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## Parental Views on the Lives of Preschool Children in the Covid-19 Pandemic Process\*

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the parental views of pre-school children during the Covid 19 pandemic and is conducted using a basic qualitative research design from qualitative research methods. In the study, parents of children attending pre-school institution were identified through criterion sampling techniques from non-selective sampling methods. The study prepared a semi-structured interview form for parents with children attending pre-school institution as an instrument for data collection. The data from the semi-structured interview form was collected through online interviews with parents whose children attend the pre-school facility. As a result of the study, parents indicated that during the pre-school children's pandemic process, there were more activities with family members at home, the children spent more time with technological devices, terms such as pandemic, diseases, and viruses were frequently used in their daily conversations, and their negative, boring, and aggressive behaviors increased. It was also noted that children were sleeping and waking up later during this time, thus changing their sleep patterns. Another finding observed by the parents was that irregular eating habits increased in the children's eating behavior. It was observed by the parents that children were washing their hands more frequently than before the pandemic. Another finding of the study was that children spoke with longing about their school life due to the disruption of personal instruction in schools.

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Covid-19, pandemic, coronavirus outbreak, parents, pre-school education

### 1. Introduction

The process of the Covid-19 pandemic has brought about some necessary changes in the lives of adults and children in our country and around the world. In this process of changing the daily routines of children, online education has been quickly incorporated into the educational process. These sudden changes have brought about physical, mental and social effects on children. This period should not be left to chance, since the pre-school period, of which we carry the traces throughout our lives, is of great importance for us to grow up as healthy individuals. In this period, the developmental support of children, both in school and in the social and family spheres, will make a positive contribution to their whole lives. For this reason, the changes and developments in pre-school education, which is of crucial importance, will undoubtedly leave important traces in children's lives.

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The first step of education, which has a significant place in human life, is pre-school education that is planned and organized within a certain program. Preschool education is of great importance because it forms the basis of education that people will receive throughout their lives (Katrancı, 2018). The pre-school education period covers the period between the birth of the child and the age of six. Pre-school education can be defined as a systematic and planned education process given in a pre-school institution and the child's family or in alternative programs in this period. The education given to the child should support all development areas (cognitive, language, motor, social and sensory development and self-care skills), should be suitable for his developmental characteristics and individual differences, and should offer a rich stimulating environment (Kuru Turaşlı, 2018). During this period, the development of children should be supported by professionals who provide a supportive environment and stimulating environment for almost all development areas (Koçyiğit, 2016). The richer the environment is in terms of stimuli, the faster the child develops and learns (MEB, 2013). Development is rapid in the pre-school period and some factors that affect development. These are the innate characteristics of the child and the environmental factors. The environmental factors also vary according to the type of development. However, the family is the first factor among the environmental factors that influence development (Kandır & Alpan, 2008). Recently, a pandemic has caused some changes in the lives of adults and children in our country as in the whole world

The coronavirus (Covid-19), which emerged in late 2019 in the city of Wuhan, the capital of China's Hubei region, has become a global pandemic declared by the World Health Organization (WHO). Covid-19 pandemic has become a global social problem that has affected the whole world in a short period of time and made people change their behavior, lifestyle and habits (Zeybekoğlu Akbaş & Dursun, 2020). The Covid-19 pandemic, which has fundamentally changed our age and life and profoundly affected our country as well as the whole world, has affected many sectors and social fields in different ways and has also significantly affected the field of education (Kırmızıgül, 2020).

Preschool child is a play child as of the period. During this period, activities are included in which children gain their spiritual, social, motor and mental skills. The change in children's daily routines due to the current pandemic can bring their spiritual, social, motor and mental development to a standstill. Exaggerated behaviors of parents in this period cause children to be affected psychologically (Ercan et al. 2020). Systematic examinations of the impact of pandemics reveal that sleep quality and duration, and reduced levels of physical and outdoor activities can and do inhibit child development from reaching its full potential in times of crisis (O'Sullivan et al., 2021). In addition, in a study conducted by Xiang, Zhang, and Kuwahara (2020) in a group of children and adolescents (6-17 years old) in Shanghai, China, it was determined that there was a significant decrease in physical activity and an increase in screen exposure of individuals during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Children are not indifferent to the effects of the pandemic COVID -19. They not only suffer from anxiety, insecurity, physical and social isolation, but also stay away from school for long periods of time. It is very important to properly understand children's reactions and emotions in order to address their needs (Jiao et al. 2020). If we look at the studies that have been conducted to investigate the reactions of preschool children during the pandemic period, we can see that they not only show some behaviors that are inconsistent with their age and developmental stage, such as general reluctance, difficulty in concentrating while playing, using the bottle, thumb sucking, and toilet accidents, but also difficulty in separating from their parents (Imran, Zeshan, & Pervaiz, 2020). It is very important to increase the diversity of observations on this topic so that we can see the impact of the current situation on children. However, studies on parents and children trying to cope with the quarantine process and their various problems seem to be insufficient (Griffith, 2020).

Studies to improve understanding of the impact of epidemics such as COVID-19 and pandemics on children's mental health and development can help guide strategies to prevent harm to children's growth and promote positive development (Araújo, Veloso, Souza et al., 2020). The long-term stay of children at home during Covid-19 has made it necessary to reveal the existing situation in terms of their psychological, physical and social lives (Direktör, 2021). The positive-negative effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on children in the pre-school period will reveal an important situation that should be determined against the situations that may be encountered in the future (Yüksek Usta and Gökcan, 2020). It is thought by Yüksek Usta and Gökmen (2020) that teachers' knowledge of pre-school children's perception of the epidemic process will guide them against problems that parents and educators may experience in the future.

Parents are the people closest to their children when it comes to observing the effects and changes on children of the curfew and social desistance practices that were implemented with the goal of protecting public health during the Covid 19 pandemic. In addition, parental support for their children through the suspension of face-to-face education and the continuation of education through online platforms came to the fore. It is very important to increase the diversity of observations made on this topic to see the impact of the current situation on children.

The purpose of this study was to examine parents' views of preschool children's experiences during the Covid 19 pandemic. The study sought answers to the following questions: the impact of the pandemic on children's daily lives, their communication with family members; changes in children's behavior, play, night sleep, feeding, cleaning and hygiene behaviors, and school routines; activities parents engage in with their children; and resource choices in preferred activities were explored.

## **2. Methodology**

This section provides information about the research model, study group, data collection instruments, data collection, and data analysis.

### **2.1. Research Model**

This study, which aims to examine the views of parents about the experiences of pre-school children during the Covid-19 pandemic process, was conducted with a basic qualitative research design. Researchers using the qualitative research method want to examine the subject in detail and reach alternative perspectives (Büyüköztürk, Çakmak Kılıç, Akgün, Karadeniz & Demirel, 2012). Basic qualitative research aims to understand how participants describe their experiences, how they construct their world, and what meanings they attach to their experiences, in keeping with the nature of qualitative research (Merriam, 2009). Basic qualitative research is often used in research and educational studies (Merriam, 2002; Kahlke, 2014) that do not wish to fully commit to a particular methodology. In this study, the basic qualitative design was preferred because it aims to understand preschoolers' experiences during the Covid 19 pandemic in line with their parents' views.

### **2.2. Research Group**

The study group of the research consists of the parents of 5-6 years old children attending preschool institutions in Konya city center during the 2019-2020 school year (N= 287). In the study, the parents of the children attending the preschool institution were identified by the random sampling method, which is one of the non-random sampling methods. The random sampling method can be described as collecting data from a sample that is easily accessible to the researcher (Büyüköztürk, Çakmak Kılıç, Akgün, Karadeniz & Demirel, 2012).

### **2.3. Data Collection Tools**

The data collection instrument in the study was a semi-structured interview questionnaire for parents with children who had attended preschool institutions until the pandemic. According to Taşdemir (2019), one of the most effective methods of data collection in educational research is the interview. Interviews are usually conducted face-to-face, but can also be conducted using audio and video tools such as telephone and videophone. According to Buran (2015), in a semi-structured interview, the researcher determines the main themes of the topic to be explored and asks approximately the same questions to each participant. Flexibility can be shown during the interview depending on the situation.

Before the semi-structured interview form was prepared, a literature review was conducted on the subject. In line with the information obtained, the subject of the study consisted of twelve question items that are generally thought to represent the subject. To increase the validity of the semi-structured interview form in the study, the interview form was broached to a faculty member from the Measurement and Evaluation department and two faculty members from the Preschool Education department. In line with the experts' opinions, arrangements were made in the question statements and two questions were removed from the form as they did not reflect the content of the study. The semi-structured interview form was completed as

ten questions and applied to fifteen parents as a pilot study. In line with the data and feedback obtained from the pilot applications, it was seen that there was no problem in the expressions of the question items. The data of the semi-structured interview form were obtained through online interviews with parents of children attending pre-school education institutions. According to Demir (2017), the application of the semi-structured interview method in studies can be carried out by using the ways such as face-to-face, using telephone, computer, internet etc.

### 2.4. Data Analysis

In our study, the data were collected via telephone, computer, and internet using the semi-structured parent interview form voluntarily. The obtained data were analyzed by descriptive analysis method. According to the descriptive analysis method, the data obtained can be summarized and interpreted according to predetermined themes Yıldırım & Şimşek (2018). While descriptive analysis is used to process data that does not require analysis thoroughly, content analysis requires a closer examination of the data obtained and reaching the concepts and themes that explain this data (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). In the study, the data obtained from the parents' opinions were first coded and then categories and themes were determined. A code (P1, P2, P3) was determined for each parent participating in the study, and sample sentences regarding the parents' views were stated. In the study, questions aimed at determining the views of parents on different issues were prepared and expert opinion was obtained from field experts. Within the scope of reliability, the data obtained from the parents were coded and compared by two different researchers. Miles and Huberman's (1994)  $(\Delta = C \div (C + \delta) \times 100)$  formula was used in the study. According to the formula "Confidence coefficient = Code with consensus  $\div$  (Code with consensus + Code with disagreement)  $\times$  100", the consensus among encoders should be at least 80%. A consensus in percent of 93% was achieved in the study  $(45/48 \times 100 = 0.93)$ .

### 3. Findings

The study includes information obtained from parents about the experiences of preschool children during the Covid 19 pandemic. The data obtained from parents' views on how the pandemic process affected the daily lives of the children in the study are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Parent Views Regarding the Effect of the Pandemic Process on the Daily Life of Children

|       |                        | Code                                  | f   | Participant's Views   |
|-------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----|---|
| Theme | Daily Life of Children | Activities with family members        | 208 | <i>We do the activities and homework sent by our teacher [P24].</i>   |
|       |                        | Time spent with technological devices | 172 | <i>He misses his friends, TRT-kids [P79].</i>   |
|       |                        | Time spent at home                    | 115 | <i>My child spends her/his pandemic days by cycling in the garden of our house, he is happy with it [P177].</i> |
|       |                        | Pandemic in colloquial language       | 86  | <i>He always asks when the pandemic will end [P282].</i>  |

When the views of the parents on this question were examined, it was found that the following answers were given. "At first it was nice to be at home, but then the children began to show nervous, impatient behavior" [P187]. "My child is unhappy and misses his friends a lot" [P136]. "He does what he wants and does not listen to his family members" [P118]. "He always wants his friends to come home" [P64]. From the results of the study, the preschool children engaged in activities with their family members in their daily lives during the pandemic, they talked about current issues such as pandemic, diseases and viruses during the pandemic in their daily conversations with their children, and their negative, shy and aggressive behaviors increased. The data collected in the study on how the pandemic affects children's communication with their family members are presented in Table 2.

When Table 2 was examined, 202 parents stated that their children spent more time with their mothers during the pandemic, and 123 parents indicated positive situations in their communication with family members. In comparison, 41 parents said that their negative communication with family members increased. The parents' statements on the subject are as follows: "His jealousy towards his brother grew. They fight all the time, but they are always together" [P12]. "They use computers more due to online education" [P22].

“They spend time with all of us, and their requests never end”[P53]. “They had the opportunity to spend time with their grandparents and eat at the same table”[P177]. “He spends time with his siblings and me but he is not satisfied at all, he is extremely grumpy and he does not want anything, he is reluctant”[P247]. Based on this information, parents stated that there was an increase in children's communication with family members during the pandemic period. It was also noted that communication problems were observed in children.

**Table 2.** Parent Views Regarding the Effect of the Pandemic Process on the Communication of Children with Family Members

|       |  | Code                     | f   | Participant’s Views   |
|-------|--|--------------------------|-----|---|
| Theme | Children's Communication with Family Members | Time spent with siblings | 202 | <i>He is playing with his brother in the garden of our house [P78].</i>   |
|       |  | Positive communication   | 123 | <i>Sibling rivalry has subsided. He couldn't regard his brother as a playmate because he was spending time with his friends. Staying at home showed my child that he can play with the younger ones [P111].</i> |
|       |  | Negative communication   | 41  | <i>Difficulties in communication with us increased. He is already a broth of a boy, he became jealous and more irritable [P25].</i>   |

The data obtained from the views of parents regarding the question of how the pandemic process affects children's behaviors in the study are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Parent Views Regarding the Effect of the Pandemic Process on Children’s Behavior

|       |                      | Code                              | f   | Participant’s Views  |
|-------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|-----|--|
| Theme | Children's Behaviors | Behaviors based on cooperation    | 108 | <i>He is very happy now because his mother is not working, he is not as anxious as before, but he sometimes has aggressive behavior [P35].</i>   |
|       |                      | Aggressive behaviors              | 99  | <i>He developed resistance to the warnings. He’s having a hard time keeping up with the rules, I guess he just doesn’t make sense anymore. He ignores the warnings and no longer feels guilty. He damages things and toys [P12].</i> |
|       |                      | Bored behaviors                   | 57  | <i>He is constantly unhappy. He always says he is bored even if he plays [P156].</i>   |
|       |                      | Controlled, appropriate behaviors | 53  | <i>He rarely has shy, grumpy, unhappy behaviors, he says he misses him school very much, I think it is so because of controlled, appropriate behaviors [P92].</i>  |

When Table 3 was examined, 108 parents indicated that their children exhibited cooperative behavior toward family members during the pandemic, 99 parents indicated that their children's aggressive behavior increased, 57 parents observed an increase in their children's shy behavior, and 53 parents indicated that their children exhibited controlled and appropriate behavior. Parents expressed their own views. “Capriciousness has begun, but he is not dissatisfied with everything. We spent a lot of time outside before the pandemic, so he's bored and reminiscing about the places he used to go. He wonders when we will return to normality.”[P10] “There are moments when he understands the situation, but there are also times when he says he's fed up and rebels”[P24]. “He is happier when he can do physical activities that he loves”[P147]. “Our regular sleeping rhythm is disturbed, we attribute this situation to the change in conditions”[P164]. “He can not get rid of his energy because he can not move enough because he is a very active child”[P186]”. “My child is bored at home, his emotionality has increased”[P286]”. The data obtained from the parents' views on how the pandemic process affects the children's games in the study are presented in Table 4.

When Table 4 was examined, 166 parents indicated that they observed no difference in their children's games during the pandemic, 92 parents used symbols about their school environment and friends, 52 parents indicated that their children took on roles such as doctors, nurses, and medical professionals, 47 parents indicated that their children talked about pandemics, diseases, and viruses, and 27 parents indicated that their children exhibited violent behavior in their games. The parents' statements on the subject are as follows: “My child used to love activities, paper and pencil, now he does not like them” [P187]. “He dreams and tells about things that are not real and when we ask him, he says he was dreaming” [P247].

**Table 4. Parent Views Regarding the Effect of the Pandemic Process on Children’s Games**

|       |                  | Code  | f   | Participant’s Views   |
|-------|------------------|---|-----|---|
| Theme | Children's Games | No difference                               | 166 | <i>He continues in the same way as before the pandemic [P163].</i>  |
|       |                  | Symbol about school environment and friends | 92  | <i>During the game, they take care to play similar to their school games [P24].</i>   |
|       |                  | Healthcare professional                     | 52  | <i>He didn’t play much, now he plays house (evcilik oyunu) with his older sister and brother. He likes playing hospital game most with his brother and sister. He becomes a doctor and heals them [P177].</i> |
|       |                  | Health terms                                | 47  | <i>He plays all kinds of games. He sometimes builds a virus killing robot with his legos [P282].</i>  |
|       |                  | Tendency to violence                        | 27  | <i>I observed that he sometimes hit his brother and his friends in his games [P56].</i>   |

The data obtained from the views of parents regarding the question of how the pandemic process affects children's regular sleep patterns in the study are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5. Parent Views Regarding the Effect of the Pandemic Process on Children’s Regular Sleep Patterns**

|       |                                  | Code                                    | f   | Participant’s Views   |
|-------|----------------------------------|---|-----|---|
| Theme | Children's Regular Sleep Pattern | Sleeping late                           | 187 | <i>My son used to go to sleep earlier, but during this period, he goes to sleep at midnight and wakes up early in the morning [P127].</i>   |
|       |                                  | No difference in regular sleep patterns | 99  | <i>There has not been much change in this process. They sleep at 12 o’clock, not 10 o’clock [P111].</i>   |
|       |                                  | Decrease in night sleep                 | 55  | <i>My child’s sleep at night has decreased. The reason for this is that this process coincided with the month of Ramadan, the regular sleep pattern differed, we are together at suhoor [P177].</i> |

When Table 5 was examined, 187 parents reported that their children slept longer during the pandemic, 99 parents observed no difference in their regular sleep patterns, and 55 parents reported that their nighttime sleep decreased. The data obtained from parents' views on how the pandemic process affected children's feeding behavior are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6. Parent Views Regarding the Effect of the Pandemic Process on Children’s Nutritional Behavior**

|       |                                  | Code                           | f   | Participant’s Views  |
|-------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----|--|
| Theme | Children's Nutritional Behaviors | No difference                  | 132 | <i>The diet continues the same as before the pandemic [P86].</i>   |
|       |                                  | Well-balanced and healthy diet | 89  | <i>I pay attention to his nutrition; we take care that he consumes well-balanced and healthy foods because he is in the development phase [P134].</i>  |
|       |                                  | Snacking tendency              | 85  | <i>My child always wanted to eat something and started to eat junk food more. We are painting or doing any activity, and the activity ends... We are watching TV, he gets bored and starts to wrap himself in snacks, but he is consuming more than before the pandemic, although he is aware that he should not exaggerate [P10].</i> |
|       |                                  | Decreasing appetite            | 83  | <i>He was already a boy with poor appetite, and this situation increased [P151].</i>   |
|       |                                  | Unhealthy nutrition            | 17  | <i>Since we are staying at the grandmother’s, he constantly asks for a snack and a coke. Unfortunately, I’m not sure if they give snacks or not [P164].</i>  |

When Table 6 was examined, 132 parents indicated that there was no difference in their children's dietary behavior during the pandemic, 89 parents indicated that their children ate a balanced and healthy diet, 85 parents indicated that their children often wanted to eat, 83 parents observed a decrease in their child's appetite, 49 parents indicated that their child suffered from anorexia, and 17 parents indicated that they consumed sugary and carbonated foods more frequently. The parents' statements on the subject are as follows: “He eats healthier foods” [P22]. “Since we are staying at the grandmother's, he constantly wants a

snack and a coke. Unfortunately, I'm not sure if they give snacks or not" [P164]. In the study, the data obtained from the parents' views on how the pandemic process affects children's behavior, such as hand washing, cleaning, hygiene, personal care, etc. are presented in Table 7.

**Table 7.** Parent Views Regarding the Effect of the Pandemic Process on Children's Hygiene and Personal Care Behaviors

|       |                                | Code                     | f   | Participant's Views   |
|-------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-----|---|
| Theme | Children's Self-Care Behaviors | Handwashing frequently   | 175 | <i>Because of our warnings and the advertisements he saw, he washes his hands longer. If he forgot to wash his hands, the only thing he did when he was warned was to wash his hands without any objection [P12].</i> |
|       |                                | Meticulousness           | 135 | <i>Children are more careful than before due to the pandemic, and they are more meticulous about washing their hands [P45].</i>   |
|       |                                | Warnings about cleaning  | 128 | <i>He warns his father as soon as he enters and says there is a virus, you touched dirty places and he gives cologne to his father [P282].</i>  |
|       |                                | Observing difference     | 83  | <i>The pandemic did not make a difference in my child's cleaning habits. [P49].</i>   |
|       |                                | Refrain from using hands | 27  | <i>They do not want to touch the surrounding furniture, elevator, stair railings [P134].</i>  |

When Table 7 was examined, 175 parents indicated that their children washed their hands more frequently during the pandemic, 135 parents were more diligent about cleaning and personal hygiene, 128 parents warned family members about their children's cleaning and personal hygiene, and 83 parents observed no difference in their children's cleaning and personal hygiene behaviors. 27 parents indicated that their child was afraid to use their hands because they feared contamination or viral transmission. The parents' statements on the subject are as follows: "We got into the habit of washing by counting to 20" [P105]. "My child prefers to use disinfectant rather than washing his hands all the time" [P5]. "My child warns me to change my clothes when I come home from work" [P12]. In the study, the data obtained from the parents' views on how children talk about their school life during the pandemic process are presented in Table 8.

**Table 8.** Expressions of Children about School Life During the Pandemic Process

|       |                        | Code                                    | f   | Participant's Views  |
|-------|------------------------|---|-----|--|
| Theme | Children's School Life | Missing the school                      | 188 | <i>He says he misses his school so much, and he hopes the pandemic will be over as soon as possible [P33].</i>   |
|       |                        | Missing friends/teacher                 | 187 | <i>When the school is closed, he misses his teacher and friends [P129]. During the pandemic, my child felt the absence of a teacher the most because he loves him very much [P67].</i> |
|       |                        | The satisfaction of not going to school | 46  | <i>He always had a reluctance towards school, and he is pleased that he did not go to school due to the pandemic [P75].</i>  |
|       |                        | Desensitization to school               | 38  | <i>I never heard him talk about his school and his friends, I guess he does not miss it [P54].</i>   |

When Table 8 was examined, it was seen that 188 parents stated that children missed their school life during the pandemic process, 187 parents stated that children missed their friends/teachers, 46 parents stated that children were happy with not going to school, and 38 parents stated that children did not talk about their school life. In the study, the data obtained from the parents' opinions regarding the question of what kind of activities you do with your children during the pandemic process are presented in Table 9.

When Table 9 was examined, 239 parents reported that they did housework with their children during the pandemic, 228 parents reported that they played various games, 189 parents did small muscle exercises, 155 parents did reading activities, 153 parents did music and painting activities, and 112 parents did experimental activities. The parents' statements on the subject are as follows: "We usually try to do all the activities" [P44]. "We bought training kits, and we make them every day at certain times" [P247]. "I have to do different activities with my children, and I look for different activities that attract the attention of the children and try to do as much as I can with them" [P83]. "My daughter likes more artistic activities while my son wants us to spend time with more active activities like playing football" [P21].

**Table 9.** Parent Views Regarding the Activities of Children with Their Parents During the Pandemic Process

|       |  | Code                                    | f   | Participant's Views  |
|-------|--|---|-----|--|
| Theme | Activities Children Did with Their Parents | Chores                                  | 229 | Since our house has a garden, we do activities such as watering the flowers and trees, we clean the garden [P285].   |
|       |  | Various games                           | 228 | We take care to play all the games that are suitable for our child's development level and are happy to play [P135]. |
|       |  | Activities to support fine motor skills | 189 | We play with playdough every day, and he plays very fondly [P3].   |
|       |  | Reading Activities                      | 155 | We definitely read from the storybooks that he determined, then he tells me [P69].                                   |
|       |  | Art Activities                          | 153 | We paint with crayons and finger paints, it's a lot of fun [P142].   |
|       |  | Experimental activities                 | 112 | We are doing experiments that we follow on social media with children. They are incredibly interested [P37].         |

In the study, the data obtained from the parents' views on what kind of resources parents used in the activities chosen for children during the pandemic process are presented in Table 10.

**Table 10.** Resources Used by Parents During the Pandemic Process

|       |                           | Code                             | f   | Participant's Views  |
|-------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|-----|--|
| Theme | Resources Used By Parents | Teacher                          | 167 | I get help from a guidance counsellor in the school [P177].  |
|       |                           | Social Media                     | 151 | I follow a few pages on Instagram that post activities we can do at home. I try to do what suits us at home for my daughter [P143].  |
|       |                           | Books about pre-school education | 130 | I use pre-school education books. We use the activity books and paints I bought from the internet a lot. We often use our own imagination [P164].  |
|       |                           | Experts                          | 122 | I listen to the speeches of some academics and educators on the Internet. There is a live broadcast every day, I try to participate and take advantage of it whenever I find time [P48]. |
|       |                           | Using resources                  | 40  | I can not get around to activities due to my work life and housework. We can only do what our teacher says. Unfortunately, I can not take care of my children anymore [P55].             |

In examining Table 10, 167 parents indicated that they communicated with their children's teachers to select activities for their children during the pandemic process, 151 parents indicated that they benefited from social media content, 130 parents indicated that they benefited from preschool education books, 122 parents indicated that they benefited from experts in the field of preschool education, and 40 parents indicated that they had no choice in selecting activities. "When we couldn't leave our homes at the beginning of the pandemic, I first researched on the internet and I was able to find many different activity examples when I thought about what to do with the children apart from the education at school" [P45]. "We used and completed our activity sets that I had bought for my child before, but could not get round to it" [P2]. "Online conversations are held by many psychologists and child development experts on Instagram. I follow these conversations, I see it very useful, I think it helps me" [P67].

#### 4. Discussion

In this part of the study, the effects of the pandemic process on children's daily life, their communication with family members; changes in children's behaviors, games, night sleep, feeding behaviors, cleaning and hygiene behaviors, and school life; activities performed by parents with their children, and resource choices in activity preferences were discussed. When parents' views on the impact of the pandemic on children's daily lives were examined, it was found that preschool children engaged in activities with their family members during the pandemic, they frequently introduced topics such as epidemics, diseases, and viruses into their daily conversations, and their negative, shy, and aggressive behaviors increased. According to Yıldız and Bektaş (2021), although children spend most of their time outdoors, the use of mobile devices is also becoming more common among children as technology develops. In addition, the fact that the areas where children can play in open areas become more limited compared to the past is another reason that increases children's interest in technology. In the study conducted by Demir Öztürk, Kuru & Demir Yıldız (2020), mothers and children were asked "How do you spend a day at home?". As a result of their studies,



they found that children spend much of their time playing and doing activities at home. As a result of their study in which they examined households, Öztürk, Yılmaz, Demir Erbil & Hazer (2020) found that during the Covid 19 pandemic, families spend more leisure time together (e.g., hobbies, TV, games, social media), share household chores, help each other, and talk with family members than they did before the pandemic.

Parents indicated that children's tendency to use technological devices during the day has increased and they spend more time using them than before the pandemic. According to Göker & Turan (2020), it is very important to monitor and regulate children's behavior. Parents are role models for children. Regulating children's use of social media and interaction with technological devices helps them to gain self-control. It has been found that ensuring that they go through the safety issues when entering the system and during distance learning in the system can prevent screen addiction that may occur (Akkaş Baysal, Ocak & Ocak, 2020). It can be said that the interruption of face-to-face teaching and isolation at home due to the rules of social distance during the Covid 19 pandemic increased children's communication and interaction time with technological devices, as well as that of parents.

When parents' views on the impact of the pandemic on children's communication with family members were examined, it was found that although children's communication with family members increased during the pandemic period, communication problems were also observed among children. During the Covid-19 pandemic process, changes occurred in their daily routines and school/work lives, and it can be stated that similarly, changes have occurred in family communication (Döğer & Kılınc, 2021). Since children have not reached sufficient maturity, they have difficulty in understanding the measures taken for the pandemic process developmentally. In this process, psychological problems such as intra-familial conflicts, deterioration of parenting roles, fear, anxiety, and social phobia experienced due to uncertainty are pretty common. In addition to all these, emotional and behavioral problems in children are also a factor that complicates the process (Kadan, Aysu & Aral, 2020). In this process, which emerged with the Covid-19 pandemic, supports for parents in terms of spending effective time with their children and communicating effectively are gaining importance (Abukan, Yıldırım & Öztürk, 2020). From the study of Yıldız and Bektaş (2021), the fact that children who could not go to school due to the outbreak of the pandemic, could not sufficiently dissipate their energy in the home environment and had to spend long periods of time in a closed environment caused physical and mental problems in the children. In addition, it was stated that the fear of children catching coronavirus and the fact that they had to spend time indoors for a long time had a negative impact on their relationships with their parents in the home environment.

The quality of communication between family members is very important for children to feel safe during the epidemic and to adapt to the epidemic more easily (Direktör, 2021). For this reason, it can be said that negative situations may have been observed in the communication of children with family members. In the study conducted by Göl-Güven, Şeker, Erbil, Özgünlü, Alvan and Uzunkök (2020), the researchers asked the parents who their children, the average age of whom was 6, met with during Covid-19 pandemic restrictions and with what methods those meetings were held. As a result of the study, it was determined that 72% of the children use online platforms to communicate with their family elders. Friends and peers took second place (46%). The rate of those who were in contact with their teachers was 29%.

In addition to many negative situations experienced during the pandemic process, there are also advantageous situations. In particular, the fact that children spend effective time with their families is a finding expressed by all participants due to their study (Kurt Demirbaş & Sevgili Koçak, 2020). The active work-life of parents can restrict their effective time with their children. It can be said that the continuation in the home environment of business life, which started with the pandemic process, has allowed children to spend more time with their parents.

When parents' views on the impact of the pandemic on children's behavior were examined, it was found that their children exhibited compatible and cooperative behavior with their family members, their children's aggressive and shy behavior increased, and their children exhibited controlled and appropriate behavior. Trauma and crises (including the pandemic process) change the responses of adults and children. In parallel with the measures taken during the Covid-19 pandemic, which we have experienced and the regulations regarding our daily life, similar behavioral and emotional reactions can be given globally (Akoğlu & Karaaslan, 2020). The restricted lifestyle created by the pandemic process paves the way for the

emergence of various emotional and behavioral problems in children (Sağlam & Kay, 2020). Therefore, aggressive and shy behaviors of parents about their children emerge as a typical result of this process.

When parents' views on the impact of the pandemic on children's games were examined, it was found that families observed no difference in children's games, they used symbols about the school environment and their friends, they adopted roles such as doctors, nurses, health workers, they often included elements such as epidemics, diseases, viruses and violent behaviors were observed in their games during the pandemic. As a result of the study conducted by Yıldız and Bektaş (2021), it was determined that children spent most of their time outdoors by performing sports activities with their friends before Covid-19 epidemic. After the emergence of Covid-19, it was determined that children had to spend more time at home due to restrictions.

Suspension of face-to-face education and being isolated at home during the pandemic process have limited children's communication and movement areas with their environment. It is possible to observe the reflections of this change in their plays in their lives. Çaykuş & Mutlu Çaykuş (2020) stated that during the Covid-19 pandemic, which is one of the crisis periods in which support is most needed, children need to see their friends, play games and communicate with them. However, in this context, children's inability to communicate adequately with their peers, inability to play in open areas such as parks and gardens, and fear of contracting COVID -19 exacerbate their fears (Özçevik & Ocağcı, 2020). For this reason, parents indicated that the negative effects of the pandemic could be observed in the children's games, whose anxiety and worry levels increased during the pandemic. The fact that preschool children internalize this process and include it especially in their games shows us how negatively they are affected by this process.

When parents' opinions on the effects of the pandemic on children's sleep patterns were examined, parents indicated that their children slept later during the pandemic, they did not notice any difference in their sleep patterns, and children's nighttime sleep decreased. Özçevik & Ocağcı (2020) found that due to the disruption of children's daily routine during the pandemic, there are restricted and limited physical activities, irregular eating habits, and disruption of regular sleep patterns. In the study by Guan et al. (2020), as a result of the interviews they conducted with parents of preschool children in Beijing, the capital of China, it was found that most parents' children slept and woke up at late hours during the Covid 19 pandemic. The normal routines of many activities in children's daily lives were found to have changed during the preschool years, as did their regular sleeping habits, and most parents indicated that their children's regular sleeping habits had changed. This situation can be explained by the fact that the changes in the daily routine of the whole family affect the children.

When the parents' views regarding the effect of the pandemic process on the nutritional behavior of children were examined, some of the parents stated that they did not observe any difference in their children's nutritional behavior during the pandemic process. Some parents also stated that their child had a balanced and healthy diet. Their child wanted to eat something often, their child's appetite decreased, their child had anorexia, and consumed gaseous and sugary foods more often. While the alterations in the pandemic process highlight the importance of paying attention to the health of both adults and children, it can be also said that one of the most important issues in this process is nutritional habits. In the study conducted by Kutlu, Ekin, Alav, Ceylan & Meral (2021), they examined the change in the nutritional habits of individuals during the Covid-19 pandemic process. As a result of the study, it was stated that the tendency to packaged foods increased because individuals thought they were safe, fruits were often consumed as snack food instead of the main meal, and the tendency to take supplements increased due to their desire to strengthen their immunity. Dilber & Dilber (2020) examined the effect of the coronavirus pandemic on the nutritional habits of individuals. It was stated that there might be a tendency to overeat due to stress by spending a long time at home during the pandemic process. The findings obtained from the study conducted by İlbasımış, Toksoy Aksoy, Cihanyurdu, Ünver, and Rodopman Arman (2021) showed that parents observed many mental symptoms related to their children during the Covid-19 restrictions period. The detection of changes in appetite in girls compared to the pre-pandemic period was noteworthy.

In the study, it was found that there were both parents who stated that there was no change in the eating habits of the preschool children during the pandemic and parents who stated that they wanted to eat more than before the pandemic and that there was even a tendency for the children to consume junk food. It can be said that children's tendency to eat increases due to the restriction of daily activities in the home

environment during the pandemic process and their long-term fixation in front of the computer and TV for educational purposes.

When parents' views on the impact of the pandemic process on children's hygiene and personal hygiene behaviors were examined, parents indicated that they washed their children's hands more frequently during the pandemic, that they were more diligent in cleaning and personal hygiene, that their children encouraged family members to clean and personal hygiene, and that they observed no difference in the child's cleaning and personal hygiene behaviors, that the child was afraid to use his or her hands because of fear of contamination or viral infection.

Person-to-person transmission of coronavirus through contact or in the form of droplets after coughing, which spreads very quickly and leads to death, caused people to increase their personal hygiene measures and avoid environments with close contact. This situation also prompts people to take more precautions in hygiene, cleaning, and contact (Karataş, 2020). Studies have shown that children and adolescents, like other age groups, have a higher risk of becoming infected and spreading the disease (WHO, 2020). When children's expressions about school life during the pandemic were examined, parents indicated that they miss their children's school life, their friends/teachers during the pandemic, that they are satisfied with not going to school, and that they do not talk about school life.

Children, like adults, are not reckless to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic process. They experience fears, uncertainties, physical and social isolation, and miss their school and friends because they are away from school for a long time (Çakır Kardeş, 2020). During the Covid 19 period, the distance education model began to be widely used due to the epidemic. During the educational process, children and educators struggled to access the materials they needed. In the distance education process, children and teachers experienced some deficits in knowledge and skills (Direktör, 2021). Children suddenly had to adapt to many changes that occurred in school and daily life during the pandemic, especially wearing masks, continuing education online, staying in the home environment for long periods of time, etc. The negative effects of this process will be felt more acutely by children in the future. The fact that children are separated from their friends and teachers for a long time during the pandemic causes them to miss school.

When investigating parents' views on the activities that children do with their parents during the pandemic, parents indicated that they do housework, play various games, do small muscle exercises, read, make music, paint and experiment together with their children during the pandemic. Kurt Demirbaş & Sevgili Koçak (2020) conducted a study assessing the Covid 19 pandemic process from the perspective of parents with children aged 2-6 years. In the study, parents indicated that children's activities were physical, mental, manual dexterity and interactive activities. Therefore, it can be said that this situation is consistent with the result of the study. In the study conducted by Lee, Ward, Chang & Downing (2021), it was found that parents performed many activities with their children during the Covid 19 pandemic. In this regard, parents indicated that they played games with their children, watched TV and other media programs, and played with toys more frequently.

As indicated by the results of the study, many parents had the opportunity to organize and carry out many activities that they had difficulty doing in their daily lives during the pandemic. It was found that the content of the activities was differentiated according to the level of competence of the parents and the activities were also designed according to the interests of the children.

When examining the resources used by the children's parents during the pandemic process, parents indicated that they communicated with their children's teachers and benefited from content on social media, books on preschool education, and experts in the field of preschool education. They also did not benefit from additional resources when choosing activities for their children during the pandemic. Since parents and children have the opportunity to spend more time at home during the pandemic than in the pre-pandemic period, it was found that parents are looking for examples of activities in different developmental areas to do with their children. In this situation, it was found that parents are making efforts to spend a lot of time at home with their children while getting information from the right sources. Being able to access examples of activities in different areas while searching for alternative resources with developing technology was the most accessible source for parents in this process.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study was conducted to investigate parents' views of preschool children's experiences during the Covid 19 pandemic. When the results were examined, it was found that the children engaged in daily activities with their families, their communication with family members increased, their shy and aggressive behaviors increased, and they exhibited harmonious behaviors at home.. It was also found that the children imitated school life in their games and that there were often traces of the elements of the pandemic process; there were differences in their regular sleep patterns, they consumed snacks more frequently in their eating habits, they were more attentive in their self-care skills, they missed their school life, they undertook various activities with their parents at home, and their parents also got help from their children's teachers in doing so. In line with these results, support training can be provided to parents to emphasize the importance of family participation in education. In addition, material design, material use, technology and technological material use can be supported by field experts to increase the quality of the time that parents will spend with their children. Sets of activity booklets and examples can be prepared for parents to spend quality time at home during the pandemic. Children who have problems cleaning and personal care during the pandemic process can gain these behaviors with interesting materials by using drama and play methods. Informative activities can be organized for both parents and children to prevent obesity in children due to the increase in the use of technology, the decrease in children's movements and the change in their eating habits during the pandemic process. Children's physical activity can be increased through synchronous or asynchronous access via online platforms by preparing physical activity activities suitable for practice in the home environment and prepared by experts in the field. Parent training can be provided to promote healthy eating among children. Nutrition programs can be offered with the support of the relevant institution and organization.

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