

## The Effect of Teacher-Child Relationship on Preschool Children's School Adjustment and Behaviour Problems

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### Abstract

This research has been conducted to examine the relationship between teacher-child relationships school adjustment and social competence variables. In total of 414 preschool children (216 boys, 198 girls), and their teachers participated in the study. Preschool teachers completed three questionnaires: The Student-Teacher Relationship Scale, the Social Competence and Behaviour Evaluation Scale, and the Teacher Rating Scale of School Adjustment. The relational survey method was used in this study. The results of this study show that there is a significantly positive relationship between the level of teacher-child closeness sub-dimension and social competence, school liking, classroom participation, and self-directiveness scores. In addition, there is a significantly negative relationship between the level of teacher-child closeness sub-dimension and anger/aggression, anxiety/introversion, and school avoidance scores. Further examination of the data revealed that, there was a significant positive relationship between the level of teacher-child conflict sub-dimension and anger-aggression and anxiety/introversion scores. On the other hand, a negative correlation was observed between the level of teacher-child conflict sub-dimension and social competence, school liking, classroom participation, school avoidance, and self-directiveness scores. According to the results, levels of teacher-child closeness predicted the levels of social competence, school liking, classroom participation, and self-directiveness. According to the results, levels of teacher-child closeness predicted the levels of social competence, school liking, classroom participation, and self-directiveness. Also, levels of teacher-child conflict predicted the levels of anger aggression, anxiety/introversion, and school avoidance.

**Keywords:** Teacher-child relationships, school adjustment, social competence, preschool.

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## Introduction

Early childhood period is a sensitive time for interpersonal relationships. It is an important part of children's overall development. Research shows that children's interactions and relationships not only within the family, but also outside the family, are important for a child's wellbeing, as well as their development (Thompson, 2014). In early childhood, this is particularly true of the relationships that children have with their teachers and caregivers (Burchinal et al., 2008; Pianta et al., 2020; Pianta & Hofkens, 2023).

One of the major influences on the current views of the effects of relationships between teachers and children on their development is based on the principles of ecological systems theory. In *Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Model* explaining environmental factors in a child's development, a child's development is affected by experiences in a series of nested systems that interact (Sabol & Pianta, 2012). These systems range from the microsystem (the immediate context), which includes the child's experiences with his or her immediate environments, such as family members, classroom, teacher, to the macrosystem (the distant context), which is the broader environment that includes cultural values and policies. The microsystem comprises interactions with the immediate environment (eg. teachers, and peers) that most strongly influence a child's development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Cross & Hong, 2012; Degol & Bachman, 2015; Nasiopoulou et al., 2019). From the perspective of the bioecological model, the positive dynamics between teacher and child are an essential close context that facilitates learning and development. Teachers provide children with a safe and supportive learning environment and support children's engagement in effective pedagogical practices that influence children's learning processes (Lippard, et al., 2018).

### Teacher- Child Relationships

The teacher-child relationship is defined as a form of interpersonal relationship that occurs during the interaction between preschool teachers and children (Ainsworth, 1991). Theories of teacher-child interactions and various studies testing these theories show that preschool teachers have a significant impact on children's development (Ansari et al., 2022; Sutherland et al., 2018). As children transition from home to preschool, the teacher's role is not only in the context of the child's cognitive development, but also has an impact on their social development (Buettner et al., 2016; Egert et al., 2020; Lippard et al., 2018; Nguyen et al., 2020; Plotka, 2019; Rojas & Abenavoli, 2021; Sutherland et al., 2018). According to attachment theorists, positive teacher-child relationships provide children with a secure base that helps them feel safe while exploring the environment and a safe haven where children can seek support and comfort from their teachers during stressful times (Pianta et al., 2003; Sabol & Pianta, 2012; Zhu et al., 2023). In contrast, negative teacher-child relationships tend to evoke feelings of insecurity in children and therefore prevent them from exploring the environment. As a result, children who share positive relationships with teachers tend to be competent and adaptive at school, whereas negative teacher-child relationship experiences can harm children's school functioning and well-being (Pianta et al., 2003; Zhu et al., 2023).

When it comes to relationships between teachers and children, researchers often assess the degree of closeness and conflict in the relationships between teachers and children (Pianta, 2001; Saral & Acar, 2021; Settanni et al., 2015). In the current study, the teacher-child relationship was conceptualized within the scope of these two basic dimensions. Closeness reflects relational security, and children who have positive teacher-child relationships characterized by open communication based on warmth and affection tend to exhibit fewer internalizing and externalizing problems (Baardstu et al., 2022; Ferreira et al., 2016; Pianta et al., 2003; Wu et al., 2015). Research results indicated that warm, responsive, and supportive teacher-child interactions encourage children to use social-emotional skills (Bulotsky-Shearer et al., 2020; Colwell & Lindsey, 2003). Conflict is linked to relational insecurity and reflects the degree of disharmony, argumentation and negativity between teachers and children (Pianta et al., 2003; Roorda et al., 2014). Teacher-child conflict in preschool years can affect children's social skills (Graves & Howes, 2011) and school adjustment (Birch & Ladd, 1997). It may cause the child to develop negative feelings and attitudes towards school, withdraw from school, have adjustment problems at school, and develop behavioral problems (Acar et al., 2021; Acar et al., 2022;

Coplan et al., 2017; Hamre & Pianta, 2001). Negative interactions have been shown to be ineffective in helping children regulate their emotions and control behaviors (Plotka, 2019; Zhu et al., 2023).

### ***School Adjustment***

Adjustment is the process of finding a balance between children's developing personalities and the increasing demands of their environment (Saraç et al., 2023). For preschool children, getting used to the preschool environment means actively participating in the process, enjoying school and establishing healthy relationships (Birch & Ladd, 1997). Adjustment to preschool includes the acquisition of academic readiness skills, behavioral regulation at school, and social interactions with teachers and peers (Pianta et al., 1997; Yoleri, 2015). This adjustment process is important for children's development (Bornstein et al., 2010; Wu et al., 2015). Children who adapt effectively are more likely to be accepted by their peers (Dos Santos et al., 2020; Shehu, 2019; van der Wilt et al., 2019). In contrast, poor adjustment to preschool may set the stage for further social problems and school failure (Karaman, 2022; Yoleri, 2015).

An important factor in children's school adjustment is their relationship with their teachers (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Hamre & Pianta, 2001). A friendly teacher who communicates with children can help support children's adjustment to school. However, problems or miscommunication between the teacher and the child may cause the child to feel lonely at school, have negative feelings towards school and want to stay away from school (Birch & Ladd, 1997).

### ***Social Competencies***

Research shows that anger, anxiety, aggression, and introversion are among the factors that affect children's social competence in the process of developing social competence (Hanish et al., 2004). For example, anger-aggression shows externalizing behaviors such as challenging adults, acting maladaptive and aggressive, whereas anxiety-introversion shows internalizing symptoms such as children's unhappy and depressed feelings and showing shyness in a group (La Freniere & Dumas, 1996). An increase in social competence supports positive social skills and prevents situations such as withdrawal and anxiety (Gür et al., 2015; Pekdoğan & Kanak, 2016). Research shows that an increase in social competence scores positively affects attitudes and behaviors towards peers (Balluerka et al., 2023; Shehu, 2019). Juntilla et al. (2012) found that social competence skills predicted anxiety and introversion in children and adolescents. Wichstrom et al. (2013) found an inverse relationship between social competence and anxiety-introversion in their study with 1000 children.

As in the bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006), positive dynamics between teacher and child mean that the more supportive relationships teachers have with children, the greater their ability to inhibit impulsive reactions, and to change and maintain their behavior (O'Connor, 2010; Rudasil et al., 2020). Teachers play a key role in helping children develop social competencies (Goble et al., 2019; Hollingsworth & Winter, 2013; Schmitt et al., 2018). Since positive child-teacher relationships have a strong impact on children's social competencies development, there is a strong need to develop these relationships, especially from preschool period, when children come together for the first time with adults other than their primary caregivers (Pianta et al., 2003; Sabol & Pianta 2012). Therefore, teachers can be seen as a reference point for building positive relationships and initiating a stronger communication process (DeJames, 2001). Children with developed social competence have positive interactions with teachers and enjoy school and activities (Soininen et al., 2023; Loomis, 2021). On the other hand, children with inattention and impulsivity problems when they start school experience more conflicts with teachers throughout preschool (Li & Lau, 2019).

When assessing the development of children's social competencies, two general distinctions are made for social-emotional problems: externalizing problem behavior and/or internalizing problem behavior (Lilienfeld, 2003; Stone et al., 2015). Externalizing conduct problems are manifested in externalizing behaviors, including aggression and hyperactivity (Liu, 2004), while internalizing conduct problems are characterized by anxiety and depression, fear, social withdrawal, and somatic complaints (Göbel et al., 2016).

### ***Current Study***

Previous researchers have indicated that the quality of the teacher-child relationship plays an important role in children's school adjustment and social competence (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Burchinal et al., 2008; Buyse et al., 2008; Hamre & Pianta, 2001). However, negative teacher-child relationships are a risk factor for children's school adjustment and social competence (Acar et al., 2019; Murray et al., 2008). As a result, the teacher-child relationship in the early years plays a significant role in children's lives with both short and long-term effects. Therefore, it is thought that this research can contribute to the diversification of the studies conducted on the teacher-child relationship of the children in the early childhood period in Turkey.

The study aims to determine the predictive effect of preschool children's relationships with their teachers on their school adjustment and social competencies. The sub-objectives of the research are as follows:

- Is there a statistically significant relationship between teacher-child relationship and children's school adjustment and social competence skills?
- Does teacher-child relationship predict children's cooperative participation, school avoidance, self-management, and liking school at a statistically significant level?
- Does the teacher-child relationship predict children's social competence, anger-aggression and anxiety-introversion at a statistically significant level?

### **Method**

#### **Model**

This study used the relational survey method to examine the predictive effect of student-teacher relationships on their school adjustment and social competencies. The relational survey model aims to determine the presence and level of change variance between two or more variables (Chirstensen et al., 2015).

#### **The sample**

The sample of the research comprised 414 children (216 boys, 198 girls), ages 5-6, enrolled in public preschools operating in the District of Karabağlar, Province of İzmir. There were six public preschools in Karabağlar district. All of the schools accepted the invitation to participate in the study. Our study was conducted simultaneously in six public preschools based on voluntary participation. Among the assessment instruments given to teachers regarding 700 children, 414 were filled out completely and correctly. Thus, 414 children were included in the study. The average age of the children was 5 years, 5 months, and the maximum was 6 years, 1 month. All the children showed normal development characteristics according to the teachers' views. None of the children participated in inclusive applications. All of the children live with their families. On the other hand, all the teachers involved in to study were women, ranging in age from 25 to 54, with teaching experience ranging from three to nineteen years; all teachers had bachelor's degrees.

#### **Instruments**

Data were collected with the Personal Information Form, Student-Teacher Relationship Scale-Short Form (STRS-SF), The Social Competence and Behaviour Evaluation Scale- Short Form (SCBE-30) and the Teacher Rating Scale of School Adjustment.

**Personal Information Form:** Questions related to such features as children age, gender, teachers' years of experience, educational status included in the form developed by the researchers.

**Student-Teacher Relationship Scale-Short Form (STRS- SF)** is a Likert scale consisting of 15 self-report items. Each item in the scale is coded between 1 (Definitely does not apply) and 5 (Definitely does apply) (Jerome et al., 2009;Pianta, 2001). The scale examines how the teacher perceives the student's behaviours and the student's thoughts about himself/herself, by taking into consideration the relationship formed with each student. It consists of two sub-dimensions which include closeness and conflict dimensions. Closeness sub-dimension includes attending to the needs of the child and being

responsive, being involved in positive emotional interactions with the child as much as possible (e.g., “I share an affectionate, warm relationship with this child”). The conflict sub-dimension includes negative behaviours the teacher perceives concerning the child and negative emotional interactions (e.g., “This child and I always seem to be struggling with each other”). It is stated that, while evaluating the student–teacher relationship effectively, it also provides support for the identification of teachers who are experiencing problems in communication or interaction and who are going through occupational burnout (Pianta, 2001). The adaptation of the short form used within the current study into Turkish has been completed by Şahin Ası and Ocak Karabay (2018). Its Cronbach's alpha values were .82 for the total score, .84 for the conflict sub-dimension, and .76 for the closeness sub-dimension. For the current study, Cronbach's alpha values of were .76 for the closeness sub-dimension and .90 for the conflict sub-dimension.

The Social Competence and Behaviour Evaluation Scale- Short Form (SCBE-30) for teachers was originally developed by LaFreniere and Dumas (1996). This 30-item scale for children in the 30-78 months age range is composed of three sub-dimensions: two distinct patterns of maladaptive behaviour (the Anger-Aggression or AA and Anxiety-Withdrawal, or AW sub-dimensions) and one adaptive pattern (the Social Competence, or SC, sub-dimension). The scale was completed by the children's teacher. The AA sub-dimension reflects children's angry, aggressive, and irritable behaviours. Children were evaluated as angry and aggressive who showed negative effects and was unable to regulate their negative emotions. The AW sub-dimension is composed of items that measure dependent, anxious, and isolated behaviours. These children spend much of their time alone and unoccupied and demonstrate little interest in group activities. Finally, the SC sub-dimension includes items used to assess positive social interaction (e.g., can negotiate solutions, works easily in groups) as well as prosocial behaviour/empathy toward their peers at school (e.g., cooperates, shares toys, comforts others). Socially competent children show positive affect in their interactions and are well appreciated by their peers and teachers. Responses were given on a 6-point Likert scale from 1 (never) to 6 (always). Çorapçı, Aksan, Arslan-Yalçın and Yağmurlu adapted the scale into Turkish in 2010. The Cronbach's alpha value averages for the original version of the scale were .87 for the SC, .84 for the AW, and .88 for the AA respectively (LaFreniere et al., 2002). The Cronbach's alpha for the current study was .93 for the SC, and .86 for the AW, .91 for the AA.

Teacher Rating Scale of School Adjustment for 5-6 years of developed by Ladd, Kochenderfer, and Coleman in 1996 designed to evaluate preschool children's school adjustment. The Scale included 25 items and four sub-dimensions: school avoidance, school liking, cooperative participation, and self-directiveness. Teachers completed the items using a three-point scale: doesn't apply, applies sometimes, and certainly applies (Birch & Ladd, 1997). The internal consistency scores for the original version of the scale across measurement occasions exceed .75 (Birch & Ladd, 1997). The Turkish version of the TRSSA was adapted by Önder and Gülay (2010). The internal consistency, as reported by Önder and Gülay (2010), for the whole scale was .70. In the current study, the internal reliability of the whole scale was found at .71. and the internal consistency coefficient of the sub-dimension school liking was .85, the internal consistency coefficient of the sub-dimension cooperative participation was .92, the internal consistency coefficient of the sub-dimension school avoidance was .83, and the internal consistency coefficient of the sub-dimension self-directiveness was .81.

### **Data collection process**

The study was initiated after the approval of the institutional ethics committee at İzmir Democracy University and the Ministry of National Education in Turkey. After obtaining ethical approval, the researchers explained the purpose of the study to the school principals who agreed to participate in the study. For schools that agreed to participate, the aim and confidentiality of the study were explained to parents informed consent was obtained from parents for their participation in the study. Parents were informed that participation was voluntary and that they would not encounter any disadvantages in case of non-participation. Children were included in the study only after their parents gave written informed consent to participate in the study. The measurement tools were completed by the teachers for each child. Preschool teachers were informed about the research and data collection tools by the researchers before the implementation. Despite all efforts, only 414 surveys were found to be filled out completely and accurate. The data analysis was conducted based on this number.

## Data analysis

The analysis of the data was statistically conducted with SPSS 25 programme. Correlations were tested using the Pearson correlation coefficient. A simple Linear Regression Analysis Technique was performed to determine the predictive effect of the teacher-child relationship on school adjustment and the social competence children'.

## Findings

Table 1.

The means, standard deviations and correlation coefficients of the variables in this study

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Conflict	12.40	6.51	1								
2. Closeness	31.34	4.88	-.39**	1							
3. Social Competence	45.99	11.57	-.68**	.66**	1						
4. Anger/Aggression	19.49	9.74	.80**	-.29**	-.58**	1					
5. Anxiety/Introversion	18.94	8.59	.39**	-.47**	-.52**	.40**	1				
6. School liking	13.88	1.79	-.50**	.38**	.51**	-.37**	-.54**	1			
7. Classroom participation	21.24	3.39	-.74**	.45**	.71**	-.55**	-.32**	.56**	1		
8. School avoidance	13.81	1.92	-.39**	-.16**	.32**	-.29**	-.45**	.75**	.33**	1	
9. Self-directiveness	17.55	2.96	-.45**	.54**	.69**	-.31**	-.59**	.56**	.62**	.40**	1

\*\* p < .001, \* p < .05

Pearson's correlations were calculated for all study variables (see Table 1). Table 1 shows that there was a significant negative relationship between the teacher-child relationships scale conflict sub-dimension and the social competence ( $r = -.68$ ), school liking ( $r = -.50$ ), classroom participation ( $r = -.74$ ), school avoidance ( $r = -.39$ ), and self-directiveness ( $r = -.45$ ,  $p < .001$ ) scores. The significantly positive relationship between teacher-child relationships scale conflict sub-dimension and anger-aggression ( $r = .80$ ) and anxiety/introversion ( $r = .39$ ) scores. On the other hand, there was a significantly positive correlation between the teacher-child relationships scale closeness sub-dimension and social competence ( $r = .66$ ), school liking ( $r = .38$ ), classroom participation ( $r = .45$ ), and self-directiveness ( $r = .54$ ), scores. In contrast, there was a statistically significant negative correlation between the teacher-child relationships scale closeness sub-dimension and anger/aggression ( $r = -.29$ ), anxiety/introversion ( $r = -.47$ ), and school avoidance ( $r = -.16$ ) scores.

Tablo 2.

The result of the simple linear regression analysis regarding the predictive effect of the teacher-child relationships scale conflict sub-dimension children on their levels school adjustment and social competence.

	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	B	$\beta$	t	p
Social competence	.679	.461	353.551	-.382	-.679	-18.803	.00
Anger-aggression	.802	.642	744.965	.537	.802	27.294	.00*
Anxiety/Introversion	.389	.149	73.584	.295	.389	8.578	.00*
School liking	.501	.249	138.875	-1.817	-.501	-11.772	.00
Classroom participation	.736	.541	489.558	-1.415	-.736	-22.126	.00
School avoidance	.388	.149	73.050	-1.312	-.388	-8.547	.00*
Self-directiveness	.445	.196	101.782	-.979	-.445	-10.089	.00

\* $p < .001$ , \*\* $p < .05$ .

In Table 2, levels of teacher-child conflict significantly predicted levels of anger/aggression ( $R = .802$ ,  $R^2 = .642$ ,  $F = 744.965$ ), anxiety/introversion ( $R = .389$ ,  $R^2 = .149$ ,  $F = 73.584$ ) and school avoidance ( $R = .388$ ,  $R^2 = .149$ ,  $F = 73.050$ ) levels for children. According to this result, it can be stated that the

teacher-child conflict level account for 64% of anger/aggression, 39% of anxiety/introversion, and 15% of school avoidance levels for children.

Tablo 3.

The result of the simple linear regression analysis regarding the predictive effect of the teacher-child relationships scale closeness sub-dimension children on their levels school adjustment and social competence

	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	B	$\beta$	t	p
Social competence	.656	.429	311.554	.277	.656	17.651	.00*
Anger-aggression	.290	.084	37.991	-.146	-.290	-6.164	.00
Anxiety/Introversion	.473	.222	118.963	-.269	-.473	-10.907	.00
School liking	.381	.143	70.181	1.036	.381	8.377	.00*
Classroom participation	.451	.203	105.438	.650	.451	10.268	.00*
School avoidance	.158	.023	10.574	.400	.158	3.252	.00
Self-directiveness	.540	.290	169.806	.891	.540	13.031	.00*

\* $p < .001$ , \*\* $p < .05$ .

Table 3 shows that teacher-child closeness levels had a predictive effect on social competence ( $R=.656$ ,  $R^2 = .429$ ,  $F = 311.554$ ), school liking ( $R = .381$ ,  $R^2 = .143$ ,  $F = 70.181$ ), classroom participation ( $R = .451$ ,  $R^2 = .203$ ,  $F = 105.438$ ), and self-directiveness ( $R = .540$ ,  $R^2 = .290$ ,  $F = 169.806$ ) levels for children. According to the result, teacher-child closeness levels predicted 43% of social competence, 14% of school liking, 20% of classroom participation, and 29% of self-directiveness levels for children.

## Discussion

As a result of the study, it was found that there was a significant relationship between both the conflict and closeness sub-dimensions of the teacher-child relationship and the variables of social competence, anger, anxiety/introversion, classroom participation, school avoidance, self-directiveness, and school liking in children.

As a result of the research, it was found that there was a significant negative relationship between the conflict sub-dimension of the teacher-child relationship scale and social competence, school liking, classroom participation, school avoidance, and self-directiveness. According to this result, as young children are in conflict with their teachers, the level of decreased social competence, school liking, classroom participation, school avoidance, and self-directiveness. A significant positive relationship was determined between the conflict sub-dimension and the anger-aggression, anxiety/introversion. As the teacher-child relationships scale conflict scores increase, the anger-aggression and anxiety/introversion scores increase. On the other hand, it was determined that there was a significant positive relationship between the closeness sub-dimension of the teacher-child relationship and social competence, school liking, classroom participation, and self-directiveness, and a significant negative relationship between, anger-aggression, anxiety/introversion, and school avoidance. The level of social competence, school liking, classroom participation, and self-directiveness together with an increase in the level of teacher-child relationship closeness increases. The level of the teacher-child relationships scales closeness sub-dimension decreases together with an increase in the level of anger/aggression, anxiety/introversion, and school avoidance scores. These results show that children's school adjustment levels and social development are affected by whether the teacher-child relationship is conflictual or close.

The results showed that the conflict sub-dimension of the teacher-child relationship scale significantly predicted the anger/aggression, anxiety/introversion, and school avoidance variables. The results of the study are consistent with existing evidence that problematic behavior in the classroom is one of the strongest predictors of the quality of children's relationships with their teachers (Buyse et al., 2008; Hu et al., 2021). Doumen et al. (2008) found bidirectional relationships between children's aggressive

behavior and teacher-child conflict in preschool. Specifically, children who exhibited high levels of aggressive behavior at the beginning of preschool had more conflict with their teachers after 3 months, leading to even more aggressive behavior at the end of the school year. Similarly, Roorda et al. (2014) reported that both children's externalizing and internalizing problems positively predicted their potential conflict levels in their relationships with teachers, and that teacher-child conflict also predicted children's behavior problems. However, Zatto and Hoglund (2019) found that children with more externalizing problems experienced more conflict in their relationships with their teachers. Zhang and Nurmi (2012) examined the relationship between teacher-child relationships and the social competence of Chinese preschool children and found that teacher-child closeness positively predicted teacher-rated child social competence and teacher-child conflict negatively predicted child social competence. On the other hand, Glüer and Gregoriadis (2017) found that the teacher-child closeness dimension positively influenced social behaviour, while the conflict dimension was associated with externalising behaviour problems. Saral and Acar (2021) found in their study that close teacher-child relationships were positively associated with children's social competence and teacher-child conflict was negatively associated with preschool children's social competence.

As a result of the research, it is understood that the closeness sub-dimension of the teacher-child relationship scale significantly predicts the levels of social competence, school liking, classroom participation, and self-directiveness variables. When children have a warm, close and sincere relationship with their teachers, they will be more positive about liking school and developing positive perceptions about school, and they will feel better at school. On the contrary, children may not want to go to school and may not want to actively participate in the educational process as long as conflict-based, negative relationships develop between teachers and children and closeness is not ensured. A warm and close teacher-child relationship also means that children exhibit fewer behavioral problems and have closer relationships with their peers (Reimers, 2021). On the other hand, as a result of the study conducted by Longobardi et al. (2016), it was determined that the teacher-child relationship was a supportive factor in children's school adjustment. Birch and Ladd (1997) found a negative relationship between a conflicted teacher-child relationship and liking school, while a close teacher-child relationship had a positive relationship with liking school and academic achievement. This supports the findings of the current study on the role of conflict and closeness in school adjustment.

### **Limitations and Suggestions**

This study, which investigates preschool children's relationships with their teachers, school adjustment, and social competencies, is limited to the observations of preschool teachers. Therefore, the findings reflect the subjective views of the teachers. Future studies can try to include other sources such as children's perspectives and observational data on teacher-child relationships. In this respect, it is important to conduct research that examines children's school adjustment and social competencies with objective tests. In addition, quantitative studies with larger samples across Türkiye may provide a larger picture of the effects of the teacher-child relationships, school adjustment, and social competencies in preschool children in Türkiye. Researchers can use more representative and larger samples in future studies to increase the generalisability of the findings. In addition, longitudinal studies will make important contributions to the literature in terms of assessing whether or not this effect is permanent. This study did not take into account variables such as teachers' personality characteristics and children's temperament that may affect teacher-child relationship, children's school adjustment and social competence. In future research, other important aspects such as bonding, teacher and child characteristics can be included.



### **Acknowledgment**

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**Ethics statement:** In this study, we declare that the rules stated in the "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive" are complied with and that we do not take any of the actions based on "Actions Against Scientific Research and Publication Ethics". At the same time, we declare that there is no conflict of interest between the authors, which all authors contribute to the study, and that all the responsibility belongs to the article authors in case of all ethical violations.

**Author Contributions:** First Author: Conceptualizing, methodology and validation, data analysis and interpretation of data, and writing-review, supervision, and editing.

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