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Regular Article

Evaluation of extracurricular activities in education according to pre-school teacher candidates' views☆

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ABSTRACT

The extracurricular activities course in education is important for both teacher candidates and the implementation of extracurricular activities. So, the study was designed according to the case study, which is one of the qualitative research methods. The interview data, which was held in line with the data obtained after the evaluation of the planned activities of the teacher candidates, was analyzed via content analysis and descriptive analysis. As a result, it was concluded that the theoretical content of the extra-curricular activities in the education course contributed to the teacher candidates in terms of both professional and personal experience gained in the study.

1. Introduction

There are many competencies in the teaching profession. These competencies include many professional and pedagogical competencies such as planning, content knowledge, language skills and communication, aptitude for the use of technological tools, and recognizing and guiding students at different levels. Learning is a lifelong process. So, learning and teaching work collaboratively with each other. Teachers and teacher candidates are responsible for both learners' and their own learning and are intertwined with society. Therefore, social life and learning are constantly related to each other. Extracurricular activities include social, sportive, or artistic activities in and out of school in the teaching-learning process. Extracurricular activities are an integral part of school life. Studies about the effects of extracurricular activities on learners date back to the 1930s. Studies about secondary school students have stated that participation in extracurricular activities in or out of school has a positive effect on students' academic achievement (Massoni, 2010; Shulruf, 2010).

Ensuring the continuity of learning for students is highly related to teacher education. Therefore, pre-service teacher education programs need to provide pre-service experience for students by integrating theory and practice. In this manner, it is seen that pre-school teacher candidates state that some courses in teacher training programs should be redesigned to recognize children, according to the studies about pre-school teacher candidates (Bartan, 2019; Duman, 2013). However, it is stated that the teaching practice is insufficient in pre-service teacher training programs, and especially that they focus on the theory (Bartan, 2019; Tekmen, 2012). Zelyurt (2021) states that the number of theoretical courses in the preschool teacher training program updated in 2018 has increased compared to the number of theoretical courses in the programs implemented in the previous years. When they are evaluated in terms of student interaction, which allows teacher candidates to get to know the student and gain professional experience, this situation is stated as a negative aspect of the program (Zelyurt, 2021).

Today, the responsibilities expected from schools are increasing and changing in line with scientific developments and technological changes. Therefore, the main responsibility expected from schools is to ensure that students have social and cultural values as well as academic skills that address the needs of today's world. The experiences gained through extra-curricular activities are valuable experiences that take place during the education and teaching process. However, educators should consider both in-class and out-of-class activities in order to create a positive learning environment, and so planning should be carried out in the lesson section. The activities that students experience in and out of the classroom are also very important for the sustainability of lifelong learning and development (Kocayiğit & Ekinci, 2020).

The social context for learning develops by trying to define the different social identities that constitute society and the availability of access and power. Field (2005) investigated the typologies of learners in a learning environment that included a wide contextual environment in society, apart from classroom learning. In this manner, learners as typological differences are like: continuous learners (learners who

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follow new activities that serve learning and learning throughout their lives), traditional learners (following formal education), instrumental learners (those who continue their education to improve their own life and career), and non-learners (those who have not continued because they have not had a positive experience in their environment). These definitions determined by Field have been shaped according to the social and cultural positions of different learners (Stuart et al., 2007). Therefore, it can be said that it is important for learners to be involved in activities with social and cultural characteristics at different teaching levels within the school and to encounter formal extracurricular activities in terms of both their personal and professional lives and the continuity of learning.

Extracurricular activities are the types of activities that are not included in the formal programs of the students. The practice of extracurricular activities began in the United States in the 19th century as part of the regular academic program. The first activities were carried out by Harvard and Yale university's according to the professional interests of the students. The activities can be applied at all school levels. A wide variety of activities, such as sports, student clubs, the student newspaper, music, painting, and drama, are included in extracurricular teaching activities. However, when the prominent studies in pre-school education are examined, it is seen that children's participation in extracurricular activities such as well-structured and qualified sports activities contribute positively to different teaching and learning levels. However, it is seen that especially school administrators and parents have very limited information about such activities carried out in and out of school environments (Sevimli-Çelik et al., 2011). School life refers to the time when learners experience various educational opportunities that provide lifelong cognitive, affective, physical, and social experiences. A lot of learning takes place in the classroom at school, but the functionality of out-of-class learning activities and the curiosity of students are increasing. Moreover, it is striking that extracurricular activities are emphasized by the Ministry of Education's Social Activities Regulation (2017), published by the educational institutions. According to the revised regulations, educational institutions make students develop a sense of self-confidence and responsibility, protect them from violence and harmful habits, provide them with new interests and skills, allow them to display their talents, keep national, spiritual, and cultural values alive and spread and transfer these values to new generations, and be volunteers among their students. It is stated that social activities should be carried out in scientific, social, cultural, artistic, and sports fields in order to encourage awareness of disability, old age, and human and children's rights. Thus, it is anticipated that students would gain social, cognitive, and affective qualities through out-of-class activities (MEB, 2017).

Extracurricular activities are carried out beyond general school programs, and moreover, they are based on a voluntary basis. Extracurricular activities can take place from pre-school education to university education. It is included in a wide range of general teaching and learning activities in all countries. It has been observed that many schools and universities have been working together and planning recently within the scope of extracurricular activities (Makarova & Reva, 2017). Lunnenberg (2010) states that extracurricular activities can serve the same purposes and functions as the compulsory and elective courses in the formal curriculum, but they can offer experiences that are not in the formal courses. He states that it is very functional, especially in terms of adaptation to social life and seeing the practical equivalent of knowledge. The related studies say that extracurricular activities have positive effects on students' academic success, school competition, and developing a positive perspective (Massoni, 2010).

A well-designed and administered extracurricular activity mediates

- the improvement of learning,
- supporting compulsory and elective courses,
- integration of knowledge and
- the realization of the goals of democratic life (Lunnenberg, 2010).

There are many functions of extracurricular activities. One of these is to support the teaching-learning process of compulsory courses. For example, by organizing activities such as the organization of student clubs related to foreign language teaching, students' foreign language speaking skills are supported. Another function is to support the learning of the contents of compulsory and elective courses by enabling students to realize learning experiences that are not possible in routine classroom practices. The learning process is supported holistically, especially with leisure activities such as sports, newspapers, and student councils. One of the most important goals of the holistic learning process is the integration of knowledge. Extracurricular activities mediate the integration of knowledge and experience in the natural environment of learning. However, it is also related to the learning goals brought about by democratic life today. By supporting students' participation in student councils, teacher groups, or similar events organized within the scope of extra-curricular activities, their development in skills such as planning, management, organization, guidance, and social communication is supported (Lunnenberg, 2010). Moreover, it is seen that extracurricular activities are reflected in the students' positive behavioral development, and therefore their increased self-esteem reflects on their academic performance. The related studies show that extracurricular activities have a positive effect on students in terms of high academic achievement and developing a positive attitude towards school. Moreover, students develop leadership, teamwork, organization, analytical thinking, problem solving, time management, multitasking, and discovering their own skills by participating in extra-curricular activities. However, students' social development is supported by participating in extracurricular activities. Extracurricular activities are constantly woven into the daily lives of students. During these activities, they can meet new people and improve their communication skills (Massoni, 2010).

According to the study by Kocayiğit and Ekinci (2020) with secondary school teachers, it is seen that there are very limited types of activities in terms of extracurricular activities. However, they have concluded that they enabled teachers to get to know students better, strengthen their interactions with their students, and contribute positively to the school environment when extracurricular activities were practiced at different educational levels. They state that especially qualified and well-organized extracurricular activities increase the motivation of both students and teachers towards learning and teaching. On the other hand, in their study with Turkish education teacher candidates, stated that the course contributed cognitively, affectively, and psychometrically to the activities that students prepared for the extra-curricular activities in the education course and that they also interacted with knowledge about the stakeholders specific to the field. Therefore, it can be said that it is very important to adopt a holistic development approach within the learning-teaching process and for teacher candidates to experience the practices to be carried out in this manner. The social impact of extracurricular activities and the practices of schools and universities are interrelated. However, in recent years, especially extra-curricular activities have made a great contribution not only to teachers in out-of-school education environments but also to vocational education during their in-service period.

2. Objectives

Extra-curricular activities are not independent from the practices in the formal program, but they are designed as separate activities. For this reason, extracurricular activities can take place at all levels of education, from pre-school to higher education. Extracurricular activities are an area where universities and schools can work together. For this reason, extracurricular activities are activities that students will participate in voluntarily rather than compulsorily. The social dimension of extracurricular activities is that they support the development of interpersonal communication skills. Moreover, it can be said that it also mediates the development of the targeted individual at all levels of teaching and learning in terms of all their dimensions. According to the

related literature, it is seen that extracurricular activities are mainly carried out for primary and secondary school students (Makarova & Reva, 2017; Massoni, 2010). Since the development of the individual progresses holistically and cumulatively, it is important to support it in different dimensions such as social, affective, and cognitive at all educational levels. So, it is seen that activities are crucial for supporting the holistic development of students, especially in the pre-school period. It is very important to support the development of the individual in the social and cultural field along with his cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills in the educational process in line with the 21st century skills. In this manner, it is very important that the pre-service education include the processes of planning, designing, and implementing activities that support the holistic development of the learners. Therefore, in this study, it is aimed to evaluate the extra-curricular activities in education, which were included as an elective course in the undergraduate programs of the faculty of education by the Higher Education Council for pre-school teacher candidates in 2018. Accordingly, the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes of the activities included in the extracurricular activities course were included in the study. The following research questions were formed accordingly.

- What are the types of activities carried out within the scope of the course "extra-curricular activities in education"?
- What are the opinions of pre-school teacher candidates about the planning processes of the activities within the scope of the course "extra-curricular activities in education"?
- What are the opinions of pre-school teacher candidates about the implementation and evaluation process of the activities within the scope of the course "extracurricular activities in education"?
- What are the views of pre-school teacher candidates regarding their interactions with their stakeholders while practicing extracurricular activities?
- What are the opinions of pre-school teacher candidates about the achievements they have gained through extracurricular activities?

3. Methodology

Case study, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in this study. A case study is defined as the in-depth investigation of one or more situations (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006) and the examination of a complex, special, and interesting phenomenon within its own conditions (Sönmez & Alacapınar, 2011). So, the case study pattern was chosen since it was aimed at examining the curriculum development course in education in depth by the teacher candidates in this study. The state of the research was the composition of extracurricular activities. The opinions of pre-service teachers about the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes of extracurricular activities formed the basis of the analysis unit.

3.1. Sample group

The study group for the research consists of pre-school teacher candidates who chose the 2nd grade Extracurricular Activities in Education course in the 2021–2022 spring term pre-school education undergraduate program. While forming the research participants, maximum diversity and criterion sampling methods, which are purposive sampling methods, were used. The aim of maximum diversity sampling is to reveal a relatively small sample representing the universe and to reveal different dimensions of the problem (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006). On the other hand, in criterion sampling, it is necessary to review and examine all situations that comply with predetermined criteria. The basic criterion determined in this context was that the pre-service teachers chose the extracurricular activities in the program. G1, G2, G3, … codes were used to protect the identity of prospective teachers participating in the research.

3.2. Data collection instruments

A semi-structured interview form and group and individual self-evaluation forms prepared by the researcher were used in order to obtain in-depth data for the research. Additionally, the lesson plans created by the research participants were also included in the data collection instruments to support the interview data and provide diversity. The data to be obtained from the semi-structured interview form were realized with the focus group interview and were recorded in written and audio form during the interview. For the validity and reliability of the data, the diversification method was used, and many different data collection tools were used in order to increase the consistency of the data collection tools. Field experts were regularly consulted in the analysis of the data obtained from these tools. At the same time, the results were enriched with direct quotations from the participants. The researcher transferred the audio recordings and the recordings of each interviewee separately, without any changes. At the next stage, all records were read and evaluated separately. The coding of the data obtained from the interview was created by the researcher in line with the research problems. A scoreboard was kept for the codes obtained from the data. Codes that were similar to each other were gathered under the same category and formed themes. The researcher and an expert from the field of education programs and teaching independently read the forms in which the data within the scope of the research were written and coded the interview codes according to the appropriate categories and themes. For each interviewee, coding, researcher, and expert opinions were compared for consistency. As a result of the comparison, each theme marked by the researcher and the expert was checked, and "agreement" and "disagreement" between experts were marked. The reliability of the research was calculated using the Miles and Huberman disagreement/unity formula.

3.3. Data analysis

Descriptive and content analysis methods from qualitative data analysis were used in the study. So, content analysis was performed on the data obtained from the semi-structured interview form in the study; descriptive analysis was performed on the lesson plans, group assessment, and self-assessment forms. The analysis of the qualitative data is as follows: The researcher transferred the audio recordings and the recordings of each interviewee separately without any changes. At the next stage, all records were read and evaluated separately. The coding of the data obtained from the interview was created by the researcher in line with the research problems. A scoreboard was kept for the codes obtained from the data. Codes that were similar to each other were gathered under the same category and formed themes. The researcher and an expert from the field of curriculum and instruction independently read the forms in which the data within the scope of the research were written and coded the interview codes according to the appropriate categories and themes. For each interviewee, coding, researcher, and expert opinions were compared for consistency. As a result of the comparison, each theme marked by the researcher and the expert was checked, and "agreement" and "disagreement" between experts were done. The reliability of the research was calculated using the Miles and Huberman disagreement/unity formula (.91). All elements of the study (data collection instruments, environment, participant, and process) were explained in a detailed way for external validity, and the researcher also spent enough time with participants for internal validity. In order to increase internal reliability and consistency, many data collection instruments were used all together, and moreover, the research process, data collection instruments, participants, data analysis, and results are explained in detail for external reliability and consistency.

4. Results

The data from the focus group interview to answer the research questions were analyzed in line with the research purpose. Results regarding the preparation, implementation, and evaluation stages of the study carried out within the scope of the extra-curricular activities course in education In this manner, sub-headings for the results were created in line with the research questions.

4.1. The results about the students' views of planning of the activities in the scope of extracurricular activities in education

The students were asked, "What are the opinions of pre-school teacher candidates regarding the planning process of the activities within the scope of extracurricular activities in education?" The data on the opinions obtained by asking the question are presented in Table 1.

According to Table 1, the planning themes include seven different categories, namely making a plan, transportation, family interaction, environmental features, safety, and teaching. According to the views of the study participants, it is stated that the realization of the planning processes for extracurricular activities within the scope of the course allows one to understand the features of planning, define the characteristics of the environment, and evaluate all aspects of planning related to transportation, safety, and family interaction. Additionally, it is stated that the planning process for the teaching category supports the creativity of the planning process, the selection of the appropriate environment for teaching, the concretization of abstract content, and the understanding of learning by doing. The related views of students are given below.

"We had difficulties in choosing a suitable area for education for children, but we chose the one suitable for education among many options." G1

"Extra-curricular activity types should be planned to support all developmental areas of children. During the planning process, spaces should be provided for children to demonstrate their creativity." G3

"While planning, it is important for the educator to go to the venue in advance and have knowledge. You definitely need a guide." G7

4.2. The results about the students' views of practice and assessment of the activities in the scope of extracurricular activities in education

Table 2 shows the category and theme created based on the views of the participants about the practice within the scope of the extra-curricular activities in the education course. However, five different categories, namely teaching diversity, weaknesses, safety of out-of-school environments, student characteristics, and strengths, have been made. The study participants state that during the implementation of the course process and the practice of the activities, it is very beneficial for students to learn by doing, to be related to life, and to support the practice according to their needs. Moreover, they state that they could realize the individual differences and motivations of the students more in the practice process from the beginning of the planning process. Also, they state that they support the elimination of inequality of opportunity arising from individual differences and the active participation of students through extracurricular activities. Some student views about these are as follows:

"I think it is necessary to implement these activities based on the view that a child's life is not just about school. The child gains implicit gains by living and seeing. This is also very important for the preschool child." G8

"… every individual is different and the learning method may differ in this regard. Making a difference in the learning method is one of the elements that support learning …" G10

Table 1
The results about the planning process for the activities in "extracurricular activities in education".

Theme	Categories	Codes
Planning	Making a plan	Be planned
		Detailed plan
		Explanatory plan
		In-time
		Time efficacy
		Pre-information
		No any difficulties
	Transportation	Difficulty in transportation
		Too far
		Economical outputs
		A vehicle for out-of-school activities
	Family interaction	Family support
		Family-school collaboration
		Briefing for families
	Environmental features	Cold environment
		Too much stimulus for out-of-school
		The number of student
		Take care of the students
		Attention deficit
	Safety	Security
		Controlling for out-of-school environment
		Controlling of students
		Taking security measures
		Getting formal permission
	Teaching	Selecting suitable environment for learning
		Supporting zone of development holistically
		Available environment
		Creativity
		Matching students' outcomes
		Individual differences
		Abstract context
		Too many activities
		Learning by doing
		General assessment

Table 2
The results about practice of the activities in scope of extracurricular activities in educaton course.

Theme	Categories	Codes
Practice	Teaching diversity	Learning by doing
		Related with life
		Supporting developmental areas
		Organizing according to students' needs
		Active learning
		Learning from nature
		Effective experiences
		Different learning methods
		Practice based activity
		Attainments
		Life based activities
		Qualitative educational practices
	Weaknesses	Too many students
		Having attention
		Distrubting other people
	Safety of out-of-school environment	Authority
		Parental permission
		Safety measures
		Safety rules
		Suitable environment for activity
		Out-of-school teaching
	Student characteristics	Age group of students
		Number of students
		Motivation of students
	Strenghts	Equal opportunities
		Positive school climate
		New experiences
		Active participation
		Interesting

"Students are very enthusiastic about extracurricular activities. Moreover, one-on-one active learning takes place. Therefore, permanent learning is provided …" G11

However, according to the participants of the study, the weak aspects of extracurricular activities are the high number of students, the excess of environmental stimuli, and the disturbing others in the environment for the activity to take place out-of-school environment. The related views of students about these are as follows.

"The environment where we will implement our activity needs to be implemented by taking into account availability, the number of students and the age group of the students. Because the place we are going to is a public place and also a cafe, we have to disturb other people, so it was difficult to practice the event we planned." G2

Another view expressed regarding the practices of extracurricular activities is that they support the creation of a positive school climate and the elimination of inequality of opportunity, which is the strength of the practice.

"In our country, where the majority of students are socio-economically disadvantaged, there is a need to determine a correct education policy regarding extracurricular activities in order to eliminate inequalities of opportunity in education and to support the creation of quality education practices and positive school climates. Therefore, it is very important to implement extra-curricular activities." G11

When the views about the evaluation process of the activities within the scope of the extra-curricular activities in the education course are examined, it is seen that three categories, prospective learning, measurement and evaluation, and strength, constituted the evaluation theme based on the views of the participants. Table 3 shows the codes obtained from the views, according to the categories they created and the theme (see Table 3).

According to Table 4, the participants state that extracurricular activities support in-class practices, reinforce the use of different assessment and evaluation methods, enable students to be evaluated from various perspectives, and use evaluation as a tool to increase the permanence of learning. In particular, they state that embodying learning supports the realization of learning by doing based on their own experiences and directs students to explore different learning areas in order to support their learning. Some student views about this are as follows:

Table 3
The results about evaluation of the activities in scope of extracurricular activities in educaton course.

Theme	Categories	Codes
Evaluation	Learning	Concrete learning
		Learning by doing
		Direct learning
		Investigating different learning environments
		Related to daily life
	Assessment and evaluation	Support for assessment in-classroom practices
		Assessment in multiple ways
		Students changes in terms of different aspects
		Formative assessment
		Goals based assessment
		Supporting developmental areas
		Assessment of all stakeholders
		Using assessment in daily life
		Different assessment methods
		Assessment of the students according to their developmental area
	Strengths for learning	Opportunity
		Awareness of environment
		Permanency in learning
		Individual differences

Table 4
The results about pre-school teacher candidates' interaction with stakeholders.

Theme	Categories	Codes
Communication	Strengths	Cooperation
		Administration
		Sharing information
		Ease at communication
		Parental participation
		Active communication
		Communicative environment
		Information with stakeholders
		Group interaction
	Weaknesses	Difficulties in decision-making
		A difference in opinion
		Difficulties in coming together
		Difficulties in communication

"The educator has many methods and choices for the evaluation of extracurricular activities. These methods can be diversified even more with the environment …"G13

"Considering the cognitive, affective, psychomotor, language and readiness of the children in the activities, the changes in these areas as a result of the activities are evaluated."G16

4.3. The results about pre-school teacher candidates' interaction with stakeholders

When the pre-school teacher candidates' interactions with their stakeholders, such as institution administrators, school administrators, and students' parents, during the planning and preparation of extracurricular activities are examined, it is seen that two categories, namely strengths and weaknesses, come out. It is stated that cooperation, administration, and sharing of information about these fields make parental participation effective in the teaching process, and especially group interaction emerges as an important and powerful feature with the implementation of extracurricular activities, especially in out-of-school environments. However, they stated that they had difficulties in the decision-making processes related to the activities due to the large number of stakeholders related to the activities; they had disagreements; and they had problems with communication and coming together from time to time. Some student views about this are given below.

"… we just had a bit of a hard time for deciding." G2

"Our communication was good in general, we handled it well. We had a hard time getting together during the planning process of the activities." G9

4.4. The results about learning outcomes of extracurricular activities in education course

In order to evaluate the pre-school teacher candidates in terms of the learning outcomes they have acquired within the scope of the extracurricular activities course, questions such as "What do you think about the activities carried out within the extra-curricular activities course?" and "Considering the practices in the extra-curricular activities course, what can you say about the contribution of the course to your professional life?" were posed. The data regarding the views of the pre-service teachers are presented in Table 5.

When the acquisitions related to the extra-curricular activities course are examined, the learning outcomes for learning-teaching, interaction, and professional development themes emerge. The teaching environment, learning-teaching process, and extracurricular activity categories constitute the learning-teaching theme. Pre-school teacher candidates stated that the extracurricular activity course is a life-related learning practice that supports their in-school learning, especially for their pre-

Table 5
The results about learning outcomes in the scope of extracurricular activities in education.

Theme	Categories	Codes
The learning outcomes for learning-teaching	Teaching environment	Supporting school learning
		Reinforcement learning
		Support for formal teaching
		Learning related with life
		Effective learning environment
		Learning outcome diversity
		Learning environment diversity
	Learning-teaching process	Developing learning environment
		Developing effective planning
		Concept - knowledge transfer
		Constructive learning
		Hidden learning
	Extracurricular activity	Features of extracurricular activity
		Measure in-classroom teaching
		Self-esteem consciousness
		Öz benlik algısı
		Professional development
		Students' responsibilities
		Different environment
		Formal issues
		Management of different environment
Interaction	Participation	Permanent learning
		Interaction with nature
		Active participation
		Individual participation
		Group participation
		Concrete learning
		Preparation for life
		Hidden learning
		Multiple development
	Social interaction	Society rules
		Socialization out-of-school environment
		Cooperation out-of-school environment
		Explaining yourself in a different environment
		Experience
		Cooperation
		Collaboration
	Individual development	Self-esteem
		Self-control
		Skills development
Professional development	Experience	Different learning environment
		Teaching experience
		Having experience for profession
		Out-of-school learning environment
		Observe
	Professional skill	Be planned
		Weaknesses of planning a lesson
		Teaching diversity
		Analysing from different perspectives
		Theory into practice
	Cognitive development	Creative thinking
		Analysis
		Conciousness of hidden curriculum
		Joyful teaching
		Knowing students
		Parent-teacher collaboration

service professional experience, and is very supportive in terms of the variety of learning outcomes and learning environment. Some student views about this are as follows:

> *"For the educator, the field of education to be given to children expands. It provides more learning environment for children. Educators have the opportunity to gain the concepts or knowledge they want to give to children more easily." G4*

> *"… we think that activities can be held not only at school and in the schoolyard, but also in different places, and such activities keep more permanent learning in children …" G9*

> *"… the real objects, objects and living things that children encounter during the realization of these activities, which also serve as preparing children for life, can be more permanent for them …" G10*

The pre-service teachers stated that, especially, their planning skills improved, they experienced constructivist teaching practices more concretely, and the gains were realized in terms of latent learning in terms of the learning-teaching process category. The views about it are as follows:

> *"… Extra-curricular activities are practical activities that reinforce what students have learned in the formal teaching process and show that these learnings are related to life. That's why each type of activity is very important in terms of implicit learning in children's daily life." G11*

When we have analyzed extracurricular activities to determine and practice them, the features of them should be in terms of the implementation of extracurricular activities, to determine the safety or instructional measures to be taken during the course process related to the activities, to determine different learning environments for activities taking place outside the school, and to define their characteristics and necessary permissions. So, teacher candidates state that they are very useful. Moreover, the views of the pre-service teachers about this are as follows:

> *"… Extra-curricular activities allow the development of skills and competencies that are extremely important for social life, and help students to realize themselves with positive psychological effects such as self-esteem and self-control." G15*

The categories of participation, social interaction, and individual development have constituted the theme of interaction. Due to the practice-oriented nature of the extra-curricular activities, it is seen that especially learning the rules of social life, the active participation of students in the learning-teaching processes, and the development of cooperation, socialization, and cooperation between both school staff and other institution employees are important for out-of-school practices. However, pre-service teachers find extracurricular activities very useful in terms of gaining professional experience before service. They state that it is very beneficial in terms of creating the details of the planning, recognizing the difficulties that may arise during the course design, developing creative thinking and analysis skills, and developing cooperation between children, parents, and teachers. The views of the pre-service teachers about this are as follows:

> *"… We learn what needs to be done in our professional life, what precautions, which permissions should be taken, and how to apply them …" G12*

> *"As a contribution to our professional life, it has contributions such as being able to control children in a different environment, taking responsibility for children, and teaching children how to behave in a different environment." G14*

> *"There is a great difference between the education we were taught in the education home and the education received by traveling, exploring and seeing, and being involved in the job rather than just showing and*

explaining the vocational education has positively affected both our learning and our teaching." G16

5. Discussion

The study was aimed at determining the opinions of pre-service teachers about the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes of extracurricular activities within the scope of the extracurricular activities course for preschool teacher candidates. Accordingly, the effectiveness of the extracurricular activities course for teacher candidates was trying to be determined.

According to the research results, the themes of planning, implementation, evaluation, communication, learning-teaching process gains, interaction, and professional development have been identified. So, the planning theme consists of the categories of planning, transportation, family interaction, characteristics of the environment, safety, and teaching. Pre-service teachers state that detailing the planning processes and having prior knowledge about the preparation stage for the lesson and possible situations that may be encountered is an important result. It is concluded that the realization of the planning phase is crucial for teaching in terms of determining the necessary time for the activities, obtaining preliminary information about the places and activities, and determining the timing. It is seen in many research results that extracurricular activities are very effective in terms of students' performance and academic success and that students acquire latent skills with these activities (Bozpolat & Yıldız, 2020; Enachescu, 2019). Another important result of the study is that the planning should be carried out in detail in terms of determining the transportation need, economic costs, and carrying out family-school cooperation together. However, pre-school teacher candidates state that the activity plan allows for the preparation and evaluation of all dimensions of the activity. In this manner, it can be said that the planning stage is an important factor in the realization of the activities and allows pre-service teachers to evaluate all conditions.

It is seen that especially creative thinking and concrete learning are emphasized in terms of teaching. Similarly, based on the research results, it was concluded that the pre-service teachers did not see the school as a single learning place for the realization of teaching; however, they thought that all institutions that serve learning should be included in the teaching. In the study of Enachescu (2019), similar to the results of the research, it was concluded that the students who participate in extracurricular activities develop personally, socially, and intellectually, and these activities increase the academic and professional competencies of the students. Therefore, it can be said that extracurricular activities contribute to students' academic, social, and cognitive development. Also, extracurricular activities contribute all students, who are from different socio-economic background, to eliminate inequalities. Because they encourage students to have active participation through extracurricular activities.

However, when the international literature is examined, it is seen that there are many studies on preschool students and preschool education practitioners (Lau & Cheng, 2016; Ren et al., 2021; Yi, 2013). According to the related literature, it is stated that children's early childhood development affects their later school success, which in turn affects their lifelong developmental skills in the long run. In the first years of life, families and pre-school education take on this responsibility together to prepare children for academic and social life. So, parental support and the quality of pre-school education are associated with the child's readiness; they determine their academic, cognitive, and social-emotional competencies for their success in the next period of life. In many countries, organized extracurricular activities are seen as a socialization area where children can acquire the competencies expected in early childhood, which form the basis of their academic and professional success in the future. The studies conducted by Yi (2013) and Lau and Cheng (2016) stated that two-thirds of preschool schools in China participate in extracurricular activities. However, preschool educators have concluded that they have little knowledge of how participation in extracurricular activities affects children's cognitive and social-emotional achievements. And also, this effect is related to other microsystems, such as family, which are important to them. Therefore, it is thought that extra-curricular activities are important, especially in terms of determining the relationship between preschool children's social-emotional and cognitive achievements.

When the study was examined in terms of the implementation and evaluation of the activities in the extra-curricular activities course, it was concluded that permanent learning through activities mediates the realization of learning from nature and staying in touch with life. However, pre-service teachers stated that they were able to focus more on learning differences, especially due to individual differences, with the planning and implementation process, and they contributed to gaining experience about this before the service. According to the gains they have acquired during the implementation phase of the activities, it is revealed that the children experience some difficulties in terms of the safety of the environment, the high number of children, and the activities that take place in the out-of-school environment. In this manner, it can be said that the pre-service teacher candidates' implementation of the activities contributes to their professional competencies with both positive and negative aspects within the scope of their special field. Moreover, it is one of the other results of the study that extra-curricular activities allow for multi-dimensional evaluation, formative and summative assessment, and all stakeholders could be included in the evaluation process. Students' changes according to their development areas are evaluated.

While performing extra-curricular activities, practitioner teachers, students, school administrators, parents, and people working in other relevant institutions are included in the implementation process. Therefore, it is thought that the interaction of all stakeholders with each other is very important in terms of teaching. The communication theme, which emerged in line with the research results, reveals that all stakeholders have been in interaction during the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes of extracurricular activities. During the planning and implementation process of the activities, the cooperation of the stakeholders with each other, guiding each other, providing convenience in terms of communication, and creating a cooperative interactive learning environment could be said to be strengths of the activities. Enachescu (2019) states that students' studying in teams and communication with teachers, administrators, or other members of society have a positive effect on them. Kocayiğit and Ekinci (2020) found similar results in their study based on teacher opinions. On the other hand, depending on the number of stakeholders, pre-service teachers' had difficulties in the decision-making processes for the activities, and there were also disagreements from time to time and occasional disruptions in getting together and communicating with stakeholders during the implementation of the activities. Bozpolat and Yıldız (2020) stated in their study that pre-service teachers encountered similar problems in the practice of extra-curricular activities in education in Turkish language undergraduate programs. According to the related literature, it has been said that extra-curricular activities also contribute to developing teacher candidates' skills of leadership and time management (Christison, 2013; Massoni, 2010; Uysal, 2022). Moreover, many teacher candidates state that the materials prepared by them would be useable for their real teaching experiences after graduation from the faculty (Bozpolat & Yldz, 2020). Therefore, it is said that teacher candidates have the opportunity to gain real-life teaching experience and also get ready for their future careers in terms of lesson planning, material preparation, and teaching.

6. Conclusion

The content of the "extra-curricular activities in education" course was evaluated in terms of the learning outcomes that pre-service teachers acquired. It is seen that the themes of learning-teaching

process, interaction, and professional development have come out according to the research results. It has been concluded that in terms of learning and teaching processes, it supports classroom teaching, reinforces in-classroom learning, and supports formal teaching. In this manner, it can be said that extracurricular activities are very effective for both implicit learning and formal teaching in the classroom. On the other hand, based on the opinions of the pre-service teachers, it is stated that the course has a positive effect in terms of professional development, individual development, and pre-service professional competencies with the activities carried out in the field of pre-service teachers. However, it can be said that the activities carried out within the extracurricular activities of an education course contribute significantly to the development of personal development and professional skills such as self-esteem and self-control. It is seen that well-structured and qualified extracurricular activities are also very effective in the professional lives of teachers, both in terms of communication with their stakeholders and their teaching (Kocayiğit & Ekinci, 2020). Moreover, it can be suggested that the content of the extra-curricular activities in education course, which is an elective course in undergraduate programs, should be taught in a practical way and that the effectiveness of the extra-curricular activities in education should be carried out through micro-teaching for future studies and its effectiveness in terms of professional development activity should be examined. It has also been suggested that extra-curricular activities learning outcomes should be studied to systematically include in the formal curriculum learning outcomes for future researchers.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Duygu İleritürk: Conceptualization, Methodology, Validation, Investigation, Resources, Data curation, Writing – original draft, Project administration, Writing – review & editing.

Declaration of competing interest

There is no conflict of interest indicated by the author of the study. Thank you.

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