

# **An Investigation of the Relationship between Early Childhood Teachers' Classroom Management Profiles and Humor Styles**

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## **Abstract**

The aim is to examine the relationship between early childhood teachers' classroom management profiles and humor styles. A correlational research methodology was utilized. 274 early childhood teachers working in ECE institutions within Turkey included. The Classroom Management Profiles Scale and Humor Styles Questionnaire were applied, and data were analyzed through t-test and ANOVA. As a result, laissez-faire and self-enhancing humor were the most common among participants. Even though there was a positive correlation between affiliative and self-defeating humor styles, the authoritarian profile was negatively correlated with laissez-faire. The indifferent profile was negatively correlated with the laissez-faire profile, while the affiliative humor style was positively correlated with the authoritarian and indifferent profile. Regarding other humor styles, there were no significant correlations observed. By increasing the number of study participants and using qualitative methods, the results from this current study can be supported, and humor styles can be used for effective classroom management.

**Key Words:** Humor styles, classroom management profiles, early childhood education, teachers

## **Introduction**

With the consideration of the importance of early childhood education for individuals' development, learning, and well-being, Ceglowski and Bacigalupa (2002) categorize the dimensions required to develop quality early childhood education under four perspectives including researchers and professionals in the field, parents, staff in childcare, and children in childcare. Whereas researchers tend to focus on program attributes, classroom practices, and/or environment, parents' concerns are more often program flexibility and staff responsibilities. While staff in childcare explain quality education through administrative, parental, collegial issues, and children tend to define childcare quality through their acceptance and/or engagement with the activities provided to them (Ceglowski & Bacigalupa, 2002).

Notably, according to Hue and Li (2008), effective classroom management is necessary for children's growth and learning. Thus, by preparing an adequate physical environment, teachers can support children's involvement and cooperation and plan classroom practices by fully considering children's development, interests, and needs (Akar, Tantekin-Erden, Tor & Şahin, 2010).

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From this point of view, the definition of classroom management includes creating a positive classroom climate, achieving success, decreasing problem behavior (Çeşme & Gündüz, 2021; Robinson, 2011; Yağın, 2020), and supporting positive relationships within classrooms (Bagley, 1907; Marzano, Marzano & Pickering, 2003; Zembat & Küsmüş, 2020; Wang, Haertel & Walberg, 1993). According to Stough and Montague (2014), classroom management is a skill that teachers should acquire. Importantly, pre-service education and professional development can help teachers to develop their classroom management skills (Nahal, 2010; Sadik & Sadik, 2014; Stough, Montague, Williams-Diehm & Landmark, 2006). Teachers should also know both pedagogical and instructional knowledge for applying effective classroom management strategies. In this way, their students should be able to reach a higher level of achievement (Omoteso & Semudara, 2011; Stronge, Ward & Grant, 2011). However, studies show that teacher training programs often provide insufficient information and learning (Akcaoğlu & Arsal, 2018; Grasmick & Leak, 1997) as well as a lack of opportunities for practice in terms of classroom management (Cockrell, Mitchell, Middleton & Campbell, 1999; Yeşiltaş, 2019). Thus, better development of pre-service education can be a way of fostering improved classroom management practices within classrooms.

In addition to their knowledge level, both teachers' and children's classroom management perspectives play an essential role in the quality of education (Can & Baksi, 2014; Evertson & Weinstein, 2011). For example, children define a "good teacher" as a teacher who provides enjoyable learning, has positive relationships with them, and who can use authority without being threatening and/or punitive (Can & Arslan, 2018; Noguera, 1995). Although from the teachers' point of view there are ongoing changes in their beliefs regarding effective classroom management practices. For example, those who believe in the impact of direct instruction emphasize the importance of rules regarding being quiet and listening. In contrast, teachers who support learning by discovery and communication tend to encourage children to learn within groups and through inquiry (Evertson & Weinstein, 2011). Thus, it is not only about their teaching methods. Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs (Greenwood, Olejnik & Parkay, 1990; Glickman & Tamashiro, 1982; Smylie, 1988), communication skills (Aküzüm & Gültekin, 2017), happiness levels (Düzgün, 2016) and classroom management beliefs (Çubukçu & Girmen, 2008; Pajares, 1992) are other important factors for classroom management practices because these beliefs and efficacy skills can be instrumental in shaping their classroom management profiles (Brophy, 1988).

### **Classroom management profiles**

According to Ekici (2004), teachers may have both positive and negative effects on children's learning due to their attitudes and/or classroom management strategies. That is why every teacher can be considered to have a classroom management profile that helps them to shape the way in which they teach children, as well as how they con-

tact students and/or what kind of leadership strategy they utilize within the classroom (Ekici, 2004). The various classroom management profiles are categorized under four titles, according to Brophy (1988). For example, the first is the “authoritarian profile,” in which the teachers tend to utilize too much discipline and pressure on the children. Thus, the children’s wishes are ignored as well as the communication between the teachers and children is harsh.

On the other hand, in the “authoritative profile,” which is the second profile, the primary aim of classroom management is to assist and support children’s learning rather than punishing them. Regarding the reasons behind the rules and expectations, teachers provide the necessary explanations to students. Therefore, students are supported to freely express their ideas to the teacher (Brophy, 1988; Kris, 1996). While in the third profile, the “laissez-faire profile,” the only important thing is the students’ feelings, so in this profile, teachers give less importance to students’ academic success (Brophy, 1988; Kris, 1996). The final profile is the “indifferent profile,” where teachers following this profile lack interest in the students, classroom, and/or teaching. As a result, they do not conduct any specific preparations for the class and the rules and expectations for the classroom are not clear for students, and discipline problems tend to occur (Brophy, 1988; Kris, 1996).

Classroom management is seen as a powerful tool for creating a supportive, safe, and facilitative environment for children in terms of their academic and social learning (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006). Due to successful classroom management approaches affecting the success of instruction, children’s learning of new perspectives as well as discovering innovative ideas is made easier (Denizel-Güven & Cevher, 2005). In addition, because appropriate classroom management behaviors affect teachers’ interactions with children, the children have a chance to control their feelings and develop positive behaviors even if they experience undesired situations and emotions (Carter & Doyle, 2006; Dinçer & Akgün, 2015; Snyder et al., 2011). As a result, the ways that teachers prefer to conduct classroom management can both enhance children’s learning and development as well as cause children to develop undesirable behaviors and have inadequate learning experiences, which is ultimately due to the teacher’s preferred classroom management profile (Metin, Aydoğan, Kavak, & Mercan, 2017).

Thus, teachers create the learning environment, have classroom activities, and/or develop attitudes toward children in relation to the classroom management profile they adopt. Therefore, investigating their classroom management profile as well as the effects on their chosen profile is essential. For example, a teachers’ age (Metin et al., 2017), years of work experience (Laut, 1999), and/or the type of institution (i.e., private or public) (İlgar, 2014) can affect their classroom management profile. As a result, one of the effects on classroom management is a teacher’s characteristics. Paul (2019) states that the teacher’s personality is a crucial element of classroom success. Kothari and Pingle (2015) also mention the importance of personality traits regarding teaching.

That is, they argue that specific personality characteristics are correlated with specific teaching styles. For example, they find that teachers who are emotionally stable and have agreeable personalities tend to prefer to utilize interactive teaching methods.

At this point, the primary question can be what are the psychological structures that contribute to teachers' classroom management profiles (Sezer, Aktan, Tezci & Erdener, 2017). That is, why and how psychological structures shape people's behavior (Hebb & Donderi, 2013). Thus, classroom management profiles can also be shaped by these differing psychological structures.

Humor can be defined as one of these psychological structures, and it is also shown as an indicator of people's health and well-being (McGhee & Goldstein, 1983). According to Cabello and Terrell (2019), humor contributes to having a warm and caring classroom atmosphere. Also, this atmosphere can be seen within classrooms following an authoritative profile (Ekici, 2004). Thus, considering the relationship between classroom management profiles and teachers' psychological structures, humor can be seen as one of the psychological structures that may affect teachers' classroom management behaviors. Therefore, it can be essential to learn if there is a relationship between classroom management profiles and humor styles. In this way, we can understand which profile the teacher has according to their specific humor style. Importantly, learning about people's humor style can provide information about their psychological condition, and it can also lead people to use humor in their life in appropriate ways. Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray and Weir (2003) define adaptive and maladaptive humor styles as a way to give meaning to people's unique humor behaviors.

The current study was primarily focused on humor, which according to Cann, Stilwell and Taku (2010), is accepted as a personality characteristic. For example, a teacher's personality can affect their humor style, which in turn affects their classroom management profile. Makewa, Role and Genga (2011) describe humor as an effective tool within the classroom. However, which humor style a teacher has ultimately affected their use of humor because there are both adaptive and maladaptive styles of humor (Martin et al., 2003).

### **Humor styles**

In daily life, humor can be used in a variety of ways. For example, people may use humor to just enjoy themselves or make others laugh. Therefore, differences in humor create different humor styles among people. Martin et al. (2003) provide explanations and creates categories which are related to humor behaviors, and he and his colleagues also state that there are both adaptive and maladaptive humor styles seen within people. In the adaptive humor styles, the first is the "self-enhancing humor" style. In this kind of humor style, people prefer not to share humor with others but instead generally prefer to use humor on their own to deal with stress and/or negative emotions. The second adaptive humor style is "affiliative humor," which is used to develop relation-

ships with others. That is, people use this humor style to establish relationships as well as decrease tension between people. In addition to using humor for positive aims like dealing with negative emotions or creating social relationships, it can also be used for negative aims. Thus, this kind of humor is described as maladaptive humor, and the first style of maladaptive humor is “self-defeating humor.” In this kind of humor, people prefer to make jokes about the self, but these jokes are mostly humiliating and tend to harm the self. While in the “aggressive humor style” is the last humor style described in (Martin et al., 2003). In this humor style, people prefer to make humiliating humor about the people around them, and as a result, this situation can harm relationships within their social group.

According to Yerlikaya (2009), people may actually exhibit the features of each of these humor styles, but in daily life, there tends to be a dominant humor style that makes up a person’s most commonly used behavior regarding humor. Thus, this combination of different humor styles forms individual differences among people’s humor usage. As a result, a variety of factors can affect people’s humor such as their personality, communication skills, and/or mental health. (Durmuş & Tezer, 2001; Overholser, 1992; Tümkaya, Hamarta, Deniz, Çelik & Aybek, 2008). Humor styles not only affect daily life but can also affect a teacher’s behaviors within the classroom. So, considering the effectiveness of using humor as a tool within the learning environment (Clabby, 1979), this creates a situation where it is necessary to investigate the humor styles of teachers.

### **The Present Study**

Teachers must apply classroom management strategies to enhance the development and learning of students at every grade level. However, even though in most grade levels, a primary aim is to support children’s achievement, in early childhood education, the use of classroom management can serve a variety of aims (Carter & Doyle, 2011). That is, early childhood settings are places in which children have developmental experiences within the social world. Also, due to differences of activity types applied in the classroom, such as play and drama, and differences in physical settings that enable children’s physical movement, there are different classroom management requirements that occur. Thus, differences in early childhood education settings, rules, and procedures can differ within preschool settings (Carter & Doyle, 2011). As a result, early childhood education classrooms require specific attention.

Even if teachers are professionals who have taken requisite pedagogical and instructional knowledge courses during their preservice teacher education, they are still human and as a result, have attitudes, interests, perceptions, and characteristics that can affect their teaching practices (Hebb & Donderi, 2013). One of the areas that may be affected by teachers’ idiosyncratic features may be their classroom management profiles. Therefore, to support classroom management practices for providing

adequate education, teachers' characteristics should be thoroughly examined to fully understand, determine, and solve any problems related to these features (Hazar, Beyleroglu, Bezci, Baydar & Tingaz, 2017). That is why focusing on these personal factors can ultimately have a greater impact and provide more permanent solutions.

When the related literature was examined, several studies were found that related to the personal features of teachers regarding their teaching practices. For example, teachers' lifestyles (Sezer et al., 2017), gender (Hazar et al., 2017; Sadik & Sadik, 2014; Sezer et al., 2017; Talsik, 2015), job satisfaction (Helm, 2017; Opdenakker & Damme, 2009) can be the some of the personal factors that may have an effect on their classroom management behaviors. Thus, teachers' personality traits, as well as their effects on classroom management skills, are discussed in several studies. For example, openness to change (Martin & Yin, 1997), having an extroverted character (Hsieh, 2016; Jalili & Mall-Amiri, 2015), being agreeable and conscientious (Chen, 2015; Wang, 2014; Ying-Ling, 2015; Yu-Lin, 2012), having high self-efficacy (Tucker et al., 2005), having stable sentiment, kindness, and preciseness (Hui-Fang, 2012), and having extroversion, openness, and neuroticism (Aliakbari & Darabi, 2013) are all personality traits which have been found to have a positive impact on the effective classroom management behaviors of teachers. Whereas when the related literature regarding the relationships between personality characteristics and classroom management behaviors was investigated, no study related to the humor behaviors of teachers could be identified.

However, when we look at the studies that examine the benefits of humor in educational settings for permanent learning, enjoyable experiences (Rossi, 2015), positive relationships between the teacher and children (Meral, 2013; Van Praag, Stevens & Van Houtte, 2017), reducing stress within the classroom environment (Hobday Kusch & McVittie 2002), and providing for better classroom management (Lovorn & Holaway, 2015). By examining the relationship between teachers' humor styles and their classroom management profiles, it is possible to better understand their classroom behaviors, and this may provide another avenue for determining appropriate ways for improving teachers' classroom behaviors. Therefore, the aim of this current study was to determine if there was a meaningful relationship between early childhood teachers' classroom management profiles and their humor styles.

Also, the results can be a guide for making the necessary changes within the classroom for engaging positive humor styles to reduce stress as well as utilizing more effective classroom management behaviors. Evans-Palmer (2010) states that this can open the way for revising teacher education programs and better developing teachers humor disposition. Thus, by using humor in general, these changes to teacher education programs can also be informative on a broader level (Jeder, 2015). As a result, the aim of this current study was to investigate the relationship between teachers' classroom management profiles and humor styles. Therefore, to reach this aim, the follow-

ing research questions were investigated.

RQ1: Is there any relationship between early childhood teachers working in private or public schools and their classroom management profile and humor style?

RQ2: Is there any relationship between early childhood teachers' age and their classroom management profile and humor style?

RQ3: Is there any relationship between early childhood teachers' years of teaching experience and their classroom management profile and humor style?

RQ4: Which classroom management profiles do early childhood educators have?

RQ5: Which humor styles do early childhood educators have?

RQ6: Are there any relationships between early childhood educators' classroom management profiles and humor styles?

## **Methodology**

### **Design of the study**

To reach the aims of this current study, a correlational research design was utilized. Thus, the study aim was to reveal the relationships between the variables of classroom management profiles and humor styles. According to Fraenkel, Hyun & Wallen (2011), when investigating relationships between continuous variables, the correlational methodology can be utilized. Also, in correlational studies there are two aims; to explore relationships and to find the degree that these relationships occur (Fraenkel et al., 2011).

### **Sample**

Early childhood educators who were actively working within a preschool setting were included in this study. In addition, convenience sampling which is described as including individuals who are easily accessible for study (Fraenkel et al., 2012) was utilized in the sampling process. Teachers were sent an online survey form via email, and those interested in participating in the current study completed the form. Thus, a total of 274 teachers participated in the current study, and all the completed surveys were collected through online tools. The current study employed convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling method; thus, it is impossible to ensure the representativeness of the sample (Fraenkel et al., 2012). On the other hand, the universe consists of the individuals working as early childhood teachers in early childhood education institutions in Turkey, and the sample is chosen from those who actively work as an early childhood teacher in Turkey. Thus, even if convenience sampling limits representativeness, by including sample that belongs to the universe, the limitation was tried to be reduced.

Among the teachers who participated, 267 were female, and seven were male. The mean value for the age of the teachers who participated in this study was 33.2, and the

mean value for the years of teaching experience was 10 years. In addition, the teachers included in the study were working with children aged three to five years old. The departments that the participants graduated from are given in Table 1. Importantly, all of the participants chosen for the study were currently working as teachers within an early childhood education institution.

**Table 1.**

*Descriptive results of departments*

Department	N
early childhood education	211
child development	53
other departments unrelated to education	10
Total	267

**Instruments**

For data collection, three different instruments were utilized.

***Demographic information questionnaire***

The demographic information questionnaire used in this study was prepared by the researcher to learn more about the teachers. There were eight questions regarding the teachers' age, gender, university, and department they graduated from, years of teaching experience, and the type of school that they were currently working in (i.e., private or public). They were also queried about if they had taken any course and/or seminar specifically related to humor or classroom management, which was done to learn more about their background regarding the study topics.

***Classroom management profiles scale***

The first instrument was utilized to gather information regarding the teachers' classroom management profiles. The Classroom Management Profiles Scale (CMPS) was developed by Kris (1996) and adapted into Turkish by Aktan and Sezer (2018). The CMPS follows a five-point Likert scale format and consists of 12 items with four sub-dimensions. These sub-dimensions are authoritarian, authoritative, laissez-faire, and indifferent profile. In the scale used in the current study, the lowest point that the participants could get from each sub-dimension was five points, whereas the highest point total was 15. The reliability value for the scale was .81 (Aktan & Sezer, 2018). When we look at the internal consistency coefficients for sub-dimensions, authoritarian, authoritative, laissez-faire, and indifferent profile, were at the level of .72, .74, .72, and .70, respectively (Aktan & Sezer, 2018). In the study, the calculated internal consistency Cronbach Alpha reliability of the scale was .72 for the authoritarian dimension, .75 for the authoritative dimension, .70 for the laissez-faire dimension, and



.72 for the indifferent dimension. The internal consistency Cronbach Alpha reliability of the scale was found to be .80. According to (Can, 2019), this result can be accepted as reliable.

### ***Humor styles questionnaire***

For teachers' humor styles, the Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ) was utilized in this current study. HSQ was developed by Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, and Weir (2003) to investigate humor styles according to four dimensions. The adaptation of the HSQ for Turkish was conducted by Yerlikaya (2009), and the questionnaire follows a five-point Likert scale format which includes 32 items and four sub-dimensions which are affiliative, aggressive, self-defeating, and self-engaging. In addition, there are eight items under each of the sub-dimensions. In the adapted HSQ, the lowest number of points possible was seven, and the highest total number of points possible from the items was 56. As a result, the scores that were obtained from each dimension show the frequency of the humor styles. Finally, the test-retest reliability for the scale was .91 (Yerlikaya, 2009). Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients were stated as .74 for "affiliative humor", .78 for "self-enhancing humor", .69 for "aggressive humor", and .67 for "self-defeating humor" (Yerlikaya, 2009). In this study, the Cronbach Alpha coefficients for the subscales were determined as .71 for self-enhancing humor, .73 for affiliative humor, .70 for aggressive humor, and .68 for self-defeating humor, respectively. The internal consistency Cronbach Alpha reliability of the scale was found to be .83. This result could be evaluated as reliable (Can, 2019).

### **Data analysis**

The data were gathered from teachers by sending online survey forms to different teacher groups via online tools as well as hard-copy forms were applied to teachers who were attending in-service education during the summer of 2019. To analyze the gathered data, SPSS 21 was utilized, and both the online and hard-copy forms were gathered from the teachers, and all of the collected data was entered into the program. Skewness and Kurtosis values were checked for normality test. It was observed that the Skewness value ranged between 147 and, 293, and the Kurtosis value between 1.06 and -.416. When Kurtosis and Skewness values are between -1.5 and +1.5, it is considered to be a normal distribution (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Furthermore, the descriptive analysis, t-test results, and ANOVA results were used to discuss the teachers' classroom management profiles and humor styles.

### **Findings**

In determining teachers' classroom management profiles and humor styles, two different scales were utilized. In the following, the results of the descriptive analysis are provided in Table 2.

**Table 2.**  
*Descriptive results of scales*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis		
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	SE	Statistic	SE
Authoritarian Profile	274	2.5316	.82345	.233	.147	-.156	.293
Laissez-faire Profile	274	4.4732	.64455	-2.169	.147	7.551	.293
Authoritative Profile	274	3.3297	.76102	.075	.147	-.363	.293
Indifferent Profile	274	2.3345	.70263	.350	.147	.139	.293
Affiliative Humor	274	3.6642	.57492	.771	.147	.993	.293
Self-enhancing	274	4.6300	1.01648	-.118	.147	-.339	.293
Aggressive Humor	274	3.7213	.59061	-.683	.147	1.411	.293
Self-defeating humor	274	3.3786	.96427	.493	.147	-.162	.293

As a result of the descriptive analysis, among classroom management profiles, the laissez-faire profile was the most preferred profile ( $X = 2.53$ ,  $SS = .82$ ). In contrast, the authoritative profile was the second most preferred profile ( $X = 3.32$ ,  $SS = .76$ ), while the authoritarian profile ( $X = 2.53$ ,  $SS = .82$ ), and the indifferent profile ( $X = 2.33$ ,  $SS = .70$ ) were the profiles preferred least by teachers. When humor styles were examined, it was recognized that self-enhancing humor ( $X = 4.63$ ,  $SS = 1.01$ ) was more common in teachers compared with other humor styles. While aggressive humor ( $X = 3.72$ ,  $SS = .59$ ) was another style that received the highest scores from teachers, and affiliative humor ( $X = 3.66$ ,  $SS = .57$ ) and self-defeating humor ( $X = 3.37$ ,  $SS = .96$ ) were the humor styles that received lower points from teachers.

***Descriptive analysis in terms of the type of school (private or public)***

To determine if there was a significant difference in classroom management profiles and humor styles in terms of the type of school, an independent sample t-test was applied to the data. In the following, the results of teachers who are working in either private or public schools are provided in Table 3.

**Table 3.**  
*Descriptive statistics in terms of the type of school*

	School type	N	X	SS	t
Affiliative Humor	Public	231	3.6591	.57553	-.343
	Private	43	3.6919	.57758	
Self-enhancing	Public	231	4.6180	1.03164	-.454
	Private	43	4.6948	.93950	
Aggressive Humor	Public	231	3.7516	.58821	1.983
	Private	43	3.5581	.58334	
Self-defeating humor	Public	231	3.3858	.93332	.285
	Private	43	3.3401	1.12775	
Authoritarian Profile	Public	231	2.5079	.80206	-1.104
	Private	43	2.6589	.93006	
Laissez-faire Profile	Public	231	4.5079	.59532	2.078
	Private	43	4.2868	.84697	
Authoritative Profile	Public	231	3.3622	.77030	1.644
	Private	43	3.1550	.69140	
Indifferent Profile	Public	231	2.3276	.69363	-.381
	Private	43	2.3721	.75666	

Whereas 43 of the teachers were teaching in private schools, 231 of them were teaching in public schools. According to the descriptive analysis regarding the type of school, except for the laissez-faire profile ( $t(274) = 2.07$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), there was no significant difference among humor styles and classroom management profiles in terms of school type. When the mean scores for the teachers from public and private schools were compared, it was recognized that the teachers who were working in public pre-schools ( $X = 4.50$ ,  $SS = .59$ ) preferred a laissez-faire profile more than the teachers who were working in private schools ( $X = 4.28$ ,  $SS = .84$ ).

### **Descriptive analysis in terms of years of experience**

The teachers' years of working experience were also examined regarding their classroom management profiles and humor styles. Thus, in conducting the descriptive analysis, Spearman's rho test was applied to the data.

**Table 4.**

*Correlation table of the year of experience, classroom management, and humor styles*

Spearman's rho		Year of experience	Affiliative	Self-enhancing	Aggressive	Self-defeating	Authoritarian	Laissez-faire	Authoritative	Indifferent
Year of experience	r	1.000	.031	-.019	-.001	.008	-.072	.101	.020	.087
	p	.	.615	.750	.983	.897	.232	.095	.740	.150
	N	274	274	274	274	274	274	274	274	274

As is illustrated in Table 4, there was no significant correlation between teachers' classroom management profiles and humor styles in terms of the years of teaching experience.

#### *Descriptive analysis in terms of age*

Again, the Spearman's rho test was applied to determine any correlation between teachers' age and their classroom management profiles and humor styles. In the following the results of the correlation test are provided in Table 5.

**Table 5.**

*Correlation table of age, classroom management, and humor styles*

Spearman's rho		Age	Affiliative	Self-enhancing	Aggressive	Self-defeating	Authoritarian	Laissez-faire	Authoritative	Indifferent
Age	r	1.00	.060	-.048	-.018	-.018	-.051	.124*	.006	.086
	p	.	.321	.428	.766	.764	.400	.041	.927	.154
	N	274	274	274	274	274	274	274	274	274

\*Correlation is significant at a 0.05 level.

According to the information presented in Table 5, there was no significant correlation between classroom management profiles and humor styles regarding teachers' age. While the only correlation was observed in the laissez-faire profile ( $r = .124^*$ ). Thus, it can be stated that there was a positive correlation between teachers' age and their preference for the laissez-faire profile.

#### *Correlations between classroom management profiles and humor styles*

The Spearman's rho test was also applied to determine if there was a significant correlation between teachers' classroom management profiles and humor styles. In the

following the correlation values between these two variables are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6.**  
*Results of correlation analysis*

Spearman's rho		Affiliative	Self-enhancing	Aggressive	Self-defeating	Authoritarian	Laissez-faire	Authoritative	Indifferent
Affiliative	r	1.000	-.014	.197**	.141*	.147*	-.142*	.052	.121*
Self-enhancing	r	-.014	1.000	.246**	.306**	-.045	.094	.266**	-.001
Aggressive	r	.197**	.246**	1.000	.262**	.023	.080	.190**	.037
Self-defeating	r	.141*	.306**	.262**	1.000	.037	.089	.261**	.014
Authoritarian	r	.147*	-.045	.023	.037	1.000	-.141*	-.077	.113
Laissez-faire	r	-.142*	.094	.080	.089	-.141*	1.000	.301**	-.128*
Authoritative	r	.052	.266**	.190**	.261**	-.077	.301**	1.000	.200**
Indifferent	r	.121*	-.001	.037	.014	.113	-.128*	.200**	1.000

\*\*Correlation is significant at a 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\*Correlation is significant at a 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Considering the information that was presented in Table 6, it was determined that there was a significant correlation between teachers' classroom management profiles and humor styles. For example, it was observed that there was a positive correlation between the affiliative and self-defeating humor styles ( $r = .141^*$ ). In addition, when looking at the classroom management profiles, the authoritarian profile was negatively correlated to the laissez-faire profile ( $r = -.141^*$ ). Also, the indifferent profile was negatively correlated to the laissez-faire profile ( $r = -.128^*$ ). Importantly, there were correlations found between some humor styles and classroom management profiles. For example, the affiliative humor style was positively correlated with the authoritarian profile ( $r = .147^*$ ) and indifferent profile ( $r = .121^*$ ), whereas it was negatively correlated with the laissez-faire profile ( $r = -.142^*$ ). Regarding the other humor styles, there were no significant correlations observed.

## Discussion

The aim of this current study was to determine if any relationship between classroom management profiles and humor styles of early childhood teachers existed. As a result, even though it was determined that no correlation occurred between every classroom management profile and humor style, it was found that there was a negative correlation between teachers' affiliative humor style in general as well as this humor style was positively correlated with the authoritarian profile and indifferent profile. According to Kazarian and Martin (2004), affiliative humor is a form of adaptive humor, and people with this humor style seem to prefer to use humor within their social environment. Also, they tend to use positive humor that does not harm the self and/

or others. Thus, the use of adaptive humor can enhance relationships between people (Cann & Matson, 2014; Klein & Kuiper, 2006; Kuiper & Leite, 2010). Therefore, when we look at the classroom management profiles that are negatively correlated to these humor styles, the previous research literature can be utilized to better understand these relationships. For example, as Bosworth (1997) states, in the laissez-faire profile, teachers have positive and warm relationships with their students as well as place importance on the children's feelings. There are also other studies that share similar results sharing the relationship between laissez-faire profile and positive and warm relationships (Giang & Nga, 2019; Hazar et al., 2017; Metin et al., 2017; Sadik & Sadik, 2014; Talsik, 2015). As a result, considering the similarities in these descriptions, the affiliative humor style, and laissez-faire profile can support each other in terms of creating a positive classroom environment. However, on the other hand, because teachers do not apply any disciplinary behaviors regarding children's negative behaviors, in the long term, this may also affect their relationship with the children and lead to an increase of negative behaviors within the classroom (Carter & Doyle, 2011; Hue & Li, 2008; McGinty, 2000). Thus, even if the laissez-faire profile includes the teachers' positive behaviors towards the children similar to the affiliative humor style, the negative correlation may be explained due to the aforementioned long-term consequences of this profile.

In addition to this negative correlation, a positive correlation was also found between the affiliative humor style and two of the classroom management profiles, which were the indifferent and authoritarian profiles. For example, Bosworth's (1997) explanations regarding the indifferent profile indicate that teachers with this profile prefer not to make classroom instruction pleasurable for children as well as do not make any special effort toward education. Instead, their primary aim is to only spend the necessary time within the classroom (Ekici, 2004; Hazar et al., 2017). Thus, because teachers following the indifferent profile have little concern regarding classroom management and/or disciplining children, the effects of their humor on their classroom authority are not of concern to them. In addition to the indifferent profile, the authoritarian profile was positively correlated to the affiliative humor style. This profile is described as a way to increase desired behavior within the classroom by restricting and controlling the children (Metin et al., 2017; Sadik & Sadik, 2014; Talsik, 2015). Affiliative humor style is a form of positive humor behavior (Martin et al, 2003; Klein & Kuiper, 2006). When the characteristics of an individual with this humor style are considered, it could be seen in the findings that the opposite picture was seen regarding this topic. However, Steele (1998) suggests that in addition to its positive effects, humor can also negatively affect the classroom environment. That is, according to the level and type of humor, the children's view of the teacher as an authority figure can change (Aboudan, 2009). Therefore, teachers who have affiliative humor styles may prefer to utilize authoritarian classroom management as a way to minimize the nega-

tive effects of a flexible classroom environment that may ultimately adversely affect the ability to constructively control and discipline students (Şahin, 2021).

It was also demonstrated in another finding of this study that the laissez-faire profile was most preferred by the teachers who were working in public schools as compared to those working in private schools. Interestingly, İlgar's (2014) study examines the differences between teachers working at a public or private school. That is, he finds that teachers are more authoritarian at public schools, whereas teachers who are at private schools are more authoritative. The reason for his findings may be due to differences in the grade levels researched in the study. For example, the research is focused on primary school teachers, and there are differences in classroom management problems between preschool and primary school. However, differences seen between public and private schools can provide evidence for the difference recognized between teachers working at either public or private schools in this current study.

Furthermore, teachers' characteristics can affect their classroom management (Küçükahmet, 2011; Ying-Ling, 2015). In this current study, it was determined through the results that there was a positive correlation between the preference for laissez-faire profile and the teacher's age. Thus, teachers who have laissez-faire profile do not put any special effort into helping their students achieve academic success. The correlation between this profile and teacher's age may be explained due to the level of burnout experienced by teachers (Antoniou, Polychroni & Vlachakis, 2006; Bayani, Bagheri & Bayani, 2013; Mousavy & Nimehchisalem, 2014). For example, according to Dolunay and Piyal (2003), with growing age, the level of burnout is likely to increase among teachers. In the study by Tümkaya et al. (2008), this finding is also supported.

As a result of the current study, it was understood that humor is a personal characteristic, and like other personal characteristics, it affected the classroom management approaches of the teachers. Thus, to better determine the best ways of supporting teachers' classroom management abilities, humor styles should be considered. This is important because humor provides an opportunity for finding ways to solve problems as well as relieve stress (Evans-Palmer, 2010; Nezlek & Derks, 2001; Overholser, 1992), and by supporting teachers' development in the desired/adaptive humor styles it can be an effective strategy for improving their classroom management skills.

### **Implementation**

The aim of this study was to reveal the relationship between classroom management profiles and humor styles. Thus, to reach this aim, quantitative research methods were utilized for the data collection and analysis. However, to develop a deeper understanding of teachers in terms of their humor and classroom management behaviors, qualitative classroom observations and interviews can also be conducted with teachers to support the quantitative findings. Furthermore, to generalize the data, more participants from different parts of Turkey, as well as other countries and regions around the

world, can be included into future studies. Finally, based on this current study, more studies could examine teachers' understanding of humor and/or classroom practices as they relate to humor in general. Finally, this data can be used as a guide for supporting teachers in this area as well as helping them to prepare sources for including humor in both their daily lives and classroom curriculum.

### **Limitations**

As mentioned, the aim of the current study was to discover the relationship between early childhood teachers' classroom management profiles and their humor styles. As a result, even though a relationship was determined between specific classroom management profiles and humor styles, the number of participants could be increased as a way of improving the statistical power and thus strengthening the findings and generalizing the results. Also, due to the surveys being primarily delivered to the teachers via online tools, only those who could be reached participated in the study. However, for future studies, random sampling can be applied to teachers who are working in different cities throughout Turkey. In this way, the researcher can have a more general idea regarding the relationship between teachers' classroom management profiles and humor styles.

In addition, the researchers in this research utilized quantitative research methods for the data analysis. However, to gain a deeper understanding regarding these relationships, the use of qualitative methods should be integrated into future studies. For example, via classroom observations and interviews, researchers can gather more detailed data regarding teachers' classroom management and humor styles. In this way, researchers can develop more effective ways for supporting teachers in these specific areas.

Furthermore, along with teachers, there can also be an integration of preservice teachers into future studies. This is important because teachers often develop their approaches and beliefs towards teaching during their undergraduate teacher education. As a result, it can be beneficial to better understand what their thoughts and experiences are while attending undergraduate education as well as how to support them in their education regarding these specific areas.

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