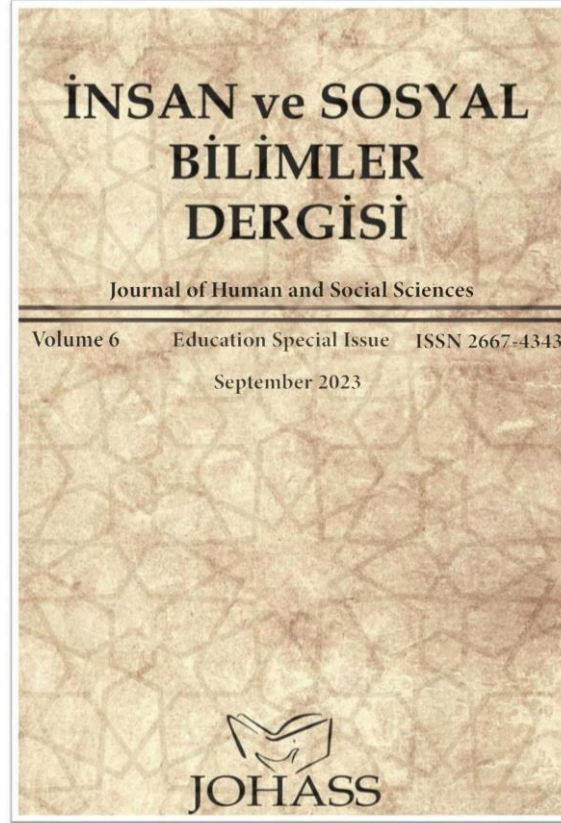


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### Preschool Teachers' Sense of Humor and Children's Appreciation of Humor\*

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## **Preschool Teachers' Sense of Humor and Children's Appreciation of Humor\***

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### **Abstract**

This study, which was conducted with 364 preschool children and 47 preschool teachers in order to determine the relationship between preschool teachers' sense of humor and children's appreciation of the value of humor in their classrooms, is a relational survey model. The data of the study were collected with "Personal Information Form", "Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale- Updated Turkish Form" used to determine teachers' sense of humor, "Humor Observation Form" prepared by the researcher to determine children's appreciation of the value of humor, and "Humor Observation Form" and used with a 5-minute video with examples suitable for the stages in Paul McGhee's humor development theory. It was determined that preschool teachers' sense of humor was at a good level, and there was no significant difference between teachers' sense of humor and teachers' age, class size, and age of children in their classes. It was determined that the sense of humor of teachers with a seniority of 11-15 years was significantly higher than those with a seniority of 16 years and above. It was determined that children's appreciation of the value of humor was at a moderate level, and there was no significant difference between the gender of the children and both their appreciation of the value of humor and their level of finding the video funny. It was determined that there was a significant difference between the ages of the children and both their appreciation of the value of humor and their level of finding the video funny. 61-72 month old children's levels of appreciating the value of humor and finding the video funny were higher than 48-60 month old children. It was determined that there was no significant relationship between teachers' sense of humor and children's appreciation of humor.

**Keywords:** Humor, sense of humor, preschool, preschool teacher

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## **Introduction**

Although there are opinions that it is impossible to make a definition of humor because it is a psychological phenomenon and that it is inappropriate to confine it within a definition, many definitions of humor have been made (Öğüt Eker, 2009). According to Booth-Butterfield & Booth-Butterfield (1991), humor is the deliberate use of verbal and nonverbal communication behaviors that elicit positive reactions such as laughter and joy. According to Cevizci (1997), it is the art of finding and revealing the distortions, incompatibilities, contradictions and ridiculousness in people or in some events that are considered natural. Humor includes the ability to produce humor, understand humor, appreciate the value of humor and use humor as a coping strategy (Thorson & Powell, 1993). Martin (2007) emphasized the difference between humor and sense of humor and stated that sense of humor is a more comprehensive concept that includes the concepts of humor production and humor understanding. Although a sense of humor is generally seen as a positive and desirable personality trait, it is not always clear what is meant by this concept. Sense of humor includes laughing at jokes and laughing situations, laughing easily and excessively, and making others laugh by producing humor (Eysenck, 1972). Sense of humor, an important personality trait, the ability to maintain a humorous perspective in the face of stress and to "see the funny side" of life's problems and challenges is an important coping skill that leads to greater resilience and emotional well-being. The ability to make others laugh and use humor to facilitate relationships and reduce interpersonal tension is a valuable social skill that contributes to social cohesion and support (Martin, 2019). There are three main theories of humor, namely superiority, dissonance and relaxation theories, which try to explain what it means for a situation to be humorous or what happens when something is perceived as humorous. The relaxation theory focuses on the physiological release of tension, the incongruity theory focuses on the contradictions between expectations and experiences, and the superiority theory focuses on the feeling of superiority over people (Shaw, 2010). According to the superiority theory, which is the oldest theory, laughter is caused by belittling another person or one's own past mistakes or stupidity (Martin, 1998). Morreall (1989), who states that the most common humor theory is the incongruity theory, states that according to this theory, humor is to enjoy something that conflicts with our mental patterns and expectations. According to the relaxation theory, which focuses on physiological motives, it is about relieving tension through laughter (Buijzen & Valkenburg, 2004; Meyer, 2000).

Raskin (1985) stated that some conditions are necessary for humor to occur:

The ideal condition for producing humor is when a person is joyful, when he or she is most inclined to laugh.

It is important to produce humor that is compatible with the person's humor taste and expectations.

Having something else occupying one's mind is an undesirable condition for humor.

If one's attention is focused on what the humor will come from, the fun is lost.

In an environment where another emotion arises, such as crying or surprise, humor can be inhibited.

McGhee (2002), who examined the development of humor in children according to Piaget's cognitive development theory, put forward his theory consisting of five stages:

Stage 0- Laughing without humor (first 6 months): In this stage, babies laugh without any humor.

Stage 1- Laughing at the attachment figure (6 months- 12/15 months): In this stage, babies laugh at the unfamiliar actions of their parents or the attachment figure.

Stage 2- Inconsistent behavior towards objects (12/15 months-3/4/5 years) The earliest examples of humor created by children are seen in this stage. After an object has become very familiar to the child, children like to use it in unusual and inappropriate ways.

Stage 3- Inconsistent naming of objects, events, people (2-3/4 years): In this stage, children begin to play by giving objects the wrong names.

Stage 4- Conceptual inconsistency (3-5 years): This stage is handled by dividing it into 4 categories:

- a. Playing with the sounds of words (not their meanings): Children become attuned to the sounds of words and begin to play with the sounds of words on their own.
- b. Combination of nonsense and real words: Children like to put words together in absurd ways, even if they know they are wrong.
- c. Distorting the characteristics of objects, people or animals: Children like to add features to people, animals or objects that do not belong to them, erase existing features, and change the size, color or shape of familiar things. They laugh at inconsistent and impossible behavior of events, things and people with exaggerated characteristics.

- d. Cross-gender naming: For children, it is quite amusing when other children are called by a name of the opposite sex or called by a name associated with the opposite sex.

Stage 5- Riddles and jokes (Multiple meanings) (6/7-10/11): Children can understand humorous jokes and riddles with words that have double meanings or ambiguity (McGhee, 2002).

Including humor in educational environments has many benefits for both teachers and children. When teachers have a sense of humor and children appreciate humor, it contributes positively to the classroom atmosphere and helps children learn more enjoyably. Humor can increase self-esteem and self-motivation, reduce classroom anxiety and facilitate learning (Berk, 1996; Evans-Palmer, 2010). Studies have shown that having a sense of humor is beneficial for both children and teachers. Studies have found that teachers' use of humor improves the classroom environment, increases student-teacher rapport and student motivation, and reduces tension (Aboudan, 2009; Kher et al. 1999; Provine, 2002). There are also studies that found that teachers' use of humor as a teaching, interaction and/or management tool can contribute to students' attention, motivation and learning (Berk, 2003; Gurtler, 2002). Humor can also help make the classroom a more comfortable and engaging learning environment for children and encourage their academic and behavioral achievement (Beard & Wilson 2013; Lovorn, 2009; Posnick-Goodwin, 2009). It has been found that developmentally appropriate, structured humor teaching and interaction strategies lead children to think at a higher level, increase their creativity and reach deeper knowledge about the subject (Henry, 2000; Paterson, 2006; Lovorn, 2008).

It has been stated that children with a sense of humor are more entrepreneurial, can think critically, have high problem-solving skills, have a positive outlook on life, can control their anger, and have less feelings of anger or hostility (McGhee & Frank 2014). Children with a high sense of humor can cope and adapt more easily and face events more easily even in difficult situations such as illness (Dowling 2014; Dowling et al., 2003). It is stated that thanks to the humor shared by children in the environment of friends, interactive interactions are born in which sincere relationships are established by having fun, anger is reduced, and boredom is prevented. Sentences with humor attract children's attention more, information is passed between children, and children move from the role of passive recipients to the role of active participants (McGhee & Frank 2014).

Teachers with a sense of humor are characterized by the nature of laughter and can make others laugh, have a positive attitude in facing difficult situations and maintain positive relationships with others (Na'imah et al., 2020). Research findings on teachers' reasons for using humor in the classroom indicate that they use humor to a) improve the atmosphere in the classroom and their relationships with students, b) deal with difficult situations and discipline problems, c) reduce tension and pressure to teach, d) attract their students' attention and interest, e) promote learning, and f) maintain their own interest and improve their mood during teaching (Darling & Civikly, 1987; Neuliep, 1991; Pollio & Humphreys, 1996; Rareshide, 1993; White, 2001).

Bergen (1992) concluded that kindergarten and first grade teachers tended to encourage a sense of humor in their students and tended to use a variety of strategies to increase the enjoyment of teaching and learning. Teachers who use humor generally exhibit a more lively and cheerful mood, often laugh at themselves, are not afraid to laugh at their own mistakes, and encourage their students to express humor. Research shows that children prefer teachers with humor and want their teachers to have a sense of humor (Garner, 2006; Nahas, 1998; Torok et al., 2004; Wanzer & Frymier, 1999).

When the literature was examined, it was seen that studies on humor styles were predominant in the studies conducted with teachers (Altinkurt & Yılmaz, 2011; Uyanık et al., 2015; Yılmaz, 2023), while studies on preschool teachers' use of humor and humor styles in the educational environment were limited. Although there are limited studies in which preschool children produce humor and appreciate the value of humor (Eskidemir Meral & Koçer, 2023; Hoicka, & Akhtar, 2011; Loizou, 2007; McGhee, 1971; Stenius et al., 2022), there is no study examining the relationship between preschool teachers' sense of humor and children's appreciation of the value of humor. Based on the view that it is important for children to be exposed to humor for their humor development (Eskidemir Meral & Koçer, 2023) and that teachers' having a sense of humor will contribute to the development of humor in children (Franzini, 2002), it was considered necessary to conduct this study. In this context, the study is expected to contribute to the literature.

The main purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between preschool teachers' sense of humor and children's appreciation of the value of humor. In line with this main purpose, answers to the following questions were sought:

What is the level of preschool teachers' sense of humor?

To what extent do children appreciate the value of humor?

Do preschool teachers' sense of humor vary according to their socio-demographic characteristics?

Does children's appreciation of the value of humor vary according to their socio-demographic characteristics?

Is there a significant relationship between preschool teachers' sense of humor and children's appreciation of humor in their classrooms?

## **Method**

### **Model**

This study is a correlational survey model. The relational screening model, one of the general screening model types, is a research model that aims to determine the existence and/or degree of change between two or more variables (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009; Karasar, 2005). In this study, since the relationship between teachers' sense of humor and children's appreciation of the value of humor in their classrooms was to be determined, the relational screening model was preferred.

This research was carried out after the permission of Akdeniz University Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee dated 03.04.2023 and numbered 182.

### **Sample and Population**

The population of the study consists of preschool children attending kindergartens in Kepez, Muratpaşa and Konyaaltı districts of Antalya province and their teachers. The sample of the study consisted of 364 preschool children attending 5 kindergartens affiliated to the Ministry of National Education in Kepez, Muratpaşa and Konyaaltı districts of Antalya province and 47 female preschool teachers. Socio-demographic information of the teachers is shown in Table 1 and socio-demographic information of the children is shown in Table 2.

### **Compliance with Ethical Standard**

In this article, the journal writing rules, publication principles, research and publication ethics, and journal ethical rules were followed.

This research was carried out after the permission of Akdeniz University Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee dated 03.04.2023 and numbered 182.

This study is supported by TUBITAK within the scope of 2209-A University Students Research Projects Support Program.

**Table 1**

*Socio-Demographic Information of Teachers*

<b>Socio-demographic variables</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Seniority</b>		
11-15 years	21	44,7
16 years and above	26	55,3
<b>Sex</b>		
Female	47	100,0
Male	0	0,0
<b>Teacher age</b>		
30-40 years old	27	57,4
41 and above	20	42,6
<b>Class size</b>		
10-20 children	30	63,2
21-30 children	17	36,2
<b>Class age</b>		
48-60 months	24	51,1
61 months and over	23	48,9
Total	47	100,0

According to Table 1, 44.7% of the teachers have a seniority of 11-15 years and 55.3% have a seniority of 16 years or more. All of the teachers are female. The age of 57.4% of the teachers was between 30-40 years and 42.6% was 41 years and above. 63.2% of the teachers have 10-20 children in their class, 36.2% have 21-30 children in their class. The age of the children in the class of 51.1% of the teachers is 48-60 months and the age of the children in the class of 48.9% of the teachers is 61 months and above.

**Table 2**

*Socio-Demographic Information of Children*

<b>Socio-demographic variables</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Girl	194	53,3
Male	170	46,7



Age		
48-60 months	112	30,8
61-72 months	252	69,2
Total	364	100,0

According to Table 2, 53.3% of the children were girls and 46.7% were boys. 30.8% of the children were 48-60 months old and 69.2% were 61-72 months old.

### **Data Collection Tools**

The data of the study were collected with the "Personal Information Form" including questions to determine the socio-demographic information of children and teachers, the "Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale - Updated Turkish Form" used to determine the teachers' sense of humor, and the "Humor Observation Form" prepared by the researcher to determine children's appreciation of the value of humor and used with a 5-minute video prepared by Eskidemir Meral & Koçer (2023), which includes examples appropriate to the stages in Paul McGhee's humor development theory.

#### ***Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale-Updated Turkish Form***

The Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale is a 24-item self-report scale developed by Thorson and Powell (1993). The scale, which was first adapted into Turkish by Aslan et al. (1999), was adapted again by Özdoğru (2018). The Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale-Updated Turkish Form used in this study was updated by Özdoğru (2018). Consisting of 4 dimensions and 24 items, the lowest total score that can be obtained from the scale is 0 and the highest is 96. The higher the total score, the higher the general sense of humor. The scale includes a general sense of humor score as well as four sub-dimensions. These are Generating Humor and Using it for Social Purposes; Using Humor as a Way of Coping; Attitude towards Humor Producers, and Evaluation of Humor. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the scale including all items is 0.894, while the coefficients of the sub-dimensions vary between 0.487 and 0.887. For this study, the calculated Cronbach Alpha value of the scale for all items is 0.921. For the sub-dimensions, it ranges between 0.774 and 0.861.

#### ***Humor Observation Form***

The Humor Observation Form is used together with a 5-minute video prepared by the researcher to determine the children's appreciation of the value of humor and containing examples appropriate to the stages in Paul McGhee's humor development theory prepared by

Eskidemir Meral & Koçer (2023). In the form, there are items with short descriptions of 26 scenes and sections for determining the children's laughter at these scenes and whether they find the video funny. While the children are watching the video, two researchers observe the children and record their laughing and not laughing at the scene on the form. The video is watched twice by the children. If the child laughs in any of the two viewings, 1 point is given to this item. If the child does not laugh in both viewings, that scene is scored as 0. The lowest score that can be obtained from the form is 0 and the highest score is 26. A high score on the form means that the child appreciates the value of humor. After the child watches the video, he/she is asked whether he/she finds the video funny or not, and a score of 1 is given if he/she finds it funny and 0 if he/she does not find it funny. Children were also asked which parts of the video they found funny. The Cronbach Alpha value calculated for all items in the Humor Observation Form in this study was 0.917.

### **Collection of Data and Analysis**

The data were collected between 24 April 2023 and 18 May 2023. After ethics committee permission was obtained, school administrators and teachers in the sample were interviewed and informed about the study. Teachers who volunteered to participate in the study signed the Informative Consent Form. Then, the teachers completed the Personal Information Form and the Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale- Updated Turkish Form. Informative Consent Forms were sent to the families of all children in the classes of the teachers who participated in the study. The study was explained to the children whose parents filled out the form and asked whether they wanted to participate in the study and their verbal consent was obtained. Children who volunteered were included in the study. Two children in the same class watched the video together in a separate quiet area. Meanwhile, the researchers observed the children, recorded their laughter on the "Humor Observation Form" and then asked them if they found the video funny.

Statistical Package for Social Science Version 26.0 (SPSS) program was used to evaluate the data. Before proceeding with the analysis, normal distribution condition was sought for the scale variables. The skewness and kurtosis values of the scale variables were found to be between -1 and +1 (Table 3) and it was determined that they met the normal distribution requirement (Hair et al., 2013). In the evaluation of the data; descriptive statistics, Cronbach Alpha coefficient in determining the reliability levels of the scales, Pearson correlation coefficient, Pearson Chi-Square, Continuity Correction and independent sample t

test were preferred in comparing demographic variables and scale variables. Statistical significance level was taken as  $p < 0.05$ .

### Findings

The findings of the study are presented in three sections: the findings on teachers' sense of humor, children's appreciation of the value of humor, and the relationship between teachers' sense of humor and their appreciation of the value of humor.

The mean scores and descriptive statistics for the Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale and Humor Observation Form are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3**

*Mean Scores For Scale Variables*

Variables	Min-Max	Mean	Min-Max	Total mean score	Skewness	Kurtosis	Cronbach Alpha
<b>PDD (Instructor)</b>	0-4	3,06±0,51	0-96	66,65±12,64	-,552	,274	0,921
<b>MUSSK</b>	0-4	2,71±0,62	0-44	29,61±7,23	,165	-,106	0,861
<b>MBSC</b>	0-4	2,66±0,71	0-24	13,10±3,47	-,547	,008	0,858
<b>MUKT</b>	0-4	3,48±0,55	0-20	17,29±2,98	-,896	-,015	0,774
<b>MD</b>	0-4	3,39±0,69	0-8	6,63±1,69	-,800	-,652	0,802
<b>MDTE (C)</b>	0-1	0,45±0,19	0-26	12,72±6,96	-,148	-,333	0,917

MCCS= Multidimensional Sense of Humor; MCCS= Generating Humor and Using it for Social Purposes; MCCS= Using Humor as a Way of Coping; MCCT= Attitude Towards Humor Producers MD= Evaluation of Humor; MDTE (Child) = Appreciation of Humor (Child)

In Table 3, the mean scores of the multidimensional sense of humor scale in teachers are  $3.06 \pm 0.51$  overall,  $2.71 \pm 0.62$  for producing humor and using it for social purposes,  $2.66 \pm 0.71$  for using humor as a way of coping,  $3.48 \pm 0.55$  for attitude towards people who produce humor, and  $3.39 \pm 0.69$  for evaluating humor. The mean score of Appreciating the Value of Humor in Children is  $0.45 \pm 0.19$ .

### Findings Regarding Teachers' Sense of Humor

The findings regarding the evaluation of teachers' sense of humor are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4**

*Evaluation of Teachers' Sense of Humor*

Socio-demographic variables			Multidimensional Sense of Humor (MDHM)				
			MUSSK	MBSC	MUKT	MD	PDD (Instructor)
<b>Seniority</b>	N	%	$\bar{x} \pm ss$	$\bar{x} \pm ss$	$\bar{x} \pm ss$	$\bar{x} \pm ss$	$\bar{x} \pm ss$
11-15 years	21	44,7	3,04±0,52	2,71±0,63	2,47±0,76	3,37±0,60	3,64±0,50
16 years and above	26	55,3	3,07±0,51	2,72±0,63	2,81±0,65	3,57±0,50	3,19±0,77
<i>Test value</i>			T:-0,169	T:-0,067	T:-1,642	T:-1,242	T:2,297
<i>P value</i>			P:0,866	P:0,947	P:0,108	P:0,221	P:0,026*
<b>Class Size</b>							
10-20 children	30	63,2	3,04±0,45	2,70±0,48	2,58±0,69	3,50±0,52	3,40±,68
21-30 children	17	36,2	3,09±0,62	2,74±0,84	2,79±0,75	3,45±0,61	3,38±0,74
<i>Test value</i>			T:-0,279	T:-0,198	T:-0,927	T:0,276	T:0,082
<i>P value</i>			P:0,782	P:0,844	P:0,359	P:0,784	P:0,935
<b>Class age</b>							
48-60 months	24	51,1	3,02±0,58	2,70±0,75	2,63±0,74	3,38±0,63	3,35±0,72
61 months and over	23	48,9	3,10±0,44	2,72±0,47	2,68±0,69	3,58±0,45	3,43±0,67
<i>Test value</i>			T:-0,574	T:-0,111	T:-0,240	T:-1,207	T:-0,392
<i>P value</i>			P:0,569	P:0,912	P:0,811	P:0,234	P:0,697
<b>Teacher Age</b>							
30-40 years old	27	57,4	2,98±0,54	2,59±0,63	2,52±0,72	3,38±0,61	3,44±0,72
41 and above	20	42,6	3,16±0,46	2,87±0,59	2,84±0,68	3,62±0,44	3,32±0,67
<i>Test value</i>			T:-1,200	T:-1,533	T:-1,563	T:-1,471	T:0,575
<i>P value</i>			P:0,236	P:0,132	P:0,125	P:0,148	P:0,568

\*p<0.05; T: Independent sample t test was applied. MUSSK= Multidimensional Sense of Humor (Teacher); MBSC= Generating Humor and Using it for Social Purposes; MUKT= Using Humor as a Way of Coping; MD= Evaluation of Humor; MDTE (Child) = Appreciation of the Value of Humor (Child)

According to Table 4, it was determined that there was no significant difference between teachers' sense of humor and teachers' age, class size, and age of children in their classes (p>0.05). It was determined that there was a significant difference between teachers' sense of humor and teachers' seniority levels (p:0,026) and the sense of humor of teachers with a seniority level of 11-15 years was significantly higher than those with a seniority level of 16 years or more.

**Findings on Children's Appreciation of the Value of Humor**

The evaluation of children according to their appreciation of the value of humor is presented in Table 5.

**Table 5**

*Children's Socio-Demographic Information and Their Appreciation of the Value of Humor*

Socio-demographic variables	Appreciating the Value of Humor		
	x±ss	Test value	P value
<b>Gender</b>	%		
Girl	5	0,47±0,26	T:-1,288
94 3,3			P:0,198
Male	4	0,51±0,27	
70 6,7			
<b>Age</b>			
48-60 months	3	0,38±0,26	T:-5,194
12 0,8			P:0,000*
61-72 months	6	0,53±0,25	
52 9,2			
<b>Funny situation</b>			
Funny	8	0,52±0,25	T:5,198
15 6,5			P:0,000*
Not funny	1	0,31±0,27	
9 3,5			

According to Table 5, there was no significant difference between children's appreciation of humor value and their gender (p:0,198). A significant difference was found between children's age groups and their appreciation of humor value (p:0,000). The appreciation of humor value was significantly higher in the age group of 61-72 months. It was determined that there was a significant difference between children's evaluation of humor as funny and appreciation of humor value (p:0,000) and appreciation of humor value was significantly higher in those who evaluated humor as funny.

The results of children's evaluation of the humor's funny status according to socio-demographic information are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6**

*Evaluation of Children's Finding the Video Funny or Not Funny According to Demographic Variables*

Socio-demographic variables		Finding it Funny		Test value	
		Funny	Not funny		
<b>Gender**</b>	<b>Girl</b>	N	165	29	P:0,375
		%	85,1	14,9	
	<b>Male</b>	N	150	20	
		%	88,2	11,8	
<b>Age***</b>	<b>48-60 months</b>	N	87	25	P:0,002*
		%	77,7	22,3	
	<b>61-72 months</b>	N	228	24	
		%	86,5	13,5	

\*p<0.05; \*\* Pearson Chi-Square; \*\*\* Continuity Correction tests were applied.

In Table 6, no significant difference was found between children's finding the video funny and their gender. However, 85.1% of girls and 88.2% of boys found the video funny. It was found that there was a significant difference between the age groups and finding the video funny (p:0.000), and 77.7% of children aged 48-60 months and 86.5% of children aged 61-72 months evaluated humor as funny. As the age of the children increases, their finding the video funny increases significantly.

### **Findings on the Relationship between Teachers' Sense of Humor and Appreciation of the Value of Humor**

The correlation analysis between teachers' mean scores on the multidimensional sense of humor scale and children's appreciation of humor is shown in Table 7.

**Table 7**

*Correlation Analysis Between Teachers' Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale and Children's Appreciation of Humor*

Variables	PDD (Instructor)	MUSSK	MBSC	MUKT	MD	MDTE (Q)
<b>PDD (Instructor)</b>	1	,802**	,853**	,773**	,731**	,062
<b>MUSSK</b>	,802**	1	,708**	,501**	,336*	,179
<b>MBSC</b>	,853**	,708**	1	,515**	,437**	,007

	,000	,000		,000	,002	,961
<b>MUKT</b>	,773**	,501**	,515**	1	,501**	-,081
	,000	,000	,000		,000	,590
<b>MD</b>	,731**	,336*	,437**	,501**	1	,078
	,000	,021	,002	,000		,603
<b>MDTE (Q)</b>	,062	,179	,007	-,081	,078	1
	,681	,229	,961	,590	,603	

\*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01;MCCS= Multidimensional Sense of Humor; MCCS= Generating Humor and Using it for Social Purposes; MCCS= Using Humor as a Way of Coping; MCCT= Attitude towards Humor Producers MD= Evaluation of Humor; MDTE (Child) = Appreciation of Humor (Child)

Table 7 shows that there is no significant relationship between teachers' mean scores on the multidimensional sense of humor scale and their appreciation of children's humor (p>0.05).

### Discussion and Results

This study, which was conducted with 364 children and 47 preschool teachers to determine the relationship between preschool teachers' sense of humor and children's appreciation of humor in their classrooms, is a relational survey model.

The average total score of the teachers on the multidimensional sense of humor scale is 66.65. Considering that the highest score that can be obtained from the scale is 96, it can be said that teachers' sense of humor is at a good level. When the teachers' sense of humor was examined in terms of sub-dimensions; the highest mean scores were in the dimensions of attitude towards people who produce humor and evaluation of humor, while the lowest mean scores were in the dimensions of using humor as a way of coping and producing humor and using it for social purposes. Since a fun learning approach is needed to develop children's cognitive, social-emotional and psychomotor aspects in early childhood, it is important for preschool teachers to use humor as part of the teaching and learning process (Na'imah et al., 2020). The higher the teachers' sense of humor, the more they will include humor in their classrooms and appreciate the humor of children who produce humor in their classrooms. For this reason, the fact that preschool teachers' sense of humor was at a good level in this study suggests that teachers also include humor in the classroom and appreciate the value of humor. Similar to this study, Gültekin & Ulutaş (2021) found that teachers found humor necessary in preschool education and needed knowledge and experience in planning and implementing activities that support humor. In the study conducted by Eskidemir Meral et al. (2019a) with preschool teachers and Çalışandemir & Tagay (2015) with pre-service preschool teachers, it

was determined that the participants had high scores of participatory and self-improving humor styles, which are positive humor styles, and low scores of aggressive and self-destructive humor styles, which are negative humor styles. In the study conducted by Yılmaz & Erden (2022) with preschool teachers, it was found that teachers were aware of the contributions of humor to children. In another study conducted by Eskidemir Meral et al. (2019b), it was determined that the total scores of preschool teachers from the attitude scale towards the use of humor in education were high. In the study of Gültekin & Ulutaş (2021), it was determined that teachers found humor necessary in preschool education and in the study of Balta (2016), it was determined that teachers' attitudes towards humor were positive. In the study of Pourghaz et al. (2016) with primary school teachers, it was determined that teachers' sense of humor was at a medium level. Colker (2008) identified 12 characteristics that preschool teachers should have and stated that one of them is a sense of humor and that learning should be fun, children expect to be loved, respected and laughed at when they joke. Cartwright (1993) also emphasized that a well-rounded preschool teacher should have a sense of humor. Humor makes the learning process more enjoyable and interaction is strengthened when educators actively participate in their students' laughter (Steele, 1998). The high sense of humor of the teachers in this study can be interpreted as having one of the characteristics of an effective teacher.

It was determined that there was no significant difference between teachers' sense of humor and teachers' age, class size, and the age of children in their classes. It was determined that there was a significant difference between teachers' sense of humor and their seniority levels, and the sense of humor of teachers with a seniority of 11-15 years was significantly higher than those with a seniority of 16 years or more. It can be said that the fact that there is no significant difference between teachers' sense of humor and class size and the age of the children in their classes is due to the fact that humor is a personality trait and therefore teachers' sense of humor is not affected by the variables in their classes. When the studies in the literature were examined, it was seen that different results were obtained in the studies determining the relationship between teachers' socio-demographic characteristics and their humor styles, their understanding of humor and their use of humor in education. In the study conducted by Yılmaz & Altinkurt (2016), similar to the results of this study, it was found that teachers with less seniority had a more positive humor style. Chaniotakis (2010) revealed that older teachers use humor less in their teaching compared to their younger colleagues. Eskidemir Meral et al. (2019a) found that preschool teachers' humor styles did not differ



significantly depending on their age and professional seniority. Similar to the results of this study, in the study conducted by Uyanık et al. (2015), it was determined that there was no significant difference between the mean humor style scores of pre-service preschool teachers and their ages. In the study conducted by Altinkurt & Yılmaz (2011) with primary school teachers and Yılmaz (2023) with preschool teachers, it was determined that humor styles did not differ according to seniority and age variables. In Balta's (2016) study, it was found that teachers' attitudes towards using humor in education did not vary according to gender and years of service.

Loizou and Recchia (2019) define humor as a produced or appreciated experience that causes a smile or laughter among its social indicators. In this study, the indicator of children's appreciation of humor was considered as children's smiling. In addition, children were asked whether they found the video funny. As a result of the study, the mean score of appreciation of humor in children was 0.45. According to this value, which can vary between 0-1, it can be said that children's appreciation of the value of humor is at a moderate level. In Yalçıntaş & Kartal's (2023) study, similar to the findings of this study, it was found that the average humor understanding scores of primary school students were at a medium level. Humor is a skill that can be developed, taught and learned (Lyon, 2006). The fact that children's appreciation of the value of humor is at a moderate level in this study shows that it is necessary to make various educational arrangements to develop preschool children's sense of humor. In a study conducted by Hoicka and Akhtar (2011) with 30-36-month-old children, it was found that children were sensitive to jokes, laughed when they were joked at, and children tended to continue this humor. Exposing children to more and more varied jokes and using humor more and more effectively in educational environments may be effective in developing children's sense of humor.

It was determined that there was no significant difference between the gender of the children and both their appreciation of humor value and their level of finding the video funny. Bergen (2020) stated that researchers examining the development of humor in infants, preschool children and primary school-age children generally determined that the early humor of both boys and girls is similar. The fact that humor differs according to gender in adulthood (Abel, 2002) but not at young ages has been attributed to environmental rather than biological reasons that gradually emerge with age.

It was determined that there was a significant difference between children's age groups and both their appreciation of the value of humor and their level of finding the video funny.

61-72-month-old children's levels of appreciating the value of humor and finding the video funny are higher than 48-60-month-old children. It can be said that as the age of children increases, their appreciation of the value of humor and finding the video funny increases significantly. This finding is an expected finding. McGhee (2002) stated that the humor examples that individuals understand and produce will have qualitative differences in the stages of cognitive development with age. The increase in children's appreciation of the value of humor as their age increases may be due to the progress in their cognitive development. According to Loizou (2005), children's appreciation of the situation in a humor element

In order for them to enjoy the humor, they need to be aware of what this situation is and how it is changing. Dissonance creates a "problem" in children's minds and when they can solve this problem, they can enjoy humor (Loizou, 2005). In this study, 61-72-month-old children may have found the video funnier and appreciated the value of humor more because they were more cognitively competent than 48-60-month-old children in solving the problem in humor scenes.

It was determined that there was a significant difference between children's evaluation of humor as funny and appreciation of humor value. It was determined that children who evaluated the video as funny had a significantly higher appreciation of humor value. However, contrary to the findings of this study, Addyman et al. (2018) conducted a study with 31-49 month-old children and found that cartoons rated as funnier by children did not cause more laughter and smiles. This was explained by the fact that young children did not fully understand what was asked of them. In Eskidemir Meral's (2023) study, it was found that there was a 30% discrepancy between 48-73 month-old children's laughter response to Nasreddin Hodja jokes and their finding them funny.

It was determined that there was no significant relationship between teachers' sense of humor and children's appreciation of humor. It is thought that this situation may be due to two reasons. Although the teachers in the study have a good sense of humor, they may not include humor in the classroom. For this reason, it may have been found that there was no relationship between children's appreciation of the value of humor and their teachers' sense of humor. The other reason may be that most of the children have been attending the preschool education class with the same teacher for one year. In this study, children were not asked how many years they had been in the same teacher's class. However, being with the teacher for one year may have ensured that they were not affected by the teacher's sense of humor. Franzini (2002) stated that the more teachers include humor in their classes and the more they support

children's humor, the easier it will be for children's sense of humor to develop. Stenius et al. (2022) stated that it is important for educators to understand how adults can learn how children can learn to use humor, to understand children's own humor and to recognize its process-based nature. Using humor in the pedagogy and everyday life of early childhood education and care increases a sense of community and brings all members of the community closer together. Using humor in education is a skill and this skill can be learned (Stenius et al., 2022). Lovorn & Holaway (2015) found that although K-12 teachers believe that laughter in the classroom helps students learn more easily and retain information more effectively, most of them do not consciously include humor in the planning or implementation of their lessons. Teachers also reported that humor can be distracting and disruptive in the classroom. In studies with preschool teachers, most of the teachers reported that they encouraged the production of humor (Bergen, 1992; Taratori et al., 2007). In the study of Gültekin & Ulutaş (2021), it was found that although teachers found humor necessary in preschool education, they needed knowledge and experience in planning and implementing activities that support humor. In the study of Yurt and Keleş (2019), it was determined that preschool teachers were open to various improvements in exhibiting humor understanding characteristics.

As a result, 61-72 month old children's levels of appreciating the value of humor and finding the video funny were higher than 48-60 month old children. It was determined that there was no significant relationship between teachers' sense of humor and children's appreciation of humor.

### **Recommendations**

Studies can be conducted to examine the relationship between preschool teachers' use of humor in the classroom and children's production of humor and appreciation of the value of humor.

Studies can be conducted to examine the relationship between classroom teachers' sense of humor and children's appreciation of the value of humor.

Similar studies can be conducted with children of different age groups.

Studies can be conducted to examine the relationship between parents' sense of humor and children's sense of humor.

Studies can be conducted to determine how and how often children and teachers produce humor in the classroom environment.

Similar studies can be conducted with male preschool teachers.

In order to support children's humor development, materials containing humor can be included in educational environments.

If preschool teachers include humor in the educational environment and support children to produce humor, it can contribute to children's appreciation of the value of humor.

### **Compliance with Ethical Standard**

In this article, the journal writing rules, publication principles, research and publication ethics, and journal ethical rules were followed.

This research was carried out after the permission of Akdeniz University Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee dated 03.04.2023 and numbered 182.

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