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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Team Teaching in Preschool Education: A Case Study

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Abstract

This case study aimed to examine how the team teaching method is implemented in a university kindergarten. In this context, the experiences of preschool teachers, and the opinions of teachers, school management, and families on team teaching were examined. The research participants were determined by the critical case sampling method. Participants included twelve preschool teachers, one school administrator, one education coordinator, and seven family members. The data, collected by semi-structured interviews, were subjected to content analysis. According to the results, the team teachers carry out the education process in equal and unequal positions and using different models. The method is found to be beneficial for the children, teachers, and the education process, provided that harmony, healthy communication and consistency are maintained between team members. On the other hand, according to participants, team teaching has disadvantages in terms of the relationship between the family and the teacher and between the teachers in the team. Finally, it is suggested that teachers who work in schools where the method is used for an effective team teaching experience should be given training on teamwork. Before implementing the method, the teachers should be given time to get to know each other. In addition, the administrators should allow the teachers to participate in the selection of their team partners.

Keywords: Co-teaching, collaborative teaching, preschool teacher, team teaching, teamwork

Introduction

Teacher isolation has been one of the basic characteristics associated with the teaching profession for years. However, the view that isolation can be an obstacle to the opportunities of professional development, and the emphasis on the necessity of cooperation have led to new discussions and methods (Flinders, 1988). Toward the end of the 1980s, techniques requiring expert collaboration to improve inclusive practices in special education were included, and this cooperative work was widely discussed in the teamwork context, which is an approach used by both special and general education teachers (Cook & Friend, 1995). Although there is generally a single teacher in a classroom in the institutions of early childhood education, this process can be continued with the guidance of two or more teachers who work as a team (Scruggs et al., 2007) due to the influence of changing environmental conditions, children's needs, and various approaches such as Reggio Emilia and HighScope (Bartlett & Gandini, 1993; Buckleitner et al., 1991). However, there is a lack of information in the current literature about how these practices are implemented and evaluated in preschool environments (Nilsson, 2015; Sanders-Smith et al., 2021; Scruggs et al., 2007; Vesay, 2004). The need for evidence-based practices to increase the effectiveness of education (Shonkoff & Fisher, 2013) has revealed the necessity of descriptive and in-depth research about this subject.

The Definition of Team Teaching and the Strategies Used in Its Implementation

Operationally, team teaching is the method of teaching by a group of two or more teachers who work together in order to plan, carry out, and evaluate the learning activities of the same group of students (Goetz, 2000). It is contextualized in two broad categories. There can be two or more teachers with the same students, in one classroom at the same time. Alternatively, teachers can work together but may not always be with the same student group at the same time (Goetz, 2000; Wang, 2010). As stated in Cook and Friend's classification (1995), the following five different strategies, namely, one teacher–one assistant, station teaching, parallel teaching, alternative teaching, team teaching, and various combinations of those strategies have been used in the practice of team teaching.

In the one teacher–one assistant strategy, one of the teachers apparently takes on the leadership role in the classroom, while the other teacher observes the classroom and supports children when necessary. In the station teaching method, teachers subdivide the content into different parts and conduct it in different areas in the classroom. Parallel teaching is the model where the teaching plan is made collectively, but each teacher guides a mixed group that consists of half of the class. In alternative teaching, one teacher works with a small group of learners that is formed based on special needs and individual differences of the children, while the other teacher continues doing activities with a relatively bigger group. Finally, the whole process is carried out collectively by the team in team teaching (Cook & Friend, 1995). Studies on the benefits and drawbacks of team teaching for both teachers and students are included in the literature (Anderson & Speck, 1998; Meizlish & Anderson, 2018; Plank, 2011).

The Advantages and Disadvantages

Cooperative team teaching has various benefits for teachers (Goetz, 2000; Hadley et al., 2000; Hestenes et al., 2009). Through this teaching

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method, teachers exchange opinions and offer alternative views and solutions to each other during activities (Anderson & Speck, 1998; Gardiner, 2010; Walther-Thomas, 1997; White et al., 1998). While new teachers benefit from the knowledge of experienced teachers about team teaching, the more experienced teachers gain knowledge about new ideas and teaching methods from their colleagues. Furthermore, team teaching facilitates diverging from the teacher-centered point of view to the adoption of a child-centered approach (Goetz, 2000; Robinson & Schaible, 1995). Blednick and Wilson (2011) indicate that this method is not only used in order to provide supportive and effective learning opportunities for all students, it also enables teaching professionals to cooperate, solve problems effectively, and be more creative.

In addition to the benefits that team teaching provides for the teachers, it is obvious that it has positive effects on the learning outcomes for the students (Hadley et al., 2000; Johnson et al., 2000). It has been revealed that students who attend schools in which this method is used have succeed better compared to those taught by a single teacher (Hadley et al., 2000; Walther-Thomas, 1997). As well as academic achievement, it was indicated that the students learning by this method had higher levels of communication and social problem-solving skills (Johnson et al., 2000). Team teaching allows students to encounter the perspectives of various experts. Thus, students can model the cooperation with which the team members respect each other and develop the critical thinking skills necessary to overcome the problems in their social lives (Meizlish & Anderson, 2018). In a cooperative team teaching experience, while two teachers are presenting their content to the class at the same time, students witness the dynamic process of two different minds and personalities and take part in this process. Different teaching approaches used by the team affect the learning skills and supply variety to the learners (Laughlin et al., 2011).

Even though team learning is advantageous for many children, some children may feel disappointed and discontented about having more than one teacher. The variety in the team and the potential uncertainty is threatening for some children. It can lead to a negative environment for children who have attention deficit and hyperactivity disorders or for those who are uncomfortable in large groups. In addition, some children can bend the classroom rules by trying to bring a teacher up against another (Goetz, 2000). The conflict that arises in such a situation can be a disadvantage for the teachers.

Working as a team is generally practical for the teachers. However, there are various difficulties caused by the need for cooperation. For instance, while the planning stage of the learning process is important for effective team work, teachers encounter difficulties in cooperation at this stage (Carter et al., 2009; Stockall & Gartin, 2002). The school management does not provide sufficient support, which hinders the organization of team meetings by the teachers. In the implementation stage, personal characteristics and differences in the teaching styles of both teachers can make the agreement more difficult between them (Jang, 2006; Pratt, 2014).

As a result, to maximize the effectiveness and minimize the disadvantages of the team teaching method, both for the teachers and the children, researchers suggest that teachers should be willing to participate in team work (Walther-Thomas et al., 2000), have knowledge about the method, communicate effectively with each other (Letterman & Dugan, 2004), and provide full participation particularly in the planning process (Meizlish & Anderson, 2018). Nevertheless, many studies involving the suggestions were conducted with students in older age groups.

The Statement of the Problem and Its Importance

Investigating the studies in terms of context and education level reveals that they discuss the levels of higher education (Canaran & Bayram, 2020), high school (Benjamin, 2000), and primary education (Jang, 2006). The method was also studied in the context of multilingual education (Palmer et al., 2016), multi-grade classes (Yıldız & Köksal, 2009), and frequently special education (Scruggs et al., 2007). Even if the studies about team teaching in early childhood education are limited in Turkey, preschool teachers stated that there are some problems in inclusive education, the support services are insufficient for children and teachers (Varlier & Vuran, 2006), and classroom size is excessive (Batu et al., 2017; Özbaba, 2000). It was pointed out that they need assistant teachers and personnel (Ertör & Akan, 2016; Karademir et al., 2017; Zembat, 2012). At this point, team teaching is worth studying concerning the determination of education investments and policies because of the opportunity of an alternative response to the needs which preschool teachers mentioned.

In addition to studies on the differences in education level, many studies about team teaching have been conducted in western countries (Meizlish & Anderson, 2018; Murawski & Lee Swanson, 2001). Yet, Turkey has a more collectivist social structure compared to the West (Ayçiçegi-Dinn & Caldwell-Harris, 2011). In collectivist societies, group work and cooperation are valuable. The individuals are supported to achieve harmony in the group. Whereas the individual's preferences and independence are in the foreground in individualist societies, the group's success is primary in collectivist cultures (Gümüştekin & Emet, 2007). Consequently, the study of how preschool teachers work as a team in a context where collectivism is culturally dominant contributes to filling the gap in the area.

This study can be a source of information about team teaching experiences for the teachers and principals of other schools in Turkey, where this method has been or will be used. Since the models that teachers apply in team teaching and the harmony between them are reflected in classroom practices and atmosphere, investigating how this method is employed can be instructive for program developers to provide effective learning opportunities for children.

The Research Questions

The aim of this study is to investigate how the method of team teaching is implemented in a university kindergarten. The following questions will be answered in accordance with this general purpose:

1. What are the experiences of preschool teachers about team teaching?
2. How do the preschool teachers, school principal, education coordinator, and families regard team teaching?

Methods

This section consists of the research model, study group, information about the kindergarten and matching process, data collection tools, data collection process, data analysis, validity and reliability of the study, ethical precautions, and the researcher's role.

The Research Model

In this qualitative study, designed as a case study model, the aim is to investigate the team teaching method through the views of teachers, school administration, and families. Case studies are mostly research designs that are used to investigate a specific situation, an event, a process, a person, or an activity. The data collected in detail from multiple sources are analyzed with an in-depth point of view (Creswell, 2009). The case in this study is the team teaching method implemented in a university kindergarten. Since the aim of this study is to investigate this case by means of the interviews conducted with various participants, the case study is preferred as the model.

Study Group

This study used critical case sampling, which is one of the methods of purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling is used in order to conduct in-depth studies and choose the cases which can lead to goal-oriented information and provide conditions which are rich in information (Patton, 2002). Critical case sampling is beneficial in determining the cases which contain the most extensive information and enable the maximum effectiveness of the results, in accordance with the purposes (Patton, 2002). In this study, the implementation of the team teaching method in a kindergarten was defined as a critical case while determining the study group.

Some participating teachers had worked as a team earlier, but they were working at the preschool alone in their classrooms during the data collection process. Therefore, five pairs of teachers who shared the same class and two teachers who worked alone in separate classrooms took part in the study. Among these teachers, only two of them had participated in the pilot study of team teaching a year earlier.

We assigned codes instead of the participants' names. The teacher group was indicated by T; the same letters in the second digit demonstrate the partners (TA1, TA2). The letters in the second digit proceed in alphabetical order according to the number of participants. The numbers in the last digit separate the pairs of teachers and represent each of them (TB1, TB2). We did not use numbers for the teachers working alone (TF, TG). EC represents the education coordinator, SP represents the school principal, and P represents the parents (P1-P7). The demographic information about the participants is presented in the table below.

As seen in Table 1, the participants (n:12) are preschool teachers, the school principal (n:1), education coordinator (n:1), and parents (n:7) in the kindergarten where the method had been applied for a year. The average age of preschool teachers is 33, the education coordinator's age is 34, the school principal's age is 56, and the average age of parents is 40. Preschool teachers have a high school diploma (n:1), associate degree (n:5), and BA degree (n:6). Years of professional experience for teachers is 8.6 years on average, ranging from 1 to 19 years. It is 34 years for the school principal, and 10 years for the education coordinator. The education coordinator has a Ph.D. degree and the school principal has an associate degree. Four parents have BA degrees, one parent has an MA degree, and two of them have Ph.D. degrees. One of the parents is a housewife, one is a teacher, one is a doctor, two parents are biologists, and two other parents are academicians.

Information About the Kindergarten and the Matching Process

The kindergarten was founded in 1985 as affiliated with a state university. It comprises 10 classrooms. There is a board of education, responsible for setting educational policies, inspecting the process, and facilitating academic development in line with the principles of preschool education, and organizing research and development activities in the kindergarten. The board involves academicians, education coordinators, and school administrators.

This kindergarten follows the preschool curriculum of Turkey. The content of this curriculum is eclectic, composed of approaches such as HighScope, Montessori, and Reggio Emilia (Ministry of National Education [MEB], 2013).

In 2017, after a series of meetings organized by the board of education, it was decided that team teaching would be launched in the kindergarten. First, the pilot study for a group of three-year-olds was conducted; a year later, all teachers followed the method. The teachers were matched after a four-day process, with the participation of education coordinators, teachers, and the school principal. In this process, introduction and adaptation activities were carried out for the teachers by drama activities. According to the results of the drama activities and the information gathered about the teachers, the school principal identified teams by considering the span of their professional experience, their attitudes toward teaching, and the harmony of their characters. The teachers did not have any experience with team teaching, whereas the school principal had the benefit of a team teaching experience while working in a state school in 2008. The academicians and education coordinators had only theoretical information about team teaching.

Data Collection Tools

The authors of this study have used the technique of interviewing, which is one of the qualitative data collection tools. Patton (2002) and Merriam (2009) point out that an interview is utilized to reveal the

Table 1.
Demographic Information About the Participants

Participants	Age	Gender	Education	Profession
TA1	38	Female	Associate degree	Preschool teacher (2 years)
TA2	24	Female	BA degree	Preschool teacher (3 years)
TB1	29	Female	Associate and BA degrees	Preschool teacher (7 years)
TB2	41	Female	Associate degree	Preschool teacher (4 years)
TC1	23	Female	BA degree	Preschool teacher (1 year)
TC2	32	Female	High school degree	Preschool teacher (14 years)
TD1	44	Female	Associate degree	Preschool teacher (15 years)
TD2	38	Female	High school degree	Preschool teacher (18 years)
TE1	30	Female	BA degree	Preschool teacher (5 years)
TE2	39	Female	BA degree	Preschool teacher (19 years)
TF	36	Female	Associate degree	Preschool teacher (10 years)
TG	31	Female	Associate degree	Preschool teacher (6 years)
SP	56	Female	BA degree	Preschool teacher (34 years)
EC	34	Male	PhD degree	Academician (10 years)
P1	32	Female	MA degree	Biologist
P2	-	Female	BA degree	Doctor
P3	52	Male	PhD degree	Academician
P4	34	Female	MA degree	Biologist
P5	36	Male	BA degree	Doctor
P6	38	Male	BA degree	Teacher
P7	52	Female	PhD degree	Academician

participants' perspectives, which are otherwise difficult to observe. Semi-structured interview forms were created and used as a data collection tool for the teachers, the school principal, parents, and the education coordinator.

The interview forms were developed by including the answers to the research questions based on the literature and consulting the views of three experts. The questions were designed to include the participants' demographic information, and subsequently their views and experiences about team teaching in general, the roles of teachers, the way of work, and evaluations about the method.

Some questions for teachers were as follows: *How is this method implemented in your school? How are the planning, implementation, and evaluation done? What do you think about this method? How do you evaluate this implementation in terms of teachers, families, and children?* The following are some questions designed for the school principal and education coordinator: *How do you define this implementation? Why did you prefer to use this method? Can you tell me about the evaluation and monitoring process? How was the matching process?* Finally, samples of questions in the interview conducted with families were included: *What do you think about the implementation? How do you think teachers implement task-sharing? Can you tell me about the teachers' roles? Can you tell me about your child's experiences?*

Data Collection Process

The data collection process was completed in July during the 2018–2019 academic year, in a nearly three-week period. These interviews were conducted in the kindergarten, face-to-face, and one-to-one in a quiet environment with the researcher and the participant. The researcher used a voice recorder and also maintained a record by writing the responses at the same time. Each interview lasted nearly 15 minutes.

Data Analysis

Content analysis was used in the study. In this analysis, data which have similar meanings are merged under various concepts and themes systematically and presented to the reader (Creswell, 2009). Data analysis was carried out by two researchers. The researchers firstly read out the data set together and formed the codes, themes, and subthemes by gathering the codes. Subsequently, after forming the codes and themes separately once again, the researchers got together for a final comparison of the formed themes, subthemes, and codes, and reached a final decision.

Validity and Reliability of the Study

As part of validity and reliability of this study, all of the raw data will be kept temporarily without including identity or determinant context information, in order to provide transparency. Structural validity was achieved by providing a variety of data sources and researchers. The data sources were diversified by means of interviews conducted with teachers, an education coordinator, school principal, and parents, and by contacting different people. For diversifying the researchers, two researchers worked together in the data collection stage, designing the interview questions and the data analysis sections. When designing the interview questions, three experts in the departments of psychological counseling and guidance, early childhood education, and primary education were consulted. For external reliability, information about participants' characteristics and the researchers' roles were included.

The Researcher's Role

In the study, both researchers made an effort to reveal the characteristics of the situation with an in-depth perspective in the data collection, analysis, and reporting stages. The researchers avoided influencing the participants during the interviews. Besides, both researchers have their academic responsibilities at the university where the kindergarten is located, and one researcher works as the education coordinator of the kindergarten.

Table 2.
Themes About the Implementation of Team Teaching

Themes
The Teacher's Position
Work Model
Advantages
Disadvantages
Expectations

The Findings

The aim of this study is to investigate how team teaching is implemented in a kindergarten located in a university. The findings are presented under the themes of the teacher's position and the work model for the teachers' experiences. The views of the preschool teachers, school principal, education coordinator, and parents on team teaching are gathered under the three themes—advantages, disadvantages, and expectations. Tables including these themes are presented below. In Table 2, all of the themes about the implementation of team teaching are included.

In Table 2, when the findings of the study are investigated, it is observed that five different themes are obtained. As for the teachers' experiences, the positions of the partners in the team are explained under the theme of teacher's position. The work model theme defines the work models that teachers use when implementing team teaching with regard to their experiences. According to the participants' perspectives, the theme of advantages includes positive aspects, the theme of disadvantages includes negative evaluations, the theme of expectations includes the views all partners express so that the effectiveness of the method can be increased. The themes, subthemes, and codes, and their frequencies about teachers' positions are demonstrated in Table 3.

According to Table 3, there are two subthemes, namely equal position and unequal position, in the theme concerning the teacher's position. Two codes were obtained from the first subtheme, which is equal position. These are equivalent and areas of expertise themes. The second subtheme, which is unequal position, included authority, close–distant, and mentoring themes.

As for the equivalent code, which is the first of the equal position subthemes in the teacher's position theme, the views of the teacher (TC), school principal (SP), education coordinator (EC), and a parent (P) are cited below.

TC1: "They are aware that we are both teachers, they knew that we are two teachers of this class. If we do an activity, it makes no difference for them whether it is carried out with me or the other teacher."

SP: "Actually, nobody gets ahead of the others here. It is a gesture of goodwill. Since they are in the same environment all the time, they are equally well versed in every topic."

Table 3.
Themes, Subthemes, and Codes About the Teacher's Position

Theme	**Subtheme**	**Codes**	**f**
Teacher's position	Equal position	Equivalent	12
		Area of expertise	8
	Unequal position	Authority	8
		Close–distant	5
		Mentoring	7

EC: “The children have already realized that they are equal. They listen to both teachers in terms of classroom management."

P1: “There is no head or assistant teacher position.”

In the teacher’s position theme, the teacher’s view about the area of expertise, which constitutes the second subtheme of equal position, is as follows:

TE1: “When it comes to art activities, teacher TE2 displays more active role, and I fall a little behind. In music, I am more interested in children. Yet, none of us hesitates to do something, we both feel the same about it.”

According to the equivalent code of equal position, which is one of the subthemes of the teacher’s position, some participants (teachers, the education coordinator, and parents) think that both of the teachers have the same position. Some teachers stated that their position in class can vary from time to time according their areas of competence and expertise.

The quotations obtained from the interviews conducted with participants about the authority code in the unequal position, which is the second subtheme of teacher’s position theme, are presented below:

TA1: “Our teacher is a little more dominant, I am more withdrawn; she is senior to me and has worked with children for two years. Since she is their teacher before, I spent the first term getting used to children.”

EC: “In some classrooms, some children accepted only one teacher as an authority. They look into the teacher’s eyes when they want to get permission or do an activity. They expect instructions from her. They ask the other teacher some questions such as “I have to pee. Can I leave? or Can I do it?” They already noticed the distribution of tasks between the teachers. If there is an educational activity to be done, they go to teacher A. If there is an issue like going to the toilet, cleanliness, and school and classroom rules, they go to teacher B.”

P4: “One of them is more authoritarian, and the other looks more affectionate, but this situation is very good for me; because I want my child to obey the rules, and not be idle.”

According to the expressions above, the authority code shows that the participants considered one teacher to be in the forefront, as a rule maker, and taking on an educational role, whereas the other teacher to be in the background, withdrawn, in a role showing love and care. It was conveyed that the difference of roles is related to teachers’ experience span.

The teacher’s view about the close–distant code of the second subtheme in the teacher’s position theme is presented below:

TD2: “Sometimes a teacher shows a lot of flexibility. While she does everything so that the child does not feel upset or cry, the other teacher sets the limits according to class rules. Thus, children are affected negatively. They feel closer to her. Also, they think it is right to accept what the teacher does.”

TD1: “The harmony between my friend and I comes into being here again. If I act negatively, parents take sides. I attract parents who are close to me, and she attracts those who are close to her.”

According to the sentences above, participants who explain the close–distant code stated that children and families find one teacher closer to themselves, whereas they consider the other teacher more distant.”

The excerpts obtained from the interviews conducted with participants about the mentoring code of the second subtheme in the teacher’s position theme are indicated below:

TC1: “About school trips and visiting places, I did not know exactly which documents are necessary. As I started working here as soon as I graduated, I did not experience any problems about writing an activity plan or implementing it, but she guided me a lot about how to do it.”

SP: “There were people who would start working for the first time, and to please them I said ‘I am placing you as mentors here, newcomers will be entrusted with you’ because there were ones who never worked before. I assigned the duty of mentoring and said I trusted them so that the teachers would mature, adapt the system and process, get to know about the method and comprehend it.”

As indicated in the excerpts, some teachers support their partners and take on mentoring roles by sharing their experiences with them. The work models that teachers use in addition to their roles are shown in Table 4.

When Table 4 is examined, it is noticed that two subthemes are formed, such as working together and shared work, within the work model theme which defines the work models of teachers. In the first subtheme, the code of the collective is included. Under the theme of shared work, which is the second theme, division of work according to the area of expertise, group sharing, active –passive, and sharing parts of the activity are involved.

The excerpt, which constitutes a sample of collective code that enables the formation of the first subtheme in the work model theme, working together, is presented below:

TG1: “… we are a young age group. This year we already implemented a half-day course. We design our monthly contents and plans with teacher TG2. We also take our daily plans and firstly work on the document by scribbling. She writes, I write, and we exchange ideas. Later, we make a clean copy of it. We start all of the plans and daily plans together. I mean, we do not watch each other without doing anything. We make the introduction to activity together.”

According to the explanation above and the collective code, it is pointed out that teachers carry out the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages of the education process in the same place, simultaneously and collectively.

The teacher’s view about the division of tasks code in the second subtheme of shared work is presented below:

TA1: “While one of us is preparing an activity, the other takes care of children.”

The following is the view about the code according to the area of expertise:

Table 4.
Themes, Subthemes, and Codes About the Work Model

Theme	Subtheme	Codes	f
Work model	Working together	Collective	4
	Shared work	Division of work	9
		According to area of expertise	6
		Group sharing	9
		Active–passive	8
		Sharing parts of activity	6

TE1: "While preparing a plan, she mostly uses art and drama activities, and I choose games. I am closer to the playground outside and I cannot be like her in art. She produces beneficial ideas."

The following excerpt includes the group sharing code:

TD1: "For instance, in small group activities, we divide the groups and do the activity. It is better and more comfortable that way."

The following expression is about the active–passive code:

TD1: "Firstly we sit and reach an agreement; one of us becomes a manager of the group and the other mixes in and plays with children."

The following is the teacher's view about the sharing code of sharing parts of activity:

TB1: "For instance, if I began the story, I read it out and children did the completing activity. Afterward, teacher TB2 did the drama activity or vice versa. She started the story-telling, and I finished it. That is the way we did it, and it was very effective."

It is noticed that teachers share the education process through the distribution of tasks based on the areas they are competent in, within the second subtheme of shared work. In addition to this, they work by sharing parts of activities, forming small groups in the classroom, and taking an active or passive role in the activity. Apart from various work models, the advantages of implementing team teaching, defined as theme, subthemes, codes, and frequencies, are indicated in Table 5.

According to Table 5, there are three subthemes—in terms of the child, the education process, and the teacher—about the advantages of team teaching. Under the subtheme in terms of children, codes for self-expression skill, multiple perspectives, and taking as a model, were formed. Within the scope of the subtheme in terms of the education process, child-centered, detailed information about children, individual attention, quality education, classroom management, variety of activity, communication with family and child, and continuity codes were revealed. In the subtheme in terms of the teacher, workload, professional development, completion, psychological support, exchange of information, and evaluation of each other's codes were specified.

Table 5.
Themes, Subthemes, and Codes About the Advantages of Team Teaching

Theme	Subtheme	Codes	f
Advantages	In terms of the children	Self-expression skill	5
		Multiple perspectives	6
		Taking as a model	4
	In terms of the education process	Child-centered	10
		Detailed information about children	6
		Individual attention	10
		Quality education	9
		Classroom management	5
		Variety of activity	6
		Communication with family and child	9
		Continuity	5
	In terms of the teacher	Workload	13
		Professional development	7
		Completion	10
		Psychological support	5
		Exchange of information	9
		Evaluation of each other	4

The mention about the code of self-expression in the subtheme in terms of children is as follows:

TA2: "Reducing the workload of teachers by half will increase the possibility of recognizing themselves and the ability to express themselves (due to the fact that teachers will be more accessible for children)."

Two teachers expressed their views about multiple perspectives, which is the second code of the first subtheme:

TD2: "While working together, I think it is crucial to take care of children with two teachers so that they notice and learn about different ideas at the same time because children notice different ideas."

TA2: "The children will be exposed to two different perspectives, in addition, they will see different reactions and figure out how to keep pace with them."

The mention regarding taking as a model is below:

TC1: "They are aware that we work cooperatively and we get on well, so they say 'you are friends' during the day. I say 'I am also a friend of your teacher out of doors, in fact, friends get on well' and we set an example for them."

It is pointed out under the subtheme in terms of children that teachers provide benefit by showing good friendship and cooperation. Children benefit from multiple perspectives presented by teachers. They can express themselves comfortably while communicating with teachers as the number of teachers increases.

The following is the sample that expresses the child-centered code of the title in terms of the education process, which is the second subtheme:

TB2: "We were not familiar with the implementation since the method in state-funded preschools was different. What kind of contribution did it make? My colleague here has 17–18 years of experience, depending on that, I think I gained lots of experience for myself. My perspective changed after all; I gained a more child-centered perspective, not teacher-centered perspective here during the education process of children. It has lots of contributions to me in this aspect."

The following is the view of a teacher and family about the code of detailed information about children:

TA2: "If you place 20 children in a classroom with one teacher, it is very difficult for the teacher to realize the characteristics and individual differences of each child. It does not matter how much the teacher is devoted or how hard she tries. She will fail to notice something at some point."

A family and a teacher expressed their views about individual attention code as follows:

TB2: "The implementation has a good aspect. The teachers can take care of children one-to-one much more."

P4: "There was one teacher in kindergarten in the past. She could not give attention to them individually. She did not notice when something happened to the child. But now, education is two-fold. There are social activities. They can support children so that they do not harm each other. We have four eyes (to observe children) thanks to this method."

The following are the teacher's views about the quality education code:

TA1: "I think it is more lucrative; I do not think the teacher can educate in a single-teacher classroom; particularly in young age groups, they cannot teach more than self-care. In older age groups, there are definitely overactive children. When the teacher takes care of them, the others can remain passive. Thus, I think this is better because the teacher can concentrate on the activities better."

TC1: "Children becomes more educated. Two teachers and two sources of knowledge are there. Therefore, the classroom becomes more educated, productive and active."

The following are the participant's views about classroom management code:

TA1: "The classroom is managed better with two teachers because the children have different interests and needs. One teacher cannot deal with all of them."

TC2: "By this way, the effectiveness of classroom management increases. The teacher can observe the classroom better as she works with fewer children. For instance, if there are 15 children, 5–6 children come to me and 5–6 children go to him /her. Thus, we can observe them better during an activity."

P8: "If there were not two teachers, I do not think they would be able to cope with all these little children. In fact, that is the way in an ideal world."

The following is the excerpt that defines the variety of activities:

SP1: "We are in the same classroom as two teachers. We work more actively and we are more coordinative during the implementations. Observing the children in the classroom, taking care of them both individually and in small groups becomes more active and better. We organize more field trips because we can control them better as two teachers."

The following are the views of a teacher and parent about the communication code:

TF1: "For instance, it is better for the parents. They contact me if they cannot contact her."

TA1: "At least the children are aware of what is going on because they constantly keep in touch with teachers. We always talk to them and do not ignore any issues. We immediately solve the problem with children, we can solve it one-to-one. If I were the only teacher in the classroom when talking to the child, I could not be interested in it the way I should."

TA2: "While communicating with children you feel more easy-going, and behave more effectively in individual communication."

TA2: "We give feedbacks better to parents."

TD2: "We do all the activities together, whether it be working together, school trips, learning activities, and family meetings; one of us definitely contacts the family."

P6: "I consider the opinions of both teachers."

The excerpt that indicates the continuity code is below:

TD2: "When one of us leaves, the other stays in the classroom; so the process does not go wrong at all. Thereby, school administration feels more comfortable."

It is understood that the teachers can make the process child-centric; and learning children's needs and differences and taking care of them individually is facilitated thanks to this method. It is also realized that teachers can use classroom management strategies more easily as they find better opportunities to observe the classroom. At the same time, teachers and families found team teaching advantageous by teachers and families since the quality of education and the variety of activities to be implemented (small group activities, field trips) can be increased, and teachers can communicate effectively with the children and their parents. In terms of providing continuity in education, the presence of one teacher in a classroom is facilitated without any gap.

A teacher and parent expressed their views about the workload code of the third subtheme in terms of the teacher as follows:

TC1: "In one aspect, it means reducing the burden and balancing it."

P6: "I think this is better; it is very difficult to deal with 20 children alone. I think when there are two teachers, they share it."

The comment about professional development is as follows:

TD2: "If they are working in the same classroom together, they can say 'Let's support each other about something' or 'We must improve themselves about something.' I think it is a good method."

TD1: "I am pleased with two teachers because teachers complement each other. This is my opinion, and it is good. We may fail to notice some points in class. For instance, in small group activities, we can separate children into two groups and deal with them. That way it is better and more comfortable."

The following are the expressions of a teacher about the psychological support code:

TC2: "I remember the time when I was the only teacher. I was tired both mentally and physically. Even though we love doing our job, we get tired when the classroom size increases. When everyone is dependent on one teacher, it is compulsive for the parents, students, school administration, and hard to design plans. But, teamwork is better."

A teacher mentioned her opinion on the scope of exchange of information:

TC1: "While designing plans, we exchanged information, because my co-teacher has 14 years of experience and I have 2 years of experience. I graduated from the university during the new system so our knowledge may be different."

The following is a teacher's view about the partner evaluation code:

TF1: "Actually, she may be aware of what I cannot notice or vice versa. When she does something, I edit it or when I do something she can control it."

When the subtheme in terms of teacher is considered, reducing the workload of teachers, contributing to each other's professional development, completing each other's gaps, providing psychological support for each other, having the opportunities of exchanging information, criticizing each other's ways of teaching, and evaluating each other are among the advantages. On the other hand, the theme, subthemes, and codes with frequencies that define the disadvantages of team teaching are presented below in Table 6.

Participants evaluated team teaching as defined in Table 6, and two subthemes, parent–teacher and teacher–teacher, were achieved. Within the first subtheme, parent–teacher, three codes were found: choosing a teacher, testing the teacher, and high expectations. The second subtheme, teacher–teacher, has five codes: educational approach, classroom management, unfamiliarity, lack of communication, and rule inconsistency.

The parent–teacher subtheme of the disadvantages theme includes the disadvantages of how team teaching is reflected in teacher–family relationships in terms of teachers. The teachers' views and families' ideas which define choosing a teacher code, which is the first code, are presented below:

TD2: "(The parents) make teacher comparisons. We may face difficulties when a parent develops a close relationship with a teacher who allows children more freedom, believing that 'my child must be the most popular and best in class.'"

TD1: "First and foremost, there is a teacher model that families want to highlight. For himself, the child selects a teacher role model. It's either me or my friend; he usually chooses the person who is closest to him. Here, my friend and I find common ground. If I act negatively, the class's parents are divided into two groups. My friend attracts those who are closest to her, and I attract those who are closest to me."

The following are the perspectives of two teachers in the same team, which include testing the teacher code:

TD2: "Some families communicate with two teachers in the same way because they want to know about their child's educational situation or how well he performs in class; they give and receive information. Nonetheless, some of them have the ability to pose the same question in various ways. 'What did my child eat today?' is a simple question. 'What kind of video games did he enjoy? What did he do in his spare time?' When I respond to the questions and the other teacher mentioned another activity that he believes will be more entertaining for more children, they begin to compare teachers, saying things like 'the other teacher told me about this and that.'"

TD1: "In fact, the parents have the potential that they believe one teacher tells them something different and the second teacher tells something different. They ask us a variety of questions. Since varying responses would cause chaos, we give the same answers."

TD2: "The family only listens to one teacher. The teacher may adhere to a single rule on a regular basis, and the child may encounter difficulties because he or she has two teachers. A teacher can be resolute. While she does everything she can to keep the child from crying or becoming upset, the other teacher establishes limits based on the class's general rules. This time, the child is affected, and she believes she should accept the teacher who is closer to her and follows her instructions. When there is only one teacher, this is not the case. 'That is the rule; we will do it together; we should behave that way.' the teacher says. In this case, working as a single teacher is more convenient. The parents inform only one person (teacher)."

The following is the view about high expectations:

TC1: "For instance, a parent calls me and I do not answer. She calls the other teacher; she does not answer either. At that moment, she understands that she should send text messages because neither answers the call. In this sense, their expectations can be a little high."

Teachers regard the parents' direction of their children's relationships with teachers by comparing them as a negative situation in the subtheme "parent–teacher.' Furthermore, a teacher being chosen as a permanent teacher by families and given different roles, as well as the family testing the teacher's implementation and consistency by giving both teachers different information about the child, is seen by teachers as a negative situation. Finally, according to teachers, another disadvantage is the family's high expectations of teachers.

A teacher points out the educational approach code, which is the first code of the teacher–teacher subtheme:

TD2: "For example, I prefer to work in a more structured and disciplined environment where the child is the center of attention. If another friend says, 'Let the child do what she wants. Allow me to lead the children in the activity, but if a child refuses to participate in the activity, she or he is free to do whatever she or he wants. Let's not upset or make her or him cry,' I can't accept that."

The following is a teacher's view about the code of classroom management:

TE2: "To be honest, I have worked alone for many years. When I am alone, I find work more systematic. You concede to be exact about saying 'yes' or 'no.' If partners turn the certainty into possibility, classroom management will be chaotic."

The following are some teacher perspectives on unfamiliarity:

TE2: "Teams are matched by the principal. I am not sure what she based her decision on. I believe it is a matter of active–passive balance or something similar. But it should be that way; having two active ones can be difficult. "

TB1: "It's a disadvantage not to acknowledge each other at first."

The teacher's point of view on the lack of a communication code is as follows:

TC1: "If we don't notify each other, I say 'I will do it,' and she says 'I will do another thing,' so there could be a conflict."

The following is the view about the code of rule inconsistency:

P5: "If either of them does something different, there will be a problem. That is the same in our house. The rules are the same. If either of us says something, the other agrees. If one allows doing something, the other allows it too. If not, our child asks the other for permission, tries to get it, but cannot get it at all."

Teachers' experiences of conflict about the educational approaches they adopt and the differences in classroom management strategies are considered a problem in the teacher–teacher subtheme, which is based on teachers' mutual experiences in the team. At the same time, one of the disadvantages is that teachers do not recognize each other when they match, in addition to the difficulties in the recognition process, communication issues among teachers, a lack of sharing important information about children among teachers, and a failure to achieve consistency in the rules. Table 7 shows the theme, subthemes, codes, and frequencies associated with team teaching expectations.

When looking at Table 7, it is clear that the expectations theme has three subthemes: necessities, parents' expectations, and expectations from administrators. Harmony, communication, and consistency fall under the subtheme of necessities. Special attention, continuity, and

Table 6.
Themes, Subthemes, and Codes About the Disadvantages of Team Teaching

Theme	Subtheme	Codes	f
Disadvantages	Parent–teacher	Choosing a teacher	9
		Testing the teacher	10
		High expectations	5
	Teacher–teacher	Educational approach	7
		Classroom management	8
		Unfamiliarity	8
		Lack of communication	12
		Rule inconsistency	9

high quality are among the subtheme of parents' expectations, while the appropriate matching code is among the subtheme of expectations from administrators.

The following is a quote from the teacher on the communication code:

TD2: "When we don't notify each other, the procedure becomes more difficult. We're at a loss as to what to do. I plan anything, either the same or a different activity; the kids become bored during the activity. The situation deteriorates. As a result, we discuss ahead of time and things run more smoothly."

The following is an example of a consistency code:

TA2: "It is vital to react in the same manner. For example, parents at home must react in the same manner, even if it is incorrect." Both teachers must respond in a similar manner. The child should not be aware that one instructor is strict while the other is gentle, and should not take advantage of this. Two teachers must make steady progress based on the same understanding."

The subtheme of necessities describes participants' opinion on how they can benefit from team teaching. These requirements are defined as team harmony, healthy communication, and exhibiting consistency about the rules for children.

The following is the excerpt which defines the code of special attention in the second subtheme, parents' expectation:

"Some parents think to themselves, 'How can I get more than I want from teachers?' They do it because they want special attention. Parents are different, and children are more innocent. 'Let me pay a visit to the teacher and support my child during mealtimes,' they reason. 'Let's keep it a secret from the other teacher so she can assist the child in eating the meal.'"

TC1: "At some point, families may think that the teacher should do this and that, talk to me when I call, send a photo if I want it."

The below is an example from the section on continuity code:

TC1: "They want both of us to teach next year."

The teacher's view, which includes the high-quality code, is as follows:

TC1: "Families are pleased with the presence of two teachers for children because they believe their children are better cared for. They believe that better education is provided. In this regard, they may have high expectations."

Families who have experienced team teaching expect teachers to take better and more dedicated care of their children, and they want a higher-quality education because two teachers work together. Furthermore, parents want their children to have the same teachers for the duration of their kindergarten years.

The education coordinator's view on the administrator's appropriate matching code of the subtheme of expectations is as follows:

EC: "As a result, similar age groups can be considered; teachers' ages can be equivalent. It is necessary to inquire about their preferences. Perhaps this is affecting teachers as well. For example, the teacher may be required to work with a partner with whom she had issues the previous year but failed to notify management. Every day, I believe they face a slew of emotional issues in the classroom. I believe the matching process should have been more transparent, clear, and in line with their desires."

It is obvious that the participants have expectations of the kindergarten managers regarding the implementations to be carried out in order to achieve harmony between partners in the process, thereby facilitating the educational process.

Table 7.
The Theme, Subthemes, Codes, and Frequencies About the Expectations of Team Teaching

Theme	Subtheme	Codes	f
Expectations	Necessities	Harmony	14
		Communication	12
		Consistency	11
	Parents' expectation	Special attention	6
		Continuity	6
		High quality	4
	Expectations from administrators	Appropriate matching	10

Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

The purpose of this study is to learn about preschool teachers' experiences with team teaching, as well as how preschool teachers, an education coordinator, a school administrator, and parents view team teaching. The important points were emphasized and the findings were discussed within the context of the relevant research based on the findings obtained in this section.

According to the first finding of the study, the participants perceive their team partner's position in the classroom in two ways: equal and unequal. Even if the school management points out that all of the teachers share equal roles and the same position, in the present implementation, teachers' positions in the classroom are differentiated. Other studies conducted on this subject show that teachers' positions that are not positioned as an equal change in accordance with the team teaching strategies being used (Baeten & Simons, 2014; Cook & Friend, 1995).

Participants in this study do not regard some teachers as equals in the classroom. It has been discovered that how teachers are classified as unequal varies depending on their personal characteristics, the educational philosophy they follow, and their years of experience. It has been suggested in the literature that teachers may face power imbalances in their roles. Factors such as age, gender, race, and years of experience are among the causes of this situation (Baeten & Simons, 2014). In this study, it was discovered that authoritarian teachers have a longer experience span. At the same time, due to differences in educational levels, some teachers regard their partners as more competent than themselves, accepting them as experts and assuming the role of assistant teacher.

There are situations in the classroom where one instructor is the authority and her colleague is in the background, as evidenced by this study. Teachers' lack of equal roles, on the other hand, can lead to children breaking the rules. When the rule setter or authoritarian teacher is not there, the children can attempt to bend the rules while speaking with the other teacher. Similarly, as in Goetz's study (2000), it is noticed that children violate the classroom rules by facing off one teacher against the other. Furthermore, in the current study, the teacher whom both children and families regard as closer to them is in a position that is neither authoritarian nor rule-making. According to Murawski (2009), when teachers do not participate equally in the decision-making process in the classroom, or when a teacher frequently determines a result, children believe that the teacher who makes the decision performs the primary task. As a result

of this situation, children tend to benefit from the alteration which they observe in teachers' positions. Instead of one teacher accepting responsibility when they fail to negotiate in accordance with the decisions made, it is advised that teachers cooperate by discussing in private, in another location (Murawski, 2009). Moreover, when the acquired data are taken into account, the teacher's access to information about how to protect equal positions can be considered advantageous in order to manage the classroom effectively and establish close relationships with children. This subject could be incorporated into the curriculum of their team-teaching education.

Secondly, the findings about the work model are provided in this study. When the working styles of teachers are considered, it is clear that they collaborate but prefer a shared working style over a coordinated method. A minority of teachers who work in groups plan and carry out the entire process collectively, while others share the process in diverse ways. According to the literature, the model of cooperation must be determined based on children's needs and education goals (Cook & Friend, 1995; Friend & Cook, 2010). Similarly, when this model is used in special education, children's age, type, and degree of special needs, teaching content, techniques used, number of students, and teachers' professional competence are taken into consideration. Accordingly, teachers can use the one teacher-one observer model, the one teacher-one assistant teacher model, or the station, alternative, and parallel teaching models (Carter et al., 2009; Cook & Friend, 1995; Friend & Bursuck, 2009; Friend & Cook, 2010; Plank, 2013). Similarly, in preschool education, children's developmental characteristics, individual differences, types of activities and learning outcomes, methods to be employed in the process, and teacher competence in this area can all be taken into account. Even though it is stated that there is no priority rank among models in special education and that they can all be utilized simultaneously (Wischnowski et al., 2004), it is emphasized that teachers need to collaborate throughout the planning stage (Hohmann et al., 1995). However, in the present study, there are cases where teachers do not complete the step of preparing activity plans together, and it is noted that this might occasionally cause communication problems, as both teachers lack the necessary information. At this stage, it can be stated that teachers will benefit from setting out a specified time period for preparing.

Thirdly, when the perspectives of the participants regarding this approach are evaluated in this study, it is discovered that team teaching is a method that decreases workload and promotes efficiency, especially for teachers. It is clear that this benefit has important implications in terms of children's recognition, as a result of being able to find more time to pay attention to them one-on-one; consequently, it has numerous benefits for the children. By this means, children can express themselves better and take the cooperation between teachers as a model to be emulated. The negative aspects of the method, on the other hand, are highlighted in this study's findings. The most difficult situation for teachers is when there is a breakdown in communication. To overcome this challenge, teachers should demand that the school administration provides them the right of choice for a more accurate matching procedure.

The findings show that the method has numerous benefits for the children, the educational process, and the chances it provides for teachers and families. However, there may be some drawbacks due to teacher harmony and communication issues. Similar findings were found in the related literature at various levels of education. To illustrate, when teachers collaborate to teach in a team setting, they develop their professional understanding of one another (Davis, 1995; Plank, 2013), and child-centered implementations improve (Goetz, 2000; Robinson & Schaible, 1995). Children are given variety in terms of approach and content, and their critical thinking skills (Meizlish & Anderson, 2018) can be reinforced, thanks to the collaborative team. On the other hand, inconsistencies in education implementation might be caused by teachers' weak communication with partners and the existence of fundamental differences in their educational perspective, according to the findings of this study. As a result of this situation, teachers face difficulties in classroom management. Likewise, it is discovered that certain families are aware of the situation. Similarly, Zigmond and Magiera (2001) state that teachers have difficulty managing their classrooms. Additionally, in the research, teachers' insufficient support from the school administration, as well as a lack of general planning time, are cited as obstacles (Keefe et al., 2004; Scruggs et al., 2007; Walther-Thomas, 1997). To alleviate these problems, it is proposed that the school administration maintains control of the process and directs teachers to combine their teaching strategies. Otherwise, individual practices are seen to be more useful (Cook & Friend, 2004).

Harmony, effective communication, and consistency between teachers are required for a positive team-teaching experience, according to the fourth finding of this study and the viewpoints of the participants. Apart from these expectations, the need for a good match is essentially underlined, so that they can be put into effect. These findings are consistent with previous research (Keefe et al., 2004; Meizlish & Anderson, 2018). According to the findings of other studies, supervisory support, mutual planning time, and teachers with the same educational understanding are required in order to develop team harmony, consistency, and effective communication (Carter et al., 2009; Jang, 2006; Scruggs et al., 2007). From this perspective, it can be claimed that there are specific situations that administrators must consider because they are responsible for the matching process. First, they should have knowledge of the process. They must be aware of children's and teachers' skills, needs, and logistics (number of students, information about sources, and facilities).

In conclusion, team teaching, a widely used and preferred method in education, benefits not only students with special needs but also teachers and all children (Friend & Bursuck, 2009). The implementation of team teaching is also recommended since it encourages all children in general education to participate in active learning and provides a supportive environment for educators (Hohmann et al., 1995). According to the findings of this study, if partners can be in harmony, communicate effectively, and provide consistency, the strategy is proven to be advantageous in a variety of ways. Teachers who will be working in schools that employ this method can be trained in team teaching to help them have a successful team teaching experience. They could be given more time to acknowledge their partners and make a decision. In future research on this topic, observation techniques may be employed, children's perspectives on the process could be included, and the study could be replicated in different circumstances.

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