

Collaborative Learning in Preschool Education: Teacher Perspectives and Practices

Ebru Uluçay Bektaş^{a*} & Özlem Melek Erbil Kaya^b

a Lecturer, Artvin Çoruh University, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5714-1854> *ebru.ulucaybektas@artvin.edu.tr

b Asst. Prof. Dr., Anadolu University, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0738-5807>

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Abstract

One of the methods used to achieve desired learning outcomes in preschool education is collaborative learning. The purpose of this study is to determine the views and practices of preschool teachers regarding collaborative learning, which is a basic qualitative study. Data were collected through a demographic information form, semi-structured interviews, structured observations, and examination of activity schedules. Descriptive analysis and document review methods were used to analyze the data. According to the findings, most teachers defined collaborative learning as cooperation and group work. They emphasized the contributions of these practices to children's socio-emotional development, improvement of communication skills, and adaptability. In addition, teachers expressed a preference for implementing collaborative learning, particularly in arts activities, and noted that the lack of cooperation among children could complicate the process. Observations and examination of activity plans revealed that teachers encouraged children to work together, intervened when necessary, and supported multidirectional communication between children within groups. In addition, similarities and differences between collaborative learning plans and their implementation were observed.

Keywords: Development of collaboration skills, constructivist approach, importance of preschool education, collaborative learning techniques.

Okul Öncesi Eğitimde İşbirliğine Dayalı Öğrenme: Öğretmen Görüşleri ve Uygulamaları

Öz

Okul öncesi eğitim kurumlarında çocuklarda, istenilen öğrenmeleri gerçekleştirmek için kullanılan yöntemlerden biri de işbirliğine dayalı öğrenme yöntemidir. Okul öncesi eğitim öğretmenlerinin, işbirliğine dayalı öğrenme konusundaki görüşlerini ve uygulamalarını belirlemeyi amaçlayan bu araştırma, temel nitel bir çalışmadır. Veriler demografik bilgi formu, yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme, yapılandırılmış gözlem ve etkinlik planı incelemeleri ile toplanırken, betimsel analiz ve doküman incelemesi yöntemiyle analiz edilmiştir. Elde edilen bulgulara göre, öğretmenlerin çoğu işbirliğine dayalı öğrenmeyi yardımlaşma ve küme çalışması olarak tanımlamışlardır. Bu uygulamaların çocukların en çok sosyal-duygusal gelişimlerine katkı sağladığını, iletişim kurma ve uyum sağlama becerilerini geliştirdiğini, bu uygulamaları en çok sanat etkinliklerinde tercih ettiklerini ve bu uygulamaları gerçekleştirirken çocukların işbirliği yapmamlarının süreci zorlaştırabildiğinden bahsetmişlerdir. Gözlem ve etkinlik planı incelemelerinde ise öğretmenlerin çocukları birlikte çalışmaya teşvik ettikleri, onları izleyerek gerekli yerlerde müdahale ettikleri, grup içinde çocuklar arasında ki çok yönlü iletişimi destekledikleri, bununla birlikte işbirliğine dayalı öğrenme planları ile uygulamaları arasında benzerlikler olduğu gibi farklılıklar olduğu da görülmüştür.

Anahtar kelimeler: İşbirliği becerilerinin gelişimi, yapılandırmacı yaklaşım, okul öncesi eğitim ve önemi, işbirliğine dayalı öğrenme teknikleri.

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INTRODUCTION

In institutions providing preschool education, various educational methods are implemented with the aim of creating an ideal environment to support the development of children. The common goal of these methods is to implement the most beneficial one for the development and education of children. One such method that has been developed to support the comprehensive education of children is collaborative learning. In many studies on collaborative learning, it has been emphasized that traditional methods of education only transmit knowledge, whereas contemporary methods such as collaborative learning aim to structure knowledge (Sezer & Tokcan, 2003; Şimşek, Şimşek & Doymuş, 2005; Alakuş & Aydın, 2009).

Collaborative learning aims to maximize both individual and peer learning by allowing children to work together to produce a product, actively participating in all stages, including evaluation. In collaborative learning, children in a group actively share the responsibility for assessment with their peers and teachers. Collaborative learning practices allow children to structure their individual learning within multiple learning environments, address their deficiencies, and reinforce acquired knowledge while learning during the instructional process. By engaging in discussions, providing original solutions to problems, and identifying errors, collaborative learning helps to develop higher-order thinking skills (Ekinci, 2010). Collaborative learning can be applied to children of all ages and its benefits include academic, social, psychological, measurement, and evaluation aspects in general (Bayrakçeken, Doymuş & Doğan, 2013, pp. 29-44). One of these benefits is that collaborative learning contributes to the development of problem-solving skills in children with low ability (Güven, 2012, p. 89). Since problem solving involves critical thinking and the ability to solve individual and group problems, it contributes to the social skills of individuals (Tok, 2014, p. 177).

During group activities in preschool settings, children reinforce collaborative behaviors by actively participating in roles within the group, demonstrating effective collaborative behaviors, and exhibiting leadership behaviors (Arslan, 2014, p. 214). Collaborative skills are underdeveloped in preschool children as a natural part of their developmental process. Considering the impact of collaboration skills acquired during the preschool years on a child's life, the need for these skills becomes apparent.

Preschool teachers should consider children's developmental levels and individual differences when forming cooperative learning groups. It is important for these groups to be diverse, and attention should be given to sharing leadership among children. Teachers must take precautions to allow children at different developmental levels to form groups. It should be remembered that as the number of children in groups decreases, individual responsibility for each child increases. The number of children in groups in preschool education varies according to class size and children's developmental levels (Kaya, 2011, p. 93).

In addition, in collaborative learning, preschool teachers should move away from the traditional role of knowledge transfer and assume a more active and varied role. Teachers play an important role in planning, implementing, organizing the learning environment, and evaluating collaborative learning practices in preschool education. Teachers can plan learning experiences according to children's developmental levels and individual differences, select materials according to needs, and restructure applications based on the results obtained (McAfee & Leong, 2007). Preschool teachers have a number of important roles and responsibilities in planning, implementing, and evaluating collaborative learning practices. The extent to which teachers fulfill these roles and responsibilities will determine the place of collaborative learning practices in the learning processes of preschool children.

Looking at the effects and benefits of collaborative learning, it is seen as an area that needs to be worked on in preschool education. In examining the research, it is noted that there is a limited number of studies on collaborative learning practices specific to the preschool period. The majority of these studies are quantitative studies that focus on other levels of education. Qualitative research takes a descriptive approach to the world. It attempts to describe previously unknown and unexplored outcomes through the data collected. Therefore, qualitative research is employed in this study, which is also important in terms of contributing to the literature in this area.

The main objective of this study is to identify the opinions and practices of preschool teachers regarding collaborative learning practices in the preschool education process. Within this general objective, the following questions were addressed:

1. How do preschool education teachers define collaborative learning practices?

2. What do preschool education teachers think about the effects of collaborative learning practices on the development of children?
3. How do preschool education teachers implement collaborative learning practices in their classrooms?
 - What are their views on the process of implementing collaborative learning practices?
 - How do they plan collaborative learning practices?
 - How do they execute collaborative learning practices?
 - What difficulties do they encounter while implementing collaborative learning practices in their classrooms?
4. What recommendations do preschool education teachers have for collaborative learning practices in preschool education?

METHOD

Research Design

This research follows a fundamental qualitative approach. Basic qualitative studies exist in all disciplines and application areas, with qualitative research being the most common form in education. Data in these studies are collected through interviews, observations, or document analysis. The theoretical framework of the study determines what questions are asked, what is observed, and what documents are considered relevant. Data analysis in these studies involves characterizing the data to identify recurring patterns.

The findings are themes or categorizations supported by these recurring patterns or the data derived from them. In this context, the basic qualitative research process can be summarized as a focus on understanding, meaning, and process; purposive sampling; data collection through interviews, observations, and documents; inductive and comparative data analysis; detailed description of findings; and presentation of themes and categorizations (Merriam, 2015, pp. 22-37). Qualitative research is defined as research that uses qualitative data collection methods such as observations, interviews, and document analysis with the goal of presenting perceptions and events in a realistic and comprehensive manner in their natural environment (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013, p. 45).

Study Group

Criterion sampling is a non-random sampling method in which the basic idea is to examine all cases that meet a predetermined set of criteria. These criteria can be determined by the researcher or based on a pre-established list of criteria (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013, p. 140). In this study, the main criterion was preschool education teachers working in official preschool classes in preschool, primary, and secondary schools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education. However, in order to achieve maximum diversity, the following criteria were also considered:

1. Voluntary participation in the study,
2. Completion of a four-year preschool teacher training program,
3. Employment as a permanent teacher in official preschool classes in preschool, primary, and secondary schools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education,
4. Work with children aged 48-69 months.

In this regard, it was found that there were 58 preschool teachers in Kars city center who met the specified criteria during the 2017-2018 academic year. The research was conducted with 18 preschool education teachers who voluntarily agreed to participate in the research, distributed in 12 different schools (6 preschools, 5 primary schools, and 1 secondary school).

Data Collection

The research used qualitative data collection techniques, including semi-structured interviews, structured observations, and examination of activity schedules. Interviews were conducted with 18 preschool teachers. Based on the data obtained from these interviews, a total of 6 observations were conducted in the classrooms of 3 teachers who were perceived to be knowledgeable about and using collaborative learning practices. In addition, a total of 6 lesson plans related to the teachers' observed activities were examined.

In order to collect interview data for the research and create the interview form, relevant literature was reviewed. The researcher formulated purposeful questions in main and subheadings, taking into account certain

principles in preparing the interview form. These principles, based on Yıldırım and Şimşek (2013), Bogdan and Biklen (1992), and Patton, are outlined as follows:

- Prepare questions that are easy to understand.
- Write open-ended questions that do not guide or direct the respondent.
- Avoid writing multi-dimensional questions.
- Develop alternative questions.
- Prepare different types of questions.
- Place questions in a logical context.
- Develop questions effectively.

To determine the content validity of the draft form created according to these listed principles, it was distributed to a total of eight experts, 6 of whom were in the field of preschool education and 2 of whom were in the field of measurement and evaluation, and they were asked to evaluate the questions in terms of qualities such as understandability, serving the purpose, and proficiency level. After feedback from the experts, the number of questions was reduced by removing two of the interview questions. In its final form, the form consists of 5 main questions and 8 final questions. During the interviews, the questions were asked sequentially and recorded with a voice recorder. The shortest interview lasted 7 minutes and the longest 34 minutes. It was observed that the interviews lasted on average 25-30 minutes.

To collect data related to observation in the research, a structured observation form was prepared based on the content of the collaborative learning method. For this purpose, relevant literature review was conducted, and the information obtained was used to create the items of the observation form. In order to assess the comprehensibility, usefulness, and appropriateness of the observation items in revealing the desired data and establishing content validity, the form was distributed to a total of eight experts, six of whom specialized in preschool education and two in the field of measurement and evaluation. The final version of the form consisted of 18 items, where each situation expressed in the items during the observations was marked on the form as "yes," "no," or "partially," depending on the observability of the situation. During the observations, the researchers did not actively participate in the environment, but only made unobtrusive observations and filled out the observation form based on the data obtained. Several measures were taken by the researchers within the study to ensure credibility and consistency. The following points were considered to achieve credibility (internal validity):

1. Prolonged interaction: In accordance with the strategy that emphasizes that a single observer should not be sufficient, each observation was conducted by two observers, and for each teacher, two different activities were observed at two different times.
2. In-depth data collection: In cases where the adequacy of the data to answer the research questions needed to be questioned, additional data collection was emphasized. Following this strategy, when teachers elaborated on different topics during interviews, their statements were allowed to conclude, and then the same question was repeated with an additional question.
3. Variation: To ensure diversity in data sources, methods, and researcher variations, teachers with different characteristics working in schools with different socioeconomic levels were included in the process. Not only interviews, but also method variations were attempted by using observation and document analysis techniques.
4. Expert review: To implement the expert examination strategy, another person in addition to the researcher participated in the data collection process, and the assistance of two experts in the field was sought in the resolution of the data.
5. Participant verification: For the strategy that can be implemented in different ways, teachers were asked to confirm by reading the interview transcripts to identify any inaccuracies, deficiencies, or additions they wanted.

In addition, to ensure internal reliability (consistency), the raw data and coding performed during the analysis phase were preserved.

Data Analysis

The data obtained in this research was analyzed using the descriptive analysis and document review method using the MAXQDA computer program. In scientific studies, qualitative findings can be presented alongside quantitative data to reduce bias and maximize reliability (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Qualitative data can be

quantified to minimize bias and maximize reliability (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). However, the aim of the descriptive analysis is to present the results in an organized and interpretable way. MAXQDA is a computer software program that assists researchers in the systematic analysis and interpretation of qualitative texts (Creswell, 2015, p. 201). It also facilitates the organization, visualization, and presentation of data through frequencies. In this context, all interviews were transcribed by the researcher, carefully read one at a time, and expressed through codes. Interview questions were accepted as themes, and relevant codes were grouped under these themes to create a codebook. The codebook and all interviews were then entered into MAXQDA by an expert. Finally, the emerging findings were analyzed and interpreted by the researcher.

To observe how the data obtained from the interviews reflected on the implementation process, observations were conducted in the classrooms of three teachers who were believed to be implementing collaborative practices in the preschool education process. These observations were conducted at two different times with the participation of another observer. Data were recorded on the observation form during the observations and explanations were recorded when necessary. Subsequently, a framework for data analysis was created based on the dimensions of observation in the context of descriptive analysis. Within this framework, it was determined under which descriptions the data would be listed and provided.

Four themes were created according to the main headings in the observation form: creating the necessary physical environment, forming learning groups, ensuring active participation of children in the learning process, and evaluating the results of implementation. Based on this framework, further steps were taken. In this context, in the next stage of data collection, the obtained data were processed, organized by reading according to the previously created framework. Frequency calculations were made for each item on the observation form according to the triple rating in the form.

After observing two activities in the teachers' classrooms at different times, samples of their plans for the observed activities were taken and interpreted through document analysis. Document analysis is the analysis of written sources that contain information about the facts and events under study. In qualitative research, document analysis can be considered as an independent data collection method or together with other data collection methods (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013, pp. 202-217).

The activity plans were used to reinforce and support the data obtained from the interviews and observations. While the activity plans were considered original based on the teachers' statements, the data obtained from interviews and observations were interpreted by the researcher by comparing them with the data obtained from the activity plans. In the activity plan reviews, the observation items and the activity plan format of the Ministry of National Education Preschool Education Program included in the Preschool Education Program were accepted as criteria while creating the headings. In addition, more than one expert participated in the data analysis processes, and consensus was reached among the experts in analyzing the data.

FINDINGS

This section includes the findings obtained through interviews, observations, and examination of activity plans during the research process.

Findings Regarding Preschool Education Teachers' Views on Collaborative Learning

What does collaborative learning mean to you? Can you explain? What do you think are classroom practices that can be examples of collaborative learning? Two themes were created in line with their answers to the questions. These themes are given in figure 1.

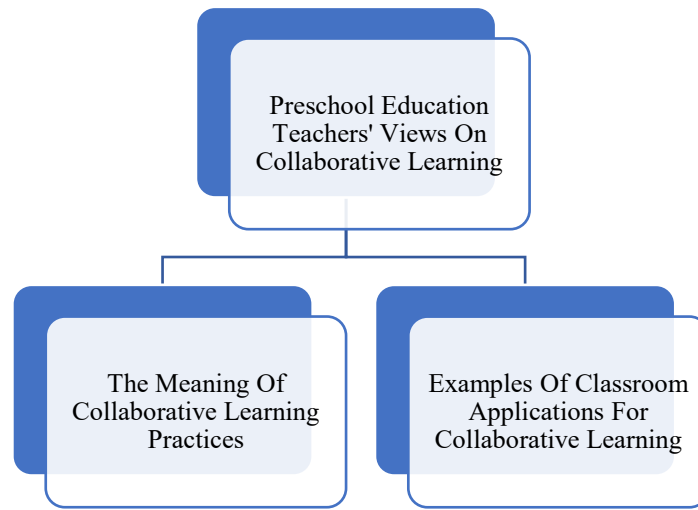


Figure 1. *Preschool education teachers' views on collaborative learning*

During the interviews, nine sub-themes were reached in line with the teachers' answers to what collaborative learning meant to them. Sub-themes and frequency distributions are given in Table 1.

Table 1. The Meaning of Collaborative Learning Practices

Sub-Theme	N
Cooperation	9
Teamwork	7
Efficient method	6
Working for a common goal	2
Permanence	2
Brainstorming process	2
Peer education	2
Enable socialization	1
Sharing among teachers	1
Total of Opinions	32

As seen in Table 1, the teachers participating in the research expressed the meaning of cooperative learning practices as cooperation, group work, an efficient method, working towards a common goal, permanence, a process including brainstorming, peer education, socialization, and teacher sharing. One of the teachers, T12, who defines cooperative learning practices as practices that develop cooperative behavior, expressed his thoughts as "Activities that we do with children by helping each other, in which either I or the children help each other...". Meanwhile, T11, another teacher who defines cooperative learning practices as group work, stated, "I think cooperative learning is important with respect to children working together in groups." This might be significant. While T14, one of the teachers, expressed his views as "... looking at each other at the tables, they do the same things with their friends at the same level..." Again, during the interviews, ten sub-themes were reached in line with the answers given by the teachers about what classroom practices that are examples of collaborative learning could be. Sub-themes and frequency distributions are in table 2.

Table 2. Classroom Applications Examples of Collaborative Learning

Sub-Theme	N
Science and nature activity	9
Teamwork	5
Learning from friends	4
Drama	3
Play	2
Children helping each other	2
Help of the teacher	2
Project studies	1
Collecting toys	1
Total of Opinions	29

According to Table 2, the teachers participating in the study expressed classroom practices that are examples of collaborative learning, such as science and nature activities, group work, drama, learning from friends, play, children's cooperation, teacher assistance, project work, and toy collection, respectively. Teacher T1 expressed his thoughts within the scope of the science and nature activity sub-theme as follows: "This term, for example, in the first semester, we made pickles with one of our parents. We did this activity with the children..." However, in the context of the play sub-theme, teacher T10 said, "In cooperative learning, we use it in our play activities after working on projects with children. We also implement it in our other experiments." While T16, one of the teachers, said, within the scope of the teacher assistance sub-theme, "Collaboration can happen in every activity. I try to help children support each other in all the work we do. I support them when they cannot." He stated that he sees cooperative learning as a process of cooperation between the teacher and the child.

Findings Regarding the Opinions of Preschool Educators on the Effects of Collaborative Learning Practices on Children's Development

"Which area of development do you think collaborative learning practices affect children the most? Why?" and "What skills might these practices contribute to the development of children?" Two themes were created in line with their answers to the question "Why?" These themes are presented in Figure 2.

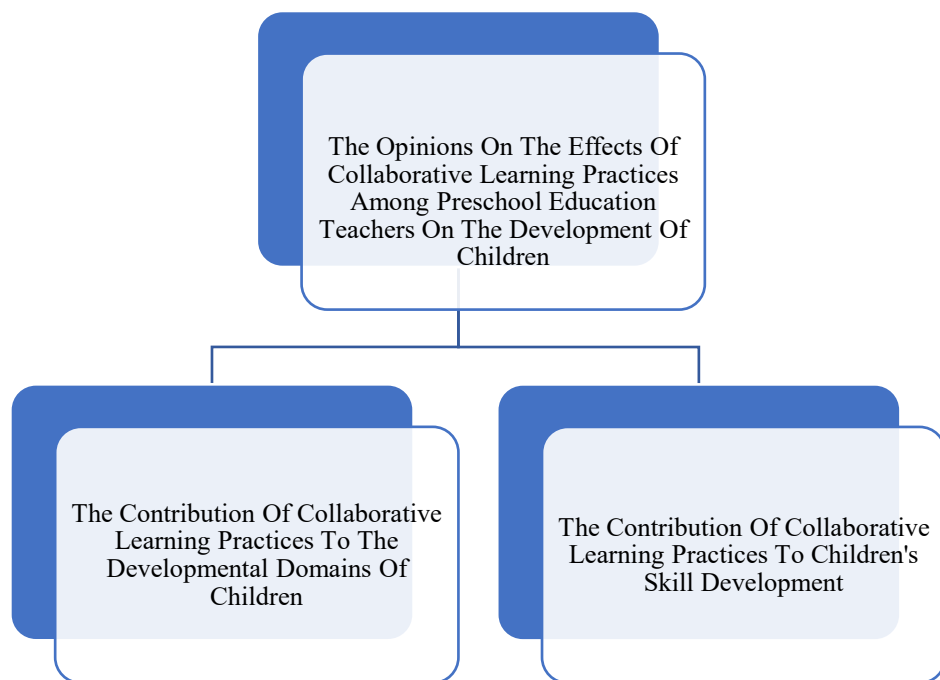


Figure 2. *Opinions of preschool education teachers on the effects of collaborative learning practices on their development.*

During the interviews, teachers were first asked which developmental area of children's development was affected by collaborative learning practices the most, and four sub-themes emerged according to the teachers' answers. Sub-themes and frequency distributions are given in Table 3.

Table 3. The Contribution of Collaborative Learning Applications to Children's Developmental Areas

Sub-Theme	N
Social-emotional development	13
Cognitive development	4
Language development	3
Physical development	1
Total of Opinions	21

According to Table 3, the teachers participating in the research expressed their opinions on which developmental areas of children's development that collaborative learning practices affect the most: social-emotional development, cognitive development, language development and physical development, respectively. According to the teachers' answers in the interviews, ten sub-themes emerged under the theme of the contribution of collaborative learning practices to children's skill areas. These sub-themes and their frequency distributions are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. The Contribution of Collaborative Learning Applications to Children's Skill Development

Sub-Theme	N
Communicating	8
Accommodate	8
Cooperation	7
Obeing social rules	3
Expressing yourself	3
Working together	3
Taking responsibility	2
Creativity	2
Problem solving	1
Handicraft	1
Total of Opinions	38

According to Table 4, the teachers participating in the research give their opinions about which skills collaborative learning practices contribute to children. They expressed these skills as communication, adaptation, cooperation, compliance with social rules, self-expression, working together, taking responsibility, creativity, problem solving, and manual skills. Among the teachers participating in the research, T5 stated his contribution to cognitive development as "...mental, that is, they think and produce," and T13 stated his contribution to language development as "...they will be in communication as they try to do something as a class, and I think this will naturally affect their social and language areas." They expressed it as follows.

Findings Regarding the Opinions of Pre-School Education Teachers Regarding the Process of Implementing Collaborative Learning Practices

In order to get the opinions of preschool education teachers about the process of implementing collaborative learning practices, teachers were asked in the interviews: "How do you implement collaborative learning practices in your classroom?", "In what kind of activities do you carry out these practices?", "How often do you implement these practices?" "What kind of educational environment do you prepare for these practices?" Four themes were created in line with their answers to the questions "(Physical environment - social environment)." These themes are given in Figure 3.

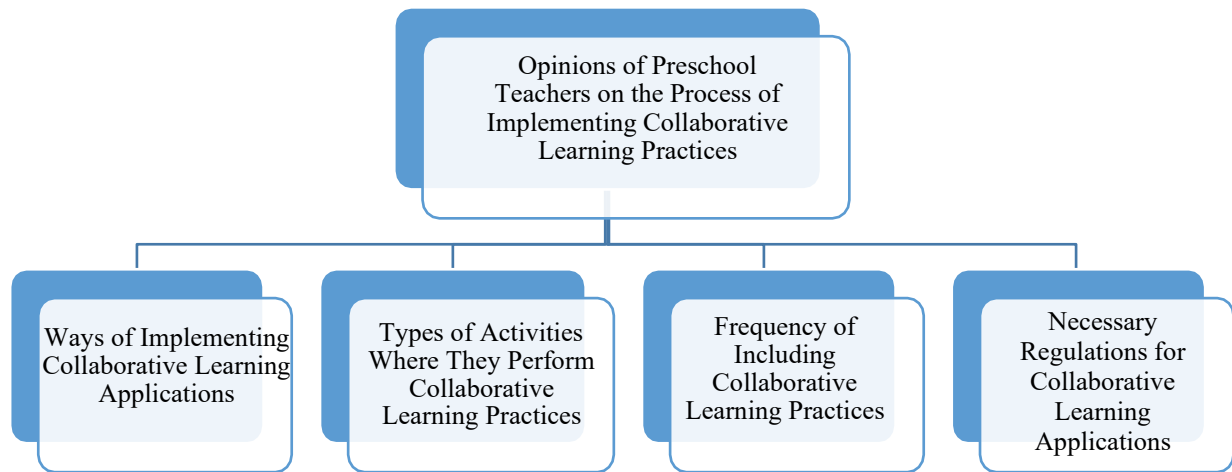


Figure 3. *Opinions of preschool teachers on the process of implementing collaborative learning practices*

During the interviews, teachers were first asked how they implemented collaborative learning practices, and nine sub-themes emerged according to the teachers' answers. Sub-themes and frequency distributions are given in Table 5.

Table 5. Ways of Implementing Collaborative Learning Applications

Sub-Theme	N
By guiding	6
Directing to teamwork	5
Encouraging cooperation	5
Explaining the process	3
Giving correction	3
Providing materials	3
Sharing the roles	3
Working with the children	3
Establishing heterogeneous groups	2
Total of Opinions	33

According to Table 5, the teachers who participated in the study expressed the ways of implementing cooperative learning practices by guiding them, directing them to group work, encouraging cooperation, explaining the process, giving corrections, providing materials, sharing roles, working with children, and establishing heterogeneous groups. Teachers T7 emphasized the sub-theme of communication skills as "Communication skills, since children sit at the same table together, they talk to those next to them...", while T5 stated, regarding the sub-themes of communicating and adapting stated by most of the teachers, "Children should be social and harmonious, be active, and communicate with their friends." "It makes it happen inside," he said. T14 said, "It improves cooperation skills. When they help each other together, their adaptability skills improve. While emphasizing the ability to cooperate and adapt, teacher T12 said, "It contributes to the development of mental skills. Because we are looking for solutions to the problems that arise, we all sit and think together." He stated that collaborative learning practices contribute to children's problem-solving skills. In this research, which aims to obtain the opinions of preschool education teachers about collaborative learning and examine their practices, teachers were asked what kind of activities they carried out for collaborative learning practices in preschool education in order to learn the types of activities in which they carried out collaborative learning practices, and seven sub-themes were reached according to the data obtained.

Table 6. Types of Activities Where They Perform Collaborative Learning Practices

Sub-Theme	N
Art	12
Play	7
Science and nature	3
Preparation for reading and writing	2
Turkish language	2
Drama	1
Total of Opinions	27

According to Table 6, the teachers participating in the research expressed the types of activities in which they carried out collaborative learning practices as art, plays, science, and nature, literacy preparation, Turkish language, and drama. T12, one of the teachers who participated in the research, expressed his views as follows: "I collaborate with children in activities such as art, plays, and Turkish language." T8 "...as I said, we organize it in art activities, science and nature activities, and Turkish language activities." While T10 said, "We use it in art and play activities." He expressed his opinions with his statements. During the interviews, teachers were asked how often they carried out collaborative learning practices, and seven sub-themes emerged according to the teachers' answers.

Table 7. Frequency of Including Collaborative Learning Practices

Sub-Theme	N
Everyday	4
Once a week	4
No order	3
Three times a week	2
Twice a week	1
Once a month	1
According to the program	1
Total of Opinions	16

According to Table 7, the teachers participating in the study expressed the frequency of using collaborative learning practices as every day, once a week, in no particular order, three times a week, twice a week, once a month and according to the schedule. While most of the teachers said that they included collaborative learning practices every day or once a week, the majority of teachers also stated that they did not have any regularity in including these practices. As a result of the interviews, T3, one of the teachers who thought that they carried out collaborative practices during the preschool education process, said, "We try to include collaborative learning activities as often as we can, but I can say that we generally carry them out twice a week." Again, T8 said, "I can generally say once a week, but we definitely engage in collaboration once a week." Finally, S9 expressed his thoughts as "Once a week for sure." Under this heading, the preschool teachers who participated in the research were finally asked what kind of arrangements (physical environment-social environment) they used in the educational environment for collaborative learning practices, and eight sub-themes emerged in line with the teachers' answers. These sub-themes and their frequency distributions are given in Table 8.

Table 8. Necessary Regulations for Collaborative Learning Applications

Sub-Theme	N
Organizing the class by activity	7
By creating heterogeneous groups	5
Using space efficiently	3
Supporting peer mentoring	3
Providing materials	2
Considering the characteristics of children	2
Preparing for activities	2
Sharing the roles	2
Total of Opinions	33

According to Table 8, the teachers who participated in the research indicated the necessary arrangements they made for collaborative learning practices; they stated that by organizing the classroom according to the activity, creating heterogeneous groups, using the space efficiently, supporting peer counseling, providing materials, taking into account the characteristics of the children, preparing for the activities, and sharing roles. T1, one of the teachers who participated in the research, said, "We organize the classroom according to the activity. We distribute the materials to the children in such a way that the space is used in the most efficient way. This is how we tell them what to do." This included sub-themes such as organizing the classroom according to activity, using space efficiently, and providing materials. T5 "... We change the location of the desks. We provide the necessary materials and arrange them". He talked about the sub-themes of arranging the classroom according to the activity and providing materials. T16 expressed the sub-themes "I especially inform the children who know, whose development is more advanced, to help their friends who do not know or who are developmentally behind..." by supporting peer counseling, considering the characteristics of the children and creating heterogeneous groups.

Findings Obtained as a Result of Examining the Activity Plans of Pre-school Teachers in Collaborative Learning Practices

When examining the activity plans, the items of the observation form and the activity plan format of the Ministry of National Education Preschool Education Program in the Preschool Education Program were accepted as criteria. In Table 9, the expected practices in collaborative implementation processes are rated "0" meaning no if they are not included in the activity schedules, "2" meaning yes if they are included, and "1" meaning partially if they are expected to be included but are not included in every aspect.

Table 9. Activity Plans for Collaborative Learning Applications

	Teacher #3 Activity #1	Teacher #3 Activity #2	Teacher #8 Activity #1	Teacher #8 Activity #2	Teacher #9 Activity #1	Teacher #9 Activity #2
Gains and Indicators are Included	BG: K3 SDG: K10 MG: K4	BG: K1, K10 MG: K1 DG: K5	BG: K3 SDG: K10 MG: K4	BG: K1 MG: K4 DG: K6, K8	SDG: K4 BG: K1 MG: K4	MG: K2 DG: K8 SDG: K6, K7
Activity Type	Integrated, small group activity (Art - Literacy preparation) Spring	Integrated, small group activity (Play-Music)	Non-Integrated, Small group activity (Art)	Integrated, Small group activity (Art-Turkish)	Integrated, Small group activity (Play -Movement)	Non-Integrated, Small group activity (Art)
Concepts are Included Words are Included	Flower Butterfly	Puzzle	Part - Whole Leg Arm Torso Body	Spring, Rain	Emotion	Numbers 1-5 Sequence
Materials Included	Watercolor Drawing Paper	Garbage bag puzzle	Paint Scissors Glue Background Cardboard Human body shape	Umbrella Raincoat Boat Umbrella Templates Garbage bag Scissors Crayons	Happy Sad Angry Basket Sensory expressions Human shapes	Drawing Paper Pencil Crayons

Table 10. Examination of Activity Plans for Collaborative Learning Applications

	T3 A1	T3 A2	T8 A1	T8 A2	T9 A1	T9 A2
1.Group size is set correctly.	2	2	2	2	2	2
2. Children were guided to create group roles.	2	2	2	2	2	2
3. A classroom environment has been created where children share group roles equally.	2	2	2	2	2	2
4. The basic duties that the group members should fulfill depending on their roles during the activity process were explained.	2	2	2	2	2	2
5.The principles that will make collaborative learning effective are explained.	2	2	2	2	2	2
6. It was checked whether the cooperation between the children had developed, and the children were encouraged to work together.	2	0	0	0	0	0
7.Multi-directional communication is supported among the children in the group.	2	0	0	0	0	2
8. Inter-group interaction is supported.	0	0	0	0	0	0
Family Participation Included	0	0	0	0	0	0
Adaptation Included	2	2	0	0	0	0
<i>Evaluation</i>						
1. Children were given the opportunity to evaluate themselves by explaining their group products.	2	2	2	2	2	2
2.Groups were encouraged to evaluate each other's work.	0	0	0	2	0	0
3.Children's contributions to their groups were evaluated according to their individual competence levels.	2	2	2	0	2	2
4. The functioning process of the groups was evaluated in terms of the basic principles of the collaborative learning process.	0	0	0	0	1	1

It was observed that all teachers participating in the research included achievements and indicators in their activity plans. In this regard, teachers' T3, K1, K3, and K10 in the field of cognitive development; K1 and K4 in the area of motor development; it addressed K5 achievements in the field of language development and K10 achievements in the field of social-emotional development. Again, teacher T8 rated K1 and K3 in the field of cognitive development, and K4 in the area of motor development. While emphasizing the achievements of K10 in the field of social-emotional development and K6 and K8 in the field of language development, lastly, teacher T9 ranked K1 in the field of cognitive development, K2 and K4 in the field of motor development. It included the achievements of K4, K6, and K8 in the field of social-emotional development and K8 in the field of language development. In line with their opinions stated in the interviews, the teachers preferred the art activity the most in their activity plans, followed by the play activity. It was seen that four of the six applications were planned as art-literacy preparation, art, art-Turkish and art activities, while two of them were planned as play-music and play-movement activities. When we look at whether the teachers participating in the research plan collaborative learning as an integrated activity in the daily plan, we see that T9 describes it as an integrated activity in the first activity, as a non-integrated activity in the second activity, as an integrated activity in both activities of T3, and as an integrated activity in both activities of T3, and as an unintegrated activity in the second activity of T8 in the first activity. It was observed that they planned it as an integrated activity and all the teachers included concepts, words, and materials in their activity plans.

When the learning process aspect was examined in the activity plans of the teachers who participated in the research, it was found that all the teachers planned the group size as it should be for collaborative learning practices. In their examination of activity plans for the items "Children were guided to form group roles" and "A classroom environment in which children shared equally was created", it was seen that all teachers included these two points in both activity plans. Again, in their examination of the activity plans for the items "the basic duties that the group members should fulfill depending on their roles in the activity process were explained" and "the principles that will make collaborative learning effective were explained," it was seen that all teachers included these two points in both activity plans. In the activity plan examinations for the item "Children were encouraged to work together by checking whether cooperation had developed between the children", it was seen that teachers T8 and T9 did not include this point in both activity plans, while teacher T3 did not include this point in the first

activity plan. It was observed that he did not include it in the second activity plan. In the activity plan, examinations regarding the item "Multi-directional communication is supported among the children in the group", it was seen that Teacher T8 did not include this point in both activity plans, while Teacher T3 included this point in the first activity and T9 included this point in the second activity plans. It was observed that they were not included in other event plans. Finally, in the activity plan examinations regarding the item "intergroup interaction is supported," it was seen that no teacher included this point in their activity plans. Additionally, none of the teachers included family participation in their activity plans. While T8 and T9, who did not have an inclusion student in their classes, did not include adaptations in their activity plans, Teacher T3 included adaptations in both activity plans.

In the activity plan examining the item "children were given the opportunity to evaluate themselves by explaining the group products" related to evaluation, it was seen that all teachers included questions in this direction in both activity plans. In the examination of the activity plans for the item "Groups were supported to evaluate each other's work", it was seen that teachers T3 and T9 did not include questions in this direction in both activity plans, and teacher T8 included them only in the second activity plan. Again in this context, in the activity plan examinations made for the article "Children's contributions to their groups were evaluated according to their individual competence levels," teachers T3 and T9 included questions in this direction in both activity plans, while teacher T8 only included questions in the first activity plan. It has been observed. Finally, in their analysis of the activity plan for the item "the functioning process of the groups was evaluated in terms of the basic principles of the cooperative learning process," teachers T3 and T8 did not include questions in this direction in both activity plans.

Findings From Observations of Preschool Education Teachers Regarding Collaborative Learning Practices

During the observations, both observers sat in different places in the classroom and observed the activities without affecting each other. They filled out the observation form and took short notes about the items to be observed, as they wished. In this context, based on the findings below, four themes were created according to the observation items: creating the necessary physical environment, forming learning groups, ensuring the active participation of children in the learning process, and making evaluations as a result of the application. These themes are given in Figure 4.

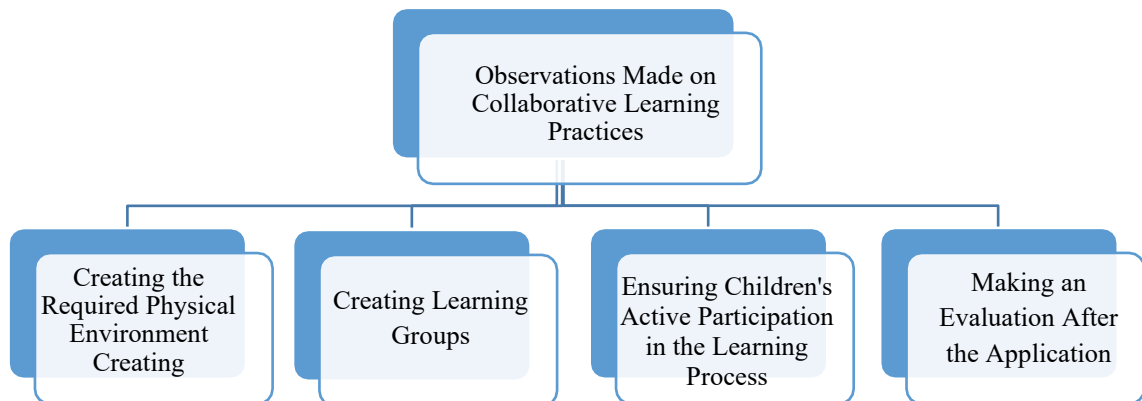


Figure 4. *Observations of preschool education teachers regarding collaborative learning practices*

Under this heading, findings regarding two activity observations each of three teachers who volunteered to make observations in their classrooms and who were concluded to carry out collaborative practices in the preschool education process as a result of the interviews are included. Under the theme of creating the necessary physical environment, it was observed that all teachers organized the classroom in accordance with collaborative working groups in both activities. Under the same theme, observations made regarding whether the materials that may be required for the collaboration groups were prepared in advance, revealed that T3 of the teachers had prepared the materials in class in both activities, T8 had prepared the materials in both activities in advance, and T9 had prepared the materials in advance in the first activity. In the second activity, it was observed that he prepared them in the classroom. Again, under the same theme, in the observations made regarding whether the materials were arranged in a way that ensures group dependency, it was seen that all teachers arranged the materials in a way that ensures group dependency in both activities.

Findings Regarding The Opinions Of Pre-school Education Teachers About The Difficulties They Encounter In The Collaborative Learning Process

What challenges do you encounter when implementing collaborative learning practices in your classroom? What do you think might be the reason for the difficulties you encounter while implementing these applications? And how do you think this situation/problems can be solved? Three themes were created in line with their answers to the questions. These themes are presented in Figure 5.

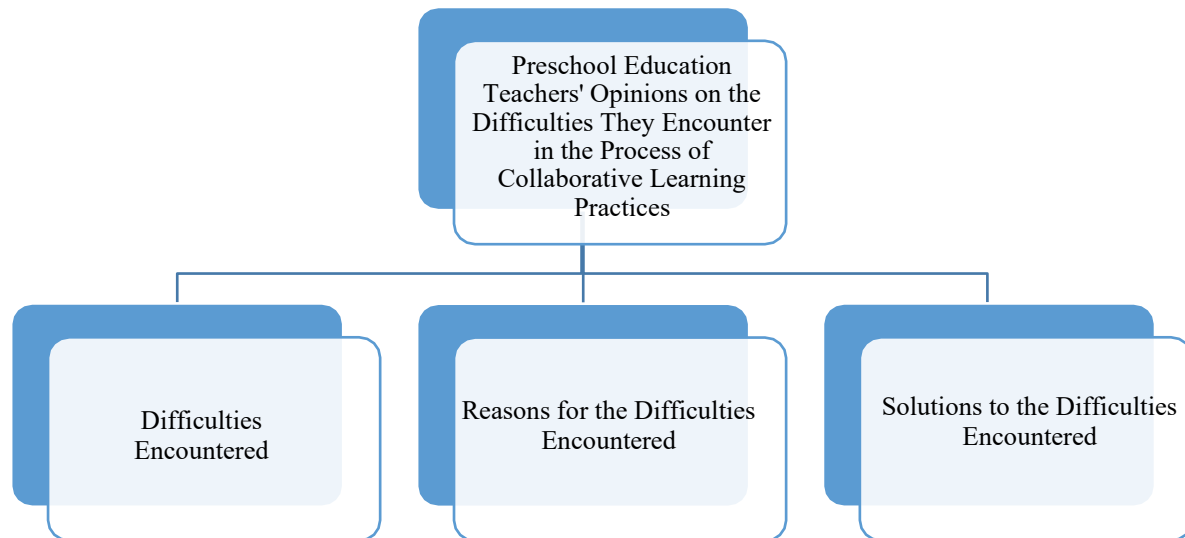


Figure 5. *Opinions of preschool education teachers on the difficulties they encounter in the process of collaborative learning practices.*

During the interviews, teachers were first asked what difficulties they encountered while implementing collaborative learning practices in their classrooms within the scope of this heading, and ten sub-themes emerged according to the answers given by the teachers. Sub-themes and frequency distributions are given in Table 11.

Table 11. Difficulties Encountered while Implementing Collaborative Learning Applications

Sub-Theme	N
Children not cooperating	5
Children's individual differences	4
Failure to maintain group control	4
Children's desire to work individually	3
Lack of materials	3
Conflicts between children	3
Children's inability to comprehend the activity	3
Children's egocentrism	2
Children's dissatisfaction with assigned roles	1
Material and moral inadequacies	1
Total of Opinions	29

According to Table 11 the teachers participating in the study stated that the difficulties they encountered while carrying out cooperative learning practices were children's lack of cooperation, children's individual differences, inability to provide group control, children's desire to work individually, lack of materials, conflicts between children, children's inability to comprehend the activity, and children's egocentrism, as well as assigned roles. They expressed their dislike of material and moral inadequacies. T14, one of the teachers who has difficulties in cooperative learning practices due to children's lack of cooperation, said, "As I said, sometimes children do not cooperate and do not want to cooperate." T16 said, "Sometimes the child does not ask for help even though he cannot do it, he just waits. This situation can also escape my notice. I can notice the situation when I see the child waiting." And that's when I intervene. While T10 expressed his thoughts as follows: "In other words, instead of looking at his friend sitting at the same table to do what he cannot do, the child can stand idle and watch him..."

Later, during the interviews, the teachers were asked, "What do you think are the difficulties you encounter while implementing collaborative learning practices?" and nine sub-themes emerged according to the answers given by the teachers. Sub-themes and frequency distributions are given in Table 12.

Table 12. Reasons for the Difficulties Encountered in Implementing Collaborative Learning Applications

Sub-Theme	N
Developmental levels of children	6
Children's individual differences	5
Children's egocentrism	5
Children getting bored with the activity	3
Insufficient parental support	3
Failure to attract attention to the event	2
Children's complaint	2
Teacher factor	1
Lack of self-confidence in children	1
Total of Opinions	28

According to Table 12, the teachers participating in the study stated the reasons for the difficulties they encountered while performing cooperative learning practices as children's development levels, children's individual differences, children's egocentrism, children's boredom with the activity, insufficient parental support, not being able to draw attention to the activity, children's complaints, teacher factor and lack of self-confidence in children. They stated. T13's thoughts on the sub-theme of children's development levels, stated by most of the teachers participating in the research, were as follows: "I think it is due to the developmental levels of children. I think it is because each child shows different developmental characteristics," and T18 said, "In addition to the individual characteristics of children, some children may not have learned to share." He explained his views on the sub-theme of children's individual differences.

The teachers participating in the research were asked how the situations/problems they encountered while carrying out collaborative learning practices could be solved, and nine sub-themes were reached according to the answers received. Sub-themes and frequency distributions are given in Table 13.

Table 13. Solutions to the Challenges Encountered while Implementing Collaborative Learning Applications.

Sub-Theme	N
Children are motivated	5
Remembering cooperation	3
By increasing the number of applications	3
Activities are organized by taking into consideration children's interests	3
By creating homogeneous groups	2
Giving up the authoritarian teacher attitude	2
With parent support	2
Giving children responsibility	1
By making children love collaboration through plays	1
Total of Opinions	22

According to Table 13, the teachers participating in the study found solutions to the difficulties encountered while carrying out cooperative learning practices by motivating children, reminding them of cooperation, increasing the number of applications, taking into account children's interests in activities, creating homogeneous groups, giving up the authoritarian teacher attitude, getting parental support, and helping children learn. They stated that by giving them responsibility and making them love cooperation through plays. T4, one of the teachers who participated in the research, expressed his thoughts within the scope of this sub-theme: "...that's what you did. It was better for us to do it this way. We try to motivate the children by saying, 'Look, you did a better job, too.'" While T14, one of the teachers, expressed his opinion within the scope of the sub-theme by reminding the need for cooperation, stating that "...they can be constantly reminded to cooperate...". T5 expressed his views within the scope of his sub-theme by creating homogeneous groups, saying that "...for example, those who are late perceivers, early perceivers, fast muscle developers, and slow ones can be seated at different tables." In this way, when a child finishes too early at the same table, they do not disturb their other friends..." Tables 11,12, and 13. Based on the

data on it can be said that most of the teachers who participated in the research encountered difficulties with children not cooperating during cooperative learning. They believed that the reasons for these difficulties were due to differences in children's developmental levels and that they could overcome these difficulties by motivating the children.

Findings Regarding The Suggestions of Pre-school Education Teachers to Carry Out Cooperative Learning Practices in a Qualified Manner

Under this heading, the theme of success suggestions for implementation was reached in line with the answers given by the teachers to the question "What are your suggestions for the qualified implementation of collaborative learning practices in preschool education?" Sub-themes and frequency distributions related to this theme are presented in Table 14.

Table 14. Success Tips for Implementation

Sub-Theme	N
Ensuring material richness in schools	4
Supporting children's helping behavior	4
Increasing the equipment of teachers	3
By increasing the number of collaborative learning applications	3
Getting family support	1
Making children love cooperation through plays	1
Reducing class sizes	1
Arranging the classroom according to children	1
Total of Opinions	18

According to Table 14, the teachers participating in the study made their suggestions for success in cooperative learning practices by providing material richness in schools, supporting children's cooperative behavior, increasing teachers' equipment, increasing the number of cooperative learning applications, getting family support, making children love cooperation through plays, reducing class sizes, and organizing the classroom according to the children. As stated by the teachers participating in the research, concerning the sub-theme of providing material wealth in schools, T3 said, "In preschool, our work is mainly done with tools. Therefore, schools should have abundant resources." T13 said, "To create more qualified students, school and classroom facilities need to be improved, and materials should be used. I think they should be enriched." Meanwhile, T17 said: "Strengthening the materials, collaborative learning can be much more effective with more materials." They expressed their thoughts as follows. Based on the data in Table 14, it can be said that most of the teachers participating in the research think that in order to increase the quality of collaborative learning, the richness of materials should be provided in schools and children's cooperative behavior should be supported.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Individuals in civilized societies are able to express their thoughts freely, criticize, conduct research, question, adapt to the society they live in, and develop social skills. Training individuals with these qualifications is closely related to the country's education system. The preschool period constitutes one of the critical periods in acquiring social skills. This research, which aims to determine the opinions and practices of teachers regarding collaborative learning implemented in preschool education institutions with the aim of creating the ideal environment that will support the development of children, is a basic qualitative study. The study group consisted of a total of 18 preschool teachers who volunteered to participate in the study, including 10 working in 6 kindergartens in the 2017-2018 academic year in Kars, 7 working in kindergartens in 5 primary schools, and 1 working in a kindergarten in 1 secondary school. While the data was collected through a demographic information form, semi-structured interview, structured observation, and activity plan reviews, it was analyzed using descriptive analysis and document review method. The results and discussions based on the findings obtained from this research, whose opinions of the teachers participating in the research are limited to the observed collaborative learning practices and activity plans, are included under this heading.

As a result of the interviews with teachers regarding collaborative learning practices in preschool education, two themes were reached. Under one of these, the theme of the meaning of cooperative learning practices, it was seen that the majority of preschool education teachers defined cooperative learning as cooperation and group work. Under the second theme, the theme of exemplary classroom practices for collaborative learning, it was determined that the majority of teachers saw exemplary classroom practices as science and nature activities and group studies.

The majority of teachers referred to collaborative learning as group work. This finding obtained in the research does not comply with the information on collaborative learning in the literature. Cooperative learning is not a group effort. In group work, children work individually by sharing topics. During this process, children are usually with their favorite friends. Additionally, successful children do not want to be in the same group as unsuccessful children (Açıkgöz, 1992, p.3). In this context, Yıldız (1999, p.156) states that all small group studies, especially cluster studies implemented in schools, are not collaborative learning. In classrooms where cooperative learning is implemented, children are not expected to compete individually or in groups. However, children are not expected to sit at desks and passively listen to their teachers. Individual studies should not be included in this process. In collaborative classroom environments, children interact in small groups while teachers circulate among the children to help children in need.

As a result of interviews with teachers regarding the effects of collaborative learning practices in preschool education on children's development, two themes were reached. Under the theme of the contribution of cooperative learning practices to children's developmental areas, which is one of these, most teachers stated that these practices contribute positively to the social-emotional development of children. Under the second theme, the contribution of cooperative learning practices to children's skill development, most of the teachers said that children mostly developed communication, adaptation, and cooperation skills.

Most of the preschool education teachers who participated in the research said that they thought that collaborative learning practices affected the social-emotional development area of children the most and improved children's communication and adaptation skills the most. Studies in the literature support this data of the research. Koç (2014) stated in his study that cooperative learning increases communication among children, improves their social skills, and increases their self-confidence. Again, Görgülü (2009) revealed in his study that drama-supported collaborative learning practices have a positive effect on the development of communication skills of 5-6-year-old children. In his research, Alp (2015, pp. 88-101) stated that the social adaptation of children participating in cooperative learning activities was found to be significantly important. In this vein, Arslan & Zengin (2016, pp. 23-45) stated in their study that children forming groups with randomly selected friends every week help them get to know each other better, communicate and socialize with people they have not worked with before in the classroom. Tuncel (2006, p.1-169) also stated in his study that cooperative learning improves communication among individuals and is a powerful method for developing social skills. However, the findings obtained in Avcioglu's (2012, p.1-16) study are parallel to these research findings. In this context, these research findings overlap with the results of studies in the literature.

As a result of the interviews conducted to determine how preschool teachers implement collaborative learning practices in their classrooms, four themes were reached. One of these, under the theme of ways of implementing collaborative learning practices; Teachers mostly said that they guided the children, directed them to group work, and encouraged them to cooperate. Under the second theme, the types of activities in which they carry out collaborative learning practices; most teachers stated that they preferred these practices in art activities. Under the third theme, the frequency of including collaborative learning practices; teachers mostly stated that they included collaborative learning practices every day or once a week. Under the fourth theme, the necessary regulations for collaborative learning practices. Most teachers stated that before starting cooperative learning practices, they organized the classroom according to the activity, formed heterogeneous groups, and made the necessary arrangements to use the classroom space efficiently.

In this study, most of the teachers said that they guided the children in the process of implementing collaborative learning practices. According to Tanel (2006, p. 25-26), based on Açıkgöz's research, what teachers need to do in cooperative learning practices is to circulate among the working groups to monitor whether the children are performing the task assigned to them in cooperation and to give feedback to the groups about what they see. However, teachers should help children at points where they need help by providing information about the process and asking questions. They should guide the peaceful resolution of inevitable conflicts within or between groups. Teachers should be supportive and resource persons in collaborative processes. Yıldız (1999, p.155-163) again stated in his study that while collaborative learning practices continue, teachers should support the children in sharing their ideas and associating them with each other, ensure the participation of every child in the group in the process, and prepare the projects. Finally, Cubukcu (2012, p. 519-520) explained the role of the teacher in the process as follows: If children cannot grasp the desired goal or have difficulty working efficiently with group awareness, the children should be given the necessary support (additional explanations, etc.). It can be said that these findings obtained in the research are parallel to the results of these studies. In addition, most of the

teachers stated that they directed the children to group work during collaborative practice processes. This finding of the study contradicts other research findings in the literature.

The plans prepared by the teachers for the observed activities were examined. In this context, in the process of planning collaborative learning practices, all teachers include in all activity plans; It was observed that they included outcomes and indicators, concepts and words and materials. In this context, it was observed that teachers included their achievements mostly in the field of cognitive development (K1 and K3), then in the field of social emotional development (K10), motor development (K4), and least in the field of language development (K8). In most of these plans examined, it was observed that teachers preferred integrated small group activities, and most of these activities were in the art activity type. All teachers included evaluation questions in all activity plans. In all activity plans examined under the heading of evaluation questions, all teachers included questions for children to self-evaluate by explaining their group products. However, in most of the activity plans, teachers did not include support for the groups in terms of evaluating each other's work or evaluating the functioning of the groups based on the basic principles of the cooperative learning process.

While teachers included questions to evaluate children's contributions to their groups according to their individual proficiency levels in most of their activity plans, they did not make this evaluation in most of their practices. When we look at the literature based on these findings of the research, it is seen that the importance of encouraging children to work together by checking whether cooperation between children has developed, supporting multi-faceted communication between children in the group, and the necessity and importance of evaluating children's contributions to their groups according to their individual competence levels are emphasized (Ekinçi, 2010; Aydın, 2011; Çubukçu, 2012). Teachers' activity plans include most of the direct or indirect gains for collaborative learning (Cognitive development K1, K3, and K10; Social-emotional development K4, K6, K7, and K10; Motor development K1, K2, and K4; Language development K5, K6, and K8). It was seen that they included.

As a result of the interviews, observations were made in the classes of three volunteer teachers who believed that they included collaborative learning practices in their classes, and the analysis of these observations regarding collaborative learning practices was carried out under four themes. Within the scope of the theme of creating the necessary physical environment, it was concluded that all of the teachers gave importance to arranging the physical environment and seating style of the classroom in accordance with collaborative working groups in all observed activities and that they arranged the materials in a way that ensures group dependency. However, it was observed that the teachers did not pay much attention to preparing the materials that might be required for the collaboration groups in advance. One teacher came completely unprepared in terms of materials before the activity, and another teacher came prepared in terms of materials in one activity but came unprepared in the other activity. Therefore, he could not exhibit a consistent attitude on this issue. Within the scope of the theme of creating learning groups, it was observed that all teachers adjusted the group sizes in accordance with collaborative learning practices in both activities, while within the scope of the theme of evaluating as a result of the application, it was observed that all teachers did not support the groups to evaluate each other's work in both activities and that the functioning of the groups was not supported by collaborative learning practices. It was observed that they did not evaluate the process in terms of its basic principles.

Teachers participating in the research stated that before starting collaborative learning practices, they needed to organize the classroom according to the activity, create heterogeneous groups, and make arrangements to use the classroom space efficiently. In this context, Şimşek, Doymuş, & Şimşek (2008, pp. 1-20) stated in their research that having groups formed as heterogeneous as possible will improve children's communication, success, and study performance. They emphasized that organizing the classroom according to the activity can contribute to the children's work participating in educational activities, the determination of leaders, and the communication between children. The finding of organizing the classroom according to activity in collaborative learning practices is compatible with the results of this research. Again, in this context, Çubukçu (2012) expressed his views on this issue as follows: The learning environment should be arranged in a way that makes face-to-face interaction of children easy.

As a result of the interviews with pre-school education teachers about the difficulties they encountered while implementing collaborative learning practices, three themes were reached. Under the theme of difficulties encountered; Teachers mentioned that children's lack of cooperation, their individual differences, and the inability to achieve group control can make the process difficult. The second theme is under the theme of the reasons for the difficulties encountered; Teachers stated that they thought these difficulties were caused by children's developmental levels, individual differences and egocentrism. Finally, under the third theme, the solutions to the

difficulties encountered; The majority of teachers stated that these difficulties could be solved by motivating children, reminding them of cooperation, increasing the number of practices and taking into account children's interests.

In the study, most of the pre-school education teachers mentioned that children's lack of cooperation and individual differences can make the process difficult while carrying out cooperative learning practices. In this context, children may have difficulties in adaptation at first because they have different personal, cognitive and affective characteristics. It may take time for some children to coordinate within the group, especially if they have not had any previous contact with their classmates. These problems disappear spontaneously over time as the teacher encourages the children to work together, the communication within the group becomes stronger, and the product produced on behalf of the group is unifying (Açıkgöz, 1992; Slavin, 1990). However, these findings obtained in the research are also compatible with the findings obtained in the study of Akay & Kocabaş (2013, p.91-110).

Under the theme of success suggestions for practice, which were reached as a result of the interviews with pre-school education teachers about their ability to carry out collaborative learning practices in a qualified manner, most of the teachers stated that the quality of collaborative learning practices could be increased by providing material richness in schools and supporting children's cooperation behaviors. Teachers also made suggestions about increasing their own equipment and the number of collaborative learning applications. The findings regarding reducing the class size and arranging the classroom according to the children, which are among the suggestions of the teachers participating in the research for the qualified implementation of collaborative learning practices, coincide with the findings in the study of Akay and Kocabaş (2013, p.91-110).

Suggestions

Based on the data obtained from the research, the following suggestions can be made to teachers: When planning activities that include collaborative learning practices, teachers should take care to plan a variety of different types of activities to provide children with rich learning experiences. In addition, they should implement collaborative learning practices by allowing children to plan, implement, question, research, discuss, and produce as much as possible during the learning process. In activities involving collaborative learning practices, teachers should ask questions that will make children think, encourage them to ask questions, and support their verbal sharing both with their own groups and with other groups. They should also respect children's choices, not interfere with the products they create as a group, and allow them to use materials in original and different ways.

Based on the data obtained from the research, the following suggestions can be made for researchers: In collaborative learning activities, action research can be conducted to create an environment in which preschool teachers act as guides, children structure their own knowledge, groups produce original products, and peer interaction is ensured. Family opinions can also be obtained on this matter. Collaborative learning practices carried out by teachers can be examined from a qualitative perspective with longer-term observations. Children's reactions and needs in this process can be determined.

Research Ethics

Ethical procedures were followed during research and publication process. Ethical approval was obtained at Anadolu University with the protocol number of 126697.

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