Investigation of Preschoolers' Self- Regulation Skills In Terms Of Social Emotional Skills*

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Abstract: Preschool period is an important period for the development of self-regulation skills in children. Many factors play a role in the development of self-regulation in children. The aim of this study is to examine preschoolers' self-regulation skills in terms of social emotional skills. The research has been conducted in general survey model. The research group of study consists of a total of 212 children, 86 of whom are girls and 126 are boys, of the 5-6 years old preschool children attending private and public kindergartens affiliated to the Directorate of National Education in Konya. The Masdu Social-Emotional Adaptation Scale developed by Güven and Işık in 2006 to collect research data and The Child Behavior Rating Scale (CBRS) scales developed by Bronson, Goodson, Layzer & Love (1990) and adapted into Turkish in 2016 by Sezgin and Demiriz were used to measure the self-regulation skills of children aged 3-6.

Key Words: Preschool period, self-regulation, social emotional development

1. Introduction

The preschool period is important years for development of self-regulation skills just as it is important in terms of many developmental characteristics in children. The development of self-regulation starts from birth. While the period from birth to age three is an early period for children to perform self-regulated behaviours, regulations and interventions made in this period have a critical importance in terms of observing developmental features in the next period (Ertürk Kara, Güler Yıldız, & Fındık, 2018). It is important to provide experiences that support children's self-regulation skills from early childhood to gain self-regulation skills. (Erol, İvrendi, 2018; Aydın and Ulutaş, 2017).

Self-regulation is the situation in which the child has a good command of his own behavioral process and can regulate his behavior. The child can choose, plan, control and assess his own behavior (Bodrova & Leong, 2017). With self-regulation skills, children acquire the ability to manage their emotions, shift their attention, or focus, and inhibit or activate their behavior (Dağgül, 2016). In addition, self-regulation is considered to be the ability to adapt to changes (Kopp, 1982).

According to social learning theory, individuals can assess their own behaviors by observing them and comparing them with their own criteria. As a result of the assessment, he organizes his behaviors by reinforcing or punishing himself (Senemoğlu, 2020). These internal mechanisms that interact with each other enable individuals to regulate their own behavior (Aydın & Atalay, 2015). Self-regulation is important not only for the individual but also for social life (Fındık Tanrıbuyurdu & Güler Yıldız, 2014). Blair and Razza (2007), who were influenced by social cognitive theory, describe self-regulation as a two-way process, including cognitive self-regulation and social emotional self-regulation. In other words, self-regulation has two interrelated dimensions, including the regulation of emotions and cognition. The interaction of these two dimensions underlies the regulation of behaviors (Calvins, Perry, & Dollar, 2016; Skonkoff, 2000 cited in Saraç & Güleç, 2019). In preschool education, children need to be supported with a training program specific to their needs in terms of behavior regulation and social skills (Fındık Tanrıbuyurdu & Güler Yıldız; 2014; Aydın & Ulutaş, 2017).

Social emotional development is a process in which, by controlling his emotions from the moment he is born, the individual shapes the values of the society and his role in the society and acquires the skills that enable him to be an individual in harmony with the society (Jenson, Sloane, & Young, 1988 cited in Küçükturan & Keleş, 2020). This process is grounded through some personal characteristics in the prenatal period. The interaction and relationships of the mother with the fetus before the birth affect the baby's social and emotional development, social skills and communication with other individuals in the years ahead (Koçyiğit & Fırat, 2020). Social-emotional skills is a broad term that can encompass a range of competencies, including emotional knowledge, emotional and behavioral regulatory abilities, and social skills (Denham, 2006). Whitted (2011) classified social and emotional skills in four sub-dimensions: emotion management, empathy skills, problem solving skills and self-control skills. Social and emotional dimensions of human behavior are intertwined, and separating these two developmental areas from each other and handling them independently will create limitations in realisation of the other developmental area (Kaya, 2019).

The preschool period is the period when the foundations of social emotional development are laid, as in all other developmental areas. The life of the child in this period will affect his emotional health and social life in the periods ahead. The academic and cognitive development of the individual is also closely related to the level of social emotional development that will ensure his / her adaptation to social life (Özdemir Beceren & Zembat, 2016).

In line with this information, it is thought that determining the relationship between self-regulation and social emotional skills of preschool children will contribute to the field and other studies to be conducted. In this study, it is aimed to examine the self-regulation skills of preschool children in terms of social emotional skills. In line with this main purpose, the following questions have been sought:

• Do self-regulation skills of preschool children have a significant difference according to the gender variable?

• Do social emotional skills of preschool children have a significant difference according to the gender variable?

• Is there a significant relationship between self-regulation and social emotional skills of preschool children?

• Are self-regulation skills of preschool children a significant predictor of their social emotional skills?

2. Method

This study, which aims to examine the self-regulation skills of preschool children in terms of social emotional skills, is a quantitative study in general survey model. General survey models are scanning arrangements made on the whole universe or a group of samples or a sample taken from it in order to reach a general judgment about the universe in a universe consisting of more than one element (Karasar, 2018).

2.1. Study Sample

The study group of the research consists of a total of 212 children, 86 of whom are girls and 126 are boys, of the 5-6 years old preschool children attending private and public kindergartens affiliated to the Directorate of National Education in Konya. In the study, children attending pre-school education institutions were determined by simple random sampling method, one of the random sampling methods. The main feature of random sampling methods is that the sample has a high representation power of the universe. (Büyüköztürk, Kılıç Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz and Demirel, 2018).

2.2. Data Collection Tools

General Information Form: The general information form has been developed by the researchers in order to reach the demographic information of the children included in the study. In this form, questions about the birth date and gender of the children included in the study have been included.

Child Behavior Rating Scale (CBRS): The Child Behavior Rating Scale (CBRS), developed by Bronson, Goodson, Layzer & Love (1990), has been prepared to measure the self-regulation skills of 3-6 years old children. CBRS is an observational assessment tool used in the teacher's classroom to evaluate children in terms of behavior regulation and social skills. (Bronson, Tivnan and Seppanen, 1995). The scale consists of 17 items and 2 sub-dimensions. There are 10 items in the behavioral regulation sub-dimension (between 1-10) and 7 items in the social skills sub-dimension

(between 11-17). These items are evaluated by scoring the frequency of observing child behaviors described in each item in the CBRS with a five-point rating system. (1-Never, 2-Rarely, 3-Sometimes, 4-Frequently / Mostly, 5-Always) (Ponitz et al., 2009; Matthews et al., 2009; Wanless et al., 2011a; Wanless et al., 2011c). Test-retest reliability of the assessment tool has been found to be 67. (Cadima, Gamelas, McClelland, Peixoto, 2015; McClelland., 2007; McClelland and Morrison, 2003; von Suchodoletz, Gestsdottir, Wanless, McClelland, Birgisdottir, Gunzenhauser and Ragnarsdottir, 2013).

Marmara Social Emotional Adaptation Scale for Five Years Old Children (MSEAS): The scale, which has been developed by an expert group of 9 people from Marmara University faculty members, has been developed to measure the social-emotional adaptation levels of 6.0-6.11 months children. The scale, consisting of 36 items and 7 sub-dimensions, has been reduced to 4 factors and 19 items as a result of the factor analysis applied to the data obtained. The sub-dimensions of the scale, which teacher requires to evaluate the social-emotional adaptation of the child by considering "Never", "Sometimes" and "Always" options, are as follow: Acting in accordance with the requirements of social life, reacting appropriately to the social situation, interaction with peers and a positive approach to the social environment. As a result of the item analysis, all items have been found to be correlated at the 0.1 significance level. The Cronbach Alpha value of the scale is 0.83, and the test-retest reliability correlation value is r = 0.89. (Güven and Işık, 2006).

2.3. Analysis of the Data

The data obtained as a result of the research were analyzed with the help of SPSS 18.00 Package Program. Firstly, normality, homogeneity and whether the data are independent of each other has been examined in the analysis of the data. Kolmogorov Smirnov test has been implemented for normality of distribution. After finding that the data have showed normal distribution, self-regulation skills levels and social emotional skill levels have been analyzed with the "Independent Groups T-test" according to the gender and age variables.

3. Results

The findings obtained from the analysis regarding self-regulation and social emotional skills of preschool children are presented in this part of the research.

3.1. Findings On The Self-Regulation Between Social Emotional Skills and Other Variables

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics Regarding the Variables

Scale	Sub-dimensions	X̄	S
MSEAS-5 age	Acting in accordance with the requirements of social life	21.75	5.15
	Reacting appropriately to the social situation	9.41	1.83
	Interaction with peers	7.39	1.71
	Positive approach to the social environment	7.83	1.48
CBRS	Behaviour Regulation	34.43	8.94
	Social Skill	24.44	6.41

Table 2 t-Test Results of Social Emotional Skill Levels of Preschool Children According to Gender Variable

MSEAS -5 Age	Gender	n	X̄	S	sd	t	p
Acting in accordance with the requirements of social life	Female	86	23.75	3.14	210	4.92	.000*
	Male	126	20.38	5.78			
Reacting appropriately to the social situation	Female	86	9.86	1.56	210	2.96	.002*
	Male	126	9.11	1.95			
Interaction with peers	Female	86	7.80	1.48	210	2.93	.015*
	Male	126	7.11	1.80			
Positive approach to the social environment	Female	86	8.05	1.24	210	1.85	.005*
	Male	126	7.67	1.62			

The (*) sign indicates that the subprocess is significant at the p <0.05 level.

The t-test results of the social emotional skills mean scores of preschool children in the sample group are shown according to the gender variable in Table 2. According to the analysis results, there is a significant difference in favor of girls in the sub-dimension of acting in accordance with the requirements of social life (t = 4.92; p = .000), reacting appropriately to the social situation (t = 2.96; p =.002), interaction with peers (t = 2.93; p =.015) and in the sub-dimension of positive approach to the social environment (t =1.85; p =.005) according to the gender variable.

Table 3 t -Test Results of Preschool Children's Self-Regulation Skill Scores Mean According to Gender Variable

CBRS	Gender	n	X̄	S	sd	t	p
Behaviour Regulation	Female	86	36.74	7.03	210	3.17	.004*
	Male	126	32.85	9.75			
Social Skill	Female	86	26.72	4.94	210	4.45	.003*
	Male	126	22.89	6.83			

The (*) sign indicates that the subprocess is significant at the p <0.05 level.

The t-test results of the self-regulation skills mean scores of preschool children in the sample group are shown according to the gender variable in Table 3. According to the analysis results and children's gender variable, there is a significant difference in favor of girls in the behavioral regulation sub-dimension (t = 3.17; p = .004) and in the social skills sub-dimension (t = 4.45; p = .003).

Table 4: Pearson's Correlation Value Test Results Regarding the Relationship Between Self-Regulation Skills and Social Emotional Skills of Preschool Children

		Behaviour Regulation	Social Skill
Acting in accordance with the requirements of social life	Pearson Correlation	.726**	.714**
	P	.000	.000
	N	212	212
Reacting appropriately to the social situation	Pearson Correlation	.544**	.366**
	P	.000	.000
	N	212	212
Interaction with peers	Pearson Correlation	.607**	.499**
	P	.000	.000
	N	212	212
Positive approach to the social environment	Pearson Correlation	.544**	.482**
	P	.000	.000
	N	212	212

The (*) sign indicates that the subprocess is significant at the p <0.05 level.

Pearson's correlation analysis have been conducted to determine whether there is a significant relationship between the sub-dimensions of variables. There is a high, positively and significant relationship between acting in accordance with the requirements of social life which is the sub-dimensions of Marmara social emotional adaptation scale and behavior regulation(r=.76, p<.05) and social skills(r=.71, p<.05) which are the sub-dimensions of the child behaviour assessment scale. There is a medium, positively and significant relationship between reacting appropriately to the social situation which is the sub-dimensions of Marmara social emotional adaptation scale and behavior Regulation (r=.54, p<.05) and social skills (r=.36, p<.05) which are the sub-dimensions of the child behaviour assessment scale. There is a medium, positively and significant relationship between interaction with peer which is the sub-dimensions of Marmara social emotional adaptation scale and behavior Regulation (r=.60, p<.05) and social skills (r=.49, p<.05) which are the sub-dimensions of the child behaviour assessment scale. There is a medium, positively and significant relationship between positive approach to the social environment which is the sub-dimensions of Marmara social emotional adaptation scale and behavior regulation (r=.54, p<.05) and social skills (r=.48, p<.05) which are the sub-dimensions of the child behaviour assessment scale.

Table 5: Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Results Related to Social Emotional Skills Levels as Predictors of Self-Regulation Skills Levels of Preschool Children

Variables	β	Standart Error	t	p	F	F significance
Constant	-	2.44	-.070	.945		
Acting in accordance with the requirements of social life	.50	.11	7.63	.000**		
Reacting appropriately to the social situation	.12	.28	2.17	.031*	70.36	.000**
Interaction with peers	.18	.33	2.84	.005**		
Positive approach to the social environment	.06	.37	.96	.335		

*p<.05 **p<.01;
R=.75 R^2=.57

Dependent Variable: self-regulation skill

Independent Variable: social emotional skill

It has been revealed that the self-regulation skills of preschool children in the sample group have been significant on their social emotional skills. (R^2=.57, $F_{(4/207)}$, p<.01). This result explains 57% of the total variance in pre-school children's social emotional skills, self-regulation skills. ccording to the standardized regression value (β), the order of importance of predictor variables on self-regulation is as follows ; acting in accordance with the requirements of social life (β= .50, p<.01), interaction with peer (β=.18, p<.05), reacting appropriately to the social situation (β=.12, p<.01) and positive approach to the social environment (β=06, p>.01).

As a result of the study, it has been found that there is a significant positively relationship between self-regulation skill and social emotional skill. In addition, it was found that social emotional skill explains 57% of the total variance in self-regulation skill in preschool children.

4. Discussion

This study has been conducted to examine the self-regulation skills of preschool children in terms of social emotional skills. When the findings of the study have been evaluated, when the analysis results of the self-regulation skills of preschool children according to the gender variable have been examined, a significant difference has been observed in favor of girls. Aksoy and Tozduman Yaralı (2017), Atmaca, Akduman and Sarıbaş (2020), Matthews, Ponitz and Morrison, (2009), Tutkun, Tezel Şahin and Işıktekiner (2016), Tuzcuoğlu, Azkeskin, Niran and Özkan (2020) found a significant difference between children's self-regulation skills and gender in favor of girls within the context of the studies that they conducted. When the studies on the subject are examined, it was expected that there would be a difference in self-regulation skills according to gender (Raffaelli et al., 2005). Atmaca, Akduman and Sarıbaş (2020) have stated that in our society, the reactions given to boys and girls differ, and while many behaviors of boys are tolerated, less tolerance is shown to girls. This may cause differences in girls 'self-regulation skills and boys' self-regulation skills. Wanless et al. (2011) examined the behavioral self-regulation skills of children in different countries. They found that American girls had higher levels of behavioral self-regulation, and this didn't differ significantly by gender in other countries. Therefore, it can be stated that the social roles expected of girls and boys with the effect of socio-cultural characteristics cause differentiation in children's self-regulation behaviors.

According to the analysis results, when the social emotional skills of preschool children have been analyzed by gender variable, a significant difference has been found in favor of girls. Dinç (2002) stated in his study that the social development levels of children were affected by the variables of age, gender and school attendance. In addition, Koçak and Tepeli (2006) found in their study that age, gender, maternal education level and socio-economic level variables affect the behaviors of four-five-year-old children regarding cooperation and social relations. There are certain roles that societies expect of different genders. These are called societal gender judgments, or stereotypes. In this period, stereotypes such as "boys don't cry" and "girls must be kind" affect social-emotional development with the development of the superego. Girls were expected to be emotional, gentle and kind, while boys were expected to be bold, strong, independent and not to show their feelings (Küçükturan & Keleş, 2020). Many studies revealed that environmental factors at home, at school and in society in early childhood support gender typing by adding on genetic influences (Berk, 2020). Thus, it is thought that social emotional skill levels of girls may be different from boys due to social differences and expectations.

It has been determined that there is a positive and significant relationship between self-regulation skills and social emotional skills of preschool children. The findings showed that behaving in accordance with the requirements of social life, responding appropriately to the social situation, interaction with peers and a positive approach to the social environment are important variables in predicting the self-regulation skill level considered within the scope of the research. In Vygotsky's tradition, physical, cognitive and social-emotional self-regulation was considered as part of a whole (Bodrova & Leong, 2017). It is very important to create consistent and predictable environments for children in the preschool period when their self-regulation skills are rapidly developing. This period was also a period when children could learn social-emotional skills such as understanding their emotions, calming themselves, etc. (Saraç & Güleç, 2019).

Self-regulation and social emotional skills of children can be examined with different variables and longitudinal studies.

In the study, when the finding "as the levels of social emotional skills of children get higher, their self-regulation skill levels also get higher" is taken into account, more emphasis can be placed on educational activities for teachers and parents in order to support these skills starting from an early age.

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