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A Review of Articles that Include the Schools' Readiness Dimension

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Abstract: The aim of this study is to review the academic papers written in Turkey on the subject of school readiness, with regard to one of the dimensions of school readiness, that of schools' readiness for children. The examinations were carried out using one of the qualitative research designs, namely the nested case study design. The study universe consists of 45 articles in Turkish that include the subject of school readiness published in 26 academic journals between the years 2012-2017. With the purposeful sampling method, 14 academic papers that include the dimension of schools' readiness for children were taken as the study sample. The obtained data were analyzed by descriptive content analysis. The analysis results show that half of the studies reviewed were published in the year 2014. It was observed that in the papers, among the components of the dimension of schools' readiness for children, the schools' physical readiness component was most often mentioned. In the articles including the schools' physical readiness component, it was observed that mainly, findings indicating that schools were not physically suitable for first-year pupils' level of physical development had been made. As for the component of teachers' readiness, research findings were accessed relating to the fact that teachers were not prepared for students in terms of their attitudes and values as well as their professional knowledge and skills. Moreover, in the articles, in terms of readiness of the schedule for students, findings were accessed regarding the fact that primary school programmes were not suitable for the levels of the students or for their levels of readiness.

Keywords: *School readiness, ready school, ready teacher, ready programme.*

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Introduction

The child, who spends the great majority of his or her time during the pre-school period with his or her family and in other informal learning environments, will, when entering a period in which he or she is to spend his or her time away from the family and in formal learning environments, progress through his or her experiences. A child starting primary school will encounter a social environment which is different from the home and which contains its own particular rules and new life experiences. In this new social environment, the child will take on tasks such as conforming to rules within a disciplined framework, carrying out the teacher's instructions and learning to read and write (Erkan, 2011). However, at primary school, before children can gain the skills of reading, writing and basic arithmetic, they must become accustomed to school. During their school transition period, all children are expected to accustom themselves to new environments differentiated by physical surroundings, teaching programmes, teachers' expectations, peer groups and types of family participation (Margetts, 1999).

With regard to school readiness, terms such as "readiness" and "school maturity" can be used interchangeably (Erkan & Kirca, 2010). Among these concepts, it is observed that the term "readiness", in particular, is two-dimensional in terms of meaning: readiness for learning and readiness for school. Whereas readiness for learning describes the child's having the necessary mental capacity to be able to learn any material and its contents, readiness for school is more comprehensive than readiness for learning. Readiness for school means all the preliminary requirements that the child needs to acquire within a certain period in order to become accustomed to school and to be successful there (McTurk, Nutton, Lea, Robinson & Carapetis, 2008).

In the definition of readiness, four approaches are put forward, namely the "Maturational Approach", "Environmental Approach", "Social Constructivist Approach" and "Transactional Approach". Among these approaches, in the *Maturational Approach*, it is argued that interventions made from outside will offer little contribution to the process of preparation for school, and school readiness is dealt with as a biological process. In the *Environmental Approach*, the child's behaviours are focused on rather than his or her internal and mental processes. In this approach, it is asserted

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that external interventions accelerate the school readiness process. In the *Social Constructivist Approach*, the evaluation focus for the school readiness process is carried to the community in which the child lives by being moved outside. In this approach, importance is given especially to the perceptions of teachers and parents with regard to the child's readiness for school. In the final approach related to the definition and evaluation of the readiness concept, namely the *Transactional Approach*, readiness is dealt with as a bidirectional concept that involves the child and his or her learning-education environments and knowledge. With this approach, the capacities of schools, which take on the duty of children's education and of meeting their individual learning needs, are focused upon (Meisels, 1998). In addition to these approaches, in the *Ecological Systems Approach*, which draws attention to the existence of systems which affect the individual, the child's relationships with his or her friends and teachers, the relationships of parents with the school, school-parent associations, local authorities, and community values and rules are regarded as the factors of school readiness (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In the Ecological Systems Approach, the family, school and peer group that affect the child's development are dealt with within the microsystem, whereas relationships between the microsystems such as family-teacher relationships and family-school interaction are dealt with within the mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In this approach, entities such as school-family associations and local authorities which affect the microsystem and mesosystem are observed inside the exosystem, whereas things such as cultural values of the community, laws, regulations, and belief systems are regarded as components of the macrosystem. Among the hypotheses belonging to the Ecological Systems Approach are the idea that these systems are in a state of interaction with each other, and that they continually affect the changing and developing individual. In this approach, moreover, it is considered that the systems affect the individual's adaptation to school.

In the study, *School Readiness: A Conceptual Framework*, school readiness was dealt with in three dimensions: the readiness of the child for school, the readiness of the school and the readiness of the family (UNICEF, 2012). In one of the dimensions of school readiness, that of "readiness of the child for school", the child's development and learning are focused upon. It is considered that at the educational level he or she is switching to, a child who does not feel out of things, who can form good relationships with his or her peers, who can carry out the duties assigned to him or her and who is aware of his or her responsibilities, is ready for school. In the "readiness of the school" dimension of school readiness, a school environment that facilitates the transition of the child from a previous educational environment to a new educational environment, where the needs of the child are met and where the developmental characteristics of the child are considered, is focused upon. This dimension, in which the readiness of the school is stressed, includes such factors as the readiness of the teacher, readiness of the teaching and learning environment, and readiness of the teaching programme. The "schools' readiness" dimension, the last of the dimensions to be added to the subject of school readiness, is rapidly gaining importance nowadays. For the school to be ready, the school staff must also be ready for the children who are to start school. For this dimension, that of the readiness of the school for the child's education in terms of its physical environment and human resources, is regarded as an important factor that affects the child's readiness for school and determines the level of readiness of the school. The third dimension of school readiness discussed in the explanation is that of readiness of families. Families who are ready for school are defined as those who take an interest in their children's early development and learning, who facilitate their transition to school and who prepare them for this transition (UNICEF, 2012). Indeed, family environments that offer positive stimulants and experiences to the child are considered as indicators of effective parenting and of families who are ready for school (Britto, 2012).

In Turkey the Law no. 6287 of 30/03/2012, regarding changes to some laws for Primary School Learning and Education, came into effect on 11/04/2012 with its publication in the Official Gazette no. 28261. The Regulations for Primary Teaching Institutions were reorganised in line with this law and published in the Official Gazette no. 28360 dated 21/07/2012. With these regulations, the length of compulsory education in Turkey was increased from 8 to 12 years and schools were graded as primary, middle and high schools. In the regulation, it was declared that registration of children for the first grade of primary school was to be done for children who had reached the age of 66 months by the end of September of the year registration was made, and that children between the ages of 60 and 66 months who were understood to be ready for primary school with regard to development could be registered for the first grade of primary school at the written request of their parents. In 2012, these changes, called the "4+4+4 system" by the public, resulted in a lot of public attention being given to the subjects of school starting age and school adaptation. Universities and nongovernmental organisations (ACEV, 2012; Bogazici University, 2012; Middle East Technical University, 2012; Turk Egitim-Sen, 2012) expressed their opinions on the changes made. Following these developments, a further change was made to the Regulations for Primary Teaching Institutions on 14/08/2013 in the Official Gazette no. 28735, and children aged 66, 67 and 68 months could be sent to preschool with a petition written by their parents, while those aged 69, 70 and 71 months could be sent to preschool with a health report certifying that they were not ready to begin primary school. However, in the regulation, no adjustment was made to the statement that children aged between 60-66 months could be sent into first grade in accordance with the request of their parents. In the Turkish Education System, in line with these implementations based on parents' wishes and chronological age, it was made possible for children aged from 60 to 80 months to be in the same class. With these implementations, even though children were

provided with definite age criteria for being registered at school, the fact that they could show great differences with regard to developmental characteristics was ignored (Baldu & Er, 2016).

At the centre of educational activities there is the individual. Nowadays, in the Ecological Systems Approach, which covers a wide range from determining the factors affecting individuals' decision-making skills (Demir Yildiz & Donmez, 2017) to testing models related to school adaptation (Demirtas-Zorbas, 2016), the individual is also placed at the centre (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Yet the fact that in the study, *School Readiness: A Conceptual Framework*, it is stressed that the school, too, needs to be ready (UNICEF, 2012) shows that educational institutions have been given prominence in the matter of school readiness.

It may be said that a child who comes to school from a ready family environment and who is considered ready for primary school in terms of developmental characteristics, will experience problems in adapting to school if he or she encounters a teacher, teaching programme, school or school staff that are not ready for him or her. It follows from this that in studies conducted on the subject of school readiness, emphasis must be placed on the Transactional Approach, which focuses on the capacities of schools, together with the Ecological Systems Approach, which includes the "school" factor in the microsystem that embraces the individual.

In this study, articles published in Turkey in the last 7 years that include the dimension of schools' readiness, which is one of the dimensions of school readiness, are reviewed. In line with the above explanations, starting from the system change carried out in Turkey in 2012 up to the present, revealing the state of readiness of primary schools for children starting school is considered important. Moreover, it is believed that with the findings obtained from the academic studies related to the dimension of schools' readiness, a contribution may be made to the body of literature related to school readiness. The academic papers taken up for research were reviewed in line with the following questions.

1. What is the distribution of the articles that include the dimension of schools' readiness according to year and journal type?
2. What are the keywords associated with school readiness in the articles in Turkish that include the dimension of schools' readiness?
3. In the findings section of the articles in Turkish that include the dimension of schools' readiness, in what way have the components of the dimension of schools' readiness been included?

Method

Research Model

Since the components of academic articles including the dimension of schools' readiness were analysed, the study was conducted using the nested case study design type of qualitative research. In a nested case study, the case taken up for research may be examined by separating the sub-units contained within it (Yildirim & Simsek, 2005). In this context, the academic studies reviewed were analysed with regard to the way of inclusion of the dimension of schools' readiness in the dimensions contained within them.

Universe and Sample

Purposeful sampling method is used for this qualitative research. The universe of the study was made up of 45 articles on the subject of school readiness published between the years 2012-2017 in 26 educational journals indexed in at least one of the ULAKBIM- SBVT, SOBIAD, DOAJ, EBSCO, Turkish Education Index and Google Scholar databases. Through the purposeful sampling method, 14 articles that included the schools' readiness dimension were taken as the sample. The year 2012 was taken as the criterion for determining the study universe of the research and for limiting the publication years of the studies in the sample to the years 2012-2017. In line with the Law related to Changes Made to Certain Laws for Primary School Learning and Education, an official letter about "Planning in Schools" was sent to the governors' offices by the Directorate General for Elementary Education of the Ministry of Education on 05/06/2012. In this official letter, it was stated that physical reorganisation of primary, middle and high schools needed to be carried out. For this reason, as the reorganisation and transformation of the education system made in the year 2012 was considered to be a turning point in the matter of schools' readiness for children, the year 2012 was taken as the criterion for the selection of the studies. Moreover, as this study was completed in January, 2018, the year 2018 was kept outside the scope of the study.

Data Collection

The research data were collected using the document analysis method. As the data collection tool, an Article Review Form (ARF) was developed by the researchers. The Article Review Form contains the name of the article, its author(s), the name of the journal in which it was published, the year of its publication, the keywords in the article related to school readiness, the study group of the research, the findings in the article regarding schools' readiness, the coding of

the findings and the explanations of the findings. The steps followed in the collection of the data may be listed as follows:

- 1) Deciding the databases to be scanned and the publication years of the articles,
- 2) Accessing the articles in the study universe, identifying articles accessed from more than one database and carrying out a deletion operation until only one of each of these articles was left,
- 3) Identifying the articles to be taken as the sample through the purposeful sampling method and numbering the articles in the sample from 1-14 as "M 1, M 2... M 14" in accordance with the rules of notation given in the demonstration on referencing in the 6th edition of the American Psychological Association's Publication Manual,
- 4) Examining the findings in 2 randomly-selected articles in terms of state of inclusion of the "schools' readiness" dimension, coding of the examined findings in the selected articles by the two researchers and determining the consistency between the coders using Miles and Huberman's (1994) formula.

Data Analysis

In view of the research questions, analysis of the research data was conducted with the descriptive content analysis type of content analysis. Descriptive content analysis is carried out to determine, at a descriptive level, trends and results of studies made on a certain subject (Calik, Unal, Costu & Karatas, 2008).

Validity and Reliability

The explanation of the steps followed in the collection and analysis of the data may be expressed as an indicator of validity. In 2 articles chosen at random from among the articles in which all components of the schools' readiness dimension were included, coding was done by the two researchers and consistency between the two coders was calculated with Miles and Huberman's (1994) formula. According to the calculations made, a consistency value of 90% was achieved between the two coders. Following these applications, the study was accepted as valid and reliable.

Results

Findings Obtained from Analysis of the Articles Regarding "Publication Year", "Type of Journal" and "Keywords"

The distributions of the articles that include the schools' readiness dimension according to distribution year, together with the distribution of the articles in the study universe according to distribution year, are presented in Figure 1.

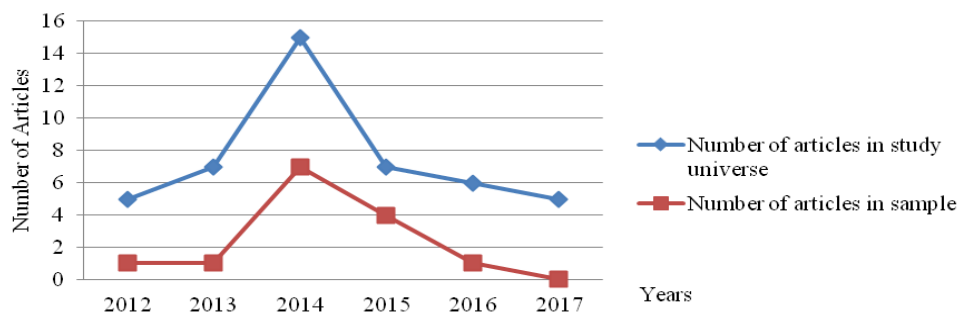


Figure 1. Distribution of Articles According to Publication Year

Looking at Figure 1, it can be seen that 7 of the 14 academic articles taken as the scope of the study were published in the year 2014. However, it was determined that among the academic articles taken as the scope of the research, there were no articles that include the schools' readiness dimension in the year 2017. Examining Figure 1, it can be stated that the distribution of articles in the study universe that deal with school readiness according to publication year shows similarity with the distribution of articles in the sample that include the schools' readiness dimension according to publication year.

In the analysis of articles reviewed for the schools' readiness dimension according to type of journal, the journals were classified according to ways of scanning in the SCI, SSCI and AHCI indices. The distribution of the articles according to type of journal is presented in Figure 2.

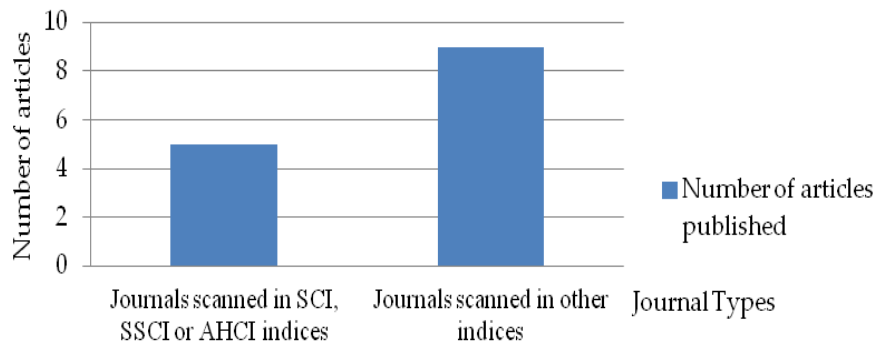


Figure 2. Distribution of Articles According to Journal Type

Looking at Figure 2, it can be seen that 5 academic articles that include the schools' readiness dimension were published in journals scanned in the SCI, SSCI and AHCI indices, while 9 articles that include the schools' readiness dimension were published in journals scanned in indices other than the SCI, SSCI and AHCI indices.

In the keywords section of the articles reviewed, the state of inclusion of the keywords associated with school readiness is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Keywords Associated with School Readiness

Keywords	f	Keywords	f
School readiness	4	Primary school transition process	1
School maturity	3	Preparation for primary education	1
Readiness	2	Transition between stages	1
Primary school starting age	2	Starting school early	1
School starting age	2	Preparation for school	1
School adaptation	2	School readiness	1
Transition to primary school	1		

Examining Table 1, it is seen that in the articles including the schools' readiness dimension, 13 keywords associated with school readiness are included. It was determined that the keywords most commonly included in the keywords sections of the articles are "school readiness" and "school maturity". When the keywords "primary school starting age", "school starting age", and "starting school early" are taken together, it may be said that keywords to do with "age" are frequently used in the articles that include the dimension of schools' readiness.

Findings Obtained Following Analysis of the Articles with Regard to Components of the Schools' Readiness Dimension

By examining the findings related to the schools' readiness dimension in the articles in line with the components "physical readiness of the school", "readiness of the teacher" and "readiness of the programme", the themes were created and coding was done.

Table 2. Frequency of Inclusion of Components of the Schools' Readiness Dimension

Themes and Codes Relating to the Schools' Readiness Dimension		f
Theme 1:	Physical Readiness of the School	
Code 1a:	Unsuitability of internal physical structure for students' physical characteristics	10
Code 1b:	Unsuitability of external physical structure for students' physical characteristics	6
Code 1c:	Importance for school readiness of physical readiness of school	1
Total		17
Theme 2:	Readiness of the teacher	
Code 2a:	Problems of teachers in their approaches to and communication with students	3
Code 2b:	Shortcomings of teachers in terms of their professional knowledge and skills	3
Code 2c:	Importance for school readiness of readiness of teachers for students	2
Code 2d:	Competence of teachers in terms of their professional knowledge and skills	1
Total		9
Theme 3:	Readiness of the programme	
Code 3a:	Unsuitability of primary school programmes for level of students	2
Code 3b:	Incompatibility of preschool programmes with primary school programmes	2
Code 3c:	Inflexibility of primary school programmes	2
Code 3d:	Importance for school readiness of readiness of programme	2
Code 3e:	Suitability of primary school programmes for level of students	1
Total		9

Examining Table 2, it can be seen that among the components of the schools' readiness dimension, that of the school's physical readiness is the most frequently included. In the articles reviewed, it was determined that the components, readiness of the programme and readiness of the teacher, are included with equal frequency.

Looking at the codes relating to the school's physical readiness component, it is seen that in the articles, the problem of the inadequacies of schools' internal physical structure was most often brought up. The comments, "*The washbasins are too high for the pupils to reach. The benches, whiteboards and noticeboards are not suitable for the pupils' height. The stairs are not safe for the pupils (Ari, 2014)*", obtained from ARF 1, may be given as an example of these findings, coded as "Code 1a". In the articles, findings related to the unsuitability of the external physical structure of schools for students were accessed and these findings were coded as "Code 1b". In the article coded M 8, the comments "*Children in independent nursery schools mostly describe primary schools as "big" in their statements and in the pictures they draw. Children generally draw primary schools as multi-storey buildings (Kocyigit, 2014)*" may be found.

Looking at the findings in the study articles in terms of the readiness of the teacher component, it was revealed that there were problems in teachers' approaches to students and that teachers could not communicate effectively with students. The comment, "*School administrators and teachers cannot communicate effectively with children from young age groups (Isikoglu Erdogan & Simsek, 2014)*", obtained from ARF 7, may be given as an example of this group of findings, coded as "Code 2a". In the articles referring to the readiness of the teacher component, the findings related to the shortcomings of teachers in terms of their professional knowledge and skills were coded as "Code 2b". In the article coded M 9, it was stated that teachers were inadequate in terms of their professional knowledge and skills, as follows: "*It is considered that class teachers do not possess sufficient knowledge or skills for teaching-learning activities to be conducted with students aged 60-72 months (Kutluca Canbulat & Yildizbas, 2014)*". The finding "*First-grade class teachers regard themselves as competent in classroom management and teaching methods (Zelyurt & Ozel, 2015)*", related with the component, coded as "Code 2d", regarding the competence of teachers in their professional knowledge and skills, was also accessed following the analysis of the articles.

As regards readiness of the programme, findings related to the unsuitability of primary school programmes for students' level and for their level of readiness were grouped under "Code 3a". While findings related to the discrepancies found between programmes applied in the preschool period and first-year primary school programmes were dealt with in "Code 3b", analysis results revealing the inflexibility of primary school programmes in terms of students of different ages and at different levels of readiness studying in the same class were discussed within "Code 3c". The statement in ARF 14 that "*First-grade programmes, as well as being inflexible, are not suited to the readiness levels of students (Zelyurt & Ozel, 2015)*", is evaluated under "Code 3a" and "Code 3c", whereas the statement that "*There are disconnections and discrepancies between programmes carried out in preschool and in the first year of primary school (Bay & Simsek, 2014)*" is presented within "Code 3b". In the analyses, only one article was located with findings related to the suitability of primary school programmes for students' level. This finding, presented under "Code 3e" in the

article coded M 3, was expressed as “Some participants stated that the programme was generally suitable for children aged 60-66 months (Bayat, 2015)”.

It can be seen in the articles that findings from the components, physical readiness of the school, readiness of the teacher and readiness of the programme, which are important for the matter of school readiness, are included. With regard to this situation, the comment “As well as the child’s individual characteristics, the programme, school readiness skills of the teachers, and the learning environments, have effects on school readiness (Buldu & Er, 2016)” can be seen in ARF 4.

Findings obtained from the Article Review Forms with respect to the components of the schools’ readiness dimension are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3. State of Inclusion of the Schools’ Readiness Dimension in the Articles

Article	Statements obtained from the findings in the articles with respect to the schools’ readiness dimension	Components and codes relevant to the statements
M 1 Ari (2014)	The washbasins are too high for the pupils to reach. The benches, whiteboards and noticeboards are not suitable for the pupils’ height. The stairs are not safe for the pupils.	Physical readiness of the school Code 1a
	Teachers fall short in meeting students’ affective needs.	Readiness of the teacher Code 2b
	The programme is not flexible enough to allow for different age groups in the same class.	Readiness of the programme Code 3c
M 2 Bay and Simsek (2014)	Children in first grade are in a physical environment that restricts their movements compared with preschool.	Physical readiness of the school Code 1a
	Children encounter authoritarian teacher attitudes in first grade.	Readiness of the teacher Code 2a
	There are disconnections and discrepancies between programmes carried out in preschool and in the first year of primary school.	Readiness of the programme Code 3b
M 3 Bayat, (2015)	Some participants stated that the number of learning outcomes in the programme was excessive and that the learning outcomes were unsuitable for the level of the students. Some participants also stated that the programme was generally suitable for children aged 60-66 months.	Readiness of the programme Code 3a, Code 3e
M 4 Buldu and Er (2016)	The size of the classrooms and the furniture and materials in schools are not suitable for children.	Physical readiness of the school Code 1a
	Some class teachers are considered insufficient in giving lessons to groups of students at young ages.	Readiness of the teacher Code 2b
	As well as the child’s individual characteristics, the programme, school readiness skills of the teachers, and the learning environments have effects on school readiness.	Physical readiness of the school Code 1c Readiness of the teacher Code 2c Readiness of the programme Code 3d
M 5 Caliskan Dedeoglu and Alat (2012)	There is a spiral structure at a rate of 51% between the preschool curriculum and the primary school maths curriculum learning outcomes. In some learning domains of the primary school maths curriculum (fractions, equality, spatial relations), activities are included that repeat the preschool curriculum.	Readiness of the programme Code 3b

Article	Statements obtained from the findings in the articles with respect to the schools' readiness dimension	Components and codes relevant to the statements
M 6 Erturk Kara and Gozcu (2015)	Families who send their children into the nursery class do not give importance, when choosing the primary school, to the proximity of the school to home or to the school's physical conditions and cleanliness.	Physical readiness of the school Code 1a, Code 1b
	According to parents, teachers' level of attention to children is important.	Readiness of the teacher Code 2a
M 7 Isikoglu Erdogan and Simsek (2014)	The crowded classes and stone floors in schools are not suitable for children, and the play areas are insufficient. The school entrances are not safe.	Physical readiness of the school Code 1a, Code 1b
	School administrators and teachers cannot communicate effectively with children from young age groups.	Readiness of the teacher Code 2a
M 8 Kocyigit (2014)	Children in independent nursery schools mostly describe primary schools as "big" in their statements and in the pictures they draw. Children generally draw primary schools as multi-storey buildings.	Physical readiness of the school Code 1b
M 9 Kutluca Canbulat and Yildizbas (2014)	The physical sizes of school playgrounds and the colours in classroom environments are not suitable.	Physical readiness of the school Code 1a, Code 1b
	It is considered that class teachers do not possess sufficient knowledge or skills for teaching-learning activities to be conducted with students aged 60-72 months.	Readiness of the teacher Code 2b
M 10 Saglam and Besen (2015)	Classrooms are unattractive and un compelling areas. The colours used in classrooms are not chosen with care.	Physical readiness of the school Code 1a
M 11 Sahin, Sak and Tuncer (2013)	Primary schools and preschool institutions should be suitable for children's development.	Physical readiness of the school Code 1c
	During the school preparation period, the teacher's approach towards the child is important. In school preparation, after the family, the most effective factor is the teacher.	Readiness of the teacher Code 2c
	Preschool and primary school programmes must be mutually compatible.	Readiness of the programme Code 3d
M 12 Tantekin Erden and Altun (2014)	First-grade primary school students complain about the existing classroom environment and seating system. The students miss their preschool environments.	Physical readiness of the school Code 1a
M 13 Uzun and Alat (2014)	The classroom benches are too high for first-year students. The seating arrangement in the classrooms is rather cramped. There is no area for the students to move about in class. Accidents happen in the playground where they fall and get hurt.	Physical readiness of the school Code 1a, Code 1b
M 14 Zelyurt and Ozel (2015)	The washrooms, canteen and playground are such that they cannot be used by young age groups.	Physical readiness of the school Code 1a, Code 1b
	First-grade class teachers regard themselves as competent in classroom management and teaching methods.	Readiness of the teacher Code 2d
	First-grade programmes, as well as being inflexible, are not suited to the readiness levels of students.	Readiness of the programme Code 3a, Code 3c

Examining the state of inclusion of the schools' readiness dimension in the articles, it can be seen in Table 3 that the three components of the schools' readiness dimension, namely physical readiness of the school, readiness of the teacher and readiness of the programme, are included in five academic articles (M1, M2, M4, M11 and M14).

Discussion

Comparing the academic articles that include the schools' readiness dimension published in electronic media between the years 2012-2017, it can be seen that the most articles were published in 2014. The reason for this finding may be that research into the subject of school readiness gathered momentum following the legal changes made in the years 2012 and 2013 with regard to starting primary school in the Regulations for Preschool Education and Primary Teaching Institutions. However, it was found that in 2017, no academic articles including the schools' readiness dimension were published. That no academic articles in 2017 related to the schools' readiness dimension could be identified may be explained by the time-dependent decrease in discussions about the system known publicly as "4+4+4". The articles in the sample that include the schools' readiness dimension and the articles in the study universe that include the subject of school readiness show similar distributions numerically according to publication year. This finding is considered to result from the fact that the schools' readiness dimension is one of the dimensions of school readiness.

In the study, it was determined that the number of articles including the schools' readiness dimension in journals scanned in the SCI, SSCI and AHCI indices was lower than the number of articles in journals that were not scanned in the SCI, SSCI and AHCI indices. The reason why the number of articles in journals scanned in the SCI, SSCI and AHCI indices was lower than the number of articles in other journals may be given as the low number of educational journals scanned in the SCI, SSCI and AHCI indices in Turkey.

In the reviewed articles, it was determined that the keywords "school readiness" and "school maturity" were most often included. This finding may be explained by the fact that the reviewed studies were conducted on the subject of school readiness. When the keywords "primary school starting age", "school starting age", and "starting school early" are taken together, it may be said that these keywords stressing students' ages are frequently included in the articles. This situation may be due to the fact that in the articles including the schools' readiness dimension, the children's readiness dimension is also emphasised. Moreover, this situation may also be regarded as a reflection of the changes made with regard to the starting age for primary school onto academic studies on the subject of school readiness.

The findings obtained from the component-based analysis of the articles including the schools' readiness dimension show that the school's physical readiness dimension was most frequently included. With regard to this dimension, it was revealed that the physical conditions of classrooms and schools were not suited to students' physical characteristics. The findings in the articles including the schools' readiness dimension which show that school and classroom environments were not physically ready may result from the fact that the legal reforms made in the education system in the year 2012 were carried out without considering primary schools' physical structures. This finding related to schools' physical readiness is supported by some studies made outside the scope of this research. Unal (2013) stated that class teachers were of the opinion that schools did not have the necessary physical infrastructures for implementation of the 4+4+4 system. In Yapici and Ulu's (2010) study, first-year class teachers stated that children had difficulty in adapting to the seating system and environment in the classroom. Altintas (2015) pointed out that in some schools, activities could not be carried out due to the inadequacy of the physical infrastructure. Moreover, in Memisoglu and Ismetoglu's (2013) study, school administrators stressed the deficiencies in schools' infrastructures. Also, in their study, Cerit, Akgun, Yildiz and Soysal (2014) determined that principals and teachers listed the problems resulting from physical deficiencies in school classrooms, toilets, washrooms and playgrounds. In our study, findings obtained from the articles related to the physical deficiencies of classrooms and schoolyards were also accessed in Ozenc and Cekirdekci's (2013) and Senturk's (2016) studies. These results relating to schools' physical readiness show that the physical arrangements that should have been made in schools in line with the 4+4+4 system in Turkey were not completely carried out, and that in some primary schools, the physical structures intended for middle school students need to be rearranged to suit the physical characteristics of primary school students.

The findings obtained from the articles reveal that there are problems arising from teachers in their approaches to and communication with students, and that teachers are not adequately competent in terms of their professional knowledge and skills. Similarly, in Boz and Yildirim's (2014) study, in which they examined the difficulties encountered by first-grade primary school teachers in the 4+4+4 education system, it was determined that teachers had difficulties in getting students to acquire basic and academic skills, in classroom management, and in the process of lesson planning. In the articles reviewed within the scope of the study, only one finding could be accessed showing that the teacher was ready for children. The fact that this study was conducted with teachers may have had an effect on this positive result showing that teachers were competent in terms of professional knowledge and skills. Yet this may also be evaluated as an indication that teachers regard themselves as competent and feel ready in their professional knowledge and skills with regard to classroom management, teaching methods and in-class activities. Indeed, in Unver, Dikbayir and Yurdakul's (2015) study, it was determined that the great majority of families thought that administrators and teachers were ready for first-year implementations.

In the study, findings were obtained showing that primary school programmes were not suited to the levels of students and that preschool and primary school curricula were not mutually compatible. Moreover, in the reviewed articles it is also stated that primary school programmes were inflexible. It may be said that in terms of the component of readiness of the programme, the finding obtained about the incompatibility between programmes is supported by the finding made in Kartal and Guner's (2017) study, that not enough attention was given to the skill of phonetic awareness, one of the basic skills in the learning of reading skills, in the Activity Book of the Preschool Teaching Programme (MEB, 2013b). In Unal's (2013) research, moreover, it was concluded that the primary school class schedule would not be sufficient for children to gain basic skills or to like school. On the other hand, there are findings in the field literature stating that primary school programmes are compatible with the Preschool Curriculum. For example, Yangin (2013) argues that many learning outcomes in the Preschool Curriculum lay the foundations for first-grade learning outcomes in the primary school syllabus.

It is stated in the articles that in schools, the physical structure, personnel and programmes applied are important in the matter of school readiness. Statements about the importance of learning environments and learning tools that support children's transition to primary school are also made in the National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) in the USA. In this platform, the importance of developing flexible education programmes that can meet the needs of students with differing characteristics and requirements is also discussed (NEGP, 1998).

It was revealed that 5 of the 14 articles including the schools' readiness dimension dealt with all three components of this dimension, expressed as physical readiness of the school, readiness of the teacher and readiness of the programme. With regard to this finding, it can be stated that only 5 of the 45 articles in the study universe dealt with all the components of the schools' readiness dimension. In Harman and Celikler's (2012) compilation study of school readiness, it was also stated that the great majority of academic studies focus on children's readiness for school. Yet there are studies in the field literature that show differences with this finding and that deal with the subject of readiness multi-dimensionally. For example, the Study of Early Childhood Development Ecologies in Turkey was designed as a longitudinal study and focuses on defining and assessing developmental ecologies and on determining their effects on children's development throughout their early childhood period (Baydar, Kuntay, Goksen, Yagmurlu & Cemalcilar, 2008). Lippman, Moore and McIntosh (2011), in their study, also examine the positive indicators of well-being in children in terms of individual, relational and contextual indicators.

Following the findings of the study, it is considered necessary to reveal the physical shortcomings of primary schools in a concrete way. For this reason, it is believed that there is a need for further field research into the "physical readiness of the school" subcomponent of the "schools' readiness" dimension. The General Directorate of Teacher Training and Development last updated the General Competences for the Teaching Profession, which it determines, recently, in 2006 (OYGM, 2017). In this context, in view of the "Professional Competence" and "Attitudes and Values" competence indicators, which are among the general competencies for the teaching profession, determination of the state of first-year primary school teachers' readiness for children may be considered as the first step in eliminating the deficiencies in this area. As of the 2017-2018 academic year, teaching programmes applied as pilot schemes have been updated in accordance with the observation and evaluation studies, and from 20th January 2018 these were shared with the public via the "<http://mfredat.meb.gov.tr>" website. In line with the results obtained from this study for the readiness of the programme component, the suitability of class schedules applied in the first year of primary school for the level of students may be examined in terms of their flexibility and compatibility with the Preschool Curriculum (MEB, 2013a). This will contribute to the taking of concrete steps on the issue of schools' readiness for children in all its components.

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