



## The Positive Contribution of School Adjustment Activities to the Transition of First Grade Students: A Case Study in Ankara

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### Abstract

The importance of programs that facilitate the transition of students to elementary school in order to support both their academic success and healthy development is undeniable. Therefore, the Ministry of National Education developed the School Adjustment Program in cooperation with UNICEF for first graders and implemented it in all elementary schools in Turkey. The aim of the present study is to examine the contribution of this program to school adjustment, student-teacher relations, peer relations, and various behaviors of elementary school students in first grade. The participants of the study, which is based on ex-post facto design, include 110 classroom teachers working in schools in Ankara during the 2015–2016 and 2016–2017 academic years. While 48 of these teachers implemented the adjustment program activities in their classrooms in 2015; others did not implement these activities in their classrooms in 2016. All the teachers filled in the School Adjustment Teacher Rating Scale, Student–Teacher Relationship Scale, and Child Behavior Scale (683 students engaged in the activities and 520 students did not) to evaluate how various aspects of their students’ transition were affected by the program. One-way MANOVA analysis showed that the study group had higher mean scores for collaborative participation, liking school, self-directedness, and closeness to the teacher than the comparison group. Although the aggressive and prosocial behavior scores towards peers were higher in the study group, the partial effect sizes were found to be insignificant. While the scores of school avoidance and conflict with teachers were lower in the study group than in the comparison group, there was no difference between the groups in their scores for asocial behaviors towards peers, hyperactivity/distraction, anxiety/fear, and exclusion by peers. It was concluded that the program contributed to the establishment of close student–teacher relationships in the selected schools and the adjustment of the students to the schools.

### Keywords

School Adjustment Program  
Student-Teacher Relationship  
Behavior Problems  
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## Introduction

In many countries, children's readiness for and adjustment to school are important issues. School adjustment can be a problem at any grade level; however, the early childhood period is of particular importance for the formal preparation of children for school (Grimley & Bennett, 2000). At the same time, the process of starting elementary school differs between countries. These differences are shaped by each country's own political and social context and social values. However, in general, the political and social interest in the transition to elementary school and early childhood education seems to have increased recently in many countries (OECD, 2017: p. 43), including Turkey. Early childhood education is not considered to be within the scope of compulsory education in the Turkish education system. Although the schooling rates in Turkey change every year, the rate in early childhood education was 55.48% for the 2015–2016 academic year and 58.79% for the 2016–2017 academic year (Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 2017), the years during which the present study conducted. In this context, most children encounter school for the first time when they enroll in compulsory and state-provided elementary school. In the Turkish 4+4+4 education system (MoNE, 2012), starting from the 2012–2013 academic year, primary school lasts for four years. In Turkey, children are often enrolled in elementary school when they are 69 months and older, and after 66 months, children can start elementary school with the permission of their parents (Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı Okul Öncesi Eğitim ve İlköğretim Kurumları, 2019). Therefore, first graders are mostly 66–72 months old. However, children older than 72 months might attend first grade for different reasons (e.g., learning problems, health problems). The main purpose of first grade in the Turkish education system is to develop children's basic literacy skills. In addition, academic development comes to the fore in the first year of elementary school and afterwards. In the first year, children take six courses (Turkish, life studies, mathematics, visual arts, physical education, and music) in one day that are run by their classroom teacher. A course typically lasts 40 minutes and there are 15-minute breaks between the courses. In this context, elementary school has a more structured form and stricter rules than early childhood education and the family environment.

School transition is a life-changing event, especially for children (Symonds, 2015). Mangione and Speth (1998) emphasized that children starting the first-grade experience problems when they enter an environment full of previously unknown people, rules, and groups. These problems are not only about adjustment to school; children may also have difficulties in establishing relationships with new people, such as teachers and peers, in this novel environment. Children might have difficulties, especially in basic areas, such as sitting for long periods of time and being silent, with which their teachers expect them to comply in order to adapt to school (Bay & Şimşek Çetin, 2014). In this context, as Schulting, Malone, and Dodge (2005) stated, not all children are successful in transitioning to elementary school. Additionally, problems related to school adjustment are experienced intensely and the most applications to school psychological counseling service are made during the first year of primary school, which is a new beginning (Kaya, Bölükbaşı Macit, & Siyez, 2012). Therefore, adjustment to school in the first grade of primary school is a significant issue and different factors related to adjustment should be emphasized in this process.

Some personal qualities, which can be developed during this period, are crucial in determining the success of children's adjustment to elementary school. One of these personal qualities is social competence. For example, Legkauskas and Mageliskate-Legkauskiene (2021) stated that social competence is a strong predictor of academic achievement and lack of conflict with the teacher, which are important indicators of school adjustment for elementary school students. Moreover, at this first stage of school life after early childhood education, one of the main elements of the socialization process for children moving away from the family environment to a more formal setting is peer interactions. Children who can establish healthy friendships are more adaptable and successful (Boulton, Don, &

Boulton, 2011; Gülay Ogelman & Erten, 2013), while children who are excluded by their friends have difficulty in adjusting to their school and environment (Buhs, 2005; Buhs, Ladd, & Herald, 2006; Loukas, Ripperger-Suhler, & Herrera, 2012; Troop-Gordon & Kuntz, 2013). In addition to peers, the relationship established with the teacher is also important for children's behavioral and social adjustment to school (Griggs, Gagnon, Huelsman, Kidder-Ashley, & Ballard, 2009). According to Wentzel (2009), this relationship can also affect children's social and academic adjustment motivations.

Behavioral problems are another factor related to school adjustment that may make adaptation to school difficult, and children who have difficulties in adapting may also exhibit behavioral problems. Such problems affect children's school adjustment negatively (Kawabata, Tseng, & Gau, 2012; Stormshak & Bierman, 1998; Wood, 2006). Therefore, recognizing and intervening in behavior problems in the early stages of elementary school can contribute to preventing possible school adjustment problems and/or academic issues that children might experience at that time and in the future. Because of the complex nature of the adjustment to elementary school and the problems it brings, school preparation is so important. Children who transition successfully actively engage in learning and adapt to the new setting; otherwise, they start first grade with anxiety and confusion (Steen, 2011). In addition, a successful adaptation process establishes the foundation for children's future achievement (Cook & Coley, 2017). Indeed, the adjustment problems experienced in elementary school may negatively affect the social-emotional state, academic success, and ultimately attitude of the child (Ladd & Burgess, 2001), and this can cause the child to experience internal and external psychological problems in the future (Erkan & Kırca, 2010; Walker, 2009). Also, activities for adaptation or transition to school can reduce children's behavioral problems. For example, after the Zippy's Friends program, it was concluded that the externalizing behavior problems and hyperactivity scores of the students in one study decreased (Mishara & Ystgaard, 2006). Correlatively, as a result of Reggio-type transition activities, there were significantly fewer behavioral problems after adaptation to school (Schneider et al., 2014). Studies also emphasize the importance of self-regulation on adaptation to elementary school (Walker & Graham, 2021). Therefore, it is very important to ensure children's readiness for school in order to prevent potential future problems. Formal and national programs that take into consideration the factors outlined above are crucial for supporting students' readiness for and adjustment to school.

The adaptation activities or programs implemented by teachers in elementary schools are important for increasing the readiness of children for the school experience (Early & Winton, 2001). Some examples of school adaptation programs offered to meet the needs of children include the following: the 15-week Maum Meditation program (Yoo & Lee, 2013) and the 24-week Zippy's Friends school-based program aimed at helping children to deal with daily challenges during their adjustment to first grade (Monkeviciene, Mishara, & Dufour, 2006). Similarly, Reggio-type transition activities (Schneider, et al., 2014), Multi-State Pre-kindergarten Study (LoCasale-Crouch, Mashburn, Downer, & Pianta, 2008), summer schools (Berlin, Dunning, & Dodge, 2011), transition programs (Carida, 2011), and after-school programs (Pierce, Hamm, & Vandell, 1999) are implemented in different countries, and their positive effects on school adjustment are well known. Activities carried out with students in these programs help them see school as an entertaining place and improve student-teacher relationships. School adjustment or transition programs usually contain activities to improve peer relationships, teacher relationships (Kim & Han, 2015), and social skills (de Moura Pereira & Figueira, 2011; Mishara & Ystgaard, 2006). In addition, parents' involvement in these activities both improves the parent-teacher relationship and enables parents to get to know each other, and in this context, these activities support various relationships in school. Thus, adaptation to the elementary school process includes some difficulties for families as well as children (Cook, Coley, & Zimmermann, 2019). For this reason, successful elementary school adaptation activities should involve both children and families, a

suggestion that is supported by a number of studies (Cook et al., 2019; Schneider et al., 2014; Schulting et al., 2005).

Rimm-Kaufman and Pianta (2000) suggested that successful transitions are embedded in interacting systems and related to parents, early childhood education, and schools and the interactions of all these elements with each other. In this context, school-based programs that provide family involvement are expected to be more effective. Dockett, and Perry (2001) stated that the most effective strategy for elementary school adjustment programs is ensuring they consist of more than one session and implementing them in small groups with parents and students.

Although in Turkey there are different programs (e.g., Bilgili & Yurtal, 2009; Özgür-İnam, 2013) that have been developed to support the adaptation of first year students to elementary school, the most common program is called the School Adaptation Program, which was created by MoNE in cooperation with UNICEF. This program has been evaluated in various studies. For example, aşçı ve Dikici-Sığırtmaç (2014) investigated the opinions of teachers about the program and evaluated program participation. Similarly, Üstündağ and Türkoğlu (2017) focused on the evaluation of the implementation and content of the program based on teacher opinions. Unfortunately, no study has simultaneously evaluated the factors affecting adaptation to school and the adjustment programs. Such an endeavor would be useful in determining whether the elementary school adjustment programs aiming to prepare children for school improve student–teacher and peer relationships, as well as school adjustment, and whether the activities foster a reduction in various behavioral problems. Therefore, this study aims to evaluate the effect of the program on school adjustment, teacher–student relationships, peer relationships, and the behavior problems students might experience in first grade.

When one examines the adaptation program and its related activities proposed by the Ministry of National Education, it is clear that social-emotional processes, such as getting to know the school and school environment; developing cognitive and communication skills, such as being informed about the lessons; and self-acceptance are used as key components for the children’s school adaptation process. During the program’s activities, parents and students have time to ask questions and gain a better understanding of what they should expect from school. Rous, Hallam, McCormick, and Cox (2010) stated that there is a need to examine adaptation programs and their effects. Research conducted so far in Turkey has been primarily related to internal reports and the evaluation of the operation of the program (Taşçı ve Dikici-Sığırtmaç, 2014; Üstündağ, 2014). Thus, the psychological effects of the program on students have not been examined. So, the goal of this study is to examine whether there is a statistically significant difference between the subtest mean scores of the School Adjustment Teacher Evaluation Scale for the study group and the comparison group (those not participating in the program). Ultimately, the hope is to provide feedback to decision makers, elementary school administrators, teachers, and school counselors regarding the continuation of adaptation activities, as well as to fill a gap related to the extent to which the program meets the needs of students.

## Method

About half the students enrolled in primary school in Turkey are introduced to the school environment in the first grade. Similarly, in Ankara, where our research was conducted, the rate of schooling in early childhood education is 58.04% (MoNE, 2017). The MoNE collaborated with UNICEF to develop activities to help children adjust to their school and its rules, as well as friends and teachers. Although these school adjustment activities have been implemented since 2006, the coup attempt in Turkey interrupted this process in 2016. Despite this interruption, first-grade teachers laboring at the Ministry of National Education have implemented the activities prepared by UNICEF during the first week of the academic year for approximately 1.4 million students enrolled in a primary school in Turkey.

Since this study examined the contribution of these activities to students' school adjustment, we defined the students attending the activities as "study" group and those who do not attend as the "comparison" group. This causal-comparative study was modeled on an ex-post facto (which means after the event in Latin) design since the activities were implemented without the researchers' intervention and the investigation took place after they were completed (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2013). In other words, as stated by Fraenkel, Wallen, and Huyn (2012), "both the results and the asserted causes occurred beforehand and were examined retrospectively" (p. 123).

Adjustment activities have been implemented in all public schools across the country. Since it was impossible to control threats to internal validity, such as history, maturity, etc., in such a large group, one region was selected for the study to ensure the potential for measurement error was minimal (Field & Hole, 2019). Therefore, this study was carried out in the same 33 schools with 1,203 students from various socioeconomic backgrounds in Ankara that had implemented the activities in 2015–2016 and had not implemented 2016–2017.

### *Participants*

This research, which evaluated the School Adjustment Program's contribution to students' various characteristics, was carried out with 110 teachers from 33 schools in Ankara, Turkey. The study group consisted of 48 randomly selected primary school first-grade teachers during the 2015–2016 academic year. Teachers in this group (13 males and 35 females) rated the adjustment level, student–teacher relationship, peer relations, and behavioral problems of a total of 683 students (332 males and 351 females) on the scales listed in the next section. The mean age of the students was 82.14 months (SD = 4.65).

The (comparison) group that did not implement the program consisted of 62 teachers (17 males and 45 females), who were randomly selected and working as first-grade teachers during the 2016–2017 academic year. These teachers rated the adjustment levels, student–teacher relations, peer relations, and behavioral problems of a total of 574 students, 285 boys and 289 girls (six students' genders were not specified) in their classrooms. The mean age of the students was 76.86 months (SD = 4.26).

### *Data Tools*

**Teacher Rating Scale of School Adjustment (TRSSA):** This scale was developed by Ladd, Kochenderfer, & Coleman (1996) and adapted into Turkish by Önder and Gülay (2010). The TRSSA consists of four subscales (school avoidance, school liking, collaborative participation, and self-directedness) and a total of 25 items. Önder and Gülay (2010) reported the Cronbach's alpha coefficient as .70 for the full scale. In this study, Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from .72 to .82.

**Student–Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS):** Developed by Pianta (2001) and adapted into Turkish by Demirtaş-Zorbaz, Özer, Gençtanırım-Kurt, and Ergene (2016), the STRS's Turkish version consists of two factors (closeness and conflict) and 23 items. "Dealing with this child drains my energy" is an example of an item on this scale. This study calculated the Cronbach's alpha coefficients as .76 and .77, respectively, for closeness and conflict.

**Child Behavior Scale (CBS):** The CBS was developed by Ladd and Profilet (1996) and adapted into Turkish by Ergene, Demirtaş-Zorbaz, Gençtanırım-Kurt, and Ozer (2018). It consists of six subscales (aggressive behavior to peers, hyperactivity, asocial relationship with peers, anxiety-fear, prosocial relationship with peers, and exclusion by peers) and a total of 59 items. "S/he is blaming others" is an item example. Ladd and Profilet (1996) reported that the Cronbach alpha coefficients ranged from .81 to .95. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from .75 to .91.

### *Procedure*

#### *School Adjustment Program*

The program consists of eight handbooks as its foundation, including the management handbook, the teacher's handbook, the psychological counselor's handbook, the teacher's activity handbook, the parent's handbook, the parent's activity handbook, foundations of the program, and the evaluation guide. The program assumes that school adjustment evolves over time and has three critical processes to be considered: preparation, placement, and integration. All the program activities are designed based on these three processes. The School Adjustment Program has also been developed in a structure that covers the child–family–school triangle. Theoretical and practical information and examples are presented on how the three stakeholders can ensure they engage in this process effectively. The responsibility of each stakeholder is specified in the handbooks. The achievement of the goals of this program requires the cooperation of principals, school counselors, and teachers. In addition, all books are made available to principals, teachers, and psychological counselors in digital format.

There are two activity books in the program: one with activities to be implemented by teachers and the other by parents. The teachers' handbook has 11 placement activities and 10 integration activities that they can choose to meet the needs of their classrooms. Settlement activities, such as "Let's Meet" or "Balloon Dance," encourage students to socialize with their teachers and peers. Integration activities including "Emotion Corner" or "Shape the Numbers," inspire students share their feelings about the school and improve their communication skills. In the parent activity book, there are five preparatory activities, three settlement activities, and one integration activity to support the activities at school. While parents are asked to apply the preparatory activities before school starts, they are expected to implement the settlement and integration activities themselves at home, in coordination with and under the direction of the teacher.

#### *Program Implementation*

The implementing team, organized by the school principals, ensures the planning of and is responsible for the correct implementation of activities. School counselors show this team how teachers should implement the classroom activities in a practical manner and continue to work with teachers during the first week of classes. Although most of these activities are expected to be carried out during the school adjustment week, as determined by the Ministry of National Education, teachers can employ activities related to the program's three components throughout the academic year according to class or student needs. After implementing the program, the adaptation team at each school evaluates the program and prepares a report for the ministry.

The School Recognition Form and the School Map are prepared by the administrators and given to parents before the beginning of the education process. Parents are responsible for choosing activities from the parent activity book according to their children's needs and implementing them with their children. Teachers also choose school settlement activities according to the needs of their students, and they carry out these activities, especially during the first week of school. They also implement school adjustment activities with the support of school counselors in the first week of classes

#### *Data Collection*

The researchers obtained the necessary permissions for the scale administration from the Hacettepe University Ethics Commission and the Ministry of National Education after selecting the schools randomly from the Ankara Provincial Directorate of National Education web page. Researchers visited and informed principals and teachers at the chosen schools about the study. Primary school teachers generally teach the same students for four years in Turkey, unless circumstances arise that hinder this process. Therefore, data were collected from multiple first-grade teachers who implemented the program at each of the chosen schools. Teachers who volunteered and signed the consent form participated in the study. Two months after the schools opened, researchers placed the scales in a

separate envelope for each student and asked each teacher to respond to them for 30% of their students who were selected at random. Teachers received hard-copy scale sets in envelopes equal to the number of students selected from the list for each class and were also informed how to fill in the scales. They had one month to observe their students without answering the scales. The teachers who volunteered also took part in a meeting before study implementation and participated fully in the data collection process. They completed the scales in an average of 20 minutes for each student. Therefore, each teacher allocated approximately 3.30 hours to the research.

### Data Analysis

The two groups (study and comparison) were contrasted in 12 subscales scores using multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) followed by multiple one-way ANOVA analyses in SPSS 26. Before the analyses, we checked assumptions (missing values, normality, outliers, variance-covariance equality, and multicollinearity) separately for each group. The data set did not contain any missing values. The pairwise correlations between the dependent variables were from  $-.40$  to  $.67$ , indicating the absence of multicollinearity. However, score distributions for each group were moderately skewed in different directions depending on outliers in the dependent variables. In addition, group variances and variance-covariance matrix equality tests were statistically significant for some variables. Bonferroni correction was applied for the multiple ANOVA analyses since violation of the assumptions would increase the type I error.

## Results

Descriptive and inferential statistics for the research variables are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** The Means, Standard Deviations, and MANOVA Results for the study (n=683) and Comparison (n=520) Groups on the School Adjustment Teacher Evaluation Scale

Scales	Comparison Group		Study group		$F(1,1201)^*$	Eta-squared Coefficients
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
School Avoidance	12.14	1.46	7.70	1.40	2856.83**	.70
School liking	6.38	1.05	10.97	1.47	3641.10**	.75
Collaborative participation	12.54	3.42	23.39	3.31	3084.01**	.72
Self-directedness	11.11	1.89	15.51	2.31	1249.30**	.51
Conflict	49.47	7.78	20.65	6.52	4873.12**	.80
Closeness	25.52	6.31	40.58	5.71	1875.46**	.61
Aggressive behaviors to peers	8.05	2.32	8.54	2.66	10.73	.01
Hyperactivity	5.49	2.06	5.55	2.08	0.27	.00
Asocial relationship with peers	7.03	1.93	7.13	2.00	0.69	.00
Anxious-fear	4.79	1.42	4.90	1.45	1.71	.00
Prosocial relationship with peers	15.47	3.82	16.10	3.45	9.04	.01
Exclusion by peers	7.70	1.81	7.85	1.94	1.97	.00

\* Bonferroni adjustment was applied (.05/12); \*\*  $p < .05$

Table 1 shows differences between the groups' mean scores on the teacher evaluations. MANOVA analysis revealed a statistically significant difference between the study and comparison groups in the linear composite of these variables (Pillai's Trace = .99,  $F(12,1190) = 26,457.32$ ,  $p = .00$ ).  $F$  values showed that this difference was between the mean scores of school avoidance, school liking, collaborative participation, self-directedness, conflict, and closeness. Accordingly, the study group got higher scores on the scales of school liking, cooperative participation, self-directedness, and closeness than those in the comparison group, which has lower scores on the school avoidance and conflict scales. Partial effect sizes ( $\eta^2$ ) confirmed that the differences between groups for those variables were large. There was no statistically significant difference between the groups in the scores obtained from the other subscales.

## Discussion and Conclusion

In the present study, the contribution of the School Adjustment Program to school adjustment, student–teacher relations, peer relations, and behavioral problems of the elementary school first grade students who participated and did not participate in the adjustment program in Ankara, Turkey, were compared. The findings revealed that children who participated in the school adjustment activities experienced better school adjustment, closeness to the teacher, prosocial behavior, and less conflict with the teacher. However, no significant difference was found between the levels of behavioral problems, except for aggressive behaviors towards peers.

The first finding of this study was that the dimensions of school adjustment, such as cooperative participation, liking for school, and self-directedness, were higher and the level of school avoidance was lower in the study group compared to the comparison group. In other words, the study group adjusted to the school better than the other group. Carter, Brock, and Trainor (2014) stated that adjustment programs are effective in the school transition process. In this study, it can also be argued that adjustment activities implemented from the first week of school are effective in the adjustment of first grade students to school. This finding is line with the extant literature (Berber, 2015; Coelho et al., 2017; Monkeviciene et al., 2006; LoCasale-Crouch et al., 2008; Taşçı ve Dikici-Sığirtmaç, 2014). School adjustment activities implemented throughout the term also have the potential to contribute to the development of students' readiness for and thus increase their adjustment to school.

The results also revealed that the students in the study group had a closer relationship with their teachers and experienced less conflict compared to the other group. Considering that preparatory programs improve the student–teacher relationship (Bilgili & Yurtal, 2009), it can be expected that students who meet with their teachers before moving on to educational activities and who engage in adjustment activities will establish healthier relationships with their teachers. Moreover, since the student–teacher relationship affects children's school adjustment (Bart, Hajami, & Bar-Haim, 2007; Chang, 2003; Lee & Bierman, 2015; Nur, Aktaş-Arnas, Abbak, & Kale, 2018; Stuhlman & Pianta, 2001), it can be said that adjustment activities improve student–teacher relations and thus facilitate adjustment to school. In other words, as stated by de Moura Pereira and Figueira (2011), students' relationships within the school develop through practices aimed at improving social skills through such programs, and thus their adjustment to school increases.

Another finding of the study was that prosocial behaviors with peers and aggressive behaviors towards peers were higher in the study group. As children's school adjustment levels increase, their prosocial behavior levels also increase (Gülay, 2011). Children who adjust to school establish closer and safer relationships with their peers and teachers (Bart et al., 2007). Moreover, children who have more friends in the first days of school develop a more positive school perception in the second month and like school more at the end of the year (Birch & Ladd, 1996; Ladd, 1990). In other words, students who participate in adjustment activities have the chance to develop more positive relationships with their peers. However, it is an unexpected finding that aggressive behaviors towards peers were higher in the study group. Contrary to this finding, the positive effect of adjustment activities in reducing behavioral problems, such as aggression, has been emphasized in the literature (e.g., Schneider, et al., 2014; Mishara & Ystgaard, 2006). However, when the  $\eta^2$  values are examined, it is seen that this difference between the groups is very small. Therefore, the statistical difference detected between the groups can be attributed to the large sample producing small standard errors (Field & Hole, 2019). Therefore, it is recommended to conduct new studies to reveal these effects more clearly.

When the effects of the adjustment activities on children's behaviors were examined, no difference was revealed between the groups for the variables of hyperactivity/distractibility, asocial relations with peers, anxiety/fear, and exclusion by peers. Considering that behavioral problems are associated with social difficulties, such as low peer acceptance, social isolation, and social inadequacy



(Hymel, Rubin, Rowden, & LeMare, 1990), the reason why adjustment activities are not effective in lessening children's behavioral problems can be explained by the complex nature of such problems. Additionally, effective adjustment programs aimed at reducing behavioral problems, such as aggression, should be carried out for longer periods of time, such as 12 lesson hours (Hudley, Graham, & Taylor, 2007). Therefore, since behavioral problems require longer-term and comprehensive interventions, short-term adjustment activities may not have been effective in addressing them. The effects of adjustment programs on these features could be re-examined through new studies on this subject.

When the findings of the present study were evaluated in general, adjustment activities were found to be effective in school adjustment and student–teacher relations. First, it should be noted that in many studies (Bierman et al., 2008; Gündüz & Özarslan, 2017; La Paro & Pianta, 2000), the aim of adjustment programs is to effectively support children in making a healthy transition to school. When the studies in question are examined, it is clear that they emphasize the content and duration of their implementation, rather than determining whether adjustment activities should be done before or after the academic year begins. Although there are different opinions about the content and duration of the practices, teachers have negative opinions about long-term adaptation programs (Arı, 2014). In their study, Bilgili and Yurtal (2009) revealed that the preparatory work applied to the first graders assisted the students in getting to know the school environment and improved the parent–student–teacher relationship. This finding is not unexpected and emphasizes the fact that administrators, teachers, and students should focus more on adjustment studies. In addition, studies that reveal the views of teachers on adjustment to primary school can be increased. Considering that adjustment activities not only improve school adjustment but also improve student–teacher relations, classroom teachers and school counselors working in elementary schools could carry out adjustment activities at the beginning of and during the semester.

### **Limitations**

In addition to the contributions of the study, there are also some limitations that should be considered. First, all the scales used to measure the various characteristics of the students were filled in by the teachers. Multiple observers, such as parents or peers, and students' self-reports could be used in future research. Second, it was assumed that the teachers completed the activities in the program in accordance with the instructions; therefore, the quality of the implementation of the activities was not examined in this study. This limitation could be addressed if future research also evaluates how well teachers implement the program. In addition, this study was conducted with first grade teachers in Ankara and can only be generalized to similar samples. Third, any early childhood education in which students engaged was not taken into account. These limitations should be considered in the interpretation of the findings, and it should be noted that these results do not represent different samples, such as adolescents or the clinical population. Despite all these limitations, this study contributes to the literature in revealing the role of adjustment programs on school adjustment, student–teacher relationships, and peer relations.

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