

## Comparison of school readiness level of 66 months and 72 months old students just started primary school: A phenomenology study

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**Abstract.** This research aimed to understand and interpret the readiness level of students in different age categories (66 months and 72 months old) studying in the first year and the adjustment problems experienced in schools as children 66 months and 72 months old had to study in the same class with the 4+4+4 arrangement. Accordingly, the comparison of these students' preparation for school education is an important research problem. The sample of the research was composed of the guidance counselor of the school and 4 1st grade class teachers and 4 parents. As the data collection tool of the research; a semi-structured interview form was used. The research results aimed to understand and interpret cognitive, affective, psychomotor and social learning domains of the children, 66 months old and 72 months old, and whether there was a significant difference in the school-starting age of the children, 66 month olds and 72 months old. As a result of the research, it was found that students, 66 months old, were not enough to be ready for school in terms of their cognitive, affective, psycho-motor, social, and language development.

**Keywords:** School readiness, primary school, teachers, students

### Introduction

School and school starting age, which will affect the child's whole life, is of great importance for children. The child, who comes out of the protection zone and first comes together with his peers in the school environment, learns to participate in the activities required by the programmed education, obey the rules within a certain discipline, plan, to fulfill the teacher's instructions, to read-write, arithmetic, etc. Along with competencies, they are faced with social and school adjustment.

The child who starts school for the first time is exposed to her new status and the changes brought about by this status, new environment, new social experiences, and different cultural influences, and he or she needs to adapt to this situation. According to Başar (2013), an individual must have cognitive, affective, and psychomotor behaviors in advance, that is, be ready for learning new behaviors. What is mentioned here is the child's school readiness or school maturity. It is important for school maturity that the child's age, height, weight, large and small muscle development, visual and auditory perception, and hand-eye coordination show a healthy development process. It can be said that these stated school maturity development criteria are also important criteria for the child, the parents, and the teachers and school administrators who make up the school environment. The child who starts school for the first time may find the new status and identity presented to him/her strange at the first stage, and then face problems or adaptation problems in adapting it to his/her life. How to cope with these changes, how to adapt to the

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new role, and which strategies to overcome these difficulties can become important problems for the child. At this point, children's readiness for school (cognitive, affective, biological, psycho-motor, and social) is of great importance in coping with problems and making a healthy and smooth transition to school (school readiness level (cognitive, affective, psycho-motor, and social (Erden & Akman, 2004; Erden, 2011). Each child's cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and social skill levels are different. This reveals the fact that the age of school maturity may differ for each child. It can be said that a 6-year-old child may have reached school maturity with her competencies, while a 7-year-old child may not be able to p these competencies.

In Turkey, in the 2012-2013 academic year, the 4+4+4 education system was enacted and with amendment numbered 28360 and dated 21/7/2012 published in the Resmi Gazete of the Regulation on Primary Education Institutions of the Ministry of National Education, Children who have completed 66 months as of the end of September of the year are registered in the first class of primary schools. Children aged between 60-66 months, who are understood to be ready for a primary school in terms of development, are also enrolled in the first grade of primary school, with a written request from their parents. (Resmi Gazete, 2014). A change that Children 66 months and older who have the right to age enrollment, but are not sufficiently developed physically or cognitively and cannot adapt to school, can also be directed to pre-spreschoolation upon a medical report from health institutions that are not developed physically or cognitively or their renrollment may be delayed for one year. has also been introduced (Resmi Gazete, 2014). There are 113 countries with a school starting age of 6 years old, 44 countries with 7, 33 countries with 5, 4 countries with 4, and 1 countries with 3 in the world, ranging from 3-7 years old. The duration of compulsory education in the European Union and some other countries varies (Bayat, 2015). While the criterion for the child to reach a certain age to start school is accepted as a criterion, school maturity is ignored.

As can be seen, with the amendment made in Article 7 of the Regulation on the Amendment of the Regulation on Primary Education Institutions of the Ministry of National Education numbered 28360 (Resmi Gazete, 2012a); It is compulsory for children who have completed 66 months as of September 30. Children who are between 60-66 months as of September 30; they are registered at the school at the request of the parents. This application has been softened a little more as a result of the reaction; To be able to send it at the request of the parents for 60 - 65 months with a parent petition for those 66 - 68 months old and those who are 69-71 months old can be delayed for one year with a report. was reorganized. (Resmi Gazete, 2012b). Various non-governmental organizations, academic circles and political parties expressed their opposition to the changes made. Some non-governmental organizations, educators and universities have found 60 months early to start compulsory education. (Güven, 2012; Duran, 2013). Reactions have taken effect and according to the regulations of primary education institutions; the school directorates approve the acceptance of the children who have the right to enroll at their age, with a petition to the school, for the children who have reached the age to start compulsory school; being able to direct them to any pre-school education or postpone their registration for one year with a health report certifying that they are not ready to start primary school made its provision. (MEB, 2013).

This study aimed to understand and interpret school readiness level (cognitive, affective, psycho-motor, and social) of students in different age categories (60-66 months and 66-72 months) who are studying in the first grade. In this sense, the main research question that this research deals with is "How are the school readiness level (cognitive, affective, psycho-motor, and social) of the 66-months old and 72-months old students who have just started primary school?" For this purpose, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. What are the school adjustment and classroom management problems observed by primary school teachers, school counselors and parents for students aged 66 months and 72 months?
2. What are the school readiness level (cognitive, affective, psycho-motor, and social) of children starting school at the age of 66 months and 72 months old according to primary school teachers and school counselors?

3. How are primary school teachers, school counselors and parents' views on readiness levels (cognitive, affective, psycho-motor, and social) of students, 66 and 72 months old?
4. What are the opinions of teachers, school councillor and parents on school readiness level (cognitive, affective, psycho-motor, and social) difference according to the demographic characteristics of the students 66 months and 72 months old?
5. What metaphors do primary school teachers, school counselors and parents produce for a 66-month-old child to start school?

## Method and paradigm of research

The paradigm of this research is interpretive as the interpretative paradigm is based on understanding and interpret subjective and inter-subjective views of the individuals and ontologically it is hermeneutics based on practical interests of individuals. (Habermas, 1985; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Gunbayi& Sorm, 2020). This study was the qualitative research approach designed as descriptive phenomenology. A phenomenological study is a research that focuses on the things people experience and the description of how they experience what they experience, a phenomenological study describes the meaning of an individual's lived experience of a concept or phenomenon. In other words, it focuses on the experience related to that phenomenon, not the phenomenon. Accordingly, phenomenological studies investigate and reveal conscious structures in human life. (Polkinghorne, 1989). The main goal of the phenomenological study is to reveal the essence of his perception of lived experiences. (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 1990).

### Sampling

For the sample of the research, 4 parents and 4 first grade teachers and 1 school guidance teacher of 66-month group and the 72-month group students studying in the first grades of primary education under the Ministry of National Education in the 2022-2023 academic year, within the borders of Antalya province Konyaaltı / Kepez / Muratpaşa were the participants in the framework of purposive sampling method and convenient sampling technique (Palys, 2008) as seen in Table 1 and Table 2.

**Table 1.**

*Sample of teachers*

n	Gender	Branch	Seniority	Department
A	Male	1st-grade teacher	21 years	Primary Class Teaching Department
B	Female	1st-grade teacher	31 years	Primary Class Teaching Department
C	Female	1st-grade teacher	15 years	Primary Class Teaching Department
F	Male	Guidance Counselor	22 years	Guidance and Consultant Department
I	Female	1st-grade teacher	6 years	Primary Class Teaching Department

The sample of parents of children according to gender, their child's class, the number of children in the family, the age order of their children, whether their children attended pre-school before primary school, educational status and their job are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.**

*Sample of parents*

n	Gender	Parent Status	Child Number in family	The age order of child	Pre-school before primary	Educational Status Mother (M)-Father (F)	Job Mother(M)-Father (F)
D	Female	2nd Class	1	1	Yes	M: Dropped out of High School	M: Housewife F: Pharmacist



						F: Dropped out of High School	
E	Female	1st Class	2	1	No	Mother: High School Father: High School	M: Esthetician F: Self Employed
G	Female	1st Class	3	2	No	Mother: Elementary Father: High School	M: Housewife F: Self Employed
H	Male	2nd Class	2	2	Yes	Mother: Elementary Father: Undergraduate	M: Housewife F: Retired Teacher

**Data collection**

As the data collection technique of the research, individual interview technique based on semi-structured interview form was used within the framework of the qualitative research approach, qualitative research, in which the study group is usually small, interview is used to gather rich and comprehensive information (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2007).

In this study, firstly, a literature study was conducted and a semi-structured interview form was prepared. In the semi-structured interview form, questions were asked about the main purpose of the research, after a brief demographic section for parents, primary school teachers, and guidance counselors. The interviews were recorded with a voice recorder and the data obtained from the participants were transcribed verbatim. The results obtained were classified with the qualitative research software NVIVO 11 (Kelle, 1995), and then reliability were tried to be increased with Kappa analysis. The data obtained are presented with a descriptive explanation addition, and the findings obtained within the framework of emerging themes and patterns were explained and interpreted.

**Data analysis**

Descriptive analysis technique, one of the analysis techniques, was used to analyze the data of the research. The interviews of about 15-40 min, which was carried out by the researchers, was recorded on a voice recorder with the permission of the participant during the interview, then it was transcribed verbatim. The data obtained from the interviews conducted between the two groups were subjected to descriptive analysis, and the results were presented with a descriptive narrative, and the findings obtained within the framework of the emerging themes and patterns were classified in line with the research objectives by giving place to direct narratives (Gunbayi, 2018).

**Ethical procedures**

Scientific research ethics were followed at all stages of the research: (1) ethics committee approval of the research was obtained from Akdeniz University Social Sciences Ethics Committee at the meeting of 1 decision numbered 7 on January 10th, 2023 and (2) an informed consent form was signed by the participants prior to the interview.

**Validity and reliability of the research**

The followings were carried out to increase the validity and reliability of the research.

To increase the internal validity (credibility) of the research, while developing the interview form, a conceptual framework was created as a result of the literature review. In addition, immediately after data collection, the results and comments were confirmed with the data sources and participant confirmation was provided. On the other hand, the fact that the information recorded in the interview was only used for scientific purposes and the signing of a consent form was an important factor in ensuring mutual trust. Thus, it was ensured that the data collected during the interview process reflected the real situation.

To increase the external validity (transferability) of the research, the research process and what done in this process were explained in detail. In this context, the model of the research, the sampling, the data

collection tool, the data collection process, the analysis of the data, were defined in detail. In addition, interviews were conducted with the participants voluntarily with the purposeful sampling method to reveal the events and facts as well as their varying characteristics.

To increase the internal reliability (confirmability) of the research; all of the findings were given directly without comment. In addition, the data were coded by a researcher and an expert in qualitative research, and the codings were compared and subjected to kappa analysis. Kappa value of the research was 0.96, indicating a perfect fit.

To increase the external reliability (dependability) of the research, by keepin ready to present all the data collection tools, raw data, coding made during the analysis phase, and the perceptions, notes, writings, and inferences that form the basis of the report to an outside expert on demand, dependability was ensured (Landis and Koach, 1977; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Cohen, Mannion and Morrison, 2007, Gunbayi, 2018).

## Findings

The findings obtained from the research are given below according to the sub-objectives of the research..

### *1. Class adjustment and classroom management problems of students between 66 months and 72 months old*

The thematic analysis of the question, “What are the school adjustment and classroom management problems observed by primary school teachers, school counselors and parents for students aged 66 months and 72 months old?” based on the views of primary school teachers, school counselors, and parents is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.**

*Class Adjustment and Classroom Management Problems*

<b>Class Adjustment and Classroom Management Problems</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>I</b>
1. Peer Relationships		√	√		√	√		√	√
2. Making excuses	√	√	√		√	√			
3. Parent Behaviors	√	√		√	√				
4. Following the Rules				√			√	√	√
5. Micro Muscle Skills	√	√		√					√
6. School – Parent Alignment			√	√		√			√
7. Violence	√	√	√						√
8. School – Teacher Love		√			√		√	√	
9. Self Care Skills			√			√			√

As seen in Table 3, when children Table 3, when asked about their views for children aged 66 and 72-month-olds on Class Adjustment and Classroom Management; Participants generally expressed different statements. Six of the participants stated that 66-month-old students had problems with their classmates, 72-month-olds were better in peer relations, and five of them said that 66-month-old students made various excuses for teachers because they wanted to leave school and go to their families. Four of them stated that parental behavior was a major factor in children's compliance with the rules. children coming from an disorderly environment had difficulties in the adaptation process, Three of the participants stated that 66-month-old children had difficulties in long-term writing because their micro-muscle skills were not fully developed and that their child had difficulty in adapting. After all, as the family was not in harmony with the school, and the child who was exposed to violence at home also used violence in the school environment however they loved the school and their teachers. They

stated that they had difficulties for the self-care of their 66-month-old children. The views of participants are given below:

*...we had a hard time. There were constant complaints from her friends. Here, while playing with her friends, she accidentally falls, gets injured, talks constantly in the classroom, cannot pay attention to the lesson, and her friends make fun of her as a minor.(H, 1)*

*Of course, young people ask more questions due to more distraction. I do not want to do it!, It is enough!, I am so hungry!, I'm so thirsty!, I got bored!, Do I have to do these? These are the reactions usually seen in those 66 months old. Distractions are higher.(B,2)*

*Children come to school with the influence of parents. It's already in the regulations. If the parents consent for up to 3 months, they can be returned to the kindergarten. we usually recommend kindergarten for those who are not ready for 1st grade. but even if the parents are not ready, they want the children to enter the 1st grade, they say yes, the child will force you a little, but what can we do, the child will get used to it in time. You can't say anything. However, the future education life of the child is affected. This is why we say it.(B,3)*

*...there were problems such as talking constantly, not paying attention to the lesson, not obeying the class rules...(G,4)*

*Since the 66-month-old student's fine-gross motor skills, which we call micro-muscular skills, are not developed, they cannot hold a pencil. they can't button up, they can't tie their shoes, they can't even catch the ball.(I, 5)*

*For example, I had a student this year. His age is suitable for the 1st grade. (72 months) He never wanted to attend class. She is ready for anything but does not want to go to class. (F,6)*

*Once a child is beaten at home, he doesn't listen to you unless you beat him. 2, 2 more 4. Well, the beating is from heaven. Look. Of course, we don't show violence. But some children don't act unless violence is used. This generation is so arrogant. This generation doesn't want to learn. he starts to misbehave because the lessons don't interest him. Look, there is a saying. 'whoever didn't settle down with advice should be warned, whoever didn't settle down with warning deserves to be whacked" We used to talk when we got together with the teachers. Verbal violence, not physical violence. We always talked like that.(A,7)*

*I don't think there is a difference between a 66-month-old and a 72-month-old child. I think that teachers affect whether children like school or not. For example, the parent of a student who did not want to go to kindergarten last year thanked me for his son's love of school this year.(C,8)*

*66-month-old students barely do their self-care. For example, since toilet training cannot be given in primary school, parents must have taught toilet training to the child at home. However, some parents send them to school without providing this education. and the child has trouble going to the toilet at school. When this situation is noticed by his friends, he is mocked and humiliated.(F,9)*

## **2. The school readiness level of 66-month-old children and Regarding the Readiness of 72-Month-Old Children**

The descriptive analysis of the question, "What are the school readiness level (cognitive, affective, psycho-motor, and social) of children starting school at the age of 66 months and 72 months old according to primary school teachers and school counselors?" based on the some views of primary school teachers and guidance teacher is presented below.

*Attention perception is lower than others. They get distracted more quickly. We have problems with the perceptions of 66-month-old students. For example, when I say to a 66-month-old child that he should draw better, the child answers me thI am only five years old and can do that much ... Of course, there is a difference. 72 months old understand and reflect on behavior. But even though 66 months old know the rules, they can't reflect on the behavior. For example, when you ask 66 months old, What are the rules? That, at work, we must be quiet in the classroom. When the bell rings, we must enter the classroom. They say like that, but when they come to practice it, they can't put it into action.(B).*

*We had a lot of sleep problems. Although she went to kindergarten for 2 years, we had an extreme sleep problem in the first grade of primary school. In addition, when the lesson is given, he constantly says, I can't write this. I don't want to write. I want to play the game. I don't want to study. I don't have to do these things. He had many reproaches like.(C).*

*66 months not ready. More addicted to parents. Not ready emotionally and physically. Using a pen, using scissors, and small muscle development is not enough. They also lag in emotional development. More family dependent. More selfish. pushes us harder. They become more selfish. I cleaned her butt. Even basic needs are problematic. They are afraid of falling into the toilet, think about it!( F).*

*When we look at it in terms of friend relations; They are in the age of play, mostly because they are younger than their peers. For this reason, they want to play games more than others. In games, for example, they always try to be me center. They can easily upset their friends in games. They may not follow the rules. Of course, emotionally; they get too fussy. They may cry when you are immediately angry, or vice versa, they may react more harshly. They make funny gestures to your face. It's like teasing. As we get older, we see that these attitudes are less. But we can generally observe this in this age group.( I).*

*The psycho-motor aspect; Now, even say this word E and the word EV together, he can't write it. He can't put it on paper. Can't transcribe even when combining E with V Here, of course, his muscles are not formed yet. If his muscles are not fully developed, he cannot lift the pencil for more than five minutes, even if he is holding a pencil. Starts to get tired after 3 minutes. Sure, it's crowded in the classroom. Some things have to go fast. Of course, the teacher will not have time for this. Naturally, the child lags behind a bit.(F).*

*72 months, he is in a more developed condition physically and he said that he pays attention better in the lesson, I see that my child understands the lessons better. If I say that he has become more conscious, it is like that.. 72-month-olds both understand and reflect on behavior. But even though 66 months old know the rules, they can't reflect on behavior(A).*

As seen in descriptive analysis based on the opinions on school readiness level of 66-month-old and 72 month-old children, primary school teachers and guidance teacher generally expressed the same statements. all of the participants stated that the cognitive readiness of 66-month-old children was not sufficient in general compared to 72-year old children and they had difficulty paying attention to the lesson and instructions. They stated that being physically younger than 72 months old caused injuries. all of the participants said that 66-month-old children were still at the age of play affectively, they want to play more games than lessons, and they missed their mothers. They also stated that the 66-month-old students frequently asked the question of when they would go home and that the students had difficulty waking up in the morning. Also, they stated that 66-month-old children had insufficient hand-muscle skills compared to 72-month-olds, their hands were often tired during the lesson and they did not want to write. Additional they stated that children still exhibited self-centered behavior as a social skill, and they only acted without considering their wishes and the wishes of their friends.

### **3. The Difference in Readiness Level of Children Between 66 Months and 72 Months**

The thematic analysis of the question, “How are primary school teachers, school counselors and parents’ views on readiness levels (cognitive, affective, psycho-motor, and social) of students, 66 and 72 months old?” based on the views of primary school teachers, school counselors, and parents is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4.**

*Difference in Readiness Levels of Children Between 66 Months and 72 Months*

Difference in Readiness Level	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1. Psycho-motor Development Difference	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		
2. Social Development Difference	√	√	√	√	√	√			
3. Affective Development Difference				√	√		√	√	√
4. Language Development Difference				√	√	√			√

As seen in thematic analysis in Table 4, on the comparison of the school readiness difference of children between 66 months old and 72 months old, participants generally expressed common statements. Seven of the participants expressed psycho-motor development, six of them Social Development, five of them affective development, and four of them Language Development regarding the difference in School Readiness of children between 66 months and 72 months. Some of the views of participants are given below:

*Now I have been working in this school for 5 years and in primary school for 22 years. Since primary school children start early in this age group, I have seen that some of their cognitive, affective, and psycho-motor deficiencies are slightly higher than their peers. I was able to observe. Although we do not experience any cognitive difficulties, I can say that there are problems with motor skills and behaviors. Of course, this cannot be said for every child, but it can be generalized.(F, 1).*

*Groups over 72 months old listen to you very well. School culture is children who sit at the moment. (D, 2)*

*A 72-month-old child is more ready both emotionally and physically. 66 months old child is not ready. More addicted to parents. He is not ready emotionally and physically, either.(G, 3).*

*...in addition, children in this age group cannot express themselves comfortably and express their thoughts with simple, imperative sentences...(I, 4).*

#### **4. Findings concerning the effect of demographic differences on readiness levels of students between 66 months and 72 months old**

The thematic analysis of the question, “What are the opinions of teachers, school counselors and parents on school readiness level (cognitive, affective, psycho-motor, and social) difference according to the demographic characteristics of the students, 66 months and 72 months old?” is presented in Table 5 below.

**Table 5.**

*Opinions on the Demographic Differences of Students Between 66 Months and 72 Months*

Demographic Differences	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1. Gender	√		√		√	√			√
2. Family Life	√		√	√	√				√
3. preschool				√	√	√		√	√
4. Living Zone		√	√			√			√
5. Violence	√	√		√					√
6. Economical situation	√		√			√	√		



7.	Sibling Factor		√		√		√	
8.	Basic Needs		√	√			√	
9.	Parental Interest	√				√		√
10.	Parent Educational Status		√		√	√		

As seen in Table 7, when asked about the effect of the demographic difference of Children between 66 Months and 72 Months old on school readiness; participants generally stated differently. While five of the participants stated that gender difference, family life, and kindergarten had a great impact, 4 of them stated that it was very important for the child's school life whether he was exposed to violence or witnessed violence or not, the economic status of his family, and whether he or she had a sibling or not. Again, while four participants expressed the demographic characteristics of the methods of meeting the nutritional needs as basic needs that affected the school life of the child, they expressed the parental interest and the demographic characteristics that affected the school life and school readiness in the parent's education status. Some of the views of participants are given below:

*...whether he went to nursery school whether he went to kindergarten, The genetic structure of the child, the cultural structure of the family, the environment in which he grew up, the family environment, for example, the child who grew up in a separated family and came to us may have a serious adjustment problem. Sometimes the child is violent. because the child was abused. He is always against the grandmother, against the parents. He was beaten a lot. At first, the custody was given to the mother, then to the father, now it is like the mother. Of course, the child reflects what is on in the house because he sees it. The child became neurotic..(D, 3, 4, 5).*

*...In the past years, a student came. She is studying in kindergarten. I said can she to them. They said yes. The parents were also parents with a high level of conscious education. Indeed, the family was very interested in the child. The student came to Me, Can you try a little? My teacher? I wonder if she can adapt to the classroom? the student was a girl. Girls are a little better at this. Gender also makes a big difference. Girls are more adaptable in this regard. Boys are more likely to go into exuberance, definitely in terms of behavior...(E, 1, 9,10).*

*...Nutrition is very important, the student goes to kindergarten, Coming from the village, city life, Family interest, Family education level, Economic structure of the family, Being the first child, Being the last child, Being a twin child. These are all factors that are very effective on the student ...( C, 2, 6, , 8 ).*

## 5. Findings on Metaphors

The thematic analysis of the question “What metaphors do primary school teachers, school counselors and parents produce for a 66-month-old child to start school?” based on the views of primary school teachers, school counselors, and parents is presented in Table 6.

**Table 6.**

*Metaphors for a 66-month-old child to start school*

Metefor	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1. Butterfly on a vine yard	√								
2. Sadness		√							
3. A baby trying to walk without crawling			√						
4. Writing on a blank page				√					
5. Strength					√				
6. A broken remote control car						√			
7. Handicapped track							√		
8. Starting the Race Early								√	
9. Early cycling									√

As seen in Table 8, when asked to produce metaphors for a 66-month-old to start school, one of them expressed the negativeness of the situation with the expression butterfly on a vine yard, and the other the expressions were sadness, a baby trying to walk without crawling, writing on a blank page, strength, a broken remote control car, handicapped track, starting the race early and early cycling.

*I liken it to a butterfly perched on a vine gourd. It's funny. Now shower the vine gourd. Consider the butterfly landing on it. This is funny. This situation is comedy.(A,1).*

*... It is a very sad situation. I have a few in my class too. They create serious problems. That's a lot for the kids! Sad for my country! Because we are raising lost children! These children will experience great problems in terms of academic, communication, social and social aspects!(B,2).*

*I liken it to a baby trying to walk without crawling. You haven't learned to crawl yet, but you want to walk. He or she has more time. (C,3).*

*Writing on a blank page, I guess. Since they are small, I see them as blank pages and we fill that page. Games, lessons, orientation according to interests, etc. Assuming that there is an improvement in the level of knowledge with the information he received at school, I can say that the blank page should be filled.(D,4).*

*Strong. I think it will be stronger. I think your feet will be more firmly on the ground. (M,5).*

*I liken it to a car with a broken Remote Control. Because the children come here with the remote control. There is an entity in the house that is coordinating someone. But there is no one controlling here. Child battery installed. There is energy. And it cannot be controlled.(F,6).*

*Handicapped Track. I'm thinking about my daughter right now. My son's older sister is also a teacher. I remember the days when I myself started teacher's school when I started High School, Getting away from home was a new place. At that time, when I started at a boarding school, I had many different emotions. It started early for my son and a month or two earlier for my daughter and her peers and this situation will always be behind in terms of age, for the rest of her life. Each school class or each step it will take will be in front of them as a handicapped track in an important decision. And this Handicapped Track will have future advantages! There will be disadvantages in the future! But of course, we will always be behind them as a family.(G,7).*

*...It's like starting a race early. So the sooner the better, right.(H,8).*

*Early cycling. It's like riding a bike before your physical condition is ready. It's like riding a bicycle even though your feet can't reach the pedals.(I,9)*

## **Discussion and conclusion**

The main purpose of this study was to compare the school adjustment and school readiness levels of 66-72 months old students who had just started primary school. Readiness can be defined as the time when a person reaches the level of being able to perform a certain behavior as a result of maturation and learning (Erden & Akman, 2004). A child with a low level of readiness in terms of cognitive, affective, psycho-motor, and social development has problems in adapting to the school culture. A healthy development of the child's characteristics such as age, height, weight, large and small muscle development, visual and auditory perception, hand-eye coordination is important for reaching a certain maturity at school start (Güler, 2012). Participant teachers stated that children who had adjustment problems in primary school also experienced problems of academic and psychological lag or school adjustment in their next schools. Maturation is very effective on learning, especially in primary school age (Erden and Akman, 2004). When the literature on the subject was reviewed and the developmental

stages of children were examined, the developmental level of each age period differed. When teachers' opinions were examined; in general, it can be said that they thought that the curriculum was not suitable for children aged 60-66 months old.

When evaluated in general, it was concluded that the psycho-motor dimensions of the children and the micro-muscular skills of 60-66 month-old students were not sufficiently developed. The development of micro-muscles is a situation that develops depending on maturation, and since children's body maturation did not occur, it was found that when the hand-arm skill was evaluated in terms of height - body maturity, it also caused a problem in the child's adaptation to the physical conditions of the school. Since the micro-muscular skills of the child were not sufficiently developed, the child could not reach the toilet sinks or caused her or him to fall behind in the games with his friends, and it could be said that depending on this situation, the self-development of the children might be adversely affected. From this, it can be interpreted that children of 60 - 66 months starting primary school could cause a social, psycho-motor, and biological risk. Participant teachers stated that students starting primary school in the age of 60-66 months old experienced problems in perceiving commands, and that they had difficulties in focusing the attention of the children on the lesson and in keeping them in the classroom because they had excessive attachment to the mother. Again, they emphasized that the given information and commands had a very short retention time due to a lack of interest and attention. This finding is supported by the research results of Gündüz and Çalışkan (2013).

For 72-month group students, participant teachers stated that as a result of the children's reaching school readiness, they were more successful in adapting to school culture, peer communication, and academic sense and they did not experience any problems. In the studies on school readiness, school readiness is defined as the state of a child's being physically, emotionally, mentally and socially ready for school. (Yavuzer, 2012). A child with school readiness has reached a certain level in terms of cognitive, affective, psycho-motor, and social development and is ready to successfully fulfill what is asked from her or him at school (Ülkü, 2007).

When the difference between students' school adjustment problems was evaluated; it was seen that there was a significant difference. It was found that the children in the 60-66 months old experienced school adjustment problems more often than the children in the 66-72 months old, and they adapted to the school culture more difficult. Accordingly, as stated in the literature having children from different age groups in the same class also affects their adjustment negatively (Basaran, Gökmen & Akdağ., 2014).

When different age groups (66-72 months old) were evaluated in terms of demographic characteristics, participants stated that in addition to the negative advantage of children coming from disadvantaged regions, the inadequacy of children's readiness caused a major problem for children both academically, socially and biologically especially for the students starting school early when they were 60-66 months old. They stated that if the child started school as a 72-month-old group, at least the child's readiness was at a slightly more adequacy level, it was easier to turn his disadvantage into a positive direction, and they had less difficulty in adapting to the school culture. It can be also said that there was a significant difference between the 66-month old and the 72 month old children from a demographically disadvantaged region.

When the difference between the academic achievement levels of the students is evaluated; it was found that there was a significant difference between the 66-month old and the 72-month old students. Similarly, in studies it was found that the micro-muscle skills of 66-month-old students were not sufficiently developed (Bayat, 2012; Sarı, 2008) and it was stated that the learning and content of the primary literacy program of the teachers were not suitable for the level of the students and that students had difficulties in writing (Bay, 2010; Bayat, 2012). Gündüz and Çalışkan (2013) also found that in their writing and reading preparation studies, about 60-66 students of primary school teachers; It was found that the students had problems such as getting tired quickly, being reluctant, careless and slow. It was concluded that 72-84 and 66-72 months old children had higher literacy skills than 60-66 months old children.

When we examined the findings obtained from parents who participated in the research, it was seen that they considered starting school early as a good situation and that their children started one step ahead of their peers. It was found that they made a positive deduction of this situation and insisted on starting school early, regardless of the opinions of the experts (pedagogues, school counselors, primary school teachers, and many researchers on the subject and their findings) stating the harmful aspects of this situation. On the other hand, teachers who participated in the research stated that the children with low readiness levels starting school caused adaptation problems at school, the children had problems due to insufficient body functions, and when evaluated at the academic level, teachers stated that as their learning speed was slower than 72 months old students, as a result of the activities in which children of different age groups in the classroom demonstrated skills, the 66-month-old children experienced the feeling of inferiority and they also experienced this situation in their next school process and even felt it throughout their lives. Accordingly, The Turkish Medical Association included the some statements related to 66 months old students in its report on early school starting in 2012: hand-eye coordination could not be achieved before the age of six, their fine motor skills have not reached the expected maturity, insufficient development of abstraction, focusing and maintaining attention skills and learning rates were slower than other students (Türk Tabipler Birliği-Turkish Medical Association [TTB], 2012).

The fact that an individual has a healthy personality, is sensitive to his or her environment, harmonious and successful in academic education largely depends on the age of starting primary education. Considering that the school starting age affects a student's whole life positively or negatively, physically, affectively, and cognitively, for a 72-month-old student with hand-arm skills and school readiness (cognitive, affective, psycho-motor, and social), it is thought that both the education-teaching process and the perception-learning process will be quite productive. Accordingly, based on the fact that the student, whose education process is successful, will not be wrong to deduce that he or she will show success indicators throughout his or her life, 72-month-old children will experience a more productive, problem-free, and more positive process in school and life, but it is thought that children who start the 66-month school process may also have an inefficient education process as a result of hand-arm skills, lesson motivation and school adjustment, cognitive, affective, psycho-motor, and social inadequacies.

### ***Recommendations***

As a result of the research, it was found that the 66-month-old students were not enough to be ready for school in terms of their cognitive, affective, psycho-motor, social and language development. Thus, according to the results of the research, the following suggestions can be put forward:

- After being subjected to the School Maturity test by the Ministry of National Education as a criterion for starting primary school, students should be enrolled in the school.
- While creating the primary literacy program, a curriculum can be developed as a result of experimental and theoretical research (for 60-66 month-old students) based on the age of starting school.
- Considering that children who start school early and children who start school by reaching school maturity are educated in the same class, precautions such as guidance and counseling services, family education, etc., should be taken in order not to adversely affect academically the early starters of different age groups being subjected to the same curriculum.
- Pre-school education should be compulsory for starting school, and the transition to primary education should be considered as a criterion as a result of the presentation of a report by the teacher of the child who graduates Pre-school education.
- To determine the readiness of children for school during enrollment, a school enrollment commission should be established in the presence of teachers, school administrators, guidance and psychological counselors, or child development specialists.

- A brochure of Is My Child Ready for School? prepared in the light of the scientific findings can be given to parents
- Awareness-raising conferences or seminars can be organized by experts for families who think their children will start school

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## Ethical approval

In the writing process of the study titled “**Comparison of school readiness level of 66 months and 72 months old students just started primary school: A phenomenology study**”, the rules of scientific, ethical and citation were followed; it was undertaken by the authors of this study that no falsification was made on the collected data, “Journal Action Qualitative & Mixed Methods Research [JAQMER] and Editor” had no responsibility for all ethical violations to be faced, and all responsibility belongs to the authors and that the study was not submitted for evaluation to any other academic publishing environment.

## Ethics committee approval

Ethics Committee Approval of this research was obtained from Akdeniz University Social Sciences Ethics Committee at the meeting of 01 decision numbered 07 on January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023.