

Metacognitive Skill Development Among Preschoolers: Exploring The Influence Of Teacher Experience, Training And School Types

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Introduction

Metacognition is regarded as one of the most superior learning skills of the 21st century, with strong relevance in the educational and psychological context (Muawiyah et al., 2019). Studies also presented that children exhibit signs of emergent metacognition at an early age. However, supporting this development is a complicated and challenging process that necessitates persistent dedication and practice. Since children are new to these approaches and methods, they might encounter difficulties or setbacks as they attempt to implement these strategies and skills. Nevertheless, research proposes that the metacognitive skills of children can be enhanced through appropriate adult support (Cassata & French, 2006) and practice (Yasir et al., 2020). However, metacognition is prone to errors, and numerous factors can influence the accuracy of metacognitive processes (Thiede et al., 2003).

In the literature, some of these elements, which have an impact on an individual's metacognitive development, were discovered as the individual's gender, the families they are raised, and the educators they are instructed. Although studies have examined how the teacher's instruction affects metacognitive development in children, studies focusing on the impact of teacher-related and school-related factors on preschool children's metacognitive skill development are rare. Consequently, to gain a deeper insight into the influence of teacher and school-related factors, this study investigates the effects of teacher experience, teachers' past courses/seminars, the duration of working with the same students, and school types on metacognitive development.

Methodology

This research was conducted as a correlational study to examine the relationship between the metacognitive skills of preschool children and the school environment with a strong emphasis on teachers. To collect data, a demographic information form for preschool teachers, the Train Track Task, and the Children's Independent Learning Development Checklist (CHILD 3-5) were used. The participants were selected through a convenient sampling method, and 40 preschool teachers and 208 preschool children from Ankara, Türkiye, participated in the current study. Before the data collection, the necessary permissions were obtained from the ethical board of a public university in Ankara, Türkiye, and the Turkish Ministry of National Education. During the data collection, preschool children's families and teachers' written consent, as well as oral consent of preschool children, were acquired. To address the aim of the study, a series of multiple analyses of variance (MANOVA) were employed.

Results and Conclusion

The results showed no significant relationship between the school type and preschool children's metacognitive skills. In Türkiye, the curriculums and activities implemented in preschools are formed based on the gains and indicators outlined in the National Early Childhood Education Program. Therefore, teachers have common goals to support, which might be associated with non-significant results. Conversely, the results of the analyses indicated that while preschool children's metacognitive skills were negatively affected by their teacher's experience, the duration of working with the same group and their

teacher's previous course/seminar on metacognition had a positive correlation with the metacognitive skills of preschool children. These findings can be attributed to the teacher's perspectives, understandings, interactions with their students, and the relationships they build with them.

Given the importance of metacognitive skill development in young children's holistic development, the necessary steps should have been taken in light of the current study's results. Teachers have a critical place in supporting their students' metacognitive skills; thus, their interactions with their students should be supported by providing teachers with necessary workshops or seminars to stay up-to-date and to enable them to gain a deeper understanding of the metacognitive development of their students starting from a very early age.

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