PREDICTION OF EMOTIONAL UNDERSTANDING AND EMOTION REGULATION SKILLS OF 4-5 AGE GROUP CHILDREN WITH TEACHER-CHILD RELATIONS

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Abstract:

The objective of the present study is to examine whether teacher-child relations predict children's emotional understanding and emotion regulation skills. The study was conducted with relational screening model, one of the screening models. Study sample included 373 children between the ages of 4 – 5 that attend preschool educational institutions. A personal information form, Teacher – Child Relationship Scale, Emotion Regulation Checklist and Wally Feeling Understanding Test were utilized as data collection tools. Data were tested with Pearson correlation coefficient and multiple regression analysis. Study findings demonstrated that there was a significant correlation between teacher – child relations sub-dimensions and emotion regulation and emotional understanding skills. Furthermore, it was determined that teacher – child relation sub-dimensions significantly predicted emotional understanding and emotion regulation skills sub-dimensions.

Keywords: teacher-child relations, emotion development, emotional understanding, emotion regulation, preschool period

1. Introduction

Significance of the conditions of social environment and especially the role of the opportunities that family and immediate environment provide for the child on the emotional, social and intellectual development of the child are undeniable (Kartal, 2007;

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Topbaş, 2004). Teacher – child relations are an important source of support for the adaptation of children to school environment and their relations with their peers (Hamre and Pianta, 2001; Hughes and Chen, 2011). According to bioecological theory, multiple contexts (such as home and school) that affect child development. Consistent and mutual relationships established with individuals within these contexts produce results that would affect the child's future life. Quality and nature of close relationships are shaped by child's traits and environmental characteristics (family and teacher behavior). Child's traits and environmental characteristics together cause harmony or disharmony in significant developmental areas such as peer relations (Rudasill et al., 2013). Close relationship processes are directly or indirectly shaped by various ecological systems. Individuals' intimate settings or microsystems include families, workplaces and academic institutions. Relations between two or more microsystems are called mesosystems.

Ecosystems include environmental factors that affect development indirectly such as the effects of the family and workplace on the child. The broadest and farthest effect on individual's development belongs to the macro system (Walls, 2016). Teacher – child relations that belong to both mesosystem and macro system directly affect the physical environment where the child is raised such as the abundance of stimuli, the magnitude and safety of child's class or setting, peer interactions, teacher attitude, teacher – child relationship and educational attitudes of preschool educators, and child's behavioral styles (Yumuş, 2013).Positive teacher – child relations allow the development of social interactions that are necessary to effectively cope with the discussions and difficulties (Rudasill and Rimm-Kaufman, 2009). These relations also promote positive perceptions of the child about the school in general and provide social support by creating safe actions in academic and social environment. It is possible for the children to distance themselves from the school, experience loneliness and exhibit lower academic performance and social competence without these types of social resources (Birch and Ladd, 1997; Pianta, Nimetz and Bennett, 1997). Teachers play a significant role in cognitive, social-emotional and academic development of children. By listening to their concerns and calming their sad feelings, teachers relax the children. Teacher – child relationship has three dimensions of conflict, dependence and closeness. Close relationship requires high levels of intimacy and support between the teacher and the child. It is more probable for children who have close relations with their teachers to request assistance from their teachers when necessary, to fulfill the requests of their teachers and behave in a collaborative fashion in the classroom. Dimension of closeness in teacher – child relations affects social-emotional development. Closeness dimension is related to high social competence, prosocial behavior, low aggressive and destructive behavior (Hamre and Pianta, 2001; Pianta, 1999; Pianta and Stuhlman, 2004; Hughes, Bullock and Coplan, 2014). Conflicting approach, hostile or argumentative interaction in

teacher – child relationship could be defined as incoherence between teacher and the child. Students could reject the ideas of their teachers, the could refuse to cooperate and oppose. High level conflicting relationship is related to negative social-emotional outcomes and behavioral problems such as aggressiveness, hyperactivity and non-conformity to classroom rules (Birch and Ladd, 1997; Pianta and Stuhlman, 2004). Dependence dimension in teacher – child relationship is defined as extreme trust the student has for the teacher. Children with extreme dependence act possessive towards their teachers and they trust their teacher in resolving social-emotional and academic problems. Children with a dependence relationship with their teacher could prefer to communicate with their teachers more instead of their peers when compared to their peers (Birch and Ladd, 1997; Pianta and Stuhlman, 2004). Children with excessive confidence in their teachers could miss the fine details in peer relationships and social withdrawal, low social competence, solitude and anxiety could be observed in these children (Hughes, Bullock and Coplan, 2014).

Skills of understanding and regulating emotions are significant behavioral elements in individuals initiating and maintaining positive interactions with others (Gormley et.al, 2011; Vural and Gürşimşek, 2009). Early childhood is a critical period for the development of children's understanding of emotions, emotion regulation skills, value systems and self-confidence social competence (Berk, 2000; Blair et.al, 2004; Carlson ve Wang, 2007). Experiences of children in early childhood education classes are affected substantially by their relations with their teachers. Quality teacher – child relation is the determinant of the children's socio-emotional, behavioral and academic achievements (Gregoriadisa and Grammatikopoulosb, 2014). Understanding emotions is to understand emotional expressions, inner emotions, predecessors and outcomes of their and others' emotions (LaBounty et al., 2008). Understanding emotions includes understanding emotional expressions (facial and body expressions), and a) understanding the reasons of the feelings of others, b) understanding emotional evidences of others, c) understanding multiple emotions, d) limited use of emotion expression methods to establish communication with others, e) coping with emotions (Southam-Gerowa and Kendall, 2002).

Emotion regulation skills are individual's controlling, monitoring, assessing and changing her or his emotional reactions to fulfill goals (Thompson, 1994). Emotion regulation skills basically include emotion regulation and emotion lability/negativity dimensions. Emotional regulation is the skill to regulate individual's emotional stimuli to conform to the environment, cope with negative emotions and sustain positive emotions (Shields and Cicchetti, 1997; Thompson, 1994). Emotion regulation is a significant factor for the individuals to reach their goals and to be complying with social life (Cole, Martin and Dennis, 2004). Emotion lability/negativity, on the other hand, is responding emerging emotional stimuli rapidly and at the same time, experiencing

problems in eluding negative emotional reactions (Dunsmore, Booker and Ollendick, 2013).

Positive teacher – child relations is perceived as low level conflict with the child, low dependence and high closeness by the teachers. Children whose relationship with their teacher is defined by respect and compassion perceive their teachers as a source of trust. As a result, these types of relationships form a basis and a model for the children to develop positive behavior. Negative teacher – child relationships are defined as high conflict and dependence, low closeness and considered as risk factors for the academic achievement of the children. In negative teacher – child relationships, children are perceived as extremely aggressive, ill-tempered or importunate by the teachers; there is a continuous conflict between the teacher and the child. Especially, negative teacher – child relationship during early childhood is quite harmful since it could block the feeling of trust formation in children. Teacher – child relationship has an important effect on early childhood age children to acquire emotion regulation skills. Early childhood is the most adequate period to help the child to achieve emotional skills. In this period, children not achieving emotional skills through adequate educational arrangements would create risks of social, academic, emotional and behavioral problems in the child's development process. (Pianta, 1999; Pianta et.al, 1995; Rudasill and Rimm-Kaufman, 2009).

Relationships where teachers are sensitive for the needs of children contribute to the social, emotional and behavioral development of the children. Within the positive relationship environment between the teacher and the child, the teacher could observe how the child expresses and regulates her or his emotions. When teacher has information about the child's skills of understanding emotions and emotion regulation, it helps the teacher to plan the emotional support that the children need. Furthermore, the teacher could contribute to emotional development of the child by being a guide and model for the child to recognize, name and adequately express the emotions when she or he experiences when she or he is disappointed, feeling sad or angry (Novick, 2004; Antidote, 2003)

Preschool age is of critical importance for the children to achieve the skills of understanding emotions and emotion regulation. It is considered that teacher –child relation is of extreme significance in children acquiring emotion regulation skills. Thus, the objective of the present study was to investigate whether teacher – child relationship predicted emotional understanding and emotion regulation skills of preschool children.

1.1 Aim of the Study

The objective of the present study is to examine whether teacher – child relations predict emotional understanding and emotion regulation skills of children.

2. Method

Research model, universe, sample, data collection tools and data analysis are discussed in this section.

2.1 Research Model
The present study was conducted with relational screening model, one of the screening research models. Screening model is a research approach that aims to describe a past or present situation as it is (Karasar, 2010).

2.2 Universe and Sample
Research universe includes 4 and 5 years old children that attend state preschool educational institutions at Eskişehir city center in Turkey. Study sample consisted of 373 children who attended preschool education institutions. The sample was selected with one of the purposive sampling methods, criterion sampling method. Sampling criteria were determined as being in 4-5 age group, attending a preschool educational institution, and not having a developmental problem.

Table 1: Demographics variables of research sample

Variables	Status	f	%
Gender of Child	Girl	162	43.43
	Boy	211	56.57
Age of Child	4 age	188	50.40
	5 age	185	49.60
Mother Education	Elementary education	87	23.32
	Secondary education	112	30.02
	University	138	37.01
	Mater/ Phd.	36	9.65
Father Education	Elementary education	72	19.30
	Secondary education	138	37.01
	University	136	36.46
	Mater/ Phd.	27	7.23
Family İncome.	0-1000 TL	46	12.33
	1001-2000 TL	103	27.61
	2001-3000 TL	57	15.28
	3001-4000 TL	70	18.77
	More than 4000 TL	97	26.01

The research was carried out through the data gathered from 162 (43.43 %) female and 211 (56.57 %) male preschool education children. In the study groups, 50.40 % of the participants had 4 age and 49.60 % had 5 age. 23.32 % of the participants had elementary school graduate mothers, 30.02 % of the participants had secondary school

graduate mothers, and 37.01 % of the participants had university and 6.65 % master/ doctoral graduate mothers. 19.30 % of the participants had elementary school graduate fathers, 37.01 % of the participants had secondary school graduate fathers, and 36.46 % of the participants had university and 7.23 master/ doctoral graduate fathers. 39.94 % of the participants were from the lower socio-economic level, 34.05 % of the participants were from the middle socio-economic level and 26.01 % of the participants were from the upper socio-economic level.

2.3 Data Collection Tools

A. Personal Information Form

This is the form that was used to identify the personal attributes (age, gender, mother-father education level, family income) of the children in the sample group.

B. Teacher – Child Relationship Scale

Teacher – Child Relationship Scale was developed by Pianta (1996) based on relationship between teachers and children, perception and evaluate of teachers in 4-8 age group. The scale includes a three-factor structure with 28 items and five-point likert-type. Test-retest reliability coefficient is .92 for conflict dimension subscale, .88 for closeness dimension subscale, .79 for dependence dimension and .89 for the whole scale. Scale internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach alpha) are .92 for conflict dimension subscale, .86 for closeness dimension subscale, and. 64 for dependence dimensions (Pianta, 2011). The scale was adapted by Şahin (2014) to Turkey for children in the 4-6 age group. The Turkish scale includes a three-factor structure with 28 items. Conflict dimension factor loads vary between .50 and .80; closeness dimension factor loads vary between .50 and .80; and dependence dimension factor loads vary between .45 and .62. Scale internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach alpha) are .84 for conflict dimension subscale, .80 for closeness dimension subscale, .72 for dependence dimension subscale and .86 for the whole scale. Confirmatory factor analysis for the scale was tested by Yüksek – Usta (2014) and the scale was determined as a good fit (GFI = .80, NFI = .89, CFI = .93, RMSEA = .079).

C. Emotion Regulation Checklist – Teacher Form

The scale was developed by Shields and Cicchetti (1997) to determine emotion regulation and control skills of preschool and school-age children. The scale contains two subscales: Emotion lability / Negativity dimension includes 15 items, whereas Emotion Regulation dimension includes 8 items, while there is a separate item which does not have a factor load in neither subscale. Emotion regulation dimension Cronbach alpha coefficient is .83 and Emotion Lability / Negativity dimension Cronbach alpha coefficient is .92.

The scale was adapted to Turkey for 4-5 age group children by Danışman, Dereli-İman, Akın-Demircan and Yaya (2015). Initially, two-factor structure of the scale was

tested with confirmatory factor analysis; however, it was observed that the data did not confirm the two-factor structure. As a result of conducted explanatory factor analysis, a two-factor structure that explained 81.12% of the total variance was obtained and it was observed that the item that was excluded from both factors in the original scale was included in the first factor. To confirm the obtained structure, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted and it was determined that the model was an acceptable fit (GFI = .93, AGFI = .90, CFI = .97, RMSEA = .07, χ^2/sd = 2.83). Cronbach alpha coefficient for the whole scale was .88, and .98 and .98 for the sub-dimensions (Danişman, Dereli-İman, Akın – Demircan and Yaya, 2015).

D. Wally Feeling Test

It was developed to identify preschool children's terms of emotion by Webster-Stratton, Reid and Stoolmiller (2008). In this test, eight pictures that depict positive and negative moods are shown to children and the children are asked to identify what the children in the pictures feel. The test was used to measure emotional understanding of 1,700 children and it was determined that the test was differential. This test is used in several countries to assay emotional understanding of children. The test was adapted to Turkey for 4-5 age group children by the author. Initially, two-factor structure of the test (understanding positive and negative moods) was tested with confirmatory factor analysis and it was observed that the data confirmed the two-factor structure. Confirmatory factor analysis established that the model was a good fit (GFI = .93, AGFI = .90, CFI = .98, RMSEA = .05, χ^2/sd = 1.813). Factor loads obtained demonstrated that the scale could also be used in a single-factor structure. Cronbach alpha coefficient calculated for the scale was .87, and .94 and .87 for the sub-dimensions.

2.4 Data Collection

Teacher – Child Relationship Scale and Emotion Regulation Checklist was filled out by the teacher of the participating children. Emotional understanding test was applied to children individually by the author. Before the scales used in the research were applied, the approval of Eskişehir Province National Education Directorate was obtained. Furthermore, consent of parents and preschool teachers were obtained prior to presenting the research scales. Parents and preschool teachers responded to the scales on a voluntary basis.

2.5 Data Analysis

Normal distribution of data was examined with Kolmogorov – Smirnov Test prior to data analysis. Kolmogorov – Smirnov test did not yield significant results and thus, identified the normal distribution of all data. It was observed that Kolmogorov – Smirnov values varied between .97and .478 for dependent and independent variables. Furthermore, analysis of skewness and kurtosis coefficients demonstrated that

skewness coefficients changed between .046 and .343, and kurtosis coefficients changed between .156 and -576. Lower than 1 skewness and kurtosis values reflected normal distribution. Single variable normality was tested with Z-values, multivariate normality and extreme values were examined using Mahalanobis Distance test. No extreme values and any factors that affected multivariate normality were observed.

Data analysis was conducted with SPSS 21.0 software. Correlation between teacher – child relationship sub-dimension scores and children's emotional understanding and emotion regulation skills sub-dimension scores was tested with Pearson correlation coefficient; whether teacher – child relationship sub-dimension scores predicted children's emotional understanding and emotion regulation skills sub-dimension scores was tested with multiple regression analysis (Büyüköztürk, 2009).

3. Findings

In this section, information on the correlation coefficient between teacher– child relationship, emotional understanding and emotion regulation skills of 4-5 years old children, and whether teacher–child relationship predicted their emotional understanding and emotion regulation skills are discussed.

Table 2: Correlations between the variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Conflict (1)	1					
Closeness (2)	-.402**	1				
Dependence (3)	.278**	.199**	1			
Emotion Lability/Negativity (4)	.561**	-.138*	.283**	1		
Emotion Regulation (5)	-.417**	.440**	-.090	-.314**	1	
Total Understanding Feelings(6)	-.737**	.344**	-.187**	-.471**	.315**	1

**p<.01, *p<.05

Table 2 indicate that there was positive correlation between conflict and emotion lability / negativity (r = .56, p< .01), negative correlation between conflict and emotion regulation (r = -.41, *p*< .01), negative correlation between conflict and total understanding feelings (r = -.73, *p*< .01).

There was negative correlation between closeness and emotion lability / negativity (r = -.13, p< .05), positive correlation between closeness and emotion regulation (r = .44, *p*< .01), pozitive correlation between closeness and total understanding feelings (r = .34, *p*< .01). There was positive correlation between dependence and emotion lability / negativity (r = 28, p< .05), negative correlation between dependence and total understanding feelings (r =- .18, *p*< .05),

There was negative correlation between emotion lability/negativity and total understanding feelings (r= -.47, p< .01). Negative correlation between emotion

lability/negativity and emotion regulation (r=- .31, p< .01). There was positive correlation between emotion regulation and total understanding feelings (r =.31, p< .01),.

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the level that teacher – child relationships predicted emotional understanding and emotion regulation skills.

Table 3: Results of Multiple Regression Analysis Related to Prediction of
Total Understanding Feelings with Teacher Child Relations

		Unstandardized		Standardized				
Model	Teacher-Child Relations	B	Std. Eror	Beta	t	F	R^2	Δ R^2
Understanding Feelings	(Constant)	6.727	.581		11.574**	61.653**	.358	.352
	Conflict	-.116	.011	-.571	-10.855*			
	Closeness	.036	.014	.123	2.492*			
	Dependence	.019	.017	.059	1.123			

**p<.01, *p<.05

Results indicate that teacher-child relations subdimensions predicted total understanding feelings significantly [R^2= .358;   F = 61.653, p< .01]. It was also observed that teacher-child relations subdimensions explained 35.8 % of the total variance in total understanding feelings dimension scores. According to regression equation in and dependent variables t-test results, conflict dimension (β= -.571; p<.01) was the strongest predictor of total understanding feelings followed by the closeness dimension (β= .123 p<.01).

Table 4: Results of Multiple Regression Analysis Related to Prediction of
Emotion Lability/Negativity with Teacher Child Relations

		Unstandardized		Standardized				
Model	Teacher-Child Relations	B	Std. Hata	Beta	t	F	R^2	Δ R^2
Emotion Lability/ Negativity	(Constant)	7.788	3.577		2.177*	78.216**	.414	.409
	Conflict	.761	.066	.584	11.614**			
	Closeness	.172	.089	.091	1.939			
	Dependence	.296	.105	.140	2.813**			

**p<.01, *p<.05

It was observed that teacher-child relations subdimensions predicted emotion lability/ negativity significantly [R^2= .414;   F = 78.216 , p< .01]. It was also observed that teacher-child relations subdimensions explained 41.4 % of the total variance in emotion lability/ negativity dimension scores. According to regression equation in and dependent

variables t-test results, conflict dimension (β= .584; p<.01) was the strongest predictor of emotion lability/ negativity followed by the dependence dimension (β= .140 p<.05).

Table 5: Results of Multiple Regression Analysis Related to Prediction of
Emotion Regulation with Teacher Child Relations

Model	Öğretmen-Çocuk İlişkisi	Unstandardized		Standardized					
		B	Std. Hata	Beta	t	F	R^2	ΔR^2
Emotion Regulation	(Constant)	20,553	1,985		10,357	33.746	.234	.227
	Conflict	-,125	,036	-,197	-3,431			
	Closeness	,341	,049	,375	6,951			
	Dependence	-,134	,058	-,131	-2,297			

**p<.01, *p<.05

Results indicate that teacher-child relations subdimensions predicted emotion regulation significantly [R^2= .234; F = 33.746, p< .01]. It was also observed that teacher-child relations subdimensions explained 23.4 % of the total variance in emotion regulation dimension scores. According to regression equation in and dependent variables t-test results, closeness dimension (β= .375; p<.01) was the strongest predictor of total understanding feelings followed by the conflict dimension (β=- .197p<.01), and by the dependence dimension(β=- .131, p<.01).

4. Discussion

Study findings demonstrated that there was a positive correlation between conflict sub-dimension and emotion lability/negativity sub-dimension of teacher – child relationship and a negative correlation between emotion regulation and total emotional understanding. There was a negative correlation between closeness dimension and emotion lability/negativity dimension of teacher – child relationship, while there was a positive correlation between emotion regulation dimension and total emotional understanding dimension. There was a positive correlation between dependence dimension and emotion lability/negativity dimension of teacher – child relationship, while there was a negative correlation between dependence dimension and total emotional understanding dimension. A negative correlation was found between emotion lability/negativity and emotion regulation and total emotional understanding. There was a positive correlation between emotion regulation and total emotional understanding.

The present study investigated the prediction of emotional understanding and emotion regulation skills of preschool children by teacher – child relationships. Study findings demonstrated that teacher – child relationship significantly predicted emotional understanding and emotion regulation skills of the children.

Standardized regression coefficient and independent variables t-test results showed that conflict and closeness sub-dimensions of teacher – child relationship had significant effects on children's emotional understanding skills. Teacher – child relationship conflict dimension had negative prediction effect on emotional understanding closeness dimension had positive prediction effect. Closeness teacher – child relationship subscale scores include adequately taking care of the child and being responsive and having positive emotional interactions. High closeness scores demonstrate that the teacher perceives the child as a good child and the child perceives the teacher as a supportive adult and utilized the teacher as an active resource (Şahin, 2014). In preschool level, teacher – child relation plays a significant role in fulfilling social, emotional and physical needs of the child as well as the parent- child relationship (Eraslan- Çapan, 2009). For development of emotional skills, it is important for primarily the teacher, family and adults close to the child to be sensitive to the basic emotional needs of the child such as recognition, acceptance, appreciation, promotion, love and affection, respect, support, trust and consolation when necessary, and provide for these needs (Bowlby, 1997). Close relationship of the teacher with the children, his or her sensitivity for children's needs, empathy, and children feeling safe and peaceful and in an environment of respect in the classroom could develop children's emotional understanding. Meanwhile, the fact that teacher acted as a guide and a model in the child recognizing, naming and expressing the emotions she or he experienced when she or he was disappointed, sad or angry could have contributed to the positive emotional interaction and affected children's emotional understanding (Pianta, Hamre and Stuhlman, 2003; Hamre and Pianta, 2016; Hamre and Pianta 2001; Nissen and Hawkins, 2010; Webster-Stratton, 1999; Webster-Stratton and Reid, 2004).

Teacher – child relationship conflict subscale scores include the behavior of the child that are perceived as negative by the teacher, their negative interactions in the emotional dimension and lack of active management of the behavior. High conflict scores defined by the teacher indicate possible disagreements experienced with the child, not being able to know how to cope with the child emotionally and not being able to define herself or himself as an effective component of that relationship. Conflicts experienced in teacher – child relationship could cause the teacher to focus on undesired behavior of the child, the child to think she or he was not understood, and feel herself or himself under threat in the classroom and introversion and failing to understand the emotions related to these experiences (Webster-Stratton, 1999; Webster-Stratton and Reid, 2004). Furthermore, when the teacher does not know how to cope with conflict, the teacher might not able to meet emotional needs of the child and could not approach the child emotionally. This could create a negative prediction effect on children's emotional understanding.

Standardized regression coefficient and independent variables t-test results showed that conflict and dependence sub-dimensions of teacher – child relationship had significant effects on emotion lability/negativity sub-dimension of children's emotion regulation skills. Teacher – child relationship conflict and dependence dimensions had positive prediction effect on emotion lability/negativity. Emotion Lability/Negativity subscale of emotion regulation is responding to emerging emotional stimuli in a rapid, rashly, impulsive manner, and at the same time, experiencing difficulties in evading negative emotional reactions (Dunsmore, Booker and Ollendick, 2013). Teacher – child relationship dependence subscale scores include children's search for affinity and assistance, negative emotional interactions, high responsive behavior against certain children. High scores in this subscale indicates problems in high level of dependence of the child on the teacher. The child reacts strongly for the separation from the teacher and asks for help even though she or he does not need it. A relationship between the teacher and the child based on dependency could result in reinforcement of the child's emotion Lability/negativity traits. In dependency based teacher – child relationship, teacher's excessively giving and assistive behavior instead of being a guide and model in the child controlling her or his emotions could reinforce the exhibition of negative emotional behavior by the child and get away with her or his desires. This could have increased the impulsive reactions against emotional stimuli by the child and prevented her or him from coping with negative emotions. Conflict in teacher – child relationship would result in the teacher focusing on the undesired behavior of the child and the child thinking that she or he was not understood and feel herself or himself under threat in the classroom. Relationships where teachers are sensitive to the unique needs of children contribute to the social, emotional and behavioral development of children. However, conflicting teacher – child relationship prevents a relationship based on trust, the teacher could not fulfill emotional needs of the child and the child could not feel himself or herself comfortable in the class. This affects the participation of the child in school activities, learning and academic achievement negatively (Coplan and Prakash, 2003; Shonkoff and Phillips, 2001). Thus, conflicts experienced between the teacher and the student could create several problems and a positive prediction effect on emotion lability/negativity dimension of emotion regulation.

Standardized regression coefficient and independent variables t-test results showed that conflict, closeness and dependence sub-dimensions of teacher – child relationship had significant effects on emotion regulation sub-dimension of children's emotion regulation skills. Teacher – child relationship conflict and dependence dimensions had negative prediction effect on emotion regulation, while closeness had a positive prediction effect. Emotion regulation skills are related to the individual controlling, monitoring, evaluating and changing emotional responses (Thompson, 1994). Emotion regulation is the ability to regulate emotional stimuli to become

coherent with the environment (Shields and Cicchetti, 1997; Thompson, 1994). Emotion regulation is the skill to cope with negative emotions and at the same time sustaining positive emotions (Denham, 1998; Hyson, 2004).

Intimate and trust based relationship between the teacher and the child provides the child an area where she or he could experience expressing her or his emotions, while at the same time, provides the teacher information on the emotional well-being of the child. In this environment of intimacy and trust, teacher could observe how the child personally expresses her or his emotions and how the child regulates her or his emotions during in-class events. Furthermore, the teacher could contribute to the child's achievement of emotion regulation skills by being a model in emotion regulation strategies or using emotion regulation strategies, accepting child's emotions, responding to her or his emotional expressions, helping the children to regulate their emotions, helping them to relax, guiding them to learn various emotion regulation strategies, and motivating them with various social and physical rewards (Dunsmore, Booker and Ollendick, 2013; Frankel et al., 2012). Awareness of the teacher about the emotional skills of the child enables the teacher to plan the support that the child is in need of (Nissen and Hawkins, 2010). However, presence of a relationship between the teacher and the child based on conflict and dependence affects participation of the child in school activities, learning and academic achievement, negatively (Coplan and Prakash, 2003). This would cause several problems in the classroom that should be resolved. Teachers, when they could not establish a quality and healthy relationship with the children, spend most of educational and instructional time trying to find solutions to the problem behavior of the children. This could prevent them to conduct activities that would enable the children to achieve emotion regulation. Education in the school environment has two aspects: teachers who provide education and the children who receive the education. For an effective education process, a special relationship is required between the provider and receiver of the education. At preschool level, teacher – child relationship plays a significant role in fulfilling social, emotional and physical needs of the child, as much as the parent –child relationship (Eraslan -Çapan, 2009). Thus, close relationship between teachers and children is quite important for both the development of children and job satisfaction of the teachers (Gordon, 1996).

In a study by Van Ijzendoorn, Sagi and Lambermon (1992), it was found that healthy teacher – child relationship contributed to only social-emotional development. Nim and Sook (2013) found that teacher – child relationship predicted emotion regulation of 3-5 years old children. Peisner-Feinberg and Burchinal (1997) found a positive correlation between preschool children – teacher relationship and social-emotional development of the children. Burchinal and Cryer (2003) found that negative teacher –child relationship affected emotional development and emotion regulation of the children negatively. Blair, Berry and Friedman (2012) found that teacher – child

relationship had a significant effect on self-regulation and emotion regulation achievements of preschool children. Feldman and Klein (2003) found that teacher – child relationship was a significant factor in children's emotion regulation. Lee (2006) found that intimate and moderate relationship between the caregivers and education providers for the child in childhood was a significant factor in emotional development of children. Ahn (2005) found that teacher – child relationship was a significant factor in achievement of emotional skills by the children. Lee (2006) found that the relationship between the child and the caregiver and trainer was significant in emotional development of the child. Hughes, Bullock and Coplan (2014) found a positive significant correlation between early childhood teacher –child relationship dependence and emotional symptoms sub-dimensions and a negative significant correlation between closeness and emotional symptoms. Myers (2009) determined that positive or negative teacher – child relations of children with low socio-economic background were directly correlated with emotional problems of the children (emotional symptoms, problems in peer relations, etc.).

5. Result

Findings of the present study demonstrated that there was a significant relationship between teacher – child relationship sub-dimensions and emotion regulation and emotional understanding sub-dimensions. Furthermore, it was determined that teacher – child relationship sub-dimensions significantly predicted emotion regulation and emotional understanding skills sub-dimensions. Based on these findings, it could be argued that teacher – child relationship is a significant factor in children's achievement of emotional understanding and emotion regulation.

6. Recommendations

Based on these results, the following could be recommended: It was found that teacher – child relationship was a significant factor in children's achievement of emotional understanding and emotion regulation skills. Curricula that would increase the closeness dimension and to decrease conflict and dependence dimensions of teacher – child relationship could be developed to investigate its effect on children's emotional understanding and emotion regulation skills. Further research could be conducted to investigate factors that affect teacher – child relationship. The same study could be conducted with children in different age groups and different samples to compare the findings. Further research could be conducted to determine other factors that could affect children's emotional understanding and emotion regulation skills.

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