



The Role of Mindfulness in the Emotion Regulation of Turkish EFL Children

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Abstract: This mixed-methods study, with a primary emphasis on the quantitative strand, investigated the relationships between mindfulness and emotion regulation of young English as a foreign language (EFL) learners while also exploring their coping strategies when experiencing negative emotions. The correlational analysis of the quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires demonstrated strong positive correlations between mindfulness and goal-directed behaviour, openness, impulse control, and the application of adaptive techniques. Regarding gender, the findings highlighted the importance of developing targeted interventions to support emotional regulation in learners, especially in females, by focusing on key areas such as clarity, goal setting, strategies, and acceptance. Similarly, the regression analysis indicated that the participants' emotion regulation (ER) difficulties were significantly predicted by their mindful attention awareness; thus, it can be concluded that the more mindful students become, the less difficulty they experience in regulating their emotions. Based on the qualitative analysis, listening to music, breathing and talking to their friends were reported as the most frequently used stress reduction strategies among the participants. In this sense, the study recommends integrating mindfulness practices into the realms of foreign language classes to help learners regulate their emotions and reach their full potential in their learning.

Keywords: Mindfulness, difficulties in emotion regulation, EFL, young learners, coping strategies.

İngilizceyi Yabancı Dil Olarak Öğrenen Türk Çocukların Duygu Düzenlemelerinde Bilinçli Farkındalığın Rolü

Öz: Nicel aşamanın baskın olduğu bu karma yöntemli çalışma, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğrenen çocukların bilinçli farkındalıkları ve duygu düzenlemeleri arasındaki ilişkiyi araştırırken, aynı zamanda olumsuz duygular yaşadıklarında kullandıkları başa çıkma stratejilerini de incelemiştir. Anketlerden elde edilen nicel verilerin korelasyon analizi, bilinçli farkındalık ile hedef odaklı davranış, açıklık, dürtü kontrolü ve uyarlanabilir tekniklerin uygulanması arasında güçlü pozitif korelasyonlar olduğunu göstermiştir. Cinsiyet açısından bulgular, açıklık, hedef belirleme, stratejiler ve kabul gibi kilit alanlara odaklanarak, öğrencilerin, özellikle de kız öğrencilerin duygusal düzenleme becerilerini desteklemeye yönelik müdahale programları geliştirmenin önemini vurgulamıştır. Aynı şekilde, regresyon analizi de katılımcıların duygusal düzenleme zorluklarının bilinçli farkındalık düzeyleri tarafından anlamlı bir şekilde tahmin edildiğini gösterdiği için öğrenciler daha farkındalıklı oldukça, duygularını düzenlemede yaşadıkları zorluklar da azalmaktadır sonucuna varılabilir. Nitel analizlere dayanarak, katılımcılar tarafından müzik dinleme, nefes alma ve arkadaşlarıyla konuşma en sık kullanılan stres azaltma stratejileri olarak bildirilmiştir. Bu nedenle,

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bu çalışma, öğrencilerin duygularını düzenlemelerine yardımcı olmak ve öğrenmelerinde tam potansiyellerine ulaşmalarını sağlamak için yabancı dil sınıflarına bilinçli farkındalık uygulamalarını entegre etmeyi önermektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Bilinçli farkındalık, duygu düzenleme güçlüğü, Yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğrenenler, baş etme stratejileri

Introduction

Technological advancements have been deeply woven into nearly every aspect of our lives, including physical, mental, and emotional dimensions, with the purpose of making tasks faster and simplifying our lives. The same holds true when it comes to our educational lives, as technology, particularly Artificial Intelligence, is changing the way we study and learn. Even with the ongoing changes in educational practices, mindfulness remains a vital tool for building healthy mental and emotional development (Babanoğlu & Atalmış, 2025). Mindfulness is described as the state of being aware and understanding of what a person is encountering (Wang & Liu, 2016). Mindfulness is "paying attention to what is occurring in the mind, body, and surrounding environment with an attitude of great interest and kindness", according to the Mindfulness All-Party Parliamentary Group (Hyland, 2016, p. 4). Due to the influence of mindfulness, which originates from Buddhist practices promoting mental balance, an individual actively contributes to their own self-actualization rather than remaining a passive recipient of external influences or circumstances (Schoeberlein et al., 2009). Since contemporary foreign language (FL) learning and teaching methods encourage active student participation by expecting learners to take initiative, understand learning tasks, and adapt them to their needs, becoming mindful is vital for learners (Navaie et al., 2018). Recent research has shown that mindfulness is an effective technique for emotion regulation (ER) in adolescents, reducing anxiety and stress while enhancing working memory (Novianty et al., 2024; Rognin et al., 2022).

In addition, highlighting the influence of emotions on language learning and teaching, Dewaele et al. (2019) invited teachers, students, and researchers to explore their emotions to gain insights into their ongoing language learning and teaching journey to better understand the intricate emotional and cognitive factors involved in this process. The importance of emotions was also emphasized through the metaphor "emotions are elephants in the room" (Swain, 2013, p. 195). Thus, this study included ER of learners, which is attributed to the procedures through which individuals conduct and moderate their emotional experiences, statements, and reactions to different stimuli and situations.

As emotional challenges have become more prominent among learners in the current global context, the rising emphasis on learners' emotional well-being has drawn increasing scholarly attention to mindfulness-based approaches and their impact on ER (Nguyen et al, 2021). Emotion regulation, which refers to the ability to monitor, assess, and modify emotional reactions, is critical for students' social interaction and academic success. Several research indicates that cultivating mindfulness contributes to students' improvements by enhancing their awareness of their internal states and reducing impulsive emotional responses (Lokita et al., 2021). In their study, Wang et al. (2022) observed that adolescents with higher levels of dispositional mindfulness demonstrated stronger working memory and greater emotional control, particularly in stressful conditions. In line with this, Rognin et al. (2022) demonstrated that brief, school-based mindfulness interventions decreased anxiety levels and improved emotional awareness among primary school students.

Similarly, Zhou and Liu (2023) underlined that emotional clarity and self-acceptance, two pillars of emotion regulation, are strongly linked to mindfulness. Similarly, mindfulness practices (MPs) have been associated with improvements in goal setting, reappraisal, and stress management, especially in adolescent populations (Dunning et al., 2018). Yousefi Afrashteh and Hasani (2022) also found a significant negative relationship between mindfulness and emotional dysregulation among adolescents, showing that higher levels of mindfulness are related to fewer difficulties in managing emotions effectively. Moreover, MPs tailored to young learners' developmental characteristics offer a valuable opportunity to support their emotional and cognitive growth in classroom settings (Wang et al., 2022).

Mindfulness has been described in diverse ways across the literature, often highlighting its reflective and experiential nature. It is frequently understood as a contemplative practice that cultivates sustained focus, deepened insight, and an enhanced sense of emotional awareness and empathy (Haynes et al., 2013; Holland et al., 2017). Kabat-Zinn (2003) describes mindfulness as the intentional and continuous attention to one's immediate emotional, cognitive, and sensory experiences, approached without judgment or analytical thought. In alternative definitions, mindfulness was described as a responsive awareness directed toward present events (Brown & Ryan, 2003) and as an intentional and conscious engagement with internal and external experiences (Schoeberlein et al., 2009). In this regard, Bishop et al. (2004) emphasise two foundational elements: maintaining awareness and adopting a stance of acceptance, both of which contribute to the ability to consciously redirect attention in constructive ways. Taken together, despite varied interpretations of mindfulness, one effective way to frame mindfulness is through the act of noticing novel details in current situations, regardless of their significance, which signals an individual's having an attentive, curious, and growth mindset.

In addition, current studies have demonstrated that MPs significantly reduce stress and anxiety, which, in turn, enhance students' academic performance and their ability to maintain focus (Park & Kim, 2023; Nguyen et al., 2021). Moreover, learners who engage regularly in mindfulness exercises tend to exhibit better concentration, improved self-regulation, and overall well-being, all of which contribute positively to their success in language learning contexts (Chen & Li, 2022). A growing body of meta-analytic research has consistently demonstrated the effectiveness of mindfulness-based interventions in alleviating symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression (Babanoğlu & Atalmış, 2025; Wang et al., 2022). These findings also highlight that such interventions promote emotional regulation and psychological well-being. Additionally, mindfulness has been associated with increased self-awareness and resilience. Since mindfulness fosters emotional balance and well-being through heightened awareness and adaptive response to emotional states (Brown & Ryan, 2003), individuals who practice mindfulness regularly display superior emotional regulation and greater stress tolerance (Schutte & Malouff, 2011) as well as improve the students' satisfaction with life with increased resilience and enhanced emotional intelligence among pupils (Goyal et al., 2014). Nowadays, mindfulness is well known in a variety of domains, such as wellbeing and leadership, because of its ability to foster important human traits. For example, mindfulness meditation fosters the development of attention, awareness, and authenticity—skills that are particularly beneficial for educators, according to Doornich and Lynch (2024). Additionally, as mentioned by Patel and Holm (2018), mindfulness can encourage thoughtful and accountable decision-making, highlighting its wider applicability to professional roles. Because of these advantages, mindfulness integration into classrooms has become more popular, especially for helping teachers and students. Proponents of mindfulness highlight its

potential to improve learning outcomes and enhance teachers' professional duties, notwithstanding the continuous discussion about the relative merits of mindfulness-based vs subconscious methods of learning in classroom settings. In order to accomplish this, teachers must be focused, accepting, nonjudgmental, and attentive when implementing mindfulness practices (Hirshberg et al., 2020).

Emotion regulation, encompassing both deliberate and automatic mechanisms, is fundamental to psychological well-being, social interactions, and the management of emotional experiences (Haeussler, 2013). It involves modifying thoughts, behaviors, and physiological responses to emotions to achieve adaptive outcomes (Gross, 1999). In the same study, Gross conceptualizes ER as a dynamic set of processes through which individuals determine which emotions to experience, as well as when and how to express or suppress them to be able to influence their emotional and behavioral responses. Key components of effective ER include recognizing and accepting emotional states, acting in accordance with personal goals, inhibiting impulsive responses during distress, and flexibly employing strategies to modulate emotional reactions (Gratz & Roemer, 2004).

Building on appraisal theory, Lazarus (2006) posits that an individual's evaluation of an event, rather than the event itself, determines their emotional response. This perspective suggests that the capacity for ER critically shapes emotional outcomes, particularly in situations involving self-discrepancies. Empirical research consistently links proficient ER to enhanced psychological health (John & Gross, 2004; Tsujimoto et al., 2024), while difficulties in managing emotions are associated with a wide range of mental health disorders (Gross, 2014; Kring & Mote, 2016). Moreover, individuals with strong ER skills may be buffered against emotional distress. As for foreign language learning, Shakki (2023) emphasizes that learners' ways of processing and expressing both positive and negative emotions, through regulation strategies such as expression, suppression, and cognitive reappraisal, have a direct impact on their engagement in EFL classrooms. In other words, learners who consciously accept their emotions and respond in ways aligned with their goals are less likely to experience negative emotional consequences, even amidst internal conflicts or self-discrepancies.

This study aimed to investigate mindfulness and ER difficulties of young Turkish EFL learners as well as examine the relationship between their mindfulness and ER difficulties. Employing a quantitative dominant mixed-methods approach, the study also aimed to reveal the participants' coping strategies to manage their anxiety and stress. By shedding light on the intersection of mindfulness and emotion regulation, this study can suggest practical insights and recommendations for educators, practitioners, and policymakers, based on the results of the following research questions:

1. What are the levels of mindfulness and emotion regulation difficulties among young Turkish EFL learners?
2. Is there any correlation between mindfulness and emotion regulation difficulties of young Turkish EFL learners?
3. To what extent does Turkish EFL learners' mindful attention awareness significantly predict their emotional regulation difficulties?
4. To what extent does gender affect young Turkish EFL learners' mindfulness and emotion regulation difficulties?

5. What kinds of strategies do young Turkish EFL learners employ when they face stress and anxiety?

Method

Research Design

The present study followed a convergent mixed methods design with a dominant quantitative orientation (QUAN + qual), as outlined by Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), to provide holistic perspective on the research problem via data triangulation, allowing the qualitative findings to provide contextual support for the primary quantitative findings. It began with a descriptive-correlational design, which addresses descriptive, comparison, and relationship questions (Thomas & Zubkov, 2023), to explore the associations between emotion regulation difficulties and mindfulness of the participants. Subsequently, regression analysis was utilized to investigate the predictive power of mindfulness on the participants' ER difficulties. This combined approach provided a more comprehensive understanding of the research phenomenon. In addition to the quantitative part, a brief qualitative question was included to identify participants' coping strategies as reported in an open-ended question.

Participants

The population of the study is all EFL primary school learners attending private language schools. Large sample sizes are generally preferred in quantitative research, with a minimum of suggested 100 participants to ensure adequate representation of the population (Mweshi & Sakyi, 2020). Accordingly, from this population, the research sample involved 134 (Male=64, Female=70) 7-10 years old EFL learners in a private language school in Bursa, Türkiye. The participants were chosen by using convenience sampling method which involves selecting individuals who are immediately accessible to the researcher (Mweshi & Sakyi, 2020) as they were all taught English for four hours per week by one of the researchers, who followed the course book, and primarily focused on developing listening and speaking skills.

Data Collection Instruments

Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS): The original Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS), initially devised by Brown and Ryan (2003), was translated into Turkish by Özyeşil et al. (2011). Statistical analysis confirmed the Turkish version of MAAS's (BİFO) reliability, showing an internal consistency of .80 and a test-retest reliability of .86 (Özyeşil et al., 2011). Thus, this unidimensional scale was utilised in this study to measure the mindfulness levels of the pupils. Each item is rated on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (always) to 6 (virtually never). Higher ratings on the scale signify a high level of mindful attention awareness.

Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS): The original version of the *Difficulties in ER Scale* (DERS) was improved by Gratz and Roemer (2004). However, due to the target participants' limited knowledge of English, the Difficulties in ER Scale-Brief Form (hereafter DERS-16), adapted for Turkish samples by Yiğit and Güzey Yiğit (2019), was used in this study. Each item in DERS-16 is rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (almost never) to 5 (almost always). DERS-16 revealed 5 subscales including clarity (item 1, 2; e.g., "I am confused about how I feel."); goals (item 3, 7, 15; e.g., "When I am upset, I have difficulty thinking about anything else."); impulse (item 4, 8, 11; e.g., "When I am upset, I have difficulty in controlling my behaviours"); strategies (item 5, 6, 12, 14, 16; e.g., "When I am upset, my emotions feel overwhelming."); and non-acceptance (9, 10, 13; e.g., "When I am upset, I become irritated with myself for feeling that

way.”). The Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were found to be .92 for overall DERS-16, .84 for clarity, .84 for goals, .87 for impulse, .87 for strategies, and .78 for non-acceptance. There are no reverse-coded items in the scale, and high scores display a high level of difficulty in emotional regulation.

Open-ended Questionnaire: Immediately after completing the scales, an open-ended question was asked to the participants to identify their stress reduction strategies when they experience difficulties in their lives. The question asked was as follows: “What strategies do you use when you have negative emotions? Please explain why?”.

Research Process

The present study was conducted after getting approval from the Ethics Committee of a state university. Data collection was utilized in classroom settings after getting consent forms from the participants’ parents. The data were collected in three phases. Firstly, they had 15 minutes to complete the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale in the first lesson. Secondly, they were given 15 minutes to respond to DERS-16 in the second lesson, and finally, they were asked to answer the open-ended questionnaire to reveal their ER strategies.

Data Analysis

The analyses in the study were conducted using SPSS (Version 21). To ensure that the data were normally distributed, skewness and kurtosis values were examined. According to established guidelines (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013), acceptable values for these measures fall within a range of -1.5 to +1.5. The analysis revealed that the scale data met the normality criteria, as the skewness and kurtosis values are within the acceptable range, confirming a normal distribution. Furthermore, the internal consistency coefficients were found to be reliable for MASS, DERS, and DERS-16 sub-scales. Table 1 displays descriptive statistics of the MASS and DERS-16.

Table 1

Tests of Normality for MAAS and DERS

Variables	N	Kurtosis	Skewness	Cronbach Alpha
DERS-16	134	.359	.720	.90
Clarity	134	-.053	.895	.81
Goals	134	-1.023	.141	.72
Impulse	134	-.592	.657	.74
Strategies	134	.187	.856	.77
Non-acceptance	134	-.099	.953	.70
Mindfulness	134	.390	.106	.81

Since the data were normally distributed, the researchers employed a Pearson product-moment correlation to examine the association between participants’ mindfulness and their difficulties in ER. The strength of the relationship between two variables increases as their correlation coefficient (r) approaches -1 or 1. A high absolute value of the correlation coefficient indicates that existing data can be used to make more accurate predictions about future values (Thomas & Zubkov, 2023). To address the third research question, a linear regression analysis was conducted to reveal to what extent the learners’ mindfulness attention awareness predicted their difficulties in their ER as it is an appropriate method for examining models in which a single predictor variable (X) influences a single outcome variable (Y) in a linear manner (Montgomery et al., 2021). The final aim of this study is to identify the strategies that young learners use to cope

with stress and anxiety. For the analysis of the qualitative data obtained from the open-ended survey question, content analysis was conducted, and the responses were coded using MAXQDA 2020.

Results

The results are presented by following the research questions respectively.

Findings related to the levels of young Turkish EFL learners' mindfulness and ER difficulties

Table 2

Descriptive Analysis of MAAS, DERS-16, and DERS-16 sub-scales

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	M	SD
DERS-16	134	1.00	5.00	2.36	0.88203
Clarity	134	1.00	5.00	2.29	1.13740
Goals	134	1.00	5.00	2.91	1.13108
Impulse	134	1.00	5.00	2.39	1.17938
Strategies	134	1.00	5.00	2.21	1.00663
Non-acceptance	134	1.00	5.00	2.09	1.08040
Mindfulness	134	1.00	4.40	2.21	0.64919

Note. Clarity = Lack of Emotional Clarity; Goals = Difficulties Engaging in Goal-Directed Behaviour; Impulse = Impulse Control Difficulties; Strategies = Limited Access to ER Strategies; Nonacceptance = Nonacceptance of Emotional Responses; Mindfulness= Mindful Attention Awareness

The results in Table 2 indicate that the participants had moderate levels of difficulty in overall emotion regulation. This suggests that while children generally do not exhibit significant difficulties in emotion regulation, they may experience occasional challenges. Based on the mean scores of the other sub-scales of DERS-16, "Goals" emerged as the most challenging aspect for the participants, suggesting that they experience considerable difficulty maintaining focus on their objectives during periods of emotional distress. On the other hand, "Non-acceptance" was found to be the least problematic dimension, suggesting that the participants are generally less inclined to reject or disapprove of their emotional experiences. In summary, the findings suggest that although there is no pervasive issue with emotion regulation, individual children may occasionally experience difficulties in specific contexts. Regarding mindfulness, the participants reported low-to-moderate levels of mindfulness, with no individuals perceiving themselves as highly mindful. Based on the mean score, it appears that the participants perceive themselves as below average in their ability to remain present and aware in a non-judgmental manner.

Findings regarding the correlation between mindfulness and ER difficulties of young Turkish EFL learners

To answer the second research question, Table 3 indicates the Pearson correlation between the subconstructs of DERS and mindfulness.

Table 3

Pearson Correlation Between MASS and Sub-constructs of DERS

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Clarity	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2. Goals	.472**	-	-	-	-	-	-
3. Impulse	.469**	.644**	-	-	.-	-	-
4. Strategies	.460**	.627**	.674**	-	-	-	-
5. Non-acceptance	.459**	.453**	.458**	.632**	-	-	-
6. Mindfulness	.552**	.648**	.642**	.692**	.547**	-	-
7. DERS-16 Total	.662**	.806**	.827**	.896**	.753**	.778**	-

Note: *p < .05, **p < .01.

As shown in Table 3, the correlation analysis revealed a significant relationship between participants' DERS-16 scores and their mindful attention awareness. The analysis also revealed positive and significant correlations among the DERS-16 sub-scales. Subsequently, a linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which mindfulness predicted participants' ER difficulties.

Findings regarding the extent to which the Turkish EFL learners' mindful attention awareness significantly predicts their emotional regulation difficulties

Linear regression analysis was employed to examine the extent to which the participants' mindful attention awareness predicted the DERS-16. The results were presented in Table 4.

Table 4

The Linear Regression Analysis indicating the relationship between mindfulness and DERS-16 Total

Dependent Variable	b	SE	β	95% CI		t	P
				LB	UB		
Constant	.022	.172		-.318	.361	.127	.899
Mindfulness	1.057	.074	.778 ^a	910	1.204	14.238	<.001 ^b

Note: a. Predictor: (Constant), Mindfulness b. Dependent Variable: Ders-16 Total

The model summary reports R-squared and Adjusted R-squared values of 606 and 603, respectively, indicating that the model explains approximately 60.3% of the variance in participants' ER difficulties. Furthermore, ANOVA analysis confirmed the statistical significance of the prediction model [F (1,132) = 202.724, p < .001], suggesting that the participants' ER difficulties were significantly predicted by the regressor, namely their mindful attention awareness. To clarify, with a high β-value (0.778), mindfulness explains a large percentage of the changes in DERS-16.

The effects of gender on young Turkish EFL learners' mindfulness and ER difficulties

Table 5 displays the statistical findings of the gender-based independent t-test results.

Table 5

Independent T-test Results based on Gender Differences in MAAS and DERS-16

Variable	N	Gender	Mean	SD	df	t	P	Cohen's d
DERS-16 Total	70	Female	2.58	.095	128.537	3.151	.002	0.85
	64	Male	2.12	.073				
Clarity	70	Female	2.52	1.21	132	2.496	.014	0.43
	64	Male	2.04	.99				
Goals	70	Female	3.15	1.15	132	2.645	.009	0.45
	64	Male	2.65	1.04				
Impulse	70	Female	2.56	1.28	132	1.745	.083	0.30
	64	Male	2.21	1.03				
Strategies	70	Female	2.45	1.08	132	2.924	.004	0.50
	64	Male	1.95	.85				
Non-acceptance	70	Female	2.30	1.12	132	2.454	.015	0.42
	64	Male	1.85	.98				
Mindfulness	70	Female	2.28	.68	132	1.239	.218	0.21
	64	Male	2.14	.60				

The results suggest that the females exhibit higher levels of emotional dysregulation (DERS-16 Total) compared to the males, particularly in goals, clarity, strategies, and non-acceptance. These findings indicate that females may face greater challenges in understanding, accepting, and managing emotions effectively. The moderate-to-large effect sizes highlight meaningful gender differences in several areas of emotional regulation. However, both boys and girls seem equally able to resist acting on impulse when they're emotionally upset. This shows that impulsive behaviour is not a key difference between how boys and girls handle their emotions. Moreover, as for mindfulness, both genders appear to have similar skills in observing and accepting their emotions without judgment.

The strategies young Turkish EFL learners employ when they face stress and anxiety

The analysis of the students' answers to the question "What strategies do you use when you have negative emotions? Please explain why?" revealed 12 different coping strategies used by the participants. Table 6 displays the frequencies of the findings, including one representative extract for each category.

Table 6

Distribution of Stress Reduction Strategies Among Participants

Theme	Codes	f	Example Quote
Stress Reduction Strategies (SDS)	Listening to music	62	S35: "I listen to the music as it makes me feel good".
	Doing breathing exercises	18	S113: "I breathe in, hold my breath and breathe out at least three times...".
	Talking to friends and family	12	S72: "When I feel bad and have some fear I talk to my friends and parents".
	Crying	12	S8: I cry and then I become comfortable. I act like nothing happened".
	Playing games	10	S16: "I play games with my friends".

Table 6 (Continued)

Theme	Codes	f	Example Quote
Stress Reduction Strategies (SDS)	Sleeping	6	S68: "I sleep to calm down".
	Going outside or taking a walk	4	S38: "I get fresh air and try to take breath when walking".
	Watching videos/movies	5	S50: "I watch something on my phone. I hang out on social media to distract myself".
	Engaging in artistic activities	3	S116: "Drawing pictures or something else makes me feel comfortable".
	Positive affirmation	3	S74: "I talk to myself and tell myself this situation will pass".
	Spending time with animals	3	S29: "I have a good relationship with animals. I spend time with them to get rid of negative feelings".
	Being alone	3	S101: "I prefer being alone when I am stressed, as I am afraid of saying something wrong and making the people I love upset."

Based on the results in Table 6, it is obvious that the learners predominantly rely on listening to music, breathing exercises, and social support (talking to friends and family) to cope with their stress and anxiety. While many strategies focus on emotional release or distraction, others, like breathing exercises and positive affirmations, involve active self-regulation. These findings highlight a mix of individual and social approaches to managing emotional challenges.

Discussion and Conclusion

The study firstly aimed to investigate Turkish EFL young learners' mindfulness and ER difficulties. The overall results indicated that the participants showed moderate difficulties with emotional regulation across most domains, with "Goals" being the most challenging. This finding indicates that it becomes significantly harder for them to stay on track and focused on their objectives, especially during challenging times. Regarding mindfulness, the participants exhibited low levels, which could be attributed to their limited exposure to mindfulness concepts or practices in their EFL classrooms. This result underlines their potential for growth in areas such as emotional regulation, stress management, and overall well-being through the practice of mindfulness techniques.

This study also aimed to examine the relationship between mindfulness and ER difficulties among learners and to analyse gender differences in these constructs. The findings showed a significant positive correlation between mindfulness and various subcategories of ER difficulties, including openness, goal-directed behaviour, impulse control, non-acceptance, and the use of adaptive strategies. These results correspond with previous research suggesting that MPs can enhance emotional regulation capabilities (Buric, 2024; Kou et al., 2025; Roemer et al., 2015). Furthermore, Raugh and Strauss (2023) stated in their study that through cognitive transformation and attentional deployment, mindfulness techniques can be employed as strategies for emotion regulation, and over time, their influence on ER processes tends to become more automatic and habitual.

The relationship between clarity and mindfulness shows that individuals who practice mindfulness tend to be more attuned to their emotions, which aligns with the core principle of mindfulness, namely a non-judgmental awareness of the present moment (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). This

finding is in line with the research, which has demonstrated that practicing mindfulness improves emotional openness and awareness by helping people control their emotional processing (Feng et al., 2025; Prakash, 2021), fosters an acceptance-based mindset through emotional transparency, and lessens avoidance behaviours (Wojnarowska et al., 2020). Emotional intelligence, especially the ability to control emotions, is positively correlated with mindfulness, while emotional weariness is adversely correlated with it (Jiménez-Picón et al, 2021).

The strong positive connection between goal-directed conduct and mindfulness suggests that mindfulness improves people's capacity to stay focused on their goals when facing emotional obstacles. In addition, since improved focus and clarity are necessary for creating and accomplishing goals, mindfulness techniques like mindful breathing and meditation can help people achieve these qualities, as also indicated by Bajestani et al. (2024) and Yakobi et al. (2021), who demonstrated that practising mindfulness enhances executive control and attention, two cognitive processes that are essential for goal-directed behaviour. This research is particularly important in the context of EFL learners, as they frequently experience considerable levels of stress and anxiety that may hinder their academic goals.

Furthermore, the significant relationship found between mindfulness and impulse control illustrates that the more mindful learners become, the better they are able to maintain focus and work toward their goals. This result aligns with the studies which highlight that practising mindfulness increases one's awareness of the present moment by helping people respond to stimuli more thoughtfully than impulsively (Korponay et al., 2019; Sleimen et al., 2023), sustains learners' attention, and lessens their mind-wandering, which can boost their academic achievement (Li et al., 2021; Zhou et al., 2023). As students need to minimize distractions and focus on their tasks, improving their ability to control impulses through mindfulness techniques is particularly beneficial in language learning environments. In line with the present study, research conducted by Cheung and Ng (2018) showed that mindfulness decreases depressive symptoms in Chinese learners through increased awareness, acceptance, impulse control, and emotion regulation.

The positive strong correlation between the learners' emotion control strategies and mindfulness is corroborated by earlier studies (Buric, 2024; Gawande et al., 2023) which underline that mindfulness training can enhance general emotional health and coping abilities by making learners more conscious of their thoughts and feelings in a way that they can identify and control their emotions.

The relationship between non-acceptance and mindfulness suggests that mindfulness enables individuals to acknowledge and accept their emotions without judgment. This correlation is substantial, highlighting the importance of acceptance in emotional regulation, which aligns with the views of Hernandez et al. (2023), Li et. al (2021) and Singh et al. (2024), who emphasize that cultivating emotional resilience and well-being requires an attitude of acceptance rather than avoidance or suppression.

The expression "Women are from Venus, men are from Mars" is a common way to use a metaphor to account for the perceived contrasts in the ways women and men approach thoughts, emotions, and actions (Ellemers, 2018). Accordingly, the female participants outperformed male learners in measures of emotional dysregulation across most areas, including clarity of emotions, goal setting, coping strategies, and acceptance of negative emotions. This finding suggests that girls may experience greater difficulty in managing their emotions, which aligns with the results of Yiğit and Guzey Yiğit (2019). Females may possess fewer coping strategies or lower confidence

in their ability to regulate emotions effectively when experiencing stress. They may also struggle to identify, label, and understand their emotions, which can lead to confusion about their feelings. This could make them feel guilty or ashamed about their feelings. In summary, the gender disparities in the study emphasize how crucial it is to take into account both biological and sociocultural elements when analysing behavioural and emotional regulation of people. On the other hand, no significant differences were found between boys and girls in their ability to control impulses or in their mindfulness skills, suggesting that both groups possess comparable levels of these competencies.

Krashen's low affective filter hypothesis (1982) suggests that our emotions, like anxiety or confidence, significantly impact how well we learn a language. When learners feel relaxed and confident, reflecting a low affective filter, language acquisition becomes considerably easier and more effective. Furthermore, agreeing with Wang (2022) who asserted that mindfulness help learners regulate their attentions, emotions, behaviours, and self-reflections efficiently, it appears that mindfulness-based techniques can help both EFL students and teachers better manage their self-oriented concerns such as anxiety in the classroom. Accordingly, mindfulness is foundational for emotional regulation, stress management, and improved psychological well-being, practising mindfulness through mindful breathing before challenging tasks, particularly speaking tasks or when transitioning between tasks would help learners regulate their emotions and lower their affective filter.

Regarding coping strategies, the qualitative results clarified that participants mostly prefer strategies that are easily accessible and immediately effective, such as listening to music and social interaction, which is consistent with the results of Ho et al. (2024) and Kahn et al. (2021) who emphasized the major calming and mood-improving effects of music. These findings highlighted that learners employ a variety of individual and social strategies aiming to either releasing or distracting from stress and anxiety. This suggests that educators should implement flexible support systems that can accommodate varied preferences and emotional needs of learners.

Implications of the study

As mindfulness serves as a foundation for stress management, emotion regulation, and well-being, the participants' low scores highlight a potential area for targeted intervention. The advantages of incorporating mindfulness techniques into EFL courses are evidenced by the positive correlations between mindfulness and emotion management. Considering the stress and anxiety often associated with language learning, mindfulness can serve as an effective strategy for enhancing students' mental health and academic achievement. Students can improve their ability to manage their emotions and increase their awareness of their emotional states by practicing mindfulness techniques like body scans, mindful breathing, and meditation.

These results point to significant pedagogical significance for EFL classes. Young learners' emotional regulation abilities may be strengthened by including mindfulness-based activities into language education, which could promote more resilient, self-directed, and focused learning habits. Therefore, mindfulness-informed practices can help create a more encouraging learning environment that improves language learning results as well as emotional well-being. The study revealed meaningful gender differences in emotional regulation, with females reporting more challenges in most areas except impulse control and mindfulness. These differences may inform the development of gender-sensitive ER programs. Such findings have important implications for education.

The inclusion of MPs into EFL courses has the potential to improve students' emotional health, stress and anxiety management skills, well-being and academic achievement. By promoting mindfulness in the classroom, teachers can assist learners in acquiring the skills necessary to overcome the emotional difficulties associated with language learning and succeed academically. Thus, mindfulness training could be an effective universal strategy to enhance overall emotional regulation as it shows no significant gender discrepancy. In short, this study advocates for the need for mindfulness interventions and supports the implementation of programs tailored to enhance mindfulness skills, particularly in EFL contexts requiring emotional regulation to foster favourable learning environments.

Instead of dwelling on the negative aspects of challenging classroom experiences, teachers can focus on the learning potential they offer for both themselves and their students. Thus, teachers play a pivotal role in helping learners navigate the emotional challenges by providing a safe, positive, judgment-free and supportive classroom environment in which learners, particularly girls, can reflect their emotions and develop healthy coping mechanisms, which is essential for their emotional well-being. As demonstrated in the qualitative findings, the learners follow social coping strategies such as talking to their friends; thus, teachers should create a collaborative classroom environment through setting group projects or pairing less confident learners with peers who demonstrate higher levels of confidence and emotional resilience to help less confident peers cope with their stressors throughout challenging language learning tasks.

Although the findings of this study are encouraging, several considerations should be taken into account. First, longitudinal research is required to examine the effects of practicing mindfulness over time to regulate learners' emotions. Secondly, the results may not be broadly generalizable because the sample size is restricted to young Turkish EFL learners. To validate the findings, bigger and more varied sample sizes should be used in future studies. In addition, research in the future may examine the fundamental processes and factors that mediate the connection between emotion control and mindfulness. Programs for mindfulness can be made even more effective by implementing interventions specifically designed to address the needs of different genders. Studies should seek to replicate and validate these findings across larger and more diverse populations and investigate the processes that underlie the correlation between ER and mindfulness. Moreover, future qualitative research could be structured around a phenomenological approach to uncover the diverse coping strategies employed by learners, particularly in the context of emotional regulation or learning difficulties, as expressed through their personal narratives.

Ethics Committee Approval Information: This research was conducted with the permission of Bursa Uludağ University Social and Humanitarian Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee dated 30/05/23 and numbered 2023/14-14. The participants were informed about the self-compassion-based psychoeducation programme. Necessary consent was obtained from the families of all participants prior to data collection.

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Geniş Özet

Giriş

Bilinçli farkındalık, bir kişinin karşılaştığı şeylerin farkında olma ve bunları anlama durumu olarak tanımlanır (Wang & Liu, 2016). Duyguların dil öğrenimi ve öğretimi üzerindeki etkisini vurgulayan Dewaele ve diğerleri (2019), dil öğrenimi ve öğretimi yolculuklarında öğretmenleri, öğrencileri ve araştırmacıları, bu süreçte yer alan karmaşık duygusal ve bilişsel faktörleri daha iyi

anlamak için kendi duygularını keşfetmeye davet etmiştir. Ayrıca, yakın zamanda yapılan çalışmalar, bilinçli farkındalık uygulamasının stresi ve kaygıyı önemli ölçüde azalttığını, bunun da öğrencilerin akademik performansını ve odaklanma yeteneklerini artırdığını göstermiştir (Nguyen, Tran, & Pham, 2021; Park & Kim, 2023). Dahası, düzenli olarak bilinçli farkındalık egzersizleri yapan öğrenciler, dil öğrenme bağlamındaki başarılarına olumlu katkı sağlayan daha iyi konsantrasyon, gelişmiş öz düzenleme ve genel refah sergileme eğilimindedir (Chen & Li, 2022). Yabancı dil öğrenimi bağlamında Shakki (2023), öğrencilerin hem olumlu hem de olumsuz duyguları nasıl işlediklerinin ve ifade ettiklerinin (ifade etme, bastırma ve bilişsel yeniden değerlendirme gibi düzenleme stratejileri aracılığıyla) EFL sınıflarındaki katılımları üzerinde doğrudan bir etkisi olduğunu vurgulamaktadır. Başka bir deyişle, duygularını bilinçli bir şekilde kabul eden ve hedefleriyle uyumlu yollarla tepki veren öğrencilerin, iç çatışmalar veya kendileriyle ilgili çelişkiler yaşasalar bile, olumsuz duygusal sonuçlar yaşama olasılıkları daha düşüktür. Bu çalışma, İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen Türk öğrencilerin bilinçli farkındalık ve duygu düzenleme zorluklarının düzeylerini, aralarındaki ilişkileri, bilinçli farkındalığın duygu düzenleme üzerindeki yordayıcı etkisini, cinsiyetin bilinçli farkındalık seviyeleri ve duygu düzenleme zorlukları üzerindeki etkilerini ve öğrencilerin stres ve kaygı ile karşılaştıklarında ne tür stratejiler kullandıklarını ortaya koymayı hedeflemiştir. Nihayetinde, araştırma, farkındalık uygulamalarının yabancı dil öğretim ortamlarına entegre edilmesinin duygu düzenlemesini nasıl artırabileceği ve öğrencilerin duygusal refahını nasıl destekleyebileceği konusundaki literatüre katkıda bulunmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Yöntem

Bu çalışma, Bursa'da özel bir dil okulunda öğrenim gören İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen toplam 134 Türk ilkökul öğrencisiyle, karma yöntem yaklaşımını kullanarak yapılmıştır. Çalışmanın nicel verileri katılımcıların bilinçli farkındalık seviyelerini ölçmek için, Özyeşil ve diğerleri (2011) tarafından Türkçeye uyarlama çalışması yapılan geçerli ve güvenilir bulunan tek boyutlu Bilinçli Dikkat Farkındalık Ölçeği (BİFO) ile, duygu düzenleme zorluğu ise Yiğit ve Güzey Yiğit (2019) tarafından Türkçe örnekleme kullanılan Duygu Düzenleme Zorlukları Ölçeği-Kısa Formu (DDZÖ-16) kullanılarak toplanmıştır. DDZÖ-16, açıklık, hedefler, dürtü, stratejiler ve kabullenme olmak üzere 5 alt ölçeği içermektedir. Ölçekte tersine kodlanmış madde bulunmamaktadır ve yüksek puanlar, duygusal düzenlemede yüksek düzeyde zorluğa işaret etmektedir. Çalışmanın nitel verileri ise tek soruluk açık uçlu anketle toplanmıştır. Veri toplama, Etik Kurul onayı alındıktan sonra ve katılımcıların ebeveynlerinden izin formları alındıktan sonra sınıf ortamlarında gerçekleştirilmiştir. Katılımcılara açıklama yapıldıktan sonra veriler 3 aşamada toplandı. Birinci derste, katılımcılara Bilinçli Dikkat Farkındalık Ölçeğini tamamlamak için 15 dakika, ikinci derste ise DDZÖ-16'ya yanıt vermeleri için yine 15 dakika verildi ve son olarak, duygu düzenleme stratejilerini ortaya çıkarmak için kendilerine "Olumsuz duygular hissettiğinde ne yaparsın? Neden?" açık uçlu sorusu soruldu.

Mevcut çalışmanın analizleri SPSS, sürüm 21 ile yapılmıştır. Analizimiz, çarpıklık ve basıklık puanlarının kabul edilebilir aralığa girmesi nedeniyle ölçeklerden elde edilen verilerin normal bir dağılım sergilediği görülmüştür. Ayrıca, ölçeklerden elde edilen verilerin iç tutarlılık katsayıları da güvenilir bulunmuştur. Bu doğrultuda, katılımcıların farkındalık ve duygu düzenleme zorlukları arasındaki ilişkileri keşfetmek için Pearson korelasyon analizi ve bilinçli farkındalığın katılımcıların duygu düzenleme zorlukları üzerindeki yordayıcı gücünü incelemek için ise regresyon analizi kullanılmıştır. Cinsiyet etkisi bağımsız örneklem T-test kullanılarak ölçülmüştür. Nitel verilerin tematik analizi için ise MAXQDA 2020 kullanılmıştır.

Bulgular

Betimsel istatistiksel sonuçlarına dayanarak, katılımcıların bilinçli farkındalık yeteneklerini ortalama altında olarak algıladıkları sonucuna varılabilir. Duygu düzenleme zorluğu ile ilgili olarak, 'hedefler' alt ölçeği katılımcılar için en zorlayıcı alan olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu, duygusal sıkıntı anlarında hedeflerine odaklanmayı sürdürmekte önemli ölçüde zorlandıklarını göstermektedir. Öte yandan, 'kabullenmeme' en az sorunlu olan alt ölçek olmuştur, bu da katılımcıların genellikle duygularını reddettiği veya onaylamadığı anlamına gelmektedir. Kısacası, bulgular, duygu düzenlemesinde yaygın bir sorun olmamasına rağmen, bireysel olarak çocukların belirli bağlamlarda zaman zaman zorluklarla karşılaşabileceğini düşündürmektedir. Kız öğrenciler erkeklere göre duygu düzenlemede, özellikle açıklık, hedefler, stratejiler ve kabullenmeme açısından, daha fazla zorluk yaşadıklarını göstermektedir.

Korelasyon analizi, katılımcıların DDZÖ-16 puanları ile bilinçli dikkat farkındalıkları arasında anlamlı bir ilişki olduğunu göstermektedir. Doğrusal regresyon analizine dayanarak, katılımcıların bilinçli farkındalık seviyelerinin duygu düzenleme zorluklarındaki varyansın yaklaşık %60,3'ünü açıkladığını göstermektedir. Son olarak öğrencilerin stres ve kaygıyla başa çıkmak için ağırlıklı olarak müzik dinleme, nefes egzersizleri ve sosyal desteğe başvurma gibi duygusal rahatlamaya, dikkat dağıtmaya ve aktif öz düzenlemeye yönelik stratejiler kullandıklarını göstermiştir.

Sonuç ve Tartışma

Literatürdeki bilinçli farkındalık seviyelerinin duygu düzenleme üzerindeki pozitif etkisini onaylayan diğer çalışmalarla (Buric, 2024; Kou et al., 2025; Roemer et al., 2015) paralel olarak, bu çalışma sonucunda da öğrencilerin bilinçli farkındalıkları ve duygu düzenleme zorlukları arasında anlamlı pozitif korelasyon bulunmuştur. Bu yüzden, bilinçli farkındalık pratiklerinin İngilizce derslerine dahil edilmesi, öğrencilerin duygusal sağlığını, stres ve kaygı yönetimi becerilerini, refahlarını ve akademik başarılarını geliştirmede önemli bir rol oynayabilir. Öğretmenler, bilinçli farkındalık uygulamalarını sınıflarında kullanarak öğrencilerin dil öğrenimiyle ilişkili duygusal zorlukların üstesinden gelmek ve akademik olarak başarılı olmak için gerekli becerileri kazanmalarına yardımcı olabilirler. Bilinçli farkındalık eğitimi, önemli bir cinsiyet farklılığı göstermediği ve genel duygusal düzenlemeyi artırabildiği için etkili bir evrensel strateji olabilir. Kısacası, bu çalışma, özellikle olumlu öğrenme ortamlarının oluşumu için öğrencilerin duygusal düzenleme yapabilmelerini gerektiren İngilizcenin yabancı dil olarak öğrenildiği bağlamlarda bilinçli farkındalık becerilerinin geliştirilmesinin önemini göstermiş ve bilinçli farkındalık müdahale programlarının okullarda yaygınlaştırılması gerekliliğinin altını çizmiştir. Öğrenciler, vücut taramaları, bilinçli nefes alma ve meditasyon gibi farkındalık tekniklerini uygulayarak duygularını yönetme yeteneklerini geliştirebilir ve duygusal durumlarının farkındalığını artırabilirler.

Eagly ve Wood (1999), sosyalleşme ve cinsiyetin insan davranışlarını etkilediğini söylemişlerdir bu çalışma sonucunda da kız öğrencilerin duygu düzenlemede erkek öğrencilere göre dürtü kontrolü ve farkındalık dışındaki çoğu alanda daha fazla zorluk bildirmektedir. Bu farklılıklar, cinsiyete duyarlı duygusal düzenleme programlarının geliştirilmesi gerekliliğini ortaya koymuştur. Bu yüzden öğretmenler, özellikle kız öğrencilerin duygularını yansıtabilecekleri ve sağlıklı başa çıkma mekanizmaları geliştirebilecekleri güvenli, pozitif, yargılayıcı olmayan ve destekleyici sınıf ortamları sağlayarak öğrencilerin duygusal zorlukları aşmalarına yardımcı olmada önemli bir rol oynarlar. Nitel bulgular arkadaşlarıyla konuşmak gibi sosyal başa çıkma

stratejilerini kullandıklarını gösterdiği için öğretmenler öğrencilerin iyi oluş hallerini arttırmak için dil öğrenmede yaşadıkları zorluklarla daha kolay başa çıkabilmeleri için grup çalışmaları ve projeleri belirleyerek destek olmalılardır. Ayrıca, duygu düzenleme zorluğu çeken öğrencileri daha kendinden emin ve dirençli akranlarla eşleştirerek işbirlikçi bir sınıf ortamı oluşturmalarıdır