



Pre-School Teachers' Classroom Management Competency and The Factors Affecting Their Understanding of Discipline*

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This research was carried out to determine the classroom management competency and the levels of perception of understanding of discipline among preschool teachers, the effect of their classroom management competency and understanding of discipline on child-teacher relationship, the relationship between interpersonal problem-solving and liking of children, the student-teacher relationship and the predictive power of interpersonal problem-solving and liking of children in teachers' classroom management competency and understanding of discipline.

Research Methods: The research was designed using single and correlational survey designs and the sample included 180 preschool teachers working at public and private preschools. Research data was collected using the "Scale of Classroom Management Competency Levels", "Teacher's Understanding of Discipline Scale", "Interpersonal Problem-Solving Inventory", "Barnett Liking of Children Scale" and "Teacher-Student Relationship Scale". **Findings:** The results revealed that 81% of the teachers need to be supported in terms of classroom management and %55 of them in terms of understanding of discipline. The results showed that professional seniority, negative attitude towards problems and liking of children are the variables that predict strict/over-controlling understanding of discipline, and the constructive problem solving and the discipline based on understanding of equity are the variables that predict their classroom management competency. **Implications for Research and Practice:** Teachers' development about interpersonal problem-solving skills must be supported as well as their pedagogical knowledge about classroom management. It is suggested that teachers' classroom management competencies should be increased and their understanding of discipline should be developed via education seminars.

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Introduction

Classroom management is an interdisciplinary subject matter that covers education, psychology, and anthropology (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006). Because it is a complex concept with many dimensions (Martin & Sass, 2010; Fries & Cochran-Smith, 2006), classroom management has been defined in various ways. "Classroom management" is a term teachers use to describe the process of creating an effective environment for academic education, developing positive interactions and relationships with students, encouraging social/emotional development and focusing on disruptive behavior or misbehavior by students (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006). It is further defined as the conscious implementation of all the stages related to planning, communication, and evaluation to accomplish goals (Erdoğan, 2010). Moreover, it is regarded that organization of the physical setting, planning and implementation of an effective education, and the management of children's behavior have been accepted as subdimensions of classroom management (Carter & Doyle, 2006; Levin & Nolan, 2007; Weinstein & Novodvorsky, 2011; Weinstein, Romano & Mignano, 2011). Hence, it is anticipated that a good class leader should have the abilities and qualities to choose teaching goals, class activities, and management techniques and strategies suitable for students (Emmer & Stough, 2001).

Although classroom management is a detailed subject (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006) and covers many dimensions of planning and implementation, the most important concern for school directors, teachers, parents, and students is to maintain discipline (Romi & Freund, 1999). Moreover, it is revealed that the term "discipline" is usually used in place of "classroom management" in the literature (Hardin, 2004; Martin & Sass, 2010). The studies carried out about classroom management in our country focus on the undesirable behavior or misbehavior of children and discipline methods (Akar, Erden, Tor, & Şahin, 2010; Guleç, Bağçeli, & Onur, 2008; Uysal, Akbaba, & Akgün, 2010). Thus, classroom discipline plays a vital role in this study with classroom management.

There are different perspectives about discipline in the literature. The classical behavioral approach aims at maintaining discipline via display of deficiencies and weakening of negative behaviors and reinforcement of positive behaviors (Landrum & Kauffman, 2006). The ecological approach focuses on the proactive side of classroom management while creating the education setting and also involves nonreactive movements while maintaining discipline. Teachers should interfere in maintaining an orderly learning environment indirectly and while attempting it, they must react as quickly and quietly as possible in this approach (Doyle, 2006; Carter & Doyle, 2006). In the social studies (integrated) curriculum approach, discipline has been considered an opportunity for teachers to show students which behaviors are appropriate and maintaining discipline has also been evaluated as an opportunity rather than perceiving it as an obstacle (Nucci, 2006). This understanding of discipline is based on "teaching something". Moreover, it is considered as a kind of understanding of education which aims at having children acquire the desired behaviors and habits and maintaining the development of self-control (Adams, 2000; Edwards, 1993; Tulley & Chiu, 1995).

Studies carried out to date have determined that teachers frequently use imperative sentences as a discipline method (Dobbs, Arnold, & Doctoroff, 2004). They also use rule-making and verbal appraisal and then preferred verbal warning, abolition of privileges and sending notes home as classroom management strategies (Little & Akin Little, 2008). They further use physical and verbal intervention more (Reschke & Hegland, 1999). It has been found that pre-school teachers in our country mostly focus on types of behaviors which could be categorized as responsive to maintain discipline (Akgün et al., 2011; Akar et al., 2010; Denizel Güven & Cevher, 2005; Güleç & Alkış, 2004, 2005; Sadık, 2002, 2003; Uysal et al., 2010). In addition, pre-service teachers mostly prefer the confrontation-agreement model of discipline (Polat, Kaya, & Akdağ, 2013), set rules mostly related to cleanliness and tidiness and movement and peer relationships (Durmuşoğlu Saltalı & Arslan, 2013), and use methods of punishment and reward to control children (Durmuşoğlu Saltalı & Arslan, 2013; Uysal et al., 2010). In addition to these findings, it was determined that while setting classroom rules, teachers did not ask students for their opinions, instead making decisions about the class themselves, that they were insistent on implementing the decisions, and that they mostly used imperative sentences (Uysal et al., 2010). To sum up, a reading of the literature has found that the classroom management studies carried out in our country focused on teachers' desire to control children's behaviors and on discipline strategies.

In this traditional model of classroom management, based on behaviorism, discipline is teacher-centered and teachers want to reduce children's undesirable behaviors via punishment and rewards, to correct their behaviors, and to enable them to focus on their educational activities (Freiberg & Lamb, 2009). This kind of classroom management understanding causes children's behaviors to depend on external factors (Fennimore, 1995). On the contrary, children are expected to be active in all the processes in the classroom from promoting their learning and development to educational activities and behavioral control (Winsler & Carlton, 2003). Teachers' instant decisions in the classroom have an important effect to maintain this balance.

Teachers' first tendencies with these instant decisions generally focus on "correcting" children's negative behaviors. Teachers think that it is preferable to change a child's behavior by intervening in his behavior immediately; however, the reality is that immediate behavioral corrections do not work. A more effective strategy is not to correct the child immediately. Thus, teachers should focus on changing themselves and building a positive relationship with the child instead of trying to change the child (Bredenkamp, 2014). Many personal characteristics of teachers are effective in maintaining order in the classroom and building a positive relationship with each child. Therefore, teachers should be aware of which interpersonal problem-solving skills they are using. In addition, it is considered that appreciating children as people, relying on professional experience, and the formation of relationships with the children are important for the decisions teachers make. However, it is revealed that the research studies related to classroom management focus on creating an effective physical environment (Landrum, Lingo & Scott, 2011; Sterling, 2009; Wasik, 2008), planning and educational activities (Gatongi, 2007; Wolfgang, 2009; Wubie, 2011),

building a relationship in the classroom and communication (Downer, Sabol & Hamre, 2010; Esturgó Deu & Sala Roca, 2010), and behavior management for children (Allen, 2010; Kim & Stormont, 2012; Rambusch, 2010). Thus, this research study aims at determining the classroom management competency and the levels of perception of understanding of discipline among preschool teachers, the effect of their classroom management competency and understanding of discipline on the child-teacher relationship, the relationship between interpersonal problem-solving and liking of children, and investigating the student-teacher relationship and the predictive power of interpersonal problem-solving and liking of children in teachers' classroom management competency and understanding of discipline.

Methods

Research Design

This research project was designed by benefiting from single and relational screening. The single screening model was performed to describe pre-school teachers' classroom management skills and understanding of discipline. The relational screening model was used to determine the relationship between teachers' understanding of discipline and classroom management competencies and student-teacher relationships, interpersonal problem solving and the liking of children.

Research Sample

The research was carried out with 180 pre-school teachers working in state and private pre-school educational institutions. Convenience sampling, one of the non-probability sampling types, was used in the study to determine the participating teachers. Almost all of the teachers participating in the study were female (90%), undergraduates (89%), and 44% of them had between 1 and 10 years of working experience, with 56% of them having more than 10 years of teaching experience.

Research Instruments and Procedures

Classroom management skills scale: A scale consisting of 40 items and prepared to detect teachers' perceptions about classroom management skills was developed by Denizel Güven and Cevher (2005). The scale's Cronbach's alpha coefficient of reliability was determined as .82 and the Spearman Brown split-half reliability coefficient was calculated as .84. As a result of the analysis carried out, it was determined that the scale factor was one-dimensional.

Teacher understanding of the discipline scale: The scale developed by Şimşek (2004) consists of the subdimensions of "Strict/overcontrolling understanding of discipline", "obedience-based discipline", "discipline based on understanding of equity", and "student-centered discipline" and totals 14 items. As a result of the factor analysis results of the scale, it was found that the factor loadings for the first factor were between .53 and .72, .68 and .70 for the second factor, .40 and .78 for the third factor, and .71 and .76 for the fourth factor, with the cumulative explained variance rate of the scale 53%. It was determined that the scale's item-total correlation values varied

between $r = .34$ and $.81$; the scale's internal consistence reliability was between $.46$ and $.69$, and the split-half correlation was between $r = .36$ and $.74$. While a high score from the scale reflects a democratic understanding of discipline, a low score reflects an authoritarian or non-democratic understanding of discipline (Şimşek, 2004).

Interpersonal problem-solving inventory: The inventory developed by Çam and Tuımkaya (2007) consisted of five factors: "negative attitudes to problems, constructive problem solving, lack of confidence, lack of responsibility, and persistence-perseverance approach". Of the total variance, 38.38% was explained in the inventory and 14.84% was explained by the subscales of negative attitudes to a problem, 12.76% by constructive problem solving, 4.64% by lack of confidence, 3.44% by lack of responsibility and 2.70% by the persistence-perseverance approach. The subscales' Cronbach's alpha coefficient of reliability varied from $.67$ to $.91$ and the test-retest reliability coefficients ran between $.69$ and $.89$. It was stated that negative attitudes to a problem and the persistence-perseverance approach could be evaluated in the dimension of *approach to a problem*, constructive problem solving, lack of confidence, whereas a lack of responsibility could be evaluated in the problem solving dimension (Çam & Tuımkaya, 2007). Therefore, subdimensions of "constructive problem solving" and "lack of confidence" were used in this research study.

Barnett liking of children scale: The scale developed by Barnett and Sinisi (1990) and adapted by Duyan and Gelbal (2008) is a 14-item measure. The scale's test-retest reliability was calculated as 0.85 and the internal consistence reliability as $.92$ (Gelbal & Duyan, 2010).

Student-teacher relationship scale: The Student-Teacher Relationship Scale developed by Pianta (2001) and adapted to Turkish by Şahin (2014) consists of 28 items and three subdimensions of conflict, closeness, and dependence. The study carried out for the scale's validity and reliability revealed that the scale's factor structure explained 41.21% of the total variance, and it was determined that the scale's test-retest reliability coefficients were $.90$ for the subdimension of conflict, $.82$ for the subdimension of closeness, and $.55$ for the subdimension of dependence, with a total score of $.87$. The scale's Cronbach's alpha coefficient of reliability was $.84$ for the subdimension of conflict, $.80$ for the subdimension of closeness, and $.72$ for the subdimension of dependence, with a total score of $.86$.

Data Analysis

The professional seniority of the pre-school teachers considered as an independent variable turned into a dummy variable and the teachers with 10 and more years of teaching experience were used as a reference category. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used for the analysis of the pre-school teachers' understanding of discipline and classroom management skills and their relationship between liking of children, student-teacher relationship, and interpersonal problem solving and teacher seniority. Multiple regression analysis was used to reveal the extent to which the factors addressed in the study (liking of children, student-teacher relationship, and interpersonal problem solving and teacher seniority) predicted the teachers' understanding of discipline and classroom management.

Results

The findings obtained as a result of statistical analysis are presented in the tables.

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics about Variables*

Variable	Subdimension	n	M	Ss
Understanding of discipline	Strict/overcontrolling understanding of discipline	180	16.28	4.05
	Obedience-based discipline	180	16.02	3.36
	Equity-based understanding of discipline	180	10.82	2.86
Student-teacher relationship	Student-centered discipline	180	8.28	1.26
	Disagreement	180	23.66	8.92
	Closeness	180	39.65	7.03
Interpersonal problem-solving skills	Dependence	180	18.73	4.61
	Negative attitudes to a problem	180	37.58	10.70
	Constructive problem solving	180	55.83	10.84
Liking of children	Lack of self-confidence	180	13.93	4.81
Class management competency		180	81.71	7.60
		180	119.45	11.87

In order to reveal the general distribution of teachers' class management competencies and understanding of discipline, the upper and lower standard deviation of the group's general average scores were calculated and the general distribution table about the pre-school teachers' class management competencies and understanding of discipline is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Teachers' Class Management Competencies and Perceptions of Understanding of Discipline

Variable	General Distribution		
	Low %	Medium %	High %
Class management competencies	11	70	19
Strict/overcontrolling understanding of discipline	32	61	21
Obedience-based discipline	24	42	34
Equity-based understanding of discipline	22	61	17
Student-centered discipline	1	23	76

According to Table 2, it was determined that 19% of teacher perceptions about class management competencies were at a high level, 11% of them were at a low level, and 70% of them were at a medium level. This research finding reveals that 81% of pre-school teachers' class management competencies must be supported. When the general distribution about the understanding of discipline adopted by the teachers was examined, it was found that more than half of the teachers (55%) adopted a strict/overcontrolling understanding of discipline and obedience-based discipline at a high level. This finding reveals that teachers' understanding of discipline must be supported.

Table 3. The Relationships between Teachers' Understanding of Discipline and Class Management Competencies and Student-Teacher Relationship, Liking of Children, and Interpersonal Problem Solving

Variables	Conflict	Closeness	Dependence	Liking of children	Negative Attitudes to Problems	Constructive problem solving	Lack of confidence	Professional seniority	Class management competencies
Strict/overcontrolling understanding of discipline	.14	-.15*	-.04	-.16*	-.18*	-.00	-.12	-.21**	-.10
Understanding of obedience-based discipline	.05	-.11	-.02	-.15*	-.11	-.03	-.00	-.04	-.03

Table 3 Continue

Variables	Conflict	Closeness	Dependence	Liking of children	Negative Attitudes to Problems	Constructive problem-solving	Lack of confidence	Professional seniority	Class management competencies
Equity-based understanding of discipline	-.08	.03	.01	.08	-.09	.01	-.01	.03	.15*
Student-centered discipline	-.01	.00	.09	.04	.01	.01	-.00	.09	.10
Class management competencies	-.00	.01	.09	.14	-.05	.23**	-.17*	.04	1

** $p < .01$ * $p < .05$

It was found that there was a negative significant relationship between teachers' strict/overcontrolling understanding of discipline and closeness, liking of children, negative attitudes to a problem and professional seniority and obedience-based understanding of discipline and strict/overcontrolling understanding of discipline. It was found that there was a positive significant relationship between equity-based understanding of discipline and classroom management competencies. There was no relationship between student-centered discipline and the other variables. It was revealed that there was a positive significant relationship between teachers' classroom management competencies and constructive problem-solving in the subdimension of interpersonal problem-solving skills but a negative significant relationship between their classroom management competencies and lack of confidence.

Table 4. Stepwise regression analysis related to prediction of teachers' strict/overcontrolling understanding of discipline

Variables	B	Std Error	β	t	p	R	R ²
First Stage							
Professional Seniority	-1.85	.66	-.21	-2.79	.00**	0.21	.044
Second Stage							
Professional Seniority	-1.89	.65	-.21	-2.89	.00**		
Negative Attitudes to Problems	-.073	.02	-.18	-2.55	.01*	0.28	.080

Table 4 Continue

Variables	B	Std Error	β	t	p	R	R ²
Third Stage							
Professional Seniority	-1.90	.64	-.21	-2.94	.00**		
Negative Attitudes to Problems	-.073	.02	-.18	-2.58	.01*	0.32	.108
Liking of Children	-.089	.03	-.16	-2.30	.02*		

** $p < .01$ * $p < .05$

As seen in Table 4, professional seniority, negative attitudes to the problem, and liking of children are ranked from highest to lowest in terms of contributions of dependent variable to variance. The variable of the feeling of closeness, a subdimension of the student-teacher relationship scale, is an unimportant predictor on the dependent variable, so it was left out in the regression equation and the stepwise regression analysis was completed in three stages. In the first stage, out of these variables identified, professional seniority, which made the most contribution to the strict/overcontrolling understanding of discipline, was entered into the regression equation and it was found that it explained 4.4% of the variance in the strict/overcontrolling understanding of discipline ($R=0.21$, $R^2=0.044$). In other words, the strongest predictor of strict/overcontrolling understanding of discipline was determined as the variable of professional seniority. The negative (-) beta value reveals that there is an inverse relationship between the strict/overcontrolling understanding of discipline and professional seniority, and as professional seniority increased, the strict/overcontrolling understanding of discipline decreased.

In the second stage, the variable of negative attitudes to a problem was included in the model and the explained variance in the strict/overcontrolling understanding of discipline went up from 4.4% to 8% ($R=0.28$; $R^2=0.080$). This means that the variable of negative attitudes to a problem made 3.6% contribution to the explained variance. Moreover, it was determined that the beta value belonging to the variable of negative attitudes to a problem was -0.18. It can be stated that as the attitude toward a problem increased, the strict/overcontrolling understanding of discipline went down.

In the third stage, the variable of liking of children was included in the model and the explained variance in the point score of the strict/overcontrolling understanding of discipline went up from 8% to 10.8% ($R=0.32$; $R^2=0.108$). In other words, the variable of teachers' liking of children made 2.8% contribution to the explained variance. When the table was examined, it was found that the beta value of liking of children was -0.16. This situation can be interpreted like this: As the liking of children increases, the strict/overcontrolling understanding of discipline will decrease. Considering these results, it is found that the variables which predict the teachers' strict/overcontrolling

understanding of discipline are professional seniority, negative attitudes toward a problem, and liking of children, respectively.

Table 5. Stepwise Regression Analysis Related to Predictions of Teachers' Classroom Management Competencies

Variables	B	Std Error	β	t	p	R	R ²
First Stage							
Constructive problem solving	.176	.057	.232	3.094	.00**	0.23	.054
Second Stage							
Constructive problem solving	.174	.056	.230	3.098	.00**	0.27	0.27
Equity-based understanding of discipline	.427	.211	.150	2.021	.04*		

** $p < .01$ * $p < .05$

In the stepwise regression analysis, the beta values of independent variables were first calculated to determine the important predictors of classroom management competencies, and it was concluded that two variables related to classroom management competencies were important predictors in terms of their contributions to variance. The variable of lack of confidence, which is not an important predictor of the dependent variable, was left out of the regression equation, and the regression analysis was completed in two stages. In the first stage, constructive problem solving was entered into the regression equation and it was determined that 5.4% of the classroom management competencies variance was explained with this variable ($R = 0.23$, $R^2 = 0.054$). In the second stage, the variable of equity-based understanding of discipline was included in the model. With the addition of this variable to the model, the variance that explains classroom management competencies went up from 5.4% to 7.6% ($R = 0.27$; $R^2 = 0.076$). In other words, the variable of teachers' equity-based understanding of discipline made 2.2% contribution to the explained variance. According to this result, first constructive problem-solving skills and then equity-based understanding of discipline predict teachers' classroom management competencies.

Discussion and Conclusion

As a result of the research study, it was found that 19% of teachers' perceptions about classroom management competencies were high, 11% were low, and 70% of them were at a medium level. Considering this result, it can be stated that 81% of teachers' classroom management competencies must be supported. Teachers state that classroom management is the most challenging aspect of their teaching (Merrett &

Wheldall, 1993). Pre-school teachers and elementary school first-grade teachers consider classroom management to be their most important professional development need (Coalition for Psychology in the Schools and Education, 2006).

The studies carried out reveal that pre-school teachers who believe that they cannot manage children's behaviors make more erratic decisions than those who believe in themselves (Masseti & Bracken, 2010; Pianta et al., 2003). Moreover, when the literature is examined, there are research studies which reveal that the beliefs of pre-school teachers affect their implementation of education activities and classroom management behaviors (Bracken & Fischel, 2006; Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Massetti & Bracken, 2010; Polat, Kaya & Akdağ, 2013; Rimm-Kaufman & Sawyer, 2004). In addition, some research studies claim that the effect of the stress factor and its interactions have been explored in teachers' self-efficacy to classroom management competencies (Dicke et al., 2014; Aloe, Amo & Shanahan, 2014; Brouwers & Tomic, 2000; Egyed & Short, 2006; Rimm-Kaufman & Sawyer, 2004).

According to Bandura, self-efficacy is "the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations" (Bandura, 1977, s. 201). Teachers with a strong sense of self-efficacy are expected to improve students' behavior and achievement despite challenging problems, but teachers with a weak sense of self-efficacy are expected to have less of an ability to have an effect on students' motivation and cognitive development (Bandura, 1997; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Thus, we conclude that teacher self-efficacy influences student achievement and motivation (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Furthermore, a positive relationship was identified between teacher self-efficacy and teacher commitment (Klassen & Chiu, 2010), job satisfaction (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Borgogni & Steca, 2003) and education quality (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). The findings of this study reveal that teachers' self-efficacy beliefs are important with regard to classroom management.

However, it is revealed in the studies carried out about teachers' classroom management competencies in our country that teachers consider themselves incompetent when it comes to classroom management and their classroom management competencies must be reinforced (İlgar, 2007; Şentürk & Oral, 2005; Akkaya Çelik, 2006). The results of these studies reveal, first, that it is important to investigate pre-school teachers' classroom management competency perceptions and, second, that primary school and pre-school teachers in particular feel themselves incompetent in matters of classroom management. These findings support the findings of our study.

When the other results obtained from the research study were examined, the results of the stepwise regression analysis revealed that the variables of professional seniority, negative attitudes to a problem, and liking of children were determined as the variables which predicted the teachers' scores on a strict/overcontrolling understanding of discipline. Moreover, the variable of professional seniority was detected as the strongest predictor of strict/overcontrolling understanding of discipline. It can be stated that as teacher experience increases, the

strict/overcontrolling understanding of discipline decreases. McDaniel (1994) states that personal philosophy, values, and teacher experience are important determiners when adopting a specific understanding of discipline (as cited in Şimşek, 2004). Considering the negative attitudes to a problem, it was found that as the negative attitudes to a problem increased, the strict/overcontrolling understanding of discipline decreased. If the person has a negative attitude toward a problem, his/her problem-solving skills will be lacking and inadequate and s/he will choose to avoid problems (Çam & Tümkaya, 2007). The teachers who prefer to avoid problems adopt a strict/overcontrolling understanding of discipline to eliminate the problem. Another result revealed by the stepwise regression analysis is that as the liking of children increases, the strict/overcontrolling understanding of discipline decreases. These results run parallel with the literature. Durmuşoğlu Saltalı & Erbay (2013) in their studies identified that teachers' state of liking of children was related to listening, speaking, and empathy skills in their communication with children and it was a meaningful descriptor. Listening, speaking, and empathy skills used in communication promotes the positive communication between the teacher and the child and this causes teachers' strict/overcontrolling understanding of discipline to diminish. According to Gelbal and Duyan (2010), one's liking of children has a very special and important place among the knowledge, skills, and values teachers have. The ability of children to be able to stand on their own feet, develop self-confidence, be at peace with themselves and their environment, and express themselves clearly all depend on their being loved by their family and teacher unconditionally and being valued and accepted as an individual (Çetindağ, 2013).

Multiple regression analysis carried out to determine whether or not understanding of discipline scores based on constructive problem solving and equity predicted teachers' classroom management competencies revealed that the constructive problem-solving variable was the most important predictor of teachers' classroom management competencies. Aydın (2004) stated that teachers' reaction styles were important to overcome the discipline problems in the classroom. It is vital that the problems encountered in the classroom should be eliminated with the right methods and techniques so that they can make positive contributions to children's development and help them to gain good habits (Öztürk, Gangal & Ergişi, 2014). Classroom management requires effective organization and implementation of communication and interaction processes (Tutkun, 2002). The teacher is able to anticipate possible student behaviors and prevent possible negative behaviors in a well-organized classroom (Tertemiz, 2000). According to Gordon (2013), after teachers learn to use skills that do not require force to maintain discipline and order, they start to use a totally different language about discipline. Teachers who can generate constructive solutions to problems and adopt an understanding of discipline based on equity are expected to have strong classroom management competencies.

Teachers' consistent discipline implementations are one of the factors that affect their teaching skills directly (Blandford, 1998). Effective classroom management and the competency to maintain discipline are included in the skills teachers must have to transfer the knowledge they have (Öztürk, Gangal & Ergişi, 2014). The knowledge that

is included in the literature supports the results obtained in this research which reveal that there is a negative meaningful relationship between classroom management competencies and a lack of confidence. Today, classroom management is viewed from a broad perspective and it is addressed three dimensionally in terms of class leadership, classroom atmosphere for learning, and discipline (Tertemiz, 2000). Teachers are expected to exhibit effective leadership inside and outside the classroom because students with different personality traits need a teacher-leader who will lead their behaviors (Dağ & Göktürk, 2014). These teachers understand their effects on the students and they use this effect positively (Jones & Jones, 1998). It is an anticipated result that a self-confident teacher feels himself competent about classroom management.

Recommendations

It is revealed in this research study that teachers' classroom management competencies are influenced by constructive problem-solving skills and that their understanding of discipline is affected by negative attitudes to a problem. In summary, it can be stated that teachers' interpersonal problem-solving skills effectively contribute to their decisions about classroom management. Thus, pre-school teachers' development of interpersonal problem-solving skills should be supported in addition to their pedagogical knowledge about classroom management.

In line with the finding that states most of the teachers feel themselves incompetent about classroom management and adopt the strict/overcontrolling understanding of discipline, it is considered that teachers could not transfer the theoretical knowledge they learn during their undergraduate studies to practice and they need to be supported due to the challenges they encounter during the implementation process. It can be stated that it is important and necessary for teachers to connect theory and practice via educational seminars with inter-institutional cooperation and thus their competencies can be increased.

Considering the other components of classroom management, teachers' classroom management competencies and understanding of discipline can be explored. Teachers' classroom management competencies and understanding of discipline can be carried out with studies designed with a qualitative research approach.

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Okul Öncesi Öğretmenlerinin Sınıf Yönetimi Yeterlikleri ve Disiplin Anlayışlarını Etkileyen Etmenler

Atıf: Buyuktaskapu Soydan, S., Alakoc Pirpir, D., Ozturk Samur, A. & Angin, D. A. (2018). Pre-School teachers' classroom management competency and the factors affecting their understanding of discipline. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 73, 149-172, DOI: 10.14689/ejer.2018.73.9

Özet

Problem Durumu: Disiplinlerarası bir konu olan sınıf yönetimi pek çok boyutu olan bir kavramdır. Bu sebeple literatürde sınıf yönetiminin farklı boyutlarını içeren tanımlara rastlanmaktadır. Bu tanımlarda sınıf yönetimi; öğretmenlerin akademik öğretim için elverişli bir ortam oluşturma, öğrenciler ile olumlu ilişkiler geliştirme, sosyal/duygusal gelişimi teşvik etme ve sorunlu davranışa odaklanma davranışlarını içeren bir süreç, hedeflerin gerçekleştirilmesinde planlama, iletişim ve değerlendirmeye ilişkin tüm basamakların bilinçli bir şekilde uygulanması olarak ifade edilmektedir. Sınıf yönetiminin alt boyutları olarak; fiziksel ortamın düzenlenmesi, eğitimin etkili bir şekilde planlanması, uygulanması ve çocukların davranışlarının yönetilmesi başlıklarının kabul edildiği görülmektedir.

Sınıf yönetimi, öğretmenlerin çeşitli yeteneklerini içeren detaylı bir konu olmasına planlamanın ve uygulamanın birçok yönünü kapsamına rağmen, okul müdürleri, öğretmenler, ebeveynler ve öğrencilerin gözünde en önemli endişe, disiplinin korunmasıdır. Ülkemizde yapılan sınıf yönetimi ile ilgili çalışmalar ise, çocukların istenmeyen davranışlarına ve disiplin yöntemlerine odaklanmaktadır. Bu nedenle sınıf yönetimi ile birlikte sınıf disiplini, bu çalışmada merkezi bir rol oynamaktadır.

Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin disiplin sağlamak amacıyla en çok tepkisel kategoriye girebilecek davranış biçimlerine odaklandıkları, öğretmen adaylarının en çok tercih ettikleri disiplin modelinin yüzleştirme-anlaşma modeli olduğu, sınıf içinde en çok temizlik ve düzen, hareket ve akran ilişkileri ile ilgili kurallar koydukları, çocukları kontrol edebilme adına ceza ve ödül yöntemini kullandıkları görülmektedir. Bununla birlikte, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin sınıf kurallarını belirlerken çocukların düşüncelerini almadıkları, sınıf ile ilgili kararları kendilerinin aldıkları ve bu kararların uygulanması için ısrarcı oldukları, çoğunlukla emir cümleleri kullandıkları tespit edilmiştir.

Öğretmenin sınıf düzenini sağlaması ve her bir çocukla olumlu ilişkiler kurmasında pek çok kişisel özelliği etkili olmaktadır. Bu nedenle öğretmenin, hangi kişiler arası problem çözme becerisini kullandığının farkında olması önemlidir. Ayrıca öğretmenin aldığı kararlarda çocuk sevgisi, mesleki tecrübesi ve çocuk ile olan ilişkisinin de etkili olduğu düşünülmektedir. Ancak sınıf yönetimi ile ilgili araştırmaların, fiziksel ortamı organize etme, planlama ve eğitim etkinlikleri, sınıfta ilişki kurma ve iletişim, çocukların davranışlarını yönetme üzerine odaklandığı görülmektedir.

Araştırmanın Amacı: Araştırmada, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin sınıf yönetimi yeterlikleri ve disiplin anlayışlarının belirlenmesi, öğrenci-öğretmen ilişkisi, kişilerarası problem çözme ve çocuk sevmenin öğretmenlerin sınıf yönetimi yeterlikleri ve disiplin anlayışlarını yordama gücünün incelenmesi amaçlanmaktadır.

Araştırmanın Yöntemi: Bu araştırma, tekil ve ilişkisel tarama modellerinden yararlanılarak tasarlanmıştır. Tekil tarama modeli; okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin sınıf yönetimi becerilerinin ve disiplin anlayışlarının betimlenmesi amacıyla, ilişkisel tarama modeli ise; öğretmenlerin disiplin anlayışları ve sınıf yönetimi yeterlilikleri ile öğretmen çocuk ilişkisi, kişilerarası problem çözme ve çocuk sevmeye arasındaki ilişkiyi belirlemeye yönelik olarak kullanılmıştır.

Araştırma 180 okul öncesi eğitim öğretmeni ile yürütülmüştür. Araştırmaya katılan öğretmenlerin belirlenmesinde olasılık dışı örnekleme türlerinden uygun örnekleme yöntemi kullanılmıştır.

Araştırmanın Bulguları: Öğretmenlerin sınıf yönetimi yeterliklerine ilişkin algılarının %19'unun yüksek, %11'inin düşük ve %70'inin orta düzeyde olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Bu araştırma bulgusu okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin %81'inin sınıf yönetimi yeterliklerinin desteklenmesi gerekliliğini ortaya koymaktadır. Öğretmenlerin benimsedikleri disiplin anlayışlarına ilişkin genel dağılım incelendiğinde ise, öğretmenlerin yarıdan fazlasının baskıcı/aşırı denetleyici disiplini ve itaate dayalı disiplini (%55) yüksek seviyede benimsediği görülmektedir. Bu bulgu öğretmenlerin disiplin anlayışının desteklenmesi gerektiğini göstermektedir.

Araştırmaya katılan öğretmenlerin baskıcı/aşırı denetleyici disiplin anlayışları ile yakınlık, çocuk sevmeye, probleme olumsuz yaklaşma ve mesleki kıdem arasında ve itaate dayalı disiplin anlayışları ile çocuk sevmeye arasında negatif yönlü anlamlı bir ilişki tespit edilmiştir. Eşitlik anlayışına dayalı disiplin ile sınıf yönetimi yeterlilikleri arasında pozitif yönlü anlamlı bir ilişki bulunmuştur. Öğrenci merkezli disiplin ile araştırmada ele alınan diğer değişkenler arasında herhangi bir ilişki bulunamamıştır. Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin sınıf yönetimi yeterlilikleri ile kişilerarası problem çözme becerileri alt boyutundaki yapıcı problem çözme arasında pozitif, kendine güvensizlik arasında ise negatif yönlü anlamlı bir ilişki görülmektedir. Öğretmenlerin baskıcı/aşırı denetleyici disiplin anlayışlarını yordayan değişkenler en yüksekten en düşüğe doğru sıralandığında bunlar; mesleki kıdem, probleme olumsuz yaklaşma ve çocuk sevmeye değildir. Sınıf yönetimi yeterliliklerini ise birinci sırada yapıcı problem çözme becerileri, ikinci sırada eşitlik anlayışına dayalı disiplin anlayışı yordamaktadır.

Araştırmanın Sonuçları ve Önerileri: Araştırma sonucunda, öğretmenlerinin sınıf yönetimi yeterliklerinin desteklenmesi gerekliliğini sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Öğretmenlerin yarıdan fazlasının baskıcı/aşırı denetleyici disiplini ve itaate dayalı disiplini benimsediği görülmüştür. Mesleki kıdem, probleme olumsuz yaklaşma ve çocuk sevmeye değişkenleri öğretmenlerin baskıcı/aşırı denetleyici disiplin anlayışı puanlarını yordayan değişkenler olarak belirlenmiştir. Ayrıca mesleki kıdem değişkeni baskıcı/aşırı denetleyici disiplin anlayışının en güçlü yordayıcısı olarak saptanmıştır. Yapıcı problem çözme değişkeninin de öğretmenlerin sınıf yönetimi yeterliklerinin en önemli yordayıcısı olduğu bulunmuştur.

Öğretmenlerin kişilerarası problem çözme becerilerinin sınıf yönetimi ile ilgili aldığı kararlarda etkili olduğu bulgusundan yola çıkarak, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin, sınıf yönetimi ile ilgili pedagojik bilgilerinin yanı sıra kişiler arası problem çözme becerileri konusunda gelişimleri desteklenmelidir.

Öğretmenlerin çoğunluğunun sınıf yönetimi konusunda kendilerini yetersiz hissettikleri ve baskıcı disiplin anlayışını benimsedikleri bulgusu doğrultusunda, öğretmenlerin lisans eğitimleri sürecinde aldıkları teorik bilgileri uygulama sürecine aktarmadıkları ve uygulama sürecinde karşılaştıkları zorluklar sırasında desteklenmeye ihtiyaç duydukları düşünülmektedir. Bu nedenle Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı ve üniversiteler işbirliğinde yapılacak projeler, eğitim seminerleri aracılığıyla okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin mesleki gelişimlerini tamamlamaları, teori ile uygulama arasında bağ kurulması sağlanarak yeterliliklerinin artırılmasının önemli ve gerekli olduğu söylenebilir.

Bu çalışmada ele alınmayan değişkenler işe koşularak öğretmenlerin sınıf yönetimi yeterlilikleri ve disiplin anlayışları incelenebilir. Öğretmenlerin sınıf yönetimi yeterlilikleri ve disiplin anlayışları nitel araştırma deseninde incelenebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Okul öncesi sınıf yönetimi, öğretmen öğrenci ilişkisi, çocuk sevme, kişilerarası problem çözme becerileri.