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**THE PSYCHOPEDAGOGICAL CONDITIONS AND METHODS
FOR KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN' ADJUSTMENT
TO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN ISRAEL**

531.01 – GENERAL THEORY OF EDUCATION

Doctoral thesis abstract in pedagogical sciences

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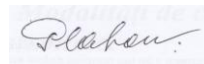
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CONCEPTUAL HIGHLIGHTS OF THE RESEARCH

The actuality of the research. The problem of childhood, in general, and nursery - school transition, in particular, generates great interest to specialists. This interest is manifested by a large number of researches, studies, documents and instructions concerning the nature, content and peculiarities of this transition. There are also a lot of materials on child's adjustment to school life, in identifying of partners involved in transition strategies relating with other children, the role of parents and decision makers involved in the school.

Transition kindergarten - school is relevant both for educational arena and for political ones. The educational arena refers to how to achieve the academic programs, the teaching quality, the academic success, the formation of relationships between staff, environment, parents and children. The policy one is related to the development of educational policy and legislation, by providing a support network for students, maintaining equality of responsibility to provide equal opportunities for all students and resource allocation.

Thus the transition kindergarten - school and child's adjustment to the new system are an extremely important event in the child's life. The transition involves physiological, psychological and social changes. As important, they directly affect the child's personality, forming positive attitudes towards school. Moreover, the transition is another step that symbolizes separation from gaming activity and the shift to learning activity. In this context, the child needs to attain a certain level of maturity and socio-emotional learning skills. The lack of social and emotional capacity affects and harms the child's adjustment to school life.

Although at international level the school age varies from country to country depending on the learning program, school, and environment. The multiple international researches indicate that for 33 countries the school age is six years old. In Israel, also, children are admitted to school at six years old, when it is assumed that all children reach a certain physical, emotional, social and sensory-motor level and a certain degree of cognitive maturity, allowing them to begin formal studies. Since 2013, in Israel, the rights to schooling have children born between January 1 to December 21 of the year. At the same time, the observations made within the activities of the author in kindergartens from Arab sectors of Israel led to the identification of differences between children born in the first triad of the year (January, February, March) and children born in the last triad of the year (October to December) generating a series of questions, such as: Are there differences in the

adjustment of children born in the first triad of the year and those born in the last triad of the year? Are children born in the last triad of studies ready for formal education? Which are the optimal pedagogical conditions of adjustment to school? So far, the answer to these questions of major importance has not found an extensive coverage in the specialized investigations. Therefore, realizations of complex studies of these phenomena become necessary and actual.

The description of the situation in the science area and the identification of the problem.

The process of children' adjustment to formal education is the subject of more research, theoretical approaches and practical diversity referring to a wide range of issues [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 23, 24]. Recent researches basically focus on cognitive, emotional, social aspects of the problem [10, 11, 13, 29]. A number of authors such as Fabian, H., Dunlop, A.-L., [14], Wildenger, L. K., McIntyre, L. L., Fiese B. H., Eckert, T. L. [31], Valeski, T. N., Stipek, D. J. [30], focuses on the analysis of the phase of transition kindergarten - primary school, on examining the preparedness of children for schooling, socio-emotional identification. A particular interest is granted to gender differences [28], the child's needs during the transition period [29], factors of risk as predictors for school performance [15], best practices and strategies to assist in the transition [14, 27]. Unfortunately, the empirical research on concerned issues is missing in Israel.

In the Republic of Moldova the issue of children' adjustment to primary school has been approached by a number of researchers: A. Bolboceanu, S. Cemortan, L.Cuznețov, L. Mocanu, V. Pascari, M. Vrancean, G. Chirică (33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40). The investigations refers to school's maturity and immaturity, the children' education in the family and school, the development of language, communication, creativity at preschool, conditions for school adjustment of children with SEN, socialization and socio-affective development of children, the training of learning skills for children of 6-8 years old, the theory and methodology of artistic education of children, preparing and training of teachers for primary education.

Also, there are missing theoretical studies and empirical research about the conditions of six years old children' adjustment born in different periods of the year. Thus, the divergence between the opportunity and importance of establishing psychological and pedagogical conditions of children' adjustment in formal education, on the one hand, and insufficient treatment of the issue in educational theory and practice, on the other hand, argues the actuality of the research and generates **the research problem** which is the need to identify psycho pedagogical conditions of adjustment to

school of children born in the last triad of the year, who face significant difficulties of adjustment compared to children born in the first triad of the year.

The research goal is the establishment and the valorization of pedagogical conditions of kindergarten children' adjustment to primary school.

The research objectives:

1. Analysis of conceptual approaches of transition and adjustment to school.
2. Identification of pedagogical conditions of adjustment to school.
3. Examination of the conditions of children' adjustment to primary school according to age, degree of readiness, sex, education level of parents.
4. Establishment of pedagogical peculiarities of children' adjustment to primary school
5. Capitalization of effects' assessment of pedagogical conditions for adjustment

The research methods:

Theoretical methods: analysis of scientific bibliographic sources, theoretical analysis and synthesis, generalization and systematization of results.

Empirical methods: pedagogical experiment, interview, questionnaire.

Statistical Methods: The test t - Student, Pearson correlation test.

The scientific novelty and the originality of the research consist in:

Theoretical foundation of psycho pedagogical conditions of children' adjustment to primary school; the achieving of a unique empirical study on the conditions of children' adjustment to primary school by age (children born in the first triad of the year / children born in the last triad of the year); degree of readiness for school (emotional, social, academic); parents' education level (low, medium, higher); establishing the influence of chronological age on the readiness of children to school; the establishment and the capitalization of psycho pedagogical peculiarities of children' adjustment to primary school; to identify gender differences at the level of classroom and age; development, implementation and evaluation of the Program of optimization the transition process; determining the role of teachers, parents and educational institutions in children' adjustment to primary school.

The solved scientific issue is to establish effective psycho pedagogical conditions and methods of kindergarten children' adjustment to primary school, having as an effect the optimizing of the transitional process in order to implement it in the educational system of Israel.

Theoretical significance of the paper: lies in approach of psycho pedagogical adjustment conditions in addressing adjustment as an integrator complex of dimensions such as age, degree of readiness of preschool, parents' education level, which ensures an effective adjustment of children to primary school; completing and promoting of scientific knowledge on the conditions of children' adjustment in the educational system; concretization of prediction for children's school success at the initial stage of formal education; forming the basis for future studies on school adjustment.

The applied value of work consists in the elaboration and implementation of the „Program of optimization the transition process” into the education system of Israel; identifying and capitalizing of psycho pedagogical peculiarities of children' adjustment to primary school; development and implementation of practical recommendations for educators, teachers and parents, thereby contributing to the promotion of positive experience and support of the child in the transition from kindergarten to school.

The program can be used by teachers, psychologists, educators from kindergarten and primary school, who are directly responsible for the adjustment of the children. The research results can be useful to parents who have difficulties in preparing children to school studies. The experimental data can be used as teaching material in the process of professional training of specialists.

The main scientific results submitted to support:

1. The psycho pedagogical conditions of transition functions as a complex system that integrates internal conditions: the age of admission to school, the social development, the emotional development, the development of learning skills and the external conditions: the level of parents' education, the family and school climate, the child's support by family, having as the result an effective adjustment of children to primary school.

2. The age differences of preschoolers generate differences in their socio-emotional functioning: children born in the first triad of the year shows a higher degree of readiness for school than children born in the last triad of the year.

3. The gender differences is marked both at class level - boys show a higher degree of emotional development and learning skills than girls, as well as at the level of age groups within the class - within groups of small children, boys are better than girls emotionally developed and of learning skills; within groups of older children, boys are better than girls developed of all investigated components.

4. Social and emotional adjustment of children born in the last triad of the year calls for further intervention strategies and pedagogical assistance on implementation of the partnership between key stakeholders (teachers, parents, children); supporting children in carrying their activities; support and stimulate communication and friendly relations between children; supervising of children at an earlier stage of schooling.

5. The pedagogical assistance programs involving all stakeholders (educators, teachers, parents) ensure the efficiency of adjustment process.

Implementation of scientific results is carried out at the institutional level within the education system of Israel.

Approval of scientific results. Theoretical and practical results of the research were presented and discussed at meetings of the Department of Educational Sciences (The State University of Moldova) and at various conferences, national and international scientific forums.

Publications on the thesis topic. On the research topic have been published 10 scientific articles.

Thesis structure: The research contains an introduction, three chapters, conclusions and recommendations, bibliography (214 sources), keywords, 130 pages of main text. In the text of thesis are inserted 13 figures, 36 tables and 2 annexes.

Keywords: transition, preschool age, school adjustment, school readiness, school maturity, individual differences, learning achievements, personality of the child, preschool experience, socio-emotional learning skills, anxiety, challenge, complexity.

Content of the research

Introduction represents the actuality of the problem, main goals and objectives, research methods. In the context, the main aims are being outlined: scientific innovation, theoretical and practical value of the research, the main scientific results submitted to support and solved problems.

In Chapter 1, Theoretical approaches of kindergarten-primary school transition in contemporary psycho pedagogy, are analyzed theoretical references on the transition from kindergarten to school, the degree of children adjustment to school, the role of children, chronological age in school adjustment.

The problem of transition kindergarten - primary school is noted in the literature as an important period, unique and significant not only for children but also for his family [1, 3, 9]. The transition denotes a new era of separation- from kindergarten, from educator and transition to a new

model of interaction. The problem of adjusting to school and how to assess it, as well as its implications in learning program, is the focus of public and professional discussions. It states that school adjustment correlates with chronological age and developmental level of the child, his/her perception of maturity depends on family, community and environment.

In this sequence of the paper, we analyzed the complex issue of school adjustment in different countries and in Israel: individual, family, organizational, policy enabler's factors and the various bottlenecks involved in this phenomenon. The examination of these factors reveals the nature of psychological, educational and sociological phenomena that require the involvement of all stakeholders: educators, teachers, parents. There are presented psycho pedagogical peculiarities of preschoolers, category affected by the transition from kindergarten to school due to lack of adjustment skills related to age and, therefore, the consequences arising from individual and social level.

In a distinct analytical framework there are presented different approaches of transition [4]. *The natural development approach* in which is emphasized the interconnection of the stages of child development and transition. Under this approach, a child can be successful in learning only when he reaches a certain stage of development, necessary to that process. Or, availability of children for formal education is presented as an inner process of biological maturity and genetic regulation. *Environmental approach* is focuses on followers of the learning process that is influenced by organizational factors, structural, institutional, and individual differences of children. The emphasis is on mediation and support of adult and child's experience dependent on environmental. *The constructivist approach* represented by the theory of Vygotsky's zone of proximal development which refers to the distance between the level of development action, as determined by solving independent problems and the potential development as determined through problem solving under guidance of an adult or in collaboration with more capable colleagues. Learning is achieved through patterns in the social context. It covers the "distance" between what is and what will the child become under the mediation of social. *In the rationalist approach* the accent is put on child's interaction, environment, society and community. Thus, educational success is assured if there are considered personal characteristics of the child and the many contexts, such as family environment, educational institutions, where he lives and develops.

In the chapter are also analyzed the models of transition that have highlighted three basic types of it: a) *Preparation of school for children* who aim to reduce stress at the initial stage of

child's learning process. The activities undertaken during this period include: knowing the child and his family, familiarizing children and families with school life, reducing the differences between the experiences of kindergarten/school. b) *Preparation of children for school* whose purposes is to make the child be ready for school. Activities carried out during this period include: preparation of the child for the first day of school, his familiarity with school rules. c) *Ensuring continuity of programs*. Practices of this transitional period have as a result: the engaging for primary classes of highly qualified professionals, continuous training of teachers and school location near the kindergartens.

In recent years, the concept of school readiness was extended beyond school maturity which refers to the capabilities of reading, comprehension, calculation. It involves a broader sense which includes physical, socio-emotional adjustment, a level of language development and general knowledge [9]. Availability for learning is more than academic goals. Thus, it is a complex of skills in various fields requires a level of physical, social, emotional development. Socio-emotional inability interrupts children' adjustment to school life [8]. Social, emotional and academic adjustment is significant for children and have a direct influence on the formation of positive attitudes towards school [15], but the child may acquire socio-emotional maturity only when it is mature in development [10]. Socio-emotional adjustment is important as a predictor of school adjustment, especially in the early years of schooling. There is a certainty that the child must acquire a certain level of maturity and social skills before entering in primary school. [10]

Approaching the problem of school maturity, Moldovan experts [33, 36, 37, 38] state that a child can be considered suitable for work or mature for first year school classes if he has reached the optimal stage of bio-psychosocial development appropriate for his age and manages to scale knowledge prescribed in the syllabus. So, the ability, the school maturity is the expression of a child's development phase. It marks that level of development (physical, psycho, social behavior), to which the activity of institutionalization can contribute to further development of personality. This level is placed between 5 and 7 years old and is based on the principle of psychological development in close unity with the biological and social principle. So, is justify the new model of early child's schooling, which involved not only the chronological, but also the health, socio-cultural conditions, the potential level of somato-psychic development and the possibility to overcome some lacking features through preventive action and valuing the outstanding ones.

The concept of "preparation" ("mature") designates the whole exchange made by the

psychiatric processes which opening the way for new acquisitions. The mental and physical development of a child must attain a certain degree of maturity that he can benefit from school learning. Otherwise, the learning process becomes ineffective or, in cases of overloading immature of child becomes even harmful. This does not mean, of course, that the mental development of children, the rhythm of this development cannot be accelerated or slowed. The pupils do not take advantage, however, only when are found, in terms of their development, at least at the stage which immediately preceding the period covered by their intellectual training. For this reason the schooling at 6 years old and the desire to prevent failures since the small schooling age make necessary the medical and psychological examination of children at their entrance to first class. This exam of identification degree is required because of school maturity mismatches between chronological age - the classic criterion of schooling - and the psychological (mental, emotional, etc.) development of children.

The process of verification the needed training for framing a child in school is important in preventing the school failure. If the level of child's development is not in according with school's needs, he will likely repeat the class or one of the following classes. On the other hand, today's fully proven that the level of development of different psychic functions can be alleviated to some extent by correct organized activity, especially at children with temporary mental delay, to those without of educational influence appropriate within the family or those with lower mental efficiency as a result of trauma or emotional shortcomings. The checking of mental development and the volume of knowledge will allow the detection and systematic practice of functions lagging behind the development of skills, assimilation of new, shares absolutely necessary notions for understanding and purchasing a whole field of school knowledges.

The acquiring of knowledges and skills stipulated for Class 1 requires a certain level of physical and intellectual development, able to provide the minimum conditions of the school success. It is not so the amount of information available to the child, how the fundamental tools and formed sensor motor mechanisms, allowing the concrete data assimilation and verbal that is offered at lessons.

In this context, there is mention that school success in complex matrix of factors that intellectuals share is quite significant, approximately 50% of school performance is attributed to intelligence. But remains no less an important place for non-intellectual factors of personality, such as interest, emotional and character's features and the conditions for organizing the school's

activity, the teaching methods etc.

The preparing of children for school work - in terms of physical maturity - also implies other aspects involved in learning materials provided in class 1, especially reading, the writing and mathematics. Also, children enrolled in first class are very different not only as individual tempo of growth and development, but also according to the chronological age.

The age of admission to school is one of the most discussed topics reflected in the literature. The interest is focused on identifying the optimal age to start school studies. The majority of studies [13, 22] refer to the influence of age on academic achievement, considered more significant than any other factor, especially for children who come from poor, representatives of disadvantaged people. Elder and Lubotsky [13] concluded that genetics is decisive, its role is more important than other components. Many researchers have adopted this view on age as part of developer and major influence on the achievements and performance of individual child, especially in the first two years of school [1]. In the specialized literature the age of transition, called the "age of reason", is regarded as a dynamic and crucial period for the development and subsequent learning process of child that starts at early age [19, 22]. The multiple changes occur learning strategies, relationships and roles, rules and values. Fabian and Dunlop [14] emphasize that transition involves changes in pedagogical approaches, in teaching and learning methods, time management, and empowerment for learning.

In the specialized literature there is disagreement as to who are the central actors of the successful transition. One thing is certain - the various involved components in the process refer to both the child's personality dimensions, as well as the support of family, community and educational institutions. Some research indicates that although there is need for cooperation between several factors, the main players of transition are children [9].

Differences between the school readinesses of boys/girls have not found an extensive coverage in the specialized investigations. There are, however, a number of studies that refer to gender differences on the degree of children adjustment in formal education. The result of investigations in which this issue was examined supports the idea that emotional adjustment of boys is higher than that of girls [28].

A series of studies reflect the importance of self-esteem in the educational environment - "I perceive me as others." This „me” of others is an indicator for self awareness and shaping of social identity which influence the personality and self-esteem of the child, and upon which depends his social status at school [25]. An important role in this regard lies with teachers. Attitude and

appreciation of the teacher determines the status of the child's self-esteem and his appreciation by others [11]. Many children (from among those who tend toward activism and independence) during the first grades encounter social difficulties that teachers report them, mostly the lack of self-confidence.

The author considers that, during the transition process, the key role lies on identification of pedagogical conditions of children' adjustment to primary school. We specify that in specialized literature the term „condition” designates a fact, a circumstances on which depends the emergence of a phenomenon or influencing the course of an action. In psychology, the term „condition” usually is presented in the context of human psychological development. Pedagogues and psychologists occupy a similar position toward „condition” as a set of natural, social, domestic and foreign variable influences which contribute to the physical, mental and moral development of personality. Hence the term „condition” can be presented as a category that reflects pedagogical and psychological factors leading up pedagogical adjustment process. Or, in our view, starting from those reported in this chapter, more dimensions ensure optimal pedagogical conditions of children adjustment to primary school on which we will focus in our research (Figure 1.1.).

The age of children' admission to school: older children who were born in the first triad of the year (January, February, March) and young children who were born the last triad of the year (October, November, December);

Emotional development: emotional stability, mood, external appearance, honesty, acceptance of the child by the teacher.

Social development reflects sociability, aggressiveness, leadership qualities, activism, energy and independence of child.

Intellectual development refers to the degree of development of cognitive, psychological processes.

Learning skills reflect perseverance, concentration, perception, ambition, interest and self-confidence of the child.

The education level of parents: higher, middle and lower levels of education.

Family and school atmosphere: psycho-emotional and moral atmosphere where the child is within the family and the school.

The teacher's competence refers to communication skills and relationship between the child and the family.

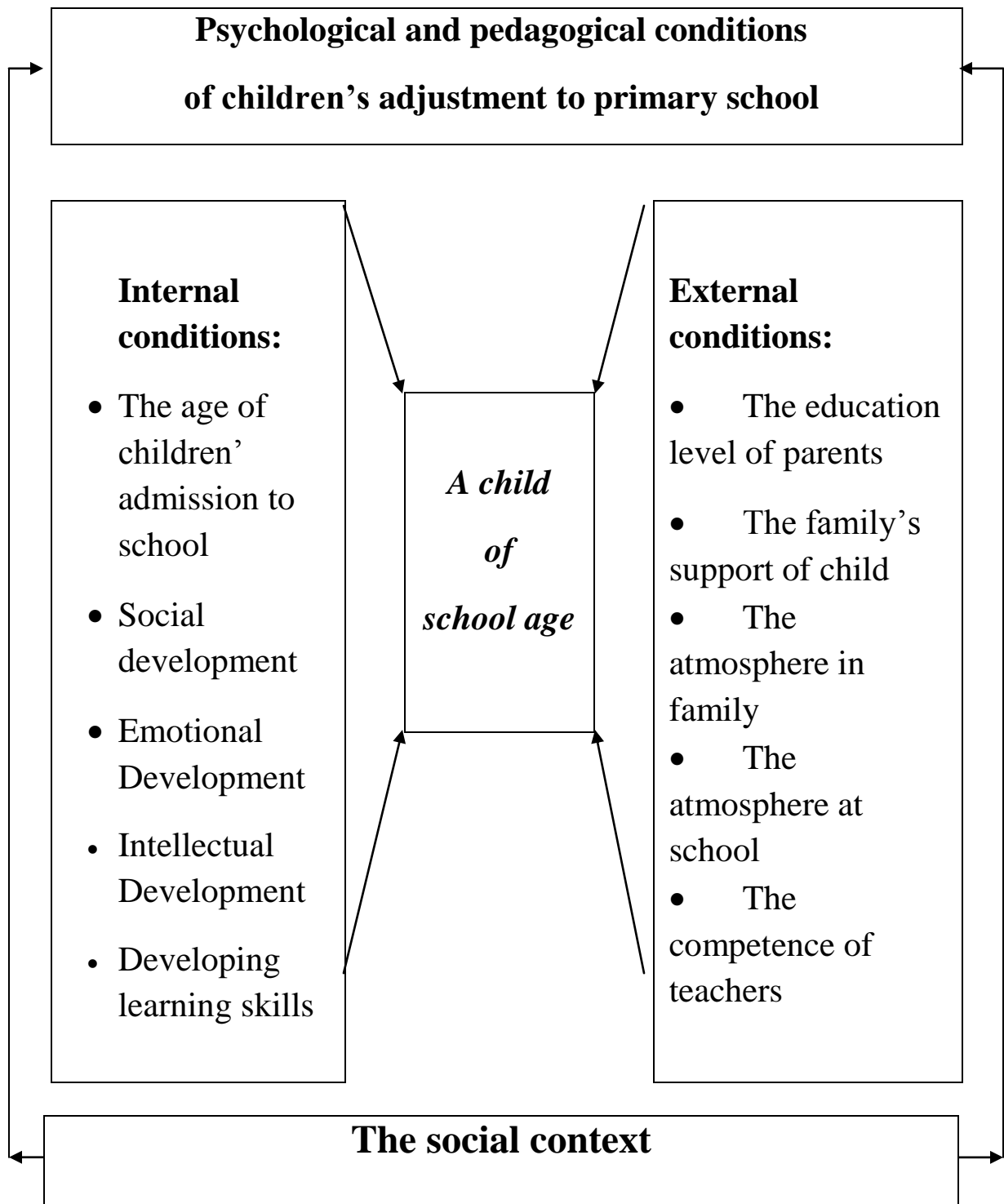


Fig. 1. The psycho pedagogical conditions of children's adjustment to primary school.

In Chapter 2, The identification of conditions of kindergarten children's adjustment to primary school, is presented the investigational design approach and the results.

In the research there was adopted a methodology of quantitative and qualitative data processing, to expose as many as possible aspects of the adjustment process. The applied methods include the collection of data through the questionnaire for teachers and interview for parents. Data collection was conducted in two groups: Group 1 consists of young children who were born in the last triad of the year (October, November and December) and Group 2 consists of older children who were born in the first triad of the year (January, February, March). Investigational approach was focused on comparing the data of the mentioned groups, the quantitative aspect referring to the evaluations of teachers and the qualitative aspect to parents' assessments.

The experiment took place in regular kindergartens in Israel's Arab sector. The assessments of educators were realized by the contribution of 276 children from 31 preschool classes. The main criteria of children' selection was the date of birth. It was important that distribution of experimental subjects to be balanced concerning the number of children (from small to elder ones) and gender (boys - girls), and in terms of the education level of parents.

Table 2.1 Distribution of experimental subjects

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Values</i>	<i>N=276</i>	<i>%</i>
Age	Young	170	61.6%
	Old	106	38.4%
Gender	Boys	166	60.1%
	Girls	110	39.9%
The parents' education	Lower	68	24.6%
	Middle	143	51.8%
	Upper	65	23.6%

The process. After the approval by the Chief Scientist and the Kindergarten Supervision Department of Israel's Ministry of Education, the kindergarten teachers received an explanation about the research and the scale used for it. The research was executed and results were obtained based on factors that were studied and recruited for this cause. Indirect observation was not used for all factors. The observation in the research is not a direct observation of the children but indirectly

by homeroom teachers, who observed the children in different and diverse group, in individual activities and situations, in structured and open tasks, in easy and difficult tasks. They witnessed the interaction between the children and between children and adults. The connection between them and children is direct during many daily hours.

The kindergarten teachers agreed to participate and be part of the research. The kindergarten teachers completed the questionnaires and evaluated each selected child in their class. The questionnaire was filled out only after parents' consent, after the goals of the research were clarified and after assuring the parents that the information would be confidential and used only for research, without using the children's names or any other identifying details. The questionnaire was given to kindergarten teachers assumed that the children's achievements in first grade may be predicted before they enter school, based on the kindergarten teacher's evaluation about their readiness and the age index of the child. The kindergarten teachers were asked to choose from a list of two groups, according to the criterion of age. The children were then classified into two aforementioned groups: experimental and control.

Kindergarten selection was made randomly from the northern district of Israel's Arab sector. However, the kindergartens were located in a generally concentrated area, so there were similarities in family and socio-economic status. The research goal and its importance were explained to the kindergarten teachers to enlighten them about the investigation aimed at predicting the level of readiness of kindergarten children for elementary school. The author personally visited each kindergarten investigation and cooperated with teachers in organizing the experiment.

After completing the questionnaire, a total evaluation was made with a discussion about the issue of early entrance to school. Here, the kindergarten teacher expressed her personal opinion about the evaluation of the child's chances to succeed at school and about the maturity level of the younger children.

The quantitative aspect. The teachers that evaluated children are permanent employees in kindergartens. They received the questionnaire that was filled with the required information about children in group 1 and group 2. Degree of readiness was assessed within three dimensions: a) social – child's interaction with other children and adults; b) emotional - behavior that reflects the emotional world of the child; c) learning skills - adapting to the learning activity. The instrument comprises 18 categories, measured on a five-point scale, where are reflected three dimensions, and each comprise six elements, as follows:

a) Social development (sociability, aggressiveness, leadership qualities, activism, independence, energy);

b) Emotional development (mood, emotional stability, external appearance, honesty, discipline, acceptance by the teacher);

c) Learning skills (perseverance, concentration, perception, ambition, self-confidence, interest). Each dimension includes the requirement to describe a pattern of behavior characteristic for the child.

The questions we looked for an answer in research were:

1. Do the child's schooling age significantly influence on preparedness and adjustment to primary school?

2. Is there a big functional difference between elder children (born in the first triad of the year) and smallest one (born in the last triad) from the same class?

3. Are there differences in learning abilities of children of the same age but of different genders?

4. Are there differences in children's readiness for learning activity in primary school connected to the parent education?

The qualitative aspect. The qualitative research was attended by 20 parents of children born in last triad of the year and schooled in the past two years. The selected parents have expressed keen interest in cooperation and participation in the interview. The interview for parents includes two parts: a) items with open response and b) items with closed response. First, parents were asked to answer the following questions: What can you say about your experience of entrance to school of children born in last triad of the year? How important is the age as part of the school maturity? If necessary, is a solution the staying of the child in kindergarten during an extra year? What would you recommend to parents of children born in last triad of the year? Later, the parents expressed their opinion on the following functions: cognitive, emotional, social, behavioral; motivation and persistence of children.

Assumptions of experimental approach:

1. There are significant differences between the child's age and degree of emotional development, social development and learning skills. Older children will show a higher level of development than infants of the same class.

2. There are significant differences between girls and boys in their emotional development, social development and learning skills.
3. There are significant differences between girls and boys in their emotional development, social development and learning abilities within groups of small children / older children.
4. There are significant differences between the degree of emotional development, social development and learning abilities of children depending on the education level of parents.

The results of quantitative research

Hypothesis 1. The age differences

We assumed that there are statistically significant differences between older children and children of the same class in terms of emotional, social and learning skills. The results are shown in the Table 2. 2.

The table 2. 2. Age differences in the emotional, social development and learning skills

Variables	Age				Values
	Small children (n=170)		Old children (n=106)		
	M	AS	M	AS	t (274)
Emotional development	1.87	0.482	4.64	0.226	-55.30**
Social development	2.55	0.654	4.66	0.275	-31.65**
Learning abilities	4.78	0.318	4.84	0.275	-1.500

*p<.05, **p<0.01

The presented data shows that there are statistically significant differences between children' age and their emotional development [t (274) = -55.30, p <0.01 **] namely, elder children (M = 4.64, SD = 0.226) are more emotionally developed than small children (M = 1.87, SD = 0.482) in the same class. At the same time, the data show insignificant differences between age and their learning skills [t (274) = -1.500, n.s].

Hypothesis 2. The gender differences.

We assumed that there are statistically significant differences between girls and boys in their emotional development, social development and learning abilities regardless of age. The data obtained are shown in the Table 2. 3.

Table 2. 3. Gender differences in emotional development
social development and learning skills

Variables	Gender				t(274)
	Boys (n=166)		Girls (n=110)		
	M	AS	M	AS	
Emotional development	1.385	2.57	1.364	3.553**	
Social development	3.41	1.235	3.28	1.050	0.892
Learning abilities	4.75	0.325	4.88	0.248	-3.573**

*p<.05, **p<0.01

The results indicate significant differences between boys and girls in their degree of emotional development [t (274) = 3.553, p <0.01 **]. Or boys (M = 3.17, SD = 1.385) are more emotionally developed than girls (M = 2.57, SD = 1.364). The data also show significant differences in learning abilities [t (274) = -3.573, p <0.01 **] girls (M = 4.88, SD = 0.248) demonstrating more advanced skills than boys (M = 4.75, SD = 0.325). Instead, the results show statistically insignificant differences in their social development [t (274) = 0.892, ns].

Hypothesis 3. The gender differences within the groups of small children – old children.

Taking in consideration our interests for children born in first triad of the year and children born in last triad of the year, we realized a deep analysis on the gender differences within the same group. We supposed that there exist significant differences between girls and boys in their emotional development, social development and learning abilities in small groups. The obtained results are shown in the Table 2. 4.

Table 2. 4. The gender differences in the emotional development, social development and learning skills in the group of small children

Variables	Gender				t(168)
	Boys (n=96)		Girls(n=74)		
	M	AS	M	AS	
Emotional development	2.06	0.553	1.63	0.197	6.273**

Social development	2.53	0.843	2.57	0.253	-0.393
Learning abilities	4.74	0.338	4.84	0.281	-2.089*

*p<.05, **p<0.01

The obtained data find the significant differences between genders in the degree of emotional development [t (168) =6.273, p<0.01**]. Boys (M=2.06, SD=0.553) are more emotionally developed in comparison with girls (M=1.63, SD=0.197). In addition, data identifies significant differences in learning abilities [t (168) =-2.089, p<0.05*], girls (M=4.84, SD=0.281) proof more developed abilities in comparison with boys (M=4.74, SD=0.338). Instead, the results show statistically insignificant differences in their social development [t (168) = -0.393, ns].

In this context, we assume that there are statistically significant differences between girls and boys in their emotional development, social development and learning skills of older children in the group. The results are shown in the Table 2. 5.

Table 2. 5. The gender differences in the emotional development, social development and learning skills in the group of elder children

Variables	Gender				104
	Boys (n=70)		Girls (n=36)		
	M	AS	M	AS	
Emotional development	4.70	.220	4.50	.169	4.886**
Social development	4.62	.325	4.75	.085	-2.372*
Learning skills	4.77	.306	4.97	.125	-3.730**

*p<.05, **p<0.01

The obtained data show significant gender differences in the degree of emotional development [t (104) = 4.886, p <0.01 **]. Thus, boys (M = 4.70, SD = 0.220) are more emotional developed than girls (M = 4.50, SD = 0.169). The data also identifies significant differences in social development [t (104) = -2.372, p <0.05 *] boys (M = 4.62, SD = 0.325) are more developed than girls (M = 4.75, SD = 0.085). Moreover, the results indicate significant differences in the development of learning

skills [$t(104) = -3.730, p < 0.01^{**}$] girls ($M = 4.97, SD = 0.125$) show more developed learning skills than boys ($M = 4.77, SD = 0.306$).

Hypothesis 4. The relationship degree of children's readiness - parents' education level

At the next stage we examined the hypothesis that there are differences between the degrees of children adjustment depending on the education level of the parents. The results are shown in the Table 2. 6.

Table 2.6. The relation between adjustment level and level of parents' education

Variables	The level of parents' education						F(2,273)
	Without education (n=68)		Secondary education (n=143)		Higher education (n=65)		
	M	AS	M	AS	M	AS	
Emotional development	2.75	1.238	2.78	1.456	3.36	1.392	4.060*
Social development	3.25	1.225	3.38	1.201	3.44	1.019	0.491
Learning skills	4.80	0.306	4.83	0.307	4.75	0.287	1.333

* $p < .05$, ** $p < 0.01$

The presented data shows significant differences between the education level of parents and the emotional development of children. If the education level of parents is higher, than the degree of emotional development of children is higher ($F(2, 273) = 4.060, p < 0.05^*$). However, there are no significant differences between the education level of parents, social development and learning abilities of children ($F(2, 273) = 0.491, n.s$) ($F(2, 273) = 1.333, n.s$). We can assume that parents with a high level of education considers the emotional development of the child as decisive phase of schooling, granting them a special attention, while cognitive and social problems are left for the subsequent phase.

The results of qualitative research

Interview with parents was focused on the analysis of various aspects of adjustment to school principles: the experience of parents whose children were born in last triad of the year; the role of age as a component of school maturity; grant, if necessity, an additional year of kindergarten for children; recommendations for parents of these children.

The obtained results revealed some unexpected and interesting findings. These findings clearly demonstrate the importance of age in kindergarten-primary school transition as a crucial stage in the child's development and annually progress. Taking into account the key elements (psychological, social, educational) of the whole process of preparing the child as perceived by parents, we can say that the transition has considerable significance for child's development and the formation of his personality, age is a highly important component of school maturity.

Many parents interviewed described their experience regarding the employment of children in primary school as difficult and frustrating. Most parents have indicated a number of special needs related to age of young children as being ignored.

Parents mentioned that the curriculum is more complicated than in previous years, children needing constant guidance in learning tasks. Parents have highlighted individual differences between children and as a result the need for a flexible curriculum suitable for each child. Speaking of granting one more year for kindergarten, more parents considered this action as being a solution. The obtained results revealed the limited capacity of small child to manifest responsibility for the learning experience and communication skills in his new environment which contains significant changes. Among other things, the parents noted their concerns and interests of all changes to both institutional networks: kindergartens and schools.

In Chapter 3, The valorization of psycho pedagogical conditions and methods of kindergarten children's adjustment to primary school, is reflected a double incursion into analyzing the obtained results.

The first incursion is about the identifying features of psycho pedagogical adjustment of children to educational process. There is demonstrated the important role of age as a crucial factor in school success. For small children, age can be considered the reason for presence/absence of cognitive, emotional and social maturity. It stresses that age, as a major factor in adjusting to school, doesn't diminish the role of the environment, social interaction and family status. The obtained results on the importance of age emphasize the idea that school maturity is influenced by biological, psychological, social and pedagogical factors. These results are supported by a number of international researches referring to the importance of children's diagnosis before the beginning of formal studies to facilitate this period both for children and for their families [10, 16].

The analysis of the results on conditions of school adjustment highlights the major role of learning skills. The obtained data of our research identify with multiple studies of international level,

where to cognitive aspect is assigned a key contributing role in predicting school success [11]. At the same time, it specifies that there are other factors that should not be ignored as predictors of school success, as well as the quality of social interactions, family status, environmental quality, which can improve cognitive abilities and level of academic achievement, factors that reduce the gap between age groups in class [7].

The obtained results demonstrate that socio-emotional skills of a child are important for his adjustment to the demands of school, which is necessary in relationships with other children, colleagues, adults in school and in class. In addition, the hypothesis on the importance of social and emotional adjustment, confirmed in research, is supported by previous studies of the other researchers in establishing that preparation for school, in social terms, involves a complex of behavior patterns necessary for individual to adapt to the social environment, or behavior patterns suitable to meet the requirements, and challenges posed by environmental change. Such a way of adjustment is defined as a result of balance and harmony between the child and the environment in order to ensure the survival of the individual in physical and social environment [11].

Moreover, research demonstrates quite contradictory results regarding the gender dimension in relation to the made assumptions. Thus, the assumption that girls would demonstrate a higher level of adjustment than the boys was confirmed only partially. The results of other researchers on the gender gap in school adjustment also are quite contradictory [14].

Parent education level (low, medium, higher) also has a major influence on the adjustment to school, especially the emotional. The results can be interpreted in the context of studies of other authors identified differences between the investigated populations by socio-economic status, ethnicity, parents' income and family background. They were established differences in aspects: social, behavioral, and cognitive [22]. In these cases, support and intervention is needed to ensure success and to reduce the disparity between groups throughout the transition period.

A second incursion refers to the formative experiment to optimize the conditions for adjustment to primary school achieved through the Programme "The school is a chance to succeed."

The experiment was meant to check the connection between the old assumption that the immanent factor of child development and readiness is an indicator of school performance. The intervention program was conducted on several levels and included assistance and advice to parents of young children, certain that only a joint pact between staff kindergarten / school and parents can ensure the success of the child's emotional and social development. The program was implemented

during 10 meetings, of 2.5 hours each containing different educational activities directions, explaining, embodiment, training. Thus, the intervention program was aimed at reducing socio-emotional gap between the two groups of children. In this context, we assumed that:

1. The lack of socio-emotional adjustment can disrupt the functioning of the child in the educational process.
2. A means of reducing socio-emotional gap is to create a safe supportive environment to allow the normal development of the child by recognizing the differences in age and the need to meet the challenges of school.

At the practical level, we plan to develop basic life skills of children by increasing listening skills; to raise awareness of children about the place held among colleagues; to exercise social-emotional skills related to emotional understanding; raising awareness of parents on early childhood needs.

The intervention was conducted on two levels and included:

-The counseling of teachers and parents focused on the ecological approach, which assumes that only a joint pact between kindergarten staff and parents can ensure a successful process. Parents were asked to engage fully in the process of intervention as equal partners; to strengthen the child's self image, to develop a family communication. Meetings with parents were held in the threshold of child's school admission in the presence of the researcher, being systematically coordinated with the school counselor. Activities for the counseling of teachers and parents were implemented as follows: the initial session - at the end of the school year, the final session - during the summer vacation, the last week before the new school year.

-Formation of socio-emotional skills of children focused on facilitating communication, confidence building, encouraging effective networking with colleagues, simulated life situations. Sessions were held with small children in kindergarten, in the last months of the school year At the end of each session the children were engaged in hand made product which can be taken home. This process has helped to motivate the children to come up with enthusiasm in meetings and cooperate with group's colleagues.

The obtained results are shown in the Table 3.1.

Table 3. 1. The differences in social and emotional development of young children before and after the intervention program

Variables	Age				t(53)
	Before (n=170)		After (n=55)		
	M	SD	M	SD	
Emotional development	1.80	0.58	2.17	0.99	-5.10*
Social development	2.47	0.55	2.71	1.11	-6.55*

*p<.05, **p<0.01

The reflected data indicates statistically significant differences both in the emotional ($t(53) = -5.10, p < 0.05$) and in the social development of children ($t(53) = -6.55, p < 0.05$) as a result of the intervention program. Or, analyzing the effects of the intervention program, we highlight positive changes in children's development on the examined parameters.

Based on the reported, there was established a set of recommendations to all those involved in transitional kindergarten-school, in order to promote positive experiences for preschoolers and successfully overcoming the encountered difficulties. The covered recommendations related to: achieving the partnership between stakeholders; child support in carrying; support of friendly relationship between children; childcare during the primary school; achievement of assistance programs; granting, in case of necessity, an additional year of kindergarten.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research concerns one of the most current and complex problems of the educational system - fixing the pedagogical adjustment of children to educational process. For the first time this issue is examined in another perspective, that of identifying particularities and specificities of two preschool age categories: children born in the first triad of the year / children born in the last triad of the year. In this context, the obtained results in the investigation led us to formulate the following conclusions:

1. The research demonstrated that the psycho pedagogical conditions of children' adjustment to primary school acts as a coherent system comprising: *internal conditions*: admission to school age (children born in the first triad of the year / children born in the last triad of the year); social development (sociability, aggressiveness, leadership qualities, activism, independence, energy

child); emotional development (emotional stability, mood, external appearance, honesty, acceptance of the child by the teacher); development of learning skills (perseverance, concentration, perception, ambition, interest, self-confidence of the child) and *external conditions*: parent education level (low, medium, higher); child's support by family (emotional and social dimensions of development, providing support and encourage the child to meet school requirements); family and school climate (psycho-emotional and moral atmosphere in which the child is within the family and school); teacher's competence (ability to communicate and relation with child and family).

2. It has been determined that the age of child greatly influences children's readiness to learn. Our results have shown significant differences between the age groups studied on their socio-emotional development. Children born in the first triad of the year show a significantly higher degree of socio-emotional development than children born in the last triad of the year.

3. The research results have confirmed the presence of gender differences as both at the class level and age group: at class, the boys show a higher degree of emotional development and learning skills than girls; at level of age group: within groups of small children, boys are more developed than girls emotionally and of learning skills; within groups of older children, boys are better than girls developed at all investigated components.

4. It has been demonstrated that the level of parents' education affects children's school adjustment. As higher the education level of parents is, so the degree of emotional development of children is higher. However, there are no significant differences between the education level of parents, social development and learning abilities of children. Parents with a high level of education consider the emotional development of the child as decisive phase for schooling, granting them special attention, while cognitive and social problems are left for the subsequent phase.

5. The results show that educational formative activities approach guidance, explanation, and concretization, used in the formative interventions should be geared towards assisting and advising parents, given the fact that only a joint pact between staff kindergarten / school and parents can ensure successful and harmonious development of a child.

6. It was established that for promotion of positive experiences, in order to overcome successfully the difficulties of the transition period, is increased the role of assistance programs for children (formation of socio-emotional skills of children focused on facilitating of communication, confidence building, encouraging an effective networking with colleagues, simulation of life situations). The importance of teachers, parents and educational institution in this period is crucial, a

decisive role has the achieving of partnership among key players, support and supervision of children during the first classes of primary school, friendly support of relations between children, granted, in case of necessity, an additional year of kindergarten.

7. There was demonstrated the value of research, whose *solved scientific issue* is to establish an effective psycho pedagogical conditions of kindergarten children' adjustment to primary school, having as a result the optimizing of transition, and its application in the educational system of Israel.

The research results allow us to offer a set of *recommendations*:

Recommendations for teachers:

- To stimulate the integration of small children in the classroom;
- To create a family atmosphere, to support interpersonal relationships in the classroom, to be responsive to the needs of the child;
- To organize activities of assistance that allow the child to gradually adapt to the learning process;
- To create an environment of safety and mutual trust between child and school;
- To sustain a close contact with the child's parents.

Recommendations for educators:

- To provide a central role to socio-emotional aspects of small child, focused on behavior and routine classroom activities;
- To make sustained efforts to maintain close contact with the school;
- To create an appropriate atmosphere that of the school, which would lead to subsequent adjustment of the child to the the educational process;
- To pay special attention to educational continuity kindergarten / school and creating a transition program in benefits to the child.

Recommendations for parents:

- To systematically inform about the age peculiarities of children;
- To draw attention to the child's needs during the period of transition;
- To support the development of child's emotional and social dimensions;
- To provide support and encourage each step of the child in order to cope with the demands of the teacher / school;
- To cooperate with teachers and be available for the child, especially in the first days of school;

- To participate actively in school life.

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ADNOTARE

Badarne Zada, *Condiții și metode psihopedagogice ale adaptării copiilor de grădiniță la școala primară în Israel*, teză de doctor în pedagogie, specialitatea 531.01 – Teoria generală a educației, Chișinău - 2016.

Structura tezei. Teza conține introducere, 3 capitole, concluzii generale și recomandări, bibliografie (214 surse), cuvinte-cheie, 130 pagini text de bază. În textul tezei sunt inserate 13 figuri, 36 de tabele și 2 anexe. Rezultatele au fost publicate în 10 lucrări științifice.

Cuvinte cheie: tranziție, condiții psihopedagogice, vîrstă, copil mare (old children), copil mic (young children), adaptare școlară, maturitate școlară, diferențe individuale, diferențe de gen, personalitatea copilului, experiența preșcolară, dezvoltare socială, dezvoltare emoțională, abilități de învățare.

Domeniul de cercetare. Teoria generală a educației. Tranziția grădiniță-școala primară.

Scopul cercetării constă în stabilirea și valorificarea condițiilor psihopedagogice ale adaptării copiilor de grădiniță la școala primară.

Obiectivele cercetării: Analiza abordărilor conceptuale ale tranziției și adaptării școlare. Identificarea condițiilor psihopedagogice ale adaptării școlare. Examinarea condițiilor de adaptare a copiilor la școala primară în funcție de vîrstă, grad de pregătire, sex, nivel de educație a părinților. Stabilirea particularităților psihopedagogice ale adaptării copiilor la școala primară. Evaluarea efectelor de valorificare a condițiilor psihopedagogice adaptative.

Noutatea și originalitatea științifică a cercetării este obiectivată de următoarele: pentru prima dată a fost realizat un studiu teoretico-empiric cu referire la condițiile adaptării copiilor la școala primară în funcție de vîrstă (copii născuți în prima triadă a anului/copii născuți în ultima triadă a anului), grad de pregătire către școală (emoțională, socială, academică), nivel de educație a părinților (inferior, mediu, superior); a fost identificată influența vârstei cronologice asupra gradului de pregătire a copiilor către școala primară: copii născuți în prima triadă a anului manifestă un grad semnificativ mai înalt al dezvoltării socio-emoționale decît copii născuți în ultima triadă a anului; a fost determinat rolul cadrelor didactice, a părinților și a instituției de învățămînt în adaptarea copiilor la școala primară.

Problema științifică soluționată constă în stabilirea condițiilor psihopedagogice eficiente ale adaptării copiilor de grădiniță la școala primară, avînd ca efect optimizarea procesului tranzițional, în vederea aplicării în sistemul educațional din Israel.

Semnificația teoretică a lucrării: rezultatele obținute contribuie la completarea și promovarea cunoașterii științifice privind condițiile de adaptare a copiilor la școala primară; la concretizarea predicției succesului școlar al copiilor la etapa inițială a studiilor formale; la formarea bazei pentru studiile ulterioare referitoare la adaptarea școlară.

Valoarea aplicativă a lucrării constă în: valorificarea condițiilor psihopedagogice ale adaptării copiilor la școala primară în sistemul educațional din Israel; în elaborarea și aplicarea recomandărilor practice pentru educatori, cadre didactice și părinți care contribuie la promovarea experienței pozitive și susținerea copilului în cadrul tranziției grădiniță - școala primară. Programul poate fi folosit de către cadrele didactice, psihologi, educatori din grădinițe și școala primară care răspund nemijlocit de procesul adaptativ al copiilor. Rezultatele cercetării pot fi utile părinților care întâmpină dificultăți în pregătirea copiilor către studiile școlare. Datele experimentale pot fi utilizate ca material didactic în procesul de formare și perfecționare profesională a specialiștilor din domeniu.

Implimentarea rezultatelor științifice a fost realizată la nivel instituțional, în cadrul grădinițelor din sectoarele arabe ale Israelului.

АННОТАЦИЯ

Бадарне Зада, Психологопедагогические условия и методы адаптации детей детского сада к начальной школе, диссертация доктора педагогических наук, специальность 531.01 – Общая Теория Образования, Кишинев, 2016.

Структура диссертации. Диссертация содержит введение, 3 главы, общие выводы и рекомендации, список литературы (214 источников), ключевые слова, 130 страниц основного текста. Текст диссертации содержит 13 рисунков, 36 таблиц и 2 приложения. Результаты были опубликованы в 10 научных работах.

Ключевые слова: переходный период, психологопедагогические условия, возраст, адаптация к школьному обучению, школьная зрелость, индивидуальные различия, гендерные различия, личность ребенка, дошкольный опыт, социально-эмоциональное развитие, навыки обучения.

Области исследования: Общая теория образования. Переход детский сад-начальная школа.

Цель исследования: выявление и разработка психолого-педагогических условий адаптации детей детского сада к начальной школе.

Задачи исследования: анализ концептуальных подходов к исследованию переходного периода детей из детского сада в начальную школу и школьной адаптации в зависимости от возраста ребенка, уровня подготовленности к школе, пола, уровня образованности родителей; выявление психолого-педагогических особенностей адаптации детей к школьному обучению; разработка, внедрение и оценка эффективности программы оптимизации психо-педагогических адаптационных условий.

Научная новизна и оригинальность исследования: впервые проведено теоретико-экспериментальное исследование условий адаптации детей к школьному обучению в зависимости от возраста ребенка (дети, рожденные в первом и последнем квартале года), уровня подготовленности к школе (эмоциональный, социальный, навыки обучения), уровня образованности родителей (начальное, среднее, высшее); выявлено влияние хронологического возраста ребенка на уровень его подготовленности к школьному обучению: дети, рожденные в первом квартале года, имеют более высокий уровень социально-эмоциональной подготовленности к школе, нежели дети, рожденные в последнем квартале года; выявлена роль педагогов, родителей и образовательного учреждения в процессе адаптации детей к начальной школе.

Решенная научная задача состоит в создании психолого-педагогических условий эффективного перехода от детского сада к начальной школе, имеющая как эффект оптимизацию переходного процесса, с целью их применения в системе образования Израиля.

Теоретическая значимость работы состоит в том, что полученные результаты вносят вклад в развитие научных знаний по адаптации детей к начальной школе; в конкретизации возможности предсказания школьного успеха детей на начальном этапе формального обучения; формирование базы для последующих исследований, касающихся адаптации к школе.

Практическая значимость работы заключается в разработке комплекса психолого-педагогических условий адаптации детей к школьному обучению в Израиле; в разработке практических рекомендаций для учителей, воспитателей и родителей, способствующих продвижению положительного опыта и поддержке ребенка в переходный период детский сад - начальная школа.

Внедрение научных результатов осуществлялось на институциональном уровне, в рамках детских садов в арабских секторах Израиля.

ANNOTATON

Badarne Zada, *The psycho pedagogical conditions and methods for kindergarten children's adjustment to elementary school in Israel*, the dissertation of the doctor of pedagogical sciences, specialty 531.01 – General theory of education, Chisinau - 2016.

Structure of the dissertation: the thesis contains an introduction, 3 chapters, general conclusions and recommendations, list of references (214 sources), keywords, 130 pages of the main text. The text of the thesis contains 13 figures, 36 tables and 2 appendices. The results were published in 10 scientific papers.

Keywords: transition, preschool age, school adjustment, school readiness, school maturity, individual differences, learning achievements, personality of the child, preschool experience, socio-emotional learning skills, anxiety, challenge, complexity

The field of the research: General theory of education. Transition from kindergarten to elementary school.

The objectives of the thesis are: Analysis of conceptual approaches of transition and adjustment to school. Identification of pedagogical conditions of adjustment to school. Examination of the conditions of children' adjustment to primary school according to age, degree of readiness, sex, education level of parents. Establish of pedagogical peculiarities of children' adjustment to primary school. Capitalization effects' assessment of pedagogical conditions for adjustment.

Scientific novelty and originality of the research consists in: Theoretical foundation of psycho pedagogical conditions of children' adjustment in primary school; achieving a unique empirical study on the conditions of children' adjustment in primary school by age (children born in the first triad of the year / children born in the last triad of the year); degree of readiness for school (emotional, social, academic); parent education level (low, medium, higher); establishing the influence of chronological age on the readiness of children to school; the establishment and capitalization of psycho pedagogical peculiarities of children' adjustment to primary school; identify gender differences at the level of classroom and age; the development, implementation and evaluation of the Program of optimization the transition process; determining the role of teachers, parents and educational institutions in children' adjustment to primary school.

The solved scientific issue is to establish effective psychopedagogical conditions of kindergarten children's adjustment to elementary school, having as effect the optimizing of the transitional process in order to implement in the educational system in Israel.

The theoretical significance of the research: the obtained results contribute to the development of scientific knowledge related to children's adjustment to elementary school, to prediction of the educational success of children at the initial stage of formal learning; to creation of the base for the future studies for adjustment to school.

The practical significance of the work: elaboration of a set of measures and practical guidelines for teachers, educators and parents that contribute to the promotion of the positive experience and support for the child, as part of the transition kindergarten - elementary school.

The implementation of scientific results was realized at the institutional level, in the framework of kindergartens in the Arab sectors of Israel.

BADARNE ZADA

**THE PSYCHOPEDAGOGICAL CONDITIONS AND METHODS
FOR KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN' S ADJUSTMENT
TO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN ISRAEL**

SPECIALTY 531.01 – GENERAL THEORY OF EDUCATION

Doctoral thesis abstract in pedagogical sciences