



Mixed Method Research

Using Mixed Method Research to Evaluate of the Learning-Teaching Process Quality in Pre-School Centers Based on ECERS

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Abstract

This study aimed to evaluate the quality of the teaching process of preschool centers based on the international standard ECERS. For this purpose, 24 preschool centers in Qeshm city were selected based on multi-stage sampling from different regions and responsible organizations. Data were first collected using ECERS observation and interview techniques. Then, the current situation of the centers was judged at the qualitative level. After analyzing the findings, operational solutions based on improving the quality of ECERS standard were presented. Based on the findings of the present study, the quality of learning activities, course structure, and activities related to children's language development and reasoning were evaluated at an unfavorable level. In addition, the structure of the course had the lowest average and the lowest quality level among the other dimensions studied. In general, the quality of the teaching process of learning preschool centers in Qeshm city with an average of 2.07 and according to the rating range of 1-7 ECERS and the range of qualitative judgment is at the level of "low quality" and undesirable.

Keywords: *Assessing, quality, Teaching-learning process, Preschool centers, ECERS*

Introduction

The quality of the education system, especially in early childhood, is a priority for any society that has clear development strategies and regular educational policies; is located (Ljubetic, 2012). Research evidence shows that the high quality of preschool education provides significant educational, economic, and social benefits in the end (Kucukturan, 2011). Preschool is a reliable shield that can be used against inequalities between children; unwanted inequalities such as being born into a family with an inadequate socioeconomic status or being born into a family with high-risk factors such as parental addiction, parenting, and unemployment, or inequalities and cumulative poverty developed during the early years (Talaee & Bozorg, 2015). Continuous evaluation is the most important measure in improving and guaranteeing quality in any system (Dorrani & Salehi, 2006). Previous studies show that if we can pay attention to the quality of these centers according to international standards and identify strengths and weaknesses, we can play a role in improving the quality of these centers by providing appropriate solutions. With this description, the present study has tried to evaluate the quality of preschool centers using ECERS International Standards and answer the question of "What is the quality of teaching processes in preschool centers in Qeshm city?".

Methodology

Combined approaches provide the necessary basis for the integration of data collection techniques and data analysis of both quantitative and qualitative methods in simultaneous or chain steps (Cited by Salehi and Golafshani, 2010, p. 187). Quantitative results alone are not enough to describe and explain the quality of preschool education centers. In a nested scheme, it is assumed that the data embedded in the heart of the other data plays a secondary role and complements the primary data. (Creswell, & Clark, 2017, p. 74). In addition, considering that in this study, the quality of teaching-learning processes of preschool centers in Qeshm city is judged, the present study is evaluation research (Kushner, 2016). In the quantitative stage, the researcher has evaluated the preschool centers using the International ECERS standard and calculated the scores of each subscale and the total score. In addition, qualitative data were collected during the observation of the children's classroom and interviews with kindergarten and preschool teachers and administrators. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. Due to the importance of having criteria for judging the quality of markers on the evaluated dimensions, from the criterion based on spectrum Used.

The statistical population consists of all preschool education centers in Qeshm city. 92 pre-school education centers are operating non-governmental in this city, of which 48 centers with official education licenses and 44 centers under the supervision of welfare in Qeshm city. Sampling was done in several stages from different geographical areas and responsible organizations (education and welfare) in the east and west of Qeshm. According to this classification, a total of 24 centers were included in the study and evaluation.

Results

The research findings are given in response to the following questions. The first question is the quality of activities related to raising children's language and reasoning in preschool centers in Qeshm city? The quality of images and books with an average of 1.21 was the lowest average among the 4 indicators, which is based on the Acres standard at an insufficient quality level. Other qualitative indicators related to this dimension: the use of language to develop reasoning, encouraging children to communicate, informal use of language with averages of 2.88, 2.33, 2.08, respectively, were assessed as low quality level. The outcome of evaluating the quality of language and reasoning activities is at a low level of desirability based on the Acres standard.

The second question is about the amount of learning activities quality in preschool centers in Qeshm city. In evaluating the quality of learning activities in the 1- 7 acres grading range, the highest average is 3, which is related to the indicator of fine motor exercises. In contrast, the lowest average number is 1.38, which is related to the indicator of sand and water activities. The result of evaluating the quality of learning activities is at a low level of desirability based on the ECERS standard.

Question 3: What is the quality of the structure of preschool centers in Qeshm city?

In the 1 to 7 ECERS rating range, the daily schedule was evaluated with an average of 2.38 and the free game with an average of 1.58 and the group activities time with an average of 1.71. The result of evaluating the quality of the course structure was evaluated at a low level of desirability. In the table below, the various dimensions evaluated are compared.

Table 1: Comparison of different dimensions evaluated in preschool centers of Qeshm city.

Subscales	N	Total scores	Mean	S ²	High ECERS score	Low ECERS score
Language and reasoning activities	24	51	2.13	0.929	4.75	1
structure	24	53.1	2.21	0.785	4.90	1
Average	24	45.33	1.89	0.866	4.33	1
	24	-	2.075	-	-	1

According to the findings of the above table, the lowest average is allocated to the course structure and is evidence of the poor quality of the course structure in preschool centers. Because of the evaluation, the average quality of the teaching-learning process of preschool centers in Qeshm was calculated to be 2.07. According to the score obtained in the grading range of 1-7 and the qualitative judgment spectrum, the quality of the teaching learning process at the level of "low quality"; and is undesirable.

Discussion and conclusion

The result of the present study, which was conducted with the aim of evaluating the quality of pre-school education centers in Qeshm city, provided evidence of the claim that the situation of pre-school education centers in Qeshm city is at an unfavorable level of quality. It is clear that a lack of attention to measuring the quality of preschool centers and determining the current status of these centers and not considering appropriate strategies for quality and guarantee, can increase the gap in educational injustice, consequences such as continuing the cycle of poverty and educational, cultural and economic decline.

Empowering the professional competencies of educators, forming professional communities, visiting privileged centers are some of the suggestions that can provide the ground for improving the services of preschool centers. Comprehensive and continuous needs assessments (taking into account international, national, regional and local needs) to improve the quality of preschool education and the use of the latest international version of the ECERS to assess quality can be effective in continuing childhood studies.

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