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## Okul Öncesi Öğretmenlerinin Okuma-Yazma Hazırlık Etkinliklerine İlişkin Yeterlilik Algılarının Belirlenmesi

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**Öz:** Yapılan araştırmada Adana ilinde Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı bünyesinde ilkokulların anasınıflarında ve bağımsız anaokullarında görev yapan okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin okuma yazmaya hazırlık çalışmalarına ilişkin yeterlilik algılarının öğretmenlerin yaş, cinsiyet, mesleki kıdem, çalışılan okul türü ve öğretmenlerin çalıştıkları çocukların yaş grubu değişkenlerine göre değişiklik gösterip göstermediği incelenmiştir. Araştırmanın örneklemini, 2020-2021 eğitim öğretim yılı güz döneminde Adana ili Merkez, Çukurova, Seyhan ve Yüreğir ilçe sınırları içerisinde yer alan Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı'na bağlı bağımsız anaokulları ve ilkokullara bağlı anasınıflarında görev yapan 332 okul öncesi öğretmeni oluşturmaktadır. Verilerin istatistiksel analizinde SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) 23.0 paket programı kullanılmıştır. Kategorik ölçümler sayı ve yüzde olarak, sürekli ölçümler ortalama ve standart sapma (gerekli yerlerde medyan ve minimum-maksimum) olarak özetlenmiştir. Çalışmada yer alan parametrelerin normal dağılım gösterip göstermediğini belirlemede ölçek skorlarının çarpıklık ve basıklık değerlerine bakılmıştır. Normal dağılım gösteren parametrelerde ikili grup analizlerinde bağımsız student t-testi, ikiden fazla grup analizlerinde Oneway ANOVA testi kullanılmıştır. Değişkenlerden ikiden fazla grup olanların gruplar arasındaki farklılığın kaynağını belirlemede Post Hoc testlerinden Tukey testine başvurulmuştur. Ölçekler arasındaki ilişkinin belirlenmesinde Pearson ve Spearman'rho korelasyon testi kullanılmıştır. Tüm testlerde istatistiksel önemlilik düzeyi 0.05 olarak alınmıştır. Araştırma sonucunda, kadın okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin "Görsel Algı Çalışmaları" ve "Sözel Öz İfade" alt ölçeklerinden aldıkları puan ortalamalarının erkek öğretmenlere göre daha yüksek olduğu belirlenmiştir. Ayrıca öğretmenlerin yaş grupları ile "Sesleri Ayırt Etme" alt ölçek puanları arasında anlamlı bir fark bulunmuştur. Öğretmenlerin mesleki kıdem değişkeni ile "Dikkat ve Bellek Çalışmaları" alt ölçek puanları arasında anlamlı bir fark bulunurken, diğer alt ölçek puanları arasında anlamlı bir fark bulunmamıştır. Araştırmada dikkat çeken bir diğer sonuca göre ilkokullara bağlı anaokulu sınıflarında ve bağımsız anaokullarında çalışan öğretmenlerin "Fiziksel Hazırlanışlık" ve "Toplam Ölçek Büyüklüğü" alt ölçeklerinden aldıkları puan ortalamaları arasında anlamlı bir fark bulunmuştur. Ayrıca okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çalıştığı yaş grubu değişkeni ile "Problem Çözme Etkinlikleri", "Başkalarıyla İlişkileri Yönetme Çalışmaları" alt ölçek puanları arasında anlamlı bir fark bulunmuştur.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Erken okuryazarlık, okul öncesi, öğretmen yeterlik algıları.

## Determining Preschool Teachers' Perception of Competence Regarding Literacy Preparation Activities

**Abstract:** The study examined whether the perceptions of competence of preschool teachers working in kindergarten classes of primary schools and independent kindergartens under the Ministry of National Education in Adana province regarding literacy preparation activities varied according to the variables of teachers' age, gender, professional seniority, the type of school he/she worked in, and the age group of the children the teachers worked with. The sample of the study consisted of 332 preschool teachers working in independent kindergartens affiliated with the Ministry of National Education and kindergarten classes affiliated with primary schools located within the borders of Adana province's Center, Çukurova, Seyhan and Yüreğir districts in the fall semester of the 2020-2021 academic year. SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) 23.0 package program was used in the statistical analysis of the data. Categorical measurements were summarized as numbers and percentages, and continuous measurements were summarized as mean and standard deviation (median and minimum-maximum where necessary). The skewness and kurtosis values of the scale scores were

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examined in order to determine whether the parameters in the study showed a normal distribution. In the normally distributed parameters, independent student t-test was used in the two-group analysis, and One-Way ANOVA test was used in the analysis of more than two groups. In the case of variables with more than two groups, Tukey test was used as a Post Hoc test to determine the source of the difference between the groups. Pearson and Spearman's rho correlation tests were used to determine the relationship between the scales. The statistical significance level was taken as 0.05 in all tests. Suggestions were made based on the research findings and findings. As a result of the research, it was determined that the mean scores of female preschool teachers from the "Visual Perception Studies" and "Verbal Self-Expression" subscales were higher than those of male teachers. In addition, a significant difference was found between the age groups of teachers and the "Discrimination of Sounds" subscale scores. While a significant difference was found between the professional seniority variable of teachers and the "Attention and Memory Studies" subscale scores, no significant difference was found between the other subscale scores. According to another remarkable result of the research, a significant difference was found between the mean scores of teachers working in kindergarten classes affiliated to primary schools and of those in independent kindergartens, which were taken from the "Physical Readiness" and "Total Scale Size" subscales. In addition, a significant difference was found between the age group variable of preschool teachers and the "Problem Solving Activities" and "Studies on Managing Relations with Others" subscale scores.

**Keywords:** Early literacy, preschool, teacher efficacy perceptions.

## Introduction

People are born into a certain social structure and begin the process of learning language thanks to the genetic structure they have. Language is a form of communication in which a person's thoughts and feelings are symbolized to convey meaning to others (Indrayani, 2016). In terms of its function, language is the ability to communicate with others. Languages include all forms of communication, whether verbal, written, sign language, gestures, facial expressions, pantomime or art. However, spoken language is the most effective form of communication and the most widely used language (Indrayani, 2016). A child who tries to understand sounds and words when he/she is born, begins to use language more effectively as he/she grows up (The National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, 2014). A child who manages to comprehend the sentences he/she hears in the first years of his/her birth pronounces the language more actively as he/she grows up (Indrayani, 2016).

Some researches show that before the child is born, he/she can recognize the mother's tone of voice and emphasis, and after then he/she is born, he/she can easily learn the same language while living in the same environment (Özbay, 2004). Language acquisition is one of the most remarkable achievements of early childhood. By the age of five, children have mastered the sound system and grammar of their language and have acquired a vocabulary of thousands of words (Hoff, 2009). Indeed, the period when language acquisition, which is considered the most important means of communication for humans, develops most rapidly is the preschool years (Cirhinlioğlu, 2001; Indrayani, 2016). Therefore, language education is of great importance during these years.

Language is an important tool for the continuation of learning in education and training. A child who starts preschool education is in a period when he/she realizes that writings have their own meanings, and his/her curiosity about written materials increases in these years (Erdoğan et al., 2013).

Introducing language activities in preschool education institutions has positive effects on the physical, psychomotor, cognitive, emotional and social development of the child (Oktaç, 2002). In addition, presenting language-rich materials in the kindergarten age contributes positively to the child's language development and early literacy skills (Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards, 2013). Studies show that preschool children's language skills are one of the best predictors of reading success in the first and second grades of primary school (Artemis & Vlachos, 2014). Children's ability to use language for listening and speaking, as well as to understand reading and writing, is critical to their academic success in the early years of elementary school (Allen & Kelly, 2015).

It is during preschool that young children learn how to use language, interact with books, understand and tell stories, and begin to write as a form of communication (Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards, 2013). At this point, teachers should be flexible when planning engaging language and literacy experiences. They should also begin education by observing children's knowledge and understanding levels (Bay & Alisinanoğlu, 2010). In other words, teachers should make room for spontaneity as children express themselves, explore books and stories, experiment with writing, and listen and learn together (Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards, 2013).

Closely related to language development, early literacy encompasses the knowledge, skills, and attitudes a child develops about reading and writing from birth through early childhood. These include aspects such as oral language, understanding that writing can convey meaning, basic alphabet knowledge, and early phonological awareness (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). The process of early literacy reveals the connection between children's pre-literacy abilities and the skills required for reading. Pre-skills including spoken language, vocabulary, phonological awareness, visual discrimination, letter recognition, print awareness, and comprehension are anticipated of children during this time (Gupta, 2009).

The aim of early literacy is not to teach children how to read and write, but to raise their awareness of these. Literacy refers to all activities that include speaking, listening, reading, writing, and oral and written assessment (Inbar-Lourie, 2017). Children have many informal experiences related to early literacy before they start school (Silinskas et al., 2020). These experiences, initiated by the child or other people, may include talking, singing, pretending to read stories, doodling and drawing (Sulzby et al., 1991). With these informal experiences, the child can begin to explore many purposes of literacy (Neuman & Knapczyk, 2022).

The level of language skills that the child has in the preschool period and the accumulation that will support the literacy process affect the child's quality of learning to read and write in primary school and his/her language use skills. In this context, the accumulation transferred to the child by the teacher

in the preschool period is important for the child's literacy success in the following years (Celenk, 2008; Dickinson & Smith, 1994; Taşkın et al., 2015; Yalçıntaş Sezgin et al., 2019). Preschool teachers' beliefs about literacy and their knowledge about literacy are related to the educational practices offered by teachers and the literacy skills of preschool children (Besser-Biron et al., 2024).

There is limited research on preschool teachers' beliefs about teaching language and literacy to children, as well as their conceptual understanding of children's language and literacy development (Lynch & Owston, 2015) and their beliefs about content areas (Lee & Ginsburg, 2007). However, it has been determined that teachers cannot be trained in a qualified manner in the field of first reading and writing preparation, that there are deficiencies in practices, that they cannot follow current developments in first reading and writing preparation studies, that they cannot use the methods and techniques related to first reading and writing preparation studies appropriately (Akbaba Altun et al., 2014; Uyanık Balat & Artan, 2004) and that they need in-service training (Karadağ, 2023).

From this point of view, the aim of the study is to determine the competence perceptions of preschool teachers regarding literacy preparation activities and to make recommendations for future studies based on the results of the study.

## **Method**

### **Research Model**

A descriptive survey model was used in this study. It is a model frequently used in educational studies to learn the attitudes, beliefs and thoughts of the majority represented on the determined subject (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The survey model consists of a process aimed at revealing the characteristics of the individuals included in the study (Büyüköztürk et al., 2016). Therefore, it was determined that the most appropriate model for this study, which was conducted to determine preschool teachers' perceptions of competence regarding literacy activities, was the descriptive survey model.

### **Sampling**

The sample of the study consisted of 332 preschool teachers working in official and private kindergartens and nursery classes affiliated with the Ministry of National Education located within the borders of Adana province, Çukurova, Seyhan and Yüreğir districts in the fall semester of the 2020-2021 academic year. Since this study aims to determine the competence perceptions of preschool teachers regarding literacy preparation activities, convenience sampling method was preferred to apply. Convenience sampling method is a method that accelerates the research. The

researcher selects a situation that is close and easy to access. (Kılıç, 2013). Demographic information about the teachers participating in the study is given as below (see Table 1).

**Table 1.** Demographic information of preschool teachers participating in the study

	n	%
<i>Gender</i>		
Female	228	68.7
Male	104	31.3
<i>Teacher's age</i>		
21-30 ages	230	69.2
31-40 ages	76	22.9
41 ages and older	26	7.9
<i>Teacher's professional seniority</i>		
1-5 years	201	60.5
6-10 years	82	24.7
11-20 years	40	12.0
21-30 years	9	2.7
<i>Type of school worked in</i>		
Kindergarten attached to primary school	204	61.4
Independent kindergarten	128	38.6
<i>Age group served</i>		
36-48 months	96	28.9
49-60 months	110	33.1
61-72 months	126	38.0
<i>Total</i>	332	100.0

Table 1 provides demographic information about the teachers who participated in the study. Accordingly, it was determined that (% 68.7) of the preschool teachers who participated in the study were female and (% 31.3) were male. The age group distribution of the teachers was as follows; (% 69.2) was between 21-30 years of age, (% 22.9) was between 31-40 years of age, and (% 7.9) was 41 years of age and above. Four teachers in the +50 age group were included in the group of teachers who were 41 years of age and above. When the professional seniority of the teachers in their professions was examined, it was determined that (% 60.5) had 1-5 years, (% 24.7) had 6-10 years, (% 12.0) had 11-20 years, and (% 2.7) had 21-30 years. It was determined that 61.4% of the teachers worked in kindergartens affiliated with primary education, and 38.6% of them worked in independent kindergartens. When the age groups in which the teachers worked were examined, it was concluded that 28.9% of them were in the 36-48 month group, 33.1% in the 49-60 month group, and 38.0% in the 61-72 month group, respectively.

## **Data Collection Process**

The data of the study were collected in the fall semester of the 2020–2021 academic year after obtaining the necessary permissions from the Adana Provincial Directorate of National Education and Aksaray University Human Research Ethics Committee. Additionally, verbal consent was obtained from the participants. The data were collected from preschool teachers who became volunteered to participate in the study and who work in schools affiliated to the Adana province center, Seyhan, Çukurova and Yüreğir districts. The “*Personal Information Form*” and the “*Scale for Determining the Competencies of Preschool Teachers Regarding Literacy Preparation Activities*” were applied to the participating teachers within the scope of the research. The data were collected through google forms.

## **Data Collection Tools**

***Personal Information Form:*** This form, prepared by the researcher, consists of six questions aimed at determining the teachers' gender, age, professional seniority, type of school they work in, and age group they teach in order to reveal the teachers' demographic information.

***Scale for Determining the Competencies of Preschool Teachers Regarding Literacy Preparation Activities:*** This scale was developed by Bay (2008). “The scale aims to determine teachers' competencies regarding preschool literacy preparation activities” The Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient calculated for the reliability of the general part of the scale was obtained as .89. The scale is a Likert-type five-point rating scale consisting of 33 items. The scale consists of 8 factors. Factor 1 “Attention and Memory Studies” consists of 6 items. Factor 2 “Visual Perception Studies” consists of 6 items. Factor 3 “Physical Readiness” consists of 4 items. Factor 4 “Studies on Using Turkish Correctly” consists of 3 items. Factor 5 “Problem-Solving Activities” consists of 3 items. Factor 6 “Verbal Self-Expression” consists of 4 items. Factor 7 “Studies on Managing Relationships with Others” consists of 4 items. Factor 8 “Distinguishing Sounds” consists of 3 items. Each factor measures a different construct. The table below shows the scale factors and the number of items for each factor.

**Table 2.** Scale factors and items number

Scale Factors	Item numbers
Attention and Memory Studies	6
Studies on Visual Perception	6
Physical Readiness	4
Studies on Using Turkish Correctly	3
Problem-Solving Activities	3
Verbal Self-Expression	4
Studies on Managing Relationships with Others	4
Distinguishing Sounds	3

### Analysis of Data

SPSS 23.0 package program was used for the statistical analysis of the data. Categorical measurements were summarized as number and percentage, continuous measurements were summarized as mean and standard deviation (median and minimum-maximum where necessary). In order to determine whether the parameters in the study showed normal distribution, skewness and kurtosis values of scale scores were examined. In paired group analyses of parameters showing normal distribution, independent student t-test was used, and One-Way ANOVA test was used in more than two group analyses. Tukey test, one of the Post Hoc tests, was used to determine the source of the difference between the groups of variables with more than two groups. Pearson and Spearman's rho correlation tests were used to determine the relationship between the scales. Statistical significance level was used as 0.05 in the tests performed.

### Findings

Table 3 shows the mean, standard deviation, median, minimum and maximum values of the “*Scale for Determining the Competencies of Preschool Teachers Regarding Literacy Preparation Activities*”

**Table 3.** Descriptive statistics

	Number of items	Mean±Ss	Median	Min-Max
Factor 1: Attention and Memory Studies	6	17,2±7,2	19	6-30
Factor 2: Studies on Visual Perception	6	25,8±3,7	26	11-30
Factor 3: Physical Readiness	4	16.7±1,8	17	9-20
Factor 4: Studies on Using Turkish Correctly	3	13,2±1,9	13	3-15
Factor 5: Problem-Solving Activities	3	13,1±1,8	13	6-15
Factor 6: Verbal Self-Expression	4	17,8±2,4	18	6-20
Factor 7: Studies on Managing Relationships with Others	4	17,9±2,4	18	7-20
Factor 8: Distinguishing sounds	3	12,9±2,1	13	4-15
<b>Total Scale Size</b>	33	134,6±13,5	135	62-163

Accordingly, the sub-scales of the “*Scale for Determining the Competencies of Preschool Teachers Regarding Literacy Preparation Activities*” of the teachers who participated in the study; ‘Factor 1: Attention and Memory Activities’, ‘Factor 2: Studies on Visual Perception’, ‘Factor 3: Physical Readiness’, ‘Factor 4: Studies on Using Turkish Correctly’, ‘Factor 5: Problem Solving Activities’,

‘Factor 6: Verbal Self-Expression’, ‘Factor 7: Studies on Managing Relationships with Others’, ‘Factor 8: Distinguishing Sounds’, ‘Total Scale Size’ scale score averages, standard deviation, minimum, maximum and median values were above the average. The high scores obtained as a result of the study show that teachers have high perceptions of competence in reading and writing readiness studies.

**Table 4.** Skewness, kurtosis and Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient values of the scale

	Skewness	Kurtosis	Parametric/Non Parametric	Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient
Factor 1: Attention and Memory Studies	-0.209	-1.269	Parametric	0.886
Factor 2: Studies on Visual Perception	-0.973	1.452	Parametric	0,859
Factor 3: Physical Readiness	-1,138	1,514	Parametric	0,707
Factor 4: Studies on Using Turkish Correctly	-1,258	3,435	Non Parametric	0,784
Factor 5: Problem-Solving Activities	-1,016	1,287	Parametric	0,745
Factor 6: Verbal Self-Expression	-1,378	3,222	Non Parametric	0,822
Factor 7: Studies on Managing Relationships with Others	-1,350	2,216	Non Parametric	0,832
Factor 8: Distinguishing Sounds	-1,258	2,034	Non Parametric	0,793
<b>Total Scale Size</b>	-0,930	4,116	Non Parametric	0,865

According to Table 4, it was determined that the skewness and kurtosis values of the sub-scale scores of the “*Scale for Determining the Competencies of Preschool Teachers Regarding Literacy Preparation Activities*”, which are the sub-scales of the scale; ‘Factor 1: Attention and Memory Activities’, ‘Factor 2: Studies on Visual Perception’, ‘Factor 3: Physical Readiness’ and ‘Factor 5: Problem Solving Activities’ were between -2 and +2; it was concluded that the relevant scale scores showed a normal distribution. In order for variables to be accepted as normally distributed, the skewness and kurtosis values of the scale score averages must be between +2 and -2 (George and Mallery 2010). It was determined that the skewness and kurtosis values of the average scores of ‘Factor 4: Studies on Using Turkish Correctly’, ‘Factor 6: Verbal Self-Expression’, ‘Factor 7: Studies on Managing Relationships with Others’, ‘Factor 8: Distinguishing Sounds’ and ‘Total Scale Size’ used in the study were not in the range of -2 to +2; it was understood that the relevant scale scores did not show a normal distribution.



**Table 5.** Examining the differences between teachers' gender variable and scale scores

	Female (n=228)	Male (n=104)	t/u	p
	Mean±Ss	Mean±Ss		
Factor 1: Attention and Memory Studies	16,7±7,2	18,3±7,1	t: -1,882	0,061
Factor 2: Studies on Visual Perception	26,0±3,4	25,2±4,2	t: 1,999	0,046*
Factor 3: Physical Readiness	16,8±1,8	16,6±1,9	t: 0,852	0,395
Factor 4: Studies on Using Turkish Correctly	13,3±1,8	12,9±1,9	u: -1,352	0,176
Factor 5: Problem-Solving Activities	13,1±1,8	13,2±1,7	t: -0,301	0,764
Factor 6: Verbal Self-Expression	17,9±2,3	17,4±2,4	u: -2,025	0,043*
Factor 7: Studies on Managing Relationships with Others	18,0±2,3	17,6±2,5	u: -1,730	0,084
Factor 8: Distinguishing Sounds	12,9±2,1	12,9±2,1	u: -0,074	0,941
Total Scale Size	134,8±13,0	134,2±14,4	u: -0,025	0,980

According to Table 5, it was determined that the mean scores of female teachers in the 'Studies on Visual Perception' and 'Verbal Self-Expression' sub-scales were higher than those of male teachers ( $p < 0,05$ ). In addition, no significant difference was found between the other sub-scales and the gender variable ( $p > 0,05$ ).

**Table 6.** Examining the differences between the teacher age group variable and scale scores

	21-30 years old (1)	31-40 years old (2)	41 years old and above+ (3)	$\chi^2/F$	p	Compare
	Mean±Ss	Mean±Ss	Mean±Ss			
Factor 1: Attention and Memory Studies	18,0±7,0	16,7±8,0	15,3±6,7	F:1,209	0,306	
Factor 2: Studies on Visual Perception	25,8±3,8	25,7±3,7	25,3±3,4	F:0,189	0,904	
Factor 3: Physical Readiness	16,8±1,7	16,9±1,8	16,5±1,9	F:0,459	0,711	
Factor 4: Studies on Using Turkish Correctly	13,1±2,0	13,1±1,8	13,7±1,2	$\chi^2$ :1,366	0,714	
Factor 5: Problem-Solving Activities	13,2±2,0	13,1±1,6	13,4±1,6	F:0,294	0,829	
Factor 6: Verbal Self-Expression	17,8±2,5	17,4±2,2	18,5±1,8	$\chi^2$ :6,574	0,087	
Factor 7: Studies on Managing Relationships with Others	18,0±2,2	17,8±2,6	18,5±1,8	$\chi^2$ :2,165	0,539	
Factor 8: Distinguishing Sounds	13,0±2,0	12,5±2,1	13,6±1,7	$\chi^2$ :7,986	0,046*	3-1; p=0,038 3-2; p=0,047
Total Scale Size	135,8±12,5	133,0±14,1	137,7±11,8	$\chi^2$ :1,995	0,574	

According to Table 6, while a significant difference was found between the age groups of the preschool teachers participating in the study and the "Sound Discrimination Studies" sub-scale scores ( $p < 0,05$ ); no significant difference was found between the age groups and the 1st Factor, 2nd Factor, 3rd Factor, 4th Factor, 5th Factor, 6th Factor, 7th Factor and the total scale size ( $p > 0,05$ ). It was concluded that no application rate was observed in relation to the age variable for these sub-scales. It was concluded that the "Sound Discrimination Studies" sub-scale score averages of preschool teachers aged 41 and over were higher than the scale score averages of kindergarten teachers aged

21-30 and 31-40. As teachers get older, they get to know their students better due to their experience and can carry out more equipped educational activities. For these reasons, it can be concluded that their perception of competence increases in direct proportion to their age.

**Table 7.** Results of the differences between the teachers' professional seniority variable and scale scores

	<b>1-5 years (1)</b>	<b>6-10 years (2)</b>	<b>11 years and above + (3)</b>	$\chi^2/F$	<b>p</b>	<b>Compare</b>
	<b>Mean±Ss</b>	<b>Mean±Ss</b>	<b>Mean±Ss</b>			
Factor 1: Attention and Memory Studies	17,2±7,1	18,9±7,0	14,4±7,1	F:6,186	0,002**	1-3; p=0,034 2-3; p=0,001
Factor 2: Studies on Visual Perception	25,8±3,8	25,7±3,8	25,8±3,1	F:0,042	0,959	
Factor 3: Physical Readiness	16,6±2,0	16,9±1,5	16,9±1,5	F:1,039	0,355	
Factor 4: Studies on Using Turkish Correctly	13,1±1,9	13,1±1,7	13,5±1,4	$\chi^2$ :1,583	0,453	
Factor 5: Problem-Solving Activities	13,1±1,9	13,2±1,5	13,2±1,8	F:0,016	0,984	
Factor 6: Verbal Self-Expression	17,8±2,5	17,6±2,4	17,9±1,8	$\chi^2$ :0,866	0,648	
Factor 7: Studies on Managing Relationships with Others	17,8±2,5	17,8±2,3	18,3±2,1	$\chi^2$ :1,068	0,586	
Factor 8: Distinguishing Sounds	12,9±2,2	12,8±2,0	13,1±1,8	$\chi^2$ :0,713	0,700	
<b>Total Scale Size</b>	134,4±14,0	135,9±13,6	133,1±10,5	$\chi^2$ :2,896	0,235	

According to Table 7, while a significant difference was found between the professional seniority variables and the “Attention and Memory Studies” sub-scale scores of the kindergarten teachers participating in the study ( $p < 0.05$ ); no significant difference was found between the professional seniority variable and the other scale scores ( $p > 0.05$ ). The source of the difference found between the professional seniority and the “Attention and Memory Studies” sub-scale dimensions was examined with the Post Hoc Tukey test. It was concluded that the “Attention and Memory Studies” sub-scale score averages of preschool teachers who worked as preschool teachers for 11 years and above were lower than the scale score averages of preschool teachers who worked between 1-5 years and 6-10 years.

**Table 8.** Results of differences between the type of school where teachers work and scale scores

	<b>Kindergarten attached to primary school</b>	<b>Independent kindergarten</b>	<b>t/u</b>	<b>p</b>
	<b>Mean±Ss</b>	<b>Mean±Ss</b>		
Factor 1: Attention and Memory Studies	17,8±7,4	16,2±6,8	t:1,950	0,052
Factor 2: Studies on Visual Perception	25,9±3,8	25,6±3,6	t:0,813	0,417
Factor 3: Physical Readiness	16,9±1,7	16,5±1,9	t:2,076	<b>0,039*</b>
Factor 4: Studies on Using Turkish Correctly	13,2±1,8	13,1±1,9	u:-0,569	0,569
Factor 5: Problem-Solving Activities	13,2±1,7	12,9±1,9	t:1,234	0,218
Factor 6: Verbal Self-Expression	17,8±2,3	17,8±2,4	u:-0,135	0,893
Factor 7: Studies on Managing Relationships with Others	17,9±2,4	17,8±2,4	u:-0,252	0,801
Factor 8: Distinguishing Sounds	13,0±2,0	12,7±2,2	u:-1,484	0,138
<b>Total Scale Size</b>	<b>135,8±13,6</b>	<b>132,6±13,0</b>	<b>u:-2,345</b>	<b>0,019*</b>

According to Table 8, a significant difference was found between the mean scores of the ‘Physical Readiness’ and ‘Total Scale Dimension’ sub-scales of the teachers working in kindergartens affiliated to primary schools and the teachers working in independent kindergartens ( $p < 0.05$ ). Additionally, no significant difference was found between the other sub-scale score averages and the type of school where teachers work ( $p > 0.05$ ).

**Table 9.** Results of differences between children's age group variable and scale scores

	<b>36-48 month (1)</b>	<b>49-60 month (2)</b>	<b>61-72 month</b>	<b><math>\chi^2/F</math></b>	<b>p</b>	<b>Compare</b>
	<b>Mean±Ss</b>	<b>Mean±Ss</b>	<b>Mean±Ss</b>			
Factor 1: Attention and Memory Studies	18,1±6,9	18,3±7,4	17,4±7,1	F:3,124	0,177	
Factor 2: Studies on Visual Perception	26,9±3,1	26,1±4,2	27,1±3,2	F:2,121	0,189	
Factor 3: Physical Readiness	17,3±1,8	17,0±2,4	17,5±1,1	F:1,258	0,911	
Factor 4: Studies on Using Turkish Correctly	13,4±1,1	13,1±2,4	13,7±1,1	$\chi^2$ :7,181	0,192	
Factor 5: Problem-Solving Activities	13,7±1,7	12,9±2,4	13,8±1,4	F:3,187	0,041*	3-2; p=0,032
Factor 6: Verbal Self-Expression	17,1±3,4	17,8±2,1	18,0±1,7	$\chi^2$ :4,188	0,241	
Factor 7: Studies on Managing Relationships with Others	18,7±1,8	17,8±2,1	18,9±2,0	$\chi^2$ :7,154	0,031*	3-2; p=0,007
Factor 8: Distinguishing Sounds	12,8±2,1	12,4±2,5	13,4±1,9	$\chi^2$ :1,811	0,711	
<b>Total Scale Size</b>	<b>137,2±8,4</b>	<b>131,9±14,8</b>	<b>134,7±10,1</b>	<b><math>\chi^2</math>:8,114</b>	<b>0,037*</b>	<b>3-2; p=0,041</b>

According to Table 9, while a significant difference was found between the variables of the age group that preschool teachers teach and the scale scores of ‘Problem Solving Activities’, ‘Studies on Managing Relationships with Others’ sub-scales and ‘Total Scale Size’ ( $p < 0.05$ ), no significant difference was found between the variable of the age group that preschool teachers teach and the other scale scores ( $p > 0.05$ ). According to the analysis, it was determined that the source of the

difference detected between the age group variable and the scale dimensions of ‘Problem-Solving Activities’ sub-scale, ‘Total Scale Size’ and ‘Studies for Managing Relationships with Others’ is due to the fact that the teachers of the 61-72 month group had higher ‘Studies for Problem Solving’ and ‘Total Scale Size’ scale score averages than the teachers of the 49-60 month group. In addition, it was understood that the difference detected between the sub-scale scores of “Studies on Managing Relationships with Others” was due to the fact that the teachers of the 61-72 month group had higher scale score averages than the teachers of the 49-60 month group.

## **Conclusion, Discussion and Recommendations**

This study was conducted to determine whether the scores obtained from the “*Scale for Determining the Competencies of Preschool Teachers Regarding Literacy Preparation Activities*” differ according to the age, gender, professional seniority of the teacher and the age group of the children.

As a result of the research, it was determined that the average scores of female preschool teachers from the subscales of “Studies on Visual Perception” and ‘Verbal Self-Expression’ were higher than those of male teachers. In addition, no significant difference was found between the other sub-factors and the gender variable.

According to another finding, while a significant difference was found between the age groups of the preschool teachers participating in the study and the “Distinguishing Sounds” sub-scale scores, no significant difference was found between the age groups and other sub-scales. It was concluded that the “Distinguishing Sounds” sub-scale score averages of preschool teachers aged 41 and over were higher than the scale score averages of kindergarten teachers aged 21-30 and 31-40. As teachers get older, they get to know their students better due to their experience and can carry out more equipped educational activities. For these reasons, it can be concluded that their perception of competence increases in direct proportion to their age. In a similar study, Karadağ (2023) found that there was a significant difference between the arithmetic means of the “Distinguishing Sounds” sub-dimension and the teacher’s age. When the results of the two studies are considered together, it can be said that as the age of preschool teachers increases, they have more experience in literacy preparation and plan activities accordingly. However, Bay and Alisinanoğlu (2012) did not find a significant relationship in the perception of competence of kindergarten teachers regarding literacy preparation activities according to the age factor.

According to another result, while there was a significant difference between the professional seniority variables of the teachers and the “Attention and Memory Studies” sub-scale scores, there was no significant difference between the professional seniority variable and the other subscale scores. In addition, it was concluded that the “Attention and Memory Studies” sub-scale score

averages of preschool teachers who have been in the teaching profession for 11 years and over were lower than the scale score averages of preschool teachers who have been in the teaching profession for 1-5 years and 6-10 years. In a similar study, Denli (2022) found that educators' early literacy beliefs and their perceptions of adequacy regarding literacy preparation studies showed a significant difference in favour of those with less professional seniority according to the professional seniority variable.

As a result of the research, a significant difference was found between the mean scores of teachers working in kindergarten classes attached to primary schools and independent kindergartens from the subscales of “Physical Readiness” and ‘Total Scale Size’. Accordingly, the mean scores of teachers working in kindergarten classes attached to primary schools were higher than those of teachers working in independent kindergartens. According to some study results, kindergarten classes affiliated with primary schools may have more stimulants than independent kindergartens. This situation may contribute positively to the development of children's skills, the increased academic success and the development of independent behaviour (Stipek et al., 1995). Indeed, according to Saracho (2004), literacy that emerges in a rich play environment can provide endless opportunities for teachers to practice reading, writing, speaking and listening. Therefore, it is thought that preschool teachers working in kindergarten classes attached with primary schools give more importance to the sub-dimension of literacy preparation, 'Physical Readiness’, compared to those working in independent kindergartens, depending on the stimulants in school.

According to the results of the research, while a significant difference was found between the age group variable in which preschool teachers work and the sub-scale scores of “Problem-Solving Activities”, “Studies on Managing Relationships with Others”, no significant difference was found between the other subscale scores. Consistent with the analyses conducted, the “Problem-Solving Activities” and ‘Total Scale Size’ sub-scale mean scores of teachers working with the 61-72 month group were higher than those of teachers working with the 49-60 month group. It is thought that this situation is affected by the fact that teachers working with older age groups plan more activities to prepare children for primary school and prepare more activities that support children's academic skills.

Özen and Erkul Hatipoğlu (2018) concluded as a result of their research that preschool teachers carry out a limited variety of activities within the scope of preparing children for reading and writing, that they mostly prefer to do these activities at the desk, and that they prefer teacher-centered activities. Similarly, Uluğ and Tekmen (2023) determined that preschool teachers mostly carry out teacher-centered activities focused on concept learning for literacy development at the desk. Moreover, in their study, Dickinson and Tabors (2001) stated that interactive book reading activities carried out by

teachers with children in preschool education institutions form a basis for children's reading and writing skills, but written materials are not given enough space in the classroom environment and not enough time is allocated for reading activities. As a result of the research conducted by Patterson (2002), a significant relationship was found between the activities carried out by teachers for literacy development and their attitudes. Considering these results, it is thought that preschool teachers should plan different activities that support children's early literacy skills such as phonological skills and print awareness. As a matter of fact, studies have emphasised the vitality of providing children with opportunities to easily access books for early literacy skills (Duyan, 2022; Dynia, et al., 2016).

Based on the research results, the following recommendations could be made;

- Teachers should increase the use of materials in the classroom and include more visually supportive activities to reinforce children's literacy preparation skills.
- Book reading hours should be held regularly to support reading preparation skills.
- Education programs can be prepared to improve preschool teachers' perceptions of literacy competence, and the effects of these programs can be monitored.

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