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The Turkish adaptation of the program administration scale

Elif Kalkan[a] *, Berrin Akman[a]

[a]*Department of Early Childhood Education, Hacettepe University, Ankara, 06800, Turkey*

Abstract

This study aims at conducting the Turkish translation and reliability study of the Program Administration Scale (PAS), developed by Talan and Bloom (2004) in order to measure early childhood leadership and management. The scale is used to determine quality in preschools in terms of administrative context. In this study the original version of PAS was translated into Turkish and back translated by bilingual individuals. After obtaining the Turkish form of the scale, the reliability study was done in 26 preschools. The results show that the scale is a highly reliable tool to support quality studies in early childhood education research.

Keywords: Program administration; preschool; quality; administrative practices.

1. Introduction

Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) developed by Harms, Clifford and Cryer in 1980 has been a widely used instrument so far for assessing quality in early care and education settings. The scale is designed in order to measure the structural and functional quality in early childhood education centers and assumed to give an overall picture of preschool quality based on the scores summed across seven subscales. ECERS has been adapted to Turkish and it has also been used in Turkey for research purposes.

On the other hand, it is claimed that there are some points not covered within the scope of ECERS though as important as the structural and process indicators listed in ECERS. Most of the widely used assessment tools tend to focus on particularly the properties of the educational setting. This kind of an approach may lead to ignoring some significant aspects, though. One of these crucial aspects is the management and leadership point of view in the early childhood education center. The management and leadership approach in an organization directly affects the motivation and work attitudes of the people working there. Considering that the people who interact with children most in an early childhood education center are the teachers, it is undoubtedly true that the positive or negative attitudes of teachers resulting from the organizational practices are reflected on children and hence may affect the quality of the education. Caldwell and Hillard (1985) stated that a high quality preschool program should cover areas as the physical environment, health and safety, nutrition and food service, administration, staff qualifications,

* Elif Kalkan Tel.: +1 510 868 88 62
  elifirma@yahoo.com

staff – parent interaction, curriculum, staffing and evaluation, which supports the view that child care quality is an integral part of a system moderating child's growth (Terry, 2001). Therefore, while assessing the global quality of a center, the working conditions as well as the administrative applications should be taken into account.

Until recently there has been a need for a reliable assessment and measurement tool for evaluating the program administration in early childhood education institutions. Although there are a number of instruments for measuring the quality of teacher-child interactions or the educational practices in classroom environment, there has been a necessity for a tool measuring administrative practices. Child care program administration involves the leadership and management of the organization including staff qualifications, administrative practices and provisions for staff (Hansen, 2006). The development of Program Administration Scale (PAS) in 2005 by Talan and Bloom has filled this large gap in the preschool quality assessment field in terms of organizational practices. The fundamental reason in developing PAS is that the quality of an early childhood education program cannot be determined by only reviewing the properties of learning environment but a data gathering method based on interviews and document reviews should also be realized. PAS is designed in order to provide a reliable and easy to administer tool for measuring the overall quality of administrative practices of early care and education programs. While it is possible to use it separately, PAS may also be a complementary device of ECERS as they both aimed at guiding program improvement efforts. PAS dwells on the importance of high quality administrative practices for the purpose of ensuring beneficial outcomes for children.

Similar to many other countries, ECERS has been the widely preferred instrument in studies conducted to identify the quality in early childhood settings. This study is conducted with a belief that the adaptation of Program Administration Scale will be highly beneficial for the Turkish researchers in terms of obtaining a more accurate picture of the global quality in the field of early childhood education as well as highlighting the current situation of organizational structures of these institutions, which may also lead to further studies.

2. Method

2.1. Program Administration Scale

The present study aims at conducting the Turkish adaptation of the Program Administration Scale, which focuses on the leadership and management aspects of the early childhood education centers. Leadership function covers a wide approach that helps an organization explain and clarify its values, identify its objectives, set forth a vision and have an action plan to attain that vision while management function is related with distributing the duties and establishing systems to sustain institutional mission. Developed for the use of early childhood program administrators, researchers, observing staff and people working towards enhancing quality, PAS was structured in a way that it may complement ECERS.

2.2. Implementation and Scoring

PAS measures quality on a 7- point scale makes an assessment based on 25 items summed under ten areas; namely, human resources development, program planning and evaluation, family partnerships, marketing and public relations, technology and staff qualifications.

The first 23 items are related with the program as a whole and the last 2 items (Item no. 24 Teacher and Item no. 25 Teacher Assistant / Trainee) are the operational items depending on the staff properties of the program. Each item shows 2- 5 indicators and each indicator is scored on a 7 – point scale starting from (1) inadequate to (7) perfect.

The implementation of the scale covers an interview with the administrator, which may take up to an hour as well as reviewing the documentation of the program. There are also some questions in the scale that may guide the researcher. During the interview, these questions may be asked to the administrator.

For the purpose of this study, the researchers got in contact with the administrators of the selected preschools. All of the administrators accepted to realize the interview. The interviews along with the documentation reviews are made during the day time between 8:30 and 12:00.

2.3. Validity and Reliability Studies

Firstly, the literacy equivalency study is made in order to find out whether there are discrepancies between the original and Turkish scales. PAS was translated into Turkish by two bilinguals and final text was constructed. Then an observer using the Turkish form and another observer using the original English form conducted PAS at 4 preschools by making interviews with the administrators and reviewing the documentation. Hence, both Turkish and English forms were implemented in 4 preschools.

Data analyses were performed using SPSS 10th version for Windows (SPSS inc., Chicago, IL, USA). Internal reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. For the reliability analysis of the study 30 preschools in Ankara were randomly selected. The Turkish form is conducted at the selected 30 preschools and Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated in order to measure the internal consistency of the scale.

3. Results

In order to determine the validity of the scale two observers used the Turkish translation of PAS in four different preschools. As a result, the interobserver agreement is found to be 0.85 as shown in the below Table 1. The lowest agreement is 0.78 while the higher is 0.91. In addition, the correlation percentage between the two observers is 90. These results justify that items of the scale that two observes used in 4 different environments are mostly equivalent in terms of language. Moreover, after the final form of the scale was obtained opinions of the experts from the early childhood education and educational sciences field were asked.

Table 1. Agreement Percentages of Observers Implementing PAS

PRESCHOOL	Agreement Percentage
Preschool 1	87
Preschool 2	91
Preschool 3	78
Preschool 4	82
Mean Agreement	85

Table 2.Reliability Analysis for PAS

	Scale mean if item deleted	Corrected item–total correlation	Alpha if item deleted
1	84.56	.572	.665
2	84.20	.319	.666
3	83.37	.3609	.651
4	82.57	.2404	.657
5	83.97	.3375	.650
6	83.17	.2208	.710
7	80.33	.2574	.660
8	84.97	.3397	.653
9	84.67	.1102	.667
10	82.33	.3247	.647
11	81.57	.3189	.647
12	81.33	.1992	.661
13	81.40	.4736	.626
14	84.07	.4989	.626
15	83.80	.3978	.638
16	82.67	.0578	.674
17	84.03	.4551	.642
18	84.27	.4295	.644
19	83.47	.0360	.678
20	80.97	.4342	.642
	Scale mean if item deleted	Corrected item-total correlation	Alpha if item deleted
21	83.40	.2237	.659
22	83.43	.1964	.661
23	81.93	.1023	.681
24	83.17	.1333	.665
25	83.17	.0555	.677

TOTAL ALPHA= 0,71

The internal consistency of the original scale was found to be 0.85. As seen in Table 2, the internal consistency of the Turkish adaptation of PAS was examined using Cronbach's Alpha. Cronbach's coefficients were calculated for the total 25-item scale and for its subscales. Cronbach's coefficient ranged from 0.63 to 0.70 across ten subscales and 0.71 was found for total score. This result is found to be satisfactory.

Pearson r was found for the subscales and it is found that there are moderate correlations among the subscales ranging from r=0.02 to r=0.60, p<0.01.

4. Discussion

This study is done for the purpose of conducting the Turkish adaptation study of Program Administration Scale, which is a recently developed research instrument to measure administrative practices in early childhood education field. The outcomes provide the evidence that PAS is a sufficiently reliable and valid measure for assessing the management and leadership approach as well as global quality in early childhood education centers.

PAS has convincing internal consistency and satisfactory reliability outcomes. Thus it can be a useful tool for both research and training purposes. Besides this conclusion, it is recommended that the outcomes of this study should be supported by other data and studies.

Focusing on the effect of administrative practices pursued in the early childhood education centers on the global quality of the institutions and conducting relevant studies on this issue may be a solution for some of the biggest problems of the field, such as teacher burnout or high turnover rates. Moreover, establishing a system based on accurate and reliable documentation will help the early childhood education centers to become more standardized and organized, which will in turn affect the global quality in a positive way. Since there are various types of administrative practices in early care and education centers in Turkey, this has an adverse impact on teachers' motivation and their attitude toward their jobs.

Further studies measuring quality by using PAS objectively along with ECERS would be worthwhile undertakings. Additionally, PAS may be a helpful complementary research tool for the studies regarding leadership or teacher efficiency at preschools.

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