

## Teacher Leadership and Classroom Management: A Research on Preschool Teachers

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### Abstract

In this research, it was aimed to determine the relationship between preschool teachers' leadership levels and classroom management skill levels and to examine these two variables according to the demographic characteristics of the teachers. This study was conducted with a survey model, one of the quantitative research methods. The study group of the research consisted of 190 preschool teachers working in preschool education institutions located in Ataşehir, Eyüp, Kağıthane and Üsküdar districts of Istanbul, which were selected by the convenience sampling method in the 2016-2017 academic year. "Teacher Leadership Scale" and "Classroom Management Skills Scale for Preschool Teachers" were used as data collection tools. As a result of the study, it was identified that there was a significant relationship between the leadership levels of preschool teachers and their levels of classroom management skill. The level of leadership of preschool teachers showed a significant difference according to the variables of age, choosing the profession willingly and the presence of assistant personnel in the classroom. Similarly, the classroom management skills of preschool teachers revealed a significant difference with regard to the variables of age and the presence of assistant personnel in the classroom.

**Keywords:** Preschool Teacher, Leadership, Classroom Management

**DOI:** 10.29329/ijpe.2023.534.7

**Submitted:** 26/12/2022

**Accepted:** 27/02/2023

**Published:** 01/04/2023

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## INTRODUCTION

The concept of leadership is frequently encountered in recent years, especially in the field of education. The common aim of the studies emphasizing teacher leadership is to increase the quality of education and training activities. Another important concept of the education process is classroom management. Addressing both concepts in preschool education is very important for children and teachers.

When the literature is examined, many definitions of leadership are encountered. Bennis (1989) likened leadership to beauty and stated that it is difficult to define, but it will be recognized when seen. According to Marin M. Chermers (1997), leadership is the social interaction process that affects others while structuring the communication and activities within the social environment and the group (Turan, 2006).

In Turkish context, Koçel (2010) defines the leadership as the process of influencing and directing the activities of others in order to achieve certain personal or group objectives under certain circumstances. However, from a broader perspective, leadership can be defined as the whole knowledge and skills required to bring individuals together in a common ground to achieve specific goals (Eren, 1991).

The research on leadership demonstrate that the leader is not a product of a status or a position but social interaction. While the leader maintains group norms and develops positive emotions for group activities and group members, he/she may have different styles, such as democratic or authoritarian (Erdoğan, 2010). Leadership in all these different styles is manifested at every stage of life (Gökçek, 2007).

Studies conducted on leadership in schools and in various educational institutions generally refer to leadership as a movement and action by certain individuals. However, the leadership in schools is the sum of the transactions carried out in order to ensure the survival, development and effectiveness of the institution (Karip, 1998). Therefore, one of the strategies that teachers should implement for leadership development is to maintain their leadership role both inside and outside the classroom. The second strategy is to develop leadership qualities by sharing various experiences with colleagues. The third strategy is to see the positive aspects that exist in their colleagues and transfer them to themselves. The final strategy is that teachers should participate in management-oriented programs to improve their leadership skills (Can, 2014). The school, where teachers develop and implement these strategies, is also the centre of student-teacher interaction.

For an effective teaching-learning process, it is necessary to establish a special relationship between teacher and the students through a bond or bridge (Gordon, 1993). The management of the class, where this bond will be formed, is extremely important. According to Manning and Bucher (2013), class management covers the strategies to ensure the safety of the classroom, the methods and techniques that allow students to regulate their behaviours and to ensure self-discipline, and all methods and techniques that ensure the execution of the entire process in class in an organized way.

In this context, the first objective of class management is to create a regular and safe environment in order to increase the motivation of the students in the classroom. The second objective is to give responsibility to students by this way to develop this awareness and to teach students to organize their own behaviour. These objectives can only be possible through effective classroom management and creating an appropriate educational environment in classrooms where these targeted behaviours are observed (Korkut & Babaoğlu, 2010).

According to Martin and Baldwin (1997), class management is a three-dimensional structure that encompasses individuals, teaching activities and class discipline. In the first dimension which refers to individuals, the expectations of teachers from students, their attitudes and behaviours towards them and the level of students' achievement are included (as cited in Denizel et al., 2005). On the

other hand, the planning activities, organizing the educational environment and time management are included within the scope of the teaching activities (as cited in Denizel et al., 2005). Discipline which is the last dimension includes the methods used by teachers for students learning the classroom rules and the implementation of them in the class (as cited in Denizel et al., 2005). After the above-mentioned understanding of the importance of classroom management, 'classroom management' has been involved in the program as a compulsory course since the end of the 1990s in education faculties in Turkey (Şişman & Turan, 2004). In 1997, 'classroom management' has been involved in the program as a compulsory course in 16 undergraduate teaching program in the faculties restructured by the Council of Higher Education/YÖK.. In this way, the field of classroom management has attracted attention and new studies have emerged (Turan, 2006).

With this interest, preschool period began to be included in the gradually increasing number of the studies. One of the recent studies in this area was conducted by Toran and Gençgel (2016). In this study it is determined that teachers' classroom management skills did not differ in terms of variables such as gender, in-service training, age group and number of children in the classroom. On the other hand, it differed in terms of educational status, undergraduate degree, and professional experience in the context of the study on assessment of classroom management skills of preschool teachers.

Studies show that effective classroom management strategies increase children's eagerness to learn, their academic skills, and school readiness while ineffective classroom management strategies reduce the motivation of children and have negative effects such as increasing disruptive behaviour problems (Webster-Stratton, Reinke, Herman, & Newcomer, 2011). On the other hand, it is not possible to talk about a single management strategy that will work for each student and class. The teacher's responsibility is to decide which strategy should be applied in which cases and which is better, and to apply different strategies when necessary (Oliver, & Reschly, 2007). It is clear that teachers who are expected to adopt different strategies in different groups should be a good leader.

The characteristics of the teacher who is the director of the classroom management and the creator of the classroom climate have a significant effect on the quality of the classroom management (Yüksel, 2013). Teacher leadership, which is one of these characteristics, is also considered as one of the important factors for quality and effectiveness in modern schools (Ho and Tilky, 2012; Sims et al, 2015). Teacher leadership is the ability to organize activities in the classroom in accordance with the students' level of development, to ensure the active participation of students and to direct them to learn (Can, 2014).

Teachers who want to make the teaching-learning process more effective must have the ability to manage the students and the materials in their classrooms for teaching purposes (Demirtaş, 2009). This ability is that the teacher takes the lead in classroom management. The teachers with this ability are good in guidance, they are helpful, gentle, and understanding. Additionally, they are aware of the responsibilities and freedom of students and they allow students to go in their own path (Balci, 2013). Accordingly, the teacher who is the leader in his class takes a crucial part in classroom management. In this respect, in order for the classroom management to be fully realized, teachers need to develop their managerial skills as well as their educational skills (Demirtaş, 2009).

Since effective teacher leaders believe that it is not right to take all the information and decisions themselves, they increase the effectiveness of their students and leave them in the role of a leader in teaching learning strategies. These teachers are expected to be a leader teacher who directs their own development and the development of their colleagues in this direction, while effectively performing classroom management for student learning (Akgün, 2001).

The task of the teacher who is the leader in his class is to produce strategies that provide positive development and provide effective teacher-student communication (Aydın, 2014).

Although there are some studies conducted in this field it can be said that these studies are inadequate. In a study conducted by Şara, Karadedeli and Hasanoğlu (2016), it was introduced as a

proof of inadequacy of these studies. In this study, it was aimed to examine the articles about class management scanned in ULAKBIM database between 2010 and 2015. One of this study's findings revealed that among the 59 articles published in 5 years, the participants of only 3 of these studies were preschool teachers.

It is known that teachers' leadership skills are necessary for classroom management (Atman, 2010; Cubukcu & Girmen, 2008; Hersey, Angelini, & Carakushansky, 1982). The literature indicates that the studies focusing on the relationship between leadership and classroom management skills of preschool teachers are scarce, especially. There is a study carried out only with secondary school teachers in this field (Kızılkaya, 2017). Determining the leadership and classroom management skills of preschool teachers is considered important in terms of improving the quality of the education and teaching process. In this respect, the current study aims to contribute this issue. For this purpose, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. Are the levels of preschool teachers' leadership and classroom management skills significantly differentiated according to their demographic characteristics (age, education level, professional seniority, voluntary selection of the profession and presence of assistant personnel in the classroom)?

2. Is there a significant relationship between the leadership levels of preschool teachers and their levels of classroom management skills?

## METHOD

### Research Design

In this study, the relational survey model of quantitative research methods was used to examine the relationship between the leadership and classroom management skill levels of preschool teachers. Although this model does not reveal the exact cause-effect relationship, it is possible to predict the other if one of the variables is known (Karasar, 2000). Since the present study mainly examines preschool teacher' leadership levels and classroom management skills, correlational research design has been chosen to reveal the relationship network among the research variables.

### Study Group

The study group of the research was formed by the convenience sampling method from non-probability sampling methods. Within the scope of this research, the number of participants in the study group was determined according to the opinion of Stevens (1996), and it was deemed appropriate to select 5-20 people per item in the measurement tool (as cited in Erkuş, 2016). The study group of the research consists of 190 preschool teachers working in preschool education institutions in Ataşehir, Eyüp, Kağıthane and Üsküdar districts of Istanbul in the 2016-2017 academic year. The demographic characteristics of participants were shown in Table 1.

**Table 1** Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

Variables	<i>f</i>	%
Age		
21-25	48	25.3
26-30	107	56.3
31 and above	35	18.4
Education Status		
Associate degree	51	26.8
Undergraduate	122	64.2
Post graduate	17	8.9
Professional Seniority		
0-5	123	64.7
6 years and above	67	35.3

Voluntary Selection of Profession		
It is my own accord	174	91.6
It is not my own accord	16	8.4
Status of Availability of Assistant Staff in the Classroom		
Available	42	22.1
Not available	148	77.9

Table 1 shows 107 (56.3%) of the teachers participating in the research are between the ages of 26-30. 122 (64.2%) of them are undergraduate graduates. 123 (64.7%) of them have 0-5 years of professional seniority. 174 (91.6%) chose their profession voluntarily. 148 (77.9%) of them do not have assistant staff.

### Data Collection Tools

**Teacher leadership scale.** The leadership scale developed by Beycioğlu and Aslan (2010) aims to describe teachers' perceptions and expectations of teacher leadership. There is a total of 25 items with five-point Likert scale (5 = Always, 1 = Never). The range of scores that can be taken from the scale varies among 25 to 125. Higher scores obtained from the scale indicate that the perception and expectation of teacher leadership was high; low scores indicate that the perception and expectation of teacher leadership is low. The scale consists of three factors: "Institutional development", "Professional development", "Cooperation with colleagues". The Cronbach-alpha internal consistency coefficient of the scale is ".93" for expectations, ".95" for the perception" (Beycioğlu, & Aslan, 2010). The total internal consistency coefficient of the scale was calculated as .92.

**Classroom management skills scale for preschool teachers.** The scale was developed by Dinçer and Akgün (2015) in order to determine the classroom management skills of preschool teachers according to their own perceptions. The scale consisting of 40 items, with 5-point Likert scale (5= totally defining, 1= not defining). The highest score obtained from the scale is considered to be positive for the classroom management skills. The scale consists of two sub-dimensions: "Professional skills" and "Teacher child interaction" (Dinçer and Akgün, 2015). The scale consists of two sub-dimensions: "Professional skills" and "Teacher child interaction". The internal consistency coefficients of the scale were as follows (Cronbach  $\alpha$ ) .83, .88 and .70; test-retest reliability coefficients. 91, .87 and .83. (Dinçer and Akgün, 2015). The total internal consistency coefficient of the scale was calculated as .94.

### Data Collection and Analysis

In the process of data collection, firstly permission was obtained from Istanbul Provincial Directorate of National Education, then the preschool education institutions were visited and after obtaining the necessary permission from the school principals, the survey was conducted. The forms were given to the teachers in the study group and the forms were collected after completed.

During the analysis, the descriptive frequency and percentage distributions were measured for the calculation of independent variables, and then the group distributions were examined and parametric techniques were used for those with normal distribution, and nonparametric techniques were used for those who did not have normal distribution. When determining whether the groups show normal distribution, it is taken into consideration whether the group size is greater than 30 (Baykul and Güzeller, 2016; Büyüköztürk, Çokluk and Köklü, 2017). Parametric techniques were used for independent variables with group numbers greater than 30, and non-parametric techniques for those less than 30. Parametric analyzes were applied due to the homogeneity of the distribution of the data, as can be seen in Table 2 (Creswell, 2008).

**Table 2.** One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Leadership Scale	Classroom Management Skills Scale
N		190	190
Normal Parameters	Mean	106,71	153,99
	Std. Deviation	13,921	15,923
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	,151	,147
	Positive	,110	,123
	Negative	-,151	-,147
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		2,075	2,023
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		,000	,001

In this study, preschool teachers' leadership and classroom management skill levels were examined with regard to several variables. A Kruskal Wallis-H Test was used to illustrate the differentiation of preschool teachers' leadership and classroom management skill levels according to the professional seniority. An independent group t test was employed to show the differentiation of preschool teachers' leadership and classroom management skill levels according to the willingness to choose the profession. A Mann Whitney-U Test was utilized to reveal the differentiation according to the presence of assistants in the classroom. Finally, a Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Analysis was used to determine the relationship between Preschool teachers' leadership and classroom management skill levels. The data were analyzed in the appropriate statistical package program (SPSS 21) and the significance level was evaluated as .05.

## RESULTS

In this section, the findings of the leadership levels of preschool teachers and classroom management skills are examined.

**Table 3** Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Results Related to the Relationship between Teacher Leadership Scale and Classroom Management Skills Scale for Preschool Teachers

Score	N	r	p
Teacher Leadership Scale			
Classroom Management Skills Scale for Preschool Teachers	190	.596	.000***

\*\*\*p<.001

In Table 3, it is clear that there was a moderate significant relationship in a positive way ( $p < .001$ ,  $r = .60$ ) between the mean scores of the teacher leadership scale and the classroom management skills scale for preschool teachers. Accordingly, it can be said that if the leadership levels of preschool teachers increase, the classroom management skills also increase.

**Table 4** ANOVA Results Related to the Age Variable (N=190)

Variable	Group	n	$\bar{X}$	ss		Sum of Squares	df	Mean of Square	F	p
Teacher Leadership Scale	21-25	48	115.10	9.110	Between Group	5191.203	2	2595.601	15.439	.000***
	26-30	107	105.11	14.803	Within Group	31437.876	187	168.117		
	31 and above	35	100.09	11.257	Total	36629.079	189			
Classroom Management Skills Scale	21-25	48	167.96	22.282	Between Group	7964.145	2	3982.073		
	26-30	107	153.90	21.419	Within Group	78242.929	187	418.411	9.517	.000***
	31 and above	35	165.29	13.585	Total	86207.074	189			

\*\*\*p<.001

In Table 4, it is seen that the scores of the Teacher Leadership Scale and the Classroom Management Skills Scale for Preschool Teachers differ significantly according to the age variable as a result of ANOVA. According to this result, a significant difference was found between the mean scores of the groups. The groups were compared with each other in order to determine which groups have these differences. As it was determined that there was not a homogeneous distribution of variance, the Tamhane Test was performed and the test results are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5** The Results of the Tamhane Test (N=190)

Scores	(I) Age	(J) Age	Mean Difference (I-J)	<i>p</i>
Teacher Leadership Scale	21-25	26-30	9.992	.000***
		31 and above	15.018	.000***
	26-30	21-25	-9.992	.000***
		31 and above	5.026	.110
	31 and above	21-25	-15.018	.000***
		26-30	-5.026	.110
Classroom Management Skills Scale	21-25	26-30	14.061	.001**
		31 and above	2.673	.876
	26-30	21-25	-14.061	.001**
		31 and above	-11.389	.001**
	31 and above	21-25	-2.673	.876
		26-30	11.389	.001**

\*\*\* $p < .001$ , \*\* $p < .01$

Table 5 indicates that the 21-25 year-old teachers reported higher teacher leadership orientation compared to 26-30 year-olds. Similarly, the difference between 21-25 year-old and 31+ year-old teachers was statistically significant and was in favour of 21-25 year-olds. The difference between other groups was not statistically significant ( $p > .05$ ).

With regard to Classroom Management Skills Scale for Preschool Teachers, the statically significant difference between 21-25 year-old and 26-30 year-old teachers was in favor of 21-25 year-olds. However, the statically significant difference between 21-25 year-old and 31+ year-old teachers was in favor of 31+ year-olds. The difference between other groups was not statistically significant ( $p > .05$ ).

The findings regarding the differentiation status of the scores of preschool teachers from the scales according to the education status variable are shown in Table 6.

**Table 6** Kruskal Wallis-H Test Results (N=190)

Scores	Groups	<i>n</i>	Mean Rank	$\chi^2$	<i>sd</i>	<i>p</i>
Teacher Leadership Scale	Associate degree	51	89.02	4.587	2	.101
	Undergraduate	122	94.57			
	Post Graduate	17	121.62			
Classroom Management Skills Scale for Preschool Teachers	Associate degree	51	81.22	4.717	2	.095
	Undergraduate	122	100.91			
	Post graduate	17	99.50			

In Table 6, when the results of the Kruskal Wallis-H test which was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference between the teacher leadership scale scores of the preschool teachers and the classroom management skills scale scores for preschool teachers were analyzed, it was determined that the difference between the mean of the groups was not statistically significant ( $p > .05$ ).

**Table 7** Independent Group t Test Results Related to the Professional Seniority Variable (N=190)

Score	Professional Seniority	N	$\bar{X}$	Ss	t Test		
					t	Sd	p
Teacher Leadership Scale	0-5	123	107.61	14.543	1.20	188	.229
	6 years and over	67	105.06	12.641	8		
Classroom Management Skills Scale for Preschool Teachers	0-5	123	159.19	22.686	-.314	188	.754
	6 years and over	67	160.21	18.819			

When Table 7 is examined, no significant difference was found between the arithmetic averages of the scores received by the preschool teachers who participated in the study according to the professional seniority variable ( $p > .05$ ).

**Table 8** Mann Whitney-U Test Results Related to the Voluntary Selection of Profession (N=190)

Score	Voluntary Selection of Profession	N	Mean Rank	Sum of ranks	U	z	p
Teacher Leadership Scale	It is my own choice	174	98.07	17064.50	944.500	-2.128	.033*
	It is not my own choice	16	67.53	1080.50			
Classroom Management Skills Scale for Preschool Teachers	It is my own choice	174	97.72	17002.50	1006.500	-1.832	.067
	It is not my own choice	16	71.41	1142.50			

\* $p < .05$

In Table 8, Mann Whitney-U test results indicated that the difference between the mean rank of the groups was significant ( $z = -2.128$ ;  $p < .05$ ). This difference was realized in favor of teachers who chose their profession on a voluntary basis. On the other hand, no significant difference was found between the scores obtained from the Classroom Management Skills Scale for Preschool Teachers. In Table 9 independent t Test results related to the status of availability of assistant staff were given.

**Table 9** Independent t Test Results Related to the Status of Availability of Assistant Staff (N=190)

Score	Status of Availability of Assistant Staff	N	$\bar{X}$	Ss	t Test		
					t	Sd	p
Teacher Leadership Scale	Available	42	115.86	11.671	5.138	188	.000***
	Not Available	148	104.11	13.435			
Classroom Management Skills Scale for Preschool Teachers	Available	42	180.31	17.198	8.331	188	.000***
	Not Available	148	153.66	18.597			

\*\*\* $p < .001$

As a result of the independent group t test it is seen the significant differences in terms of the status of availability of assistant staff in the classroom variable. The mean scores indicated that the difference between the groups in favor of the teachers who have assistant staff in the classroom ( $p < .001$ )

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

It is known that it is very important for teachers to include their teacher leadership skills in the classroom management process for an effective learning to take place. As a result of this research, which was carried out based on this information, it was found that there was significant relationship at a moderate level and positive way between the leadership levels of preschool teachers and classroom management skills. It can be said that as the leadership levels of teachers increase, classroom management skill levels increase. Preschool teachers lead children in their classes and staff in their institutions. They direct the work done in their schools. While doing all these, they use both management skills and leadership skills (Tal, 2010). Classes are the most important application areas of teachers' plans and programs. Classes are also the most critical units where the teacher will realize the objectives related to the curriculum, reflect the teaching ideas and behaviors, and show the leadership characteristics.



As a leader in the classroom, the teacher will manage the whole process of classroom management (Can, 2014). Teacher leadership will support the quality of the institution along with classroom management skills (Mettiäinen, 2016). Establishing a positive classroom climate, organizing the education environment in a manner to provide desired behaviors, taking measures to address the problems that may arise or solving existing problems with appropriate methods are considered within the scope of teacher leadership (Çubukçu, & Girmen, 2008). In the literature, it has been concluded that there is a positive and significant relationship between the leadership styles and classroom management behaviors of physical education teachers (Çelik, 2014), and primary school teachers (Kadak, 2008). On the other hand, Memişoğlu and Çakır (2015) revealed in their research that there is a significant relationship between leadership styles and classroom teacher behaviors. Preschool teachers are expected to achieve more effective classroom management skills through the development of leadership levels. Thus, undesired behaviours in the classroom and classroom management disruptions that adversely affect the learning process will be prevented.

As a result of the research, the skill levels of the preschool teachers' leadership and classroom management indicated significant difference according to age. The level of leadership of teachers in the 21-25 age group was higher than in other teachers. Teachers new to the profession as they start their career with great excitement and enthusiasm aim to be a role model for their students (Korkmaz, Saban, & Akbasli, 2004). On the other hand, some studies done with preschool teachers (Akçadağ, 2008), physical education teachers (Çelik, 2014), preschool administrators and teachers (Dikmen Ada, 2012) and elementary school teachers (Kadak, 2008) have concluded that the leadership behaviors of teachers do not differ according to age variable. It is thought that the branch they study in may be effective in the high leadership skills of young teachers. As a matter of fact, as a result of the research conducted by İbiş and Çalışkan (2021), in which they examined the leadership skills of different branch teachers, it was revealed that preschool teachers had the highest score (İbiş and Çalışkan, 2021).

With regard to the level of classroom management skills of preschool teachers, the statically significant difference between 21-25 year-old and 26-30 year-old teachers was in favor of 21-25 year-olds and difference between 26-30 year-old and 30+ year-old teachers was in favor of 31+ year-olds. The high level of classroom management skills of teachers between the ages of 21 and 25 may be related to their personal development. In addition, it is clear that, as the age group of teachers increases, classroom management skill levels increase as well (Dinçer, & Akgün, 2015; Ilgar, 2007; Sönmez, 2014). On the other hand, there are also studies that indicate no differentiation between classroom management skills and age (Alatlı, 2014; Çevik Karatekin, 2018; Düzgün, 2016; Nur, 2012; Yaşar Ekici, Günhan, & Anılan, 2017).

According to the results of this study, the skill levels of the preschool teachers' leadership and classroom management do not differ according to the educational status. At this point, it is important how teachers use their personal competencies and classroom management regardless of their education level. Li (2015) obtained a similar finding in his study. Kadak (2008) studied with teachers working in primary schools and Dikmen Ada (2012) studied with the leadership behaviors of preschool administrators and teachers and these studies revealed that the leadership behavior of these teachers did not differ according to the educational status. In studies examining classroom management skills, similar to this research finding, it was found that classroom management skills of preschool teachers (Nur, 2012; Yaşar Ekici et al., 2017) and secondary school teachers (Düzgün, 2016) do not differ according to their educational status. On the other hand, there are research findings indicating that as the educational status of preschool teachers increases, their classroom management skills increase (Ata, 2014) and that classroom management skills of teachers at different levels differ according to their educational status (Kızılkaya, 2017; Sadık and Dikici Sığırtaç, 2016; Toran and Gençgel). When these research findings are evaluated together with the findings in the literature, it can be said that qualitative research findings are needed in order to reveal concrete findings on the effect of the educational status variable on leadership and classroom management skills.

According to another result of the study, preschool teachers' leadership and classroom management skill levels do not differ according to the professional seniority variable. Li (2015) determined that leadership behaviors of preschool teachers did not differ according to the seniority. Kk and Bektař (2010) found that the leadership styles of teachers working in secondary education did not differ according to the professional seniority variable. On the other hand, there are also studies that determined that the leadership skills of teachers differ according to professional seniority (Dikmen Ada, 2012; Memiřođlu, & akır 2015). As a result of this research, the reason why teachers' leadership and classroom management skills do not differ according to professional seniority variable can be examined in detail. Contrary to expectations, the result of such a result can be interpreted as teachers acquiring these skills from different sources.

Classroom management skill levels of preschool teachers do not differ according to the professional seniority variable. Adıgzel (2016), Denizel Gven and Cevher (2005), Keleř (2013) and Nur (2012) concluded that the classroom management skills of preschool teachers did not differ according to the professional seniority variable. Special education teachers' (Alatlı, 2014) and physical education teachers' (elik, 2014) classroom management skills did not differ according to their seniority. On the other hand, there are also studies that found that teachers' classroom management skills differ according to professional seniority (Akın, 2006; Ata, 2014; Sadık, & Dikici Sıđırtma, 2016; Yařar Ekici, Gnhan, & Anılan, 2017).

As a result of the study, it was determined that the level of leadership of preschool teachers who chose the profession willingly was higher than the other teachers. No matter which profession, the attitude towards that profession will affect the work done. The best example of this is the teaching profession. Teachers who enjoy doing their job are successful in that field (Purchase, & Bekdemir, 2006). The teacher who fulfills his profession willingly is the one who trusts and respects his students, makes learning valuable and enjoyable and loves his job (zdemir, Yalın, & Sezgin, 2004). These teachers will complete their personal development and present a good model for their students.

Classroom management skill levels of preschool teachers did not differ according to the status of choosing the profession willingly. What is important in classroom management is that the teacher prevents the undesired behaviors in the classroom based on previous experiences and lives. On the other hand, Adıgzel (2016) found that the preschool teachers who chose their profession willingly had higher levels of classroom management skills.

As a result of the study, it was determined that the skill levels of the leadership and classroom management of the preschool teachers differed significantly according to the status of availability of assistant staff in the classroom variable. The scores of the teachers who have assistant staff in the classroom are higher than the other teachers. The presence of assistant staff in the classroom enables the effective execution of the education process (Gndz, 2012) and allows teachers to spend more time with the children in the process of activity. Thus, the teacher can have the opportunity to lead children and to provide classroom management effectively. In this regard, ınar Terbilliođlu (2015) and evik Karatekin (2018) found that preschool teachers who had assistant staff in their classes had higher perceptions about psychological empowerment levels in personal freedom and impact dimensions than other teachers. Heikka, Halttunen, and Waniganayake (2018) stated that the leadership of teachers and employees in preschool institutions in Finland was shared among teachers, administrative staff and assistants. Thus, the success of the institution was increasing. Teachers' communication with the assistant staff in the classroom (Yılmaz and Aslan, 2013) provides teachers convenience in classroom management.

### **Implications**

Based on these results, the following suggestions for the researchers and practitioners were introduced: As a result of this research, a relationship was found between the leadership skills of preschool teachers and their classroom management skills. It is recommended to conduct research with different socio-cultural participant groups, using qualitative research methods for the reasons for this

relationship. In this study, a detailed examination can be made about the reasons why teachers aged 21-25 have higher leadership skills. The possible reasons for the high leadership skills of the teachers who choose their profession voluntarily can be examined by interviewing the teachers. By supporting young candidates in the career selection process, the interest in the teaching profession can be increased, so that individuals who become teachers by wanting the profession can be more effective. Finally, since the situation of having assistant personnel in the classroom is positive on both leadership skills and classroom management skills, studies on having assistant personnel in each teacher's classroom in preschool education institutions can be carried out by authorized institutions.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no potential conflict of interest in this study.

**Funding Details:** No funding or grant was received from any institution or organization for this research.

**CRedit Author Statement:** Rengin Zembat: Supervision, Writing-Review & Editing. Hilal Yılmaz: Investigation Visualization, Writing- Original draft preparation. Şeyma Değirmenci: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing- Original draft preparation. Büşra Çelik: Data Curation, Visualization, Writing- Reviewing and Editing.

**Ethical Statement:** This article is the authors' own original work, which has not been previously published elsewhere. The article is in compliance with the ethical principles page of the journal.

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