

# Examination of Teachers' Views on School-Based Mindfulness in Early Childhood

Mihriban Özcan <sup>a\*</sup> & Adalet Kandır <sup>b\*</sup>

a Asst. Prof. Dr., Hasan Kalyoncu University, Faculty of Education, Department of Early Childhood Education, Gaziantep, Türkiye, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6109-0132> \*mihriban.ozcan@hku.edu.tr

b Prof. Dr., Gazi University, Faculty of Education, Department of Early Childhood Education, Ankara, Türkiye  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9917-2587> \*akandir@gazi.edu.tr

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## Abstract

This study aims to examine preschool teachers' views on school-based mindfulness activities. The research design has a phenomenology pattern, one of the qualitative research patterns. The researchers determined the study group of the research by snowball sampling method and 21 preschool teachers formed the study group of the research. Moreover, the researchers used "School-Based Mindfulness Interview Form" as the data collection tool in the study. Additionally, the researchers analyzed the obtained data by content analysis method. As a result, the research concluded that teachers' own learning processes were not satisfactory to plan school-based mindfulness trainings. In addition, the vast majority of teachers stated that they included activities related to understanding and expressing emotions every day. Teachers also included activity planning, the learning process, and daily routines in relation to both understanding and expressing emotions and attention and focus. They stated that children acquired more social skills with school-based mindfulness trainings.

**Keywords:** mindfulness, school-based mindfulness, social skills, early childhood education, preschool teachers.

## Erken Çocukluk Döneminde Okul Temelli Bilinçli Farkındalığa İlişkin Öğretmen Görüşlerinin İncelenmesi

### Öz

Bu araştırmanın amacı, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin okul temelli bilinçli farkındalık etkinliklerine yönelik görüşlerini incelemektir. Araştırma nitel araştırma desenlerinden fenomenoloji desende tasarlanmıştır. Araştırmanın çalışma grubu kartopu örnekleme yöntemi ile belirlenmiştir ve 21 okul öncesi öğretmenin araştırmanın çalışma grubunu oluşturmuştur. Araştırmada veri toplama aracı olarak "Okul Temelli Bilinçli Farkındalık Görüşme Formu" kullanılmıştır. Elde edilen verilere içerik analizi yöntemiyle analiz edilmiştir. Araştırma sonucunda öğretmenlerin aldıkları formal eğitimlerin okul temelli bilinçli farkındalık eğitimlerini planlamada yeterli olmadığı sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Ayrıca öğretmenlerin büyük çoğunluğu duyguları anlama ve ifade etme ile ilgili etkinliklere her gün yer verdiklerini ifade etmişlerdir. Öğretmenler hem duyguları anlama ve ifade etme hem de dikkat ve odaklanma ile ilgili olarak etkinlik planlamaya, öğrenme sürecine ve günlük rutinlere değinmişlerdir. Okul temelli bilinçli farkındalık eğitimleri ile çocuklara daha çok sosyal becerilerin kazandırıldığını ifade etmişlerdir.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** bilinçli farkındalık, okul temelli bilinçli farkındalık, sosyal beceriler, okul öncesi eğitim, okul öncesi öğretmenleri.

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## INTRODUCTION

Mindfulness is the observation of individuals' experiences in their feelings and thoughts that exist internally and are reflected externally without judgment (Lutz et al., 2009). Brown and Ryan (2003), on the other hand, define the concept of mindfulness as individuals focusing their attention on the moment they are in, without being judgmental and accepting. Although there are different definitions of the concept of mindfulness, also known as "mindfulness," in the literature, the most basic point on which these definitions emphasize is to observe the experiences of individuals in their feelings and thoughts that exist internally and are reflected externally without judging (Thera, 2001). While Kabat-Zin applies mindfulness to reduce the level of stress and pain in adults with a chronic disease, it has also started to be applied in education as a study of understanding the difficulties, coping skills and emotions encountered in daily life skills in recent years (Donald et al., 2016; Meiklejohn et al., 2012).

Today, with the changes brought about by digital culture, consumption and especially the competitive culture that emerges at school can increase the anxiety levels of children in early childhood and reduce their attention and focus skills (Bockmann & Yu, 2023; Kuzujakis, 2021). Trying to focus on learning activities in a stressful environment can lead to both a decrease in children's academic performance and self-confidence (Knothe & Flores Martí, 2018). School-based mindful awareness education programs can steer children away from trying to learn in a stressful environment, thus enhancing their learning potential. Children's learning potential increases with school-based mindfulness programs related to learning and teaching activities (Hooker & Fodor, 2008; McCallum & Price, 2010; Shlomov et al., 2023). Studies have shown that school-based mindfulness programs have positive effects on children's behaviors, perceived stress, attention, focus, emotional regulation and academic performance (Black et al., 2009; Erten & Güneş, 2024; Sibinga et al., 2013; Uygun & Erus, 2024; Zenner et al., 2014). The fact that preschool teachers who practice with preschool children do activities that will increase their learning qualities positively affects the potential of children. In addition, teachers' participation in mindfulness practices can support both increasing their own well-being levels and ensuring classroom order, organizing appropriate educational environments and making practices that will improve children (Hatton-Bowers, et al., 2023; Jennings, 2015; Lo, 2024; Nolan, 2023; Roberts & Montgomery, 2016). As a result, teachers will also enhance their well-being, and this state of well-being will be effective in their personal and professional development. The use of school-based mindfulness programs as an alternative program creates changes in children's body, emotion, consciousness and mental schemas (King et al., 2021; Maynard et al., 2017). Children who have acquired skills such as self-regulation, recognition and expression of emotions at an early age are successful in primary school readiness, using verbal language, mathematics skills and emotional competence, as well as in perceiving many skills and living a good life in their adult years (Bazzano et al., 2023; Claessens & Dowsett, 2014; Galvez Tan & Alampay, 2021; Moffitt et al., 2011; Ponitz et al., 2009). For this reason, school-based mindfulness practices play an important role in children's awareness of their emotions, expressing them in appropriate ways, and improving their self-regulation skills in early childhood (Birnie et al., 2010). In this context, the utilization of school-based mindful awareness education programs in early childhood can reduce children's perceived levels of stress, alleviate their anxiety, and enable them to focus more attentively on the present moment. Moreover, effectively implemented school-based mindful awareness programs can foster balance in children's physical, mental, and emotional states, thus leaving positive traces in their life skills from an early age.

School-based mindfulness trainings provide important opportunities to support children's skills such as attention, focus, and emotion control (Duff, 2024). Skills such as attention, focus, planning, creating mental schemas, affective awareness, self-regulation are provided by the working memory of executive functions. In their study, Flook et al. (2010) concluded that the mindfulness program supported children's executive function skills based on their attention, focus, mental planning, and action skills. School-based mindfulness trainings are crucial to support and develop children's attention and focus skills.

Considering the research, mindfulness focuses on the relationship between self-regulation, executive function skills and attention skills (Culotta 2021; Guenther et al., 2021; Işık, 2020; King et al., 2021; Lertladaluck et al., 2021; McCann 2021; Sibinga et al., 2013; Thierry et al., 2016; Zenner et al., 2014). However, there are more parental views on mindfulness in early childhood, but studies examining the teachers' views on planning qualified learning activities for children's development are more limited (Albrecht et al., 2012; Jennings et al., 2013; Meiklejohn et al., 2012; Tonga, 2019). From this point of view, as indicated in the literature review, the involvement of teachers in school-based mindful awareness practices can enable them to better structure their teaching and learning processes, providing children with the opportunity to learn in a stress-free, anxiety-free environment. Based on this premise, the research aimed to thoroughly examine teachers' perspectives on school-based mindful awareness in early childhood and sought to answer the following question:

What are teachers' views on school-based mindful awareness in early childhood?

## METHOD

This section includes the model of the research, the study group, data collection tools and data analysis information.

### Research Model

The research aimed to examine the preschool teachers' views on school-based mindfulness in depth. In accordance with the purpose, the researchers designed this study with the phenomenology pattern, one of the qualitative research methods. The phenomenology pattern is suitable for the problem of the research in terms of providing in-depth information about the subjective realities of individuals (Creswell, 2017).

### Study Group

The study group of the research consisted of 21 preschool teachers working in preschool education institutions in the 2022-2023 academic year. On the other hand, the researchers determined the study group by snowball sampling technique. Snowball sampling is used in cases where it is difficult to access the units that make up the universe or where information about the universe is incomplete (Patton, 2005). By using this technique, the researchers focus on people and critical situations where they can obtain rich data and reach the universe by following these people and critical situations. Accordingly, one or more reference persons are selected in relation to the subject of the study and other persons are reached through the selected persons (Creswell, 2017). As a result of the research conducted by the researcher in a chain, the data collection phase of the research is completed after reaching data density (Kerlinger & Lee, 1999). In this regard, the researchers reached a teacher based on undergraduate graduation and years of experience, and subsequently, conducted an interview with another person recommended by that teacher. The researchers applied this process to each teacher in the same way. Moreover, the researchers obtained the information of another teacher from the interviewed teachers and reached the study group in a chain in the form of snowball effect. The demographic information of the study group was as follows: 81% (n=17) of the teachers participating in the study were female; 19% (n=4) were male; 33% (n=7) were between the ages of 25-29, 52% (n=11) were between the ages of 30-34, 15% (n=3) were over the age of 35; 57% (n=12) were preschool teaching undergraduate graduates, 43% (n=9) were postgraduate graduates from preschool education; 19% (n=4) were contracted and 21% were permanent. Considering the professional seniority years of the participants, 14% (n=3) had a seniority of 0-2 years, 33% (n=7) had a seniority of 3-5 years, 24% (n=5) had a seniority of 6-10 years, and 29% (n=6) had a seniority of more than 10 years. 60% (n=12) of the teachers were working in the official kindergarten, 30% (n=6) in the official kindergarten and 10% (n=2) in a private kindergarten. Considering the number of children in the classes of the participants, those with 20-25 children in their class constituted 90% (n=19) of the study group, while those above 25 children in their class constituted 10% (n=2).

### Data Collection Tools

One of the main data collection tools in qualitative research is interviewing (Creswell, 2017). The interview enables to learn about behaviors, emotions, or how people express the world around them that we cannot observe. In the semi-structured interview form, the questions are open-ended and flexible. Participants can express their thoughts in their own words (Merriam, 2013). This study used a semi-structured interview form as it aimed for the participants to express their thoughts and practices with open-ended questions in an original way.

**School-Based Mindfulness Interview Form.** The researchers conducted a literature review and prepared a "School-Based Mindfulness Activities Interview Form" consisting of two parts in accordance with the purpose of the research. The first part of the form included questions about demographic information of the participants such as gender, age, educational status, professional seniority year, graduation field, staff status, type of school and number of children in the class. The second part included 6 questions to reveal the knowledge and experiences of the participants about school-based mindfulness. The researchers submitted the prepared form to the opinion of three field experts for content validity. Since there was no change in the questions at the end of the expert opinions, the researchers applied it to two preschool teachers within the scope of the pilot application in order to test the comprehensibility and suitability of the form for its purpose. At the end of the pre-application, there was no problem in terms of comprehensibility and suitability for its purpose, and the researchers applied the form to 21 preschool teachers.

### Data Collection Process

In the study, the researchers filled in the data collection tool in face-to-face interviews with the teachers forming the study group. Additionally, the researchers conducted interviews individually in the guidance service to avoid quieter and distracting elements compared to other areas in the school. During the interviews with the teachers in the study, the teachers signed a voluntary participation form, and the researchers recorded the interviews. Two different researchers later transcribed and read voice recordings to ensure data integrity. Based on the confidentiality of the research, the researchers used codes such as T1, T2, and T3 instead of the names of the teachers.

### Data Analysis

Additionally, the researchers analyzed the obtained data by content analysis method. The main goal of content analysis is to combine interrelated data under certain concepts and themes and to interpret them in a more understandable way for the reader (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). Following data integrity, two researchers independently coded responses. After that, the researchers examined the codes by bringing together the researchers and calculated the compatibility between the coders. The researchers re-encoded the points they agreed upon by examining the different codes that emerged. After the coding process, the researchers conducted a comprehensive examination of interrelated codes and created categories and themes by drawing upon the literature. This study discussed reliability, which can be handled in different ways in qualitative research, on the basis of consensus between coders. It is recommended that the percentage of agreement between coders should be at least 80% (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this study, the inter-coder agreement was 91%. Considering the rate of agreement between encoders, the study was reliable.

## FINDINGS

The researchers examined the answers given by the teachers to the School-Based Mindfulness Interview Form and obtained the themes of 'learning processes', 'recognizing and expressing emotions', 'attention and focus' and 'acquired skills'. These themes included categories, which had codes are under its scope. Table 1 presents the obtained themes, categories, and codes.

Table 1. Distribution of Themes, Categories and Codes in Relation to Teachers' Views

Learning Processes	Satisfactory	In-depth theoretical knowledge Adaptive activity diversity Case study
	Partially Satisfactory	Theoretical foundation building Case study
	Not quite satisfactory	Individual differences Difference in social life Lack of practice
Recognizing and expressing emotions	Activity planning	Structured activity Unstructured activity Expressing emotion Individual differences
	Learning process	Large group activities Individual activities Case study Stories
	Daily routines	Start time Playing time Assessment Time Emotion board
Attention and Focus	Activity planning	Structured activities Unstructured activities Peer interaction Individual differences
	Learning process	Using voice appropriately Eye contact Classroom arrangement Use of technology
	Daily routines	Start time Playing time Assessment Time Attention board

Acquired Skills	Social Skills	Recognizing and expressing emotions Coping with problems Anger Management Empathy Self-confidence Self-regulation Motivation
	Cognitive skills	Attention skills Problem solving skills Decision-making skills Thinking skills
	Language skills	Self-expression Maintaining communication
	Academic Skills	Attitude towards the activity Quick learning
	Motor Skills	Fine motor skills

Considering Table 1, which examines the theme of teachers' *learning processes* within the scope of School-Based Mindfulness practices, teachers stated that the courses they took in their own learning processes were not satisfactory in planning the activity processes related to the skills of recognizing and expressing emotions, attention and focusing in school-based mindfulness (n=14). The codes belonging to the category of not satisfactory were individual differences (f=4; T1, T3, T18, T21); differences in social life (f=5; T1, T4, T17, T18, T21); cultural differences (f=4; T1, T3, T16, T18); lack of practice (f=12; T1, T2, T3, T8, T9, T11, T13, T14, T16, T17, T19, T21) and lack of course (f=5; T9, T11, T16, T19, T21). On the other hand, there were also teachers who thought that the courses in their undergraduate education were completely satisfactory (n=3). The codes belonging to the satisfactory category were in-depth theoretical knowledge (f=2; T6, T12); adaptive activity diversity (f=3; T10, T15, T20) and case study (f=2; T15, T20). In addition, there were also teachers who stated that the theoretical knowledge they received in undergraduate education formed the basis for application planning and that they conducted their research in line with this basis and thought that the education they received was partially satisfactory in this context (n=4). The codes that formed a partially satisfactory category were theoretical foundation building (f=3; T4, T5, T7) and case study (f=2; T5, T7). For example, teacher T9 in the example below stated that undergraduate courses were not satisfactory due to their theoretical weight and lack of practice in this field.

*T9: "The courses I took during the undergraduate period were mostly theoretical. I think it is important to practice more in planning activities to understand and express emotions. There was no chance of such practice in undergraduate education. Therefore, it is unsatisfactory."*

On the other hand, the statements of the teacher coded T15, who said that the information they received in the lessons was satisfactory because it contained intense theoretical knowledge and included many adaptive activities in these lessons, are as follows:

*T15: "With the deep knowledge I gained in my undergraduate education and since we shared many activities we wrote with my friends, I have many adaptive activities."*

There were also teachers who thought that the theoretical knowledge they received in undergraduate education was partially satisfactory because it formed a basis for activity planning and conducted their research in line with this basis and the education, they received offered an idea at this point. In relation to this, the statements of the teacher coded T5 are as follows:

*T5: "Although the courses I took during the undergraduate period provide a basis for the subject... I can create activity plans with my observations of children in the classroom environment. If it were not for this knowledge during the undergraduate period, it would be difficult for me to plan the activities."*

Considering the theme of *recognizing and expressing emotions* presented in Table 1, the categories of activity planning, learning process and daily routines emerged. The categories and codes are as follows:

All of the teachers (n=21) stated that they included recognizing and expressing emotions in their daily plans. Statements on frequency were: every day (f=11; T1, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8, T9, T11, T13, T21); 2-3 days a week (f=5; T2, T14, T17, T18, T20) and 1-2 days a month (f=4; T15, T16, T10, T12). The statements of teachers coded T4 and T17 regarding how much they included recognizing and expressing emotions in their daily plans are as follows:

*T4: "When children come to the classroom, we talk about their feelings every day."*



*T15: "We work on the emotional calendar every day... we define emotions."*

As seen in Table 1, the codes of the activity planning category related to the theme of recognizing and expressing emotions were: structured activities (f=10; T1, T2, T5, T7, T8, T9, T13, T14, T15, T21); unstructured activities (f=7; T1, T3, T6, T11, T13, S16, S21); expressing emotions (f=6; T1, T2, T7, T17, T19, T21) and individual differences (f=5; T1, T3, T7, T11, T13). Although the teachers paid attention to different situations regarding activity planning in their statements, they stated that they included emotions in their statements both in a planned way and included emotion studies in daily routines or unstructured activities at the start of the day. The statements of teachers coded T1 and T21 are as follows:

*T1: "... my primary priority is to create a circle at the start of the day and ask how they feel. ...sometimes I plan with drama in the learning process and sometimes I include unstructured emotions in children's daily routines or situations that arise in the classroom."*

*T21: "... I both evaluate unplanned situations during playtime and prepare planned activities when they need them."*

The codes of the learning process were: large group activities (f=6; T1, T3, T4, T7, T9, T13); individual activities (f=5; T1, T15, T17, T21); case study (f=3; T1, T5, T6) and stories (f=7; T3, T4, T7, T8, T9, T13, T21). Teachers stated that they structured different learning processes according to the dynamics of the classroom, similar to activity planning. The statements of teachers coded T3 and T7 regarding the learning process are as follows:

*T3: "... I differentiate and apply it as an individual or large group activity according to the situation of the children on that day. I usually use stories in my activities."*

*T7: "I mostly ask how you would behave and how you would feel if you were... telling a case study. I usually do the case studies through stories."*

The codes of daily routines were: start time (f=13; T1, T4, T5, T7, T8, T9, T14, T16, T17, T18, T19, T20, T21); playing time (f=4; T5, T6, T11, T12); assessment time (f=4; T3, T5, T7, T17) and emotion board (f=3; T2, T7, T19). The statements of teachers coded T8 and T19 regarding daily routines are as follows:

*T8: "... we start the day with them always expressing their feelings at the time of starting the day."*

*T19: "There is an emotion board in my classroom. When the children come in the morning, the circle tells how they feel by choosing from the emotion board at the time..."*

### **Attention and Focus**

Considering the theme of **attention and focus skills** presented in Table 1, the categories of activity planning (n=7), learning process (n=7) and daily routines (N=4) emerged. The codes of activity planning were: structured activities (f=6; T1, T4, T13, T15, T20, T21); unstructured activities (f=?; T1, T3, T7, T11); peer interaction (f=4; T3, T6, T8, T11) and individual differences (f=3; T1, T12, T15). Teachers discussed more the strategies they used in the classroom when choosing activities related to attention and focus. The statements of teachers coded T6 and T15 regarding activity planning are as follows:

*T6: "... I care that children pay attention to each other. I feel that they are more focused when listening to each other's activities."*

*T15: "I plan activities such as carrying the ball without dropping it, completing patterns or completing jigsaw puzzles... I prefer activities where their attention is concentrated."*

The codes related to the learning process were: using voice appropriately (f=11; S1, S6, S7, S8, S10, S11, S16, S18, S19, S20, S21); eye contact (f=5; S1, S2, S7, S9, S11, S13); classroom arrangement (f=5; S2, S5, S8, S9, S21) and use of technology (f=3; S2, S7, S8). The opinions of the teachers T2 and T8 regarding the learning process are as follows:

*T2: "... I feel that children focus better as I make eye contact... I take care to include technological tools in my activities in order to attract their attention."*

*T8: "... I do not sit the children who distract each other at the same table. I think maintaining the classroom arrangement is effective at this point. "*

The codes related to the category of daily routines were: start the day (f=6; T1, S4, T7, T11, T20, T21); playing time (f=5; T1, T4, T7, T8, T21); assessment time (f=3; T4, T7, T21) and curiosity board (f=4; T4, T6, S8, T17). The statements of teachers coded T7 and T17 regarding daily routines are as follows:

*T7: "Sometimes I keep a material about the activity of that day in the classroom before the children come to the classroom....Sometimes we find this in that moment and I want them to find it while working during playing time."*

*T17: "There is an attention board in my classroom. I add visuals to this board that I want them to pay attention to on a weekly basis."*

Considering Table 1, the categories of social skills (n=16), cognitive skills (n=7), language skills (n=3), academic skills (n=2) and motor skills (n=2) related to the theme of **acquired skills** of children emerged. The codes related to social skills were: recognizing and expressing emotions (f=15; T1,T2, T4, T6, T7, T8, T9, T10, T13, T14, T15, T16, T17, T20, T21); coping with problems (f=8; T1, T2, T4, T7, T8, T10, T15, T21); anger management (f=6; T1, T6, T8, T9, T11, T12); empathy (f=4; T7, T13, T19, T21); self-confidence (f=3; T13, T20, T21); self-regulation (f=2; T19, T21) and motivation (f=1; T21). When expressing their thoughts on social skills, teachers have associated emotions with many other skills. For example, the statements of teachers coded T1 and T21 regarding social skills are as follows:

*T1: "Children recognize emotions in the first place. They're learning how to express that feeling. They communicate more healthily. They control their anger or express it. "*

*T21: "The motivation of children who can express their emotions increases. Their self-confidence is increasing."*

The codes related to cognitive skills were: attention skills (f=5; T1, T3, T7, T14, T21); problem solving skills (f=4; T3, T5, T7, T14); decision-making skills (f=3; T1, T3, T21) and thinking skills (f=2; T1, T21). Teachers associated cognitive skills with social skills in their statements. For example, statements of teachers coded T3 and T14 regarding cognitive skills are as follows:

*T3: "I think they are calmer when solving problems."*

*T14: "I think children are more careful when we solve their problems with emotions."*

The codes related to language skills were: self-expression (f=4; T1,T3,T7,T11) and maintaining communication (f=2; T1,T3). The statements of the teachers coded T3 and T7 are as follows:

*T3: "Children who understand their emotions express themselves better."*

*T7: "Children both express themselves better and their communication with each other becomes better."*

The codes related to academic skills were: attitude towards the activity (f=2; T1, T4) and quick learning (f=1; T21). The statements of teachers coded T4 and T21 on this issue are as follows:

*T4: "It is effective in many skills of children. From soft skills to academic skills. They like the activity more, their attitude is changing. "*

*T21: "Even children's learning speed changes."*

The code related to motor skills was: fine motor skills (f=2; T4, T21). The statements of teacher on this issue are as follows:

*T21: "When the focus and attention problem disappear, they develop better in activities such as stringing beads."*

## DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research aimed to examine the preschool teachers' views on school-based mindfulness in depth. They emphasized that the learning processes were not satisfactory within the scope of the fact that the teachers participating in the study primarily included school-based mindfulness in their practices. They stated that they mostly applied the activities they would do with children with their individual efforts or research. The study revealed that teachers had difficulty in planning activities due to the fact that more theoretical information was included in their undergraduate education and the lack of courses for practice. On the other hand, they emphasized that the theoretical knowledge in their undergraduate education formed the basis for them and stated that they experienced the benefit of this theoretical knowledge in their activities (Table 1). There are studies emphasizing that supporting teachers in this regard is more effective in structuring their education processes (Jennings, 2015; King et al., 2021). In their study, Hatton-Bowers et al. (2023) concluded that teachers' knowledge of mindfulness practices is effective in strengthening their practices for children. Similarly, Kenwright et al. (2023) stated in their study that teachers' school-based mindfulness practices increased the child's well-being, helped to ensure stress management, and strengthened basic life skills. In addition, they associated the acquisition of these skills by children with teachers' adoption of school-based mindfulness (Kenwright et al., 2023). Nolan et al. (2023)



concluded in their study that teachers' school-based mindfulness practices are significant in developing academic motivation in children. Creating suitable learning environments and processes for children is significant for the emergence of quality learning. When teachers actively participate in mindfulness practices, they will be able to plan appropriate learning environments and processes for children, thus positively impacting their potential. Therefore, teacher training programs that include mindfulness education, as well as various programs prepared for teachers or children, will support children's development positively (Hatton-Bowers, et al., 2023). The fact that children do not feel emotional pressure in their environment or express their emotions comfortably supports their learning processes. Additionally, since these skills prepare them for primary school, it is vital how teachers structure these processes (Schonert-Reichl & Lawlor, 2010). Research shows that teachers' knowledge of mindfulness will help them structure their learning process and thus provide children with more effective learning opportunities (Jennings, 2015; Whitehead, 2011). For this reason, based on the idea that knowledge of teachers who play an important role in children's learning processes about mindfulness practices is effective in structuring their educational processes, their views on this subject and the studies conducted in the literature are similar.

Regarding the theme of recognizing and expressing emotions, they stated that most of the teachers allow children to express their emotions almost every day. Teachers stated that they included emotions in their plans to understand and express emotions in daily routines, structured or unstructured activities at the time of starting the day (Table 1). Considering the literature, school-based mindfulness practices are crucial for children to recognize and express emotions, similar to the results of the research. (Sibinga et al., 2013). In relation to this, King et al. (2021) concluded in their study that taking school-based mindfulness lessons increases their well-being and decreases their anxiety levels and anger problems. Children who have acquired skills such as self-regulation, recognition and expression of emotions at an early age are successful in primary school readiness, using verbal language, mathematics skills and emotional competence, as well as in perceiving many skills and living a good life in their adult years (Bazzano et al., 2023; Claessens & Dowsett, 2014; Galvez Tan & Alampay, 2021; Moffitt et al., 2011; Ponitz et al., 2009). For this reason, school-based mindfulness practices play a significant role in children's awareness of their emotions, expressing them in appropriate ways, and improving their self-regulation skills in early childhood (Birnie et al., 2010).

Teachers mentioned activity planning, learning process and daily routines similar to recognizing and expressing emotions in their attention and focus skills. They stated that they mostly structured the activities themselves in this regard. In addition, they emphasized that it was important to make eye contact in the classroom by expressing the methods they used in the learning process, to change the tone of voice during the activity, and to prevent distractions when they placed the children at the tables themselves in the classroom arrangement. A small number of teachers, on the other hand, emphasized that technology was a critical tool in attracting children's attention based on their individual differences and stated that they tried to include technology in the learning process with the informal trainings they received (Table 1).

Similarly to the findings of our research, Flook et al. (2010) concluded in their study that the implemented mindfulness program supported children's attention, focus, ability to make plans in mind, and initiation skills. Supporting children's metacognitive skills is possible by conducting studies on attention and focus skills (Whitehead, 2011). School-based mindfulness trainings for preschool children with rapid neurological development are also significant as they are related to executive function skills (Andreu et al., 2023). In this regard, Flook et al. (2010) concluded in their research that the implemented mindfulness program supported children's attention, focus, ability to make plans in mind, and initiation skills. Similarly, Shlomov et al. (2023) concluded in their study that school-based mindfulness practices positively affect children's executive function skills. In early childhood, children's neurological brain development, attention and focus skills are rapidly progressing and play a significant role in strengthening cortical regions of the brain, especially the prefrontal cortex. In particular, developing attention and focusing skills and noticing cognitive processes contribute significantly to brain development (Gürleyik & Gözün Kahraman, 2018; Güven et al., 2019). Children's transition to metacognitive skills such as analysis and synthesis is only possible if their minds are active and attention and focus skills are supported (Büyükaşkapu et al., 2012; Whitehead, 2011). School-based mindfulness trainings provide important opportunities to support children's skills such as attention, focus, and emotion control (Duff, 2024). School-based mindfulness trainings are crucial to support and develop children's attention and focus skills.

Regarding the skills they provide to children, the teachers focused more on social skills. They stated that in mindfulness practices, children's recognition and expression of emotions supported their development of self-confidence, reduced anger problems, and helped them regulate emotions. There were also teachers who stated that children's awareness of the activities and the moment contributed to their cognitive skills by expressing that it

supported their problem-solving skills and thinking skills. They emphasized that they supported their language development by emphasizing that their communication with each other was better, and then emphasized all these developments as well as many skills for their academic development. They highlighted that attention and focus skills emerged integrally by supporting their small muscle development (Table 1). McCallum and Price (2010) stated in their study that permanent learning emerges in children with mindfulness practices. Studies have shown that school-based mindfulness programs have positive effects on children's behaviors, perceived stress, attention, focus, emotional regulation and academic performance (Sibinga et al., 2013; Zenner et al., 2014). This situation can be followed in a facilitating way in their learning by carefully observing, focusing and concretizing emotions, behaviors and communication in the preschool period with mindfulness trainings, which have an important place to support social, emotional and language development and communication skills. It is crucial to include mindfulness trainings in children's lives to support their social, emotional and language development and communication skills. In their study, Bazzano et al. (2023) concluded that mindfulness practices support children's social and academic skills. Children who interact by carefully observing, focusing, and concretizing emotions, behaviors, and communication in the preschool period have high academic skills in primary school (Flook et al., 2010; McCallum & Price, 2010; Napoli et al., 2005; Schonert-Reichl & Lawlor, 2010). However, trying to learn in a stressful environment causes both children's academic performance to decrease and their self-confidence to be damaged. On the contrary, when children express themselves emotionally, their self-confidence increases, and they are more successful (Knothe & Marti, 2018). Supporting children to be well and to realize their emotions in order to support their learning from the early years enables them to make a strong start in terms of development, to establish healthy communication throughout their lives and to support their academic skills (Duncan & Magnuson, 2013). Early childhood is critical in the development of children's cognitive skills such as comprehension, attention, problem-solving, critical thinking, analysis, and synthesis. School-based mindfulness practices are crucial in supporting these skills. In their study on this subject, Thierry et al. (2016) concluded that school-based mindfulness practices increase children's self-regulation, self-expression, and academic skills. Similarly, Culotta (2021) concluded in his research that mindfulness trainings support children's emotional control, emotion regulation, and problem-solving skills. In addition, they determined that teachers' practices affect children's self-regulation behavior. For this reason, they stated that teachers should integrate their mindfulness practices with the activities they do in the daily education flow.

In the study conducted to examine preschool teachers' views on school-based mindfulness practices, teachers stated their own learning processes, recognizing and expressing emotions, attention and focus skills, and the skills they provide to children. Most of the teachers stated that the formal education they received was not satisfactory to support their attention and focus skills for children and their ability to understand and express emotions. While planning these activities, they needed additional training or planned these activities with their own efforts. In addition, the studies on understanding and expressing emotions were mostly included in the circle clock at the start of the day. They stated that they evaluated both structured and sudden situations that occurred during the day in this regard. Additionally, they mostly included structured activities in relation to attention and focus skills. Although they stated that mindfulness practices mostly supported social skills in children, they also supported cognitive skills, language skills, academic skills and motor skills.

The results of this study are significant in terms of examining teachers' views on school-based mindfulness practices in depth. Teachers' views and knowledge of mindfulness practices provide insight into how they support children in this regard. In the light of the results obtained in the research, the recommendations can be presented as follows;

The teachers who were participants of the study stated that their learning processes were unsatisfactory in school-based mindfulness practices. Based on these views, in-service trainings or online trainings can be provided to increase the practice experience of teachers on school-based mindfulness practices.

In the study, the researchers consulted views of 21 preschool teachers and examined their opinions in depth. Teachers with different socioeconomic levels can be interviewed. In order to examine the views and practices of teachers in depth, different and more comprehensive measurement tools can be developed apart from the interview form.

Based on the statements that teachers were unsatisfied in school-based mindfulness practices for practice, different techniques such as focus group interviews, scale applications, and program development studies can be used with teachers working in different preschool education institutions. The study is limited to the views and experiences of the 21 preschool teachers who participated in this research study. Thus, the researchers can further make applications, reaching out to more teachers and using different methods.

### Ethical Committee Information

Ethics committee approval certificate was obtained from Gazi University Ethics Committee (decision numbered E-77082166-302.08.01-628331 dated 05.04.2023) for the research.

### Researchers' Contribution Rate

Authors	Literature review	Method	Data Collection	Data Analysis	Results	Conclusion
Author #1	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒
Author #2	☒	☒	☐	☒	☒	☒

### Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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