Investigation of the Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence Levels and Decision-Making Skills of Primary School Students[1]

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Abstract

This study was conducted to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence levels and decision-making skills of primary school students. The research was conducted using the survey model of quantitative research methods. The population of the study consisted of fourth grade primary school students studying in Ümraniye, Istanbul in the 2022-2023 academic year. The sample of the research was a total of 820 students (396 Females and 424 males), selected by convenient sampling method. In this study, data were collected using the "Personal Information Form", "Decision Making Skills Scale for Primary School Students" and "Emotional Intelligence Scale for Children". The data were analyzed by correlation analysis, independent sample t-test, and one-way Analysis of Variance in line with the sub-problems of the study. According to the results obtained from the findings of the study, it was concluded that there is a positive and significant relationship between student's emotional intelligence levels and decision-making skills.

Keywords: Intelligence, Emotion, Emotional Intelligence, Decision-Making Skills, Primary School.

Introduction

Primary school is an important period for learning basic life skills. In this period, the opportunities offered to the child, the steps towards the formation of the self, and the interactions between the family and the school are of great importance. The conditions of the child's immediate environment, the opportunities offered, and healthy interaction environments contribute greatly to the idealization of the educational process. This situation is of great importance for the development of emotional intelligence (Yavuzer, 2004). It is argued that success or failure in human life is closely related to emotional intelligence. The ability to lead a successful and productive life and make the right choices is related to the development of emotional intelligence. For this reason, developing individuals' emotional intelligence skills has gained great importance. Training children to develop their emotional intelligence skills at an early age are critical in ensuring that they become individuals who can effectively manage their emotions and empathize with others in the future (Özkanlı, 2018). In addition to academic success, emotional intelligence and decision-making skills play an important role in an individual's successful life. Emotional intelligence can be defined as the ability to understand and manage one's own emotions and other people's emotions (Mayer & Salovey, 1990). Decision-making skill is the ability of an

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individual to evaluate the options in the best way in different situations, to predict the consequences, and to show the will to make the most appropriate decision (Janis & Mann, 1977). Developing emotional intelligence and decision-making skills of primary school students is critical to the acquisition of basic life skills.

Emotional intelligence is considered to be a key factor in decision-making processes and problem-solving, playing an important role in analyzing in-depth the options that an individual face in achieving their goals and choosing the best path. Through emotional intelligence, people can understand the changes occurring around them and predict the consequences of these changes, which allows them to make more informed predictions about the personal and environmental consequences of their decisions and actions (Türkmenoğlu-Ulusu, 2019). Throughout their lives, people face countless opportunities and obstacles and sometimes face unpredictable situations. In such situations, there may not always be a clear answer, and it may be necessary to choose the most appropriate one among the available options (Savages & Armstrong, 1996). In the decision-making process, individuals may have to choose the most appropriate option by evaluating the available information. Emotional intelligence and decision-making skills play an important role in choosing the most appropriate one among the options.

Decision-making can be defined as choosing the most appropriate option among two or more alternatives (Öncül, 2013). In order to make the right decision, a person should be able to choose the most appropriate option among these alternatives or use his/her creativity and think of a new option. Today, with the effect of the constantly changing environment, some decisions can be made by using information only, while some decisions can be made by associating them with the person's perspective and values (Kaltsounis, 1987). For this reason, the person who will make a decision should evaluate the situation well and decide according to certain criteria. For the decision to be made, the options should be examined and reviewed very well and in-depth questioning should be done (Sever, 2018). The consequences of some decisions people make about themselves or the people they are responsible for can deeply affect their lives. This requires that decision-making skills should be considered as one of the basic life skills that need to be learned.

Decision-making as a basic life skill can also be related to other life skills. Emotional intelligence plays an important role in making healthy decisions and solving problems. For this reason, emotional intelligence can also be decisive in decision-making. Alternatives should be evaluated well for the most appropriate choice. For this, emotional intelligence enables the individual to create various solutions, develop alternatives, recognize changes in the environment and evaluate the effects of these changes, and predict the possible consequences of the decision to be taken on oneself and other people (Türkmenoğlu-Ulusu, 2019). Emotional intelligence has a crucial role for individuals to be successful in their relationships with people and their ability to adapt (Gündüz, 2021). It has been determined that people with high emotional intelligence are more self-confident, more successful, happier, more productive, and have higher job responsibility (Acar, 2002). This situation makes it necessary to improve the emotional intelligence and decision-making skills of primary school students.

The literature includes research about emotional intelligence (Çullu, 2019; Erdoğdu, 2008; Harrod & Scheer, 2005; İşmen, 2001; Köse, 2020; Mayer et al., 2001; Özkanlı, 2018; Woitaszewski & Aalsma, 2004; Yeşilyaprak, 2001; Yolcu, 2019) and decision making skills (Bednar & Fisher, 2003; Brown & Mann, 1990; Deniz & Avşaroğlu, 2014; Demirbaş- Nemli, 2018; Ersever, 1996; Güneypınar, 2021; Köksal & İşmen-

Gazioğlu, 2007; Sever & Ersoy, 2019; Tekin & Ulaş, 2016; Uçar, 2019; Yalın, 2021; Yaşar, 2019). Regarding emotional intelligence, Çullu (2019) investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence and school refusal in primary school students; Erdoğdu (2008) investigated the emotional intelligence levels of university students; Harrod and Scheer (2005) investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence and demographic characteristics of young people; İşmen (2001) investigated the relationship between problem-solving skills and emotional intelligence; Köse (2020) investigated the effect of parental attitudes on emotional intelligence and decision-making styles of adolescents. Mayer, Perkins, Caruso, and Salovey (2001) examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and superior emotional abilities and ability to manage social difficulties; Özkanlı (2018) examined the relationship between children's emotional intelligence levels and aggression levels; Woitaszewski and Aalsma (2004) examined the effect of emotional intelligence on the success of talented students; Yeşilyaprak (2001) examined the educational implications of emotional intelligence; Yolcu (2019) examined the effects of emotional intelligence levels of primary school students on problem-solving skills.

Regarding decision-making skills Brown and Mann (1990) investigated the decision-making processes of adolescents and their participation in family decisions; Bednar and Fisher (2003), the relationship between adolescents' decision-making skills and parenting styles; Deniz and Avşaroğlu (2014), the level of explaining the emotional intelligence abilities of university students' self-esteem and decision-making styles in decision-making; Demirbaş- Nemli (2018), the development of cognitive decision-making skills of primary school fourth-grade students; Ersever (1996) examined the effect of an interaction and decision-making skills training program developed for university students on students' decision-making styles; Güneypınar (2021) examined the effect of fairy tale-based decision-making activities with third-grade primary school students on students' decision-making skills; Köksal and İşmen-Gazioğlu (2007) examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and decision-making strategies in adolescents. Sever and Ersoy (2019) examined the development of a decision-making skills scale for primary school students; Tekin and Ulaş (2016) examined the decision-making skills of fourth-grade primary school students; Uçar (2019) examined the decision-making skills of first-grade primary school students; Yalın (2021) examined the decision- making skills of seventh-grade students; Yaşar (2019) examined the development of decision-making skills of primary school students in life science course.

Based on the studies in the literature, this study examined the relationship between primary school students' emotional intelligence levels and decision-making skills, and in this context, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. Is there a significant relationship between students' emotional intelligence levels and their decision- making skills?
2. Do the emotional intelligence levels of the students differ significantly in terms of their gender, whether they receive pre-school education or not, the income level of the family, whether or not the family consults with the students when making decisions about the child, and whether or not the teacher consults with the students when making decisions about the class?
3. Do the decision-making skills of students differ significantly in terms of their gender, whether they receive preschool education or not, the income level of the family, whether or not the family consults with the students when making decisions about the child, and whether or not

the teacher consults with the students when making decisions about the class?

Method

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

Research Model

This research was conducted using the survey model. Survey models are research models that aim to describe a past or present situation as it exists (Karasar, 2011).

Population and Sample

The population of the study consisted of fourth-grade primary school students studying in the Ümraniye district of Istanbul province in the 2022-2023 academic year. The sample of the study was a total of 820 fourth grade primary school students, 396 (49%) of whom were Females and 424 (51%) of whom were males, selected from the population by convenience sampling method. Convenience sampling is defined as a sampling of individuals who are in the immediate vicinity, easy to reach, and willing to participate in the research voluntarily (Ekiz, 2009). The schools were grouped as lower, middle, and upper socioeconomic levels according to their proximity to the district center and the study group was randomly selected from these three groups. The personal characteristics of the participants are given in Table 1.

Table 1

Personal Characteristics of the Participants

Variable	Feature	N	%
Gender	Female	396	49
	Male	424	51
Preschool Education Status	Yes	635	77
	No	185	23
Family Income Status	Low	15	2
	Middle	593	72
	High	212	26
Family's level of caring about the student's opinion	Never Cares	22	3
	Cares a Little	237	29
	Cares a lot	561	68
Teacher's Level of Caring about Student's	Never Cares	33	4

Thinking	Cares a Little	195	24
	Cares a lot	592	72

When Table 1 is examined, it is seen that 49% of the students participating in the study were females and 51% were males; 77% of the students received preschool education, 23% did not receive preschool education; 2% of the students' families had low, 72% had medium, and 26% had high-income levels. Table 1 shows that 3% of the students's families did not care at all, 29% cared a little, 68% cared a lot about their children's opinions when making decisions about issues concerning their children. 4% of students' teachers did not care at all, 24% cared a little, 72% cared a lot about their students' opinions when they made decisions concerning their students.

Data Collection Tools

In this study, data were collected through the "Personal Information Form", "Decision-Making Skills Scale" and "Emotional Intelligence Scale for Children".

Personal Information Form

The personal information form created by the researchers included questions about gender, preschool education status, family income according to the student's perception, the level of importance the family attaches to the views of the child in matters concerning the child, and the level of importance the teacher attaches to the views of the students in matters concerning the students.

Decision-Making Skills Scale for Primary School Students

Decision-Making Scale was developed by Sever and Ersoy (2019). After exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, it was revealed that the scale structure was single-factor. The factor loadings of the 15 items in the scale were calculated to be between .53 and .74, the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient was calculated as .89, and the KMO value was calculated as .92. In the validity and reliability research, content validity control, lower-upper 27% groups, item-total correlation, test-retest correlation, and Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient were used. The total variance explained by the scale was calculated as 40.078. Each item in the four-point Likert-type scale is rated as never (1), sometimes (2), usually (3) and always (4). A total of 15 to 60 points can be obtained from the scale. In this study, the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency value was .79 (Sever & Ersoy, 2019).

Emotional Intelligence Scale for Children (EIS)

"Emotional Intelligence Scale for Children" was developed by Küçükkaragöz and Kocabaş (2012) and consisted of 18 items. In the four-point Likert-type scale, each item is graded as never (1), sometimes (2), often (3) and always (4). The Cronbach Alpha reliability of the scale was .72 in total; managing emotions .84, empathy .72, emotional awareness .60, and motivation sub-dimension .59. Items 4, 7, 12, and 14 of the Emotional Intelligence Scale were reverse scored as they were negative items. Items 8, 11, 16, and 18; 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, and 10; 6, 13, 15, and 17; motivation; 4, 7, 12, and 14 are in the sub-dimensions of "managing emotions". In this study, the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient was calculated as .76 (Küçükkaragöz & Kocabaş, 2012).

Data Collection and Analysis

The measurement tools were delivered to 5 public primary schools in the Ümraniye district of Istanbul province by the researchers. For this, permission was first obtained from the owners of the scales. Then, ethics committee permission was obtained from Istanbul Medeniyet University Educational Sciences Ethics Committee with the letter dated 03/10/2022 and numbered 2022/08-04 regarding the ethical appropriateness of the application of the measurement tools, and then research permission was obtained from the Istanbul Provincial Directorate of National Education and implementation permission was obtained from the school directorates where the research would be conducted. The scales were administered by the researchers by personally visiting the relevant schools for no more than one class hour. The scales were administered in the classes where the students were studying by their class teachers. The research was conducted voluntarily. Participants were informed that the study did not involve any uncomfortable situations and that they could leave the study if desired for any reason. In addition, it was confirmed by the researchers that the participant information would not be shared with anyone during and after the study and great care was taken to conduct the research within the framework of ethical principles.

First, skewness and kurtosis analyses were performed to determine whether the data were normally distributed. Following this, the data were analyzed by correlation analysis, independent sample t-test, and one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) in line with the sub-problems of the study. Correlation analysis was used to determine the relationships between variables. In addition, while independent samples t-test was used to compare variables with two categories, ANOVA was used to compare variables with more than two categories. When there was a significant difference, a post hoc test was performed to determine the source of the significant difference. In addition to the significance values of the statistical data, the eta-square (η^2) was also examined for effect size values. The effect size value allows more accurate judgments to be made on the results by taking into account the deviations arising from the sample size (Özsoy & Özsoy, 2013). Accordingly, if the effect size is .01, it is interpreted as having a small effect, .06 as having a medium effect, and .14 as having a large effect (Cohen, 1988). In this study, the effect size was determined according to these values.

Table 2

Students' Mean Scores from the Measurement Tools

Scales and Dimensions	Mean±ss	Bottom-Upper
Decision Making Skills	44.8±7.7	15-60
Emotional Intelligence Dimensions		
Emotion Awareness	3.1±0.6	1-4
Empathy	2.9±0.6	1-4
Motivation	3.3±0.5	1.25-4
Managing Emotions	2.6±0.8	1-4

Table 2 shows the mean scores of the students who participated in the study. When the findings obtained are examined, it is seen that the mean level of decision-making skills of the students participating

in the study is 44.8±7.7. When the averages of Emotional Intelligence Dimensions are examined, it is seen that the mean level of emotional awareness of the students participating in the study is 3.1±0.6, the mean level of empathy is 2.9±0.6, the mean level of motivation is 3.3±0.5 and the mean level of managing emotions is 2.6±0.8.

Normality Analysis

Within the scope of the normality examination of the study, the skewness and kurtosis values of the scale and scale sub-dimensions to be used in the hypothesis tests of the study were examined. In this context, skewness and kurtosis values obtained between -1 and +1 indicate that the data are normally distributed (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2005) and allow the use of parametric tests in hypothesis testing. The values obtained outside of this range indicate that the data are not normally distributed and nonparametric tests should be used in hypothesis testing.

Table 3

Normality Examinations of the Scales Used in the Study

Scales and Dimensions	Skewness	Kurtosis
Decision-Making Skills	.009	.187
Emotional Intelligence Dimensions		
Emotion Awareness	-.437	-.260
Empathy	-.438	-.516
Motivation	-.850	.240
Managing Emotions	-.254	-.972

Table 3 shows the skewness and kurtosis values of the scale and scale sub-dimensions used in the study. When the findings obtained were examined, it was determined that the skewness and kurtosis values of the measurement tools were between -1 and +1, therefore, the data showed normal distribution and it was decided to use parametric tests in hypothesis testing.

Findings

In this section, the findings obtained through the research are discussed in line with the subproblems of the research.

Findings on the Relationship between Students' Emotional Intelligence Levels and Decision Making Skills

Table 4

The Relationship Between Students' Emotional Intelligence Levels and Decision-Making Skills

Scale Dimensions	1	2	3	4	5
1. Decision Making Skills	1	.426**	.481**	.520**	.169**
2. Emotion Awareness		1	.343**	.447**	.213**
3. Empathy			1	.408**	.117**
4. Motivation				1	.160**
5. Managing Emotions					1

Table 4 shows that there is a significant, positive and average correlation between students' decision-making skills and their emotional intelligence levels in the dimensions of emotion awareness (r= .426; p<.01), empathy (r= 481; p<.01) and motivation (r= .520; p<.01); and a significant, positive and weak correlation in the dimension of managing emotions (r= .169; p<.01).

Findings Related to Students' Emotional Intelligence Levels

Table 5

t-Test Results Regarding Emotional Intelligence Levels of Students According to Their Gender

Dimensions	Gender	N	$\bar{x}$	*ss*	*t*	*p*	η^2
Emotion Awareness	Female	396	3.16	0.61	2.737	.006	.009
	Male	424	3.05	0.60			
Empathy	Female	396	3.07	0.61	6.146	.000	.044
	Male	424	2.80	0.66			
Motivation	Female	396	3.36	0.58	1.984	.048	.005
	Male	424	3.28	0.56			
Managing Emotions	Female	396	2.79	0.87	3.210	.001	.012
	Male	424	2.59	0.87			

Table 5 shows that the emotional intelligence levels of the students participating in the study differed significantly by gender in favor of females in the dimensions of emotional awareness ($t_{(818)}$ = 2.737; p<.01), empathy ($t_{(818)}$ = 6.146; p<.01), motivation ($t_{(818)}$ = 1.984; p<.05) and managing emotions ($t_{(818)}$ = 3.210; p<.01). When the eta-squared (η^2) values are examined, it is seen that the effect is small in the sub-dimensions of emotion awareness (.009), motivation (.005) and managing emotions (.012), while it is at a medium level in the sub-dimension of empathy (.044).

Table 6

t-Test Results Regarding Emotional Intelligence Levels of Students According to Whether or not They Receive Preschool Education

Dimensions	Status	N	$\bar{x}$	*ss*	*t*	*p*	η^2
Emotion Awareness	Yes	635	3.11	0.60	.647	.518	.001
	No	185	3.08	0.64			
Empathy	Yes	635	2.96	0.65	2.342	.019	.007
	No	185	2.83	0.66			
Motivation	Yes	635	3.34	0.56	2.161	.031	.006
	No	185	3.24	0.60			
Managing Emotions	Yes	635	2.69	0.88	.237	.813	.000
	No	185	2.67	0.87			

Table 6 shows that the students who participated in the study did not differ on the dimensions of emotion awareness ($t_{(818)}$ = .647; p>.01) and managing emotions ($t_{(818)}$ = .237; p>.01) according to whether they had pre-school education or not; they differed significantly in favor of the students who had pre-school education on the dimensions of empathy ($t_{(818)}$ = 2.342; p<.05) and motivation ($t_{(818)}$ = 2.161; p<.05). When the eta-squared (η^2) values are examined, it is seen that the effect in the sub-dimensions of empathy (.007) and motivation (.006) in favor of those who received preschool education is at a small level.

Table 7

One-Way ANOVA Results Regarding Emotional Intelligence Levels of Students According to Income Status of Their Families

Dimensions	Status	N	$\bar{x}$	*ss*	*t*	*p*	Difference	η^2
Emotion Awareness	Low	15	2.90	0.70	4.810	.008	1-2	.012
	Middle	593	3.07	0.61			1-3	
	High	212	3.21	0.59				
Empathy	Low	15	2.94	0.80	.003	.997		.000
	Middle	593	2.93	0.65				
	High	212	2.93	0.65				
Motivation	Low	15	3.33	0.74	1.098	.334		.003
	Middle	593	3.30	0.57				
	High	212	3.37	0.54				
Managing	Low	15	2.50	1.02	.401	.670		.001

Emotions	Middle	593	2.70	0.87				
	High	212	2.67	0.90				

As seen in Table 7, according to the income level of students' families, there is a significant difference between emotional intelligence levels in the dimension of emotion awareness ($F_{(819)} = 4.810$; $p<.01$) in favor of students whose families have medium and high-income levels compared to students whose families have low-income levels. However, it is seen that there is no significant difference in the dimensions of empathy ($F_{(819)} = .003$; $p>.01$), motivation ($F_{(819)} = 1.098$; $p>.01$) and managing emotions ($F_{(819)} = 401$; $p>.01$). When the Eta-Square (η^2) value showing the effect size of the sub-dimension of emotion awareness (.012), where a significant difference was detected, it is seen that the effect is at a small level.

Table 8

One-Way ANOVA Results Regarding Emotional Intelligence Levels According to Whether the Family Cares about Students' Thoughts

Dimensions	Status	N	$\bar{x}$	*ss*	*F*	*p*	Difference	η^2
Emotion Awareness	Never cares	22	2.64	0.50	22.737	.000	1-2	.053
	Cares a little	237	2.93	0.56			1-3	
	Cares a lot	561	3.19	0.61				
Empathy	Never cares	22	2.77	0.66	10.500	.000	1-2	.025
	Cares a little	237	2.78	0.65			1-3	
	Cares a lot	561	3.00	0.64				
Motivation	Never cares	22	2.91	0.74	13.725	.000	1-2	.033
	Cares a little	237	3.21	0.54			1-3	
	Cares a lot	561	3.38	0.56				
Managing Emotions	Never cares	22	2.66	0.79	1.096	.335		.003
	Cares a little	237	2.62	0.85				
	Cares a lot	561	2.72	0.89				

In Table 8, it is seen that there is a significant difference in students' emotional intelligence levels according to the whether their families cares about their thoughts or not in the dimensions of emotional awareness ($F_{(819)} = 22.737$; $p<.01$), empathy ($F_{(819)} = 10.500$; $p<.01$), and motivation ($F_{(819)} = 13.725$; $p<.01$) in favor of the students whose opinions were taken into consideration. On the other hand, there was no significant difference in the dimension of managing emotions ($F_{(819)} = 1.096$; $p>.01$). In other words, it is seen that the emotional intelligence levels of the students participating in the study increase in direct proportion to the level of importance of their opinions on issues related to them in the dimensions of emotional awareness, empathy and motivation. When the Eta-Square (η^2) values showing the effect size

are examined, it is seen that the effect is medium in the sub-dimension of emotional awareness (.053), where a significant difference is detected, and small in the sub-dimensions of empathy (.025) and motivation (.033).

Table 9

One-Way ANOVA Results Regarding Emotional Intelligence Levels According to Whether the Teacher Cares about Students' Thoughts

Dimensions	Status	N	$\bar{x}$	*ss*	*F*	*p*	Difference	η^2
Emotion Awareness	Never cares	33	2.88	0.57	12.795	.000	1-3	.030
	Cares a little	195	2.94	0.58				
	Cares a lot	592	3.17	0.61				
Empathy	Never cares	33	2.74	0.63	13.170	.000	1-3	.031
	Cares a little	195	2.75	0.64				
	Cares a lot	592	3.00	0.64				
Motivation	Never cares	33	3.41	0.48	13.683	.000	1-2	.032
	Cares a little	195	3.14	0.61			3-2	
	Cares a lot	592	3.38	0.55				
Managing Emotions	Never cares	33	2.48	0.97	2.526	.081		.006
	Cares a little	195	2.60	0.85				
	Cares a lot	592	2.73	0.88				

As seen in Table 9, there is a significant difference in students' emotional intelligence levels according to the whether their teachers care about their opinions while making decisions about the classroom in the dimensions of emotional awareness ($F_{(819)} = 12.795$; $p<.01$), empathy ($F_{(819)} = 13.170$; $p<.01$), empathy ($F_{(819)} = 13.170$; $p<.01$) and motivation ($F_{(819)} = 13.683$; $p<.01$) in favor of the students whose opinions were taken into consideration. However, there was no significant difference in the dimension of managing emotions ($F_{(819)} = 2.526$; $p>.01$). In the dimensions of emotion awareness and empathy, it is seen that as the level of importance of students' thoughts increases, the scores they get from the scale also increase. When the Eta-Square (η^2) values showing the effect size are examined, it is seen that the effect is at a small level in the sub-dimensions of emotion awareness (.030), empathy (.031) and motivation (.032) where a significant difference is detected.

Findings Related to Students' Decision-Making Skills

Table 10

Results of t-Test Regarding Students' Decision-Making Skills According to Gender

Gender	N	$\bar{x}$	*ss*	*t*	*p*	η^2
Female	396	45.61	7.58	2.569	.010	.008
Male	424	44.21	7.93			

Table 10 shows that the decision-making skills of the students participating in the study differed significantly by gender in favor of Females ($t_{(818)} = 2.569$; $p<.01$). When the eta-squared (η^2) value showing the effect size is examined, it is seen that the effect (.008) in the difference is at a small level.

Table 11

Results of t-Test Regarding Decision-Making Skills According to Students' Preschool Education Status

Status	N	$\bar{x}$	*ss*	*t*	*p*	η^2
Yes	635	45.28	7.93	2.689	.007	.009
No	185	43.54	7.14			

Table 11 shows that the decision-making skills of the students participating in the study differed significantly in favor of those who received preschool education ($t_{(818)} = 2.689$; $p<.01$). When the eta-squared (η^2) value showing the effect size is examined, it is seen that the effect size (.009) is at a small level.

Table 12

One-Way ANOVA Results Regarding Students' Decision-Making Skills According to the Income Status of Their Families

Level	N	$\bar{x}$	*ss*	*F*	*p*	Difference	η^2
1. Low	15	47.33	6.43	4.161	.016	1-2	.010
2. Middle	593	44.41	7.79				
3. High	212	46.03	7.75				

Table 12 shows that according to the perceptions of the students participating in the study, there is a significant difference in students' decision-making skills according to their family income level ($F_{(819)} = 4.161$; $p<.05$) in favor of students with low family income group compared to those with medium family income group. When the eta-squared (η^2) value showing the effect size is examined, it is seen that the effect (.010) is at a small level.

Table 13

One-Way ANOVA Results Regarding Decision-Making Skills According to Whether the Family Cares about Students' Thoughts

Level of Importance	N	$\bar{x}$	ss	F	p	Difference	η^2
1. Doesn't care at all	22	43.23	6.53	30.663	.000	2-3	.070
2.Cares a little	237	41.75	7.71				
3.cares a lot	561	46.27	7.48				

Table 13 shows that there is a significant difference ($F_{(819)}$ = 30.663; p<.01) in students' decision-making skills according to whether their families care about their thoughts when making decisions about them in favor of those whose families care a lot about their thoughts. When the eta-squared (η^2) value showing the effect size is examined, it is seen that the effect size (.070) is at a moderate level.

Table 14

One-Way ANOVA Results Regarding Decision-Making Skills According to Whether the Teacher Cares about Students' Thoughts

Level of Importance	N	$\bar{x}$	*ss*	*F*	*p*	*Difference*	η^2
1. Doesn't care at all	33	42.27	7.88	27.141	.000	2-3	.062
2. Cares a little	195	41.67	7.44				
3. Cares a lot	592	46.09	7.57				

Table 14 shows that there is a significant difference ($F_{(819)}$ = 27.141; *p*<.01) in students' decision-making skills according to whether their teachers care about their opinions when making decisions about the classroom, in favor of those whose teachers care a lot about their opinions. When the eta-squared (η^2) value showing the effect size is examined, it is seen that the effect size (.062) is at a moderate level.

Discussion

In this section, discussions, conclusions, and recommendations are discussed according to the sub-problems of the study.

The Relationship Between Students' Emotional Intelligence Levels and Decision-Making Skills

In the study, it was concluded that there was a positive and significant relationship between student's emotional intelligence sub-dimensions and decision-making skills. It was seen that the level of emotional intelligence decision-making skills at a statistically significant level. This shows that students' high levels of emotional intelligence positively affects their decision-making skills. This result shows that emotional intelligence can be effective in the employment of various skills such as decision-making, problem solving, empathizing and academic success, and therefore emotional intelligence should be given importance in the education process. In support of the research result, Güvendi (2019) determined in his study that as children's emotional intelligence levels increase, their decision-making skills also improve.

Köksal and İşmen-Gazioğlu (2007) found that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and logical decision-making skills. In the study conducted by Yolcu (2019), a positive relationship was found between emotional intelligence levels and problem-solving skills of primary school students, and it was concluded that problem solving skills increased with the increase in emotional intelligence. Baba (2012) concluded that there is a significant relationship between students' academic performance and their emotional and kinesthetic intelligence levels.

The Relationship Between Students' Emotional Intelligence Levels and Personal Information

As a result of the research, it was seen that the emotional intelligence levels of the students differed significantly according to their gender in favor of female students. In other words, in this study, the emotional intelligence levels of female students were found to be higher than male students. This shows that female students are at a better level in terms of emotional awareness, empathy, motivation, and managing emotions than male students. Köksal and İşmen-Gazioğlu (2007) determined that the emotional intelligence levels of female students were higher than male students in their research. Çullu (2019), in his study examining the relationship between the emotional intelligence of primary school students and school rejection, concluded that emotional intelligence scores showed a significant difference in favor of female students. Çiçek-Akkuş (2019), in his study investigating the relationship between aggression, emotional intelligence, and birth order of 3rd and 4th-grade primary school students, reached a similar result and found that the emotional intelligence level of female students was higher than male students. In his study, Köse (2009) found that the emotional intelligence levels of female students were higher than male students. Goleman (2017) determined that men scored higher in the dimensions of managing emotions and self-motivation, while women scored higher in the dimensions of understanding the emotions of others and communication skills. Özkanlı (2018) concluded that the emotional intelligence levels of students aged 10-11 differed significantly in favor of female students. Ulutaş (2005), in his research on preschool students, concluded that emotional intelligence levels did not differ significantly according to the gender of the students. It is seen that in most of the studies aimed at determining the level of emotional intelligence according to gender, a significant difference is reached in favor of female students. This situation may be related to biological characteristics and the way children are raised.

It was seen that the emotional intelligence levels of the students who participated in the study did not differ in the dimensions of emotion awareness and managing emotions according to whether they received preschool education or not, but they differed significantly in favor of the students who received pre-school education in the dimensions of empathy and motivation. In other words, the empathy skills and motivation of the students who received preschool education were higher than the students who did not receive preschool education. This situation can be considered an important situation in terms of showing the importance of preschool education. Considering that preschool education is a critical period in terms of student's social, emotional skills and personality development, the fact that students who benefit from preschool education have the opportunity to have social interactions, participate in group activities, and gain emotional awareness under the guidance of their teachers may be effective in such a result. In addition, preschool education may have contributed to raising students' emotional intelligence and readiness levels. In support of the research result, Ekinci-Vural (2012) determined that the social skills and emotional intelligence scores of first-grade students who received preschool education were significantly higher than those of students who did not receive preschool education. Güvendi (2019)

concluded that students' emotional intelligence scores differed significantly in favor of those who had previously received preschool education according to the sub-dimensions of stories, understanding, and managing.

According to the family income level of the students participating in the study, it was seen that the emotional intelligence levels of the students participating in the research differed significantly against the students with low family income in the dimension of emotional awareness, but did not differ significantly in the dimensions of empathy, motivation, and managing emotions. In other words, it was understood that students with high-income families had higher emotional awareness, but there was no difference in the sub-dimensions of motivation, empathy, and managing emotions. The fact that the emotional awareness of the children of high-income families is higher than that of the children of low-income families may be related to the fact that they can access resources that will provide emotional awareness more easily, put their empathy skills to work, and spend more and quality time with their children. On the other hand, the fact that income difference did not have a significant effect on the dimensions of empathy, motivation, and managing emotions may be explained by the fact that these skills may develop more through individual and environmental interactions and may be independent of material resources. In parallel with the results of this study, Harrod and Scheer (2005) found a positive relationship between the socioeconomic status of the family and students' emotional intelligence levels. Yurdakavuştu (2012) concluded that the emotional intelligence levels of children from high-income families were higher than those of children from low-income families. Unlike these results, Kayhan-Aktürk (2015) determined that the emotional intelligence scores of preschool students did not differ according to family income status.

It was seen that there was a significant difference between the emotional intelligence levels of the students and the emotional intelligence levels of the students in the dimensions of emotional awareness, empathy, and motivation in favor of the children whose thoughts were considered important; however, there was no significant difference in the dimension of managing emotions. The fact that there is a positive correlation between families' valuing students' opinions in decision-making processes and students' emotional intelligence levels is also important in terms of families having the potential to easily put this research result into practice. The fact that families make democracy a way of life and give importance to children's opinions in decisions related to the family, especially in decisions related to the children themselves, may have contributed to their children's feeling of self-worth. Similar to the results of this study, Tekay-Kara (2022) found that there was a medium-level significant relationship between emotional intelligence and positive childhood experiences. Battal (2021) found a significant positive relationship between the emotional intelligence levels of children and democratic parental attitudes. Al-Elaimat, Adheisat, and Alomyan (2020) found a significant positive relationship between the emotional intelligence levels of preschool students and their parents' democratic parental attitude. In parallel with the results of this study, the literature shows that parental attitudes have an important effect on the development of children's emotional intelligence; parents' understanding and responsible behavior towards their children, supporting them without trying to control them, and protecting them without harming their autonomy contribute positively to the development of children's emotional intelligence.

It was seen that there was a significant difference between the level of teachers' caring about students' opinions while making decisions about the classroom and students' emotional intelligence levels in the

dimensions of emotional awareness, empathy, and motivation in favor of the students whose opinions were cared about, but there was no significant difference in the dimension of managing emotions. The fact that there is a positive relationship between teachers' valuing students' opinions in decision-making processes and students' emotional intelligence levels is also important in terms of enabling teachers to easily apply the results of this research to classroom management and to make students feel valuable and safe. Teachers' giving importance to students' opinions in classroom decisions by making democracy a way of life can contribute to making their children feel valuable. In this regard, in the study conducted by Özeloğlu (2019), most of the teachers found that involving students in this process while making decisions in the classroom contributed to increasing children's self-confidence and raising them as free and independent individuals. Kozikoğlu (2018) drew attention to the importance of individuals taking an active role in making decisions about themselves from an early age and stated that this would contribute to children gaining new cognitive abilities and increasing their self-confidence. Özkan (2013) argues that asking children's opinions following their developmental levels when making decisions about issues that concern them at school can contribute to children whose opinions are asked in this process to learn to respect the opinions of others.

The Relationship between Students' Decision-Making Skills and Personal Information

In the study, it was concluded that the decision-making skills of the students differed significantly in favor of female students according to their gender. In other words, it was concluded that the decision-making skills of female students were higher than male students. The higher decision-making skill levels of female students compared to male students may be related to expected gender roles. Social expectations may focus on the fact that Females should be more careful, responsible, and logical in decision-making processes. In addition, the fact that Females biologically enter puberty at an earlier age may enable them to develop abstract thinking and decision-making skills at an earlier age than males. The research conducted by Sağlam and Kaplancı (2020) supports this view. These researchers attributed the high responsibility levels of female students and students with female teachers to the fact that the responsibilities imposed on women in terms of social roles depending on culture are higher than men. In this context, Sever (2018) found that there was a significant differentiation in favor of female students in his study comparing female students and male students in terms of decision-making skills. Karakaş-Günal (1999) determined that male students were able to make more independent decisions than female students. Unlike the results of this research, Yalın (2021) and Uçar (2019) determined that students' decision-making skills did not change according to their gender.

It was seen that the decision-making skills of the students participating in the study differed significantly in favor of those who received pre-school education according to whether or not they received pre-school education. In other words, it was understood that the fact that students received pre-school education positively affected their decision-making skills. The higher decision-making skill levels of students who received preschool education may be related to the fact that during the preschool education process, students had the opportunity to experience various scenarios through games and structured activities and to develop their decision-making skills in the educational environment. In addition, the games that students played with their peers may have contributed to the development of their decision-making skills and socialization. Supporting this result, Uçar (2019) concluded that students who received preschool education had better decision-making behaviors than students who did not receive preschool education. In addition, in Öncül's (2013) research with classroom teachers, it was determined that the majority of

teachers determined that preschool education contributed to the development of decision-making skills. This situation is noteworthy in terms of showing the importance of preschool education in the development of decision-making skills.

According to the perceptions of the students participating in the study, it was found that there was a significant difference between family income levels and decision-making skills in favor of students with low family income levels; children of families with medium income levels had the lowest decision-making skills. In other words, it was determined that the decision-making skills of students with the lowest family income level were the highest, while the decision-making skills of students with medium family income levels were the lowest. This may be due to the fact that children from low-income families may have had the opportunity to develop decision-making and problem-solving skills in an improvisational way because they had to take responsibility at an earlier age and use limited resources effectively. Such situations, which may seem negative at first glance, may contribute to the earlier maturation of individuals and the development of decision-making skills. In addition, Brown and Mann (1990) argue that students with higher socioeconomic status have the opportunity to create more options and have more decision-making experiences due to their access to wider economic opportunities. Yalçınkaya (1990) found that socioeconomic status has an effect on the ability to make choices, the timing of the decision-making process, and the capacity to make multifaceted decisions. Yiğit (2005) found that students with middle-income levels hesitate more when making decisions; students from middle-income families experience more indecision than children from high-income families. Sever (2018) found that decision-making skills differed significantly in favor of the middle economic income level according to family income level.

It was found that the decision-making skills of the students differed significantly in favor of those whose thoughts were highly valued by the families of the students who participated in the study and their level of caring about the thoughts of the students while making decisions about themselves. In other words, it was concluded that the decision-making skills of the children of families who care about their children's thoughts in the decisions taken within the family are better. This may be related to children's ability to express themselves in the family and to experience that their opinions are valued. The fact that there is a positive correlation between families' valuing their children's opinions in decision-making processes and children's decision-making skills is important for families to easily put this research result into practice. This may also be important in terms of contributing to the provision of students' participation rights in the family. This result is also supported by other studies. In this context, Özeloğlu (2019) determined that children's decision-making skills develop with the decision-making opportunities offered to them, and especially the attitudes of families towards their children play a critical role in the development of their children's decision-making skills. Eldeleklioğlu (1996), in his study examining the relationship between decision-making strategies and parental attitudes, found that children of families adopting a democratic approach make decisions logically and independently. In such family environments, the individual characteristics and opinions of adolescents are valued, they are encouraged to be involved in family decisions from an early age, and they are supported in making their own decisions. These adolescents develop their decision-making skills through opportunities such as observing the decision-making processes of other family members, experiencing the consequences of decisions, and being encouraged to make their own choices. On the other hand, young people with protective, demanding, and authoritarian parents were found to be more indecisive and dependent.

Kozikoğlu (2018) emphasized the importance of individuals being involved in the process of making decisions that affect their own lives from an early age. He stated that this participation will not only help children acquire new cognitive skills but also increase their self-confidence. Öncül (2013) found that most of the students received support from their families during decision-making and that families played an important role in students' choice-making processes; families with higher levels of education had less difficulty in collecting information about their children's decision-making. In Sever's (2018) study, it was found that the scores obtained with the decision-making skills scale differed in direct proportion to the frequency of taking the child's opinion in the decisions made within the family. In the study conducted by Yalın (2021), it was found that the decision-making skills scores of seventh-grade students differed significantly according to the statement 'my opinion is asked' in family decisions.

It was found that the decision-making skills of the students who participated in the study differed significantly in favor of the "highly valued" ones with the level of teachers giving importance to students' opinions when making decisions about the classroom. In other words, it was concluded that the decision-making skills of the students in the classes of teachers who attach importance to the opinions of their students in the decisions taken in the classroom were better. This may be related to the fact that teachers make democracy a way of life give importance to the opinions of students in classroom decisions and ensure students' participation rights in the classroom. In addition, in a classroom environment where students' opinions are valued, students are expected to develop their social skills as well as their academic achievement. In the study conducted by Özeloğlu (2019), all of the teachers argued that children's participation in decision-making processes is of great importance based on the idea that it will help children increase their self-confidence and gain independent personality. Kozikoğlu (2018) found that teachers strongly believed in children's right to freely express their own opinions, but their belief in children's right to participate in decision-making processes that concern them was at a more moderate level. Yalın (2021) found that seventh-grade students' decision-making skill scores differed significantly according to the item 'my opinion is asked' in the decisions taken in the classroom. Sever (2018), in his research on students' decision-making skills, determined that there was no differentiation related to the frequency of consulting students' opinions in decisions made in the classroom. Öncül (2013), regarding the decision-making skills of fourth-grade primary school students, found that students frequently consulted their teachers during the decision-making process, so teachers played a critical role in this process.

Recommendations

1. Since there is a positive relationship between students' emotional intelligence levels and decision-making skills, measures can be taken to increase students' emotional intelligence levels in schools.
2. Considering that preschool education plays an important role in the development of decision-making skills and sub-dimensions of emotional intelligence, especially empathy, and motivation, it can be ensured that every child can benefit from preschool education.
3. Families can be made aware of the importance of students' opinions when making decisions about students.
4. Teachers can be encouraged to consult and value the opinions of students when making decisions about the classroom.

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