

Respect for Differences Among Children, Parents, and Preschool Teachers: A Quantitative Study

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Abstract. The rapid changes in the World (wars, epidemics, forced migration, earthquakes or desire to live in better conditions, etc.) have increased the need to respect differences in societies compared to the past. The aim of this study¹ is to examine the tendencies of respect for differences and tolerance levels of young children, their parents, and preschool teachers, as well as the relationship between the tolerance levels of parents and teachers and children's respect for differences. Conducted by using a quantitative research method, the study followed a relational screening model. The study group consisted of 320 children aged 54–72 months, 320 parents of these children, and 151 preschool teachers. Data collection tools used in the study were the “*Respect for Differences Scale*” and the “*Tolerance Tendency Scale – Adult Form*”. The findings of the study indicate that the children's level of respect for differences is at a moderate level, while the tolerance tendencies of parents and preschool teachers are at a good level. Furthermore, no significant relationship was found between the children's respect for differences scores and preschool teachers' tolerance tendency scores. A low-level, negative significant relationship was found between the children's respect for differences scores and their parents' tolerance tendency scores.

Keywords: Respect for differences, tolerance, children, parents, teachers.

Vaikų, tėvų ir ikimokyklinio ugdymo pedagogų pagarba skirtumams: kiekybinis tyrimas

Santrauka. Sparčios permainingos pasaulyje (karai, epidemijos, priverstinė migracija, žemės drebėjimai ar noras gyventi geresnėmis sąlygomis ir kt.) didina poreikį gerbti skirtumus visuomenėje lyginant su tuo, kas buvo praityje. Šio tyrimo tikslas – ištirti pagarbos skirtumams tendencijas ir tolerancijos lygį tarp mažų vaikų, jų tėvų ir ikimo-

¹ This article is derived from the doctoral thesis titled “*Investigation of Young Children's Views of the Old People and the Level of Respect for Differences, and the Level of Parents' and Preschool Teachers' Ageism and Tendency for Tolerance*”.

kyklinio ugdymo pedagogų bei atskleisti ryšius tarp tėvų ir pedagogų tolerancijos lygių ir vaikų pagarbos skirtumams. Šiame kiekybiniame tyrime naudotas santykių atrankos modelio metodas (angl. *relational screening model*). Tyrimo imtį sudarė 320 vaikų, kurių amžius buvo 54–72 mėn., 320 šių vaikų tėvų ir 151 ikimokyklinio ugdymo pedagogas. Tyrime naudoti instrumentai buvo Pagarbos skirtumams skalė (angl. *Respect for Differences Scale*) ir Tolerancijos tendencijų skalė (suaugusiųjų forma) (angl. *Tolerance Tendency Scale – Adult Form*). Tyrimo rezultatai atskleidė, kad vaikų pagarbos skirtumams lygis yra vidutinis, o tėvų ir ikimokyklinio ugdymo pedagogų tolerancijos polinkių. Taip pat nustatytas silpnas, neigiamas ir reikšmingas ryšys tarp vaikų pagarbos skirtumams ir jų tėvų tolerancijos polinkių.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: pagarba skirtumams, tolerancija, vaikai, tėvai, mokytojai.

Introduction

The term ‘respect’ is used in various ways in daily life. Respect is the reverence for something worthy of admiration (Parse, 2006). Furthermore, Hoban (1977) defined respect between individuals as something expressed towards others due to openness and human decency. The concept of ‘respect’ is mentioned twenty-one times in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and, in Article 29, it is specifically stated that “*the development of respect for the child’s parents, cultural identity, language and values, national values of the country of origin or residence, and civilizations different from their own...*” (UNICEF, 2003).

The concept of ‘respect’ has been defined and emphasized in various contexts, highlighting its multidimensional nature. Parse (2006) describes respect as reverence for something worthy of admiration, while Hoban (1977) emphasizes interpersonal respect as an expression of openness and human decency. This broad understanding of respect is also reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF, 2003), where the term appears twenty-one times, thereby underscoring its importance in promoting respect for parents, cultural identity, and diverse values.

If a person demands the right to be respected and desires recognition of their dignity, then, they must acknowledge that others also have the same right to demand respect. Therefore, the right of any individual to demand respect from others also encompasses the responsibility of respecting them (Darwall, 2010; Pighin, 2005; Roland & Foxx, 2003). Whereas, Raz (2001) emphasizes the value of respect by stating that “*Respecting people is a way of treating them*”. Tolerance is a much more ambiguous concept, which is open to various interpretations ranging from unlimited acceptance to mere forbearance (Witenberg, 2007). Tolerance is a concept that evolves as individuals acquire the ability to respect both themselves and others, foster empathy, and critically reassess stereotypes (Katz, 2008).

Respect for differences refers to recognizing and valuing the uniqueness of each individual while acknowledging their equal moral worth. It goes beyond mere tolerance, which can imply passive acceptance, and instead involves an active appreciation of diversity and empathy toward others. As Darwall (2010) and Pighin (2005) note, respect requires acknowledging others’ rights to be treated with dignity just as one demands the same for oneself. In this sense, respect is reciprocal and relational – in the sense that it

embodies both a right and a responsibility. This understanding distinguishes respect for differences as a dynamic social and moral practice that promotes coexistence in diverse environments such as schools and communities.

The concept of diversity is used to denote the state of being different, distinctiveness, and the characteristics that distinguish any natural, social, or intentional phenomenon from others (Turkish Language Association [TDK], 2019). It has been discovered that children, from a very young age, are able to differentiate differences and tend to categorize individuals as good, bad, beautiful, or ugly based on certain attributes. Therefore, there has arisen a need for an educational approach that promotes respect for differences and combats discrimination (Foundation for the Support of Women's Work [KEDV], 2006). As a society characterized by diversity, numerous studies have been conducted with the aim of preventing discrimination in education and fostering respect for differences (Conner & Fraser, 2011; Dereli İman, 2014; Ekmişoğlu, 2007; Acun Kapıkıran et al., 2006; Skaggs & Bodenhorn, 2006).

For the sustainability of both individual and social peace, it is crucial that individuals develop respect for differences and acquire the skills to combat discrimination from an early age. This study aims to measure the development of respect- and tolerance-based attitudes in children, as well as determining the attitudes of their parents and teachers. This is because research shows that children can perceive differences from a very young age and develop positive or negative judgements based on these differences (Anzures et al., 2013; Ramsey et al., 2005; Rennels et al., 2016; Kelly et al., 2005; Ziv & Banaji, 2012; Kinzler et al., 2007). By the age of four, children demonstrate social preferences based on gender, race, ethnicity, age, language, and accent (Aboud, 1988; French, 1987; Kinzler et al., 2009; Maccoby & Jacklin, 1987), and can distinguish between members of their own ethnic group and members of other ethnic groups (Nesdale et al., 2005). By the age of five, children's ability to distinguish and identify people according to their physical characteristics is comparable to that of adults (Pozzulo & Lindsay, 1998). In this context, especially in multicultural and multiethnic societies, educational environments should be inclusive, and prejudices should be prevented from an early age. However, the existing literature mostly focuses on either children or teachers; however, studies that consider the relationship between children, families and teachers together are lacking. On these grounds, this study aims to address this gap by examining the effects of a multi-stakeholder educational approach, while considering the influence of both families and teachers on children's development of tolerance towards differences.

This study aims to determine the level of respect for differences among pre-school children, as well as the level of tolerance among their parents and teachers. The relationship between the two was also examined. The following questions were addressed: "What are the children's levels of respect for differences? What are their parents' and teachers' levels of tolerance? Do these levels differ according to demographic variables?", and "Is there a relationship between children's respect for differences and the tolerance levels of their parents and teachers?"

This study aims to examine the effects of a multi-stakeholder educational approach on children's development of respect for differences, focusing on the influence of both families and teachers. Specifically, the study seeks to measure the levels of respect for differences among pre-school children and the levels of tolerance towards differences among their parents and teachers. The relationship between children's respect for differences and the tolerance levels of their parents and teachers will also be explored. The study will address the following questions: "What are the children's levels of respect for differences? What are the levels of tolerance among their parents and teachers? Do these levels vary according to demographic variables? Is there a relationship between children's respect for differences and the tolerance levels of their parents and teachers?"

Method

Research Design

The study used a survey model, which is a descriptive model from the quantitative research tradition. Creswell (2008) defines the survey method as a quantitative research method used by researchers to determine individuals' attitudes, behaviours, feelings, opinions and characteristics. This study aimed to determine the levels of respect for differences among early childhood children and to examine the tolerance tendencies of their parents and preschool teachers, categorized by demographic characteristics, as well as the effect of these tendencies on children's respect for differences in the elderly.

This study employed a survey model, which is a descriptive method from the quantitative research tradition. The survey method is widely used in social sciences to examine individuals' attitudes, behaviours, opinions, and characteristics (Creswell, 2008). The aim of this study was to determine the levels of respect for differences among early childhood children, and to assess the tolerance tendencies of their parents and preschool teachers, categorized by demographic variables. Additionally, the study sought to explore the relationship between these tendencies and children's respect for differences.

The survey was designed to collect data on children's respect for differences, as well as the tolerance levels of their parents and preschool teachers. The participants were asked to complete a structured questionnaire that assessed their attitudes towards cultural and social differences. The questionnaire included both closed-ended and Likert scale questions, allowing for the collection of both quantitative data on the respondents' views and attitudes. Data were analyzed by using statistical methods with the objective to identify trends and relationships between the variables. This method is particularly suited for the study as it allows for the collection of data from a large sample, enabling a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between respect for differences and tolerance levels.

Sample

This research used a non-random convenience sampling method. The sample group consisted of 320 children aged 4.5 to 6.0 years (i.e., 54–72 months) who attended 15 different preschools (six private and nine public), as well as their 320 parents and 151

preschool teachers. The demographic characteristics of the children in the study group are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. *Demographic Characteristics of the Participant Children (n=320)*

<i>Variables</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Type of institution		
Private school	117	36.6
Public school	203	63.4
Gender		
Girl	164	51.3
Boy	156	48.8
Age Groups		
54–60 Months	37	11.6
61–66 Months	144	45.0
67–72 Months	139	43.4

According to Table 1, 64.4% of the children in the study attended a state school. Of these children, 51.3% were girls and 11.6%, 45% and 43.4% were aged 54–60 months, 61–66 months and 67–72 months, respectively. The demographic characteristics of the parents who participated in the study are given in Table 2 below.

Table 2. *Demographic Characteristics of the Participant Parents (n=320)*

<i>Variables</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Age Groups		
20–25 Years	32	10.0
26–31 Years	104	32.5
32–37 Years	122	38.1
38 Years and Above	62	19.4
Education Level		
Elementary School	23	7.2
Middle School	48	15.0
High School	149	46.6
Associate Degree	32	10.0
Bachelor Degree	62	19.4
Master's or Doctorate Degree	6	1.9
Perceived Income Level		
Very Good	5	1.6
Good	92	28.8
Medium	175	54.7
Low	40	12.5
Very Low	8	2.5

According to Table 2, 38% of the parents in the study were aged 32–37, 46.6% were high school graduates and 54.7% were of a medium socioeconomic status. The demographic characteristics of the preschool teachers who participated in the study are given in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Demographic Characteristics of the Participant Preschool Teachers (n=151)

<i>Variables</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
Gender		
Woman	139	92.1
Man	12	7.9
Age Groups		
26–31 Years	58	38.4
32–37 Years	62	41.1
38 Years and Above	31	20.5
Marital Statues		
Single	49	32.5
Married	102	67.5
Experience Level		
Less than 1 year	5	3.3
1–5 Years	43	28.5
6–10 Years	58	38.4
11–15 Years	34	22.5
16 Years and Above	11	7.3
Type of School School Where The Teacher Works		
Private School	31	20.5
Public School	120	79.5

Table 3 shows that of the preschool teachers who participated in the study, 92.1% were female, 41.1% were aged 32–37, 67.5% were married, and 79.5% worked in public schools.

Data Collection Tools

Two measurement tools were used in this study. The first was the “Respect for Differences Scale”, which was used to determine the level of respect for differences among children. The second was the “Tolerance Tendency Scale”, which was used to determine the level of tolerance among parents and preschool teachers.

Respect for Differences Scale

The Respect for Differences Scale was developed by Ekmişoğlu in 2007 to determine the level of respect for differences in children aged 5–6 years. The scale is a triple-Lik-

ert type (Agree or Somewhat Agree, or Disagree), which consists of 4 sub-dimensions. There are 5 items belonging to the gender factor, 9 items belonging to the family-social life factor, 8 items belonging to the disability factor, and 8 items belonging to the different cultural background factor. The Cronbach's alpha value of the scale was found to be 0.69 (Ekmişoğlu, 2007).

The Respect for Differences Scale, as developed by Ekmişoğlu (2007), is a triple-Likert-type scale (Agree, or Somewhat Agree, or Disagree), which was designed to assess the level of respect for differences in children aged 5–6 years. The scale consists of four sub-dimensions: gender (5 items), family-social life (9 items), disability (8 items), and different cultural backgrounds (8 items). The overall Cronbach's alpha value for the scale was found to be 0.69, indicating a moderate level of internal consistency. However, Cronbach's alpha values for the individual subscales were not calculated in this study, which is a limitation that could be addressed in future research to further evaluate the reliability of each factor. The highest score that can be obtained from the scale is 90, whereas the lowest score is 30. High scores obtained from the scale indicate that the level of respect for differences is high, while low scores indicate that the level of respect for differences is low. The application of the scale takes an average of 15 minutes.

Exploratory Factor Analysis was conducted by the researcher to determine the inverse items in the scale. The Exploratory Factor Analysis of the scale is given in Appendix A. As a result of EFA, item 21 of the Respect for Differences Scale was found to be a reverse item, and it should be coded as a reverse item.

There is no explanation in the scale regarding the reverse coding of the item, which is why Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted.

Tolerance Tendency Scale – Adult Form

Çalışkan and Çavuş (2020) developed a 10-item “Tolerance Tendency Scale-Adult Form” for adults. In the study conducted with 126 adults, the KMO coefficient was found to be 0.87. The test split reliability of the scale, which has two factors as respect and acceptance of differences, is 0.85 and 0.61, Cronbach alpha reliability is 0.85 and 0.67, McDonald Omega reliability is 0.86 and 0.79, and Test-Retest reliability is 0.78 and 0.77, respectively. In addition, according to the CFA fit findings of the Tolerance Tendency Scale-Adult Form, the RMSEA value was 0.12, the AGFI value was 0.84, and the GFI value was 0.90. These values show that the scale is at an acceptable level. The scale is five-point Likert-type (Not at All Appropriate, Somewhat Appropriate, Very Appropriate, and Completely Appropriate), and it consists of 2 sub-dimensions (respect for differences and acceptance) (Çalışkan & Çavuş, 2020). The highest score that can be obtained from the scale is 50, whereas the lowest score is 10. The application of the scale takes an average of 10 minutes.

Data Collection Process

The relevant Ethics Committee was applied before initiating the data collection process. After the Ethics Committee granting permission, the other necessary permissions were

obtained from the Directorate of National Education. Information about the study was shared with the school administration and preschool teachers in the schools where the application would be carried out. The parental consent form related to the study was sent to the parents of the children, and the children of the parents who consented to the study were included in the study group. The children who made up the study group were introduced to each other, and the children were informed about the process, and then they were included in the study. The scales were administered to the children individually by the researchers in a quiet environment independent from their classrooms.

After obtaining permission from the schools, the **Respect for Differences Scale** was distributed to the families who agreed to participate in the study through the schools. The parents filled out the scale and returned it to the school. For preschool teachers, the scales were delivered by the researcher to the preschool teachers of the preschool classes where the study was conducted. After completing the scales, the preschool teachers returned them to the researcher.

Data Analysis

In the statistical analyses, normal distribution assumptions (age group, type of school they attend, age of parents, age of preschool teachers, marital status, and the type of school they work in variables)² were met, and parametric tests were applied. In the statistical analyses, the assumption of normal distribution was examined **only** for continuous variables (parents' age and preschool teachers' age). Since variables such as the gender, marital status, type of school attended, and type of school worked in are categorical in nature, normality assessment was not applied to these variables. Continuous variables that met the normality assumption were analyzed by using parametric tests, while categorical and non-normally distributed variables were analyzed by using appropriate nonparametric tests. Nonparametric tests (Mann–Whitney U and Chi-square tests) were applied to the variables that did not meet the assumption of normal distribution (the variables of income level perceived by the parents of the children, education level of the parents, perceived income level and gender, age, professional seniority of the preschool teachers) where the value of n was less than 30. Nonparametric tests were applied to variables that were categorical in nature or did not meet the assumption of normal distribution. Specifically, the Mann–Whitney U test was used for comparisons involving ordinal variables (e.g., parents' perceived income level, parents' education level, and preschool teachers' professional seniority), while the Chi-square test was applied to nominal variables (e.g., gender). In addition, nonparametric procedures were preferred in cases where group sizes were below 30. The selection of each statistical test corresponded directly

² The skewness (0.013) and kurtosis (-0.564) values of the *Respect for Differences Scale*, the skewness (-0.028) and kurtosis (-0.686) values of the *Tolerance Tendency Scale* administered to parents, and the skewness (-0.072) and kurtosis (-0.633) values of the *Tolerance Tendency Scale* administered to preschool teachers show a normal distribution. The z-scores of children, parents and preschool teachers vary between -2.6 and +2.5. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results of the *Respect for Differences Scale* and the *Tolerance Tendency Scales* were 0.20, 0.70 and 0.71, respectively ($p > 0.005$).

to the structure of the research questions and the measurement level of the variables included in each analysis.

The research questions of the study are as follows:

1. What are the levels of Respect for Differences Scale (RDS) scores among children aged 54–72 months, and do these scores differ according to demographic variables?
2. What are the levels of Parents' Tolerance Tendency Scale scores, and do these scores differ according to demographic variables?
3. What are the levels of Preschool Teachers' Tolerance Tendency Scale scores, and do these scores differ according to demographic variables?
4. Is there a significant relationship between children's respect for differences levels and parents' tolerance tendency levels?
5. Is there a significant relationship between children's respect for differences levels and preschool teachers' tolerance tendency levels?

Results

Below, we present the scale scores of children, parents and preschool teachers.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for Children's Respect for Differences Scale Scores and Parents' and Preschool Teachers' Tolerance Tendency Scale Scores

Groups	Dimensions	$\bar{X}$	SD
Children (n=320)	Gender (subdimension)	9.45	2.58
	Family-Social Life (subdimension)	18.85	4.30
	Disability Status (subdimension)	17.15	3.55
	Different Cultural (subdimension) Background (subdimension)	18.03	4.59
	Respect for Differences Scale General Total Point	63.50	11.83
Parents (n=320)	Respect for Differences (subdimension)	23.29	4.53
	Acceptance (subdimension)	12.29	3.53
	Tolerance Tendency Scale General Total Point	35.59	6.98
Preschool Teachers (n=151)	Respect for Differences (subdimension)	24.64	3.85
	Acceptance (subdimension)	13.39	3.12
	Tolerance Tendency Scale General Total Point	38.03	6.28

When Table 4 is analyzed, the mean score of the children in the study belonging to Respect for Differences Scale is $\bar{X}=63.50$. The mean scores of the parents of the Tolerance Tendency Scale are $\bar{X}=35.59$ and the mean scores of the teachers are $\bar{X}=38.03$.

It was determined that children's levels of respect for differences did not differ according to the school type [$t(318)=0.022$, $p>.050$], gender [$t(318)=0.576$, $p>.050$] and age [$F(2, 317)=2.284$, $p<.104$] variables (see Tables 5 and 6 for reference).

Table 5. Comparison Children's of Respect for Differences Scale Scores by School Type and Gender

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	t(318)	p
Type of institution					
Private school	117	63.48	11.85	0.022	0.983
Public school	203	63.51			
Gender					
Girl	164	63.13	12.04	0.576	0.565
Boy	156	63.89			

Table 6. One-Way ANOVA Results for Children's Respect for Differences Scale Scores by Age Groups

54–60 Months		61–66 Months		67–72 Months		F	p
$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD		
64.02	12.97	64.89	11.72	61.92	11.51	2.284	.104

It was found that the tolerance tendency levels of the parents did not differ according to the variables of age [$F(2, 149)=1.898, p<.153$] and education level [$X^2_{(5)}=9.014, p<.050$], but differed according to the perceived income level [$X^2_{(4)}=12.50, p<.050$]. As a result of the data provided by the Mann–Whitney U test over the paired combinations of the groups intended to determine between which groups the differences between the perceived income levels were to be found, a statistically significant difference was found between the ‘very good level’ and the ‘low level’ in favour of ‘very good level’ parents, between ‘good level’ and ‘low level’ in favour of good level parents, between ‘medium level’ and ‘low level’ in favour of medium-level parents (see Tables 7 and 8).

Table 7. One-Way ANOVA Results for Parents' Tolerance Tendency Scale Scale Scores by Age Groups

20–25 Years		26–31 Years		32–37 Years		38 Years and Above		F(3, 319)	p
$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD		
33.40	7.16	36.21	6.46	35.77	7.22	35.32	7.19	1.379	.249

Table 8. Comparison in Parents' Tolerance Tendency Scale Scores by Perceived Income Level and Education Level

<i>Variables</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean Rank</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>X²</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Significant Difference (Mann–Whitney U Test)</i>
<i>Perceived Income Level</i>						
Very Good	5	235.30	4	12.50	.014	Vey Good > Low Good > Low Middle > Low
Good	92	173.51				
Medium	175	160.20				
Low	40	120.91				
Very Low	8	168.83				
<i>Education Level</i>						
Elementary School	23	135.35	5	9.014	.109	-
Middle School	48	158.98				
High School	149	155.06				
Associate Degree	32	157.84				
Bachelor Degree	62	188.91				
Master’s or Doctorate Degree	6	124.83				

Table 9. Comparison in Preschool Teachers' Tolerance Tendency Scale Scores by Gender

<i>Variables</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Sum of Ranks</i>	<i>Mean Rank</i>	<i>U</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>Gender</i>						
Woman	139	10616.00	76.37	782.00	0.359	.720
Man	12	860.00	71.67			

Table 10. One-Way ANOVA Results for Preschool Teachers' Tolerance Tendency Scale Scores by Age Groups

<i>26–31 Years</i>		<i>32–37 Years</i>		<i>38 Years and Above</i>		<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>$\bar{X}$</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>$\bar{X}$</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>$\bar{X}$</i>	<i>SD</i>		
38.05	6.29	37.12	6.09	39.80	6.46	1.898	.153

Table 11. Comparison in Preschool Teachers' Tolerance Tendency Scale Scores by Marital Status and Type of School

<i>Variables</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>$\bar{X}$</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t(149)</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>Marital Statues</i>					
Single	49	38.06	6.52	0.038	.970
Married	102	38.01	6.19		
<i>Type of School Where Teacher Works</i>					
Private School	120	38.06	6.97	0.031	.975
Public School	31	38.02	6.12		

Table 12. Comparison in Preschool Teachers' Tolerance Tendency Scale Scores by Experience Level

Variables	N	Mean Rank	SD	X ²	p	Significant Difference (Mann-Whitney U Test)
Experience Level						
Less than 1 year	5	25.80	4	13.33	.010*	1–5 years > Less than 1 year
1–5 Years	43	79.30				6–10 years > Less than 1 year
6–10 Years	58	68.47				11–15 years > Less than 1 year
11–15 Years	34	83.96				16 Years and Above > Less than 1 year
16 Years and Above	11	101.00				16 Years and Above > 6–10 years

It was determined that teachers' tolerance tendency levels did not differ according to gender [Mann–Whitney U=782.00, $p=0.72$], age [$X^2_{(2)}=0.343$, $p>.010$], marital status [$t(149)=0.592$, $p>.010$] and type of school [$t(149)=0.031$, $p>.010$] variables, but they differed according to professional seniority [$X^2_{(5)}=15.19$, $p<.050$]. According to the result of the Mann–Whitney U test over paired combinations of the groups to determine between which groups the differences between the years of professional seniority were manifested, a significant difference was determined between teachers with 16–20 years of experience and teachers with less than one year of experience in favour of teachers with less than one year of experience (see Tables 9, 10, 11, and 12).

In the Pearson Correlation analysis conducted to determine the relationship between children's Respect for Differences Scale scores and preschool teachers' Tolerance Tendency Scale scores, no significant relationship was found. However, a significant relationship was found in the Pearson Correlation analysis conducted to determine the relationship between children's Respect for Differences Scale scores and parents' Tolerance Tendency Scale scores.

There is a low-level, negative and significant relationship between children's Respect for Differences Scale scores and their parents' Tolerance Tendency Scale scores ($r=-.17$, $p<.001$). Accordingly, it can be stated that as the parents' level of tolerance tendency decreases, children's level of respect for differences increases. On the contrary, it can be noted that as the level of tolerance tendency of the parents increases, the level of respect for differences of the children decreases. The values related to the regression model in order to determine whether the parents' level of tolerance tendency predicts the children's level of respect for differences are presented in Table 13.

Table 13. Regression Analysis Results on the Predictive Power of Parents' Tolerance Tendency Scale Scores on Preschool Children's Respect for Differences Scale Scores

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	F	p	R	R ²	β	t	p
Tolerance Tendency Scale Scores	Respect for Differences Scale Scores	4.709	.000	.175	.031	-.175	-2.170	.032*

*Note. $p<0.005$

In Table 13, the regression model was found to be appropriate as a result of the regression analysis conducted to determine whether the scores of the parents on the Tolerance Tendency Scale significantly predicted the scores of the children on the Respect for Differences Scale. It was found that the parents' tolerance tendency scores explained 3% of the variance of the children's respect for differences scores ($R^2=.031$; $p<.001$) in a statistically significant way.

Moreover, it was observed that a child would state "I would like to be friends with a child in my class who learns differently than me" in the Respect for Differences Scale. Again, it was observed that some children responded to the item "If a child whose skin colour is different from mine (for example, darker/lighter) came to my class, I would like to be friends with him/her" in the Respect for Differences Scale as "I would like to be friends with him/her when I get to know him/her", "I would like to be friends with him/her because God created black people too" and "I would give him/her food if he/she cannot find food". For the item "I would like to have friends who speak a different (non-Turkish) language" in the scale, one child said "I would like to, I would teach them to speak Turkish" and another child said "I would like, because there are already Syrians". These spontaneous answers show that preschool children do not have discriminatory attitudes.

Conclusion, Discussion and Suggestions

The average total score of the children in the study was 63.50 on the Respect for Differences Scale. These values overlap with the previous findings of the relevant literature (Aktaş, 2020; Topcubaşı, 2015; Yüksek Usta, 2019). In his study, Ekmişoğlu (2007) found that the average scale score of 122 preschool children aged 5–6 years was 2.12 on the basis of total items. Likewise, in our study, it was observed that the value obtained by dividing the mean scale score of 54–72-month-old children by the total items was 2.11. This value overlaps with Ekmişoğlu's (2007) study. Similarly, Tunar (2017) found that children attending the fourth grade had a sufficient level of tolerance. These findings are in line with previous studies showing that children are respectful towards differences, and that respect for differences in education is effective in increasing tolerance and acceptance levels in children (Berger et al., 2016; Katz, 2008; Pirchio et al., 2018). Campbell (2011) found that children's rights and tolerance curriculum increased children's tolerance levels in a study conducted with 12–13-year-old children. In a study conducted with preschool teachers, Pekdoğan (2019) reported that a teacher stated that "respect for differences eliminated othering behaviour among children". No interviews were conducted in the study, and interesting comments made by the children spontaneously while answering the scale items were included.

The Tolerant Tendency Scale general total scores of the parents in the study were 35.59, whereas the total mean score was 3.5. This shows that the tolerance tendency levels of the parents are at a good level. In Doğan's (2021) study intended to determine the tolerance tendency levels of different generations, the scores of the participants were the same as in our study. Gürbüz (2022) found that the mean tolerance tendency scores

of parents were 36.20 for females and 33.21 for males. Similar studies in the literature (Çavuş, 2019; Gökalp, 2017; Yılmaz & Güven, 2019) essentially overlap with the findings of our study.

The mean total score of the Tolerant Tendency Scale of preschool teachers in the study was 38.03. This shows that the teachers' tolerance tendency is at a good level. According to the results of the Tolerance Scale applied to pre-service teachers in Gül and Alimbekov's (2020) study, it was established that the tolerance levels of pre-service teachers were high. Similar studies in the literature (Çavuş, 2019; Pekdoğan, 2019) overlap with the findings of our study. Pekdoğan (2019) stated in his study with preschool teachers that the most important skill that should be in respect for differences education is empathy, followed by trust and respect, and then involving tolerance and responsibility.

In the analysis conducted to determine the relationship between the children's Respect for Differences Scale scores and preschool teachers' Tolerance Tendency Scale scores, no significant relationship was found. However, a significant relationship was found in the analysis conducted to determine the relationship between the children's Respect for Differences Scale scores and their parents' Tolerance Tendency Scale scores. It is notable that there is a low-level, negative and significant relationship between the children's Respect for Differences Scale scores and their parents' Tolerance Tendency Scale scores. Accordingly, it can be said that as the children's level of respect for differences increases, the parents' level of tolerance tendency decreases. In other words, it can be suggested that as the parents' level of tolerance tendency decreases, the children's level of respect for differences increases. Accordingly, it can be remarked that as the children's level of respect for differences increases, the parents' level of tolerance tendency decreases. In other words, it can be highlighted that as the parents' level of tolerance tendency decreases, the children's level of respect for differences increases. However, despite the very low regression coefficient score, it can still be stated that a relationship, albeit weak, has been detected between these variables. Considering that managed attitudes towards differences increase with age (Connolly et al., 2002; Merrilees et al., 2018; McKeown & Taylor, 2018; Taylor & McKeown, 2019), the negative relationship between the children's and parents' level of respect for differences can be explained by this finding.

Limitations and Delimitations:

This study has some limitations. First, the data collection tools used were limited to a single scale. Future research could expand by including multiple methods or diverse age groups and cultural contexts. The study was conducted in specific geographical areas and school types, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Future studies could include a broader sample from different regions or educational systems.

The suggestions developed as a result of the study are as follows:

- Respect for differences can be realised through a multicultural classroom environment. For this reason, teachers can invite people whom students can characterise as different to the classroom, and visit different educational environments.

- Teachers can introduce different cultures, countries and geographies to children with the help of appropriate documentaries and cartoons.
- It is important that families accept these differences and reflect this to their children instead of reacting to differences. For this reason, awareness-raising activities can be carried out for families in order to raise awareness of respect for differences in society.

Author Contributions:

Since both authors contributed equally to all stages of the research and manuscript preparation, the contributions are as follows:

Ayşe Duru: Conceptualization, methodology, formal analysis, investigation, writing – original draft, writing – review and editing, visualization.

M. Oya Ramazan: Conceptualization, methodology, formal analysis, investigation, writing – original draft, writing – review and editing, visualization.

Data Availability

Data can be made available upon reasonable request from the authors.

Limitations

The study sample was limited to Turkish children, their parents and teachers, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other ethnic groups.

Ethics Declaration and Committee Approval

The principles of scientific research and publication ethics were followed for this research. Ethics approval was obtained from the Marmara University Educational Sciences Institute Sciences Research and Publication Ethics Committee (dated 12 November 2021 and numbered 9-20). Informed consent was obtained from each participant's legal family to participate in this study.

Proportion of Authors' Contribution:

The two authors participated and contributed equally in producing the work and preparing it for publication.

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Appendix A: EFA results of the Respect for Differences Scale

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted to determine the construct validity and factor structure of the Respect for Differences Scale (RSDS).

Firstly, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) sample size was calculated for the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) of the Respect for Differences Scale. The KMO sampling adequacy value was found to be 0.848, and it was determined that the sample size was sufficient for EFA. Bartlett's test is performed to test whether the data meet the assumptions of multivariate normality. As a result of Bartlett's test, it was found that $\chi^2(435)=1941.893$; $p<0.05$, and this finding showed that the correlations between the items were large enough for EFA (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

As a result of establishing EFA, it was determined that the Respect for Diversity Scale, which consists of 30 items, consists of a structure with 4 sub-dimensions (factors), and these 4 factors explain 35.90% of the total variance. For the fields of education and social sciences, the total explained variance rate can be around 50–60% (Yong & Pearce, 2013). **In the item total score correlation analysis, it was determined that the 21st item of the scale was a reverse item. In scoring the scale, the 21st item should be reverse-coded.**