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THE ROLE OF FAMILY INSTABILITY AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE CHILD'S COGNITIVE AREA/DEVELOPMENTAL AREA: CHILD AND LANGUAGE

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Abstract:
In the present study, the first and strongest environmental impact on children's developmental effects is presented, which comes from the family context, where children live and are active in the first years of life. In more detail, we focused on the detailed analysis of specific characteristics of parents, such as their socio-economic and educational level, family structure, age, and citizenship of the parents, as well as whether or not they have attended a family support program, characteristics that contribute in the formation of an appropriate or non-family environment and considered by the scientific community to be able to influence the level of a child's cognitive development, and in particular "oral speech", "reading" and "scripture and written expression".

Keywords: school readiness, preschool education, family–neighborhood characteristics

1. Introduction

The extensive literature suggests that the family is the primary framework for the development of preschool children, since children aged 0-6 years, live for a very long time of their lives with the family and even their first basic years (Bronfenbrenner, 1994. Callender, Olson, Choe & Sameroff, 2011. Whittaker et al., 2011). So, by the age of six, the mental and psychic mechanism of the child is formed and at the same time, emotional bonds and interactions are developed between peers and adults, with whom they gradually come in contact and which bonds have duration and intensity (Ball, 1994. Lambert et al., 2002. La Paro et al., 2004. Azzi-Lessing, 2009).

The role that the family plays in the child's life is an interdisciplinary object of study for many researchers, because the family has undertaken and performs in relation to the child, the following functions:

- Satisfaction of basic biological needs, ensuring the physical integrity and health of the child.

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- Ensuring all those elements for building a healthy personality, which will ensure emotional balance and social adjustment.
- Ensuring an environment rich in educational stimuli to activate and utilize all the cognitive abilities of the child.
- Promoting the socialization of the child, by learning all those forms of behavior that are necessary and accepted by society as a whole (Tzani, 1988).

According to the ecological theory of Bronfenbrenner (1994), but also the scientific results of many other researchers (Sameroff et al., 1987. Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 2000. Burchinal et al., 2002. Mistry et al., 2010. Dockett & Perry, 2014. Gourgiotou, 2018. Gourgiotou & Koti, 2016. Koti & Gourgiotou, 2020), the family factor is the strongest environmental influence on the development of young children.

The existence or not of specific characteristics of parents, such as their educational and socio-economic level, contributes to the formation of an appropriate or inappropriate environment that enhances the development of intellect, thinking, memory, and perception of the child (Kalantzi-Azizi & Bezevegkis, 2000).

2. Purpose and research questions of the research

This article explores the consequences of existing socio-economic family risks and their impact on young children's learning development, in the areas of language, literacy, and reading, and factors of school readiness.

The individual research questions (R.Q.) are as follows:

RQ1: What are the main negative socio-economic factors of the families where the child lives and how are they related to each other?

RQ2: How do the negative socio-economic characteristics of the family affect the areas of language, writing, and reading of young children?

3. Theoretical background of the research

The effect of the accumulated factors of instability in the family implies the increase of the cumulative risk index, which measures the number of risk factors in a family, regarding the developmental results of young children.

The term instability is often used in social science research to describe the change or discontinuity of the individual in an experience. The change itself can have both positive and negative consequences, depending on the context in which it occurs, including whether the change is optional, whether it has been planned in advance, and whether the person is moving to ensure better conditions.

The positive development of early childhood is a key feature and foundation for healthy families and healthy communities. When young children grow up with positive early experiences and positive early social and emotional development in healthy families, which provide for a normal family environment, then young children are placed on a positive trajectory for healthy development and a healthy lifestyle, achieving higher

academic results (Smith, 2010). The positive early development of children serves as a predictor of their consistently successful course, which includes their school readiness for kindergarten, their subsequent academic achievements, their graduation from high school, as well as the shielding of their healthy and productive course, as adults.

Consequently, children's social and emotional development is another important aspect of their well-being, especially for children and families facing financial and other challenges (Braveman, Sadegh-Nobari & Egerter, 2008). Children living in poverty and less socio-emotionally developed often face greater challenges in their early development, with obvious negative consequences, such as those highlighted (Crosnoe & Cooper, 2010).

For these reasons, exploring more information about the factors involved in children's early socio-emotional development is an important issue for families with young children, for preschool structures and schools, and for the community at large.

However, through a variety of studies and beyond the placement of each researcher in relation to specific variables of his research, the academic community has come to the conclusion that "*family instability and discontinuity*", with all that it entails, can greatly affect the developmental outcomes of young children (McKernan, Ratcliffe & Vinopal 2009. Mills & Amick 2010. Sandstrom & Huerta, 2013. Koti & Gourgiotou, 2020). Children's first experiences not only shape their developmental course and general behavior and status, but also affect their lifelong health and learning (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2007. Evans, Brooks-Gunn & Klebanov 2011. Shonkoff & Garner 2011). In order for young children to develop to their full potential, they need: safe and stable housing, adequate and nutritious food, adequate access to medical care, safe relationships with the adults who care for them, awareness and appropriate parental care, as well as adequate learning opportunities, high quality, at home, in pre-school and school structures (Sandstrom & Huerta, 2013. Slot, 2017).

Research shows that a large number of children treat the factor of instability in their lives, often referred to by other researchers as "*discontinuity*" (Gourgiotou & Gliaou-Christodoulou, 2016). Researchers from various fields of study, such as developmental psychology, sociology, economics, public order, demography, and family studies, have explored different areas of instability in child support structures, which predict the developmental outcomes of young children (Evans, Brooks-Gunn & Klebanov 1997. 2011. Shonkoff & Garner, 2011).

Through the existing literature, on the effects of instability on children's developmental outcomes and academic achievement, we can synthesize research data into five recognized areas of instability, such as: family income, parental employment, family structure, housing, and school and childcare environments outside the residence.

Examining, in this article, some of them, we can refer, more specifically, to the following:

A. Unstable employment

"Parental instability" is associated with a young child's negative academic performance, such as his or her poor school performance and problem behavior in the school environment. Also, the negative impact on the school performance of children is stronger for children with parents who have reached compulsory education (primary school or high school), while the impact on their educational level is stronger for children from Africa, for the male children of white parents and for the first children of a family. Also, in dual-income households (when both parents have a salary), the loss of the father's job may be more related to the children's academic results than the loss of the mother's job. Finally, according to research findings by Sandstrom & Huerta (2013), "*parental work instability*" leads young children to worse behavioral outcomes than those in which the mother either voluntarily changes jobs or works in low-paying full-time jobs, or has variable working hours.

B. Family weakness

The factor of "*family instability*" is associated with problematic behaviors of family children and with specific academic results, even for preschool children. Thus, according to the scientific view of Sandstrom & Huerta (2013), when in a family structure, many and frequent changes occur, then the problematic behaviors of children will increase further. Also, family transitions - changes that occur early in the life of children, before the age of six (6) years, but also during adolescence, seem to have the strongest effects on the developmental outcomes of children. More analytically, according to the research of Sandstrom & Huerta (2013), on the one hand, the need of young children for constant and continuous contact with their guardians - parents, with whom they can ensure safe living conditions, was confirmed, and on the other hand, the need was highlighted of adolescents for continuous parental support, for the existence of positive role models and roles in their lives, as well as for permanent residence - residence and attendance at their schools. Finally, young children exhibit more negative behaviors when they do not have the emotional and material support of their parents, that is, these basic conditions, among other things, for the smooth management of a family transition - change (Sandstrom & Huerta, 2013).

C. The instability of the residence

Sandstrom & Huerta (2013), through their research, pointed out that in terms of the factor of "*home instability*", children who face it, have worse academic and social results than children who have a stable home. In particular, young children who are forced to move frequently have lower vocabulary skills, behavioral problems, fewer school achievements, higher school dropout rates, and lower educational attainment as adults. Also, elementary school children seem to be more sensitive to changes in residence than preschool children, which has a direct impact on their academic performance. In addition to the various effects of the lack of a stable home, depending on the age of each child, it is also pointed out that "home instability" is associated with the poor social development

of children, in all age groups. Finally, the provided level of quality of the home and neighborhood where young children live may increase the negative impact of the "home instability" factor on young children, as changes in housing lead to changes in their wider environment.

D. The unstable situation outside the family environment: school and local community care

Changes in the structures of preschool education for young children, according to Sandstrom & Huerta (2013), can be frequent, especially when children's parents move or change jobs in order to increase their low family income and improve their marital status. For infants, these frequent changes can lead them to become overly attached to their caregivers and to the manifestation of various problematic behaviors. For preschool children, frequent changes in preschool education structures combined with the absence or possible indifference to developing the skills necessary for their basic schooling education can disrupt their learning continuity and reduce school attendance, and their school readiness.

In conclusion, the scientific community (Evans, Brooks-Gunn & Klebanov 1997; 2011; Shonkoff & Garner, 2011; Sandstrom & Huerta, 2013; Koti & Gourgiotou, 2022) emphasizes that the family, social and economic situation (SES) of parents can affect the child's experiences at home, but also the quality of his contacts and interactions with other contexts, such as that of preschool education.

4. The sample and the method

The sample of the present research comes from the population of preschool students who attend 4 different kindergartens of the Directorate of Primary Education of the North Aegean of the prefecture of Samos (69 students) and in 27 kindergartens of the seven (7) Directorates of Primary Education of the prefecture of Attika (676 students).

So, the total sample is 765 students. These are children aged 5-6 years, infants.

For the evaluation of the language culture related to the specific cognitive areas: "oral speech", "reading" and "scripture and written expression", of the children of the research sample, the Scale of Criteria based on the alternative evaluation based on the curriculum (curriculum-based-assessment rating rubric) entitled: "The Readiness of Infants for Primary School" (Gourgiotou & Klotsotiras, 2018) and was completed by the kindergarten teachers in collaboration with the researcher.

The cognitive area/development area "child and language" was examined, through a set of 27 questions, with 9 separate questions for the cognitive area, "oral speech", with 12 additional questions for the cognitive area, "reading" and with 6 more specific questions for the cognitive area "scripture and written expression", and the average values obtained for each cognitive area/development area were used.

The SPSS 20 program was used for the statistical processing of the survey data, Cronbach's alpha internal reliability index was calculated and the following statistical

techniques were used: Single Input Frequency Tables for describing variables and Relevance Tables (dual input frequency tables) for the search correlations between variables. Two variables are defined as independent when knowledge of one variable does not affect the value of the other. Alternative hypotheses can therefore be formulated: H0 (null hypothesis), the variables are independent, and H1 (alternative hypothesis) are not independent. The above hypotheses are tested with the Pearson Chi-Square Test (x2 test). The test is performed by comparing a predetermined level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$) with the significance resulting from the test.

5. The data

Subsequently, the demographics of the parents participating in the research are presented and the data obtained from their answers are analyzed (questions 1-10).

Table 1: Number of persons (N) and percentages (N%) of the categories of variables

	N	N %
Age		
5 years old	243	31,76
6 years old	522	68,24
Sex		
Boy	395	51,63
Girl	370	48,37
Marital status		
Married	613	80,13
Unmarried	5	,65
Divorced	65	8,50
Widower	1	,13
Separated	77	10,07
By cohabitation agreement	4	,52
Profession of mother		
State employee	162	21,18
Private employee	311	40,65
Worker	37	4,84
Freelancer	65	8,50
Unemployed	190	24,84
Education of mother		
Compulsory education	77	10,09
High school	304	39,84
Tertiary education (TEI – AEI)	233	30,54
Master's degree	107	14,02
PhD	11	1,44
2nd Degree	31	4,06
Profession of father		
State employee	138	18,04
Private employee	386	50,46

Worker	56	7,32
Freelancer self-employed	158	20,65
Unemployed	27	3,53
Education of father		
Compulsory education	87	11,37
High school	304	39,74
Tertiary education (TEI – AEI)	241	31,50
Master's degree	93	12,16
Phd	26	3,40
2nd Degree	14	1,83
Family income		
0-12.000 euros	189	24,71
12.000-15.000 euros	137	17,91
15.000-20.000 euros	142	18,56
20.000-28.000 euros	161	21,05
28.000-35.000 euros	92	12,03
35.000-40.000 euros	29	3,79
40.000-50.000 euros	7	,92
50.000+ euros	8	1,05
Citizenship		
Greek	677	88,50
Other	88	11,50
Monitoring family support programmes		
No	738	96,47
Yes	27	3,53

According to the table above (Table 1), most of the children participating in the research are 6 years old. The citizenship of the vast majority of children attending the kindergartens under investigation is Greek. In terms of the gender of children, boys are slightly smaller than girls. The vast majority of the parents of the children who took part in the survey have the following characteristics: they are married, private employees, high school graduates, with an annual income of up to 12,000 euros, and have not attended family support programs.

Table 2 presents the overall results of the evaluation of each language culture development area: "oral speech", "reading" and "scripture and written expression", of the children in the sample.

Table 2: Number of individuals (N), mean (MT), and standard deviation (TA) of the individual cognitive areas/areas of child development

	N	**MT**	**TA**
Set of oral speech	765	2,65	,523
Reading set	765	2,57	,498
Set of scripture and written expression	765	2,64	,4218
Overall assessment of the language	765	2,62	,449

The answers for each of the individual cognitive areas/areas of child development are being above 2.5, so all mean values are between "partially" and "Yes". Therefore, the development/progress of children in almost all cognitive areas is evaluated from "rather positive" to "positive". The highest average value refers to the "set of oral speech" and the "set of scripture and written expression".

It is reminded that in each of the questions there are three options (1 = not yet, 2 = in part, 3 = yes). The score of each field (cognitive area) is the average value of the questions that make it up. The higher the score, the more positively the child's development/progress is evaluated in the specific area.

Below, the correlations will be made between the basic socio-economic characteristics of the child's family, with the cognitive areas/areas of language development: "oral speech", "reading" and "scripture and written expression" that assess the development of children in the specific cognitive areas.

According to Table 3, statistically significant differences in parental citizenship exist in all cognitive areas/areas of language development: "oral speech", "reading" and "scripture and written expression", (the corresponding levels of importance p are less than 0.05). In all the above cases the average value corresponding to the parents with Greek citizenship is higher than that corresponding to the parents with another citizenship. Therefore, children with parents who have Greek citizenship, are significantly superior in the cognitive area of the language, compared to children whose parents have another citizenship.

Table 3: Number of persons (N), mean (MT), standard deviation (TA), value of statistical t, degrees of freedom (df), and level of significance (p) of all scales of the individual cognitive areas/areas of development of children related to the nationality of the parents

	Citizenship	**N**	**MT**	**TA**	**t**	**Df**	**P**
Set of oral speech	Greek	677	2,71	,470	9,583	763	,000
	Other	88	2,17	,653			
Reading set	Greek	677	2,61	,477	6,632	763	,000
	Other	88	2,24	,542			
Set of scripture and written expression	Greek	677	2,681	,4068	7,106	763	,000
	Other	88	2,352	,4239			
Overall assessment of the language	Greek	677	2,67	,419	8,423	763	,000
	Other	88	2,26	,507			

According to Table 4, statistically significant differences in the marital status of parents exist in all cognitive areas/areas of language development: "oral speech", "reading" and "written and written" (the corresponding levels of importance p are less than 0.05). In all the above cases, the average value corresponding to the parents with a partner is higher than that corresponding to the parents without a partner. Therefore, the children of parents with a partner are significantly superior in these areas of development compared to the children of parents without a partner.

Table 4: Number of persons (N), mean (MT), standard deviation (TA), value of the statistic t, degrees of freedom (df) and level of significance (p) of all scales of the individual cognitive areas / areas of development of children related to marital status

	Marital status	**N**	**MT**	**TA**	**t**	**Df**	**P**
Set of oral speech	With a partner	618	2,68	,499	3,407	763	,001
	No partner-Single	147	2,52	,596			
Reading set	With a partner	618	2,59	,502	2,543	763	,011
	No partner-Single	147	2,47	,474			
Set of scripture and written expression	With a partner	618	2,670	,4215	3,530	763	,000
	No partner-Single	147	2,534	,4064			
Overall assessment of the language	With a partner	618	2,65	,446	3,371	763	,001
	No partner-Single	147	2,51	,444			

From the table above, it appears that there are statistically significant differences between the mean values of the cognitive areas/areas of language development: "oral speech", "reading" and "scripture and written expression" of children, due to the mother's profession (all the corresponding significance levels are less than 0.05).

The same table also shows, in general, that the best performance in the cognitive area/ language development area is shown by students whose mothers are civil servants or private employees and freelancers, since they show the highest average values, while the worst performance is recorded by students whose mothers are working or unemployed, since the lowest average values were recorded for this category.

Table 5: Number of persons (N), mean (MT), standard deviation (TA), value of the statistic F, degrees of freedom (df), and level of importance (p) of the subscales and the overall assessment for the Language corresponding to the mother's profession

		N	**MT**	**TA**	**F**	**df**	**P**
Set of oral speech	State employee	162	2,78	,418	20,604	4, 760	,000
	Private employee	311	2,73	,449			
	Worker	37	2,12	,687			
	Freelancer	65	2,71	,561			
	Unemployed	190	2,48	,567			
Reading set	State employee	162	2,69	,392	12,947	4, 760	,000
	Private employee	311	2,61	,466			
	Worker	37	2,20	,554			
	Freelancer	65	2,63	,533			
	Unemployed	190	2,43	,545			
Set of scripture and written expression	State employee	162	2,723	,3535	10,777	4, 760	,000
	Private employee	311	2,671	,4176			
	Worker	37	2,329	,3737			
	Freelancer	65	2,756	,3910			
	Unemployed	190	2,554	,4580			
Overall assessment of the language	State employee	162	2,73	,357	16,818	4, 760	,000
	Private employee	311	2,67	,412			
	Worker	37	2,22	,491			
	Freelancer	65	2,70	,473			

	Unemployed	190	2,49	,489			

From the above table (Table 6), it appears that there are statistically significant differences between the mean values of all cognitive areas/areas of language development: "oral speech", "reading" and "scripture and written expression" of children due to educational mother level, since all corresponding significance levels are less than 0.05. Also, from table 6, it appears, in general, that the best performance is shown by the students whose mothers have a university degree or a postgraduate degree (they show the highest average values), while the worst performance is shown by the students whose mothers are graduates of compulsory education (they show the lowest average values). Students whose mothers have high school diplomas show intermediate performance. Where there are significant differences, the corresponding diagrams of their average values are presented.

Table 6: Number of persons (N), mean (MT), standard deviation (SD), value of the statistic F, degrees of freedom (df) and level of significance (p) of the subscales and the overall assessment for the language corresponding to the educational mother's level

		N	**MT**	**TA**	**F**	**Df**	**P**
Set of oral speech	Mandatory education	79	2,20	,610	69,156	3 . 761	,000
	High school	304	2,48	,570			
	Tertiary education (TEI – AEI)	264	2,82	,366			
	Master's degree, PhD	118	2,97	,112			
Reading set	Mandatory education	79	2,24	,490	73,706	3 . 761	,000
	High school	304	2,37	,533			
	Tertiary education (TEI – AEI)	264	2,73	,388			
	Master's degree, PhD	118	2,93	,146			
Set of scripture and written expression	Mandatory education	79	2,395	,3887	59,316	3 . 761	,000
	High school	304	2,490	,4456			
	Tertiary education (TEI – AEI)	264	2,768	,3620			
	Master's degree, PhD	118	2,928	,1790			
Overall assessment of the language	Mandatory education	79	2,28	,452	79,879	3 . 761	,000
	High school	304	2,45	,474			
	Tertiary education (TEI – AEI)	264	2,77	,345			
	Master's degree, PhD	118	2,94	,119			

From the above table (Table, 7), it appears that there are statistically significant differences between the mean values of all cognitive areas/areas of language development: "oral speech", "reading" and "scripture and written expression" of children due to family income, since all corresponding levels of importance are less than 0.05. Even from table 7, it seems, in general, that the best performance is shown by students whose parents have a high annual family income in thousands of euros, i.e., 35 thousand euros and above (show the highest average values), while the worst performing students whose parents have a very low family income, i.e. 0 to 12 thousand euros (show the lowest average values).

Table 7: Number of subjects(N), mean (MT), standard deviation (SD), F-statistic value, degrees of freedom (df) and level of significance (p) of the subscales and total score for Language corresponding to the family income

		N	MT	TA	F	Df	P
Set of oral speech	0-12.000	189	2,33	,621	24,517	5,759	,000
	12.000-15.000	137	2,64	,503			
	15.000-20.000	142	2,77	,420			
	20.000-28.000	161	2,72	,486			
	28.000-35.000	92	2,84	,320			
	35.000+	44	2,95	,130			
Reading set	0-12.000	189	2,32	,550	17,718	5,759	,000
	12.000-15.000	137	2,53	,479			
	15.000-20.000	142	2,65	,419			
	20.000-28.000	161	2,62	,519			
	28.000-35.000	92	2,76	,350			
	35.000+	44	2,86	,254			
Set of scripture and written expression	0-12.000	189	2,429	,4616	17,519	5,759	,000
	12.000-15.000	137	2,669	,3705			
	15.000-20.000	142	2,707	,3660			
	20.000-28.000	161	2,668	,4716			
	28.000-35.000	92	2,793	,2677			
	35.000+	44	2,883	,2233			
Overall assessment of the language	0-12.000	189	2,36	,499	23,121	5,759	,000
	12.000-15.000	137	2,61	,418			
	15.000-20.000	142	2,71	,372			
	20.000-28.000	161	2,67	,466			
	28.000-35.000	92	2,79	,279			
	35.000+	44	2,90	,189			

6. Discussion – Conclusions

As already mentioned, the main objective of the present study was to investigate the effect of family instability on specific cognitive areas/areas of language development, of preschool children ("oral speech", "reading" and "scripture and written expression"). More specifically, it was investigated how basic socio-economic characteristics of a child's family affect the specific cognitive areas/areas of development, so that through these results would be submitted some suggestions for further reflection for the development and strengthening of specific cognitive areas of toddlers.

Based on the quantitative analysis of the personal data of the interviewed parents, most of the children are six (6) years old. This can be attributed to the fact that the children enrolled in kindergartens are aged from four (4) to six (6) years, now mandatory, by law (article 33 of law 4521/2018 - law of two-year preschool education /Government Gazette 38 τ.Α').

In terms of the gender of children, boys have a slightly higher percentage than girls. Regarding marital status, it appears that a significant percentage (18.70%) of the

parents of young children are divorced or separated, that is, two out of ten parents do not live in the same house with their child. This percentage shows that the institution of the family is in crisis, a fact that negatively affects the psychosynthesis and course of young children. As mentioned by many researchers, the family is the primary stage of a child's experiences and is inextricably linked to the neighborhood, that is, to the environment of the interaction of a child's creative expression and search for experiences (Germanou, Papadimitriou, 2011:27. Hofferth, 2006) connects the family with biological and non-biological parents, married and unmarried parents and with the behavioral problems of children aged 3-12. Children from all of the above family types, except those with married biological parents, had significant behavioral problems, as confirmed by Hofferth's research. Regarding the profession of mothers, we see that a rather large percentage (24.84%) of unemployed mothers is recorded, in relation to the percentage of unemployed fathers, which amounts to only 3.53%. These figures are related to the more widely accepted fact of the increased demands and the multiple roles that a mother has and which greatly influences women in the field of finding work, significantly increasing the unemployment rate in women and her removal from the family (Chandola & Coleman, 1999: 323).

Regarding the mother's education, the survey data showed that 49.93% of the surveyed mothers answered that they have a degree from a primary and secondary school. Comparing this result with that for the father's education, we see about the same percentage, 51.11%.

Finally, the vast majority of parents are married, private employees, high school graduates, aged 33-44, with an annual income of up to 12,000 euros, and have not attended family support programs.

Examining those elements that contributed to the formation/development of children in kindergarten in each of the cognitive areas/areas of development (see Table 2), we observe that the highest average value relates to the total oral speech and the total writing and written expression. These results demonstrate the crucial importance of writing and speaking for the development of the young child. From the above data, it is understood that there is an identification of the views of the majority of research subjects with the scientific community which states that: ensuring proper education and training of children by the family, is increasingly considered an important first step for future educational development and their comprehensive development (McDonald Hooks et al., 2006. Mahony & Hayes, 2006. Sheridan, 2007. Leach et al., 2008. Campbell et al., 2008. Kakana & Simouli, 2008. Azzi - Lessing, 2009. Morrissey, 2010. Gourgiotou & Gliaou, 2016. Gourgiotou & Koti, 2016).

Also of particular interest are the findings from the correlations between all the individual cognitive areas/areas of children's development, for the language, that is, the overall assessment of: "oral speech", "reading" and "scripture and written expression" with the risk characteristics of the family.

Regarding the correlation of the overall language assessment, "oral speech", "reading" and "scripture and written expression" of children with the nationality of the

parents (see table 3) the results of our research showed that children with parents with Greek citizenship, are significantly superior in speaking, reading, and writing to children whose parents have other nationalities, results that are confirmed by many other researchers (Lloyd & Hertzman, 2010. Vaden-Kiernan et al., 2010. Leventhaland Shuey, 2014. Koti & Gourgiotou, 2020). Anita Minh and her colleagues (2017), according to their research findings, report that young children living in neighborhoods with lower concentrations of ethnic, immigrant, and linguistic minorities have positive developmental and educational outcomes.

Regarding the correlation of the overall language assessment, the children's "oral speech", "reading" and "scripture and written expression" with the marital status (see Table 4), equally important findings emerged, which indicate that children with parents living with a partner are significantly superior to children without a partner in language, writing, reading and expression. In addition, studies confirming the above findings have described that children of unmarried mothers (i.e., when the biological father is absent) achieve lower grades in their studies than those of married mothers (Mistry et al., 2010). Also, Astone & McLanahan (1991:318), confirm the above research position, since they themselves found through their own research, that the parents of single parents or adopted children have lower educational expectations, negatively affecting the school performance of their children.

Examining those elements of our research that correlate the overall assessment of language, "oral speech", "reading" and "scripture and written expression" of children with the variable "mother occupation" (see Table 5), we find that the profession of the mother, is positively related to the development of language, "oral speech", "reading" and "scripture and written expression" of these children. Better-educated mothers provide more books for their children and have better reading skills, which allow them to stimulate children's early reading, which in turn aims to improve children's literacy skills (Johnson et al., 2008. Koti & Gourgiotou, 2020).

From the correlation of the overall assessment of the language, "oral speech", "reading" and "scripture and written expression" of the children with the variable "educational level of the mother" (see table 6), it appeared from our research that in general, the best performance, recording the highest average values, show the students whose mothers are civil servants or private employees and freelancers, while the worst performance, noting the lowest average values, show the students whose mothers are working or unemployed. The educational level of parents is another strong predictive indicator of children's literacy skills and their socio-emotional development (Walker et al., 2011. Koti & Gourgiotou, 2020). When parents are more educated, children usually exhibit a higher level of development in certain cognitive areas, such as "oral speech", "reading" and "scripture and written expression".

The correlation of the children's overall language assessment with "family income" (see Table 7), showed that the students of our sample show the best performance, when their parents had a high annual family income of over 35 thousand euros (show the highest average values), while the worst performance was noted by students whose

parents had a very low family income, i.e. 0-12.000 euros (show the lowest average). These results confirm the conclusions of previous surveys that highlight the income of households as the main indicator of the socioeconomic level of the family and as one of the most important factors in the context of family life (Koti & Gourgiotou, 2020). In addition, recent studies have shown that children living in poverty and whose family is supported by a family support program, often face multiple socio-demographic risks and that the accumulation of risk factors hinders their learning (Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 2000. Koti & Gourgiotou, 2020).

So far, various research data (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005. Levac et al., 2010. Anita Minh, et al., 2017), on the one hand, point out the important, direct, influence of the child's family on his developmental course and on the other hand provide ground for further research analysis of specific variables, by examining the degree of their impact on the comprehensive development of the preschool child.

In conclusion, taking into account the results of the present study regarding the risk characteristics of the family and how they affect the development and progress of the children living in them, is emphasized the need for further, modern and systematic research on how to improve basic social benefits of each family. Targeted interventions by competent bodies, regarding parent training programs, the creation of social structures for the care of single-parent families, and the integration of families with other citizens in the neighborhoods, will contribute more effectively to the comprehensive development of children.

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