Education and Science

Original Article

Vol 50 (2025) No 222 21-44

Problems Experienced in the Field of Vocational Specialization for Early Childhood Music Education in Turkey and a Solution Proposal *

Yunus Yapalı [1], Ayşe Çakır İlhan [2], Salim Sever [3]

Abstract

Although the problems in early childhood music education (ECME) have been addressed in many scientific studies around the world, the fact that the problem is still among the issues for which solutions are still sought in current studies suggests that a permanent solution has not yet been found. The main purpose of this study, which is designed as a qualitative case study, is to propose a master's degree program that is believed to be a solution to the current problems in the field of early childhood music education (ECME) in Turkey. In line with that, a master's program proposal for ECME specialization education was developed in line with the Turkish Higher Education Qualifications Framework (THEQF), existing information in national and international literature, and participant opinions.

The proposed program is based on Bandura's self-efficacy theory, aiming to improve the performance of early childhood instructors with limited experience in teaching music. The participants of the study were determined by purposeful and snowball sampling method. The study group consisted of 24 participants, including 14 academicians who teach courses on ECME in faculties of education and health sciences and conduct postgraduate studies in this field, and 10 music teachers who teach music in private schools. The data were obtained through literature review and the interviews with the participants and reported in various categories and subcategories using descriptive and content analysis in line with the sub-objectives of the research. The analysis was focused on the evaluations of the participants about the course structure, content and interdisciplinary interactional potential of the proposed master's program. The findings have paved the way for the creation of a draft master's program within the scope of the Turkish Higher Education Qualifications Framework.

Keywords

Field competencies
Early childhood music education
ECME
Master's program proposal
Expert competencies

Article Info

Received: 11.17.2023
Accepted: 09.20.2024
Published Online: 04.28.2025

DOI: 10.15390/EB.2025.13289

* This article is derived from Yunus Yapalı's PhD dissertation entitled "A suggested program for determining the field competencies in early childhood music education specialty", conducted under the supervision of Ayşe Çakır İlhan and Salim Sever.

[1] Sivas Cumhuriyet University, Faculty of Education, Department of Fine Arts Education, Türkiye, yunusyapali@cumhuriyet.edu.tr
[2] Kapadokya University, Faculty of Architecture Design and Fine Arts, Department of Graphic Design, Türkiye, aysecakirilhan@gmail.com
[3] Ankara University, Faculty of Education, Department of Elementary Education, Türkiye, salimsvr@gmail.com

As a result of the research, 43 general competencies and 43 field competencies were determined for the proposed master's program in the dimensions of knowledge, skills and competence at the master's level in line with the Turkish Higher Education Qualifications Framework (THEQF). In addition, the courses to be included in the program and their contents, the disciplines that the ECME specialist can interact with, and the opinions/suggestions of the instructors and music teachers about the proposed master's program were explained in detail.

This study, which also aims to strengthen the professional competencies of ECME specialists and provide a reference point in the formation of music education programs in the future, is thought to improve the quality of experts in the field of ECME and to provide a guideline for prospective music education programs. In addition, the study is expected to contribute significantly to the instructors from different disciplines in terms of providing a solution for ECME specialization and creating a new field of specialization.

Introduction

Early childhood represents one of the most important and influential developmental stages in an individual's life. It is a period when children make their first contact with the world, where basic skills are formed and their identities are shaped. Therefore, the education and experiences provided during early childhood can profoundly influence an individual's future life path.

Music is an art form that leaves indelible marks in human experience and contributes to our development in many ways. Especially for children, music plays an important role in supporting their developmental areas. In this context, the positive effects of music education on children have been extensively studied in the literature. Music education affects children cognitively (Campbell & Scott-Kassner, 2009), emotionally (Williams, Barrett, Welch, Abad, & Broughton, 2015), linguistically (Bolduc, Gosselin, Chevrette, & Peretz, 2020), socially (Ruokonen, Tervaniemi, & Reunamo, 2021), communicatively (Pitt, 2019), and musically (Gromko & Poorman, 1998). However, how these positive effects should be reflected in practice is an ongoing debate in the field of early childhood music education (ECME).

The problems related to ECME field expertise have been the main subject of many scientific studies conducted worldwide in the recent decades and the importance of expertise competencies has been emphasized in the studies of many researchers (Bautista, Yeung, McLaren, & Ilari, 2022; Göncü, 2010; Greenberg, 1976; Groff, 1962; Milliband, 2004; Okyay, 1980; Saunders & Baker, 1991). The results of the studies conducted in recent years also demonstrate that the solution proposals offered for the problems experienced in the field of ECME have been identified. It also shows that it cannot provide a permanent solution to the problem and that ECME expertise should be handled more effectively. Studies on music education (Fidan, Çiftçibaşı, & Turan, 2020), preschool education (Barboros & Akbulut, 2021), and classroom teachers and prospective teachers (Dinç Altun & Uzuner, 2018; Poulter & Cook, 2022; Sungurtekin & Çakır İlhan, 2015; Welch, 2021) show that they do not find their competencies in the field of ECME sufficient. Therefore, the views that the problem in ECME specialization still persists and that the undergraduate courses of these programs are insufficient to achieve the target goals and learning outcomes are still persistent.

The main problems encountered in ECME are evident in teachers' competencies (Öztutgan, 2018; Welch, 2021) and the content of existing music education programs (Aysu, Aral, Gürsoy, & Yıldız Bıçakçı, 2018; Koca, 2013). In addition, educational policies (Elaldı, Batdı, & Sönmez-Ölger, 2020; Fidan, Çitçibaşı, & Turan, 2020) also have an impact on these problems. In the literature, various suggestions

have been made in order to address these problems. These suggestions include revising music curricula, differentiating teaching departments, strengthening master's and doctoral programs, and increasing in-service trainings. In addition, the cooperation between educational policies, curriculum designers and teachers can be strengthened.

Among the proposed solutions to the problems in the field of ECME, increasing the number and quality of music education courses stands out. This can be quite beneficial especially to those music teachers working in private schools since music lessons at all levels are taught by music teachers in these schools. However, the situation is different in public schools. Pre-school musical activities and music lessons at primary school are usually carried out by child development specialists, pre-school and classroom teachers. Therefore, it is seen that the mere changes in music education undergraduate programs do not completely eradicate the problem. Another suggested solution is to start preschool music education undergraduate programs (Doğan & Tecimer, 2017; Fidan, Çitçibaşı, & Turan, 2020; Küçüköncü, 2000). However, given that the current problems affect all educators from different educational fields, it is doubtful that such an undergraduate program will completely solve the problems. Solution proposals such as enriching the number and content of ECME-oriented courses and opening undergraduate programs in the field of ECME will only positively affect undergraduate students who continue their education in the period when the program is opened or when the number and content of courses are solved.

These suggestions emphasize that ECME should be considered as a separate specialty. In this context, teaching techniques, methods and approaches appropriate for children should be presented effectively by the experts in the field. In the current situation, the teachers who are expected to teach music at preschool and primary school levels are not trained with the necessary equipment in undergraduate programs. In Erdoğan Okyay's (1980) evaluation of the current situation 44 years ago, it was pointed out that ECME was not adequately included in kindergartens. Okyay emphasized that education in this field is carried out either by the preschool teachers who do not have sufficient music education or by the music teachers who are not sufficiently specialized in preschool education. The fact that this phenomenon is still valid in Turkey in 2024, even in a period when the acquisition of 21st century skills is important, emphasizes the need for a new and original solution proposal for a qualified ECME.

The experts to be trained within the scope of this program will be qualified to provide this education at the undergraduate level. This solution will enable undergraduate students to graduate with the desired competence by receiving education from academicians specialized in this field. The proposed program is based on Bandura's (1977, 1986) self-efficacy theory in order to improve the performance of early childhood educators with limited experience in music (Barrett, Flynn, Brown, & Welch, 2019; Poulter & Cook, 2022). Bandura's self-efficacy theory highlights that an individual's belief in his or her ability to cope with a particular task affects task performance and success.

The proposed master's program is regarded important in that it will provide a solution to the problem of educators graduating from music, pre-school and classroom teaching and child development programs. The experts who will be trained within the scope of this program will be trained with the competence to provide this education at the undergraduate level. This solution will enable undergraduate students to graduate with the desired competence by receiving education from academicians specialized in this field. The proposed program is based on Bandura's (1977, 1986) self-efficacy theory in order to improve the performance of early childhood educators with limited experience in music (Barrett, Flynn, Brown, & Welch, 2019; Poulter & Cook, 2022). Bandura's self-efficacy theory claims that an individual's belief in his or her ability to cope with a particular task affects task performance and success. The concept of self-efficacy is associated with an individual's confidence in their own abilities and skills and their belief in their capability to cope with a given task. In designing the program, self-efficacy theory aims to make the teachers treat the music education more confidently and encourage them to perform musical activities more effectively. This theory emphasizes that the program is shaped by the training and guidance of teachers and plays an important role in increasing

teachers' self-efficacy. It is anticipated that this program will add value to the school and classroom environments of ECME specialists. Although it is known that music education at an early age has positive effects on the success of the individual in later life, it poses an important problem that the music and the environmental factors are not fully combined in this critical period. Kodály argues that music education should be accessible and enjoyable for everyone. Kodály aims to support children's musical development by aligning music education with their natural tendencies and abilities. In designing the proposed program, the principles emphasized by Kodály guide teachers and direct them on how to implement music activities to make them more enjoyable for students. These emphases explain how the program is used to make students love music and develop their musical abilities. The main task of teachers is to make music and singing an enjoyable experience for students (Liszt Academy, 2022). It is thought that this can lead to a more positive relationship with music and increase students' interest in the field.

In the 21st century's dynamic and ever-changing socio-economic context, the skills that individuals should possess are constantly evolving in parallel with the rapidly evolving nature of technological innovations, globalization and transformations in the business world (Ablak, 2020; Atik & Yetkiner, 2021). In this regard, skills such as creativity, leadership, entrepreneurship and innovation are becoming increasingly significant (Kayhan, Altun, & Gürol, 2019). Early childhood is a critical period for cognitive, emotional, and social development (Haartsen, Jone, & Johnson, 2016). Erdoğan Okyay's evaluation in 1980 points to the shortcomings of music education in this period. Today, the fact that these challenges still persist shows that there is an urgent need for transformation in this field. 21st century skills include not only technological competencies but also a set of skills such as communication, cooperation, creative thinking and problem solving (Gelen, 2017). In this context, music as a tool can be effective in teaching these skills in early childhood. As a result, it is critical that music education is deemed as a separate specialty in early childhood both to develop children's musical talents and to help them acquire the basic skills required by the 21st century. This should be considered as part of the transformation of our education system.

This study is intended to address the current challenges in the field of ECME in Turkey with reference to the international literature. While examining the essence and scope of ECME, it proposes a master's program to train individuals specialized in this field. This proposal encourages the training of qualified specialists to respond to the potential development areas and needs in early childhood music education and to enhance the educational standards in this field. The study aims to examine the required competencies of ECME specialists, course contents and participant opinions in this field from a detailed perspective.

The research was shaped in line with the opinions of academicians and music teachers working in the field. It is thought that this study will contribute to the professional development of ECME specialists, fill the gap in the field of music education and improve the quality of music education programs. In addition, this study, which emphasizes the importance of interdisciplinary cooperation such as music, classroom education and child development and the necessity of creating a collaboration to overcome common challenges in this field, aims to encourage progress in the field. Accordingly, the problem statement of the research is: “How can the current challenges in the field of ECEC in Turkey be addressed with a master's program proposal aiming to train individuals specialized in this field?”.

In order to determine the requirements and content of this program, answers to the following sub-problems were sought in line with the opinions of instructors and teachers;

1. What are the general competencies and field competencies determined for the graduate program to train ECME specialists?
2. What are the courses and their contents that can be included in the graduate program to train ECME specialists?
3. What are the participants' opinions about the graduate program to train ECME specialists?

Method

Research Model

This study, which aims to prepare a proposal for a master's degree program that trains ECEC specialists in Turkey, was conducted based on a qualitative design (Sönmez & Alacapınar, 2019). "The main advantage of qualitative research is that it provides a richer and deeper understanding of the population to be examined" (Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009, p.8). The methodological basis of the research is the case study, which aims to examine a specific event, situation or a limited system in depth. This method involves a comprehensive analysis of the information / data obtained through multiple data collection tools (e.g. observations, interviews, audio-visual materials, documents) (Chmiliar, 2010; Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2018). This approach was selected in order to gain an in-depth understanding of how and why the situation or event under study occurred, to address the experiences and perspectives of the participants in detail, and to provide important clues for future research (Davey, 1990; Yin, 1984). In the study, the theoretical framework was created by reviewing domestic and international literature on ECME. The prepared semi-structured interview form was applied to the participants through video interviews, telephone, e-mail and face-to-face interviews on the online platform, which provides convenience and flexibility to both the researcher and the participant (Rahman, Tuckerman, Vorley, & Gherhes, 2021).

Study Group

Although 'early childhood ' refers to the age range of 0-8 years in the global literature (UNICEF, 2001), it is defined to refer to the period starting from preschool until the age of 9 and covering the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades of primary school in this study. The term "participants" refers to the field experts and teachers interviewed within the scope of the study. The teachers who teach music in this period are defined as early childhood music educators, and lecturers who conduct courses on ECME in higher education institutions are defined as field experts. The experts who are aimed to be trained in the master's program proposed in the study are defined as ECME experts and these people are defined as having the capability to adapt the knowledge, skills and competencies required by the fields of early childhood and music education. The instruments used in Orff-Schulwerk elementary music and movement pedagogy, which are thought to promote improvisation, are called elementary music instruments and are also referred to as Orff instruments in the study.

The study group was determined by snowball sampling, one of the purposive sampling methods (Creswell, 2020). This method starts with identifying the experts on a particular subject in the first place. These experts form the basis of the research and facilitate the procedure with their profound knowledge on the subject (Patton, 1987, as cited in Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). As a result of the interviews with several experts, new experts were identified and contacted in line with their suggestions. The new experts also suggested other potential experts through their own knowledge networks and connections. This process enabled the number of research participants to increase and snowball. However, as the research progressed, certain experts stood out more than others. These experts became key participants in the research and their knowledge and experience were placed at the center of the research. Thus, in addition to the few experts initially identified using snowball sampling, the network of experts with deep knowledge of the subject and valuable contributions to the research was enlarged and enhanced, ultimately shaping the whole research process. In line with this procedure, the faculty members who have taught or are currently teaching courses on ECME in the faculties of education (music, pre-school and classroom teaching) and child development departments of the faculties of health sciences and who conduct academic studies in this field were selected. The study group was increased until it reached a redundant level where the data obtained from new participants started to become repetitive and no longer provided new or different information, at which point the sample expansion process was stopped and the number of participants was determined. In this context, 4 lecturers from the department of elementary education (pre-school and classroom teaching program), 8 lecturers from the department of music teaching, 1 lecturer from GSF/music department and 1 lecturer from the department of child development were identified. In addition to the lecturers, 10 music teachers working in pre-school and

primary school levels of private education institutions were also included in the study group, and eventually the study group of the research was formed with a total of 24 volunteer participants. The academics who were defined as field experts and interviewed were coded as U1,U2,U3,.....U14 while the teachers were coded as T1,T2,....T10. Demographic information of the participants is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic İnformation of the Participant Teachers and Experts

Variables		**N**
Participant experts		
Gender	Female	9
	Male	5
	35-44 years	5
Age	45-54 years	4
	55+ years	5
	Master's degree	2
Educational level	PhD(continuing)	1
	PhD	11
	Music Education	7
	Child growth	1
Department	Development Psychology	1
	Preschool	2
	Fine Arts/Music	1
	Basic Education	2
Participant Music Teachers		
Gender	Female	7
	Male	3
Age	23-33 years	3
	34-44 years	7
Educational level	Undergraduate	6
	Master's Degree	4
Work experience	1-10 years	4
	11-20 years	6
Receiving ECME training after undergraduate education	Yes	5
	No	5

Data collection and analysis

The ethical permission of this study was approved by "Sivas Cumhuriyet University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Social and Human Sciences Board" with the document numbered E-60263016-050.06.04-136517 and decision number 26. Document Verification Code: BSDL5NZP25, Pin Code: 54362. Full compliance with the principles of confidentiality and anonymity was ensured while obtaining information from the participants. In addition, full compliance with ethical rules was ensured by obtaining written permissions. This ethical report is based on the ethical considerations from the beginning to the end of the study. and were applied with care to ensure that the data obtained were accurate and reliable.

In this study, the data were obtained through literature review, document examination and interview techniques, which are among qualitative research methods (Merriam, 2018; Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009). The literature review was conducted to identify the gaps in existing knowledge and to form the basis of the research. In this context, both domestic and international sources and graduate studies on ECME were examined using libraries, digital libraries, archives, books, journals, periodicals, and Google Scholar. TYYÇ (Core competency framework) constitutes a basic reference point for all graduate programs in Turkey. Turkey's national qualification framework is determined by the CCF and

sets the standards for students studying in higher education institutions. Under the guidance of the CCF, the knowledge, skills and competencies of the relevant specialization are explained in detail. In addition to this, the "Qualifications for the Basic Field of Teacher Training and Educational Sciences" sets out the basic principles and competencies for the training of teachers and the development of educational processes. Therefore, competencies in the field of teacher training and educational sciences and competencies in the field of fine arts music education were defined based on the CCF as the main basis. The interviews were conducted with field experts and music teachers and included predetermined questions. The interview questions were designed as a result of the literature review and were evaluated by music and early childhood education experts. These experts provided detailed feedback on the content, purpose and wording of the questions and the questions were revised according to this feedback. In addition, the final version of the questions was created by adding follow-up questions to collect more information on the subject by conducting trial interviews. In the interviews conducted in this context, a total of 12 questions, 8 main questions and 4 probing questions, were used for the lecturers and 10 questions were used for the teacher participants. During the interview process, certain questions were rephrased in different ways or the sequence of questions was adjusted in order to ensure that the participants understood some issues better and provided more detailed information and detailed explanations.

In addition, foreign experts from abroad contributed to the study by providing resource support. A foreign expert who also participated in the study group and who studies the perceptual and other responses of infants and toddlers to music, as well as the nature of music in infants' environments (singing for infants) answered questions sent via e-mail and shared resource suggestions that could be used in the research. The interviews were conducted face-to-face, by phone or online and recorded with the consent of the participants. The interviews lasted 90 minutes on average. The transcribed audio recordings were converted into written text after confirmation by the participants. The data, which were determined to be similar and related to each other in the texts, were combined and classified around certain concepts and themes, and reported in various themes and categories in line with the sub-objectives of the research using a descriptive and content analysis approach (Miles & Huberman, 2015). In addition, by making direct quotations from the interviews (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021), the findings were presented in more detail and supported by scientific studies. As a result of the study, with the cooperation of the researchers and the thesis monitoring commission, the general and field competencies required at the master's level, the disciplines that the ECME specialist can interact with, the courses to be included in the program and their contents, the theoretical and practical proportional distribution of the courses were determined for the proposed program. In line with the CCF, a master's program proposal has been prepared in accordance with the bologna process. In addition, the opinions and suggestions of the instructors and music teachers about the proposed master's program were put forward.

Validity and Reliability

The data of the study were analyzed using descriptive and content analysis methods with an inductive perspective. With this approach, the data obtained from the participants were coded, categorized and themes were formed by revealing the relationships between categories. To ensure internal validity, the triangulation method (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) was applied by using different data collection tools (i.e. interviews and document analysis). Thus, data diversity was ensured and it was checked whether the data obtained from different sources were congruent with each other (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021). During the research process and analysis, two expert academics in the field were met regularly to receive feedback on the findings and the process. This method, known as peer debriefing, aimed to minimize the subjective perspective of the researcher and to ensure internal validity (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In order to increase the validity of the findings and themes, the findings were verified by re-contacting some participants with a method called Member Checking. Participants confirmed that their own statements were accurately reflected (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

While determining the study group, those people with experience and knowledge in the field of ECME were specifically selected for external validity by purposive sampling method (Robson & McCartan, 2016), and external validity was increased by defining the study group in detail and presenting the data with direct quotations (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021). During the coding process, two independent coders were used to ensure data consistency (Creswell, 2021). In the analysis process, the data were re-analyzed by different research teams or researchers and the consistency of the results was checked (Akar, 2016). In this research conducted using the MaxQDA program, all data collection, coding, analysis and interpretational processes were recorded and the research was made open to external audits (Creswell, 2021). All of these processes were carefully implemented to increase the validity and reliability of the research. Thus, the reliability and validity of the findings of the study were ensured.

Findings and Discussion

1. Findings regarding the Competencies Established for a Master's Degree Program Training ECME Specialists

It is obvious that the competencies determined for the proposed master's program are included in the course information packages published by the universities and are compatible with the course information packages of the master's programs in the field of fine arts music education of other universities. Thus, it is aimed to ensure that those who want to specialize in the field of ECME acquire certain competencies and to provide an education with an academic component at the master's level. In this context, a total of 86 competencies, 43 general competencies and 43 field competencies, were determined by the researchers based on CCF, teacher training and educational sciences basic field competencies and fine arts music education field competencies. Of the general competencies, 13 are identified in the knowledge, 8 in the skills, and 22 in the competence dimension, respectively. Of the field competencies, 17 are identified in the knowledge, 16 in the skills, and 10 in the competence dimension. The competencies identified are shown in Table 2 as Individual and Professional Development (IPD), Musical Knowledge and Skills (MKS).

Table 2. ECME Expert Competencies

Master's Degree General Competencies (MAGC)	
Knowledge	
MAGC1.	Has theoretical and practical knowledge and art culture at the level of expertise specific to the field and aesthetic knowledge. (BMG)
MAGC2.	Knows research methods and techniques. (BMG)
MAGC3.	Knows the ways of accessing scientific knowledge in their field. (BMG)
MAGC4.	Knows undergraduate qualifications in the field of undergraduate studies or in a different field, and develops methods and techniques at an expert level. (BMG)
MAGC5.	Knows the relationship between theory and practice of a progressive study with their creativity in line with their knowledge, skills and competencies (BMG)
MAGC6.	Has the knowledge of art and aesthetics to determine the direction of production. (BMG)
MAGC7.	Knows the methods and techniques used in ECME. (BMG)
MAGC8.	Explains the interdisciplinary interaction related to the field. (BMG)
MAGC9.	Knows the applications related to ECME. (BMG)
MAGC10.	Has knowledge about current practices related to the field of specialization. (BMG)
MAGC11.	Knows selection and development of appropriate materials, resources and activities to facilitate the learning process (BMG)
MAGC12.	Knows the developmental periods of the child. (BMG)
MAGC13.	Knows the child's musical developmental characteristics. (BMG)

Table 2. Continued

Master's Degree General Competencies (MAGC)	
Skill	
MAGC14.	Interprets information from different disciplinary fields by integrating it with the knowledge acquired in the field. (BMG)
MAGC15.	Proposes scientific solutions to problems related to the field. (BMG)
MAGC16.	Relates the knowledge, methods and techniques of the field of specialization with different disciplines (BMG)
MAGC17.	Plans and manages musical studies. (MBB)
MAGC18.	Creates a unique and piece of music. (MBB)
MAGC19.	Plans and manages the stages of artistic works. (MBB)
MAGC20.	Conducts scientific research. (BMG)
MAGC21.	Uses cognitive, emotional and linguistic communication skills effectively (BMG)
Competency	
MAGC22.	Carries out a study that requires specialization in the field on their own. (MBB)
MAGC23.	develops new approaches appropriate to the circumstances to find solutions to complex and unforeseen problems encountered in the applications of the field. (BMG)
MAGC24.	Plays as a leader to find solutions to the problems in the field. (BMG)
MAGC25.	Carries out project procedures and teamwork related to the field. (BMG)
MAGC26.	Effectively expresses the purpose, importance and meaning of their own work. (BMG)
MAGC27.	Creates their personal methods in the artistic design process. (BMG)
MAGC28.	Participates in exchanging experiences and information on education and training and share their thoughts effectively (BMG)
MAGC29.	Evaluates the information related to their field with a critical perspective and guides learning process. (BMG)
MAGC30.	Carries out studies in the field within the framework of lifelong learning. (BMG)
MAGC31.	Defines their goals within the art and culture environment. (BMG)
MAGC32.	Criticizes and comments on their own and others' work. (BMG)
MAGC33.	Identifies national and international resources related to the field of personal development. (BMG)
MAGC34.	Guides learning. (BMG)
MAGC35.	Defines the meaning, purpose and value of their work for their target audience and expresses them effectively. (BMG)
MAGC36.	Actively conveys his/her thoughts in discussions on music and education. (BMG)
MAGC37.	Transfers the achievements related to the field to the society. (BMG)
MAGC38.	Uses information and communication technologies at the level required by the field. (BMG)
MAGC39.	Prepares and presents innovative and original applications. (MBB)
MAGC40.	Applies the knowledge of the field in interdisciplinary environments. (MBB)
MAGC41.	Participates in raising awareness about the sensitivity of society to cultural values (BMG)
MAGC42.	Based on undergraduate qualifications in the same or a different field develops and deepens knowledge, methods and techniques at the level of expertise. (MBB)
MAGC 43	Transfers and applies the rules of professional ethics to working life. (BMG)

Table 2. Continued

Master's Degree Field Competencies (MAFC)	
Knowledge	
MAFC1.	knows the pedagogical needs of early childhood. (BMG)
MAFC2.	Knows the importance and characteristics of children's music. (MBB)
MAFC3.	knows the aims and working methods of music education for children. (MBB)
MAFC4.	Knows the activities that contributes to promoting musical learning and its transformation into behavior. (MBB)
MAFC5.	Knows musical development and skills in the period between 0-8 years. (MBB)
MAFC6.	Knows the prerequisites to be found in children's songs. (MBB)
MAFC7.	Knows song teaching techniques. (MBB)
MAFC8.	Knows children's music from different periods and cultures. (MBB)
MAFC9.	Knows the appropriate educational environment and teaching tools and materials for ECME (MBB)
MAFC10.	knows the spiral education model integrated with music activities and the objectives. (MBB)
MAFC11.	Knows how to plan an ECME activity. (MBB)
MAFC12.	Knows the techniques to improve auditory perception. (MBB)
MAFC13.	knows the techniques of teaching music writing. (MBB)
MAFC14.	Knows the key points to be considered while singing. (MBB)
MAFC15.	knows the techniques of developing musical creativity. (MBB)
MAFC16.	Knows questioning techniques appropriate for music activities (MBB)
MAFC17.	Knows elementary musical instruments. (MBB)
Skill	
MAFC18.	Selects and uses children's songs according to the criteria to be considered in their selection. (MBB)
MAFC19.	Applies and adapts song teaching techniques in early childhood. (MBB)
MAFC20.	Creates teaching environment and equipment for ECME. (MBB)
MAFC21.	Integrates spiral education model with activities suitable for musical objectives. (MBB)
MAFC22.	Adapts theoretical and practical knowledge / skills to the field. (MBB)
MAFC23.	Collaborates with school, family, community and interdisciplinary fields. (BMG)
MAFC24.	Values professional self-development. (BMG)
MAFC25.	Plans, organizes and implements music studies in early childhood. (MBB)
MAFC26.	Applies techniques to improve auditory perception. (MBB)
MAFC27.	Applies music writing teaching techniques. (MBB)
MAFC28.	Performs song teaching. (MBB)
MAFC29.	Applies techniques for developing musical creativity. (MBB)
MAFC30.	Effectively uses the tools he/she has identified to practise in his/her music studies and develops studies in order to benefit from. (MBB)
MAFC31.	Uses elementary music instruments effectively in their studies (MBB)
MAFC32.	Conducts art-oriented workshops for children. (MBB)
MAFC33.	Makes the introduction and analysis of children's songs. (MBB)

Table 2. Continued

Master's Degree Field Competencies (MAFC)
Competency
MAFC34. Conducts studies in accordance with the techniques of developing musical creativity. (MBB)
MAFC35. Applies techniques to improve auditory perception. (MBB)
MAFC36. Applies the rules to be considered in song teaching. (MBB)
MAFC37. Effectively uses elementary musical instruments in their musical activities. (MBB)
MAFC38. supports the children's general development of by observing their musical activity in this context. (MBB)
MAFC39. Knows how to use domestic and international research data to support their own teaching and deepen their expertise. (BMG)
MAFC40. Find high quality, versatile and up-to-date learning material and use it applies it in his/her own teaching. (BMG)
MAFC41. Has a good command of the basics of using a healthy and natural sound. (MBB)
MAFC42. Makes observations about the singing voice and different ways of using the voice and provides feedback based on their observations. (MBB)
MAFC43. Applies different teaching techniques related to music writing (MBB)

1. Findings and Comments on the Courses that can be included in the Proposed Master's Program and their Contents

In the interviews with the experts in the study group, the experts were asked the question "Which courses do you think should be included in the master's program to be prepared for ECME field expertise?". In line with the answers, the opinions of the experts are shown in Figure 1.

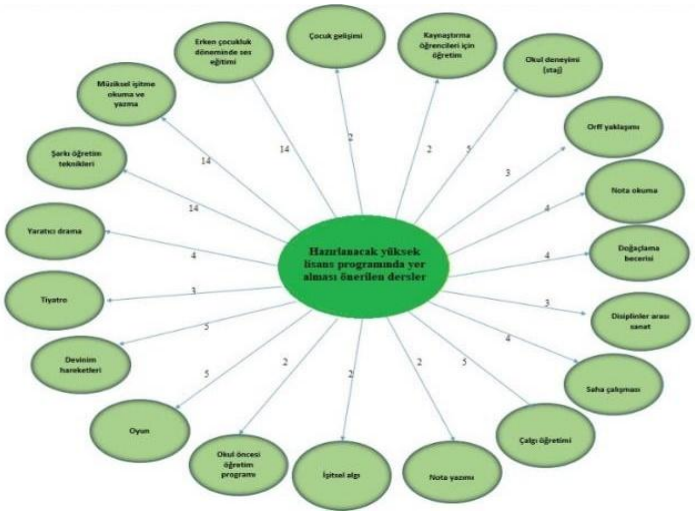

Figure 1. Categorization of the Courses Suggested by the Participants to be Included in the MA Program to be Prepared for ECME Specialization

One of the participants, U2, said, "Voice training is one of the subjects that I attach the most importance to in early childhood since it can evolve into a situation where neither the child nor the person conducting the ECME can realize the damage inflicted on the voice without using the voice correctly and without realizing it. There should definitely be a voice education course and its content should include topics such as vocal health, ways of protection, vocal limits, etc." Antoher participant, U1, added "...in addition to this; musical hearing, reading and writing, early childhood vocal education, song repertoire, improvisation, special topics in ECME, theoretical foundations of early childhood education, artistic development of children, ECME methods and programs, teaching methods and techniques for music education. 'U4 reported', Song teaching techniques, a course on what to pay

attention to while singing, or a common course that combines all these topics under the title of song teaching can be given. There should definitely be a course on developing musical creativity. A course such as questioning techniques can be added to a music course that encourages students to ask questions. A number of extra courses to develop auditory perception, note writing, instrument teaching at school, etc. should be included in the program."

Campbell and Scott-Kassner (2009) emphasize the use of music as a tool that encourages creativity and expression in early childhood. In this context, teachers' inclusion of music-related activities in their classrooms ensures that music is conveyed to students in a more profound and effective way (Barrett, Schachter, Gilbert, & Fuerst, 2022). The participants expressed opinions that the program should include lessons involving Orff, dance and movement. One of the participants, U10, said, "There should definitely be a course that includes creative dance, movement and drama. There should be another course that teaches children how to plan activities that will transfer information through play. Individual instrument training course, song repertoire, improvisation, musical developmental characteristics, developmental characteristics of the child should definitely be among the courses or subjects that should be included." U5 added, "Song repertoire, improvisation, children's musical orientations, instrumental experiences can be included. A field study should definitely be included in the program and a course or practice that enables experience in a field where knowledge can be transformed into practice should be included. A course on new methods and technologies, sound systems, and so on can be included in the program, or it can be included in the content of another course. A course that teaches interdisciplinary art education practices can be added. Courses on dance movement and improvisation, theater or musical fiction can also be added." U6 said, "Acquiring competencies for the application of the competencies acquired in the field of ECME specialization to individuals with special needs is a very important issue. ECME specialists should know the characteristics and needs of individuals with special needs and be able to adapt the competencies acquired in the field of ECME to children with special needs."

In order to be qualified as an ECME specialist, the application of theoretical knowledge in real training sites and finding flexible solutions to the challenges encountered in this process play a pivotal role. Combining the theoretical knowledge gained from the program with practical field work will help prospective experts to develop their competencies. Participants believe that integrating field experience with theoretical learning will enhance the professional competencies of ECME specialists and increase the effectiveness of the program. Participant U5 said, "Having a program that offers field experience opportunities will make the program more functional." U3 added, "I think internships or field placements that offer students different types of music education programs would be important. Ideally, these programs should have highly skilled music educators who can serve as role models." U9 emphasized, "A practice environment of its own could be one of the strengths of this program." U14, reported "If it is limited to academic courses two days a week, it will not achieve its purpose. I believe that it will be successful if situations such as practice, production, etc. are included in the process."

Interactions with field experts play a decisive role in the development of teaching skills (Polikoff, Desimone, Porter, & Hochberg, 2015). Pre-service teachers' field experiences are enriched by the pedagogical guidance they receive from their mentors, which provides them with more opportunities for receiving feedback (Nikoçeviq-Kurti, 2023). Moreover, some studies emphasize that gaining experience in the field and sharing the knowledge of experienced educators strengthen general teaching competencies (Cheung, Wong, Wang, & Dai, 2023; Gregory et al., 2011; Mena, Hennissen, & Loughran, 2017).

In Tecimer Kasap's (2006) study, recommended course contents for graduate programs focused on preschool music education include courses such as child development and psychology, basic principles of child education, historical and theoretical perspectives of child education, child-family and teacher dynamics, early music literature, music teaching methodologies, and creative drama with various instruments. In addition, it is believed that integrating science, philosophy and art in the educational process will provide important guidance to educators to understand the educational needs of children and provide quality music education at an early age.

The participants emphasized that the ECME specialist should have a good command of the developmental characteristics specific to early childhood and the musical developmental characteristics specific to this period. They also agreed that the program should include courses that include teaching methods, techniques and approaches from the past to the present, as well as approaches based on the use of contemporary technological tools. The participants underlined the importance of the program's courses by emphasizing the skills of the 21st century with interdisciplinary art education practice, creativity, dance, movement and improvisation studies.

The thesis monitoring committee re-evaluated the literature review and the feedback of field experts and teachers for the courses in the proposed master's program. As a result of these evaluations, a course list was prepared by categorizing the courses according to similar and related topics. The possible course list for the master's program aiming to train ECME specialists is detailed in Table 3.

Table 3. Theoretical / Practical Courses Suggested in Line with Expert Opinions and Their Contents

Courses	Contents	Theoretical (%)	Practical (%)
1. Early Childhood Development and Musical Developmental Characteristics I-II	• Cognitive Development Period and Musical Development Characteristics • Physical Development Period and Musical Development Characteristics • Motor Development Period and Musical Development Characteristics • Social Development Period and Musical Development Characteristics • Emotional Development Period and Musical Development Characteristics • Language Development Period and Musical Development Characteristics • Personality Development Period and Musical Development Characteristics • Moral Development Period and Musical Development Characteristics	70	30
2. Early Childhood Music Education I-II	• Voice Education in Early Childhood (characteristics of children's voices, causes of childhood voice disorders and possible solutions, voice limits in early childhood) • Song Teaching (voice hygiene, conscious singing habits, features that should be found in children's songs) • Instrumental Experiences with children (accompanying children's songs with elementary music instruments) • Creativity and Problem Solving in Music Education • Early Childhood Music Examples (to be able to choose appropriate music to be listened to children) • Philosophical Perspectives on Music Education • Special Education in Music (music teaching for children with special needs and their participation in artistic activities)	60	40

Table 3. Continued

Courses	Contents	Theoretical (%)	Practical (%)
3. Teaching Methods, Techniques and Approaches in Music Education I-II	• Dalcroze Approach • Orff-Schulwerk Approach • Kodaly Approach • Suzuki Talent Training Approach, • Music Together® Program • Conversational Solfege Approach • Gordon Theory • Drama Method • Jeux Dramatique (Expressive Play) • Song Teaching Techniques • Techniques for Improving Auditory Perception • Instrument Teaching Techniques at School • Techniques for Developing Musical Creativity • Use of New Technologies in Music Education • To be able to adapt music teaching methods, techniques and approaches to individuals with special needs	60	40
4. Planning Musical Events for Children	• Music and Movement for Children • Activities • Music Events at Home for Children and Families • Sample Activities for Children with Special Needs • Instrument Making Activity • Creative Dance Activities • Musical Play Activities • Games, Dance and Music Activities • Planning Daily Training Flow for Children • Planning Measurement and Evaluation Activities	50	50
5. Seminar and Portfolio Preparation / Research and Independent Study in Music Education	• Literature Review or Case Study • Examination and evaluation of activity plans. Examination and evaluation of application examples for ECME in Turkey and in the world. • Portfolio creation	80	20
6. Field Studies in Music Education	• Internship / School Experience	30	70

Note: Theoretical Courses: Courses in which the conceptual foundations, theoretical frameworks and research results of a particular topic are discussed. Practical Courses: Courses that enable students to develop practical skills, practice and gain experience in real-life scenarios.

2. Findings and Comments on Participants' Thoughts and Suggestions about the Graduate Program to Train ECme Specialists

When the thoughts and suggestions of the participants (field experts and teachers interviewed) are examined within the scope of the research, it is clear that the participants shared their thoughts under a series of sub-headings ranging from the selection of instructors, admission conditions to the program, determination of courses, practical activities and institutional associations. In Table 4, the participants' thoughts and suggestions about the program are shown in themes, categories and codes.

Table 4. Participants' Thoughts and Suggestions about the Program

Theme	Category	Codes
Thoughts and Suggestions about the Program	a. Selection of Lecturers	Academic competence and expertise, selection of lecturers, educator qualifications, teaching by experts, pedagogical competence, personality eligibility
	b. Criteria of Admission for the Students to the Program	General culture and educational background, musical experience, skills assessment, domain knowledge and development, performance evaluation, application documents, list of criteria
	c. Preparatory Class	Preparatory program implementation, preparation for different disciplines, master's equalization class, preparation for different branches, special preparatory programs, knowledge and skill development, postgraduate education needs
	d. Determination of Courses	Rigorous course identification, practical course approach, course diversity and approach, examination of different country programs, lesson plan comparisons, accompaniment of children's songs, Orff instruments education, interdisciplinary course associations, Orff-Schulwerk-oriented studies
	e. Inter-University Cooperation	Support through Erasmus and other programs, participation of academics abroad, signing university protocols, academic cooperation agreements, academic staff in big cities, well-trained academics availability
	f. Field experience	Various internship/placement programs, competent music educators (role models), opportunities for field experience, inclusion of practice and production, requirement for continuous practice (internship), eliminating implementation challenges

In the statements made by the participants, there is a consensus on instructor competence. One of the participants, U1, said, “The selection of the faculty members who will take part in training them is of great importance as well as those who will receive education.” U13 said, “It should be given in a program composed of academicians from music teaching, preschool, classroom teaching and child development departments within the institute of educational sciences.” U8 said, “I think that early childhood education should be given by an ECME specialist.”

Admission Criteria for students

The participants stated that graduate students to be admitted to the program should have musical equipment, field experience and characteristics suitable for the nature of the profession. U1 stated that “they should have sufficient general cultural, educational and musical equipment, experience and knowledge. In addition to music teaching undergraduate graduates, it is also appropriate to recruit students from among those who have completed primary school teaching, kindergarten teaching and child development undergraduate programs and have worked successfully in their fields for at least two years after graduation, especially through an appropriate selection exam with a musical dimension.”S2 said, “Personality traits should be taken into consideration. I think that individuals who will receive the title of early childhood education specialist should have not only musical skills and theoretical knowledge but also positive personality traits.” U2 reported “...should be emotional but should be able to identify situations where they should stand strong.” U4 added , “...should be hardworking, positive and encouraging.”, emphasizing the importance of personality traits in the criteria for acceptance to the program. On the other hand, it is seen that some of the participants put forward suggestions whose content and implementation methods are very clearly defined. Participant U12 said, “The following criteria and data should be requested for applications to the master's program: A dance video of the candidate, a video of the candidate's instrumental

performance, a video of the candidate's performance (dance and/or music) with his/her students, a 30-minute video of the candidate's lesson process, a portfolio consisting of documents from the education and courses he/she has taken and showing his/her work, and letters of reference."

The majority of the participants stated that ECME competencies are too complicated to acquire in undergraduate programs. Moreover, it was emphasized that these competencies are important not only for graduates of preschool, classroom and child development departments, but also for graduates of music teaching departments.

Preparatory class

The participants suggested that a scientific preparation should be applied in order for candidates from different disciplines to complement their field knowledge. In this context, one of the participants U6 said, "Since the students who will participate in the program will come from different disciplines, a preparation program must be implemented..." U9 said, "It would be much more beneficial to create a preparatory class where music educators can be equalized in the field of child development by taking courses in pre-school, basic education and child development graduates in the field of child development, and more musical courses in the master's degree." T1, one of the participants, said, "Scientific preparatory classes should be opened and graduate students coming from different branches for specialization education should be provided to gain the knowledge and skills they need in this preparatory class."

It is predicted that individuals graduating from music departments of conservatories and fine arts faculties and child development departments of health sciences faculties can reach the same level on a scientific basis by completing the "Pedagogical Formation" courses offered to education faculty students. Following this scientific basis, it is thought that the participants will be able to use their musical knowledge and skills in this field by taking courses that include teaching methods and approaches specific to early childhood. In this way, it is evaluated that they will be able to produce effective solutions to the problems they may encounter with their knowledge and skills.

Determination of courses

It was observed that most of the participants expressed parallel views on the determination of program courses. It is seen that the approaches cover a wide range from the review of the relevant literature to the consideration of interdisciplinarity, cultural and artistic diversity; from the weight of certain fields to the extension of the duration of education. One of the participants, T3, said, "Including courses with intense games and practices in the program." S9 said, "Instrument education should be emphasized, lessons that can accompany children's songs with Orff instruments should be emphasized." T5, "It is important to benefit from the music of different cultures as well as our own culture, to feed the child with different music and knowledge, and I also find it important for them to learn an instrument in terms of being a role model by accompanying children with an instrument in music education, supporting the student's ear development and ease in transferring the musical structure."

When the music courses in preschool music teacher training programs in Finland where ECME teachers are trained are examined; "Preschool Music Education I-II, Solfege, Jazz, Music History, Music Analysis, Old Folk Music, Orchestra, Chamber Music, Music Technology, Folk Music, Music Pedagogy, Children's Choir Conducting, music-play-movement, music and dance, music therapy, main instrument, old music, new music, opera and theater music course, voice training courses are taught. There are also courses in aesthetic education and painting, child development and psychology, children's literature, drama to support these courses (Tufan, 2006).

Inter-university cooperation

Some of the participants expressed their views that the program could be strengthened through institutional collaborations. In addition to domestic training opportunities for the personal and professional development of ECME specialist candidates, it was suggested that they should be encouraged to benefit from foreign universities such as the Erasmus program. One of the participants, U2, said, "Protocols can be signed with universities. Scientific preparation courses can be provided from other disciplines." U9 stated, "Support can be received from foreign professors through Erasmus

programs. A training staff can be established in a big center like Ankara where well-educated academicians working in this field can be found together."

Field Experience

Participants emphasized that field experiences not only provide students with the opportunity to put their theoretical knowledge into practice, but are also critical for developing their pedagogical skills and self-discovery. The following are direct quotations from the experts' views on this issue. T6: "In case such a program is opened, I think that there should be an internship throughout the entire education. At the end of the process, it should be ensured that students who have deficiencies in practice gain experience with additional time if necessary. Otherwise, I think that it would not be possible for an educator with a weak application pillar to carry out the process in a healthy way." U14: "I believe that if situations such as application, production, etc. are included in the process, it will be successful."

Discussion

Music education is a critical field that has a significant impact on cultural, cognitive and emotional development and leaves lasting marks on the lives of young individuals. However, there is a significant need to identify the competencies that professionals in the field of music education should possess and to standardize these competencies. This study forms the basis of the proposed master's program with a structure in which the competencies determined on the basis of CCF, the basic field of teacher training and educational sciences and the competencies of the field of fine arts music education are defined. These competencies have the potential to both raise educational standards and increase national and international recognition. In this context, it is clear that CCF provides a decisive guidance in the creation of these competencies and is an effort to raise the standards in education. In addition, it has been observed that the competencies determined for the proposed master's program are included in the course information packages published by the universities and are compatible with the course information packages of the master's programs in the field of Fine Arts Music Education of other universities. This compliance shows that the program offers an accepted and standardized education model in the field. It is thought that this will provide students and graduates with an assurance that their education will be recognized and evaluated at national and international level. In conclusion, this study reveals that the competencies that ECME specialists should have can be acquired in a systematic and comprehensive manner within a structure that takes the CCF and other universities' course information packages as reference. The proposed master's program, which is thought to provide these competencies, is seen as an important step that will contribute to both increasing the quality of education in the field of music education and improving the skills of professionals.

The study emphasized that music teachers should have a wide range of knowledge not only in music, but also in literature, fine arts and other disciplines. In the literature, researchers such as Rasulova and Tillahojayev (2021) stated that music education is not only limited to melodies and note knowledge, but also requires a holistic approach covering all aspects of art. In particular, specialists trained in the field of ECEC are expected to have a broad perspective from pre-school education to art education, creative drama and dance education. In this context, providing education to students in a way that is integrated with art, aesthetic worldview and deep commitment to the profession will contribute to their personal and professional development. On the other hand, Williams, Park, and Breazeal (2019) stated that the connections between music education and artificial intelligence can improve the quality of education and help children become more conscious individuals in the technological age. These findings of the study support research in this field and suggest new ways on how music education can be integrated with new technologies. In this context, it is stated that the courses in the proposed master's program should have an interdisciplinary structure. In addition to music education, the program should include a variety of disciplines such as literature, fine arts, creative drama, dance and artificial intelligence.

It is important to include information from disciplines and to present this information with an integrative approach. Thus, students will be equipped with a wide and in-depth knowledge, will receive a strong education in both theoretical and practical terms, and will provide a professional development in the field of music education. In particular, providing an interdisciplinary structure will support their intellectual and professional development by providing students with different perspectives and methodologies. Such a structure will also provide students with the ability to understand and apply issues at the intersection of art and technology, and may enable them to develop more creative and innovative solutions in their educational processes. Therefore, it is thought that the integration of interdisciplinary courses into the curriculum in the proposed master's program will contribute to students becoming more equipped and competitive in their future professional lives.

In selecting students for the program, in addition to their musical abilities, the aim is to select qualified participants by taking into account the characteristics of pedagogical formation and other disciplines that support the field. This approach emphasizes the value and impact of music as a pedagogical tool. It is known that music has a direct impact on students' intelligence, cognitive abilities and brain functioning (Alam & Mohanty, 2023). New technological developments and cultural changes are also transforming the nature of music education. Considering these changes, different pedagogical approaches and methods should be used when providing music education to students (Karimova, Achildiyeva, Ikromova, & Xaydarova, 2021; Rasulova & Tillahojayev, 2021; Young, 2021). The fact that candidates who will specialize in the field of ECME come from different disciplines can increase the comprehensiveness and depth of education in this field. In this context, it is thought that the proposed preparatory class will increase the comprehensiveness and effectiveness of the program by allowing candidates to integrate their knowledge of different disciplines with ECME (Bülbül, 2003). This preparatory class offered to students can help them understand ECME more comprehensively and use this knowledge effectively in their practices.

Interuniversity collaboration is strengthened due to factors such as the increase in projects carried out and social closeness. In the study of Gürlek (2023), it is stated that past collaborations tend to continue in the future, while it is emphasized that institutional closeness supports collaboration between similar types of institutions. However, it is seen that similarities in the scientific expertise of researchers do not have a significant effect on collaboration. This situation shows that expertise in the same scientific fields is not a key factor in affecting interuniversity collaboration. The findings that interuniversity collaboration increases students' cultural and academic diversity and provides them with an international perspective support the globalization trends in education. These collaborations can make students more equipped individuals at an international level by providing them with the opportunity to develop not only academic but also cultural awareness and empathy (Chan, 2004). The implementation of the program, which aims to provide a comprehensive education with general and field competencies determined based on CCF, will increase the qualifications of the ECME field experts it aims to train and provide professional development in the field of music education.

The findings obtained in this study, in line with the existing literature, show that field experiences not only provide students with musical competence, but also contribute positively to their cognitive, emotional, and social development. Field experiences provide students with practical skills by providing them with the opportunity to learn how to put theoretical knowledge into practice. ECME, in particular, can make positive contributions to various areas from students' language skills to their social adaptation. As stated in studies such as Kuebel (2020) and Zeybek and Karataş (2022), field experiences provide students with the opportunity to put their theoretical knowledge into practice and develop their pedagogical skills. In this context, it is an academic necessity to analyze the effects and value of field experience in the discipline of music education more comprehensively. Such an examination can encourage preservice teachers in the field of music education to receive a more holistic education in both theoretical depth and practical competence. As Kuebel (2020) emphasizes in his study, field experiences in undergraduate music education programs provide students with the opportunity to put theoretical knowledge into practice. Such experiences improve students' practical abilities and

provide an opportunity to gain a deep understanding of pedagogical content knowledge. In addition, these experiences increase the capacity to assess children's special educational needs and to prepare them to teach effectively in a variety of musical environments. According to the findings regarding the application process of prospective teachers, positive effects were observed on the ability of prospective teachers to discover themselves, develop their pedagogical skills, and put their theoretical knowledge into practice (Zeybek & Karataş, 2022).

Conclusion

This study has addressed the current challenges in the field of ECME in Turkey and presented a proposal for a master's program to train individuals specialized in this field. The research was conducted to determine the qualifications of ECME experts by examining the required competencies, course contents and participant opinions from a detailed perspective and a master's program prepared in line with the CCF.

The findings show that the program defines critical competencies for ECME experts and can increase the quality of education in this field. The feedback from the participants emphasized the importance of the program's participation of academicians specialized in music, preschool education and child development and adopting an interdisciplinary approach. This idea also coincides with the results of current studies in the field. Music education needs to develop from a broad perspective and adopt innovative approaches, with not only music experts but also experts from different disciplines working together (Lorenzo de Reizabal, 2022). In addition, it was stated that international cooperation could enrich the knowledge and skill levels of ECME expert candidates. These results provide valuable guidance for both academic and practical applications.

The results of the study regarding the first sub-problem show that the master's program prepared based on CCF defines key competencies for ECME specialists. In this framework, 43 of the 86 competencies created are focused on general competencies (13 knowledge, 8 skills, 22 competencies) and the other 43 are focused on field competencies (17 knowledge, 16 skills, 10 competencies). As a result, the study findings reveal that within a framework where CCF and other universities' course information packages are taken as reference, the competencies that ECME specialists should have can be acquired systematically and comprehensively. These competencies have been determined to both increase education standards and increase recognition at national and international levels, and will make significant contributions to the professional development of ECME specialists.

In line with the second sub-problem of the study, the contents of the courses to be included in the master's program proposed to train EÇME specialists and their theoretical-practical ratios were determined. In this context, the program includes courses such as 'Early Childhood Development and Characteristics of Musical Development I-II', 'Early Childhood Music Education I-II', 'Teaching Methods-Techniques and Approaches in Music Education I-II', 'Seminar and Portfolio Preparation/Research and Independent Study in Music Education', 'Planning Musical Activities for Children' and 'Field Study in Music Education'. The contents of the courses and their theoretical-practical ratios were detailed together with the members of the Thesis Monitoring Committee in line with the feedback of field experts and teachers. It is thought that these arrangements strengthen the interdisciplinary structure of the program and support the professional development of students by receiving a strong education in both theoretical and practical terms.

When the participants' thoughts and suggestions about the proposed program were evaluated in line with the third sub-problem of the study, it was stated that it was important to include expert academicians from the fields of music, preschool and classroom teaching, and child development in the creation of the program. It was emphasized that the musical talent assessment in the student selection process had a primary importance in determining the qualified participants of the program. It was highlighted that the preparatory class proposed for candidates from different disciplines had the potential to create an interdisciplinary learning environment with music and pedagogical formation courses. In this context, it was emphasized that considering international examples and adopting an

interdisciplinary approach would enrich the content of the program. The participants emphasized that students' ability to apply their theoretical knowledge in practical educational environments should be developed. Therefore, it was concluded that cooperation between universities in Turkey and abroad is a decisive factor in increasing the knowledge, skills, and experiences of ECME expert candidates.

Implications

The limitations of the study include the lack of access to a large number of participants and the lack of access to courses and content of similar programs abroad due to the small number of academicians who specifically conduct academic studies in the field of ECME. This situation suggests that the study is lacking in terms of international comparisons, especially in terms of the theoretical and practical application rates of courses recommended for a master's program that will train ECME specialists. In addition, the idea that graduate studies directly covering ECME expertise are seen as a separate field and that this area of expertise is not sufficient is seen as a limitation of the study. It is recommended that future studies should conduct studies to better understand the theoretical and practical balance of programs by using international examples and best practices. In this way, it is thought that more contributions can be made to developments in the field of ECME and more effective training programs can be created.

In order to increase the quality of education, it is proposed that the proposed master's program be opened in cities with experienced academicians in the fields of fine arts education, basic education and child development. Experts who successfully complete the program can be encouraged to work as lecturers in the music and preschool education departments of education faculties, child development programs of health sciences faculties and child development associate degree programs of vocational schools.

Higher education institutions can organize seminars in order to support the introduction of the field of specialization in undergraduate and associate degree programs regarding the proposed program and to enable graduates to continue their professional development.

It is considered that the preparation of resources in the local language for the courses offered in the program, the translation and diversification of foreign resources into Turkish in order to benefit from international literature are of primary importance. In addition, it is important to continuously update and improve the program with evaluations to be made as a result of feedback from students and graduates.

It is thought that the creation of doctoral level education opportunities after the proposed master's program will increase the quality of ECME. This program proposed for ECME specialization can be a model for the creation of similar education programs in art education, visual arts and other pedagogical fields. In this context, it is thought that early childhood education can reach the desired level with field experts to be trained in other disciplines related to early childhood education.

References

Ablak, S. (2020). Sosyal bilgiler öğretmen adaylarının sahip oldukları 21. yüzyıl becerilerinin çeşitli değişkenler açısından incelenmesi. *Tarih Okulu Dergisi*, *13*(48), 3316-3334. doi:10.29228/Joh.45167

Akar, H. (2016). Durum çalışması. In A. Ersoy & A. Saban (Eds.), *Eğitimde nitel araştırma desenleri* (pp. 111-150). Ankara: Anı Yayıncılık.

Alam, A., & Mohanty, A. (2023). Does musically responsive school curriculum enhance reasoning abilities and helps in cognitive development of school students?. In D. A. Karras, S. K. Oruganti, & S. Ray (Eds.), *Interdisciplinary perspectives on sustainable development: Achieving the SDGs through education, wellbeing, and ınnovation* (1st ed., pp. 337-342). Abingdon: CRC Press.

Atik, A. D., & Yetkiner, A. (2021). Ortaöğretim biyoloji dersi öğretim programı kazanımlarının 21. yüzyıl becerileri açısından incelenmesi. *Trakya Eğitim Dergisi*, *11*(2), 745-765. doi:10.24315/tred.707904

Aysu, B., Aral, N., Gürsoy, F., & Yıldız Bıçakçı, M. (2018). Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin müzik etkinlikleri hakkındaki görüşlerinin incelenmesi. *Ankara Sağlık Bilimleri Dergisi, 7*(2), 21-31. Retrieved from https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/ausbid/issue/41277/482728

Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc.

Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc.

Barboros, E., & Akbulut, E. (2021). Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin müzik eğitimi dersi hedeflerini gerçekleştirme ve öz-yeterlik inanç düzeylerinin incelenmesi. *Eğitim ve Toplum Araştırmaları Dergisi, 8*(1), 65-74. doi:10.51725/etad.817246

Barrett, J. S., Schachter, R. E., Gilbert, D., & Fuerst, M. (2022). Best practices for preschool music education: Supporting music-making throughout the day. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, *50*(3), 385-397. doi:10.1007/s10643-021-01155-8

Barrett, M. S., Flynn, L. M., Brown, J. E., & Welch, G. F. (2019). Beliefs and values about music in early childhood education and care: Perspectives from practitioners. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10, 724. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00724

Bautista, A., Yeung, J., Mclaren, M. L., & Ilari, B. (2022). Music in early childhood teacher education: Raising awareness of a worrisome reality and proposing strategies to move forward. *Arts Education Policy Review*, *125*(3), 139-149. doi:10.1080/10632913.2022.2043969

Bolduc, J., Gosselin, N., Chevrette, T., & Peretz, I. (2020). The impact of music training on inhibition control, phonological processing, and motor skills in kindergarteners: A randomized control trial. *Early Child Development and Care, 191*(12), 1886-1895. doi:10.1080/03004430.2020.1781841

Bülbül, T. (2003). Ankara Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Fakültesinde görev yapan öğretim üyelerinin lisansüstü öğretime öğrenci seçme sürecine ilişkin görüşleri. *Ankara University Journal of Faculty of Educational Sciences*, *36*(1), 167-174. doi:10.1501/Egifak_0000000069

Campbell, P. S., & Scott-Kassner, C. (2009). *Music in childhood: From pre-school Through the elementary grades* (3rd ed.). New York: Schirmer Books.

Chan, W. W. Y. (2004). International cooperation in higher education: Theory and practice. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, *8*(1), 32-55. doi:10.1177/1028315303254429

Cheung, A. C. K., Wong, K. L., Wang, H. F., & Dai, J. B. (2023). Effect of a student teaching internship program on the self-efficacy of pre-service teachers in rural China. *International Journal of Educational Management*, *37*(2), 373-392.

Chmiliar, l. (2010). Multiple-case designs. In A. J. Mills, G. Eurepas, & E. Wiebe (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of case study research* (pp. 582-583). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry ve research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Creswell, J. W. (2020). *Eğitim araştırmaları: Nicel ve nitel araştırmanın planlanması, yürütülmesi ve değerlendirilmesi* (H. Ekşi, Trans.). İstanbul: EDAM Yayınları.

Creswell, J. W. (2021). *Nitel araştırma yöntemleri* (S. B. Demir, & M. Bütün, Trans.). Ankara: Siyasal.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Davey, L. (1990). The application of case study evaluations. *Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation, 2*(1), 9. doi:10.7275/02g8-bb93

Dinç Altun, Z., & Uzuner, F. G. (2018). Sınıf öğretmenlerinin müzik öğretimine yönelik görüşlerinin incelenmesi. *Abant İzzet Baysal Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, *18*(3), 1416-1432. doi:10.17240/aibuefd.2018.18.39790-471132

Doğan, C., & Tecimer, B. (2017). The evaluation of preschool and primary educational music activities in Turkey based on teachers opinions (Ankara sample). *The Journal of Academic Social Science Studies JASSS International Journal of Social Science,* 64, 497-506.

Elaldı, Ş., Batdı, V., & Sönmez-Ölger, D. (2020). Music education competencies of preschool teachers and preservice preschool teachers. *Cumhuriyet International Journal of Education*, *9*(2), 617-636. doi:10.30703/cije.640704

Fidan, S., Çiftçibaşı, M., & Turan, Z. (2020). Müzik öğretmeni adaylarının okul öncesi müzik eğitimi yeterliklerine ilişkin görüşleri. *Eurasian Journal of Music and Dance*, 16, 354-374. doi:10.31722/ejmd.757303

Gelen, İ. (2017). P21-Program ve öğretimde 21. yüzyıl beceri çerçeveleri (ABD uygulamaları). *Disiplinlerarası Eğitim Araştırmaları Dergisi*, *1*(2), 15-29. Retrieved from https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/386403

Göncü, İ. Ö. (2010). Okul öncesi eğitimde müzik eğitiminin temel sorunları. *Kastamonu Eğitim Dergisi*, *18*(2), 355-362. Retrieved from https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/kefdergi/issue/49063/626025

Greenberg, M. (1976). Research in music in early childhood education: A survey with recommendations. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, 45, 1-20.

Gregory, S., Dalgarno, B., Campbell, M., Reiners, T., Knox, V., & Masters, Y. (2011). Changing directions through VirtualPREX: Engaging pre-service teachers in virtual professional experience. In *Ascilite 2011 Changing Demands, Changing Directions* (pp. 491-501). ASCILITE 2011.

Groff, P. J. (1962). Self-estimates of the ability to teach music. *Music Educators Journal*, *48*(4), 140-141. doi:10.2307/3389557

Gromko, J. E., & Poorman, A. S. (1998). Developmental trends and relationships in children's aural perception and symbol use. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 46*(1), 16-23. doi:10.2307/3345756

Gürlek, S. U. (2023). Üniversiteler birbirine sosyal, kurumsal ve bilişsel olarak ne kadar yakındır? TÜBİTAK proje iş birlikleri üzerinden bir analiz. *Fiscaoeconomia*, *7*(1), 525-549.

Haartsen, R., Jones, E. J., & Johnson, M. H. (2016). Human brain development over the early years. *Current Opinion in Behavioral Sciences*, 10, 149-154. doi:10.1016/j.cobeha.2016.05.015

Karimova, M., Achildiyeva, M., Ikromova, F., & Xaydarova, O. (2021). Use from pedagogical technologies in music lessons. *European Scholar Journal, 2*(4), 460-463.

Kayhan, E., Altun, S., & Gürol, M. (2019). Sekizinci sınıf Türkçe öğretim programı (2018)'nın 21. yüzyıl becerileri açısından değerlendirilmesi. *Adnan Menderes Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Eğitim Bilimleri Dergisi, 10*(2), 20-35.

Koca, S. (2013). An investigation of music teaching self-efficacy levels of prospective preschool teachers. *Educational Research and Review, 8*(12), 897-900. doi:10.5897/ERR2013.1483

Kuebel, C. R. (2020). Early childhood fieldwork for music education majors. *International Journal of Music in Early Childhood*, *15*(2), 199-215.

Küçüköncü, Y. (2000). Sınıf öğretmenliğinde müzik eğitimi. *Pamukkale Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi, 7*(7), 8-12. Retrieved from https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/pauefd/issue/11136/133196

Liszt Academy. (2022). *Kodály Konsept, Zeneakadémia.* Retrieved from https://kodaly.hu/

Lorenzo de Reizabal, M. (2022). Music education models in the 21st century: The music mediation model for social engagement. *Revista Educación, 46*(2). doi:10.15517/revedu.v46i2.49922

Mena, J., Hennissen, P., & Loughran, J. (2017). Developing pre-service teachers' professional knowledge of teaching: The influence of mentoring. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 66, 47-59.

Merriam, S. B. (2018). *Nitel araştırma: Desen ve uygulama için bir rehber* (S. Turan, Ed. & Trans.). Ankara: Nobel Yayın Dağıtım.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (2015). *Nitel veri analizi* (S. A. Altun, & A. Ersoy, Trans.). Ankara: Pegem.

Milliband, D. (2004). *Excellence and enrichment: New frontiers in music education*. Music for Life Conference (Vol. 3), London.

Nikoçeviq-Kurti, E. (2023). Exploring the contribution of the five-factor mentoring model in advancing the pre-service teachers' personal and professional growth. *International Journal of Instruction*, *16*(1), 469-488.

Okyay, E. (1980). Ortaöğretimde müzik eğitiminin sorunları. In N. Koç (Ed.), *Yükseköğretime giriş sorunları* (pp. 26-28). Türk Eğitim Derneği Bilim Dizisi Yayını. Retrieved from http://egitimvebilim.ted.org.tr/index.php/EB/article/view/5493/1654

Öztutgan, Z. (2018). Okul öncesi öğretmen adaylarının müzik eğitimine ilişkin öz-yeterlik algıları. *Adıyaman Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi,* 29, 574-593. doi:10.14520/adyusbd.351754

Pitt, J. (2019). Communicating through musical play: Combining speech and language therapy practices with those of early childhood music education - The SALTMusic approach. *Music Education Research*, *22*(1), 68-86. doi:10.1080/14613808.2019.1703927

Polikoff, M. S., Desimone, L. M., Porter, A. C., & Hochberg, E. D. (2015). Mentor policy and the quality of mentoring. *The Elementary School Journal*, *116*(1), 76-102.

Poulter, V., & Cook, T. (2022). Teaching music in the early years in schools in challenging circumstances: developing student teacher competence and confidence through cycles of enactment. *Educational Action Research, 30*(2), 192-208. doi:10.1080/09650792.2020.1765185

Rahman, S. A., Tuckerman, L., Vorley, T., & Gherhes, C. (2021). Resilient research in the field: Insights and lessons from adapting qualitative research projects during the COVID-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 20, 1-16. doi:10.1177/16094069211016106

Rasulova, S. S., & Tillahojayev, O. T. (2021). Peculiarities of training music teachers for innovative educational activities. *Academic Research in Educational Sciences, 2*(4), 14-17.

Robson, C., & McCartan, K. (2016). *Real world research* (4th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Ruokonen, I., Tervaniemi, M., & Reunamo, J. (2021). The significance of music in early childhood education and care of toddlers in Finland: An extensive observational study. *Music Education Research, 23*(5), 634-646.

Saunders, T. C., & Baker, D. S. (1991). In-service classroom teachers' perceptions of useful music skills and understandings. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 39*(3), 248-261. doi:10.2307/3344724

Sönmez, V., & Alacapınar, F. (2019). *Örneklendirilmiş bilimsel araştırma yöntemleri* (7th ed.). Ankara: Anı Yayıncılık.

Sungurtekin, Ş., & Çakır İlhan, A. (2015). Müzik eğitimi yeterlikleri bağlamında sınıf öğretmeni "sanat ve estetik" yeterliklerinin öğretim elemanlarının görüşleri doğrultusunda değerlendirilmesi. *Uludağ Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi, 28*(1), 53-73. doi:10.19171/uuefd.25893

Tecimer Kasap, B. (2006). Geleceğin müzik öğretim elemanlarının yetiştirilmesi üzerine bir model program. In *Ulusal Müzik Eğitimi Sempozyumu bildirisi* (pp. 5-18). Retrieved from https://www.muzikegitimcileri.net/bilimsel/bildiri/pamukkale/B-Kasap.pdf

Tufan, S. (2006). Okul öncesi müzik öğretmeni profili. In *Ulusal Müzik Eğitimi Sempozyumu bildirisi* (pp. 185-192). Retrieved from https://www.muzikegitimcileri.net/bilimsel/bildiri/pamukkale/S-Tufan.pdf

UNICEF. (2001). *Dünya çocuklarının durumu raporu: Erken çocukluk dönemi.* Retrieved from https://www.unicef.org/reports/state-worlds-children-2001

Vanderstoep, S., & Johnston, D. (2009). *Research methods for everyday life: Blending qualitative and quantitative approaches*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

Welch, G. F. (2021) The challenge of ensuring effective early years music education by non-specialists. *Early Child Development and Care, 191*(12), 1972-1984. doi:10.1080/03004430.2020.1792895

Williams, K. E., Barrett, M. S., Welch, G. F., Abad, V., & Broughton, M. (2015). Associations between early shared music activities in the home and later child outcomes: Findings from the longitudinal study of Australian children. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly,* 31, 113-124. doi:10.1016/j.ecresq.2015.01.004

Williams, R., Park, H. W., & Breazeal, C. (2019). A is for artificial intelligence: The impact of artificial ıntelligence activities on young children's perceptions of robots. In *Proceedings of the 2019 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '19)* (pp. 1-11). New York: Association for Computing Machinery. doi:10.1145/3290605.3300677

Yıldırım, A., & Şimşek, H. (2018). *Sosyal bilimlerde nitel araştırma yöntemleri* (11st ed.). Ankara: Seçkin Yayıncılık.

Yıldırım, A., & Şimşek, H. (2021). *Sosyal bilimlerde nitel araştırma yöntemleri* (12th ed.). Ankara: Seçkin Yayıncılık.

Yin, R. (1984). *Case study research: Design and methods.* (3th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Young, S. (2021). Towards constructions of musical childhoods: Diversity and digital technologies. In W. Brodsky, & W. Gruhn (Eds.), *Music in the lives of young children: An annotated anthology of research papers from early child development and care* (1st ed., pp. 14). London: Routledge. doi:10.4324/9781003090311

Zeybek, G., & Karataş, K. (2022). Öğretmenlik deneyimine ilk adım: öğretmenlik uygulaması sürecinin incelenmesi. *MANAS Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, *11*(3), 973-990. doi:10.33206/mjss.995588