings generally children are exposed to should be in a form that challenges children in a positive way regarding risky play. School administrations should consider including playground equipment to school playground which are age appropriately and there should be teacher trainings about importance of active supervision. Teachers should be aware of active supervision during the usage of these equipment since it is concluded risky play is beneficial for children but it needs to be under adult supervision.

Although teachers mostly had positive thoughts about risky play, they had some fears or concerns about the practice in this study. It was concluded that the reasons for these hesitations were external sources such as the school administration and the reaction of the families. At this point, it can be stated that some in-service training or workshops can be given to school administrators and families and then the necessary arrangements can be done in the school environment to support risky play as training highlights. Apart from this, especially families who adopted

protective or helicopter parenting styles can receive some training or workshops where they can stretch their own practices and ideas about being close to authoritative parenting. Another concern of teachers toward practicing risky play in the daily schedule was that the curriculum they must follow during the education. At this point, curriculum makers can prepare a curriculum that facilitates to integrate this type of play into daily practice, taking into account the importance of risky play for children, which is supported by the important references in this study. Through some training or courses, it can be explained how these curriculums can be applied to both pre- and in-service preschool teachers.

Implications for Further Research

This study was conducted based on preschool teacher's knowledge, practice, and attitude toward risky play. The further research may also follow up the data with observing the teachers in their classroom setting during their education. Thereby, the consistency between teachers' attitude and practices is also examined. Moreover, further research may prepare an environment that has challenges which is rich for allowing risky play. Thuswise, the change in teacher's knowledge, practice, and attitude toward risky play may be investigated with pre- and post-data collection procedures.

This study was conducted in a unique school that applies IB PYP and MoNE Early Childhood Education Program together. Further research may investigate the impact on using these two different programs together. After examining these programs with the help of document analysis techniques, teacher's opinions toward using these programs and their allowance toward risky play may be gathered. Although teachers were asked about their teaching experience, they were not asked

how many years of experience they had in PYP school. Further studies may also focus on the impact of teaching at a PYP school for a given year.

Limitations

This study may have a reasonable number of limitations. First, the study relies on participants' honest responses regarding perception of risky play to the interview questions. Second, the study is limited by the accuracy of the translation of national teachers' answers from Turkish to English hence there may be missing interpretations. Thirdly, this research is a case study that takes place in a foundation school in Ankara which implements IB PYP and MoNE Early Childhood Education Program together. Early childhood teachers come from different nationalities which is the foundation of this study. At this point, not being able to reach teachers from a wide range of nationalities is a limitation for this study. Also, the number of participants is limited and therefore, findings cannot be generalized to the whole population. Additionally, the age range of the participants did not have a wide range. Thus, the effect of upbringing conditions of different generations on the study could not be investigated. Another limitation might be the gender of the teachers. All the teachers who are included in the interviews are women and the researcher did not have control on gender choice.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions

Dear Teacher,

This research is about teacher attitude toward risky play in early childhood settings and is carried out by Merve Şimşek who is a master's program student at Bilkent University under the supervision of Assist. Prof. Armağan Ateşkan. The interview will take approximately 20-30 minutes. Data will be used only for research purposes and your personal information will not be involved in it. You can withdraw from the interview any time if you feel uncomfortable. You can contact me through email if you have any concerns or questions. Thank you for your participation by sharing your experiences.

Interviewer:

Date of Interview:

Location of Interview:

- 1.Can you tell me about yourself? Your age, hometown, passion?
2. Can you tell me about the games you played when you were a child?
- 3.Thinking back to your childhood days, do you have any specific memory of you playing a risky play?
- 4.How long have you been an early childhood teacher?
- 5.Can you tell me about your teacher training? Did you go to vocational high school, which department did you graduate from?
- 6.Have you received any courses about risky play in college or in-service training?
Can you tell me about it if you did?
- 7.What is play?

8.How do you define risk?

9.What is your understanding of risky play?

10.What are the benefits of risky play for young children?

11.Do you allow risky play in your classroom? Ex; letting children use climbing equipment or creating a high area for them in the classroom, swinging, bicycling, running at high speed, letting them use cutting tools, walking on icy water, playing fighting, letting them explore the environment alone (in a certain spot).

12.How do you allow risky play in your classroom? /What kind of opportunities do you provide that can be counted as risky play?

13.How often do you include risky play in your classroom?

14.When you consider your Daily Schedule, where do you think children take the most risk?

15.Can you compare your and your partner's attitude towards risk taking?

16.Do you think preschool teachers put restrictions on children's engagement of risky play?

17.What is the factor (if there is any) that might resign you to allowing children to take risks?

18.What do you think about young children's risk taking?

19.Why do you think children take risks or tend to play risky play?

20.Do you think your nationality/culture you were raised in, affects your attitude towards risk taking?

21. Do you think your education affects your attitude towards risk taking?
22. What do you think affects your attitude towards risky play?
23. What do you think children gain from risky play experience?
24. How do you feel about risky play?
25. Do you ever feel that your understanding or personal attitude towards risky play is different from your colleagues?
26. How do you feel (emotions) in the face of any risky play examples done by your students? calm, scared, happy, excited etc.

Appendix B

Informed Consent Form

Dear Interviewee;

This study was designed to investigate the views of preschool teachers from different cultures about risky play. The data obtained in the research will only be used in scientific studies and will not be shared with third parties or companies/institutions.

The interview will take approximately 20-30 minutes. The interview will be recorded to prevent data loss and voice recordings will not be shared with third parties. There are 26 questions in the interview, but the researcher may ask some follow-up questions when necessary. The first part of the interview questions is about the demographic information of the participants, the second part includes opinions about risky play and the third part includes questions about the relationship of the curriculum with risky play. Personal information of the participants is never requested in the questions. All questions in the study were prepared and revised with the comments of two expert opinions and the permission of Bilkent University's human research ethics committee was gathered. There are no questions in the study that would make the participants feel uncomfortable. However, if you feel uncomfortable during the interview for any reason or do not want to answer the questions, you can withdraw from the study.

If you want to participate in the study in line with the information given above, please tick and sign the boxes below.

- ☐ I am over the age of 18 and I participate in the study voluntarily.
- ☐ I was informed by the researcher that I would withdraw from the study whenever I wanted.

Participant signature

Appendix C

Permission from MoNE



T.C.
ANKARA VALİLİĞİ
Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü

Sayı : E-14588481-605.99-48195134
Konu : Araştırma İzni

20.04.2022

BİLKENT ÜNİVERSİTESİ REKTÖRLÜĞÜNE

- İlgi: a) 13.04.2022 tarihli ve 3717 sayılı yazınız.
b) MEB Yenilik ve Eğitim Teknolojileri Genel Müdürlüğünün 2020/2 nolu Genelgesi.

Üniversiteniz Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü Yüksek Lisans Öğrencisi Merve ŞİMŞEK'in "Okul Öncesi Öğretmenlerinin Eğitimde Riskli Oyunlara Karşı Tutumları" konulu tezi kapsamında merkez ilçelere bağlı ilkokullarda uygulanacak olan veri toplama araçları ilgi (b) Genelge çerçevesinde incelenmiştir.

Yapılan inceleme sonucunda, söz konusu araştırmanın Müdürlüğümüzde muhafaza edilen ölçme araçlarının; Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasası, Milli Eğitim Temel Kanunu ile Türk Milli Eğitiminin genel amaçlarına uygun olarak, ilgili yasal düzenlemelerde belirtilen ilke, esas ve amaçlara aykırılık teşkil etmeyecek, eğitim-öğretim faaliyetlerini aksatmayacak şekilde okul ve kurum yöneticilerinin sorumluluğunda gönüllülük esasına göre uygulanması Müdürlüğümüzce uygun görülmüştür.

Bilgilerinizi ve gereğini rica ederim.

Harun FATSA
Vali a.
Milli Eğitim Müdürü

Ek:
Uygulama araçları (4 sayfa)
Dağıtım:
Gereği:
Bilkent Üniversitesi
Bilgi:
9 Merkez İlçe MEM