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Duygusal Bilgi: Okul Öncesinde Farklı Yaş Gruplarının Duyguları Tanımlaması Üzerine Bir Durum Çalışması

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Özet

Okul öncesi dönemde çocukları duyguyu tanımlarını ortaya koymak amacıyla yapılan araştırmada Farkas ve Vallotton (2012) tarafından geliştirilen "Duygu Durumları Tanımlama Testi" kullanılmıştır. Duygu durumlarını içeren kısa hikayeler ve resimlerden oluşan testin geçerlik ve güvenilirliği yapıldıktan sonra anaokulunda 3, 4 ve 5 yaşında 50 çocuğa uygulanmıştır. Mutluluk, üzüntü, korku, gurur duyma ve utanma duygularını içeren kısa hikayeler çocuğa okunması ve soru sorulması ile her çocuk için ortalama 15 dakika video kaydı alınmıştır. Duyguyu tanıma ve duyguyu tanımadaki yaş ve cinsiyet farklılıklarına bakılan araştırmada, çocukların %20'sinin duyguyu doğru tanıyabildiği belirlenmiştir. Duyguyu tanımadaki yaşa göre artan ortalama olmasına rağmen anlamlı bir farklılık görülmemiştir. Cinsiyet yönünden de anlamlı fark görülmemeyen araştırma sonucunda erkeklerin en fazla mutluluk, kızların ise üzüntü duygusunu tanıdığı, her iki cinsiyetin de gurur duygusunu tanıyamadığı görülmüştür. Bulgular bütün olarak değerlendirildiğinde, duygu bilgisinin okul öncesi dönemde desteklenmesinin gerekliliği ortaya çıkmaktadır. Araştırma sonuçları, ilgili literatür üzerinden tartışılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Anaokulu
Duygusal bilgi
Duygusal gelişim
Erken çocukluk eğitimi

Emotional Knowledge: A Case Study on Recognition of Emotions by Different Age Groups in Preschool

Abstract

In this research that was carried out on the identification of emotions by preschool children, the "Emotional States Identification Test" developed by Farkas and Vallotton (2012) was used. The test, consisting of pictures and short stories related to different emotions, was performed with 3, 4, and 5 year old 50 preschool children, after establishing its

Keywords

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Emotion development
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validity and reliability. Each child was video recorded for approximately 15 minutes, while some short stories with happiness, sadness, fear, anger, pride, and shame were read to them and some questions asked. It was observed that only 20% of the children could recognize emotions correctly in the research, in which age and gender differences were studied in the recognition and identification of emotions. Although there was an increasing average in recognizing emotions as age increased, no substantive differences were observed. It was recorded that male children recognized happiness and female children recognized sadness the most easily; but none of them could recognize pride in the research results, for which no substantial difference was recorded regarding gender. Upon evaluation of the findings, the necessity to support emotional knowledge in preschool is clear. Research results are discussed through the related body of literature.

INTRODUCTION

The preschool period is regarded as a critical period in terms of children's development of healthy personality structure and the ability to form positive interactions with their surroundings. In this period, children extend their emotional development by acquiring the skills of expressing and controlling emotions. In other words, children learn about their egos and which skills they should have to compete with their peers in these years (Kandır & Alpan, 2008). For this reason, emotional development should be paid attention to just as much as physical and cognitive development in early childhood education (Güven & Azkeskin, 2014).

Children with developed emotions were observed to be more curious and motivated individuals than their peers. Previous research shows that a substantial amount of children's behaviors is acquired in these years, forming the basis for future character structure, behaviors, habits, and belief and value judgments (Kandır & Alpan, 2008). Considering that emotional development, which is influential throughout an individual's life, is correlated with the maturing and learning processes (Kandır & Alpan, 2008), these processes should be interpreted and evaluated well. In this respect, emotional development stages must be interpreted and evaluated.

Children up to 36 months are seen to express their emotions such as happiness, fear, sadness, shame and guilt, mainly by focusing on their needs. As to the process between 36 months and 8 years old, children should recognize and identify the emotions they show; associate their behaviors with emotions; and develop themselves in recognizing other people's emotions (Senemoğlu, 1994; Kandır & Alpan 2008; Tok, 2014; Gordon & Browne, 2015). In the preschool period, the emotions that stand out are empathy, fear, anger, and shame.

Despite the view that children are egocentric, they acquire the skill to understand others' emotions and act accordingly in this period (Senemoğlu, 1994; Gordon & Browne, 2015). In preschool years children begin to understand the emotions of peers in their social surroundings and among third parties around them (Shields et al., 2001). As emotion recognition skill acts as the basis for the skill of understanding the emotions of a third person

(Shields et al., 2001), how children recognize their emotions through their peers' emotions was evaluated in this research.

In this period in which the emotion of empathy develops, the evidence is that the emotion of fear also develops in many aspects as well. Children may develop fears in consequence of some unpleasant experiences, such as loud sounds, sudden speeds, imaginary creatures, darkness, etc. (Yavuzer, 2012). Another accentuated emotion, anger, may show up when the child cannot fulfill his/her wishes and is seen as in a state of sadness as it loses its effect (Yavuzer, 2012). For children to develop empathy, they should be introduced to various experiences, and assisted from their early years in understanding how different people may have different emotions and how to tolerate and appreciate these different emotions (Gordon & Browne, 2015).

Children who are disturbed emotionally and socially tend to be furious and angry. When the disturbance is caused by punishment or ridicule, the result is the feeling of shame. On the other hand, when children are supported to act independently and to be a self-ordained individual, they acquire the feeling of pride as a consequence of their success (Erdiller, 2014; Bredekamp, 2015). The feelings of happiness, sadness, anger, fear, pride, and shame are acquired by children as a result of various experiences. The research is substantive in terms of demonstrating the levels of children's acquisition of emotions. The evaluation also points to the direction of children's experiences.

It is important to form a reliable, consistent relationship with children based on love and tolerance, in order to help them control their negative feelings in preschool, form a healthy emotional development basis, and provide them with settings from which they can learn (Senemoğlu 1994; Gülçin ve Azkeskin, 2014; Kandır & Alpan, 2008; Gordon & Browne, 2015). The particular emotion which should be given to children is love. Children who are surrounded by the feeling of love develop feelings of trust and self-respect. Self-control of emotions is another factor children should be supported in acquiring. It is necessary to talk about children's emotions in order for them to familiarize themselves with their emotions, to change their focus of interest when they are faced with a negative feeling, and to bring the positive feelings of the children who are hasty about something they want, into the forefront when they are waiting (Şahin, 2014; Gordon & Browne, 2015).

To act in a persistent and strict manner with extremely angry children may cause them to develop apprehension of high expectations and negative emotional gains. In a healthy emotional environment, love and trust should rise to prominence (Yavuzer, 2012). In order to be able to create environments in which positive feelings stand out, monitoring children's verbal and physical expressions helps to facilitate the support and evaluation of children (Senemoğlu, 1994). Providing a game setting is another supportive factor. Playing games is an important resource which ensures children both express their emotions and turn towards positive emotions (Şen, 2014).

Children go through the significant information gathering process about social skills behaviors, behavior regulation, and coping with emotions by getting into emotional communication and observing peers' emotions. Acquiring early emotional sensitivity in social learning settings can be crucial for future academic success (Shields et al., 2001). In this context, teachers shoulder important responsibilities. Children who are cared for and valued by their teacher gain a positive sense of self and develop a sense of self competence. Teachers should set up learning environments to create positive feelings. They should enable children

to express their emotions through drawing, coloring, or different channels. Teachers should plan activities such as music, drama, and physical activities in the preschool education program in a way in which children can be self-confident and have satisfactory feelings. Here it is important for teachers to know their students and how they can express their emotions. It is beyond doubt that in this period one of the most effective ways to know children is through games. Observation of children's emotional gains through games is the easiest way for the teacher (Senemoğlu, 1994; Gordon; & Browne, 2015).

To sum up, when the preschool period is evaluated regarding supporting children's healthy developmental acquisition of emotions, as in other zones of development it occupies an important position as a critical period (Kandır & Alpan, 2008). In this period, children begin to reinforce and gain basic emotional competencies (Shields et al., 2001). Children who cannot notice, explain, and share their emotions have difficulties in understanding both their own and others' emotions and they have such problems in their life. These children are observed to develop diffident, dependent, uncollaborated, incompatible personality structure in terms of identity achievement.

The identification of which particular emotions children can recognize and which emotions they have difficulties with is an important indicator of the teachers' support (Gordon & Browne, 2015). The fact that there is no research based in Turkey that has been found to regard the recognition of emotions in preschool in the review of the related body of literature, reveals the need for research on this subject. Preschool teachers should know and support children's emotion recognition stages. The primary focus of this research is to present which of the six basic emotions children can recognize and which of them they cannot, based on age and gender factors. In this context, emotion recognition is defined as a self-identification of emotions through the evaluation of peers' emotions (Shields et al., 2001). The evaluation of the effectiveness of preschool education programs which aim to support the emotional development is another important factor.

Objectives of the Research

The main objective of the research was the identification of children's emotion recognition states which took place when they were presented with short stories.

The sub- aims which were determined in line with the main aim are as follows:

- How accurate are the levels of preschool children's emotion recognition states?
- Is there a meaningful difference based on the gender of preschool children's emotion recognition states?
- Is there a meaningful difference based on the age of preschool children's emotion recognition states?

Method

Information regarding the research model, population and sample, data collection tools, and data analysis are presented in this section.

Research model

The sub-aims specified in line with the main objective are to determine the accuracy levels of emotion recognition states of 3, 4, and 5 year old children who are in a preschool educational institution, and to detect any meaningful correlations or differences regarding the gender and ages of children with emotion recognition states. In this regard, the research

is survey research, which is one of the descriptive research models. Survey research is a research approach which aims to represent a past or present case as it is (Karasar, 2002).

Study Group

This research was carried out with 3, 4, and 5 year old children who were in a preschool educational institution in the 2014-2015 academic year. There were two study groups in the research. Validity and reliability studies were carried out with the data obtained from the first study group. The findings were composed with the answers of children who were in the second study group.

To determine the validity and reliability of the data collection tool, the intuitions of 33 children in the preschool educational institution were consulted. 39.4 % of the children were male (n:13) and 60.6% of the children were female (n:20). 27, 3% of the children (n=9) were 3 years old, 48,5 % (n=16) were 4 years old, and 24,2% (n=8) were 5 years old.

The second study group of the research consists of 50 children who were in 3-5 age groups. 64,0% of the children (n=32) were male, and 36,0% (n=18) were female. 40,0% of the children (n=20) were 3 years old, 34,0% (n=17) were 4 years old and 26,0% (n=13) were 5 years old.

Collection of Data

Developed by Vallotton (2008), the "Emotion States Identification Test" was adapted to detect how correctly preschool children could recognize their emotions within the scope of this research. The test consists of two sections: a short story and coding questions. Different short stories aimed at *happiness, sadness, fear, pride, anger* and *shame* were created for female and male children, in order to identify their emotions, and two questions were prepared for each story. Story cards were distinctive for male and female children, with a boy character picture on the card for male children and a girl character picture for female children.

A translation group was formed for the translation of the test into Turkish. The stories and questions were translated into Turkish, and then translated into English again, when the initial mistakes were corrected. Three language professionals' opinions were taken on the translations. The corrections on which the language professionals agreed were made. Three preschool education professors' opinions were taken in order to detect the suitability of the short stories and questions for preschool children. Short stories and questions were revised in line with the opinions of the professionals. The professionals opined that the pictures prepared for the second questions of short stories may cause distraction and digression from the story, especially for younger children. Accordingly, three preschool children, one from each age group, were tested. These children were observed to answer the first emotion-oriented questions properly, but after the pictures were shown, they were not able to focus on the questions, and they asked irrelevant questions about the picture. For this reason, it was determined that only stories and the first questions would be on the test.

In summary, six stories (with different headings for male and female children) and six items were used in the Emotion States Identification Test after the translation and proofreading were completed. The draft test was carried out with 33 3-5 year old children in a preschool educational institution. The children's answers were video-recorded. The children received one point when they recognized an emotion state in a story correctly; and no points when they could not recognize the emotion or did not answer the question. The

video recordings were presented to another professional for investigation of the appropriateness of scoring. Item and test statistics of the test with six question items were calculated in the validity- reliability study in line with the answers of the 33 children.

Item discrimination and difficulty indexes calculated within the validity/reliability study of the Emotion States Identification Test are shown in Table 1.

Table1. Item analyses of the Emotional States Test

Items	Item difficulty index	Item discrimination index
Happiness	0,36	0,68
Sadness	0,42	0,78
Anger	0,28	0,71
Fear	0,23	0,66
Pride	0,04	0,30
Shame	0,05	0,44

Upon the analysis of the data shown in Table 1, it was detected that the children who attended to the pre-implementation, correctly identified sadness the most ($p_{ij}=0,42$) and pride the least ($p_{ij}=0,04$). The questions related to the stories created for the identification of all emotion states were determined to be medium to highly distinctive. Test statistics were calculated after the detection of the high discrimination level of the items. In accordance with the children’s answers, KR-20 reliability coefficient was calculated as 0.677. Kalaycı (2009) stated that a reliability coefficient calculated higher than 0.60 points indicates reliable results. The average difficulty index of the test was identified as 0.23. With another expression, children could identify 23% of the emotions correctly. The average discrimination index was calculated at 0.60. The test was found to be quite effective in identifying children who could recognize the emotions correctly.

Analysis of the Data

Descriptive statistics (number of people, minimum, medium, maximum, standard deviation) of the data obtained in the study were calculated first. Then frequency and percent values were calculated for each emotion state. To detect if there were any meaningful correlations or differences between genders in and among age groups in emotion states detecting levels, the Mann Whitney U test, the Kruskall Wallis test, and chi-squared distribution statistics were calculated.

Findings

Findings gathered in accordance with the sub-aims of the research are presented in this section.

1. How Correctly Can Preschool Children Recognize Emotions?

In order to detect how accurately preschool children can recognize emotions with reference to stories, descriptive statistics were calculated and results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics calculated regarding the emotion recognition states of preschool age children

Test	Number of items	N	Lowest	Highest	\bar{X}	SS
Emotion Recognition	6	50	0,00	4,00	1,20	1,31

When the data in Table 2 is viewed, it can be seen that the preschool children whose views were received were not able to detect any of the emotions. It was found that the child who recognized emotions the most, could identify four emotions.

The children could recognize 1,20 of the emotions out of six emotion items. In other words, 3-5 years old preschool children could recognize 20% of the emotions by looking at the stories.

Frequency and percent values were calculated on the basis of children’s scores for each emotion, in order to identify which emotions children could recognize easily and which emotions they had difficulty with in the scope of the research. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Frequency and percent values calculated on the basis of emotions preschool children could recognize

Emotions	Correct (1 Point)		Incorrect/No answer (0 point)	
	f	%	f	%
Happiness	17	34,0	33	66,0
Sadness	20	40,0	30	60,0
Anger	11	22,0	39	78,0
Fear	11	22,0	39	78,0
Pride	0	0,0	50	0,0
Shame	1	2,0	49	98,0

In line with the information in Table 3, children were able to recognize sadness the most correctly (%40,0; n=20). Following that, they could recognize happiness (%34,0; n=17), anger (%22,0; n=11), and fear (%22,0; n=11). Only one of the children could identify shame (%2,0) and none of the children could recognize pride (%0,0; n=0).

Correct emotion recognition percentages of the children are presented in Figure 1.

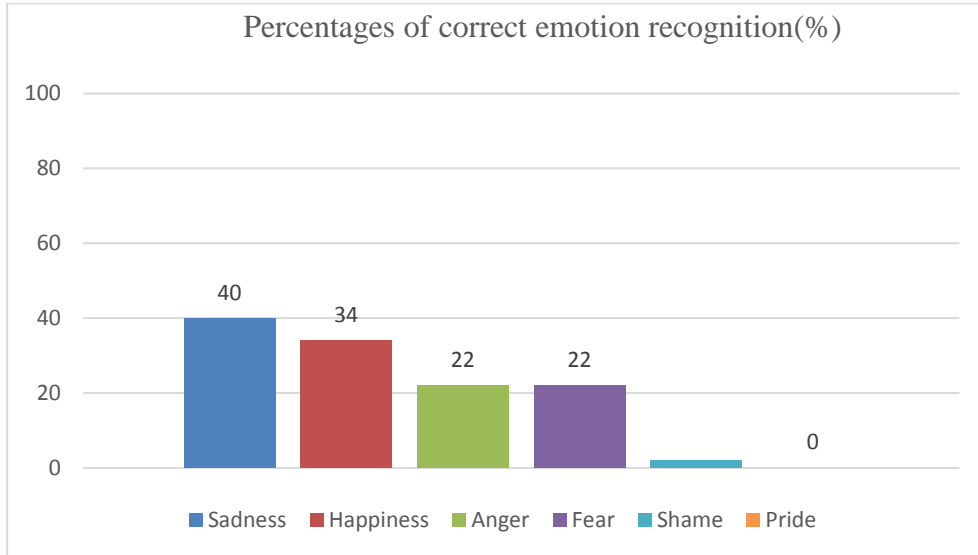


Figure 1. Percentages of correct emotion recognition of children in preschool

As seen in Figure 1, the emotion recognized the most by preschool children is sadness, and the one they recognized the least, is pride.

2. Is There a Meaningful Difference Based on the Gender of Preschool Children’s Emotion States Recognition?

The Mann -Whitney U test was performed with the aim of detecting whether any meaningful correlation or difference existed in the emotion states recognition of preschool children based on gender. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Mann Whitney U test results calculated according to genders of emotion state recognition levels of preschool children

Gender	N	$\bar{X} \pm SS$	Mean rank	Total rank	U	Z	p
Male	18	1,22±1,31	25,66	821,00	283,000	0,106	0,916
Female	32	1,67±1,34	25,22	454,00			

It can be seen that no meaningful correlation or difference existed ($p > 0,05$) between genders in preschool children’s emotion states recognition levels, upon the examination of Table 4. In other words, male and female children could recognize the emotions in similar ways.

The chi-squared distribution test was performed in order to detect whether any meaningful correlation or difference existed regarding gender based on the emotion states recognition of preschool children. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Chi-Square Distribution Statistics calculated regarding genders on the basis of preschool children’s emotion states recognition

Emotions	Gender	Correct (1 point)		Incorrect/No answer (0 point)		X ²	p
		f	%	f	%		
Happiness	Male	12	37,5	20	62,5	0,485	0,486
	Female	5	27,8	13	72,2		
Sadness	Male	12	37,5	20	62,5	0,231	0,630
	Female	8	44,4	10	55,6		
Anger	Male	8	25,0	24	75,0	0,466	0,495
	Female	3	16,7	15	83,3		
Fear	Male	7	21,9	25	78,1	0,001	0,977
	Female	4	22,2	14	77,8		
Pride	Male	0	0,0	32	100,0	.	.
	Female	0	0,0	18	100,0		
Shame	Male	0	0,0	32	100,0	1,814	0,178
	Female	1	5,6	17	94,4		

In accordance with the data in Table 5, no meaningful difference or correlation was detected ($p>0,05$) between genders of children in the recognition of happiness, sadness, anger, fear, pride and shame feelings. In the examination of the table, male children are seen to identify happiness and female children are seen to identify sadness the most. Neither of the genders could identify the feeling of pride.

3. Is There a Meaningful Difference Based on the Age of Preschool Children’s Emotion Recognition States?

The Kruskal Wallis test was carried out in order to detect whether any meaningful correlation or difference existed among the 3, 4, and 5 year old children participating in the research based on their emotion states recognition. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Kruskal Wallis Test results calculated according to preschool children’s ages on the basis of emotion states recognition levels.

Age	N	$\bar{X} \pm SS$	Mean Rank	df	X ²	p
3	20	0,75±0,91	21,35	2	3,862	0,145
4	17	1,24±1,25	26,18			
5	13	1,85±1,68	31,00			

According to the data in Table 6, children’s level of recognition of emotion states increased as they got older, yet no statistical difference was found between children’s level of emotion states recognition and their age.

Chi-squared distribution statistics were calculated in order to detect whether children's answers on the base of emotions showed a meaningful difference or correlation according to children's ages. The results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Chi-squared distribution statistics calculated preschool children's emotion recognition based on ages

Emotions	Age	Correct (1 point)		Incorrect/No answer (0 point)		X ²	p
		f	%	f	%		
Happiness	3	4	20,0	16	80,0	4,041	0,133
	4	6	35,3	11	64,7		
	5	7	53,8	6	46,2		
Sadness	3	4	20,0	16	80,0	5,558	0,062
	4	9	52,9	8	47,1		
	5	7	53,8	6	46,2		
Anger	3	4	20,0	16	80,0	0,817	0,665
	4	3	17,6	14	82,4		
	5	4	30,8	9	69,2		
Fear	3	3	15,0	17	85,0	2,812	0,245
	4	3	17,6	14	82,4		
	5	5	38,5	8	61,5		
Pride	3	0	0,0	20	100,0	.	.
	4	0	0,0	17	100,0		
	5	0	0,0	13	100,0		
Shame	3	0	0,0	20	100,0	2,904	0,234
	4	0	0,0	17	100,0		
	5	1	7,7	12	92,3		

According to the data in Table 7, although there were differences in the emotion recognition levels of children of different ages, these differences were not considered statistically significant; in other words, there were no meaningful differences in emotion states recognition levels according to children's ages.

Discussion and Conclusions

The recognition and identification of emotions in the preschool period are important for children's emotional development. Children are presented with short stories related to happiness, sadness, fear, anger, pride, and shame; and how correctly children can recognize the emotion raised in the stories, and whether there was a meaningful difference based on age and gender in identifying the emotion were detected.

According to the results about emotion recognition, it was observed that a maximum of four emotions (happiness, sadness, anger, fear) could be recognized, and 20% of the emotions were identified correctly. In the results of the study, the rate of emotion recognition is considered low. This situation reveals the need to support children. Domitrovich, Cortes, and Greenberg (2007) recorded that children have quite high levels of emotion knowledge and social competence when they practice a program aimed to develop children in emotional and social ways in experimental research. During this period, although children are fairly good at understanding others' emotions, they may not feel other people's emotions (Marion, 2010). Children's emotion knowledge will increase as teachers develop alternative activities to reinforce emotional development regarding recognizing emotions and implementing the education process regularly. Teachers' focus on emotion awareness development will help children develop love and acceptance feelings, which are among the most important needs.

In the research, it has been found that children recognize happiness the most, and the pride feeling cannot be recognized; the second most recognized feeling is shame. In the preschool period, children are known to be fairly successful at recognizing the happiness feeling from other people's facial expressions (Marion, 2010). Denham and his colleagues (2003) observed that children have good levels of emotional knowledge and recognize happiness the most among happiness, sadness, and anger feelings, in similar research in which they told children short stories by using puppets. Taking research samples into consideration, it is assumed that there may be a difference because of cultural differences and children's family structures. Children use the speech and events of their culture when expressing emotions (Marion, 2010). Thereby, culture is an important factor in recognizing and making sense of emotions. The fact that no good emotion recognition results were gained from the research shows that children's emotional knowledge should be supported.

No meaningful difference was detected upon the evaluation of children's emotion recognition based on gender. In the research in which Denham and his colleagues (2003) told short stories to children with puppets, the differences in the emotional knowledge of 3 and 4 year old children was viewed based on age and gender. Although there was no meaningful difference between genders, male children were seen to recognize the happiness feeling the most, female children recognized sadness the most, and both genders could not recognize pride. Shame is another least recognized emotion. Pride and shame feelings are regarded as too complex for children younger than six years old, and they are recognized at the rate of 60% by children (Marion, 2010). The reason for the difficulty that children have in recognizing these emotions can be affiliated with the complexity of the emotions. Along with this factor, fellowship which takes place in social settings is crucial for children's emotion competence development. Family structures and peers have substantial effects in shaping children's personality structure. Children gain emotional competence with an increase of positive feelings if their mothers show helpful and supportive behavior (Denham et al., 2003; Denham, & Grout, 1993). Children who cannot identify happiness are not thought to

experience pride feelings at all. For instance, when a mother rewards her child when he is angry, this behavior of the mother increases the recognition of this emotion (Denham & Grout, 1993). Female children were seen to have more emotional competence in the research conducted by Denham and his colleagues (2010) regarding emotional competence in preschool based on gender difference. Female children's rates of emotion recognition were recorded higher than the males, except for happiness and anger, in this research as well. Still, the averages of the two genders are close to each other, and both genders had similar results in recognizing emotions.

Lastly, the difference in children's emotion recognition within age groups was investigated. Although no meaningful difference was seen within age groups, an improvement in emotion recognition was recorded as the ages of the children increased. In the preschool period, as children get older, they acquire more experiences in becoming familiar with their own emotions, and in identifying the outcomes of their emotional responses (Denham & Grout, 1993). In the research conducted by Denham and his colleagues (2003), an improvement was recorded in children's emotion recognition as their age increased. In this regard, a correlation can be found between the research results.

As a conclusion, children were observed to be insufficient in emotion recognition, and in the need of improvement. Regardless of the increase in the averages of emotion recognition according to age, no meaningful difference was recorded across ages. This result shows the fact that children who are expected to develop in terms of emotion recognition cannot fulfill these expectations. No difference was observed in emotion recognition regarding gender as well. Gender is not considered as a determinant factor because of the impact of children's emotional sharing with their families, peers, and the teachers with whom children construct their knowledge as to emotion recognition in consequence of their emotional experiences (Denham et al., 2003; Marion, 2010).

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