Analyzing the relationship between the levels of preschoolers' social competence and understanding their emotional skills

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ABSTRACT

In the study, the relationship between 4 and 6 years old preschool children's capability of understanding emotions and their social competence, aggression and anxiety levels were investigated. The research was conducted in the relational scanning model. The sample of the study consisted of 308 children selected from 4–6 year old children attending formal preschool institutions in Konya city center. "Personal Information Form," "Denham's Affect Knowledge Test" and "Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation-30 (SYDD-30) Scale" were used to collect research data. The collected data were evaluated using the independent group t-test, Kruskal Wallis test, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), Mann Whitney U test, and Spearman Rank Differences Correlation Analysis Technique. Because of the research, it was determined that the mean scores of the 4–6 years old preschool children in the Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation-30 Scale differed significantly according to gender and mothers' and father's education status variables. In addition, while there was a significant correlation at low level and statistically p<0.01 level between the mean scores of anger-aggression and anxiety-introversion subscale scores and Understanding Emotions Test, there was a moderately significant positive correlation and statistically at p <0.01 level between the mean scores of the Affect Knowledge Test and the social competence subscale scores.

Key words: Social competence, understanding emotional, aggression, anxiety, early childhood education.

INTRODUCTION

The ability to communicate effectively is shaped from early childhood. Improving children's social and emotional development, particularly in critical developmental periods, enables children to grow up as socially equipped individuals (Riva and Ryan, 2015). It covers many social skills and competencies, such as interaction, cooperation, empathy, self-management, and coping with stress (Swetnam et al., 1983; Merrell, 2003; Kostelnik et al., 2014; Kemple, 2017). International organizations such as OECD and CASEL also state that social skills should be developed in early childhood, including the development of emotional competence skills such as social awareness, cooperation, emotional stability and interacting with others (OECD, 2018; CASEL, 2017). Previous research emphasizes that emotions and emotional competence are important in establishing social relationships in a qualified manner by increasing social skills (Saarni, 1999; Denham et al., 2007; Sette et al., 2015; Jones et al., 2015). Since the language development of preschool children is incomplete and their vocabulary is minimal, the simplest and most common way for them to express themselves is through their emotions (Oktay, 2000; Bers, 2013). According to Denham (1998), emotions are not only an important factor in how people perceive themselves and the world, forming, as it were, the center of daily life, but they are also becoming increasingly complex in the world.
Furthermore, emotions are effective in generating responses to various situations like increased attention and agility in times of danger through anger, fear and disgust, focus on understanding the environment through astonishment, adaptation to a situation through sadness and relaxation through love and happiness (Goleman, 2021). Negative emotions are common in early childhood and if precautions are not taken they can affect a child’s peer relationships and mental health, as well as create permanent negative emotions on their positive emotions (Guo, 2018). Neurological studies show that social-emotional learning takes place before the age of six. This period is, therefore, critical. During this period, children acquire the basics of emotional competence by learning to recognize emotional knowledge and emotional understanding, regulate and manage their emotions and express themselves non-verbally (Harris 2008; Housman and Denham, 2018). According to Gerchon and Pellitteri, 2018, when children’s emotional understanding processes are examined, first of all, people should be able to recognize and name their emotional facial expressions. Understanding "non-stereotypical emotions", which includes the ability to have different emotions, is realized (Denham, 2003). When preschool children encounter events that give rise to conflicting emotional states, they may have difficulty understanding the feelings of the individual who experienced the event (Gnepp, 1983; Hoffner and Badzinki, 1989).

There are various approaches to understanding emotions. In behavioral theory, emotions are restricted to basic emotions and their physical mechanisms, while physiological theory focuses on their biological basis. Further, while etiological theory emphasizes that emotions are necessary to survival, social constructivism posits that the schemas created in social life form the basis of emotions (Strongman, 2003). Children with a developed ability to understand emotions can perceive the connection between emotions and events, and communicate effectively by interpreting verbal or non-verbal messages (Mayer and Salovey, 2004). As children learn acceptable behavioral expressions by understanding emotions in their social lives, their social competencies are also developed (Denham et al, 2003; and Hodgkin 2011). Children whose emotional development is advanced are more socially competent, as they can confidently express their emotions, opinions and beliefs about a subject or situation (Kansu and Beceren, 2004). Social competence in early childhood is defined as friendship skills by adapting to different situations, social interaction skills, reaching social goals, providing peer relationships and reaching personal goals (Sheridan et al., 2010; Rubin et al., 2006; Corbacı, 2008). When the relevant literature was scanned, it was found that by increasing their social competencies, children could adapt to their social environments in later stages of their lives as well as improve their school readiness and academic skills. Developing social competence prevents behavioral problems such as anxiety, depression, loneliness, incompatibility, expulsion from school and being involved in crime (Lemerise and Arsenio, 2000; Heckman and Kautz, 2012; Durlak et al., 2011; Bierman et al., 2010; Sergin and Giverts, 2003; Paulou, 2014; Ladd, 2008; Ziv, 2013).

By contrast, it was revealed that behavioral problems are more common in children whose social competence is not fully developed (Paulou, 2014; Denham et al., 1990; Ribes et al., 2005; Lecuyer and Hauck, 2006). Behavioral problems such as aggression, anxiety, and shyness directly affect the development of a child’s personality and prevent the child from communicating with the people around him. When these problems are not resolved in the early years, children may tend to become incompatible and problematic individuals for the future (Radley et al., 2009; Zhang, 2013). According to Deluty (1985), individuals who engage in aggressive behaviors, such as physical assault, verbal assault, making inappropriate gestures, making decisions on the behalf of others, trying to crush by taking advantage of their superiority in a discussion, giving orders, unnecessary or inappropriate may show behaviors such as making requests, speaking loudly in inappropriate situations and at times not taking responsibility for their actions (Kılıç, 2009). When the reasons for the aggressive behaviors of pre-school children are examined, it is seen that being excessively anxious is also effective. When a child communicates with those around him, he is generally expected to comply with the patterns determined by society and to act following the conditions required by the environment. However, a child who cannot understand the emotions of the individuals around him is incapable of appropriate emotional responses; therefore, because he cannot comply with social rules, he is subject to negative reactions and his level of anxiety increases (Karataş, 2015; Fox et al., 2020; Perry et al., 2020).

When studies on emotional understanding and social competence in early childhood are examined (Elksnin and Elksnin, 2003; Webster et al., 2004; Weimer and Guajardo, 2005; Richardson et al., 2009; Whitted, 2011; Martins et al., 2016; Kılıç and Gungör Aytar 2016; Rodriguez et al., 2020; Harrington et al., 2020; Laurent et al., 2020), it is seen that emotion understanding skills are effective in children’s social skills such as interacting with the individuals around them and expressing themselves by showing correct emotional reactions. The study was conducted to examine the social competence, aggression and anxiety levels of 4-6-year-old children regarding various variables and to investigate the relationship between the understanding of emotional skills and social competence, aggression and anxiety levels. The sub-problems of the research for this purpose in the research are as follows:

1. Are the mean scores of social competence, anxiety-introversion and anger-aggression subscale differentiated according to the gender of 4-6-year-old children?
2. Are the mean scores of social competence, anxiety-
introversion and anger-aggression subscale differentiated for 4–6-year-old children according to their mothers' education levels?
3. Are the mean scores of social competence, anxiety-introversion and anger-aggression subscale differentiated for 4–6-year-old children according to their fathers' education levels?
4. Is there a significant relationship between mean scores of 4–6 years old children's Affect Knowledge Test and mean scores of social competence, anxiety-introversion and anger-aggression subscales?

**METHOD**

**Research model**

The relational survey model was used in the research. The general survey model is the process conducted on the entire universe with a large number of elements or a group that will represent the universe (Karasar, 2020). In the relational survey model, the change and the relationship are examined (Büyüköztürk et al., 2013; Karasar, 2020).

**Study group**

The universe of this research is constituted by children between the ages of 4 and 6 who attend preschool institutions in Konya. The sample of the research was composed of 308 children selected by purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling is a sampling method that enables the selection of rich situations as information in in-depth research. In an analogous sampling technique, an in-depth study is conducted in this group by selecting only a similar subgroup (Büyüköztürk et al., 2013). Of the 308 children participating in the survey, 46.4% were composed of female children and 53.6% were male children. When the distribution of educational status of the mothers is examined, it is seen that 22.7% of the mothers are primary school graduates, 21.1% are secondary school graduates, 28.6% are high school graduates and 27.6% are university graduates. When the distribution of the educational status of the fathers of the participating children is examined, it is seen that 17.2% of fathers are primary school graduates, 21.4% are secondary school graduates, 32.8% are high school graduates and 28.6% are university graduates.

**Data collection tools**

"Personal Information Form," "Denham's Affect Knowledge Test" and "Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation-30 (SYDD-30) Scale" were used to collect research data. Personal information form was created to obtain information about the socio-demographic characteristics of children and their families included in the sample of the researcher. Denham's Affect Knowledge Test was developed by Denham et al. (2002) and Denham and Couchoud (1990), adapted to Turkish sample by Yilmaz (2012). The test is administered to children between the ages of 3 and 6 using puppets, which are designed to determine the ability of children to understand emotions. The test consists of two parts and a parent form. In the first part of the test, there are 8 mold dialogues and in the second part, there are 12 variable dialogues. Parent forms are sent to the children's families to create variable dialogues in the second section. In this form, parents are asked to mark possible emotions that their children can show if they are exposed to 12 variable dialects found in the second part of the test. According to the answers from the parents, variable dialogues are created for each child. In the dependability studies, which were conducted by Denham et al., (2002) and Denham and Couchoud (1990), the internal consistency of the test was calculated by test-retest at .60 and .85. In the analysis made by Yilmaz (2012) for the adaptation study; the validity of Denham’s Affect Knowledge Test was checked for the validity of structure and content.

As a result of measurements made Barlett test result value is= 756.123; P < 0.01. It is seen that the value of KMO is .737. The Cronbach Alpha test was used to measure the reliability of the data. The reliability coefficient was calculated as .83. The original form of the Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation-30 (SYDD-30) Scale was developed by La Freniere and Dumas (1996), adapted to Turkish by Çorapçı et al. (2010). It includes three subscales, which are the social competence (SD) subscale, anxiety-intuition (AU) subscale and the anger-aggression (SC) subscale. Each sub-dimension consists of 10 items. According to the analysis on the validity of the scale, the ratio of chi-square value to the degree of freedom, 1240.08/405 = 3.06, model and data compatibility is good; RMSEA value is .7 (90% confidence interval .7 to.8) indicates that compliance is acceptable (Çorapçı et al., 2010). The reliability coefficient for the social competence subscale was .87 and the anger-aggression (KS) subscale was .81, and the anxiety-introversion (AD) subscale was .79.

**Collection of data**

To collect the data, the schools to be implemented from the pre-primary education institutions in Konya were determined by a similar sampling technique and the necessary permissions were taken to implement them. Information was given about the research by interviewing the principals and teachers of preschool education institutions and teachers were asked to send the parent form of Denham’s Affect Knowledge Test and the personal information form created by the researcher to the students'
parents. After a period of approximation, the forms filled by the parents were taken from the teachers; a variable dialog section of Denham's Affect Knowledge Test was created for each child in line with the information received. Using the mother and child spoon puppets that the researcher prepared for Denham's Affect Knowledge Test; 8 dialog forms, which formed the first part of the scale and 12 dialogues for each child, based on Denham's Affect Knowledge Test Parent Form; the child practiced was animated by the puppet and answers that were given by the child were marked on the scale. In addition, the first also children's names who were practiced Affect Knowledge Test were coded to Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation-30 (SYDD-30) Scale, which is adapted to Turkish by Çorapçı et al. (2010), which is used as a data collection tool in the research and given to the teacher. Teachers who knew the children for at least 5 months were asked to fill in the scale separately for each child. All data obtained were transferred to the computer by the researcher.

### Analysis of data

The statistical operations required in SPSS 22 package programs related to the data obtained in the research were carried out by the researcher. To test the differentiation of social competence, aggression and anxiety levels of children according to their gender; "t-test"; to examine whether the average scores of social competence, aggression and anxiety differ according to the education levels and emotional understanding skill levels of the parents of 4-6 years old children; One-factor analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used. If there was a difference, Tukey analysis was performed from Post Hoc techniques to determine which group was favored within the variables in question. The Spearman Rank Differences Correlation Analysis and Multivariate Multiple Regression Analysis technique were used to determine the relationship between the mean scores of the understanding emotion test of children aged 4-6 and the social competence, anxiety-introversion and anger-aggression subscales.

### FINDINGS

In Table 1, independent t-test findings are given to compare the scores of "social competence, anger-aggression and anxiety-introversion subscale" scores according to the gender of the children participating in the survey. When the social competence averages were controlled by t-test according to the genders of 4-6 year old children, the significant difference was found to be at .05 level (t = -14,755, p < .05). It was also found that the level of social competence of girls (X̄=30,31), was higher than the level of social competence of boys (X̄=21,67). In the anger-aggression sub-dimension, when the averages of anger-aggression perceived from the teachers were controlled by t-test, there was a significant difference at .05 level (t = 2,786, p < .05). According to this result, it was found that the averages of the anger-aggression scores of boys (X̄=22,09), were higher than the averages of the anger-aggression scores of girls (X̄=20,24). When the anxiety-introversion Subscale Point Scales according to the sex of 4-6 year old children were examined, there was a significant difference at .05 level (p < .05). According to this result, it was found that boys had higher anxiety-introversion scores (X̄=17,90) than girls (anxiety-introversion level, (X̄=15,76)).

### Scores of social competence, anger-aggression subscale and anxiety-introversion according to maternal education status

According to Table 2, it was found that scores of children's Social Competence Subscale were significantly different according to the variables of mother education status (F = 226,042, p < .05). While social competence scores of children whose mothers are university graduates (X̄=33,6) are higher than children whose mothers are high school graduates (X̄=27,3), whose mothers are secondary school graduates (X̄=23,8) and whose mothers are primary school graduate (X̄= 18,3) and social competence scores of children whose mothers are high school graduates (X̄=27,3) are higher than children whose mothers are secondary school graduates (X̄=23,8) and primary school graduates (X̄= 18,3) and social competence scores of children whose mothers are secondary school graduates (X̄=23,8) are higher than children whose mothers are primary school graduates (X̄= 18,3). Moreover, the average scores of the children received from the anger-aggression subscale were found to differ significantly from those of the

### Table 1: Social competence, anger-aggression and anxiety-introversion subscale scores according to the gender of 4-6-year-old children score averages t-Test findings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>Sd</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social competence</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>21.67</td>
<td>4.84</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>-14,755</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>30.31</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger-aggression</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>22.09</td>
<td>6.29</td>
<td>275.63</td>
<td>2.786</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>20.24</td>
<td>5.18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety-Introversion</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>17.90</td>
<td>5.04</td>
<td>293.83</td>
<td>3.843</td>
<td>.027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>15.76</td>
<td>4.74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p<.05
mother education status variable ($F = 7.566, p < .05$). According to this result, it was found that while anger-aggression scores of children whose mothers are university graduates ($X=20$) are lower than children whose mothers are primary school graduates ($X=23.7$), anger-aggression scores of children whose mothers are high school graduates ($X=19.8$) are lower than children whose mothers are university graduates ($X=20$). According to analysis results, there was a significant difference in the anxiety-introversion dimension in terms of maternal education status variable ($F = 5.154; p < .05$). According to this result, the anxiety-introversion scores of the children who participated in the research and whose mothers are primary school graduates ($X=17.9$) were found to be higher than the anxiety-introversion scores of the children whose mothers were secondary school graduates ($X=17.4$), high school graduates ($X=16.8$) and university graduates ($X=15.1$). While anxiety-introversion scores of children whose mothers are secondary school graduates ($X=17.4$) are higher than children whose mothers were high school graduates ($X=16.8$) and university graduates ($X=15.1$), it is seen that anxiety-introversion scores of children whose mothers are high school graduates ($X=16.8$) are higher than children whose mothers are university graduates ($X=15.1$).

Scores of social competence anger-aggression subscale and anxiety-introversion according to father education status

As shown in Table 3, the scores of preschool children's social competence subscale significantly differed according to the father's educational status variable ($F = 314.526, p < .05$). According to this result, it was found that while social competence scores of children whose fathers are university graduates ($X=33.8$) are higher than children whose fathers are high school graduates ($X=27.2$), whose fathers are secondary school graduates ($X=21.6$) and whose fathers are primary school graduates ($X=17.7$) and social competence scores of children whose fathers are high school graduates ($X=27.2$) are higher than children whose fathers are secondary school graduates ($X=21.6$) and primary school graduates ($X=17.7$). Moreover, the scores of the children in the anger-aggression subscale were found to differ significantly according to the father's educational status variable ($F = 8.524, p < 0.05$). According to this result, while the anger-aggression scores of children who

### Table 2: Descriptive analysis and One-Factor Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test findings regarding score averages of social competence, anger-aggression and anxiety-introversion subscale of 4–6 years old children by maternal education status.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mother Educational Status</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>$\bar{X}$</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>Variance Source</th>
<th>sd</th>
<th>Frames Avg.</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Significant Diffrnc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Social Competence</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary S. (1)</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Inter-Groups</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3168.9</td>
<td>226.04</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1-2 /1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary S. (2)</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>In-Groups</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High S. (3)</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>307</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uni.(4)</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>6.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anger-Aggression</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary S. (1)</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>Inter-Groups</td>
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<td>238.5</td>
<td>7.56</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary S. (2)</td>
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<td>6.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>High S. (3)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>6.69</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary S. (1)</td>
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<td>4.81</td>
<td>Inter-Groups</td>
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<td>Secondary S. (2)</td>
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<td>17.4</td>
<td>5.09</td>
<td>In-Groups</td>
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<td>23.9</td>
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<td>High S. (3)</td>
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<td>5.47</td>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>Uni.(4)</td>
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</table>

$p < .05$
Table 3: Descriptive analysis and One-Factor Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test findings regarding score averages of social competence anger-aggression and anxiety-introversion subscale of 4–6 years old children by father education status.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father Status</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>$\bar{X}$</th>
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<th>Variance Source</th>
<th>sd</th>
<th>Frames Avg.</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Significant Diff.nc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Competence</td>
<td>Primary S. (1)</td>
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<td>3,7</td>
<td>Inter-Groups</td>
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<td>3471,2</td>
<td>314,526</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1-2/1-3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Secondary School (2)</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>21,6</td>
<td>3,2</td>
<td>In Groups</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>1-4 /2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High S. (3)</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>27,2</td>
<td>3,1</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>307</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2-4 / 3-4</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>6,6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anger-Agression</td>
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<td>Inter-Groups</td>
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<td>266,4</td>
<td>8,524</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1-4/2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary School (2)</td>
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<td>23,4</td>
<td>6,3</td>
<td>In Groups</td>
<td>304</td>
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<td>Uni. (4)</td>
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</table>

$p<.05$

participated in the research and whose father are primary school graduates ($X=22,2$) are higher than the anger-aggression scores of children whose fathers are secondary school graduates ($X=23,4$), high school graduates ($X=20,6$) and university graduates ($X=19,1$) it is seen that the anger-aggression scores of children whose fathers are secondary school graduates ($X=23,4$) are higher than anger aggression scores of children whose fathers are high school graduates ($X=20,6$) and university graduates ($X=19,1$) and anger aggression scores of children whose fathers are high school graduates ($X=20,6$) are higher than children whose fathers are university graduates ($X=19,1$). According to the results of the analysis, there was a significant difference in the anxiety-introversion dimension in terms of the father education status variable ($F=7,159; p<.05$). According to this result, while it is seen that the anxiety-introversion scores of the children who participated in the research and whose fathers are primary school graduates ($X=17,8$) and whose fathers are secondary school graduates ($X=17,9$) are higher than the anxiety-introversion scores of the children whose fathers are high school graduates ($X=17,0$) and university graduates ($X=14,8$), it is seen that the anxiety-introversion scores of the children whose fathers are high school graduates ($X=17,0$) are higher than the anxiety-introversion scores of the children whose fathers are university graduates ($X=14,8$). Spearman rank differences correlation analysis findings for determining the relation between affect knowledge test scores of children and the social competence, anxiety-introversion and anger-aggression subscales score

According to Table 4, while there was a statistically significant avoidant level relationship ($r=-.226; p<.01$) between mean scores of Affect Knowledge Test and anxiety and introversion subscale scores, the significant correlation was found between the average scores of the Affect Knowledge Test and the average scores of the social competence subscale scores in the positive direction at the level of $p <.01$ ($r = .622, p <.01$).
Also, a statistically significant avoidant low-level relationship ($r = -.193; p < .01$) was found between the average scores of the Affect Knowledge Test and the mean score of the anger-aggression subscale. According to Table 5, it was found that a significant regression model $F(1,306) = .34$, with $p < .001$ and $34\%$ of the social competence skills variance ($R^2 = .34$) were explained by the ability to understand emotions. Accordingly, understanding emotions independent variable predicts social competence dependent variable positively and significantly, $B = .58$, $t (306) = 12.7$, $p < .01$. In addition, a significant regression model $F(1,306) = .40$, with $p < .001$ and $40\%$ ($R^2 = .40$) of the anger-aggression skills variance were explained by the ability to understand emotions. Accordingly, understanding emotions independent variable predicts anger-aggression dependent variable negatively and significantly, $B = .17$, $t (306) = -3.57$, $p < .01$. Additionally, it was found that a significant regression model $F(1,306) = .34$, with $p < .001$ and $31\%$ of the variance in the dependent variable ($R^2 = .34$) were explained by the independent variables. Accordingly, understanding emotions independent variable predicts anxiety-introversion dependent variable negatively and significantly, $B = .17$, $t (306) = -3.13$, $p < .01$.

**DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In the research, the average scores of social competence scores of 4 to 6 year old girls were higher than that of boys whereas the average scores of anger-aggression and anxiety-introversion scores of boys were higher than girls. When the related literature is examined; similar to this research, some studies that were conducted at home and abroad (Butovskaya and Demianovitsch, 2010; La Freniere et al., 2002; Romano et al., 2005; Altay, 2007; Hay and Cook, 2007; Gökçe, 2013; Trentacosta and Izard, 2007), found that girls' social competence skill levels were higher than boys' social competence skills; on the other hand, Şendil (2010), one of the limited number of studies in terms of research comparing children's social competence and behavior problems with temperament, gender and peer acceptance, found that gender did not affect behavioral problems and social competence. It can be said that the fact of girls' having higher social competence scores than boys may be caused that girls and boys behave differently socially in society since early ages (Maccoby, 2002); girls interact with their teachers and peers positively (Altay, 2007); girls' adaptation to social environments more quickly (La Freniere and Dumas,1996), because of these situations they can express themselves more easily. When studies on the anger-aggression behaviors of the children are examined, not only this research but also some other ones that were conducted at home and abroad (Kanlikılıçer, 2005; Gülay, 2008; Bulut, 1996; Chen and Jiang, 2002) stated that boys had higher anger-aggression scores than girls.

Besides, when we look at the studies on children's anxiety-introversion behaviors; similar to this research also the research of Chen and Jiang (2002) determine that the anxiety-retreat level of boys was higher than that of girls. Moreover, it can be said that the reason why the anger-aggression scores of boys are higher than that of girls is;
boys are more active and aggressive than girls at an early age; they are more uneasy when they are blocked, they tend to express a high level of satisfaction during play (Eisenberg et al., 2001; Else-Quest et al., 2006), the desire which is asked by society from boys to be more mobile and agile in their sex roles, parents' attitudes that confirm that their boys exhibit aggressive behavior and family involvement (Kanlıkuşçu, 2005) and boys having difficulty communicating (Chen and Jiang, 2002). In addition, when looking at the studies on children's anxiety-introversion behaviors; Similar to the study conducted by Chen and Jiang (2002), they found that the anxiety-withdrawal level of boys is higher than girls. It can be said that girls develop their collaboration skills better than boys, their school performance is better and they have fewer behavioral problems (Eisenberg et al., 2001; Else-Quest et al., 2006), and therefore they show less anxiety-anxiety. In the outcomes of the findings of the study, a direct correlation between the educational levels of the mothers and fathers and the social competence scores, the social competence scores of children increased as the children's mothers and fathers' education levels increased, besides, it was found that the anger-aggression scores of children whose mothers are university graduates are lower than the children whose mothers are primary school graduates, whereas anger-aggression scores of children whose mothers are high school graduates are lower than children whose mothers are university graduates.

There is an inverse correlation between the level of the father's education status and the anger-aggression scores of the children; it was determined that children's anger-aggression scores decreased as their fathers' level of education increased. There is an inverse correlation between parents' level of education and children's anxiety-introversion scores; as the level of education of mothers and fathers increased, the anxiety-introversion scores of children decreased. When the relevant literature is searched (Topaloğlu, 2003; Karaaslan, 2012; Ayyıldız, 2011; Ari and Seçer, 2004; Gökçe, 2013), it was inferred that as the educational levels of the mothers increased, the social competence scores of children increased as well. The reasons why as the education levels of the children's mothers increased and the social competence scores of children increased can be because as the education levels of the mothers' increases; the education that they had to affect the way that they behave to their children and their relationships with their children in a positive way, as a result of this, children are more likely to develop social skills and less aggressive behaviors (Ayyıldız, 2011), as there is a significant difference in the positive attitude of the mother's learning level and ability to recognize facial expressions, they have the opportunity to understand their children, to allow them to express themselves and to increase their level of social-emotional adjustment, to pay more attention to their education and to watch videos and television programs which are related to child development. Also, when the related literature is examined (Topaloğlu, 2013; Gülay, 2008), it is expected that as the education level of the mothers increases the of the anger-aggression scores decrease; it has been determined in the study that the anger-aggression scores of children whose mothers are high school graduates are lower than the anger-aggression scores of children whose mothers are university graduates.

It is thought that some of the causes of this result may be the fact that women with higher education levels have a higher marriage age than other women and therefore they have children later, their expectation levels exceed their children's levels, mothers who have education at the undergraduate and graduate levels fulfill what their children excessively desire to be democratic and therefore they provide freedom at an unlimited level to their children (Gökçe, 2013). Bazarbashi (2014) concluded that as the level of education of mothers decreased, authoritarian, permissive, protective attitudes increased whereas democratic attitudes decreased. In the study of Sarı (2007), it has been determined that in the case of limited social adjustment, the children whose mothers are secondary school graduates have more limited social adaptation behaviors compared to those children whose mothers are postgraduates and while the highest average is in the children whose mothers are secondary school graduates, the lowest average is in the children whose mothers are graduates and undergraduates. Considering this information, it can be said that as the level of education of the mother falls, the situation of showing correct attitudes toward children decreases and therefore it increases the children's exhibiting limited social adaptation behaviors and accordingly the children increase their anxious behaviors. Similar to the study results in the literature, it has been determined that as the education level of fathers increases; children's social competence scores (Senemoğlu, 2001; Karaaslan, 2012; Alpan, 2006, Gülay, 2008) anger-aggression scores (Kadan, 2010) and anxiety-introversion scores (Gümüş, 1997; Smith &Walden, 1998) increase. As the education level of fathers increases, they give more importance to what their children say, encourage them to express themselves by recognizing that they are individuals (Karaaslan,2012), become positive models for them and do not behave repressively (Senemoğlu, 2001) shows the right attitudes and therefore children's social competence scores can increase.

Berk (2013) believes that when the care of the child is understanding and loving, the psychological conflict of the first year which is named as basic trust versus basic mistrust will be solved in the positive direction and that the confident baby will be confident in examining and discovering the world, hoping that the world is good and satisfactory. As a result; there will be less aggressive behaviors of children against the environment. For this reason, it is thought that the problem of basic trust versus basic mistrust of children whose fathers have a low level of
education and have physical and verbal aggression (Kadan, 2010) can’t be solved positively. In the results of the study, while a meaningful correlation, statistically and positively in moderate level, was found between the average scores of understanding emotion test and social competence subscale, it is observed that there is a statistically significant negative correlation in a low level between the mean scores of understanding emotion test and the mean scores of the anxiety-introversion subscale and the mean scores of the anger-aggression subscale. When related literature is reviewed similar to this study, in most of the surveys conducted by (Hale and Tager-Flusberg, 2003; Saarni et al., 2006; Kuyucu, 2012; Eisenberg et al., 2001; Karayılmaz, 2008; Borke, 1973; Ceylan, 2009; Çorapçı et al., 2010; Sette et al., 2015; Jones, Greenberg and Crowley, 2015; Dennis et al., 2009) a statistically significant positive correlation between the mean scores of Affect Knowledge Test and the social competence subscale scores was found. Besides, when related literature is scanned; in most of the studies conducted (Yılmaz, 2012; Paulo, 2014; Denham et al., 1990; Ribes et al., 2005; Lecuyer and Hauck, 2006) similar to the study results, it has been concluded that there was a statistically significant negative correlation between the mean scores of the Affect Knowledge Test and the mean scores of the anger-aggression subscale scores. When literature is scanned, in most of the studies conducted (Dunn et al., 1991; Ontai and Thompson, 2002; Şahin, 2015; Sette et al., 2015) similar to the study results it has been concluded that negative correlation between the mean scores of the Affect Knowledge Test and the mean scores of the anger-introversion subscale scores was found.

In the study, while understanding emotions independent variable predicts social competence dependent variable positively and significantly, anger predicts aggression dependent variable negatively and significantly. Also, the independent variable of understanding emotions predicts the anxiety-introversion dependent variable negatively and significantly. Related research on the social competency skills with the ability to understand emotions study similarly, is seen as a positive predictor (Izard et al., 2001; Garner and Estep, 2001; Bierman and Motamedi, 2015; Eisenberg et al., 1998; Denham et al., 2003). In addition, it is determined that children's social competence skills are affected by their teachers' perceptions of understanding emotions and academic compliance (Denham et al., 2012). In addition, similar to the studies, inadequacy in the ability to understand emotions predicted behaviors such as anxiety and anger was found (Denham et al., 2002; Elijah and Madeira, 2013; Williams and Woodruff-Borden, 2015; Matheson and Jahoda, 2005; Laurent et al., 2020; Brajiša-Zganec and Hanzec, 2015; Helmsen et al., 2012). In addition, inadequacy in the ability to understand emotions predicted behaviors such as anxiety and anger was observed. Southam-Gerow and Kendall (2000) found no significant relationship between understanding emotions and anxiety in their study. It can be said that the reason for this is that the study was conducted with children who were clinically diagnosed with anxiety disorder. Suggestions developed considering the results obtained from the research are as follows:

1. To increase the level of social competence of children, they can be directed to preschool education institutions that are one of the best socializing environments, or incentive programs can be created for children having education in kindergartens.
2. Importance can also be given to planning activities aimed at increasing children's social competence by taking their differences into account in the classroom activities.
3. To reduce the level of children's anxiety and aggression, their parents can be trained to accurately express their emotions.
4. Children who are in the preschool period and experiencing problems with emotional skills can be identified and these children can be trained about the understanding of feelings skills.
5. When preschool children are thought to have modeled their teachers; teachers can be taught to express feelings so that teachers can express their feelings correctly in communication with children.
6. Educational cartoons prepared for children can include the ability to understand children's emotions and concepts that will enhance their social competence.

Suggestions for researchers are as follows:
1. Educational programs that include the understanding of feelings skills to improve the social competencies of preschool children may be developed.
2. New and comprehensive studies determining the relationship between preschool children's ability to understand emotions and their social competence, aggression and anxiety levels can be conducted.
3. Educational activity books for parents to educate their children can be prepared for younger children in a socio-emotional context.
4. The research was conducted in Konya province and can be applied to different samples to contribute to the results of the research.
5. Longitudinal studies may be included to determine how preschool education affects a child’s future behavior.

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