

The Effects of the ÇABA Multi-Purpose Early Childhood Education (ÇABAÇAM) Model on the Academic Achievement, Personal and Professional Development of Preschool Teacher Trainees*

Cansu Gülerⁱ

Ministry of National Education

Ebru Aktan Acarⁱⁱ

Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University

Abstract

This is a case study on the Effects of The Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University ÇABA Multi-Purpose Early Childhood Education (ÇABAÇAM) Model on the Academic Achievement, Personal and Professional Development of Preschool Teacher Trainees as a result of their experiences as voluntary practitioners within the ÇABAÇAM model. Using a qualitative research model, the research is carried out within a case study-based framework. Following a literature review, the researcher developed a semi-structured interview questionnaire as the means of data collection. The study group consists of preschool teacher trainees volunteering as preschool classroom practitioners in ÇABAÇAM while attending Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University Education Faculty Preschool Education Teaching Undergraduate Program. 13 Teacher trainees were selected by the researcher for the project. Semi-structured interviews were held with the volunteer teacher trainees between October 1st and November 1st 2020. The analysis of the data gathered was done by content analysis. Maxqda2020 was employed in the analysis of the semi-structured interviews. The data, as examined by the researcher indicates that the ÇABAÇAM Model had a positive effect both on the academic achievement and the personal and professional development of preschool teacher trainees. Research findings show that in accordance with its fundamental educational goals, the ÇABAÇAM Model is shown to successfully ease pre-assignment teachers' transition into work life by equipping them for their future professional roles in ways which will enable them to better contribute to meeting the quality standards for preschool education.

Keywords: ÇABAÇAM, ÇOMÜ, Teacher, Voluntarism, Awareness, Preschool Education

DOI: 10.29329/ijpe.2023.546.3

Submitted: 06/12/2022

Accepted: 23/03/2023

Published: 01/06/2023

* This article is a product of the master's thesis research study conducted by the first author supervised by the second author

ⁱ **Cansu Güler**, Expert in Early Childhood Education, Republic of Türkiye Ministry of National Education, Email: cansuguler24@icloud.com

ⁱⁱ **Ebru Aktan Acar**, Prof. Dr., Department of Basic Education , Department of Preschool Education, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, ORCID: 0000-0002-9944-9013

Correspondence: ebru.aktan@yahoo.com.tr

INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education

Preschool education takes place between 0-66 months, during the infancy and early childhood period of a child's life, spanning the child's birth up to their entry into primary school. This period of education enables children's development in accordance with societal norms, and it is the developmental phase in a child's life during which education supports the growth of a child's reasoning skills, advancing their psycho-social development and powers of perception. Early childhood education, or "early learning" as it is also known, aims to enhance the child's creative abilities as an individual, broadening their horizons as they acquire the national, moral and human values of the society in which they live (Yılmaz, 2003). This stage of education lays a solid foundation for the development of their socio-emotional, cognitive, language and motor skills and for the life-long wellbeing of the child. Provision of a high-quality systematic education during this period is seen as the most important phase in the educational system, as it lays the foundation for basic knowledge, skills and attitudes which every child will continue to develop throughout their lifetime, providing experiences which will also go on to influence their subsequent education (2023 Education Vision 2018).

Children between the ages of 0-6 are known to develop at a rate of alacrity unmatched in later life. This phase of education is of particular importance for the Turkish Education System. According to the ERG Education Monitoring Report 2022, the rise in access to pre-school education in the 2021-2022 school year is a consequence of the actions taken by the Ministry of National Education. Pre-school enrolment amongst the five year age group increased to 81.6% during the 2021-2022 school year. This represents a 10.4% rise over the 2019-2020 school year to become the highest recorded percentage increase in enrolment of recent years. The enrolment ratio stands at 55.9% in the 4-5 age group and 44.1% in the 3-5 age group.

Enrolment for 3 year olds appears to be 1,114,165, and 913,757 for 4 year olds. The enrolment figures for 5 year olds are officially at 219,356. There is an overall lower percentage of enrolment for girls compared to boys throughout the preschool education level. The enrolment gender percentage among 5 year olds is recorded as 81.4 % for girls and 81.9 % for boys respectively (ERG, 2022).

The Preschool Teacher

Learning and behaviour development peaks in individuals between 0-6 years of age. Learning and attitudes acquired in this period remain with the individual for life. Teachers have a considerable impact in setting the foundations for learning. Thus, great emphasis is placed globally on the training of teachers. The preschool teacher cannot be compared with teachers in other areas as they are often the first educator the child encounters during their life. The teacher is the first adult the child meets outside of their own family circle. This first contact with education has a profound impact on the child. The first educator creates an impact on the child's consciousness which will become instrumental in building their lifelong basic schemata for the role of the teacher.

According to the 2022 ERG Education Monitoring Report, 1,139,673 teachers were in service in Turkey during the 2021-2022 academic year. 975,698 of these were employed in the public sector while 163,975 worked in private institutions. Teacher employment increased by 2.7% in the 2021-2022 year, compared to figures for the previous academic year of 2020-2021. The general numbers of teachers employed in public and private institutions increased during the 2021-2022 school year, comparatively the most significant increase occurred in the pre-school teaching population. The number of children attending pre-school education decreased by 24.8% while the numbers of teachers within the same group decreased by 3.8% during the 2020-2021 school year. However, the number of children attending pre-school education increased by 53.8% while the numbers of teachers within the same group increased by 12.8% during the 2020-2021 school year.

Preschool teachers, who play a significant role particularly in the personal development of individuals, are themselves in need of both quantitative and qualitative support.

Preschool Teacher Competencies

When we consider the demands of the 21st century knowledge-based society, continuity becomes key to the development of an educational system in which teachers are ever more capable, considerate and sensitive in face of the challenges of the age. Such continuity may be enhanced by the consistent provision of professional development opportunities for educators such as conferences, courses, seminars, programs and a variety of published educational material. However, it is essential to consider carefully the fundamental structure and impact of such devices, if they are to be truly instrumental in contributing towards the desired developments in teachers (Djoub, 2018).

Analysing the special area proficiencies officially considered by The Ministry of National Education (MoNE) to be requirements for preschool teachers as the initial educator encountered by the 0-6 year old, it must be emphasised that teachers need to continue their own development, both in terms of professional skills, personal and social competencies and academic achievement. Preschool teacher trainees must be aware, during the four-year period of their undergraduate studies in faculties of education, of how essential it is for them to focus on acquiring multi-faceted competencies and skills, not only in academic but also personal and social domains in order to develop all-round professional and personal capability and ensure their preparedness for future professional life. It is crucial that teachers begin to self-improve as trainees while still enrolled as undergraduates. The global need for better qualified preschool teachers is ever more pertinent as quality standards in preschool education continue to rise (Early and Winton, 2001).

Personal Development

Personal development, in summary, is the ability of a person to effectively realise their lifelong potential as a self-reliant, independent individual who engages in the continuous pursuit to develop personal resources and skills appropriate to this end. The first step in personal development is self-awareness. The individual must first recognise their existing strengths and weaknesses, understand their personal propensities and behaviours and develop awareness and understanding of their cultural environment (Özdemir, 2004).

Özkan (2003) defines personal development as the process by which an individual initiates change in areas of perceived deficit or inadequacy, in order to acquire the desired outcome in a defined area of need. The individual, in this phase of development, will be aware of their existence within an increasingly globalising world, and recognise that they must constantly self-renew and self-develop in order to adapt to the constant state of flux in their changing environment. Teachers must have a proactive personality, be open to innovation and change, and must always respect the views, cultural values, beliefs and consciousness of others. They must be respectful, patient, helpful, protective, disciplined, sensible, open to different attitudes, trustworthy and ethical in their behaviours. Teachers must also be diligent, organised and systematic in their approach to their own personal development. They must be selfless, avoid negative habits wherever possible, and be aware, engaged and positively invested in social and societal issues (Yetim and Göktaş, 2004).

Academic Success

Academic success is defined as the result of an outcomes-based assessment of abilities and knowledge acquired through formal instruction within an establishment, and recognisably verified through an academic process of assigned grading, testing or both. The student is awarded success in this system via combined outcomes assessment calculations based on performance, ability to access knowledge and skills of self-expression within an academic environment, alongside standard test grades and achievement in tasks and responsibilities assigned by specific programs within the

institution, which are assessed according to quality indicators and levels predetermined by each program. (Demirel, 2012).

The concept of academic success is of particular significance in educational research. According to studies in the field of education, the concept of the school as a determining factor in academic success begins to be pinpointed in school studies ensuing 1960 (Balcı, 2002). In subsequent studies the factors influencing academic success are defined as: size of the educational institution and the learning setting, its physical attributes, administrative structure, management approaches and the school environment (Çalık and Kurt, 2010; Özdemir et al, 2010), as well as teacher behaviours, experience and proficiency (Razon, 1987; Sama and Tarım, 2007). The socio-economic levels of the parents, parenting styles, child-rearing attitudes and approaches to education and discipline are other complimentary factors impacting academic success. In addition, the school environment, teacher behaviour, the student's perception of self-worth, level of social / emotional intelligence, level of self-awareness, the educational approaches and methods employed within an institution, along with the student, the teacher, the school and the family may be counted among the variables influencing academic success.

Professional Development

Looking at the definition of the concept of professional development, as an important contributor to a teacher's lifelong learning process (Bümen vd., 2012; Telese, 2012), the provision of inclusive and high quality learning services is considered the primary rationale for why both teachers and school management should seek to develop their professional skills (MEB 2023 Vision, 2018). Professional development is a concept defining the rationale for and ways in which practitioners in a specific career area engage in professional improvement to enable optimal attainment in their field of interest. Through professional development, school managers, trainers and teachers can re-assess and fine-tune their knowledge, become aware of new developments in a given field and seek to hone newly acquired skills to the standards of the establishment in which they operate.

Professional development in the field of education is expressed as continuous and systematic learning experiences based on targeted content presented by a trainer, aiming to enhance teacher effectiveness within the teaching-learning environment, in order to increase the academic success of students (Reese, 2010).

Opportunities should be provided throughout their four-year undergraduate studies to maximise the all-round development of teacher trainees, targeting both their personal and professional development as well as their academic success. If carried out effectively, teachers will advance their proficiency upon graduation, and will become better-equipped teachers, who are more beneficial to their students and the community throughout their careers. The ÇABA Multi-Purpose Early Childhood Education Centre is an academically grounded, community based institution which was established to assist in the all-round development of teacher trainees, while engaged in re-integrating children of socio economically underprivileged backgrounds into the community.

ÇOMÜ ÇABA Multi-Purpose Early Childhood Education Centre (The ÇABAÇAM Model)

A stated goal of The Ministry of National Education (MEB) Board of Education 2013 Early Childhood Education Program is to create a common environment for children from disadvantaged environments and families. According to the programme, with the essential aim of creating equal opportunities to maximize the potential of all individuals, children identified as being from disadvantaged backgrounds are to be pinpointed, and all those who might come in contact with those children are to be reached. There is a need for ground-breaking institutions, and a diversity of systems and services to give children of disadvantaged backgrounds access to early childhood education. The national ratio of community based early childhood education centres is 4.1%. The ÇABAÇAM Multi-

Purpose Early Childhood Education Centre (ÇABAÇAM) model is one such establishment (ERG, 2021).

“The Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University (ÇOMÜ) ÇABAÇAM (Multi-Purpose Early Childhood Education Centre) project was established as an innovative cooperative initiative between the university, local government, and NGO's, with support from the ÇABA association and the municipality of Kepez, Çanakkale, which first opened its doors within the Faculty of Education in 2008" (Güler, 2022).

The project ran between the years 2008-2012 as the ‘Prof. Dr. Suzan Erbaş Early Childhood Education Classroom, continuing between 2012-2015 as the ‘ÇABA Multi-Purpose Early Childhood Education Classroom’ at the Faculty of Education (ÇOMU Anafartalar campus). The unit was inaugurated at new premises in the 2015-2016 academic year (on ÇOMÜ Terzioğlu campus); re-commencing its program there as the 'ÇABAÇAM Multi-Purpose Early Childhood Education Centre'. Within this program, at the new location, 'The Kozalak Toy Exchange Workshop' was set up as a community service to distribute community-sourced toys, stationary and other donated equipment to educational establishments throughout the country where there was need ("ÇABAÇAM", n.d.)

The ÇABAÇAM Model from the Perspective of the Child and the Teacher

The main purpose of this project is to, in cooperation with the wider community, provide early childhood services for children and families of disadvantaged environments facing developmental risks. An equally important role was to provide the setting and opportunities for teacher trainees to combine theory and practice during the pre-service phase of their training (“ÇABAÇAM”, n.d.). To date, 120 children aged between 4-6, their families and close to 200 teachers have been instructed and/or have benefited from the services provided by the ÇABAÇAM project.

The future objective of the centre is to take the project forward country-wide, in collaboration with the entire ÇABA team, to provide further support for early childhood education services for children, as well as their families, teacher trainees, teachers, and carers, in short, reaching all individuals who come into contact or work with children within this age group across the country where there is need. The goal is to provide services to families who do not otherwise have free access to such educational opportunities. Asylum seekers, refugee children and their families are included in the program, in line with the protocol signed between ÇABAÇAM and with the Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants in 2015.

The ÇABAÇAM model is realised with the participation of teacher trainees studying at the university as undergraduates and graduate level students who participate in the program as volunteers. The centre is founded on the basis of the cooperation of teachers, trainee teachers, academicians, local government and NGO's, and may be regarded as a case model for community centred early childhood education. Multiple studies related to the efficacy of this model have indicated that participating children have benefitted in terms of support for their all-round development and, in addition that the program has contributed to their preparedness for formal education at the primary school level. The model has also proved effective in supporting the development of the linguistic skills of asylum seeker and migrant children (ERG, 2021).

The table below indicates a detailed programme of dedicated trainings aiming to support the all-round development of teacher trainees within the model. These trainings are specifically designed within the scope of the educational goals underpinning the ÇABAÇAM model (“ÇABAÇAM”, n.d.) and carried out according to those goals by expert educators who are specialists in their fields.

Table 1 Educational activities within the ÇABAÇAM model.

| | |
|--|--|
| ENKA Schools Cultural Excursion | Museum Visit |
| Psychology Training | Basic Education Symposium |
| Interactive Group Story Reading Training | Movement, body percussion training project |
| Personal Development Trainings | Field Trips |
| İTÜ Schools Visit | Little Scientists Project |
| Istanbul Excursion | Little Chefs Project |
| Science Education Projects | Arts and Crafts Training |
| ORFF Training | Projects With Dads |
| Diversity Awareness Training | Student Conference |
| Family Participation Activities | Kermesse/fairs |
| Early Childhood Education Centre Gatherings | Preschool Program Training |
| Maltepe Student Congress | ORFF Training |
| Drama Training | The Persona Doll Approach |
| Participatory Ecological Activities for Children | STEM Training |

METHOD

This chapter discusses the model, study group, validity and reliability, data collections tools and the methods of data analysis used for the research.

Research Model

The case study is a methodological in-depth analysis approach used to systematically collect information on the workings of limited systems (Chmiliar, 2010). Quantitative or qualitative approaches may be used in case studies.

Cohort Group

The research work group was made up of trainee teachers volunteering at the ÇABA Multi-Purpose Early Childhood Education Centre while continuing their studies at the Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University Early Childhood Education Department. Thirteen volunteers participated in the research project. The participating teacher trainees were selected with criterion sampling, a purposive sampling method. Collecting data from interviews with individuals highly informed of the situation was of fundamental importance. Thus, the sampling of participants was carefully constituted of individuals who met the required qualifications. The main criteria for participant selection were their being enrolled in the Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University Faculty of Education, Early Childhood Education Department and being a volunteer teacher trainee at the ÇABA Multi-Purpose Early Childhood Education Centre.

Table 2 The Volunteer teacher trainees' Introduction to ÇABAÇAM

| Main Category | Sub Category | <i>f</i> | N |
|---|-----------------------|----------|---|
| The Volunteer Teacher Trainees' Introduction to the ÇABAÇAM Model | Program Coordinator 1 | 8 | 8 |
| | Peer Suggestion | 4 | 4 |
| | Program Coordinator 2 | 1 | 1 |

Information on how the trainee teachers first encountered the ÇABAÇAM model is displayed in table 2. According to the table, the most coded sub-theme is "Program Coordinator 1" followed by "Peer Suggestion" and "Program Coordinator 2". 8 of the 13 trainee teachers stated in the interviews conducted by the researcher that they were introduced to the ÇABAÇAM model by Program Coordinator 1.

Data Collection Tools

Research data was gathered with semi-structured interview questionnaires developed by the researcher. The semi-structured interview form is the most commonly used data collection method in

qualitative research. It is important to comprehend the principal features, the advantages and disadvantages, and the strong and weak points of a method to enable its effective and productive use. The preparation of the interview questionnaire and the interview itself are all points to be taken into account in the quest to uncover the required qualitative data (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2011).

The researcher prepared 11 open ended questions on the ÇABAÇAM model's impact on the personal and professional development of the participants. National and international literature was consulted during the development of the interview form. Three experts in the field were consulted on the reliability of the form. Pilot applications did not uncover any issues in the coherency or comprehension of the questions. The questionnaire was put into use following final revisions.

Data Analysis

The data was processed by content analysis. Content analysis, "is a way to objectively and systematically classify, numerically tabulate, decode, and make deductions on spoken, written or other kinds of source material" (Tavşancıl and Aslan, 2001, p. 22). The semi-structured research interviews were analysed using the Maxqda 2020 program.

FINDINGS

The data gleaned from the observation and interview forms of the ÇOMÜ ÇABA Early Childhood Education Centre (ÇABAÇAM)'s impact on the volunteer teacher trainees' academic success, and personal and professional development is presented in this section.

Decoding the Teacher Trainee Interviews

Semi-structured interview forms were employed by the researcher in the interviews with the ÇABAÇAM teacher trainees. The data retrieved is presented in the subsequent chapter.

Findings from the Analysis of the Volunteer Trainee Teachers' Perceptions of ÇABAÇAM

Analysis of table 3 indicates the most frequently coded sub-themes regarding the teacher trainees' perception of the ÇABAÇAM project were, "**Children from Disadvantaged Backgrounds**", "**Early Childhood Education Centre**", and "**Preschool Teacher Trainees**". The fact that all 13 of the volunteer participants referred to the participation of children of disadvantaged backgrounds in the ÇABAÇAM project (f:15) indicated a bias in the ÇABAÇAM model's education system towards disadvantaged groups. The teacher trainees stress that the centre is an early childhood education centre and it is staffed by preschool teacher trainees.

The volunteer teacher trainees' outlook on the ÇABAÇAM model is positive. The centre is seen as a project school/centre where children of disadvantaged backgrounds have access to free early childhood education, where volunteer teacher trainees are trained and where teacher trainees of varied speciality areas have the opportunity to develop their skills. The participants' attention can be seen to be mainly focused on the training of children from socio economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The impact of the establishment in this respect is evident in these findings. The participants' perception of the centre as a project school that focuses on trainings for teacher trainees, preschool early childhood education and advancing trainee experience and awareness is clearly expressed.

Table 3 Findings related to the Volunteer trainee teachers' perceptions of the ÇABAÇAM model

| Main Category | Sub Category | f | N |
|--|---|----|----|
| Findings On The Volunteer Teachers' Perceptions of ÇABAÇAM | Children From Disadvantaged Backgrounds | 15 | 13 |
| | Early Childhood Education Centre | 7 | 4 |
| | Preschool Teacher Trainees | 7 | 7 |
| | Awareness | 6 | 5 |
| | Trainee Training | 6 | 5 |
| | Experience | 6 | 6 |
| | Project School | 5 | 4 |
| | Volunteer Based Foundation | 5 | 5 |
| | Professional Incentive | 3 | 3 |
| | Asylum seekers and migrant children | 3 | 3 |
| | Specialist Teacher Trainees | 3 | 3 |
| | University Based | 2 | 2 |
| | Project Manager Prof. Ebru Aktan Acar | 2 | 2 |
| | Laboratory Environment | 1 | 1 |
| | Post-Graduate Students | 1 | 1 |
| Family Trainings | 1 | 1 | |

Analysis of Table 4 regarding the volunteer trainees' opinions about university education systems shows the most frequently coded sub-themes to be "**Insufficient practical training/internship time**" and "**Theoretical Education**". All 13 participants frequently (F:20) indicated university assigned internship periods were too brief. This indicates the time allotted to practical experiences at universities is limited. Concurrently, the volunteers indicated university education to be largely theory based.

Table 4 Findings related to volunteer teacher trainee opinions on university education systems

| Sub Category | Sub Category | f | N |
|---|---|----|----|
| Findings On The Volunteer Teachers' Opinions of The Universities' System of Education | Insufficient practical training/internship time | 20 | 13 |
| | Theoretical education | 8 | 7 |
| | Insufficient Communication with Children | 6 | 6 |
| | Insufficient Experience | 6 | 6 |
| | Insufficient Opportunities For Field Specialization | 5 | 6 |
| | Insufficient Opportunities For Meeting Teachers From different Specialist Areas | 3 | 2 |
| | Insufficient Socio Cultural Contribution | 3 | 2 |
| | Rote Teaching | 3 | 2 |
| | Insufficient Awareness of Responsibility | 1 | 1 |
| | Insufficient Socializing | 1 | 1 |
| | Lack of Creative Environment | 1 | 1 |
| | Structured Education System | 1 | 1 |
| | Teacher Centred Education | 1 | 1 |
| | Insufficient Knowledge of Teaching Techniques | 1 | 1 |

The volunteers' and teacher trainees' appraisal of the undergraduate degree in which they are enrolled is of note. When compared to the ÇABAÇAM example, the trainee teachers point to a lack of practical experience/internship opportunities in the undergraduate degree programs they are enrolled in. The participants explain that ÇABAÇAM is able to both provide internship and theoretical training, that their time at the centre had been highly productive, and they felt satisfied and happy about the experience and felt empowered. The participants' further point out that, intermingling with teacher trainees with diverse specialities, and being in direct contact with the children and their parents enriched their teaching experience. As a result, the participants expressed the perception that both the theoretical and practical implementations of formal university courses are insufficient. Furthermore, the participants are of the view that formal education is steered by an authoritative relational framework, that such education was lacking in freedom and independence, is unimaginative, tends to be facile, and is inadequate in encouraging academic specialization. In this context, it can be seen that the ÇABAÇAM model is not seen as an alternative to university education but rather as a method of enriching and reinforcing it.

Assessing the Teacher Trainees Who Volunteered in the ÇABAÇAM Model within the Purview of Teacher Adequacy

Findings regarding the academic success, personal and professional development of the teacher trainees volunteering in the ÇABAÇAM model are assessed under four sub-headings in the following chapters.

Findings Related to the Personal Development of Volunteer Teacher Trainees in Relation to Their Experiences within the ÇABAÇAM Model

Table 5 displays the personal development experienced by the teacher trainee volunteers involved with the ÇABAÇAM model.

The most frequently coded sub-themes of table 5 in relation to the impact of the ÇABAÇAM model volunteer trainee experience on the personal development of the preschool teacher trainees are "**Communication Skills**", "**Cultural Interaction**" and "**Humanist Attitude**". The Communication skills and cultural Interaction sub-themes were often referred to by all 13 of the participants. The ÇABAÇAM model was seen to pre-eminently improve the teacher trainee's communication abilities and cultural interactions the most. At the same time, the model was observed to encourage the teacher trainees to be more humane, as 9 of the 13 participants frequently coded the "**Humanist Attitude**" sub-theme.

Table 5 Findings related to the personal development effect of the ÇABAÇAM model on volunteer teacher trainees.

| Sub Category | Sub Category | f | N |
|--|--------------------------|----|----|
| Data On the Personal Development of Volunteer Teachers | Communication Skills | 34 | 13 |
| | Cultural Interaction | 20 | 11 |
| | Humanist Attitude | 16 | 9 |
| | Socialization | 12 | 6 |
| | Self-Confidence | 9 | 5 |
| | Cooperation | 7 | 6 |
| | Responsibility | 7 | 6 |
| | All-round Development | 6 | 5 |
| | Planned Approach to Work | 6 | 4 |
| | Creativity | 6 | 4 |
| | Patience | 4 | 4 |
| | Self-control | 4 | 3 |
| | Empathy | 4 | 3 |
| | Inquiry Skills | 3 | 3 |
| | Collaboration | 3 | 3 |
| | Decisiveness | 1 | 1 |
| | Critical Thinking | 1 | 1 |
| Idealist Attitude | 1 | 1 | |
| Observation Skills | 1 | 1 | |

As can be surmised from their statements, the volunteer teacher trainees gained all-round capabilities which had a positive impact on their personal development as a result of their voluntary internship at the ÇABAÇAM education centre. Communication, humanism, enhanced cultural interaction, and socialization, confidence, self-control, responsibility, critical thinking, and increased ability to plan and schedule work were cited among the trainees as capabilities they acquired.

Findings Related to the Effects of Their ÇABAÇAM Experiences on the Academic Success of the Volunteer Teacher Trainees

Table 6 Findings Related to the Effects of the ÇABAÇAM model on The Academic Success of The Volunteer Teacher Trainees

| Main Category | Sub Category | f | N |
|--|--|----|---|
| Data On The Academic Success of Volunteer Teachers | Long Term Learning Through Practice | 15 | 9 |
| | Knowledge of Teaching Techniques | 12 | 7 |
| | Increase In School Performance Standings | 10 | 8 |
| | Knowledge In Field | 10 | 4 |
| | Increased Motivation | 5 | 5 |
| | Support For Pre-Service Training | 4 | 4 |
| | Theory to Practice | 3 | 3 |
| | Activity-Material Knowledge | 2 | 2 |
| | Program Planning Capabilities | 1 | 1 |
| | Peer Learning | 1 | 1 |
| | Increased Proficiency Level | 1 | 1 |
| | Enhanced home assignment performance | 1 | 1 |
| | Opportunity to meet quality teachers/lecturers | 1 | 1 |
| Had no Effect | 1 | 1 | |

Table 6 shows the ÇABAÇAM model's impact on the academic success rates of the volunteer preschool teacher trainees. 9 of the 13 teacher trainees most frequently stressed the "**Long Term Learning through practice**" sub-theme (f:15). The long-term learning absorbed by the trainees through the ÇABAÇAM model can be seen to contribute in a meaningful manner to their academic success as future teachers. "**Knowledge of Teaching Techniques**" and "**Increase in School Performance Standings**" sub-themes are the two other frequently selected sub-themes.

The volunteer teachers indicated that the ÇABAÇAM model training provided at the centre had a positive effect on their academic success. Following their experiences at the centre, where they had the opportunity to learn through practice, the teacher trainees indicated improvements in the performance standings of their schools and in their teaching methods and techniques. With the pre-service training they received through the program, the participants also indicated that their field knowledge and ability to generate relevant material on the subject has increased.

Findings Related to the Effects of the ÇABAÇAM Experience on the Professional Development of the Volunteer Teacher Trainees

Table 7 indicates that the sub-themes most selected by teacher trainees when asked about the effect their volunteer teacher trainee experiences in the ÇABAÇAM model had on their professional performance were: "**Professional Attachment**", "**Ability to communicate with children and their families**", and "**Occupational experience gain**". The professional attachment sub-theme (f:18) was selected by 11 of the 13 participants. This proves the occupational training provided in the ÇABAÇAM model has met its target. The 'ability to communicate with children and their families' sub-theme (f:16) was selected frequently by 11 of the 13 participants. The model has attained its educational goal in enabling its participants to communicate with children and their families. The 'occupational experience gain' sub-theme (f:11) was also selected repeatedly by 10 of the participants.

Table 7 Findings Related to the Effects of the ÇABAÇAM experience on the professional development of The Volunteer Teacher Trainees

| Main Category | Subcategory | <i>f</i> | N |
|---|---|----------|----|
| Findings Related to The Volunteer Teacher Trainees Professional Development | Professional Attachment | 18 | 11 |
| | Ability to communicate with children and their families | 16 | 11 |
| | Occupational experience gain | 11 | 10 |
| | Ability to Plan, Program and Assess | 8 | 7 |
| | Classroom Management | 8 | 8 |
| | Contemporary Teacher Concept | 8 | 6 |
| | Developed Activity Resources | 6 | 6 |
| | Use of Materials | 5 | 4 |
| | Teaching Approaches and Techniques | 3 | 3 |
| | Time Management | 3 | 3 |
| | Child Centred Teaching Approach | 3 | 3 |
| | Competency | 2 | 2 |
| | Institutional Culture | 2 | 2 |
| | Effective Problem-Solving Skills | 2 | 2 |
| | Academic Research Skills | 1 | 1 |
| | Organization Activities | 1 | 1 |
| | Academic Advancement Attitude | 1 | 1 |

As explained in their own statements, through the support it offers, the ÇABAÇAM Model is revealed to have a profound effect on the professional development of volunteer teacher trainees. The trainees' stated they will be integrating knowledge gained into their own professional lives. Professional attachment and a fondness for children are the professional emotions most frequently mentioned by the volunteers. Indeed, a good career in education must be built on sympathetic foundations. It would be very difficult for a teacher trainee who likes neither their vocation of choice nor children to have a productive or good professional life. In addition, volunteer trainers emphasized that ÇABAÇAM gave them many professional skills such as planning, scheduling and evaluating process, in addition to the ability to communicate with children and families. Furthermore, the trainees stated that they gained competencies such as classroom management, activity-based education, and the contemporary teacher approach as a whole. This is evidence that the ÇABAÇAM model has succeeded in meeting its educational goals.

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research aims to review the impact ÇABAÇAM has on the academic success, and personal and professional development of preschool teacher trainees. The research employed a qualitative design, and the findings were classified and interpreted thematically. The findings uncovered from the observations and opinions of the volunteer teacher trainees were discussed in the Outcomes section, where suggestions were offered to the points raised by the research. The results pertaining to the findings of the research are disclosed in this chapter. Information gleaned from observations and interviews completed with the volunteer teacher trainees are discussed under the same chapter.

Conclusions from Findings related To the Volunteer Teachers' Perceptions of ÇABAÇAM

Analysis of the findings on the volunteer teachers' perceptions of ÇABAÇAM, point out that the identity of the education centre has become synonymous for the trainees with 'children from disadvantaged backgrounds'. The teacher trainees emphasized that the program is specifically for socio economically underprivileged children. In the eyes of the participants the educational establishment and children from disadvantaged backgrounds are inherently and inextricably linked to one other. This situation defines the mission of the centre. The volunteers' perceptions confirm the establishment as a project school targeting preschool teacher in which trainees may gain practical experience serving children from disadvantaged backgrounds. The least referenced sub-themes are that its founder is Prof.

Dr. Ebru Aktan Acar; that post-graduate students are involved; that the establishment provides preschool education; that a research environment is provided; that family education is offered; and that the environment may be likened to a laboratory. A problematic sub-theme emerges when the results of the findings on the trainees' opinions on the formal education systems within universities are analysed. The practice/internship period allocated to students within the university system is regularly cited as inadequate by the trainees. The teacher trainees are given insufficient opportunities for practical experience throughout their undergraduate studies, which leads them to express fears of future professional inadequacy related to practice. This problem may have been exacerbated by the post 2018 reduction of the minimum pre-graduation internship period by The Council of Higher Education.

Conclusions from Findings related to the ÇABAÇAM Model's Effect on the Personal Development of Voluntary Teacher Trainees

Asked by the researcher about the impact of the ÇABAÇAM model on their personal development, the teacher trainees were seen to take up the sub-themes of communication abilities, cultural interaction, humanist attitude, socialization, and self-confidence with most enthusiasm. The intense emphasis on the sub-theme of communication skills may stem from the multiple ways in which the model enables trainees to communicate with children, other trainees, families, and experts in the field while involved in training. Concurrently, from the cultural interaction aspect, the models' multi cultured structure might have had a positive impact on the participants in that respect. Focusing on the child profile served by the ÇABAÇAM model, in line with its community-based nature, the inclusion of refugee groups is perceived as an integral component of the model. Another often cited sub-theme involves the humanist attitude. Disadvantaged groups and refugees constitute the fundamental structure of the ÇABAÇAM model. Perhaps because of this, the teachers involved with the program, knowingly or otherwise, internalise the humanistic principle of considering "the uniqueness of the individual". The socialization sub-theme is another of the sub-themes most heavily emphasized within the personal development category. Adequate emphasis on this theme might stem from the equal representation of all stakeholders within the model. Cooperation between teacher trainees from varied fields of study during their learning process may contribute to gains both in informal and formal learning. It may provide participants with new networking opportunities. The most emphasized sub-theme is revealed to be self-confidence. The flexible structure of the model leads the teacher trainees to feel encouraged to have a say in the process and be thus empowered to clearly express their ideas and to actively contribute through more creative approaches to the model processes, therefore promoting 'self-confidence' to the status of one of the most emphasized sub-themes of the research.

The least contributing sub-themes were seen to be, ability to plan, program and assess, all-round development, analytical ability, observation skills, decisiveness, sensitivity, volunteerism, idealist approach and institutional culture.

Conclusions from Findings related to the ÇABAÇAM Model Effect on the Academic Success of voluntary Teacher Trainees

According to the answers provided by the teacher trainees to questions on the ÇABAÇAM model's impact on their academic success, long term learning through practice, knowledge of teaching techniques, increase in school performance standings and field knowledge were the most frequently selected sub-themes. The teacher trainees' participation in trainee trainings, the children's direct involvement in the educational process and the management of varied, concurrent projects for the benefit of the model may have provided the participants lasting long term learning opportunities through practice. The reason for the most frequent selection of the sub-theme Knowledge of educational methods and techniques, was a result of the teacher trainees' direct involvement in the children's education, during which they assumed the direct role of teacher of the student and were able to decide and apply the appropriate educational techniques which they acquired during trainee trainings. A direct reciprocal relationship may be said to be observable between the sub-themes of increase in school performance standings and specific field knowledge. The preschool teacher trainees

may owe their subsequent success in undergraduate academic examinations to their increased field knowledge as well as the long-term learning they acquired as a result of their training in praxis within the ÇABAÇAM model.

The least contributory sub-themes according to the teacher trainees were, 'increased proficiency level', 'enhanced home assignment performance', Ability to Plan, Program and Asses, Peer Learning, Academic Research Skills, and Communication Skills.

Conclusions from Findings related to the ÇABAÇAM Model Effect on the Professional Development of voluntary Teacher Trainees

An examination of answers to questions directed to volunteer preschool teacher trainees by the researcher, on the theme of the impact of the ÇABAÇAM model on their professional development, reveals the selection of professional attachment, ability to communicate with children and their families, and the occupational experience gain sub-themes. An increase in professional attachment was recorded among the voluntary trainees participating in the ÇABAÇAM model. The rationale for this improvement may be viewed as the qualities gained by the teacher trainees through becoming stakeholder participants in the early childhood centre, by being immersed in the atmosphere of the setting, being able to explore and master the learning environment and integrate with the children and their families, as well as the opportunity to cooperate with other trainees and familiarise themselves with an institutional culture. It is the sum of these elements which may be said to have led to the teacher trainees' increased attachment towards their future profession. The teacher trainees also explain that thanks to the offered opportunity to spend time with the children and their families, their ability to communicate with former has improved immeasurably. Their engagement with the professional experience sub-theme explains the teacher trainees' attitude towards gaining much needed experience in the educational process before graduating. This approach may result in teacher trainees becoming both technically and psychologically better prepared for their transition to a teaching career, with potentially positive effect on their future professional lives.

Factors defined by teacher trainees as having the least impact on their experience were scientific research skills and professional attachment. The relegation of certain specific professional elements to the lowest rung in trainee perception may be due to individual differences, insufficiencies in undergraduate training, and the programs and activities taking place at the establishment. New programming and events within the establishment may lead to the redress of such drawbacks.

The opinions of the volunteer teacher trainees were gathered by the researcher. Analysis of the findings has demonstrated the ÇABA Multi-Purpose Early Childhood Education Centre had a positive effect on the academic achievement, personal and professional development of preschool teacher candidates. The trainees point out that the centre enhanced their professional readiness throughout their pre-service education, and state that the experience furnished them with the competencies they will require for their professional careers in education. The trainees further indicate that, in their view, those of their colleagues who did not participate in the ÇABAÇAM project graduated with a deficit in professional knowledge.

Most teacher trainees who assessed their pre-service experiences in the faculties of education in which they were enrolled stated that the courses on offer were insufficient, that the education provision did not match the reality in the field, and that they were unable to acquire an education which was adaptable to the children or the education system of today. Furthermore, the trainees stress that the system they find themselves within does not prepare them for the teacher profession or institutional culture in the true sense of the words. The evaluations of the teacher trainees in this study match the outcomes of numerous other research projects.

DISCUSSIONS

The teacher training establishments of Turkey have experienced numerous past changes and revisions, referred to as reforms, in an attempt to better meet the requirements and challenges of the era. Despite this, there is a perception that pre-service teachers cannot gain the necessary professional skills prior to their eventual assignment in the field. However, according to research by Gül and Köse (2021), while pre-service teacher trainees' perception of their formal education, was positive, the participants' professional development levels were found to be severely lacking as practitioners. The research of Eğmir and Koçyiğit (2019) asked teachers to evaluate their own undergraduate training according to their personal experiences. In that context, the said research assessed the teachers' undergraduate experiences from diverse angles. The outcome of the study indicated that teachers were proficient in theoretical knowledge in their specific field, yet felt lacking in knowledge of professional practice. The research outcome indicated that the gaps in the teachers' professional knowledge became apparent as they transitioned from students into professional life. Research by Çalış and Gürbütürk (2019) showed Faculty of Education students struggled to adapt their theoretical knowledge to practical use. The graduates experienced difficulties communicating with children, were lacking in classroom management and were unable to take full advantage of teaching materials. In the conclusion of their paper, the researcher suggests pre-service training and opportunities for classroom practice should be improved. Ergünay (2018) underlines deficiencies such as field knowledge and classroom management in their research. According to the research carried out by Öztürk et al. (2016) 48% of all teaching staff employed in Ministry of National Education (MEB) preschools throughout Turkey did not participate in any seminar, webinar, conference, workshop or any other kind of extra-curricular educational activity throughout their undergraduate studies.

The positive opinions of the volunteer teacher trainees involved with the ÇABA Multi-Purpose Early Childhood Education Centre are in stark contrast with other studies previously completed in the field. This confirms the inadequacy of the theoretical training and pre-service teaching practices being currently provided both from the standpoint of Ministry of National Education and university requirements alike. Thus, the need for additional community based school projects such as ÇABAÇAM and for said establishments to widen their scope is clearly evident.

Studies on undergraduate education elsewhere reveal attempts to ameliorate similar issues by prioritizing pre-assignment education for preschool teachers. A Comparative Study on Pre-Assignment Education by Gong and Wang (2017) states: Examining "Preschool Teachers in China and the United States", it is noteworthy that the Chinese government has begun training most preschool teacher candidates as they start middle school. The US however, employs a different approach. The US chooses to start training preschool teachers at undergraduate level. Bielicki (2014) researched the effect classroom management perception had on the job satisfaction levels of teachers working in the rural areas of New York State. In the research where experience was noted to be instrumental to success, issues relating to class management were traced back to individuals, and an overall inadequacy in classroom management was observed in the participants. Lillvist et al. (2014) examined 810 students who received preschool teacher education at 15 universities in Sweden in terms of teacher competencies and emphasized that there were un-dismissible differences between the students' opinions on the competencies of their teachers and the self-perceptions of the educators. Saraacho and Spodek (2007), analysed 40 published research papers on educational programs and the training systems for the training of preschool teachers. The study concluded that providing good education to individuals involved in the area of preschool education led to an improvement in the overall level of schooling. The quality of preschool education establishments was seen to be linked to the education levels of the teachers involved. Finally, research by Oroszko (1995) analyses the classroom management techniques used by experienced preschool teachers in the US. Oroszko's research involved 18 teachers employed in private and state schools as well as day care centres and those involved in the Head Start Program which caters to low-income children. Approaches to classroom management, capabilities, context and the opinions of the teachers were considered for the research. The outcomes of the research resulting from classroom observation showed primary and secondary school teachers had similar approaches in managing classroom behaviour and activities.

These comparative results indicate both the level and critical importance of the education provided at the ÇABA Multi-Purpose Early Childhood Education Centre. As a result of the literature review, it was concluded that the pre-assignment education of preschool teacher trainees should be of higher quality. In this context, the ÇABAÇAM model can be seen to have had a positive impact on the pre-service education of teacher trainees. The model contributes to the personal and professional development of preschool teacher trainees who take on the role of voluntary educators; at the same time, while enhancing pre-assignment training such services also fortify the academic acumen of those enrolled. The model, which enables learning through practical application, allows the participating trainees to graduate with experience and an expanded toolbox of skills. Preschool teacher trainees thus effectively carry over their experiences into their professional lives, so that both the child participants and the community can benefit from the quality of their teaching practices as a result.

Recommendations

The ÇABAÇAM model has proven to positively contribute to the variables of personal and professional development of teacher trainees while assisting them academically at the same time. By providing the opportunity for practical experience, the model prepares trainees for their professional lives, thus supporting the conversion from theory to practice for the volunteers. With this in mind:

Recommendations for Policy Makers,

Within the context of preschool teacher training, Faculties of Education may alter the contents of their courses to improve teacher trainee access to practitioner training. In the context of the teacher trainee trainings provided at ÇABAÇAM (Drama training, Orff, trainings on varied approaches and models, etc.) the need of improved theoretical instruction at university level becomes clearer.

In addition to extending the duration of practical courses, it is necessary to prepare programs that will enable pre-assignment teachers to be more proactive in the processes which prepare them for their professional life. More comprehensive programs need to be developed aiming to actively prepare preschool teacher trainees for their profession which require the increased participation of those enrolled.

Recommendations Regarding the ÇABAÇAM Model

An in-service professional teacher could be physically present in the classroom alongside the ÇABAÇAM volunteer trainee. Such a teacher could act as mentor for the trainees so support them as they encounter problems in the classroom.

The establishment is currently based solely in Çanakkale. Disseminating the ÇABAÇAM model to other universities throughout the country could help such a program reach additional low-income children and teacher trainees. Participating teachers were witnessed to have developed in the ways foreseen by this research. The project has observably yielded positive results as anticipated. The educational approach employed within this project could act as an exemplar for other similar establishments.

The ÇABAÇAM model should be introduced nation-wide, support from other universities should be sought to widen the reach of the program. It is essential that the number of teacher trainees benefiting from such a program is increased.

Conflicts of Interest: No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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

CRedit Author Statement: The authors contributed equally to this research.

Ethical Statement: Publication ethics was provided for this study. Ethical approval was obtained for this research from the Scientific Research Ethics Committee of Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University.

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