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THE IMPACT OF THE NAME WRITING SKILL IN PRESCHOOL CHILDREN ON PRINT KNOWLEDGE, ALPHABET KNOWLEDGE, AND PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS: THE CASE OF TURKEY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to analyze the name writing skills, print knowledge, phonological awareness, and letter knowledge skills of preschool Turkish children of different socioeconomic levels concerning various variables. This study also analyzes the predictiveness of name writing in supporting early literacy skills of children. The study included 357 preschoolers, which were 60 to 72 months old, with a mean age of 64,5 months. Name writing, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge skills were compared to socioeconomic levels using the MANOVA analysis. The multivariate linear regression analysis was performed to predict the name writing variable using alphabet knowledge, print awareness, and phonological awareness variables of preschool children with different socioeconomic levels. The results of the study pointed to significant differences among all skills concerning socioeconomic status (SES). Low SES children got lower scores in all sub-skills. The study also compared early literacy performances of children based on the educational level of mothers, and significant differences were found among groups in all sub-skills. As the educational level of mothers increased, the scores of children out of all sub skills also increased. Another result got by the study is that the name writing skills of children have a significant predictive effect on print knowledge, alphabet knowledge, and phonological awareness. This study is important as it indicates about the early writing skills in a language like Turkish, which has transparent orthography, and it can pave the way for future research on the subject.

Keywords: name writing skill, print knowledge, alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness

INTRODUCTION

Starting from an early age, many children see their names on their bedroom doors, at home, on artwork exhibited at school, or on their belongings. Starting from around this age, children are encouraged to copy their names, start writing them on their own, and recognize the letters in them. As a result, it is no surprise that children's knowledge about their printed names develops

early on. Children raised in literate societies recognize their names much earlier. Initially, children may memorize their names as logograms, not name the letters in their names, and recognize letters only by their shape and form. For example, they can call the letter A, "a line between two bars (Villaume & Wilson, 1989). It is noted that children aged 4 to 5 can write their names (Tolchinsky-Landsmann & Levin, 1985; Villaume & Wilson, 1989). It is reported that when writing random letters or nonwords, children aged 4 to 6 use the letters in their own names excessively (Levin et al., 2005; Treiman & Kessler, 2003).

Between the ages of 3 and 4, writing becomes more complex (Springate, 1983; Sulzby, 1985). They become more aware of the many functions and forms (e.g. writing from left to right) of writing. They recognize the communicative role of written language and realize that the message is carried by the print, not the picture. Children recognize phonemes and vocalize letters as they read their names, and other known words (e.g. mother, cat), and prints around them (Bissex, 1980; Chomsky, 1979). Children see their names as a part of their reading-writing world. Some children use their names as an instrument to better understand early literacy concepts such as the alphabet, grapheme-phoneme correspondence, and words (Puranik et al., 2011).

The Relationship among Name Writing, Alphabet Knowledge, Print Knowledge, and Phonological Awareness Skills

Print knowledge includes understanding the difference between print and picture, letters and digits, and rules of print (having a space between words, linear writing). Researchers have reported that print knowledge is an important step in gaining literacy skills (Elias et al., 2014; Sandai et al., 2013; Puranik et al., 2011). Understanding the phoneme-grapheme correspondence is an important part of understanding the rules and functions of print.

Various studies carried out with preschoolers found the moderate level and simultaneous correspondence among name writing, alphabet knowledge, and phonological skills (Diamond et al., 2008; Mohamed Isa et al., 2015; Puranik & Lonigan, 2012). However, there are differences among studies as to the level of correspondence between name writing and the development of grapheme and phoneme knowledge of children. For example, even though Molfese et al. (2011) found a simultaneous correspondence between name writing and the development of grapheme and phoneme knowledge of preschoolers, they identified that this correspondence was not significant later while Blair and Savage (2006) reported a strong correlation between phonological awareness and phoneme knowledge and name writing skills of children, Welsch, Sullivan, and Justice (2003) did not find a correlation between phonological awareness and name writing skills. Instead, they found a correlation between alphabet recognition and print knowledge and name writing skills. Bloodgood (1999) reported a high level of correspondence between alphabet writing and name writing. As is seen, there is no consensus which skills correlate with name writing skills.

On the other hand, the majority of these studies were carried out with English-speaking children. However, the Turkish language structure is quite different than the English one. In Turkish, graphemes are written the same way they are read, or read the same way they are written. Studies carried out on languages with consistent writing systems such as Turkish, Dutch, and German found that phonological awareness skills of children play a central role in their early literacy skills (Babayiğit & Stainthorp, 2007; Landerl & Wimmer, 2008; Wimmer & Mayringer, 2002).

Studies on different languages show that print awareness increases with age. Although there are a few studies that approach the print awareness skills of Turkish-speaking children from the perspective of development, the results are in parallel with international literature. In a study by Şimşek Çetin (2015), it is reported that print awareness skills improve with age; the level of awareness of 5-year-old children is higher than that of 3- and 4-year-olds. Studies report that print awareness predicts future reading skills and children's understanding of the form, function, and use of print sets the foundation of reading and writing skills (Badian, 2001; Justice & Ezell, 2004; Strickland & Schickedanz, 2009; Piasta et al., 2012). Meta-analysis studies also suggest that early writing skills, such as letter knowledge and name writing, are the best predictors of future reading skills (Hammill, 2004; Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998). Name writing, which is an early writing skill, is considered being one cornerstone of literacy acquisition and one of the best predictors of literacy among school-age children (Puranik et al., 2011; Strickland & Shanahan, 2004).

Socioeconomic Status and Early Literacy

Literature shows that a significant portion of children starts first grade void of adequate early literacy skills. Such children lag their peers throughout their school life (Kargın et al., 2017). The socioeconomic status (SES) of families is one of the primary variables influencing the early literacy development of children (Arnold & Doctoroff 2003; Burchinal et al., 2011). Little or no literacy activities participated by parents and children, lack of a rich learning environment, a stimulating environment such as social environment and school, storybooks, or printed material lead low SES children to perform poorly in reading skills compared to higher SES children (Aram et al., 2013; Case et al., 2002). It is also reported that low SES preschoolers know fewer words, letters, and phonemes than their peers, and this performance gap continues to widen each passing year (Garcia & Weiss, 2017).

One Turkish study reported that the literacy environment of low SES children at home was less adequate than those of middle and high SES children, and this situation posed a disadvantage for children (Ergül et al., 2015). Another study found that phonological awareness and comprehension skills of first graders of low SES families were much poorer than those of high SES peers, and these skills closely correlated with the educational level of mothers (Erkan & Saban, 2011). There is not a comprehensive study in Turkey about the overall early literacy skills level of children and how they perform in various skills. For this reason, it is thought that analyzing the early literacy skills of preschoolers before formal reading education would support and offer important information in drawing up preschool educational programs, identifying teaching strategies, and planning the formal reading teaching program.

Acquiring knowledge about the early literacy skills of Turkish-speaking children coming from families with various socioeconomic levels will allow early intervention programs to be developed to minimize potential gaps of such skills. This study is also considered important as it reveals the correlation between consistent writing systems and languages with transparent orthography and early writing skills. The purpose of this study is to analyze the name writing skills, print knowledge, phonological awareness, and letter knowledge skills about various variables of Turkish preschoolers of different socioeconomic levels. The study also analyzed the predictiveness of name writing in supporting early writing skills of children considering that name writing develops much earlier than word writing.

METHOD

Participants

The study population is made up of children, which were 60 to 72 months old with a mean age of 64,5 months, attending preschools of educational facilities affiliated to the Ministry of National Education in central Konya. Depending on the social and economic characteristics of school regions, schools were grouped under three socioeconomic levels (low, middle, high). Before evaluation, the families of children were sent a participation permission letter and only children who were allowed to participate by their families were included in the evaluation. Demographics of children included in the study and information about the socioeconomic properties of families were collected using the "Family-Child Information Form", which was developed by the researchers. 357 Turkish-speaking children, 179 boys and 178 girls with a mean age of 64.5 months without any diagnosed disability, were included in the study. 36% (127) of these children were of low SES, 34% (123) of middle SES, and 30% (107) in high SES group. Educational levels of mothers and fathers are divided into 6 groups. Table 1 provides information about the demographic information about children and their families.

According to Table 1, the majority of mothers are primary school graduates and graduates, while the fathers are graduates and secondary school graduates.

Table 1
Demographic Information about Children and Their Families

Gender of children	N	%
Male	*179*	*50*
Female	*178*	*50*
Socioeconomic level		
Low SES	127	36
Middle SES	123	34
High SES	103	30
Educational level of mothers		
Primary school	94	26
Secondary school	76	21
High School	77	22
Graduate	91	25
Postgraduate	16	5
Doctorate	3	1
Educational level of fathers		
Primary school	73	20
Secondary school	97	28
High School	41	12
Graduate	119	33
Postgraduate	23	6
Doctorate	4	1

Data Collection Tools

Family-Child Information Form

The form, which was used to identify the socioeconomic level of the families of children in the study, includes SES variables such as the educational level of parents, occupation, child's age, sex, and possessions in the house, books, and participation in cultural activities. This form was filled by families.

Preschool Children Print Knowledge Evaluation Check List

The Preschool Children Print Knowledge Evaluation Check List, which was developed by Şimşek (2011), was put to use to evaluate print awareness of children. The check list was prepared to evaluate the level of knowledge of pre-school children on book concepts, the function of print, the shape and direction of print, sentences, words, and letters. The list consists of 17 items. For each question, the score is 1 for correct or 0 for incorrect. The highest and lowest scores of the checklists are 17 and 0, respectively.

Alphabet Knowledge Subtest

Alphabet knowledge was evaluated under two different dimensions, namely alphabet knowledge in receptive language and alphabet knowledge in expressive language. If there is no response from the child within the first three seconds, or he/she gives a false response, the practitioner moved onto the next question without giving any reaction, or by acting neutrally.

i) Alphabet knowledge in receptive language.
This section has seven items. Children were asked to point to the letter told to them among four options. During administration, children were told, "Now, I am going to show you four letters, and I would like you to point to the letter I vocalized, okay?", and then all items in the test were covered respectively.

ii) Alphabet knowledge in the expressive language.
This section also has seven items. Children were asked to name the letters shown to them. During administration, children were told, "Now, I would like you to name the letter I will show you, okay?", and then all the items in the test were covered respectively.

Name Writing

To measure their name writing skills, children were given a blank paper and a pencil and were asked to write down their names. Later on, names that were written by children were evaluated using the rubric based on a score between 0 and 9 used by Puranik, Lonigan, and Kim (2011). According to this system;

Table 2
Name Writing Score

0 Point	No response or a scribble produced by scratching generally distributed over the page.
1 Point	Scribble which is linear, i.e., organized in a horizontal or vertical line.
2 Point	Writing contains distinguishable/separate units (e.g., circles, dots, or lines that are separated). Child needed to have at least 2 to receive credit with the exception of a cursive line that goes up and down repeatedly.
3 Point	Writing contains simple characters—units are simple forms including dots, circles, square and triangle like forms, short lines and symbols – that are separated.
4 Point	Writing contains simple characters and is written demonstrating left-to-right orientation.
5 Point	Writing contains first letter of name and other letters may be represented by simple characters.
6 Point	Writing contains first letter of name and other letters may be represented by complex characters—the units are not simple, but include pseudo and real letters.
7 Point	Writes name using correct first letter and represents other sounds in name with random letters.
8 Point	Writes more than half of the letters contained in their first name.
9 Point	Correctly spells first name using conventional spelling.

The first author trained the other two studies on how to score. For this training, 40 samples of name writing were used outside the scope of the study data, and a 90% agreement was achieved between the scores of the two researchers. One of these researchers scored all the writing samples included in the study's data. Then, one fourth of the writing samples were randomly selected and these data were scored again by the second researcher. Inter-rater reliability was found to be k=0.85.

Phonological Awareness

The Phonological Awareness Sub-dimension of the Early Literacy Skills Assessment Tool, which was developed by Karaman (2013), was employed to evaluate phonological awareness skills.

The Phonological Awareness Sub-dimension consists of five subtests, namely matching words starting with the same phoneme, identifying rhyming words, identifying initial phonemes in words, deleting syllables and phonemes, and blending phonemes. Correct answers are given "1" point and wrong answers are given "0" points. If a child does not give an answer to a question, that question is repeated 3 times. If the child still does not answer, "0" points are given.

Data Collection

The study data was collected in the fall semester of the 2020-2021 school year. Before the study, necessary permits from the university's ethics committee and the Ministry of National

Education. Data were collected by the researchers. Data was collected by working directly with students. Before the evaluation, the researchers introduced themselves to students, chatted with them so that they can get familiar with the environment. The evaluation activities were performed individually in an empty classroom of the school's children were attending.

Data Analysis

SPSS 22.0 statistics software was used to analyze the data. Before data analysis, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Normality Test was performed to identify if scores showed normal distribution. Due to the fact that the data set showed normal distribution, it was decided to perform parametric tests. The homogeneity of variances was tested using the Levene test, and the homogeneity hypothesis was supported for all sub scales. For this reason, the one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed to identify the effect of SES and educational level on name writing, phonological awareness, and alphabet and print knowledge. The correlation between variables was identified using the Pearson correlation analysis. The cut-off points identified by Green and Salking (2005) were used to evaluate effect sizes. These cut-off points are regarded as small, medium, and large, and were 01, .06, and .14 respectively.

FINDINGS

Based on the data obtained using the information collected via the Family Information Form, name writing, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge skills were compared with regard to three socioeconomic levels, namely low, middle, and high, (n=357) using the MANOVA analysis, and the results are provided in Table 3. MANOVA analysis results on the educational level of mothers are provided in Table 4. The multivariate linear regression analysis was performed to predict the name writing variable using alphabet knowledge, print awareness, and phonological awareness variables of preschool children with different socioeconomic levels. The analysis results are shown in Table 5.

Table 3
Early Literacy Performances of Study Groups by SES Level

	Group	N	$\bar{x}$	*F*	*p*	$\eta 2$	Post-Hoc
Name Writing	Low	127	4.21	49.35	.000*	.21	Middle<Low Low<High
	Middle	123	4.43				
	High	107	6.35				
Phonological Awareness	Low	127	13.37	50.81	.000*	.22	Low<High Middle<Low Low<High
	Middle	123	18.36				
	High	107	22.22				
Alphabet Knowledge	Low	127	3.32	254,89	.000*	.59	Low<High Middle<Low Low<High
	Middle	123	6.83				
	High	107	12.35				
Print Awareness	Low	127	11.25	7.48	.000*	.04	Middle<Low Low<High
	Middle	123	11.27				
	High	107	12.35				

Table 3 shows that low SES children obtained lower scores in all sub skills. In terms of name writing and print knowledge skills, the scores of low SES and middle SES were not significantly different. For the name writing skill, the average skill of low and middle SES children was seen in item "writing contains simple characters and is written demonstrating left-to-right orientation", while the average of the high SES group was seen in item "writing contains first letter of name and other letters may be represented by complex characters—the units are not simple but include pseudo and real letters." The most striking finding was about alphabet knowledge. The effect size (η2= .59) of this skill was quite large. While high SES children correctly answered nearly all seven graphemes and phonemes directed to them (Mean=12.35), the mean of the low SES group was X=3.32.

Table 4
Early Literacy Performances of Study Groups by Educational Level of Mothers

	Group	N	$\bar{x}$	*F*	*p*	*η2*
Name Writing	Primary school	94	3.51	30.94	.000*	.34
	Secondary school	76	4.81			
	High School	77	5.71			
	Graduate	91	6.22			
	Postgraduate	16	6.62			
	Doctorate	3	6.63			
Phonological Awareness	Primary school	94	12.72	31.81	.000*	.35
	Secondary school	76	14.14			
	High School	77	18.09			
	Graduate	91	23.19			
	Postgraduate	16	25			
	Doctorate	3	24.33			
Alphabet Knowledge	Primary school	94	3.30	42.46	.000*	.42
	Secondary school	76	6.01			
	High School	77	7.14			
	Graduate	91	8.93			
	Postgraduate	16	9.25			
	Doctorate	3	9.60			
Print Awareness	Primary school	94	10.15	15.38	.000*	.21
	Secondary school	76	10.76			
	High School	77	11.22			
	Graduate	91	12.09			
	Postgraduate	16	12.16			
	Doctorate	3	11.33			

According to Table 4, significant differences were found between groups in all sub skills. Effect sizes of all sub skills were large. It is particularly striking that the effect size of the alphabet knowledge skill was quite high *η2*= .42. Since only three mothers were doctorate

graduates, they are most likely unable to represent their group. Other than that, the scores of children increased as the educational level of mothers improved for all sub skills.

Table 5

Correlation between Literacy Skills of Children in the Study

	Variable	B	Std. E.	β	t	p	Dual r	Partial r
Low-SES	Constant	2.13	.38	-	5.61	.000	-	-
	Print Awareness	.156	.028	.424	5.576	.000	.473	.449
	Alphabet Knowledge	.068	.033	.161	2.037	.044	.231	.211
	Phonological Awareness	.055	.014	.316	3.930	.000	.342	.334
	$R=.56, R^2=.31, F_{(3, 123)}=18.74, p=.000$							
Middle-SES	Constant	-2.939	.575	-	-5.109	.000	-	-
	Print Awareness	.598	.046	.746	12.884	.000	.797	.763
	Alphabet Knowledge	.014	.040	.019	.342	.033	.312	.301
	Phonological Awareness	.029	.012	.143	2.451	.016	.411	.219
	$R=.809, R^2 = .65, F_{(3, 119)} =74.88, p=.000$							
High-SES	Constant	-.283	.905	-	-.313	.755	-	-
	Print Awareness	.398	.048	.610	8.374	.000	.682	.636
	Alphabet Knowledge	.031	.066	.032	.464	.043	.326	.346
	Phonological Awareness	.064	.021	.223	3.046	.003	.415	.287
	$R=.71, R^2 = .51, F_{(3, 103)} =35.67, p=.000$							
Total Group	Constant	-.748	.321	-	-2.328	.020	-	-
	Print Awareness	.399	.027	.574	14.562	.000	.661	.613
	Alphabet Knowledge	.057	.021	.108	2.729	.007	.251	.244
	Phonological Awareness	.052	.009	.230	5.512	.000	.455	.282
	$R=.72, R^2 = .51, F_{(3, 353)} =122.99, p=.000$							

According to Table 5, the variables of print knowledge, alphabet knowledge, and phonological awareness positively correlate with the variable of name writing in all SES groups (R= .72, R2 = .51, p=.000). Print knowledge, alphabet knowledge, and phonological awareness explain approximately 51% of the total variance in name writing. T test results on the significance of regression coefficients show that the name writing variable in low, middle, and high SES groups is a significant predictor of print knowledge, alphabet knowledge, and phonological awareness. The analysis of dual and partial correlations between predictive variables and the dependent variable revealed significant correlations between the variables of name writing and print knowledge the most in all SES groups. Especially in the middle SES group, the correlation between print knowledge and name writing (r=.79) is much higher than the correlation between two variables (r=.76).

Table 6
Correlations between All Measures in the Whole Sample (n = 356)

	1	2	3	4
1. Name writing	-	.66**	.25*	.46**
2. Print knowledge		-	.29*	.33**
3.Alphabet Knowledge			-	.34**
4.Phonological Awareness				-

** p<,01, *p<,05

According to the correlations among variables shown in Table 6, there is a positive and significant correlation among variables. The highest and the most significant correlation between variables is the one between name writing and print knowledge (r=,66, p<.01).

DISCUSSION

This study analyzes the name writing, alphabet knowledge, print knowledge, and phonological awareness skills of Turkish-speaking preschoolers of different socioeconomic levels and examined the extent to which the name writing skill predicts these skills. The results of the study pointed to significant differences among all skills regarding SES level. This finding of the study is supported by others in literature (Arnold & Doctoroff 2003; Snow et al, 1998; Ergül, et al., 2015). These studies also found that low SES children underperform in early literacy skills.

Differences in literacy skills of children of different SES levels reveal themselves very early (Stipek & Ryan, 1997). Low SES children start school with a significantly lower level of skills compared to their high SES peers (Bryant et al., 1994). It is reported that the differences among early literacy skills of preschoolers of different SES levels such as print knowledge, alphabet knowledge, and phonological awareness predict their reading and writing skills in the future (Clement et al., 2004; Lonigan et al., 2000; Neuman & Celano, 2001). Being of low socioeconomic level, in other words, poverty, is a key element in academic failure (Arnold & Doctoroff, 2003). Even though in low SES schools' children need more literacy materials, these schools have less such materials in their hands compared to high SES schools. It is noted that preschools attended by the children of such families do not adequately cover early literacy experiences (Kerem & Cömert, 2005). In the study, schools attended by low SES children offer half-day education while high SES schools offer full-day education. One reason for the gap between low and high SES children could be the fact that preschool education is longer in high SES schools, and high SES families provide more environmental stimulus and offer high-quality early literacy environments for their children (Currenton & Justice, 2008; Steensel, 2006). It is noted that regardless of the SES group, due to lack of knowledge, teachers are unable to carry out high-quality activities in their classes on early literacy (Çakmak & Yılmaz, 2009). Therefore, it is inevitable for low SES children to perform poorly since they are not exposed to enough environmental stimulus at home.

The study also compared early literacy performances of children based on the educational level of mothers, and significant differences were found among groups in all sub

skills. As the educational level of mothers increased, the scores of children out of all sub skills also increased. In this study, mothers with a higher educational level usually have a higher socioeconomic level. At this level, children have an enabling environment where they can learn and use language. Parents with a lower educational level usually have a lower socioeconomic level. Compared to other income levels, children of families with a low socioeconomic level have less educational materials at home, their families have low expectations about their academic performance and careless about their school performance, all of which is considered being the variables negatively affecting their early literacy skills (Cook & Kilmer, 2010). On the other hand, mothers with a high educational level provide more learning opportunities and a rich learning environment for their children, more responsive towards their communicative behaviors, and provide an environment rich in stimuli, all of which help children to perform better in early literacy skills (Pan et al., 2005; Umek et al., 2005).

Another result obtained by the study is that the name writing skills of children have a significant predictive effect on print knowledge, alphabet knowledge, and phonological awareness. In addition, a moderate level of significant correlation was found among these variables. These findings are consistent with those of Bloodgood (1999), who reported a high correlation between name writing and alphabet writing, of Welsch et al. (2003), who found a significant correlation among name writing skills and print knowledge, of Blair and Savage (2006); Diamond and Baroody (2013); Molfese et al. (2011), who pointed a correlation between phonological awareness and name writing skills.

For writing, children need to know what print means and have letter knowledge (Puranik et al., 2011). As their name writing skills improve, children become more motivated to write and start learning letters and phonemes outside their names (Treiman et al., 2001) In addition, children that are knowledgeable of writing rules are exposed to more writing and literacy activities, and become more motivated to write letters, recognize phonemes, and write names. It is noted that the name writing skill contributes to reading and writing skills in primary school and knowing how to write the letters in their names makes children more willing to write (Puranik et al., 2011). Despite this, most low SES children in this study failed to write a recognizable letter. While in foreign studies, high SES children almost completely accurately wrote their names (Puranik et al., 2011), in this study, even the high SES group did not score that high even though Turkish has a transparent orthography. This finding suggests that preschool teachers cover early writing skills very little in their classes. Studies carried out in Turkey also point out that teachers cover early literacy skills very little in their classes (Deretarla-Gül & Bal, 2006; Kerem & Cömert, 2005). In the light of these results, considering that children write the letters in their own names before other letters, and their attention towards and sense of ownership of their own names (Levin et al., 2005), it would be beneficial to use name writing activities to support early literacy skills such as phonological awareness, print knowledge, and alphabet writing.

The results of the study suggest that children coming from different social infrastructures are at different levels of early literacy skills. One goal of preschool education is to fight such inequalities. It is reported that with high-quality preschool education, the academic and social performances of children raised under socioeconomically and culturally inadequate conditions improve (NAEYC, 2000). Therefore, the knowledge gained by teachers, who are the key elements of high-quality preschool education, during their academic training is pivotal for the development of children (Polat, 2019). Little or no focus on early literacy teaching in teaching training is considered being one of the most important reasons behind the gap in performance among children (Dickinson & Caswell, 2007; Hsieh, et al., 2009). Lacking

adequate professional knowledge and skills, teachers start their careers unequipped. Lack of in-service training opportunities and focus on early literacy result in teachers not giving enough attention to early literacy in their teaching plans (Hsieh et al., 2009). For this reason, it is recommended that teachers are trained in early literacy skills by way of in-service training programs, seminars, and conferences. It is also important to enrich course content on early literacy skills and offer practical information in undergraduate programs on preschool education. It is inevitable for cognitive gains to remain short term if families, who can support children constantly, are not included in intervention efforts (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2010). For the reasons explained above, it will be important for teachers, working in low SES regions, to get informed on how families can contribute to their children's early literacy development at home through regular on-the-job seminars. In addition, it is recommended to organize seminars in centers to be established in these regions for parents to train them on how to support the early literacy skills of their children.

Limitations and Future Research

This study has limitations, and recommendations are offered for each limitation. First of all, this study is limited to 60 to 72-month-old preschool children with normal development. It is recommended to work with a larger sample group in future studies to see a clearer picture of the development of early literacy skills in the Turkish language and improve the generalizability of results. Second, it was noted that the name writing skill predicts other early literacy skills. Considering the fact that name writing develops earlier than word writing, additional studies are needed to grasp the role of name writing in supporting the early literacy skills of children. Given all the above, it is recommended that teachers and parents include name writing skills in game-based activities to support the early literacy skills of children. Longitudinal studies can offer much detailed information about the predictiveness of future literacy skills by children's scores.

CONCLUSION

This study is considered being important as it indicates about the early writing skills in a language like Turkish, which has transparent orthography, and it can pave the way for future research on the subject. The study results show that name writing skills predict alphabet knowledge, print knowledge, and phonological awareness skills. These results show that making use of name writing skills during early writing activities can be a promising way to develop interventions to improve the literacy skills of children, especially low SES children. In future studies, longitudinal monitoring of children and examining what kind of effects the risks they experience in these skills have on basic academic areas such as literacy will provide more detailed information in the definition of risk groups.

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