

Play and Toy Preferences Based On Children's Views

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Abstract: *Play and toys are essential tools in child development, which contribute to cognitive, physical, social, linguistic and psychomotor well-being of children. It is parents who provide their children with play environment and toys, and ordinarily, children spend time with their toys in such environments. This study aims to examine play and toy preferences of children from diverse socio-economic backgrounds based on their views and judgments. The research was conducted with 60 children over 48 months old attending independent kindergartens and those within public elementary schools in Kars, Turkey. In order to collect data, "Play and Toys Interview Form," which was designed by the researchers, as well as children's drawings titled "Play and Toy" were used. The results of the study revealed that the toy preferences of children from all socio-economic backgrounds were dictated by gender; and children with access to a variety of toys were those from higher socio-economic background. It was also found that the children with high and moderate socio-economic status were able to explicate the characteristics of the toys they played with. The children from low socio-economic background, on the other hand, were found to play outdoors. The results demonstrated that children generally preferred pretend play with domestic and medical themes as well as fighting, transportation, and so forth. It was also indicated that parents from high socio-economic background played more with their children.*

Key words: *Socio-economic status (SES), preschool period, play, toys*

I. Introduction

Play is an important tool to nurture the needs of children. Since the beginning of life, it has remained indispensable, yet been diversified depending on the developmental stages of each child. Play is particularly crucial in early childhood period. During this period, it is known that children like taking an active role in play, and turning each experience into a play. However, what makes early childhood period unique is that children use play as a tool to make sense of the world they live in (Aksoy, 2014; Tuğrul, 2014; Anderson & Bailey, 2010). Children whose play needs are met turn out to be self-empowered, successful individuals in the future. As children, they learn about their surroundings as much as they play. For them, play is the most influential means of expressing emotions such as sadness, anger, and happiness, and it enhances their experiences during the developmental process. By means of play, children learn to establish a relationship between objects and actions. They also develop a universal learning skill (Goldstein, 2012; Akkoyunlu, 2007; Özdoğan, 2000). Moreover; it is an opportunity for children to explore the world they live in. It enables them to be social beings (Anderson & Bailey, 2010), guiding them to gain awareness and promoting multidimensional development (Tuğrul, 2014).

Children need play materials and toys in order to reap the benefits of play, thus toys are of utmost importance in child development during the preschool period (Cinel, 2006). Naturally, they are the materials for child play, which stimulate their imaginative skills and are encouraging. They also promote learning (Kamaraj, 1996; Yalçınkaya, 2005; Hoorn, et al., 2007). The more children have an access to a variety of play materials, the more varied meanings they ascribe to these materials in their imaginary worlds (Adak-Özdemir & Ramazan, 2012). Children enjoy spending time playing with their toys, thus it is necessary to give them adequate time to play with their toys, which will considerably contribute to their development (Kandır, 2000). Toys undergird the development of cognitive skills such as problem-solving, decision-making, creative thinking, spatial perception, memory and observation (Yıldız & Kayılı, 2014). It also fosters autonomy, independence, and self-confidence as well as teaching them to share, cooperate and contemplate (Çakmak, 2014). Play materials and toys which are easy to access stimulate creativity. Containers, boxes, reels, latches and dough, which can be found in every home, offer a play environment for children to customize as they wish, while water, sand, clay and paint enable children to learn about and experience the world around them (Egemen et al., 2004). Consequently, children develop their own personalities in such environments through such play materials.

As a result of technological developments, play and toys, which have an important role in the life of children, have shifted in terms of appearance, play environment, the number of players, and required materials (Yavuzer, 1998). This shift has particularly been from outdoor to indoor play (David, 2015). Play and toys of the past have transformed in Turkey as well as in the whole world and have been replaced with puzzles, legos, remote control cars, Barbie dolls, robots, and computer games (Yavuzer, 1999). Not surprisingly, the wide use of

technology results in children's preference of electronic toys, games and mobile phones over the forms of conventional play. Today, cultural elements of play have declined, and children have started playing the same games, which leads to less creativity (David, 2015). Lack of urban open spaces that has resulted from unplanned urbanization has considerably limited children's freedom in open spaces (Sormaz&Yüksel, 2012). As conveyed by Eroğlu (2009), child play has recently been restricted to home; the only materials used in play are manufactured toys; and children mostly spend their time playing computer games. Furthermore, gender is reported to be a significant factor in play and toy preferences of children. In the studies conducted by Tuzcuoğlu et al. (2006) and Kamaraj (1996), it was found that children's toy preferences were determined by the dictates of gender.

Among many factors influencing the choice of play and toys, which are essential to child development, are environmental, educational, cultural, technological and economic concerns. This study aims to examine play and toy preferences of children from diverse socio-economic backgrounds based on children's views and judgments. With a view to this, the toys played by the children of diverse socio-economic backgrounds, the games they play and whether the parents get involved in play were investigated based on children's judgments.

II. Method

In this section, research design, participants, data collection tools, procedures and data analysis are explained.

Research Design

This research, designed to examine the play and toy preferences of children from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, was carried out using semi-structured interviews, employed in qualitative research. Qualitative research is empirical in nature, in which the researcher observes the phenomena in its natural state, collecting data using qualitative data collection techniques such as observations, interviews and document analyses (Balci, 2013). Interview is a data collection tool, which uses open-ended questions either suggested by the researcher or arising naturally during the interview (Güler, et al., 2013).

Participants

The research was conducted with sixty children over 48 months old, attending two independent kindergartens and two operating within public elementary schools in Kars, Turkey during 2015-2016 school year. In order to ensure the participants to be from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, maximum variation sampling, which is one of the purposive sampling methods, was used. The participants were selected after reviewing the data requested from Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK)¹, which revealed the socio-economic level of downtown Kars. With regard to this information received from TUIK, independent kindergartens and those within the public schools of Ministry of Education were identified. Among those schools, one independent kindergarten (two classes) for high socio-economic status; one independent kindergarten (one class) and one kindergarten class in public elementary schools for moderate socio-economic status; and two kindergarten classes in public elementary schools for low socio-economic status were chosen. From these schools, 20 children from low socio-economic background, 20 from moderate socio-economic background, and 20 from high socio-economic background comprised the population of the study. Requisite consents were received from Kars Directorate of Education so that data could be collected.

Data Collection Tools

In order to collect data, semi-structured interview form "Play and Toys Interview Form" and children's drawings titled "Play and Toy" were used. While designing the interview form, the researchers analyzed both theoretical and empirical studies. A draft was prepared and consulted to three specialists of preschool education. In the light of recommendations made by these specialists, the final version was designed. The form is comprised of two parts. Part 1 contains personal information of each child (age, gender, the number siblings, and ages of the parents, their educational background and employment). The information required in Part 1 was obtained from each child's personal file, and the forms were completed in the light of information received by teachers. In Part 2, there are questions about the plays preferred and toys played by children. There are a total of 15 questions to identify the toys that children had at home and their favorite toy, as well as who bought them, who their playmates were at home, whether the parents played with them and where they played. Children were also asked to comment on the drawings titled "Play and Toys," which they had made earlier and those comments were noted at the back of each picture. The comments were analyzed based on where each child played in the picture, the toys she drew, the games she played and whom she played with. The research was piloted with 20 children, as a result of which the questions were found to be comprehensive and as no problems were experienced, the data collected from the pilot study were included in the present study.

¹Upon the request of the researcher, demographical data about Kars province was retrieved from the General Directorate of Civil Registration and Nationality of the Turkish Ministry of Interior Affairs on 02.11.2015.

Collecting Data

The researcher implemented the study initially by making an appointment with the schools from which data would be collected. She walked in the classrooms with the teachers and met children. After meeting them, she told the children that they were going to do an art activity. The children were provided with crayons and A4 size paper. Prior to drawing, they were asked to think about the toys they have at home, the games they played, where they played them, their favorite toys and who played with them. Next, they were instructed to draw a picture of the games and toys they played. No time limit was set for the children to complete the activity and the researcher waited until all the children finished drawing their pictures. After this activity, the researcher interviewed each child individually, making sure that they would not hear each other, and influenced by each other's responses. The interview began with the child reflecting on the picture she drew. These reflections were noted down at the back of each picture. Then the questions in "Play and Toys Interview Form" were asked, and the answers were written down simultaneously by the researcher. Data was collected during eight days in November 2015.

Data Analysis

Data collected from the interviews were read thoroughly by the researcher and a child developmental specialist individually, and a number of themes were formulated. Following themes were decided both by the researcher and the specialist: "I Have No Other Toys-I Have a Bag of Toys", "They Don't Buy Any-They Make a Surprise," "Playing House-Playing Drivers,"and "Play If Not Busy-Never." These themes were analyzed using descriptive analysis and interpreted accordingly. Descriptive analysis aims to analyze data based on predetermined themes (Balci, 2013). In order to increase the reliability of the research, opinions of the children who participated in the study were directly quoted. Each child interviewed was given a three- letter code and a number to avoid confusion. The first letter refers to gender (F/M); the second letter represents socio-economic status (L/M/H); and the last letter and number refers to the child interviewed. To illustrate, "FLI1" means that the child interviewed is the girl numbered 1, who is from low SES background.

III. Findings

In the light of information received from Family SES Background Form, the demographic information of parents and children from low, moderate and high SES backgrounds is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Information of Parents and Children

Age						
	Low SES		Moderate SES		High SES	
	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father
20-25	11	0	1	0	1	1
26-30	5	12	6	2	3	1
31-35	2	2	10	6	9	9
36-40	1	3	2	8	6	5
41 and above	1	3	1	4	1	4
Total	20	20	20	20	20	20
Educational Background						
Illiterate	2	1	0	0	0	0
Elementary School	11	5	8	2	3	0
Middle or high school	7	14	10	8	8	8
University	0	0	2	10	9	12
Total	20	20	20	20	20	20
Employment						
Employed	1	20	3	20	10	20
Not employed	19	0	17	0	10	0
Number of Children						
1	0		3		7	
2	9		10		8	
3	5		6		5	
4 and above	6		1		0	
Gender of Children						
	Low SES		Moderate SES		High SES	
	Female		12		13	
Male		8		7		

Table 1 demonstrates that the majority of the mothers from low SES background were between 20-25 years of age, elementary school graduates and not employed, whereas the fathers were between 26-30 and middle or high school graduates. It also shows that the majority of the mothers from moderate SES were 31-35 years old and middle or high school graduates while the fathers were 36-40 and university graduates. Both the mothers and fathers from high SES background, however, were mostly 31-35 years old and university graduates.

Data obtained from the interview form were analyzed based on the following themes: "I Have No Other Toys-I Have a Bag of Toys," "They don't buy any-They Make a Surprise," "Playing House-Playing Drivers," and "Play If Not Busy-Never." The results based on each theme are illustrated in below tables.

THEME 1: "I Have No Other Toys- I Have a Bag of Toys"

Within the scope of the theme "I Have No Other Toys-I Have a Bag of Toys," the views of the children from diverse socio-economic backgrounds pertaining to their toy preferences were interpreted (see Table 2 for the illustration of results).

Socio-economic Status	Type of Toy					
	Low		Moderate		High	
Gender	F	M	F	M	F	M
Push and Pull Toys	7	17	3	25	9	24
Dolls	6	0	14	0	17	0
Stuffed Toys	3	0	10	3	3	4
Miniature Toys	4	4	3	4	11	8
Manipulative Toys	1	3	2	0	1	3
Educational Toys	0	0	0	1	3	1
Electronic Toys	2	0	1	6	5	6
Computer Games	1	0	1	1	1	2
Musical Instruments	0	0	0	0	2	0
Contemporary Heroes	3	1	6	1	4	4
Toy pistols and rifles	0	1	0	9	2	3
Other toys	5	4	3	3	10	5
Total	32	30	43	53	68	60

The responses given to "What toys do you have at home?" are shown under the title "Type of Toy." Table 2 demonstrates that both boys and girl from diverse socio-economic backgrounds had push and pull toys (vehicles of transportation). Girls articulated "I have a pink car... a Barbie car." However, the results revealed that the boys did not have baby dolls at all. It was found that boys mostly played with push and pull toys whereas girls played with dolls. Children from all socio-economic backgrounds had stuffed toys (teddy bears and other stuffed animals) and miniature toys (plastic fruit and vegetable sets, toy medical kits, toy repair kits, etc.). Moreover, children from low SES background did not have any educational toys (puzzles, memory cards, dominoes, etc.), and moderate SES children had very few (only one child). Those from high SES background, on the other hand, had more educational toys. As for electronic toys (remote control cars, robots, etc.) and computer games, children from high SES background mostly had these types of toys. The girls from this socio-economic background also had toy musical instruments, which revealed that socio-economic status is important factor in toy variety. As to toy variety, FHI52 and FHI50 stated as follows:

"I have a doll, toy house, legos, puzzles, toy ornaments, toy computer, flute, Barbie doll, tablet and pretend make-up set. I also have crayons and books" (FHI52).

"I have a lot of toys but all of them are broken. I have a rubber duck, Kaloghlan² doll car, drum, play house kit, toy eagle, elephant, crocodile, octopus, toy dentist kit, and peg games" (FHI50).

Interestingly, all the boys had toy pistols and swords. Even the girls from high SES had toy pistols and swords and they referred to them as "my red pistol" and "my man doll with a sword." Play objects such as balls, crayons, books, play dough, make-up accessories, and toy jewelry are included in "Other toys" in Table 3. It was found that all the children had these toys, yet the children from high SES had more (15) than those from low SES (9). FHI56 and FLI6 commented about what objects they had other than toys:

"My dolls, cars, drawings, train, color changing puppy" (FHI56).

"My brother has crayons and he shares with me. I have one coloring book"(FLI6).

As illustrated in Table 2, a total of 32 girls and 30 boys from low SES, 43 girls and 53 boys from moderate SES, and 68 girls and 60 boys from high SES backgrounds have toys, which indicates that the children from low socio-economic background did not have many different types of toys while there was a variety in the toys that the children from high socio-economic background had. FHI42 and FLI12 stated their views as follows:

²Kaloglan is a Turkish fictional character adored by children.

"I have two bags of toys. A Barbie cooking set, little Barbies, two balls, one of which is flat. One of them is pink and the other blue" (FHI42).

"I have nothing but a doll" (FLI12).

During the interviews, it was also revealed that the children from high SES and moderate SES backgrounds could explicate about the features and functions of their toys comprehensively whereas those from the low SES backgrounds did not articulate much. For instance, the children from high SES background said: "the shoes of my Barbie doll," "transformers car," spinning robot," "my two sound-making cars," "my hotwheels car," "my color-changing puppy." Likewise, the children from moderate SES stated "My remote control car goes fast," "I have a little doll, a chubby doll, a teddy bear, and a little new teddy bear," I have a toy pistol, and it shoots bullets." The children from low SES background, on the other hand, confined themselves to straightforward statements about their toys, simply naming them: "I have a doll, and no other toys", "my car, ball... legos, pistols... I had a train but it's broken" or "a car, flag, eyeglasses, tree, ring, toy."

Table 3. The Distribution of Responses about the Toys Illustrated in Drawings

Socio-economic Status	Low		Moderate		High	
	F	M	F	M	F	M
Gender						
Dolls	10	0	8	0	10	0
Cars	3	6	0	6	0	4
Animals	1	1	1	0	1	1
Contemporary Heroes	1	0	0	2	1	3
Toy Pistols and Swords	0	1	0	2	0	0
Educational Toys	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other (ball, robe, bicycle, etc.)	2	3	4	1	4	2

As illustrated in Table 3, it was found that the girls drew dolls while boys drew cars. Whereas toys such as a ball, bicycle and robe were drawn, educational toys like puzzles and legos were not drawn. It was also seen that the children from high socio-economic background drew contemporary heroes as toys. Although the children drew less toys, when they were interviewed, they mentioned more toys, which seems to result from the lack of drawing skills. The children were reported to complain while they were drawing the pictures, saying "I cannot draw toys" or "I drew a snake because I cannot draw a car." This was mostly observed in the children from low socio-economic background. When the pictures were examined, it was seen that fine motor skills of the low SES children should be promoted. In general, there was a parallelism between the pictures and the children's comments about these pictures. Some examples of the pictures drawn by the children are illustrated below in Picture 1 and Picture 2:

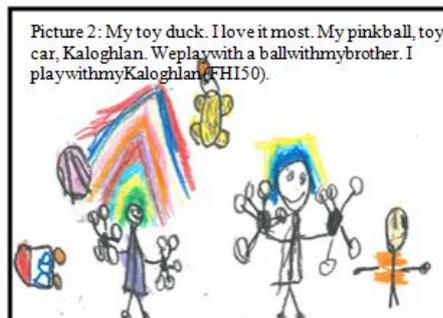


Table 4. The Distribution of Responses to the Question "What toys do you play with most?"

Socio-economic Status	Toy Preferences					
	Low		Moderate		High	
Gender	F	M	F	M	F	M
Push and Pull Toys	1	5	1	2	1	2
Dolls	9	0	7	0	10	0
Electronic Toys	0	0	0	2	2	2
Contemporary Heroes	1	2	4	2	0	2
Toy Pistols and Swords	0	1	0	2	0	1

As illustrated in Table 4, the girls from all socio-economic backgrounds preferred playing with dolls and contemporary heroes while the boys from low and moderate socio-economic backgrounds preferred push and pull toys, electronic toys and toy pistols. Low SES children, on the other hand, did not have any electronic toys.

THEME 2: “They don’t buy any–They Make a Surprise”

Under the theme “They don’t buy any–They make a surprise,” it was aimed to identify the perceptions of the children from all socio-economic backgrounds about when they are bought toys and who in the family buy toys for them. The responses of the children are illustrated in Table 5.

When they are bought toys				Who buy them			
Socio-economic Status	Low	Moderate	High		Low	Moderate	High
Don't know	6	4	0	Mother	3	6	3
Special Occasions	3	3	5	Father	7	7	10
Never	2	1	0	Relative (grandfather, uncle)	10	7	7
Economic reasons	1	2	4				
Whenever I ask	1	2	4				
Other	6	7	7				

The responses given to “When are you bought toys?” are shown under the title “When they are bought toys.” The low SES children replied as “I don’t know” (6) more than the moderate SES children (4). However, none of the high SES children used this statement. Likewise, “Never” response was given by low (2) and moderate (1) SES children, but not by high (0) SES children at all. It was also found that the high SES children were bought toys in special occasions (birthdays, holidays, etc.) as well as whenever they asked, which demonstrates that high SES children were bought more toys than the others. During the interviews, economic reasons were also found to be why they were not bought toys. With regard to economic reasons, MHI51 and FMI37 commented as follows:

“They buy toys when they save money” (MHI51).

“I ask daddy ‘buy me a toy’, and daddy says ‘I don’t have money, when I have, I’ll buy one for you’”(FMI37).

It was also found the children are bought toys only after they fulfill certain expectations, which is shown in Table 5 as “Other.” MLI18, FMI26, and MMI54 namely commented about these expectations:

“When I go to school” (MLI18).

”When I behave well” (FMI26).

“Mommy cannot buy toys anymore because she doesn’t have much money. When I behave well and don’t cry at school, they buy a toy for me”(MMI54).

Interestingly, the children also stated the reason why they were not bought any toys. For example, FMI47 commented during the interview: “We ask for toys whenever we see them. They say no to some of them because when we have a lot of toys, they usually say no.” On the other hand, the children from low socio-economic background stated that they were barely bought toys and did not express why they were not bought. FLI2 said “They never buy” and FLI17 said “They buy later.”As understood from the children’s views, the high SES children have more awareness about when they were bought toys than the low and moderate SES children, who employed rough, straightforward statements.

As illustrated in Table 5, mostly fathers and relatives bought toys for children. It is obvious that mothers bought less than others. During the interviews, the children particularly mentioned the close relatives who bought toys: “Once we went to Ankara, and grandma bought a crying doll”, “Auntie sent a doll for me,” and “My uncle bought a toy when he came over.”

The responses given to the question “Do they ask you your opinion while they buy toys?” are shown under the title “The child is asked her opinion” and illustrated in Table 6.

Socio-economic Status		Low	Moderate	High
The child is asked her opinion	Yes	5	10	12
	No	15	10	8
Total		20	20	20

Table 6 illustrates that the children from high socio-economic ground were asked their opinion much more than the moderate SES children. Yet the children from low socio-economic background were barely asked their opinion. MLI9, FMI26 and FMI39 stated their views as follows:

“No” (MLI9).

“No they don’t ask. They only say ‘We bought a toy for you’”. (FMI39).

“‘We can buy when we have money,’ mommy says. I say ‘Mommy, let me buy a mermaid doll’ but ‘Choose another toy,’ mommy says, so I choose another toy”(FMI26).

During the interviews, the high SES children commented about the occasions when they were allowed to choose the toys they wanted. FHI50, MHI54, FHI59, and FOI21 also stated that they were allowed to choose the toy they wanted when they were given gifts or their parents made surprises.

“They buy me toys as a gift. Once, daddy bought a guitar and made a surprise for me.” (FHI50).

“Yes, they ask, and ‘Buy a racing car,’ I say.” (MHI54).

“Yes, I choose my toy. ‘Shall we buy a toy for you,’ they ask.” (FHI59).

“Yes, they ask. I choose, and they buy. They don’t buy expensive toys. They buy cheap toys” (FOI21).

THEME 3: “Playing House – Playing Drivers”

Within the theme of “Playing House-Playing Drivers,” it was aimed to identify what games and where the children from diverse socio-economic backgrounds would prefer to play. The results are illustrated in Table 7.

		Low	Moderate	High
Games	Outdoor Plays (hide and seek, blind man’s buff, etc.)	20	6	4
	Indoor Plays (pretend plays such as playing house, drivers, doctors)	18	23	30
	Violent Games (fighting, shooting, wrestling etc.)	4	8	10
	Computer Games	0	3	6
	Educational Games (puzzles, legos, etc.)	2	3	4
Space	Outdoors (backyard, front yard, parks, playgrounds,)	14	6	7
	Indoors (own room, living room, etc.)	6	14	13
Games illustrated in drawings	Indoor Games (pretend play such as playing house, drivers, doctors, etc.)	12	15	15
	Outdoor Games (hide and seek, blind man’s buff, Mr. Wolf, ball games, etc.)	7	4	2
	Violent Games	1	1	3

The games these children played were classified as outdoor games (hide and seek, blind man’s buff, ball games etc.), indoor games (pretend play such as playing house, drivers, doctors, etc.), violent games (fighting, shooting, wrestling, etc.), computer games, and educational games (puzzles, legos, etc.). The space they choose to play is grouped as indoors and outdoors. The results are demonstrated in Table 7. The games such as hide and seek and blind man’s buff were found to be played by the low SES children at most and they preferred outdoors (backyard or front yard) more than indoors. The moderate and high SES children played outdoors less, and they preferred indoors (their own room, the living room, etc.). During the interviews, the children expressed themselves as follows:

“I play hide and seek, hopscotch. I ride my bicycle. I play with my cars. I play with my dolls” (FLI3).

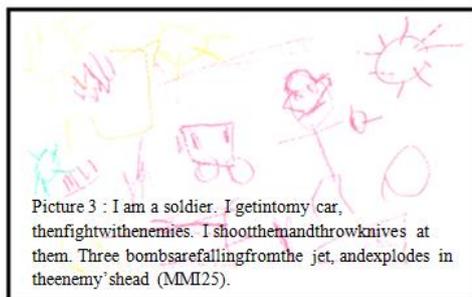
“Barbie, Mr. Wolf, hand-clapping, ring around the Rosie” (FLI11).

“Hide and seek, Mr. Wolf”³³(MLI5)

As inferred from Table 7, the children would also prefer to play violent games. They named these games as “playing fighters, soldiers, policemen, and wrestlers.” Computer and educational games were most played by the children from high socio-economic background, which seemingly results from the economic well-being of these families. FHG56 comments as follows: “I play with Winx and Barbies. I had a tablet and played with it, but now I can’t because it’s broken. I play with mommy’s.”

The results have shown that the games played by the children from moderate and high socio-economic backgrounds do not vary considerably, and they preferred pretend play such as playing house, doctors, babysitters, neighbors, drivers, animals, fighters and so on. The children from the low socio-economic background, however, preferred outdoors, playing hide and seek, blind man’s buff and so forth. Furthermore, there are certain similarities between the games played by the children and those illustrated in drawings. The moderate and high SES children drew pictures of pretend play more than any other games. To exemplify, FMI35 said: “I play neighbors with my dolls.” FMI38 commented: “My brother and I sometimes study, and sometimes play games. We play house with dolls. My brother makes-believe a soldier, and I become a doctor. I sometimes watch TV.” Likewise, FHI60 stated: “My sister and I play babysitters,” and MHI51 said: “My brother and I play drivers.” On the other hand, the games drawn by the low SES children reflected the outdoor games. For instance, MLI5 commented: “My brother and I play Mr. Wolf. We play hide and seek.” FLI11 also stated: “My friends and I play with a ball.” There were also violent games illustrated in pictures. Some examples are shown in below:

³³Mr. Wolf is a Turkish play.



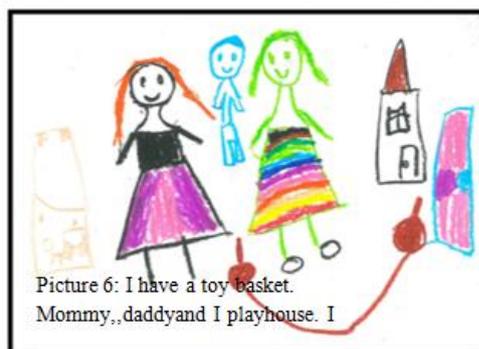
THEME 4. Play If Not Busy –Never

“Play If Not Busy–Never” aims to describe the views of the children from all socio-economic backgrounds as to playing with their parents. The results are illustrated in Table 8.

Who they play with		SES			
		Low SES	Moderate SES	High SES	
Mother	Yes	8	3	12	
	No	12	17	8	
Father	Yes	5	7	14	
	No	15	12	6	

Table 8 reveals that the mothers from the moderate socio-economic background do not play with their children (17). Those from the high socio-economic background, however, play more with their children (12). During the interviews, they also reported what games they played with their mothers. As to the reasons why they could not play with their mothers, some of them responded is in the following: “No we can’t play with mommy. Mommy does house cleaning,” “She sometimes plays with me. We play with legos, but not much,” No she doesn’t play because she has a tablet,” “She plays games with her own tablet,” “Mommy is very busy, so she can’t play with me,” “No, mommy does her own work, and she helps me with my homework.” Other who played with their mothers said: “We play house together with my mother. She is the aunt in the game,” “We play with my Barbie dolls,” We play if she isn’t busy. Sometimes we make up stories,” “Yes, she plays but not much. We play excavators,” “She plays if she isn’t busy. We play with legos but she plays less. We sometimes play peek a boo.”

As demonstrated in Table 8, mothers from the high socio-economic background mostly involve in pretend play with their children. The children revealed that their mothers played with them when they were not tired or busy. Following are the pictures (Picture 5 and Picture 6), illustrating the children and their parents playing together.



As revealed in Table 8, low SES fathers played less with their children, whereas the fathers from the high socio-economic background spent more time playing with their children. During the interviews, the children commented as to what games they played or why they could not play with their fathers. For instance, FHI50 said “He never plays. He played with me only once. We played with play dough.” “Daddy goes to work in the mornings. He doesn’t play with us. He takes us to school,” said FLI7. FLI11 also said: “No, he doesn’t play. He sleeps. He plays with his mobile phone.” As to playing with their fathers, MLI11 said “Yes, we play drivers, we make circles with legos, and we put the cars in the circles,” FHI46 said “Yes, he plays doctors. We become doctors and take care of him,” MHI46 said “he plays wrestlers,” MHI53 said “Daddy giggles us and we play monsters,” and MHI56 said “We play lions. Daddy becomes the lion and eats me.” As understood from the children’s statements, fathers played more action games with their children than mothers did.

SES	Playmate			Playmate Illustrated in Drawings		
	Low	Moderate	High	Low	Moderate	High
Myself	0	2	0	10	8	9
Friend	6	5	7	8	4	1
Sibling	12	9	10	2	8	7
Mother	0	0	2	2	1	5
Father	0	1	2	1	1	3

The playmates of the children were examined and demonstrated in Table 9. Both the interviews and the pictures drawn by the children revealed that they played most with their siblings and friends. The low SES children drew their friends, whereas the moderate and high SES children drew their siblings. Those who drew their parents were mostly from high socio-economic background, which suggested a parallelism between the children's opinions and the pictures they drew. FHI48, who responded that she usually played with her parents and commented on her picture, saying "I play with mommy and daddy, and I play with my Barbie dolls." Some of the children drew pictures in which parents do not play with them but accompany their children. MHI54 and MHI55 commented as follows:

"In this picture, I have mommy and daddy with me. I play with my toys, mommy is doing housecleaning, my brother is studying and daddy is going to work" (MHI55).

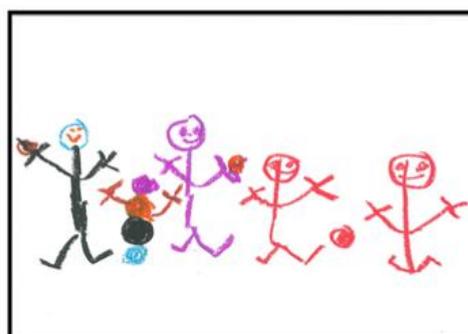
"My brother and I play with my ball. Mommy is cooking and daddy is sleeping" (MHI54).

Picture 7 and Picture 8 illustrates the playmates the children drew.

Picture 7: My sister and I play babysitters (FHI60).



Picture 8: My friends and I are making a snowman. We play with a ball. (FMI34).



IV. Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to describe the views of children from diverse socio-economic backgrounds on play and toy preferences.

The results of the study demonstrated that gender was an important parameter in the toy preferences of the children from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Moreover, it was found that the girls had push and pull toys as well as the boys. Similar conclusions with regard to gender were also drawn by a number of researchers. With a view to investigating the toy preferences of the children aged 3 to 5, Francis (2010) found that the toys played by this age group had gender-specific features. Kuzu (2015) also found that the girls preferred dolls and toy kitchen sets, whereas the boys preferred toy cars, trucks and rifles. Additionally, Öncü-Çelebi (2012) conveyed that parents' attitudes were influential in their children's gender-specific toy preferences.

Also in the pictures drawn by the children, gender was determined to be an important factor. The girls drew dolls while the boys drew toy cars, which was supported by the earlier research conducted by Karaman and Köksal-Akyol (2011).

Moreover, socio-economic status (SES) was found to be a significant factor determining toy variety. The results demonstrated that the high SES children had a variety of toys, which was similar to the results of the research conducted by a number of researchers. Yıldız and Kayılı (2014) found that socio-economic background determined the toy preferences of children. Likewise, Onur et al. (2004) claimed that as the economic status of the family increases, the children have more toys.

It was also concluded that the moderate and high SES children could explicate the features and the functions of the toys they had, whereas the low SES children simply named the toys they had, which seemingly results from the fact that the toys of the moderate and high SES children had more features.

The high SES children were also found to get toys whenever they ask or in special occasions. Children could have toys depending on their socio-economic background and whether they fulfilled an expected behavior. Likewise, Uğurlu et al. (2012) conveyed that there was a relationship between financial status and the toys parents bought for their children. Onur et al. (2004) also suggested that the mothers from high socio-economic background seemingly did not pay attention to the prices of the toys they bought for their children. Furthermore, in an attempt to identify the views of the mothers from urban and rural areas about play and toys, Tezel-Şahin, et al. (2015) found that mothers in cities buy toys to award their children while those from rural areas buy only when their children ask for one.

This study also revealed that the people who bought toys for the children were respectively the father, a close relative, and the mother. However, in a study conducted by Onur and Demir (2002) to investigate the views of the low and high SES mothers in two different cities as to toy needs of their children, it was found that the mother and father buy toys together. In addition, the frequency of buying toys increases from high to low socio-economic background. The grandparents and close relatives from the low socio-economic background in Onur and Demir's research were found to buy toys more, which is also supported by the present study. Similarly, with a view to investigating the toy choices of mothers with children aged 1 to 3, Uğurlu et al. (2012) found that it was respectively the mother, father and a close relative, who buy toys for the children.

The results of the study demonstrated that the families from high SES background took into account their children's wishes as to what toy they want. Likewise, Erden and Alisinanoğlu (2002) found that the number of parents who believed that they should buy the toy together with their children was increasing. On the other hand, they concluded that the percentage of the parents who believed they needed to buy toys together with their children decreased as the parents became less educated. In contrast to Erden and Alisinanoğlu's research, however, Bolışık et al. (2014) found that less educated adults cared about their children's toy preferences more than educated adults.

The games played by the children and those illustrated in pictures proved similar. The children were found to prefer playing house, doctors, babysitters, neighbors, drivers, fighters, policemen, lions, and so on. Moreover, the low SES children preferred outdoor plays while those from the moderate and high SES backgrounds preferred indoor plays. Karaman and Köksal-Akyol (2011) also concluded from the drawings made by children that they mostly preferred pretend play.

The children were also found to play violent games, which ascends from low to high socio-economic background. Likewise, Onur and Demir (2002) concluded that children began to have toys which led to an increase in violent and aggressive behavior. Besides, the low and moderate SES children were found to have toy pistols more than those from the high socio-economic background.

The study also revealed that play space differed based on the socio-economic status of the family. To illustrate, the low SES children preferred being outdoors, playing hide and seek and blind man's buff, whereas the moderate and high SES children chose to stay indoors, playing with their toys. With a view to identifying the games played by the children aged 5 to 6 from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, Wortham and Scherrer (1987) concluded that the children from low socio-economic backgrounds preferred outdoor games, whereas those from the high socio-economic background liked pretend play indoors. Similarly, Cinel (2006) found that the high SES children would prefer to play in their rooms compared to the low SES children, who preferred outdoor play. Karaman and Köksal-Akyol (2011) concluded that children usually played at home or school. In an attempt to analyze the shifts in child play through three generations, Tuğrul et al. (2014) found that outdoor play was declining among today's children. In the light of these findings, the trend was reported to be from outdoors to indoors because the parents do not let their children play outside due to safety concerns.

As for whether the parents played with their children, the parents from high SES background were found to play most with children. The parents were reported to play with their children when they were not busy, and the children were observed to draw their siblings and friends in the pictures as playmates. In an attempt to examine the play relationship between the mother and child, Temur and İnan (2010) found that the mothers played with their children if they were not busy doing housework, and both working mothers and housewives regard others as responsible for playing with the child. Likewise, Erbay and Durmuşoğlu-Saltalı (2012) found that children chose to play most with their friends, siblings, mothers and fathers, and the mothers have difficulty in playing with their children as they feel exhausted. Tuğrul, et al. (2014) analyzed parents' involvement in child play, in which they found parents are engaged in other tasks while their children are playing. The results of the present study are supported by other research, which suggests that parents are unwilling to play with their children. In fact, parental involvement in child play enhances communication with the children, enabling parents to get to know their children better.

To conclude, the findings obtained from the present study, conducted in Kars, can be implemented with other children from different regions, and the results can be compared. Adopting different approaches to child play and toys may deepen our understanding of the undeniable role of play and toys in child development. Further research could be conducted on the views of fathers from diverse socio-economic backgrounds about the

role of play and toys. Preschools could inform the parents about the importance of play and toys in parent involvement programs. Seminars could also be organized to train parents about the significance of play and toys and as to how parents would involve in play. Municipalities and other local administrative units could cooperate to increase the number of parks and playgrounds so that they can encourage children to play outdoors.

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