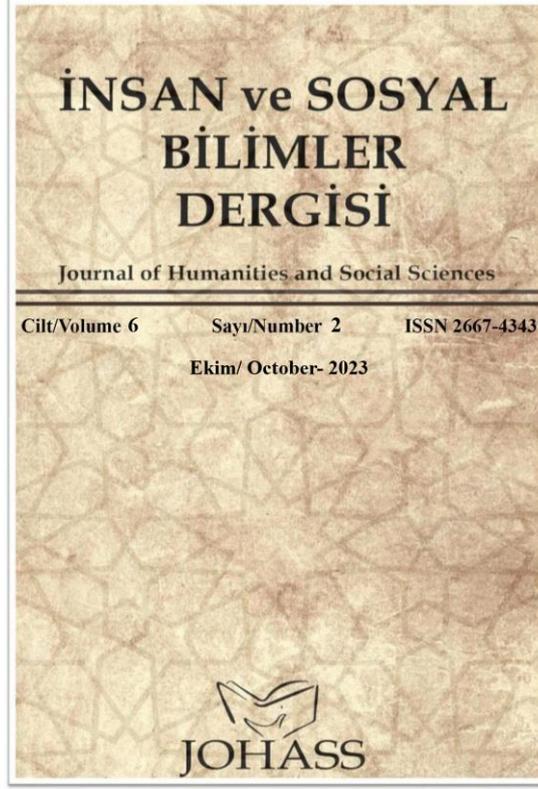


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**Determining the Needs for Classroom Management Course in Associate Degree Child Development Departments**

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## **Determining the Needs for Classroom Management Course in Associate Degree Child Development Departments**

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### **Abstract**

The aim of this study is to determine the needs for the classroom management course in associate degree child development departments. The research was conducted using the case study method. In this context, 5 experts were included in the study group using criteriyinon sampling technique, and 201 students were included using appropriate sampling technique. Data were collected through a semi-structured interview form developed by the researchers and the classroom management competency scale. Additionally, studies conducted nationally and internationally on the subject were also reviewed for data collection. The data were analyzed using content analysis, percentage, frequency, and mean analyses. According to the results of the research, the classroom management competencies of child development department students are at a moderate level. Experts state that since graduates mainly work in the education sector, there is a need for a classroom management course in these departments. Moreover, experts mentioned that in addition to professional knowledge such as planning, knowing classroom management strategies, knowledge of methods and techniques, using instructional technologies, and designing materials, students also need to have personal characteristics such as being open to development, friendly, empathetic, and having communication skills to succeed in their professional lives. The findings obtained from the research can be used for program development or updating studies for the classroom management course in associate degree child development departments.

**Keywords:** Child development, classroom management, needs analysis

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## **Introduction**

Education in the field of child development is founded on understanding the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional changes that occur during childhood, one of the most critical phases of an individual's life, and developing educational approaches suitable for these changes. The experiences children acquire during this period form the foundation for many fundamental skills and attitudes in their future lives. Therefore, the knowledge and skills that professionals who will work directly with children need to possess are of great importance.

Students trained in Child Development undergraduate and associate degree programs can work in various fields after graduation. One of these fields is educational institutions. Especially those who work as teachers/assistant teachers in private educational institutions providing preschool education, the child development undergraduate and associate degree students need to know the group dynamics they may encounter in their advancing careers, individual differences, and how to cope with these differences. However, it is observed that detailed and systematic training on classroom management is not given in the current child development undergraduate and associate degree curriculums. In this article, a needs analysis is presented with the aim of drawing attention to the existing deficiency and emphasizing the necessity of the classroom management course in child development departments. Firstly, a general overview of the definition and importance of classroom management, and then, in light of the interview and survey results with field experts and child development students, the article focuses on what kind of deficiencies exist in the current curriculum in this field and how these deficiencies can be addressed. This study aims not only to raise awareness on the subject of classroom management in the field of child development education but also to guide educational institutions and relevant stakeholders.

### **Classroom Management and Its Importance in the Preschool Period**

The preschool period refers to a phase where children continue their social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development and where the foundations of education are laid; it is also a time of many first experiences for children. In this period, children are introduced to the school environment, friends, teachers, rules, and routines. This period is a significant time in which rapid changes and developments are experienced from an individual's perspective. (Temizyürek & Akyüz, 2020). During this process, educators who have close and intense interaction with children need to possess effective classroom management skills to support

both academic and social skill development of the children, facilitate their adaptation to the new environment, and ensure their learning in a safe and supportive setting. Classroom management plays a critical role in organizing the educational environment and providing an effective learning atmosphere to support students' learning process.

Classroom management is defined as directing classroom dynamics like an orchestra by encompassing factors such as organizing resources in a planned manner, making the environment productive, tracking student progress, and identifying potential student difficulties in advance (Terzi, 2002). In other words, classroom management is expressed as a process of creating a positive educational atmosphere in the classroom and enhancing the opportunities for students to express themselves freely and demonstrate their abilities (Turan, 2004).

Classrooms, which are the spaces where educational-teaching processes are conducted and where teachers interact directly with students, represent a certain structural order, especially in terms of student learning (Başar, 2000). It is an undeniable fact that this structural order needs to be supported by a successful teaching process. Effective classroom management encompasses comprehensive direction of education programs, physical conditions, time management, emotional relationships, and all kinds of activities within the classroom. In this context, it is expected that the teacher is familiar with both the characteristics of the student and teaching methods. However, it is not enough for the teacher to be knowledgeable in this area only; they also need to be proficient in classroom management. This is because the relationship between teaching and management is mutual, and the success of one positively affects the other. Management knowledge is essential for an effective teaching process, and teachers need to be aware of this (Ming-tak and Wi-shing, 2008; Pretorius and Lemmer, 1998; Cited: Eren, 2018).

While the types of communication vary, every interaction involves certain objectives, whether intentional or unintentional. These objectives, evident in the message exchange between the sender and receiver, provide certain benefits to the participant(s) in the communication process. Recognizing the physical, psychological, and sociological functions of communication is crucial to achieve these specified objectives. (Ata & Oğuz, 2021). In this context, a teacher must be a successful manager and communicator beyond being a competent educator (Saritaş, 2003). Classroom management is necessary to create an atmosphere conducive to learning because it includes techniques and processes that encourage both teaching and learning (Karwan and Hussein, 2023). For a teacher to conduct an effective

teaching process and to increase active student participation in lessons, it is essential to have in-depth knowledge of classroom management and dealing with unwanted student behaviors and the ability to apply this knowledge in practice (Erol, 2006). Creating a positive atmosphere in the classroom and achieving the intended results in education depend on the teacher's classroom management skills. An effective educational process is directly related to strong classroom management skills. The foundation of success in education and teaching lies in the proper guidance of the classroom (İlgar, 2005). Similarly, Wahdah et al., (2023) stated that classroom management and student success cannot be separated from each other. In this context, when child development undergraduate and associate degree students take positions in educational institutions, they will be professionals interacting directly with children. Therefore, they need to possess the ability to manage a group of children, direct interaction among children, cope with negative behaviors, impart self-control skills to students, organize the learning environment, and guide students' learning processes. The classroom management course is of great importance in imparting this competence.

On the other hand, there is no classroom management course in associate degree child development departments in Türkiye. In the literature, no studies have been found to determine the needs for classroom management courses in child development departments. In this respect, the study is capable of filling this gap in the field. For this reason, the study aimed to determine the needs for classroom management course in child development departments. In this context, one general research and three sub-problems have been identified in this study.

### **Problem Statement**

Is there a need for a classroom management course in associate degree child development programs?

### **Sub-problems**

1. According to the opinions of the students, is there a need for a classroom management course in their programs?
2. According to the opinions of experts, is there a need for a classroom management course in child development programs?
3. Based on the literature in the field, is there a need for a classroom management course?

## **Method**

### **Model**

In this study, it is aimed to identify the needs for a classroom management course in child development departments. In line with the objective, data triangulation has been used through employing different data collection tools such as literature review, expert interview form, and scale. In this context, the study has been conducted with the case study method. Case studies are studies that describe events and situations occurring in their natural conditions in detail using different data collection tools and are based on deep foundations (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). In the study, the embedded multiple case study design has been used as the design. The embedded multiple case study design is a study where there are different units of analysis within itself and more than one case is addressed in a study (Yin, 2014).

### **Sample and Population**

In the scope of the research, two different sampling techniques have been used for two different participant groups. Criterion sampling has been used for experts, and convenience sampling technique has been used for students. Criterion sampling is a type of sampling in which the sample is formed according to certain criteria determined by researchers (Büyüköztürk et al., 2011). In the criterion sampling technique, the criteria sought are that the participants have taught courses in child development departments and have taken a classroom management course. Convenience sampling is a technique where participants are those that researchers can easily reach and include in the study, which accelerates the research and the probability of participants being selected is unknown (Dawson & Trapp, 2001). The number of experts participating in the study is five. 20% (n:1) of the experts are Associate Professors, 40% (n:2) are Assistant Professors, 20% (n:1) are Lecturers with PhDs, and 20% (n:1) are Lecturers and PhD students. The number of students participating in the study is 201. 64.1% of the students are 2nd grade and 35.9% are 1st grade.

### **Data Collection Tool**

In the study, an attempt has been made to diversify the data by using different data collection tools to collect data. In this context, data has been obtained by conducting semi-structured interview forms, scales, and literature reviews.

**Semi-Structured Interview Form:** Within the scope of the study, a semi-structured interview form, consisting of four questions and developed by the researchers, has been used. The questions included in the interview form address the need for a classroom management course, knowledge and skills related to classroom management, what is needed in professional life regarding classroom management, and the responsibilities of stakeholders. After the questions were prepared, opinions were received from two field experts, and the appropriateness of the questions was decided by the experts. No additions or deletions were made to the interview questions after the expert opinion.

**Classroom Management Competency Scale:** Within the scope of the study, the scale developed by Elçiçek, Kinay, and Oral (2015), consisting of five sub-dimensions and 30 items of the 5-point Likert type, has been used. The KMO value of the scale was calculated as 0.90, the  $X^2/df$  ratio as 1.67, and the RMSEA value as 0.047. They also found the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient to be 0.87. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the sample in this study is 0.882.

## **Data Analysis**

After the opinions obtained from the experts were transcribed into text, they were analyzed with content analysis. Content analysis is to organize data that resemble each other within certain codes and themes and present them in a way that readers can understand (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2012). The data obtained from child development students with the scale were analyzed with percentage, frequency, and average. Since the questions in the scale are of the 5-point Likert type, the scores that can be obtained for each question vary between 1-5, and overall in the scale, it varies between 30-150. The responses in the scale are listed as very insufficient, insufficient, intermediate, sufficient, and very sufficient. This classification was taken into account when determining the levels for the overall scale and sub-dimensions of the students.

## **Validity – Reliability**

Some measures have been taken to ensure validity and reliability in the research. To ensure validity; opinions were taken from experts and participants, and these opinions were given in the form of direct quotations. In addition, measures have been taken such as explaining the method, design, study group, the reason for selecting the sample, the preparation processes of data collection tools, and analysis of the research.

To ensure reliability in the research; measures such as calculating the concordance of opinions and the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient have been taken. For opinion concordance, the opinion concordance formula of Miles and Huberman (1994) has been used. According to this formula  $[G.U = G.B / (G.B + G.A) * 100]$ , it is sufficient for the opinion concordance to be 70% and above (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In the study, the opinion concordance rate between two coders used in content analysis in the analysis of data obtained from expert opinions is 81.8%. The reliability coefficient for the scale used to determine students' classroom management competencies for the study group is .882.

### **Compliance with Ethical Standards**

For this study was received ethics decision by Hatay Mustafa Kemal University Social And Humanities Scientific Research And Publication Ethics Committee. (Date:05.05.2023 Decision:04).

## **Findings**

### **1. Is There A Need for A Classroom Management Course According to the Students of The Child Development Department?**

The averages of the students were checked to determine the sub-dimensions of the scale and their levels in the whole scale, and the results are given in Table 2.

**Table 1**

*Descriptive Values Obtained from the Scale*

<b>Sub-dimension</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Min.</b>	<b>Max.</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S. Deviation</b>	<b>Level</b>
Relationship management	201	9	45	28.60	6.24	Moderate
Instruction management	201	7	35	20.55	5.53	Moderate
Behavior management	201	6	30	12.62	5.25	In sufficient
Physical arrangement management	201	5	25	19.35	3.06	Sufficient
Time management	201	3	15	11.29	2.34	Sufficient
Total	201	30	150	96.24	15.36	Moderate

According to the data in the table, the score ranges for the five levels for the overall scale are as follows: 30-53 very insufficient, 54-77 insufficient, 78-101 intermediate level, 102-125 sufficient, and 126-150 very sufficient. Due to the average score of the students from the overall scale being 96.24, their classroom management competencies are at an

intermediate level. For the relationship management sub-dimension, the score ranges for levels are: 9-15 very insufficient, 16-22 insufficient, 23-30 intermediate, 31-37 sufficient, and 38-45 very sufficient. The average score for this dimension is 28.60, which is at an intermediate level. In the instruction management sub-dimension, the levels are: 7-12.5 very insufficient, 12.6-18.1 insufficient, 18.2-23.7 intermediate level, 23.8-29.2 sufficient, and 29.3-35 very sufficient. The average score for this dimension is 20.55, placing it at the intermediate level. In the behavior management sub-dimension of the scale, the score ranges for levels are: 5-9.8 very insufficient, 9.9-14.7 insufficient, 14.8-19.7 intermediate, 19.8-24.6 sufficient, and 24.7-30 very sufficient. The average score for this dimension is 12.62, placing it in the insufficient level. In the physical arrangement management sub-dimension, the score ranges for levels are: 5-8 very insufficient, 9-12 insufficient, 13-16 intermediate, 17-20 sufficient, and 21-25 very sufficient. The average score for this dimension is 19.35, which is at the sufficient level. In the time management sub-dimension, the score ranges for levels are: 3-5.3 very insufficient, 5.4-7.7 insufficient, 7.8-10.1 intermediate, 10.2-12.5 sufficient, and 12.6-15 very sufficient. The average score for this dimension is 11.29, placing the students at the sufficient level.

## **2. Is There A Need or A Classroom Management Course in Child Development Departments according to Experts?**

The answers given by the experts to the question, "Is there a need for a classroom management course in child development departments? Why?" are provided in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*Expert Opinions Regarding the Question, "Is There A Need for A Classroom Management Course in Child Development Departments?"*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>f</b>
Need	Working in the field of education	5

According to Table 2, experts have expressed their opinion under the theme of the need for a classroom management course in child development departments as working in the field of education (f:5). Some sample opinions of the experts related to the determined code are as follows;

*"Graduates of the Child Development department predominantly work in the field of education. Special education and rehabilitation centers and kindergartens are their main areas of work. In some schools, they work as teachers and in others, as assistant teachers. However, since there is no classroom management course in child development departments, they might have to work as if lacking in this aspect. Especially since the age group is 4-6 years, there can constantly be unwanted situations, and due to the sensitivity of the children and their families, they should know what to do in the face of these unwanted situations. Therefore, it should definitely be taught as a course." (U4)*

*"Yes. I think they need it. For example, the fact that a student graduating from a vocational high school child development department cannot be directly appointed as a teacher through KPSS should not mean that they do not need this course. Because students and graduates of this department serve as teachers in many areas, especially in the private sector. Students and graduates of child development are in direct contact with preschool children, and I think their numbers are noteworthy. I believe that action should be taken in this real context, and I think they need to take a classroom management course." (U1)*

The responses given by the experts to the question, "What kind of knowledge and skills should a graduate of the child development department have in terms of classroom management?" are included in Table 3.

**Table 3**

*Expert Opinions on the Question, "What Kind of Knowledge and Skills Should Graduates of The Child Development Department Have in Terms of Classroom Management?"*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>f</b>
Professional competence	Field knowledge	4
Individual competencies	Personal characteristics	4

According to Table 3, experts have expressed their opinions under the theme of professional competence as field knowledge (f:4) and under the theme of individual competences as personal characteristics (f:4) for students who are graduates of the child development department. Some example opinions of the experts related to the identified codes are as follows;

*"Like in every profession, these students also need to have some features both professionally and personally. Firstly, they need to love children and their jobs.*

*Professionally, they need to be able to plan, know classroom management strategies, teaching methods and techniques, and especially design materials. Since children of this age are in the concrete operational stage, everything can be material for them. Personally, they should be open to development, cheerful, able to become a child with children, and have empathy and communication skills." (U5).*

*"Firstly, they need to know the children. Therefore, they should have knowledge about child development. After knowing the children, they should have the knowledge and skills to plan and implement the educational process that will respond to their interests and needs, appeal to children, keep children's attention at a high level, and motivate children. They should have the knowledge and skill to solve problems that may occur during the educational process. They should have knowledge of methods and techniques that will keep the motivation of children high. They should have creative problem-solving knowledge and skills to resolve problems encountered during the implementation of the plans. To start, maintain, and conclude the process healthily, they should be patient, tolerant, understanding, disciplined, good role models, and have advisory roles." (U2).*

The answers given by the experts to the question, "What do students of the child development department need in terms of classroom management in their working life? What should be taught?" are included in Table 4.

**Table 4**

*Expert Opinions on the Question: What Do Students of the Child Development Department Need In Terms of Classroom Management in Their Working Life?*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>f</b>
Pedagogical knowledge	Developmental psychology	4
Field knowledge	Planning and implementation knowledge	3
Technological knowledge	Instructional technologies	1

According to Table 4, experts have expressed their opinions on what the graduate students of the child development department will need in their working life under the theme of pedagogical knowledge as developmental psychology (f:4), under the theme of field knowledge as planning and implementation knowledge (f:3), and under the theme of technological knowledge as instructional technologies (f:1). Some sample opinions of the experts related to the identified codes are as follows;

*"For effective and lasting learning and behavior change, within the scope of classroom management, they first need information about the developmental characteristics, levels, interests, and needs of the children. With this knowledge, they will be able to plan and implement the educational process that suits and addresses the children. Education according to the child will focus the child's attention on the educational process and also motivate them to the process. Thus, children will not be apart from the process but will be a part of the process and even the main element shaping the process in the advanced stages."(U2).*

*"The plans made due to children in the preschool period can vary a lot. Therefore, students of child development should also be able to apply by making changes to the plans in practical terms. In addition, primarily the developmental characteristics, interests, and needs of the children, methods of increasing motivation in the classroom, ways of including children in the educational process, and methods for enabling children to plan, implement, and manage their own educational processes should be taught to the students of the child development department." (U1).*

*"Today is the age of technology, and preschool students are getting acquainted with technology even before they start school. Students of child development need to know instructional technologies both to inform children and their families about technology use and to benefit from technology during teaching."(U4).*

The answers given by the experts to the question, "Are there any responsibilities for YÖK, Universities, Academicians, and other stakeholders for the classroom management course in the child development department?" are included in Table 5.

**Table 5**

*The Expert Opinions Regarding the Question, "Are There Any Responsibilities on the Part of YÖK, Universities, and Academicians for the Classroom Management Course in Child Development Departments?"*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>f</b>
YÖK	Curriculum development	3
Universities	Incorporating it as a course	3
Academicians	Following innovations	2

According to Table 5, experts have expressed their opinions regarding the responsibilities that fall to YÖK, Universities, Academicians, and other stakeholders for the

classroom management course in child development departments under the themes of curriculum development (f:3) for YÖK, incorporating it as a course (f:3) for Universities, and following innovations (f:2) for Academicians. Some example opinions from the experts relating to the specified codes are as follows;

*"YÖK: Should make the necessary adjustments for the renewal of the curriculum and the addition of the classroom management course. Universities: By emphasizing application courses and internships, they should provide students with practical experience. Academicians: They should follow current approaches in classroom management and teach students the best and most effective methods. Other Stakeholders: Institutions with practical application areas, especially schools, kindergartens, and special education institutions, should cooperate with universities and teach students solutions to problems they may encounter in real life (U3).*

*"There is a need for such a course, so considering the characteristics of the department, the classroom management course taught in education faculties can be updated through needs assessment studies, and programs can be developed, YÖK can lead these studies. It is important for Universities to include it as a course and if possible as a compulsory course. I can say that Academicians have the most responsibility. They can contribute to curriculum development and evaluation studies with their academic studies and can also instill strategies and approaches related to this course in students."(U5).*

### **3. According to the Literature, is There A Need for A Classroom Management Course in Child Development Departments?**

Within the scope of the research, studies at national and international levels have been examined to determine whether there is a need for a classroom management course.

Dönmez (2007) has emphasized that teachers should have effective classroom management skills, stating that teacher behaviors are the most important determinant in creating an effective and positive classroom atmosphere. Similarly, Ercoşkun and Ada (2013) have also mentioned insufficiency in this field as a reason for teachers not being able to establish effective classroom management. In the study where Paliç and Keleş (2011) received opinions from teachers about classroom management, they have recommended implementing pre-service and in-service training programs related to the subject to ensure that all teachers are equipped with contemporary approaches and proficiency in classroom management. Öztürk et al., (2014) have emphasized in their study with teacher candidates that

cooperation between family and teacher is important against unwanted behaviors in the classroom, but the education that the teacher has received regarding classroom management, and the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they possess are more effective in shaping the behaviors of the children. Erdoğan, Kurşun, Tan Şişman, Saltan, Gök, and Yıldız (2010) in their study on classroom management and reasons for in-class problems and their prevention, have listed one of the reasons as teacher management inadequacy and one of the preventive measures as improving teacher competencies. Parpucu, Yıldırım Polat, and Akman (2018) in their study have examined the opinions on relationships and communication in classroom management of participants working in kindergartens as preschool teachers and assistants. As a result of the research, they observed that teachers with associate degrees and high school diplomas were distinctly limited in terms of classroom management and the factors affecting classroom management. From this point, they pointed out the importance of the classroom management course and suggested that the course should be taught by a relevant field expert. Uyanık Balat, Bilgin, and Ünsal (2017) in their study examining the relationship between preschool teachers' attitudes towards the profession and classroom management, have stated that teachers' democratic attitudes positively affected classroom management skills while negative attitudes adversely affected these skills. Aküzüm and Altunhan (2017) have revealed that the classroom management skills possessed by preschool teachers predict their inclusive education competencies. Güder, Alabay, and Güner (2018) in their study examining the behavioral problems encountered by preschool teachers in the classroom and the strategies they applied, have stated that there is a need to enhance teachers' competencies related to classroom management approach.

O'Neill and Stephenson (2012) have stated in their study with teacher candidates in Australia that the situation they feel most inadequate in is dealing with challenging students. Burden (2003) has emphasized that teachers need to possess the necessary knowledge and skills related to classroom management to facilitate positive social interaction, active participation, and self-motivation. Wang, Haertel, and Walberg (1993) have expressed in their study that the most important factor affecting students' learning and academic achievement is classroom management. Wait and Warren (2001) have compared teachers receiving traditional undergraduate education with those graduating from a program containing effective classroom management strategies and determined that teachers receiving effective classroom management strategies were more successful in managing the classroom. Carlson, Bender, Benson, and Tired (2011) have implemented a 16-week program aimed at enhancing

cooperative structures of children, facilitating their adaptation to school, reducing aggressive behaviors, and strengthening classroom management strategies on 24 preschool teachers. At the end of the research, positive changes were observed in the use of effective classroom management strategies by preschool teachers. Chun-Ting (2023) has suggested that teachers working in active aging learning centers in Taiwan base their interactions and interpersonal harmony on traditional Chinese methods; therefore, they should be trained in classroom management and encouraged to have positive interpersonal interactions inside and outside the classroom. Zhang (2023) has noted that classroom management problems are more prevalent in online education and highlighted the need for teachers to learn effective classroom management methods in online education.

Studies show that the way to create a positive classroom atmosphere is through teacher behavior. For this, teachers must have the necessary knowledge and competence. The way to create a positive classroom environment is through effective classroom management. Classroom management also positively affects academic achievements by improving the quality of education.

### **Discussion and Results**

Classroom management not only provides students with theoretical knowledge but also prepares them for the challenges they may face in practice. This preparation both increases individual awareness and facilitates finding effective solutions to problems that may be encountered in professional life. The aim of this study is to determine whether there is a need for a classroom management course in child development departments. In line with this purpose, the study has been conducted using the case study method. The data obtained through literature review, expert opinions, and student views have been analyzed and interpreted.

The classroom management competencies of child development students have been determined to be at a medium level. Şahin Sak (2015) has conducted a study supporting this finding, examining the self-efficacy beliefs of pre-school teacher candidates regarding classroom management. She interviewed 52 teacher candidates who had taken the classroom management and school practice course, determining that 51.9% of the participants were partially competent. Due to the students' level being medium, it can be said that they need education in the field of classroom management. In pre-school, classroom management is a

composite of knowledge, skills, and behaviors related to child-centered, multifaceted development, and the use of play as the fundamental teaching method (Küçükahmet, 2012). These components are included in the sub-dimensions of the scale used in the study. The students' level has been identified as medium in relationship management and instruction management dimensions, sufficient in physical order management and time management dimensions, and insufficient in behavior management dimension. Students feel competent only in physically organizing the classroom environment and in terms of time. They are not sufficient in the dimensions of relationship, instruction, and behavior, which have a significant place in classroom management strategies. Ming-Tak and Wai-Shing (2008) have stated that the purpose of classroom management is to facilitate effective and meaningful learning by creating a positive classroom atmosphere to support students' developmental areas and boost their self-confidence. To achieve this goal, it can be argued that students need to be proficient in other dimensions of classroom management as well. This is because Early et al. (2006) have found that the education received by teachers has an impact on children's cognitive and general skills. There are some studies indicating that students graduating from vocational high schools in child development and associate degree child development programs need a course in classroom management. In a study conducted by Parpucu, Yıldırım Polat, and Akman (2018), it was determined that assistant teachers, who are graduates of associate degree programs and vocational high schools, did not include teaching methods and techniques, material usage, the physical environment of the classroom, and the developmental characteristics of learners while defining classroom management. It was reported that this situation might be due to not taking a course in classroom management. Contrary to these studies, Yeşilyurt and Çankaya (2008) found in their research with 225 teachers that the classroom management skills of associate degree graduates were higher than those of bachelor's degree graduates. Denizel Güven and Cevher (2005), in their study with 93 preschool teachers, found significant differences in favor of preschool teaching and child development associate degree graduates, and Sadık and Dikici Sığırtmaç (2016) found a significant difference in favor of associate degree graduates between bachelor's and associate degree graduates. The results of these studies could be attributed to the fact that associate degree graduates and vocational high school graduates in the study group have more work and application experience compared to bachelor's degree graduates due to the data collection tool used.

In the research, experts have stated that students graduating in child development predominantly need a course in classroom management as they work in the field of education. They have emphasized that, in order for students to be successful in their professional lives, they need to have personal qualities such as being open to development, cheerful, empathetic, and communicative, in addition to professional knowledge such as planning, knowing classroom management strategies, knowledge of methods and techniques, and designing materials. Bulut (2020) has stated that in order to be a teacher in the preschool age group, students need to know developmental characteristics and use various methods to provide classroom management. Experts have emphasized that students need to be able to use developmental psychology, planning and implementing, and instructional technologies, which have become a necessity of today, to establish effective classroom management. Prensky (2001) refers to today's students as digital natives. Therefore, teachers need to concretize and facilitate teaching by using instructional technologies in various ways within the classroom (Arabacı and Polat, 2013). Additionally, experts have mentioned that tasks such as developing and updating programs related to the course for higher education institutions, making it a mandatory course for universities, and keeping abreast of innovations for field experts to know contemporary classroom management strategies fall on the institutions. Teachers who do not have sufficient knowledge and skills in classroom management will not be able to instill the behaviors they want to impart to their students (Terzi, 2002).

Within the scope of the study, 132 vocational colleges with child development programs in 80 universities, excluding foundation universities, have been examined. It has been observed that in 21 of these schools, a classroom management course is offered, being mandatory in 8 and elective in 13 (YÖKATLAS, 2023). In other words, in 65.6 % of universities offering an associate degree in child development program, no classroom management course is offered. This value indicates that the classroom management course is largely not included in the child development programs at the associate degree level, and this is a deficiency for students who mostly work in the education sector after graduation.

The findings obtained show that education in classroom management plays a critical role in creating effective learning environments contributing to the cognitive, social, and emotional development of children. At the same time, classroom management education imparts critical skills to students such as understanding group dynamics, preventing or solving potential conflicts and problems, and increasing student motivation.

In conclusion, it is recommended that the curriculum of the child development department be updated with more comprehensive and practical training on classroom management. This update is thought to be able to increase both the academic success of department students and enrich their field experiences after graduation; moreover, it can serve as a guiding reference for universities, educational institutions, and other relevant stakeholders regarding the addition of classroom management education to the program. Especially in the curriculum development process, it is hoped that the findings obtained from the study will contribute to making child development education more compliant with international standards. Lastly, the addition of the classroom management course to the curriculum will be a step that supports the vision and mission of the child development department, equips students with the skills required by the 21st century, and makes them more competent in the field. Therefore, based on the results of this study, it is recommended to add a classroom management course to the curriculum of the child development department.

### **Compliance with Ethical Standards**

For this study was received ethics decision by Hatay Mustafa Kemal University Social And Humanities Scientific Research And Publication Ethics Committee. (Date:05.05.2023 Decision:04)

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