



Original article

Do Children's Picture Books on Values Support Social-Emotional Development in Türkiye?

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Abstract

Purpose: Social and emotional development are the two areas of development that are described as highly interactive in the literature and include the skills necessary for the children to manage their own emotions and behaviours in the preschool period. Various educational programs such as dance and creative drama are provided to the preschool children to learn these skills. Additionally, values education and illustrated children's books come to the forefront in providing children with social and emotional skills. Therefore, the aim of this study is the values-themed illustrated children's books in terms of social-emotional development area outcomes and indicators in MEB 2013 Preschool Education Program. **Method:** The present study is a case study. The study includes 75 children's books with illustrations on the themes of friendship, respect for differences, sharing, cleanliness and empathy determined by the cluster sampling method. Data were collected through Outcomes and Indicators Form (OIF) and analysed by the descriptive analysis method. **Findings:** The most commonly represented indicators were "O411: Tells others' emotions," "O511: Explains positive / negative emotions using verbal expressions" and "O412: Tells the reasons for others' emotions." On the other hand, there is no statement representing 10 indicators. It has been determined that the gains and indicators do not show a balanced distribution. **Implications for Research and Practice:** A children's library that includes a wide range of themes, outcomes, and indicators will be more effective in supporting children's social-emotional development. It may include books of different values and other areas of development in the future studies.

Keywords: Values, Children's Books, Social – Emotional Development.

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INTRODUCTION

Social and emotional development are two development areas that continue for a lifetime by interacting with each other. For this reason, these two development areas are dealt with. When you look at social-emotional skills, the generally elaborated subjects are self-awareness, social awareness, relationship management, and responsible decision-making (Ministry of Education Republic of Singapore, 2013). It is thought that it is important to bring in the children the necessary social-emotional skills for individuals to sustain their existence in the society at young ages. It is because the knowledge, and skills given to the children at early ages can be learned better in comparison with the children at the age of school, and adolescence. Therefore, the children who are brought in social-emotional skills can manage their emotions. and behaviours, respect the differences, they can establish relationships, keep contact, and interact with others and take what they do. The children knowing their strong, and weak points would be able to manage their emotions, and behaviours better with a strong perception of the self (Ministry of Education Republic of Singapore, 2013). As it is seen, children, with the social-emotional skills, can show behaviours to protect both their own emotional, and social entity, and other people's emotional, and social entity in their circumstances.

When we think that social-emotional skills are the skills needed in harmonising with the society, it comes to the mind what are the short, and long term effects of these skills. When we look from the point of academic life, and school life, it can be seen that these skills contribute to the academic, and school achievements of the children, and their obtaining good relationships in the school (Tilleczek et al., 2017). In a study by Shala (2003), it was seen that social-emotional development in the preschool term has a positive effect on the academic achievements of the children in the first, second, and third class. The children who have a high level of social-emotional development are seen to have positive experiences after the school as well as being successful in academic terms in the school. For example, these children have fewer behavioural, and emotional problems, and have positive social behaviours in the future (Payton et al., 2008), comprehend social clues, and evaluate correctly people's behaviour, and higher level of academic achievement (ri Fakhri & Faujiyah 2019). As seen in the studies, the children who are developed social-emotionally have potential to be better at academic success, and interpersonal relationships, and they experience fewer problems in the ongoing years of their life.

When we consider that social-emotional development reveals important lifelong effects, it is thought that social-emotional skills should be supported. Starting from this aim, many studies have been done examining the educational programs prepared for the preschool children, and effects of these programs on the children. In the literature, we can see various studies that supports social-emotional development of preschool children like effects of creative drama trainings on emotional-social development (Gultekin, 2014), and social-emotional behaviours, effect of dance training on the social-emotional harmony of the children (Maliyok, 2018), the effect of self-regulation on the social-emotional

behaviours, and skills of the children (Liman, 2017), the effect of educational games on social-emotional harmony of the children (Kacir, 2015), and the effect of picture based curriculum on social-emotional adequateness (Henderson, 2018). As it is seen, there are many educational content, educational methods, and techniques that are thought to be effective on social-emotional development.

Education of values is another one of the programs prepared for supporting the social-emotional development of preschool children, alongside creative drama education, dance education, self-regulation skills education, educational games, and picture-based curricula. Values education, which is key to living in a society, is naturally assumed to support the social-emotional development of children. While the existing literature includes studies demonstrating the effectiveness of values education programs on preschool children's social skills (Dereli-Iman, 2014; Kapkin, 2018) and social-emotional harmony (Ipek, 2014), as well as the relationship between value attainment and social harmony and skill level (Tanriverdi & Erarslan, 2015), research on this topic remains limited. Although the contributions of the aforementioned educational programs to social-emotional development are clearly established, values-themed children's books have also been examined by different disciplines in this field. For example, in a study by Heath et al. (2017), the role of books in enhancing social-emotional learning was discussed, while Garner et al. (2018) focused on emotional development through the emotions portrayed in children's books. What sets this study apart is its specific analysis of the extent to which values-themed children's literature aligns with the social-emotional development outcomes and indicators outlined in the preschool education programme. By doing so, this research not only fills a gap in the literature but also provides a more nuanced perspective on the role of values-themed picture books in early childhood development. In this way, in addition to the educational programs mentioned earlier, such as dance and drama, this study can also guide educational stakeholders on how children's social-emotional development can be supported through values-themed books. As we understand from this point, attaining values supports social-emotional development. For this reason, we should give a place to the attaining of values in the program for supporting the social-emotional development of the preschool children.

Even if the attaining of values is not included as a separate type of activity in the Preschool Education Program (MoNE, 2013) it has been stated that cultural, and universal values should be brought in among the basic principles of preschool education. Moreover, when we look at the outcomes of the social-educational development area included in the program, we can see it is stated that many values like justice, cooperation, empathy, respect should be attained in the preschool period (Erturk Kara, 2015). It is stated that bringing cultural values to the children is one of the aims of the program (MoNE, 2013). As it is seen, values education is in fact included among the aims in the program but it is planned indirectly to be brought in the children.

When we consider the Preschool Education Program does not teach the values as an independent subject but chooses to give them via indirect ways, it is thought that the children's picture books are the most indirectly used resource for this indirect way of teaching. At this point, the subject of how the children's picture book with the theme of values affect the social-emotional skills gains importance. Although there is a study that examines the support of the children's picture books, which were published by targeting preschool children, to the outcomes for the area of the social-emotional development in the MoNE 2013 Preschool Education Program (Sildir, 2016), there is no study that examines how these outcomes are supported by the children's picture books about the values that affect the social-emotional development. Therefore, the aim of this study is to examine the values-themed children's picture books in terms of the social-emotional development outcomes, and indicators in the MoNE 2013 Preschool Education Program.

METHOD

Research Model

In this qualitative study, we apply the steps of the content analysis method. This method allows researchers to indirectly examine human behaviour. Additionally, when document analysis is a key component, it enables them to adhere to scientific research methodology (Fraenkel et al., 2023). In this study, we looked at how the children's picture books with the theme of values represented the social-emotional development outcomes, and indicators.

Sample

While the target universe of the study consists of the children's picture books with the theme of "values", the sample includes a total of 75 books with the themes of friendship/fellowship, respect for the differences, sharing, cleanliness, and empathy. Cluster sampling method was used as a sampling method. In the cluster sampling method, the universe is separated into clusters, and random selection is made from these groups. After that the elements of these groups are listed, and samples are chosen from this list (Sahin, 2014) In this work too, firstly the list of "values" were prepared for the determining the sample. 5 themes were randomly selected from this list. After that a list was created for the available books for each theme. 15 books were selected for each theme with the method of simple probability sampling, and the total 75 children's picture books were included in the study. Both researchers independently completed the form for each book separately, ensuring they did not see each other's responses.

Data Collection Tools

The data were collected via the form of "Outcomes and Indicators Form" (OIF) prepared by the researchers. The outcomes, and indicators in the form consist of the outcomes, and indicators about the

social-emotional development in the MoNE 2013 Preschool Education Program. Table 1 shows the list of outcomes.

Table 1. Social-Emotional Development Outcomes in “Outcomes and Indicators Form”

| Outcomes | |
|-----------------|---|
| 1 | They introduce their own characteristics. |
| 2 | They introduce the characteristics about their family. |
| 3 | They express themselves with creative ways. |
| 4 | They explain other people's feelings about a case or situation. |
| 5 | They show their positive/negative feelings about a case or situation in appropriate ways. |
| 6 | They protect their own and other people's rights. |
| 7 | They motivate themselves for achieving a job or task. |
| 8 | They respect the differences. |
| 9 | They explain different cultural characteristics. |
| 10 | They fulfil their responsibilities. |
| 11 | They take responsibility in the activities about Atatürk. |
| 12 | They obey the rules in various environments. |
| 13 | They protect aesthetic values. |
| 14 | They realize the values of the artworks. |
| 15 | They feel confidence in themselves. |
| 16 | They explain that individuals have different roles, and tasks in the communal living. |
| 17 | They solve their problems with the others. |

According to Table 1, the form includes 17 outcomes, and 50 indicators in total.

Data Collection Procedure

The researchers went to five different bookshops in İstanbul. These bookstores were selected through convenience sampling and inclusion criteria. Firstly, in order to access a sufficient number of books, bookstores with sections dedicated to preschool children's books were selected. Secondly, locations that granted permission for us to examine the books individually were chosen and visited. Similarly, three criteria were considered when selecting the books in these bookstores. Firstly, books specifically prepared by publishers and authors to address the values relevant to the study's focus were chosen. Secondly, if the cover information did not explicitly mention the values, the researchers examined the books to determine whether they aligned with the identified values theme. Thirdly, care was taken to ensure that the books were appropriate for the preschool age group. A list was prepared for the books with the themes of friendship/fellowship, respect for the differences, sharing/helping, cleanliness, and empathy. The books taken as a sample from the list were examined by the researchers for one week and OIF was filled up.

In the data collection process, the MoNE 2013 Preschool Education Program was used. Data collection for the study was completed during this period. In 2024, both the Maarif Model and the 2024 Preschool Education Program were introduced. While the 2013 program had 17 outcomes in the social-

emotional development area, the 2024 program includes 22 outcomes. Besides the newly added outcomes, there have been changes in the wording of the outcomes, though their objectives remain the same. For example:

- 2013 Program: "Self-motivated to accomplish a task or duty." (MoNE, 2013)
- 2024 Program: "Shows determination to accomplish a task or duty." (MoNE, 2024)

Therefore, the study is considered to remain current.

Data Analysis

Descriptive analysis was used for the analysis of the data. As a result of the content analysis of the children's picture book with the values (friendship/fellowship, respect for the differences, sharing/helping, cleanliness, and empathy) theme separately by the two researchers, frequencies, and percentages of the book contents for the outcomes, and indicators in OIF and the consistency value between the evaluators were found. The consistency between the evaluators was calculated between the Krippendorff Alpha coefficients.

As a result of the consistency calculations between the evaluators, the indicators having weak consistency rate between the evaluators were excluded from the study. The indicators excluded from the research were shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Outcomes and Indicators Excluded from the Research

| Outcomes | Indicators |
|---|--|
| 2: They introduce the characteristics about their family. | They say names of their close relatives like aunt and uncle. |
| 3: They express themselves with creative ways. | They express their feelings, thoughts and dreams in unique ways. They create products that have unique features. |
| 4: They introduce the characteristics about their family. | They say the results of other people's feelings. |
| 6: They protect their own and other people's rights. | They say what they should do for protecting other people's rights. |
| 7: They motivate themselves for achieving a job or task. | They start work without a direction from an adult. |
| 8: They respect the differences. | They say people have different characteristics. |
| 9: They explain different cultural characteristics. | They say different countries have their own cultural features. |
| 10: They fulfil their responsibilities. | They show that they are willing to take responsibility. |
| 13: They protect aesthetic values. | They mention about good and disturbing things they see in their environment. |
| 15: They feel confidence in themselves. | They mention what they like and what they do not like about themselves. |
| 17: They solve their problems with the others. | They solve their problems with the others by talking. When they cannot solve the problems with their friends, they want help from the adults. |

In the table above, the left column presents the Social-Emotional Development outcomes from the MoNE 2013 Preschool Education Programme. An outcome represents the skills, knowledge, values,

and attitudes that children are expected to achieve during the educational process. Under each outcome, indicators are listed in the right column of Table 2, which are examples extracted from the study. An indicator is a specific and observable behaviour or performance criterion used to measure the extent to which a particular outcome has been achieved. In this study, outcomes are abbreviated as "O" and indicators as "I." When we look at the Table 2, the total of 13 indicators, which are O2I3, O3I1, O3I3, O4I3, O6I4, O7I1, O8I2, O9I3, O10I1, O13I1, O15I1, O17I1, O17I2, was excluded from the study.

FINDINGS

Table 3 shows the number of contents for the indicators under social-emotional development outcomes in OIF. Sample sentences were given alongside with the indicators among the expressions that represent the outcomes, and indicators of social-emotional area in the children's picture book.

Table 3. Average and Percentage Values of the Outcomes and Indicators and Sample Sentences

| Outcomes | Indicators | \bar{X} | % | Sample Sentences |
|--|--|-----------|-------|--|
| 1: They introduce their own characteristics. | They say their name, surname, age, physical features and affective characteristics. | 4,5 | 0,9 | "Hello, my name is Mercan." |
| | They say their mother's, father's name, surname, occupation etc. | 3 | 0,61 | |
| 2: They introduce the characteristics about their family. | They say their mother's and father's physical features like hair colour, height, eye colour. | 0 | 0 | "I live in just downside of the road." "He passed the seas with a paper ship. When he reached to the opposite shore, he made the paper ship into a hat and put it on his head." |
| | They say their telephone number. | 0 | 0 | |
| | They say the address of their home. | 0,5 | 0,10 | |
| 3: They express themselves with creative ways. | They use the objects in unorthodox way. | 3 | 0,61 | |
| 4: They explain other people's feelings about a case or situation. | They mention other people's emotions. | 295 | 60,40 | "Mother of the bear who dropped to the water run to its baby happily." |
| | They say the reasons of other people's feelings. | 38 | 7,87 | |
| 5: They express themselves with creative ways. | They express their positive/negative feelings with linguistics expressions. | 90 | 18,49 | "We love you too." |
| | They show their negative feelings with positive behaviours. | 3 | 0,61 | |
| | They say their rights. | 4 | 0,41 | |
| 6: They protect their own and other people's rights. | They say other people have rights. | 0,5 | 0,10 | "We were free to play and go to the school." |
| | They say what can be done when they are exposed to injustice. | 0,5 | 0,10 | |
| 7: They motivate themselves for achieving a job or task. | They make an effort to finish the job they started. | 1,5 | 0,31 | "Robi passed all one day with cleaning the home." |
| 8: They respect the differences. | They say they have different characteristics. | 11 | 2,25 | "The pink monster was different from everyone when it was born." |
| | They take part in the activities with the children different from them. | 2,5 | 0,51 | |

| | | | | |
|--|--|-----|------|--|
| 9: They explain different cultural characteristics. | They say cultural features of their own country. | 0 | 0,00 | - |
| | They say similar and different features of their own culture and other cultures. | 0 | 0,00 | |
| 10: They fulfil their responsibilities. | They fulfil the responsibility they took. | 7,5 | 1,53 | "I throw paper and newspapers to the paper bin." |
| | They mention the possible results when the responsibilities are not fulfilled. | 0 | 0,00 | |
| 11: They take responsibility in the activities about Atatürk. | They participate in the activities of Atatürk. | 0 | 0,00 | - |
| | They express their feelings and opinions about Atatürk with different activities. | 0 | 0,00 | |
| 12: They obey the rules in various environments. | They express their opinion about determining the rules in different environments. | 0,5 | 0,10 | |
| | They say rules are necessary. | 0 | 0,00 | |
| | When their wish and rules are in a contradiction, they act in accordance with the rules. | 0,5 | 0,10 | "I must be silent for my sibling to sleep." |
| 13: They protect aesthetic values. | They obey the rules of etiquette. | 10 | 2,04 | |
| | They organise their environment in different ways. | 1,5 | 0,31 | "Mother and her children classified the toys, book and puzzles." |
| 14: They realize the values of the artworks. | They appreciate beauties around themselves. | 2,5 | 0,51 | |
| | They say what they saw and heard in the artworks. | 0,5 | 0,10 | "Roka, you are making voices like a frog... My little kid, are you thinking you are a frog? she asked. Roka did not care about it, continued to sing." |
| | They explain their feelings about the artworks. | 0,5 | 0,10 | |
| 15: They feel confidence in themselves. | They care about protecting the artworks. | 0 | 0,00 | |
| | They express themselves in front of a group. | 1 | 0,20 | "Those who pooped raise their hand." |
| 16: They explain that individuals have different roles and tasks in the communal living. | They express their different opinions when it is needed. | 0 | 0,00 | |
| | They undertake the leadership when needed. | 4 | 0,82 | |
| 17: They solve their problems with the others. | They say they are people who have different roles and tasks. | 0 | 0,00 | "I am a security officer and cleaner bird." |
| | They say that the same person have different roles and tasks. | 1 | 0,20 | |
| | They act as reconciliatory when needed. | 3,5 | 0,72 | "He wanted to say what he thought to Pamuk." |

As seen in Table 3, the most represented indicators are respectively "O4I1: They mention other people's emotions," "O5I1: They express their positive/negative feelings with linguistic expressions," and "O4I2: They say the reasons for other people's feelings." On the other hand, there is no expression found for the indicators "O2I2: They describe their mother's and father's physical features, such as hair colour, height, and eye colour," "O2I3: They state their telephone number," "O9I1: They mention the cultural features of their own country," "O9I2: They describe similar and different features of their own culture compared to other cultures," "O10I3: They mention the possible consequences of not fulfilling responsibilities," "O11I1: They participate in activities about Atatürk," "O11I2: They express their

feelings and opinions about Atatürk through various activities,” “O12I2: They state that rules are necessary,” “O14I3: They show care for protecting artworks,” and “O16I1: They recognise that people have different roles and tasks.”

When we look at the children's books with the themes of friendship/fellowship, helping/sharing, respect for the differences, empathy and cleanliness separately, Table 4 shows the distribution of outcomes and indicators most represented for the social-emotional development.

Table 4. Average Scores of Values, Outcomes and Indicators

| Value | Outcomes | Indicators | <u>X</u> |
|--------------------------------|--|---|-----------------|
| Friendship/ Fellowship | 4: They explain other people's feelings about a case or situation. | They mention other people's emotions. | 9 |
| | 5: They express themselves with creative ways. | They express their positive/negative feelings with linguistics expressions. | 5 |
| | 8: They respect the differences. | They say they have different characteristics. | 11 |
| Helping/ Sharing | 4: They explain other people's feelings about a case or situation. | They mention other people's emotions. | 9 |
| | 5: They express themselves in creative ways. | They express their positive/negative feelings with linguistic expressions. | 5 |
| | 3: They express themselves in creative ways. | They use the objects in an unorthodox way. | 3 |
| Respect for the Differences | 4: They explain other people's feelings about a case or situation. | They mention other people's emotions. | 16 |
| | 5: They express themselves in creative ways. | They express their positive/negative feelings with linguistic expressions. | 7 |
| | 8: They respect the differences. | They take part in the activities with the children different from them | 7 |
| Cleanliness | 4: They explain other people's feelings about a case or situation. | They mention other people's emotions. | 10 |
| | 5: They express themselves in creative ways. | They express their positive/negative feelings with linguistic expressions. | 4 |
| | 4: They explain other people's feelings about a case or situation. | They mention other people's emotions. | 9 |
| Empathy | 5: They express themselves with creative ways. | They express their positive/negative feelings with linguistics expressions. | 12 |
| | 15: They feel confidence in themselves. | They undertake the leadership when needed. | 7 |

As seen in Table 4, the most frequently observed objective among the values discussed is “O4: They explain other people's feelings about a case or situation.” When looking at the indicators for Objective 4, the most frequent indicator is “O4I1: They mention other people's emotions.” Among all the values, the least represented objective is “O15: They feel confidence in themselves.”

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The current study determined how much the children's picture book with the values theme includes the social-emotional outcomes and indicators in the MoNE 2013 Preschool Education Program. It was determined that the outcomes and indicators of the social-emotional area were included in different dimensions in the books with the themes of friendship/fellowship, helping/sharing, respect for differences, empathy, and cleanliness, which were selected with the method of cluster sampling from the current value list. When the current findings are examined, it can be seen that the outcomes of social-emotional development areas in the MoNE 2013 Preschool Education Program were not distributed evenly. When the books are examined based on the values, there is not a balanced distribution either.

When we examine the general results, the most frequently represented objective is “O4: They explain other people's feelings about a case or situation.” However, among the indicators for this objective, there is an unbalanced distribution. Similarly, the most represented objective across all objectives is “O5: They show their positive/negative feelings about a case or situation in appropriate ways.” The current findings suggest that expressing other people's feelings is more emphasised than expressing one's own feelings in children's picture books with a values theme.

In the context of children's social-emotional development, forming friendships and maintaining peer relationships are crucial for healthy development. Göl-Güven (2021) stressed that establishing and maintaining healthy and constructive relationships is an important social-emotional skill. These skills are also key to the development of peer relationships. To establish and sustain these relationships in a healthy manner, children need the skill to express both their positive and negative feelings (Gulay, 2009). Given this, it is expected that “O4I1: They mention other people's emotions (f=9)” and “O5I3: They express their positive/negative feelings with linguistic expressions” are among the most represented indicators found in books with friendship themes. A study by Dirican and Daglioglu (2014) found that the theme of friendship/fellowship is one of the most prevalent values in Turkish children's picture books. In this context, children's books can serve as effective tools for establishing peer relationships and for understanding and expressing emotions, as the characters in these books model emotional expression and behaviour for children (Gonen et al., 2016). Another important aspect of recognizing and expressing emotions is that it fosters self-awareness in children. In other words, it helps children develop self-awareness by understanding how their emotions affect their behaviour in different contexts (Göl-Güven, 2021). Given that books are a tool for children to acquire values, it is anticipated that the outcomes and indicators for social-emotional development should be distributed more evenly.

One of the values selected in the current study is sharing/helping. It is known that children's literature plays a significant role in teaching the importance of human relationships, such as sharing and helping (Kiran, 2008). In a Delphi study by Guzelyurt and Sarac (2018), it was noted that the theme of sharing and helping is essential for promoting positive behaviours in children. Additionally, educational

programmes that include children's books with themes of helping and sharing have been shown to positively affect children's social-emotional development (Celebi-Oncu, 2016).

In the current study, when examining books related to these themes, the most frequently represented objectives and indicators are “O4: They explain other people's feelings about a case or situation. O4I1: They mention other people's emotions,” “O5: They show their positive/negative feelings about a case or situation in appropriate ways. O5I1: They express their positive/negative feelings with linguistic expressions,” and “O3: They express themselves in creative ways. O3I1: They use objects in unorthodox ways.” On the other hand, there were no indicators representing objectives related to protecting rights necessary for sharing/helping, fulfilling responsibilities, obeying rules in various environments, and explaining different roles and tasks of individuals in communal living. Given the frequent occurrence of the sharing/helping theme in children's books, it is expected that this subject should be represented more evenly because this value is also related to children’s social-emotional learning and future life features. For example, Gol-Guven (2021) emphasises that children who develop such skills are more likely to exhibit high academic achievement and display more positive social behaviours in later stages of life. Unfortunately, children's books have often fallen short in supporting the virtue of sharing. For instance, in a study by Turhan et al. (2020) that identified themes in Turkish children's books, it was found that out of 665 books, 505 addressed the theme of virtues. However, only 0.6% of these books included the virtue of sharing.

Given the rapidly changing cultural structure of society, it is important to introduce the value of respecting differences at an early childhood stage. When examining the Social Development Area of the MoNE 2013 Preschool Education Programme, objectives "O8: They respect differences" and "O16: They recognise that people have different roles and tasks" address societal differences. However, in the books reviewed, there were no references to the indicators "O8I1: They describe having different characteristics" and "O8I2: They describe people having different characteristics" under Objective 8. There are 7 instances representing the indicator "O8I3: They participate in activities with children different from themselves." Moreover, there were no references to Objective 16 and its associated indicators in the books examined. Similarly, a study by Mert et al. (2013) found that children's books often focus more on universal values, suggesting that these books may not effectively support cultural transmission.

The theme of cleanliness is widely emphasised in children's literature for preschoolers. Erdal (2009) notes that environmental pollution and people's irresponsibility concerning it are frequently highlighted in cleanliness-themed books. Consequently, books are expected to represent indicators related to environment and responsibility within the outcomes and indicators of the MoNE 2013 Preschool Education Programme’s Social-Emotional Development Area. However, the findings reveal that there were no indicators “O10I1: They fulfil their responsibilities” and “O10I2: They mention the

possible consequences of not fulfilling responsibilities” under Objective “O10: They fulfil their responsibilities,” nor “O13I1: They organise their environment in different ways” and “O13I2: They appreciate the beauty around them” under Objective “O13: They protect aesthetic values.” Instead, the objectives and indicators related to expressing feelings were more frequently addressed in cleanliness-themed children's books. Given that environment and environmental pollution are key subjects in cleanliness-themed books, it is crucial to include these outcomes and indicators in a balanced manner.

Empathy is a crucial skill to develop during the preschool period to handle future challenges effectively. Besides, this skill is under one of the competencies of Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL). To increase children’s social awareness and promote social emotional development, it is suggested to gain them the ability to understand diverse perspectives of diverse cultures through empathy (Borowski, 2019). Uzmen and Magden (2002) found that reading socially-oriented children's books to preschoolers enhances their level of empathy. Therefore, it is recognised that high-quality children's books used during the preschool period support the development of empathy in children (Alpoge, 2003). In the current study of children's books with an empathy theme, the most frequently represented objectives and indicators are related to feelings (O4I1; O5I1). Additionally, the indicator “O5I1: They undertake leadership when needed” under the objective “O15: They feel confident in themselves” is the most frequently represented indicator. In contrast, there were no indicators for the objectives “O6: They protect their own and others' rights,” “O8: They respect differences,” “O9: They explain different cultural characteristics,” “O12: They follow rules in various environments,” “O16: They explain that individuals have different roles and tasks in communal living,” and “O17: They resolve problems with others.” This suggests that children's books with an empathy theme focus more on conveying feelings.

In conclusion, children's books are a valuable tool for instilling values in preschoolers. Cengiz and Duran (2017) consider children's books as psychosocial tools that help children manage their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours. Given that the Social-Emotional Area outcomes and indicators encompass the social and emotional skills that children need, it is expected that values-themed children's books should provide a balanced representation. However, the examined books tend to focus more on outcomes and indicators related to feelings. This indicates that values-themed children's books may fall short in teaching some outcomes and indicators.

Suggestions

The findings of the current study have some suggestions for the practical applications, and future studies. First of all, there is a necessity of a balanced distribution for the outcomes, and indicators of Social-Emotional Development Area. Writers of children's books may be supported for this subject. Secondly, the preschool teachers should consider the outcomes, and indicators in selection of the books. A children's library that has diversity for both themes, and outcomes, and indicators has more effect on

supporting the social-emotional development of the children. Finally, the number of books with the theme of respect for the differences are found fewer in accordance with the results of the current study. Moreover, the studies done focus on the themes like friendship, sharing more. For this reason, it is suggested to the preschool teachers, and the writers of the children's books to select themes for different values such as frugality, privacy, friendship, helping, and tolerance.

The current study includes the books with the themes of friendship/fellowship, sharing/helping, respect for the differences, cleanliness, and empathy. In the future studies, the books of different values may be included in the study. Similarly, the future research papers may be made as a study that includes the outcomes, and indicators of other development areas like motor development, cognitive development, language development, and self-care development. Finally, the current study included the children's picture book in the various bookstores of İstanbul. The future studies may focus on the children's picture books in the preschool educational institutions, and those preferred by the preschool teachers.

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