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# The Preschool Classroom Management and Inclusion in Turkey

## Abstract

*This study evaluates classroom management of preschool teachers by using the data collected from 147 teachers who have and do not have children with disabilities in their classrooms. The Turkish Form of the Teacher Strategies Questionnaire (TSQ-T) was used for gathering data based on teachers' opinions of the classroom management strategies that they use. The authors found that the TSQ-T is a reliable instrument for investigating preschool classroom management, and that the frequency and usefulness scores regarding the management strategies of the teachers who have and do not have children with disabilities in their classrooms are similar, except for the fact that the inclusive classroom teachers view the negative strategies as being less useful than the other group of teachers. In addition, the Turkish teachers have almost the highest scores on their current and future confidence in being able to deal with problems. The authors discussed the results in terms of the content of the pre-service and in-service classroom management courses and practicums related to management skills of the preschool teachers and the teacher candidates.*

*Keywords: Preschool Teachers, Classroom Management, Inclusion*

## Introduction

Classroom management which is a critical part of effective teaching consists of three components; namely, maximizing the time allocated for instruction, organizing instructional activities for increasing academic engagement and success, and using proactive strategies for preventing and decreasing problem behaviors (Sugai & Horner, 2002). Classroom management is an effective variable on the achievement and behaviors of all children in the classroom (Marzano & Marzano, 2003; Stage & Quiroz, 1997; Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993). In a well-managed classroom, academic and social development of all children are supported, their learning increase, problem behaviors decrease

and possible negative behaviors are prevented (Evertson & Emmer, 1982; Evertson & Weinstein, 2006). In addition, using the strategies such as adapting pace and fluency of instruction, arranging and monitoring transitions lead to more achievement and less disruptive behaviors (Evertson & Emmer, 1982; Evertson, Emmer, Sanford, & Clements, 1983; Evertson & Harris, 1992). Moreover, effective classroom management encourages cooperation among students and achievement for their goals by planned activities and instruction (Doyle & Carter, 1984). Furthermore, when the teachers differentiate their behaviors and management strategies according to the needs of the students, they can establish a more effective relationship with children having different ability levels (Brophy & McCaslin, 1992).

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Therefore, it is accepted that the teachers are expected to know the learning characteristics of the ones they teach, to adapt the content of the curriculum, instructional methods and teaching materials according to the developmental levels of children, to recognize and praise the positive behaviors and to teach expected positive behaviors (Emmer, Evertson, & Worsham, 2003).

Since the 1970s and 80s, although classroom management has drawn the attention of researchers focusing on preschool teacher training, there have been only a very limited number of studies investigating and demonstrating the difficulties inclusive preschool teachers face when managing their classrooms that include children with and without disabilities. For example, McIntosh (1994) stated that although teachers make some adaptations for children with disabilities while they teach, they have limited teaching skills for these children. In another study (Schumm & Vaughn, 1993), the researchers highlighted that only 39% of the preschool teachers feel that their plans were sufficient for the children with disabilities. In addition, two studies (Blanton, Blanton, & Cross, 1993; Hanrahan, Goodman, & Rapagna, 1990) indicated that teachers have serious concerns regarding problem behaviors of children with disabilities. Moreover, the inclusive preschool teachers who stated their need for support in various aspects of inclusion, frequently stressed that they should learn effective strategies which can be employed in their classrooms. Besides, they had difficulty in coping with the problem behaviors of children with disabilities and creating learning environments to increase engagement of all the children in their classrooms (Akalın, Demir, Sucuoğlu, Bakkaloğlu, & İçsen, 2014; Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000; Bruns & Mogharreban, 2009; Buell, Hallam, Gamel-McCormick, & Scheer, 1999; Kamens, Loprete, & Slostad, 2003). According to Marzano and Marzano (2003), effective teachers are those who do not treat all children the same and who use different strategies for those with different levels of ability. Conversely, ineffective teachers are specified as those who are not responsive to the different needs of the children placed in their classrooms.

For many years in Turkey, the issues of classroom management were embedded as a chapter in Educational Psychology courses; however, in 1997, within the

framework of reconstruction of the teacher education programs, a new course focusing on classroom management was added to the teacher education programs. Thus, in the last two decades, on the one hand, managing the preschool classrooms is an issue that has been strongly emphasized by researchers and on the other, textbooks were written for the pre-service teachers (Aktaş-Arnas & Sadık, 2008; Uyanık-Balat, & Bilgin, 2010). In addition, the classroom management of preschool teachers has been evaluated by employing various methods and instruments and teachers' profiles regarding classroom management have been examined (Akgün, Yazar, & Dinçer, 2011; Denizel-Güven & Cevher, 2005; Gezgin, 2009; Sadık, 2004; Turla, Şahin, & Avci, 2001; Uysal, Akbaba, & Akgün, 2010). According to these findings, the preschool teachers often take classroom management into consideration to ensure discipline in their classrooms and use classroom management strategies to cope with problem behaviors. A group of preschool teachers defined the classroom management as arranging the physical environment and organization in terms of various aspects on the first day of schools (Akar, Erden-Tanteğin, Tor, & Şahin, 2010). They generally prefer reactive classroom management strategies (Uysal et al., 2010) and try to control problem behaviors by using negative verbal responses. Most of the teachers do not consider proactive strategies such as teaching positive behaviors as an alternative to problem behaviors, which is an important management strategy (Akgün et al., 2011). Teachers believe that problem behaviors displayed in schools are generally either due to the characteristics of the child, such as their developmental level, or the parents (Akar et al., 2010). Uysal et al. (2010) investigated teacher responses to the problem behaviors of young children in preschool classrooms, through interviews and observations, and found that, according to teachers, they employ various strategies such as talking to child, using physical approximation, establishing eye contact, reestablishing the rules, asking questions, ignoring, changing the child's seat, and talking to parents. However, classroom observations revealed that the preschool teachers did not employ the strategies as often as they said they did; in other words, there was a huge gap between their statements and classroom management strategies they practiced.

In two studies, the classroom management strategies of Turkish preschool teachers were evaluated via the Teacher Strategies Questionnaire (TSQ-T), a self-report instrument, developed by Webster-Stratton, Reid, and Hammond (2001). Doğan and Uzmen (2003) examined the frequency and the perceived usefulness of classroom management strategies of the preschool teachers and found that the teachers use the strategies that they think as useful. In addition, the frequency of the strategies used by the teachers was found to be related to their confidence about dealing with the current and future problem behaviors, their approaches to the parents and their perception regarding the usefulness of the strategies. A second study carried out by Gezgın (2009) compared the classroom managements of in-service and pre-service preschool teachers by employing the TSQ-T. According to the results, the pre-service and in-service teachers use five strategies at most (*giving positive and clear directions, praising good behavior, commenting on good behavior, using a clear classroom discipline plan, and preparing children for transitions*). On the other hand, *sending a child home for misbehavior, using physical restraint, warning or threatening to send child out of the classroom and singling out a child or a group of children for misbehavior* were the strategies least used by the preschool teachers and teacher candidates.

To date, we have not been able to access the studies examining the classroom management of the inclusive preschool teachers and whether placing children with disabilities in preschool classrooms changed the management strategies of the teachers. Nonetheless, the previous studies emphasized that the preschool teachers who employ effective management strategies might prevent negative developmental outcomes, support children for promoting social behaviors, improve general environment of the classroom (McGilloway et al., 2010), and they might reduce the need for special education services (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Keeping in mind the results of all the previous studies, it seems that evaluating the classroom management of the inclusive preschool teachers appears to be an important issue not only for the future development of teacher education programs but also improving the quality and success of inclusive preschool practices. In

this context, the aim of our study is to thoroughly examine the psychometric properties of the Turkish Form of the TSQ (TSQ-T), by using the data gathered from a large sample and assessing the classroom management of the Turkish inclusive preschool teachers. The research questions addressed in the current quantitative-descriptive study are as follows:

a) Which classroom management strategies are being used by the preschool teachers?

b) To what extent do the teacher variables (age, education, experience, having children with disabilities in the classroom, and having taken a course/courses on inclusion) affect the TSQ-T scores of the preschool teachers?

c) Which classroom management strategies have been most and least used by the teachers who have or do not have children with disabilities in their classrooms?

## Method

### Study group

The participants of this study are 147 preschool teachers who work in private and public preschools in several school districts of the two cities, Ankara and Sivas, in Turkey. Demographic characteristics of the participants are given in Table 1. According to the Table 1, all teachers are women and 45 teachers have a bachelor's degree in child development or preschool teaching, whereas the majority (69.4%) either graduated from Child Development Department of a Vocational High School for Girls (VHS) that provide education and training in different job areas for young girls or a four-year Distant Education Program on preschool teaching. Although VHS graduates are defined as teacher assistants in the Supporting Vocational Training Project of Ministry of Education (MoNE, 2007), most of them who have experience in the field are employed as classroom teachers due to a shortage of the preschool teachers in Turkey.

**Table 1**  
*Demographic characteristics of the participant teachers*

		<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Age	Less than 25 years	39	26.5
	26-35 years	78	53.1
	36-52 years	28	19.0
	Missing data	2	1.4
Experience	Less than 5 years	70	47.6
	6-10 years	48	32.7
	More than 11 years	28	19.0
	Missing data	1	0.7
Education	Others (VHS, DE)*	102	69.4
	Faculty of Education	45	30.6
Children with disabilities in class	Yes	59	40.2
	No	85	57.8
	Missing data	3	2
Experience with children with disabilities	Yes	66	44.9
	No	78	53.1
	Missing data	3	2
Pre-service course on inclusion	Yes	16	10
	No	131	90
Pre-service course on special education	Yes	120	81.6
	No	27	18.4

\*DE: Distance education VHS: Vocational High School for Girls

### Measures

The data for this study was collected through the Demographic Information Form that includes the questions related to the participants' characteristics, and the Turkish Form of the Teacher Strategies Questionnaire.

### *The Teacher Strategies Questionnaire (TSQ):*

The TSQ is an instrument developed (Webster-Stratton et al., 2001) to evaluate preschool teachers' self-reported frequency of strategy use and perceptions about the usefulness of strategies in terms of classroom management (Carlson, Tiret, Bender, & Benson, 2011). It consists of three sections; namely section A, B, and C. In section A, *confidence in managing current and future problems in the classrooms*, there are two items that are rated by using a six-point rating system ranging from *not confident at all* (1) to *very confident* (6). Section B includes 34 items related to the *positive*

*and negative management strategies* and the frequency and usefulness of each strategy is rated by the teachers with a five-point rating system from *never* (1) to *very frequently* (5). Whereas the 18 items related to *positive strategies* consists of three subscales, which are praise and incentives, proactive strategies and limit-setting strategies, *inappropriate/negative strategies* include nine items. Item 27-34 are related to the strategies that are used for improving *school-home interactions*, in other words, *working with parents*. The third section of the TSQ (Section C) concerns the eight items regarding *teachers' positive approach to parents*. The items in this section are rated solely for their frequency; using a six-point rating system with *never* (1) and *always* (6). The seven items of *working with parents* and eight items of *positive approach to parents* are combined to form *Teacher-Parent Strategies* while positive and negative strategies constitute *Teacher-Student Strategies*. By using the data collected by the TSQ,

total positive, total praise, total proactive and total limit-setting strategies scores with total negative scores are calculated and consequently, five scores for frequency of strategy use and four scores for perception-of-strategy-usefulness are obtained from the instrument.

The analysis carried out by Webster-Stratton and colleagues (2001) indicated that the Cronbach Alpha values of the TSQ varied between .70 and .84. In another study (Carlson et al., 2011), the alpha values were computed once more, by using data obtained from 24 teachers and good internal consistency was found for the subscales of the TSQ except for negative strategies ( $r = .50$ ). The results of all reliability studies are shown in Table 2.

*Turkish Form of the TSQ (TSQ-T):* Doğan and Uzmen (2003) translated the TSQ into Turkish for the first time and used it for evaluating the classroom management strategies of 61 preschool teachers. However, they did not provide information about the psychometric characteristics of the Turkish form of the TSQ in their study. Section B of the TSQ was used in another study by Gezgin (2009) in order to compare the classroom management of pre-service and in-service preschool teachers and Cronbach Alpha values for frequency and usefulness scores of Section B were found to be .87 and .89 respectively. In the current study, first, we excluded “using green-red warning system” strategy from the instrument due to the fact that this strategy was not used in Turkish preschools.

The translation studies were then repeated and a back-translation procedure was used. Finally, necessary changes were made on the TSQ-T by comparing the back-translation with the original instrument. To investigate the understandability of the instrument, Turkish Form was administered to a small group of preschool teachers and it was determined that several items, such as physical restraints, anger management, problem-solving, open discipline, transitions were not easily understood by the teachers. Therefore, the researchers decided to add some explanation to these problematic items. For example, the item of *physical restraints* was explained as *to prevent the behavior by holding child’s hands and arms*, and similarly, *using group incentives* was defined as *for example, to extend the duration of the play that children like or, to let the children engage in the activities they like*. Thus, the Turkish Form of the TSQ was ready to use for collecting data from the preschool teachers.

*Reliability study:* The reliability study carried out for the original instrument was replicated for the Turkish Form and Cronbach Alpha internal consistency values were calculated for the subscales of the TSQ-T. Internal consistency values of the TSQ-T subscales were found to be between .68-.91. Table 2 shows the results of the previous Cronbach Alpha values of the frequency and usefulness scores of the original instrument and the Turkish forms.

**Table 2**

*Cronbach Alpha Values of the TSQ Obtained from Different Studies*

The TSQ subscales	Webster-Stratton et al., 2001*		Carlson et al., 2011		Gezgin, 2009*		The TSQ-T	
	F**	U**	F	U	F	U	F	U
Positive Strategies	.79	.70	.80	.87	-	-	.87	.91
Praise & Incentives	.75	.76	.79	.84	-	-	.68	.69
Proactive strategies	.63	.54	.71	.78	-	-	.81	.84
Setting limits	.73	.52	.17	.43	-	-	.75	.73
Negative Strategies	.77	.84	.70	.50	-	-	.78	.86
Working with parents			.71	.88	-	-	.80	.87
Positive Approach to Family			.82		-	-	.82	
The TSQ Section B					.87	.89		

\*The data in the empty cells have not been reached.

\*\*F: Frequency, U: Usefulness

*Item analysis:* In addition to the calculation of the alpha values for the TSQ-T item analysis was conducted. To investigate whether each item from teacher-child interaction strategies and teacher-parent strategies discriminate against the 27% of the participants who have the maximum and minimum scores from the TSQ-T, item analysis for the two groups of strategies were carried out separately. First, we scored the negative strategies (9 items) in a reverse manner, then *positive and negative strategies* scores were computed and a single score for *the teacher-child interaction strategies* was obtained. Similarly, a score for teacher-parent interaction strategies was calculated by computing the item scores of the *working with parents* (7 items) and *positive approach to parents* (8 items). Then, total scores of *the teacher-child interaction strategies* and *teacher-parent strategies* of the participants were listed from the top to the bottom score, and upper and lower 27% groups of participants were determined for each group of strategy. The mean scores obtained from each item of the upper and lower 27% groups were then compared by using independent sample t-test for teacher-parent interaction strategies and teacher-child interaction strategies separately.

According to the results of the t-tests, all items significantly discriminated against the 27% of the participants who had the upper and lower scores from the teacher-child ( $p < .05$ ) and teacher-parent interaction strategies ( $p < .01$ ), except for two items (Item 2: Describe bad behaviors, and Item 12: Call parents) from the teacher-child strategies.

*Item-total correlations.* To examine the item-total correlation for the TSQ-T, due to the fact that total score for the instrument could not be obtained, total scores of the positive strategies and negative strategies were calculated and item-total correlations for both frequency and the usefulness scores of the positive and negative strategies were examined separately. All item-total correlation values are shown in Table 3. Analysis indicated that there was a high correlation between each item and the total score of each positive and negative strategy. Based on the reliability studies, it is possible to say that the TSQ-T is a reliable instrument for evaluating the classroom management strategies of the preschool teachers.

**Table 3**  
*Item-Total Correlation Values for the Positive and Negative Strategies*

Positive strategies			Negative strategies					
Item no	F	U	Item no	F	U	Item no	F	U
Item1	.399*	.512*	Item18	.769*	.763*	Item2	.342*	.174**
Item3	.354*	.414*	Item19	.589*	.548*	Item6	.610*	.624*
Item4	.364*	.396*	Item20	.618*	.658*	Item7	.641*	.775*
Item5	.397*	.475*	Item21	.679*	.731*	Item8	.556*	.589*
Item13	.431*	.569*	Item22	.721*	.671*	Item9	.733*	.857*
Item14	.709*	.768*	Item23	.686*	.711*	Item10	.677*	.840*
Item15	.710*	.736*	Item24	.643*	.665*	Item11	.777*	.858*
Item16	.549*	.677*	Item25	.607*	.528*	Item12	.562*	.531*
Item17	.710*	.723*				Item26	.510*	.784*

\* $p < .01$ , \*\* $p < .05$   
F: Frequency, U: Usefulness

*Procedure*

Two Ph.D. students, second and third authors, from the Department of Special Education of Ankara University collected

data from the 10 public and private preschools. Having been taken the permission for the study from the Ministry of Education, the students visited the

preschools and explained the purpose of the research to the principals and classroom teachers.

Then, they handed out the TSQ-T to the teachers and waited in the schools until they completed the forms. By this way, teachers had the chance to ask any questions about rating their own classroom management strategies. Finally, all the TSQ-T forms were retrieved and controlled as to whether there were any items left blank. Then all data was loaded into the SPSS program.

**Results**

*The strategies used by the preschool teachers*

The mean scores of the TSQ-T obtained from the preschool teachers were calculated and the ranges of the scores of the participants were presented in Table 4. The table shows that the scores related to teachers' current and future confidence about dealing with problem behaviors are high. In addition, the scores regarding frequency and usefulness of positive strategies of the teachers are similar.

In other words, the participants state that they use the positive management strategies that they believe to be useful. Moreover, although they use the negative strategies less than the positive strategies, they believe that they are useful as much as positive strategies.

*The variables affecting the TSQ-T scores*

At this stage, the effects of the teacher variables on the TSQ-T scores, such as age and teaching experience, whether the participants have children with disabilities in their classrooms and having taken a course related to special education, were investigated.

*Age.* The participant teachers were divided into three groups based on their age and the first group included the teachers who were below 26 years of age, whereas the ranges of the second and third groups' ages were 27-35 and 36-52, respectively. Thus, the number of teachers in each group was maintained to be equal to each other. Then, the TSQ-T scores of the three groups were compared using one-way analysis of variance. The results of the analysis indicated that age was not an effective variable on the TSQ-T scores of the participants.

**Table 4**

*The Mean Scores and the Standard Deviations of the TSQ-T Subscales of the Participants*

	TSQ-T		Frequency		Usefulness	
	Minimum Scores	Maximum scores	M*	SD**	M	SD
<b>Positive strategies total score</b>	18	90	63.40	9.96	64.52	11.79
Praise & incentives	6	30	20.34	2.74	24.34	3.89
Proactive strategies	6	30	22.67	4.34	23.25	5.24
Setting limits	5	25	16.70	3.66	16.89	4.01
<b>Negative strategies total score</b>	11	45	19.45	6.15	28.97	8.33
Working with parents	7	35	24.06	5.19	26.19	6.39
Positive approach to parents	8	48	31.25	6.03	-	-
<b>Confidence</b>	2	14	11.00	1.43	-	-

\*M: Mean      \*\*SD: Standard deviation

*Teaching experience.* To investigate whether the experience of the teachers

was an effective variable on their classroom management, the participants were divided into three groups according to the

number of years they worked as teachers. The experience ranges of the groups were determined as less than 5 years, 6-10 years, and more than 11 years, respectively. One-way ANOVA was used in order to compare the TSQ-T scores of the teachers and it was found that both their frequency and usefulness scores did not change according to their experience level.

*The child with disabilities in the classroom.* To examine if the children with disabilities in the preschool classrooms affected the teachers' classroom management strategies, the researchers compared the TSQ-T scores of the inclusive preschool teachers and those who did not have children with disabilities in their classrooms. According to the demographic variables, 40.1% of the study group had children with various disabilities in their classroom and they tried to support their development. The results of t-test indicated that the positive strategies scores of two groups of teachers, in both frequency and usefulness aspects, and negative strategies scores in frequency were similar. However, usefulness scores of the negative strategies were significantly different,  $t(143)=6.13$ ,  $p=.000$  (Cohen d effect size= .92). In other words, the inclusive teachers viewed the negative strategies ( $M= 29.57$ ,  $SD= 9.70$ ) to be less useful than the other group ( $M= 21.83$ ,  $SD= 5.34$ ).

*Course regarding special education and inclusion.* Of all the participants 81% percent had attended to a special education in-service course and 10% of them had a course focusing on inclusion in pre-service education. To create groups with equal numbers of teachers, due to the fact that only 27 teachers had no previous knowledge about special education, 27 teachers who had attended a course on special education were randomly selected from the group. Similarly, since only 16 teachers had previously taken a course on inclusion, 16 teachers who had not attended any course on inclusive practices were randomly selected and both for the special education and inclusion courses taken, the number of the teachers in the groups were made equal. Then, the TSQ-T scores of the groups were compared. Based on the non-normal distribution of the data, Mann-Whitney U Test was used in order to compare the teachers'

scores. According to the results of the analysis, the scores of the teachers who had attended a course on special education were found to be significantly different than the other teachers only in *working with family* subscale scores ( $z=-2.176$ ,  $p=.03$ ). This meant that, the teachers who had previous knowledge of special education used more parent-related strategies than teacher who did not have any knowledge. The same analysis was repeated for the teachers who took and did not take a course on inclusion; the scores of *the positive approach to parents* of the two groups were found to be significantly different ( $z=-2.28$ ,  $p=.02$ ). That is, the teachers who had previous knowledge on inclusion applied more positive approaches to the parents compared to the other group.

#### *Management strategies most and least used by the preschool teachers*

The participants of the study were divided into two groups based on whether they had children with disabilities in their classroom or not. Then the most and the least used five classroom management strategies by two groups were determined through the calculation of the mean scores obtained from each positive (17 items) and negative (9 items) management strategy. The analysis indicated that five strategies which are the most and least used by two groups of teachers were similar. *Praising positive behavior, using group incentives, giving clear positive directions, rewarding targeted positive behavior with incentives (e.g., stickers)* were the strategies mostly used (the range of the mean scores: 4.54-4.02) by both group of teachers. In addition, *preparing children for transitions with predictable routine* was the fifth strategy mostly used by the inclusive classroom teachers. *Sending the child home for aggressive or destructive misbehavior, in-house suspension (sending to principal's office for misbehavior), warning or threatening to send child out of classroom if s/he does not behave, using physical restraints and sending home notes to report problem behavior to parent* were the rarely used strategies by both groups of teachers.

With regard to the usefulness of the strategies, it was determined that the strategies found to be the most and least useful strategy by the inclusive teachers and the others differed. Inclusive classroom teachers reported that *preparing children for*

*transitions with predictable routine, giving clear positive directions, praising positive behavior and using group incentives* strategies were the most useful strategies (the range of the mean scores of the most useful strategies: 4.47-4.30), whereas the other group, in addition to four positive strategies, stated that *sending the child home for aggressive or destructive misbehavior* is the most useful strategy (the mean of the item score: 4.18). Furthermore, two strategies (*praising positive behavior and describing and commenting on positive behaviors*) were frequently used and found to be the most useful strategies for two groups of teachers. On the other hand, the least useful strategies, except for *singling out a child or a group of children for misbehavior* were found to be different for two groups of teachers. The inclusive classroom teachers stated four negative strategies (*Singling out a child or a group of children for misbehavior, sending home notes or frowny faces to report problem behavior to the parent, warning or threatening to send child out of classroom if s/he doesn't behave, and in-house suspensions/sending to the principal's office for misbehavior*) to be the least useful (the range of the mean scores of items: 2.64-2.59), while the other group those who had no children with disabilities in their classroom stated three positive strategies, which are *ignoring misbehavior that is non-disruptive to class, using anger management strategy for oneself, and using verbal redirection for child who is disengaged* to be the least useful (the range of the mean scores of three items: 2.28-3.23).

## Discussion

In this study, classroom management strategies of the preschool teachers were evaluated by using the TSQ-T. Based on the results obtained from the TSQ-T, the least and the most used management strategies by the teachers who had and did not have children with special needs in their classrooms were determined.

Previous studies have only examined Cronbach's Alpha values of TSQ-T in terms of psychometric properties (Carlson et al., 2011; Gezgin, 2009; Webster-Stratton et al., 2001). In the current study, the psychometric properties of the instrument were thoroughly investigated by comparing

the scores of the participants who had maximum and minimum scores and by calculating the relationship between the total scores and item scores for the positive and negative strategies. Although two items (*Describing or commenting on bad behavior and calling parents to report bad behavior*) did not significantly discriminate the upper and lower 27% groups, the researchers decided to keep them in the instrument, as both strategies have frequently been used by the preschool teachers for the classroom management (Akar et al., 2010). In addition, Cronbach Alpha values of the TSQ-T was found to be consistent with the findings of the reliability values of the original instrument (Webster-Stratton et al., 2001; Carlson et al., 2011). Given the findings of the reliability studies, the TSQ-T is a reliable and valid instrument that can be used to evaluate the classroom management strategies of the Turkish preschool teachers.

This study also examined the TSQ-T scores and the variables that affect the classroom management strategies of the teachers. Table 4 indicates that the TSQ-T scores of 117 teachers were high and the mean scores of Section A related to how confident of the teachers *in managing current and future behavior problems*, were very close to being the highest scores which can be obtained from this section. In her study, Gezgin (2009) who collected data from 94 preschool teachers found that the mean confidence score of the preschool teachers was approximately 6.00. Likewise, in another study (Shernoff & Kratochwill, 2007) evaluated the classroom management of the teachers prior to a teacher training program by using the TSQ and found that the mean score of the questions related to their confidence was 4.00. However, in this study, the mean of the confidence scores of the participants are found to be 11.00. Given the highest score to be obtained from Section A is 14, it could be argued that the participants in this study have high self-confidence when it comes to coping with the current and future problem behaviors of the children.

In two studies, the effects of the Incredible Years Teacher Training Program on classroom management strategies of American and Irish teachers were evaluated by the administration of the TSQ (Carlson et al., 2011; McGilloway et al., 2010). When the findings of two studies

were compared to those of the current study, it appeared that the subscale scores gained from the positive strategies of the Turkish teachers were close to the scores of the American and the Irish preschool teachers. In other words, Turkish teachers use the positive classroom management strategies as much as their colleagues in the United States and Ireland. However, given that the highest usefulness score which can be acquired from the negative strategies is 45, the mean usefulness negative score of the participants of the current study is 28.97. The results suggested that Turkish teachers might have thought that some of the negative strategies are also useful for effective classroom management in preschools. This finding appears to be consistent with those of the previous studies investigating the classroom management strategies of preschool teachers in Turkey. For example, in their study, Akgün and her colleagues (2011), observed management behaviors of the preschool teachers and found that, in addition to the positive strategies such as *presenting choices and praise, listening, encouraging the children*, the teachers use some negative behaviors such as *accusing, intimidating, comparing the child with the other children and taking the child out of the activities*. In a similar study (Uysal et al., 2010), reactive strategies such as *reprimanding, threatening, verbal and non-verbal warning, confronting the child in front of class* were identified as the negative behaviors used by preschool teachers. They interpreted these findings as being due to the fact that the preschool teachers were probably not aware of the strategies they used and they did not use the positive strategies as much as they reported. We think that similar comments could be made for the findings of this study.

The findings of the existent literature examining the variables that influence the classroom management of preschool teachers appear to be inconsistent. Although some studies have suggested that the classroom management of the elementary teachers are affected by their age and experience (Sucuoğlu, Demirtaşlı, & Güner, 2009; Güner, 2010), one study showed that the classroom management of the preschool teachers do not change according to their age or experience in the field (Denizel-Güven & Cevher, 2005). Likewise, in the current study, neither age

nor experience leads to the changes in management strategies used by the participants. Therefore, future studies could investigate the management of the teachers who work in different grades and types of classrooms and determine demographic variables affecting teacher management strategies and skills.

It is considered to be very important that preschool teachers should take courses related to the special education and inclusion before they begin to work with children having different ability levels. Pre-service courses are accepted as being important tools for preparing teacher candidates for working with children showing diverse abilities (Buell et al., 1999; Leyser & Toppendorf, 2001). These courses, in which the classroom and behavior management strategies are embedded in the course content, usually provide general information necessary for special education and inclusion. Therefore, in the current study, the researchers expected that special education and/or inclusion courses would have led to the differences in the classroom management strategies of the preschool teachers. However, the analysis revealed that, apart from the subscales related to working with parents, these pre-service courses did not lead to differences in management strategies. In addition, the teachers who had and did not have children with disabilities in their classes generally used same management strategies. We suggest that these courses appear to be inadequate for training teachers for various strategies and the use of those strategies in the inclusive classrooms. This is due to the fact that the courses are mostly based on theory and do not offer real experience in inclusive preschool settings.

In preschool classrooms including children with disabilities, the teachers are expected to know behavioral interventions and to use effective strategies based on the needs and behaviors of all children. Bruns and Mogharreban (2009) emphasized that inclusive classroom teachers should have information and experience on how to create learning environments for all children and how to employ behavioral techniques and effective management strategies. In addition, the classroom teachers with effective management skills are those who have a repertoire of specific techniques for high-needs students (Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003) and the

most effective classroom managers do not treat all children the same way but use different strategies for different types of students (Brophy & McCaslin, 1992). Taking this information into consideration, we determined the five most frequently used and useful strategies, as seen by the inclusive classroom teachers as well as those who do not work with children with special needs. The findings suggest that the most and least used strategies employed by two groups of teachers appear to be the same. For both groups of teachers, four positive strategies were the most used ones and five negative strategies were those least used. Similarly, all teachers frequently use the strategies of *praising positive behaviors*, and *describing and commenting about positive behaviors* and perceive them as useful. In a study of Gezgin (2009), it was found that these strategies are both most frequently used and perceived as the most useful strategies by the preschool teachers. In addition, teachers use management strategies that they perceive as the most useful. However, some interesting findings were revealed in the current study. For example, *sending child home for misbehavior* is the least used negative strategy by the inclusive teachers, while the teachers who do not have children with disabilities in their classrooms score this strategy as one of the most useful strategies. Although the participants listed *ignoring misbehavior that is non-disruptive to class*, *using anger management strategy*, *using verbal redirection for the child who is disengaged* strategies as the least useful three strategies; previous literature highlighted them as effective and proactive ones (Webster-Stratton, 2006). These findings suggest that preschool teachers need guidance and support to use proactive strategies in their classrooms.

We think that the findings of this study should be interpreted by taking into consideration the four-year preschool teacher education programs in Turkey.

a. Pre-service preschool teacher programs include a compulsory course entitled "*Classroom Management and Discipline in Early Childhood Education*" or "*Classroom Management in Preschools*." This course mainly focuses on the definition, principles and models of classroom management. The textbooks followed in the course generally do not emphasize the

proactive and positive strategies such as limit-setting and praise. For example, in the textbook entitled *Classroom Management in Preschools* (Aktaş-Arnas & Sadık, 2008), proactive approach to classroom management and positive strategies are only mentioned very briefly in the chapter related to managing inappropriate behaviors. However, theoretical approaches underlie these strategies, information related to implementing proactive strategies in inclusive classrooms and examples demonstrating real life cases are not presented in any chapter of the book. On the other hand, children with disabilities are generally addressed in a separate chapter in textbooks and teacher candidates are informed either on the types of disabilities and characteristics of the children with various disabilities, with the notion that these children should be taught by special educators (Aktaş-Arnas & Sadık, 2008) or on the philosophy and the principles of inclusion as a service model without putting emphasis on their implementation (Uyanık-Balat & Bilgin, 2010). It is believed that this situation could account for preschool teachers having somewhat limited knowledge regarding how to use positive strategies and how to differentiate the strategies according to children's developmental level.

b. The previous literature has highlighted that teacher behaviors are related to the children behaviors and good classroom management would increase the academic success and decrease/prevent the problem behaviors of children with and without disabilities (Marzano & Marzano, 2003; Soodak & McCharty, 2006). Nevertheless, several studies examining the preschool teachers' views about problem behaviors displayed in classrooms indicate that the parents are those generally blamed for the behaviors of the typically developing children (Akar et al., 2010) and problem behaviors of the children with disabilities are attributed to either ineffective and neglecting parenting style or the children's disabilities (Akalin, et al., 2014). This point of view could suggest that teachers believe that children's behavior is linked neither to the learning environment nor their behaviors or strategies that they use in their classrooms. Considering these findings, we think that the classroom management courses should not only focus on the theories, approaches, and principles

regarding how to manage classroom but also on the relationships along with the proactive management strategies, between teachers' and children's behaviors.

Finally, when reading the findings of this study, it should be taken into account that the TSQ-T is a self-report instrument that evaluates the management strategies of teachers according to their views. As stated in the study by Carlson et al. (2011), the participant teachers could have been affected by social desirability and they might have shown themselves as more successful than they were. Some studies have reported that the strategies teachers actually use and the strategies they think they use are different (Çifci, Yıkımsı, & Akbaba-Altun, 2001; Kounin, 1977). Therefore, evaluating the classroom management of preschool teachers through observation, as well as by using self-report instruments could provide complete and accurate information about the management strategies practiced in the inclusive preschool classrooms.

## Conclusion

The results of this study mainly reflect the general classroom management profile of the preschool teachers. It is very well known that preschool teachers are responsible for supporting the development of all children as well as to prevent and control challenging behaviors that can cause problems in future years. To ensure that the teachers fulfill these roles and responsibilities, one of the meaningful ways is to empower them to employ effective and proactive classroom management strategies, and to make them understand the importance of classroom management not only on decreasing problem behaviors but also on creating an effective learning environment for all children. We believe that if the content of pre-service and in-service courses for classroom management is revised and more opportunities are given to teachers and teacher candidates to transfer their knowledge into classrooms, and moreover, if they are provided with the appropriate feedback about their practices, the teachers might appreciate the power of the positive approaches on the behaviors of children. They might also recognize the fact that using a variety of strategies in accordance with the developmental

level of children works better than using same strategies for all children.

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