Southeast Asia Early Childhood Journal, Vol. 11 (1), 2022 (1-17)
ISSN 2289-3156 /eISSN 2550-1763
http://ejournal.upsi.edu.my/index.php/SAECJ

CHILD MISBEHAVIOR IN AN EARLY CHILDHOOD CLASSROOM: MONTESSORI EDUCATORS' VIEWS AND PRACTICES

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Received: 24 August 2021; **Accepted:** 19 October 2021; **Published:** 19 January 2022

To cite this article (APA): Kural, E., & Ceylan, R. (2022). Child misbehavior in an early childhood classroom: Montessori educators' views and practices. *Southeast Asia Early Childhood Journal*, *11*(1), 1-17. https://doi.org/10.37134/saecj.vol11.1.1.2022

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.37134/saecj.vol11.1.1.2022

ABSTRACT

Within the scope of Montessori education system, which has been widely applied in Turkey in recent years, "prepared environment", "didactic materials" and "prepared adult" concepts have been frequently emphasized. It could be asserted that behavior management at Montessori classrooms is formed and arranged within the frame of these three basic factors. This study intends to determine the classroom management practices of Montessori educators who work in public or private preschool institutions' three-six-year-old early childhood departments in Turkey and how they associate these practices with classroom management. The study was carried out in line with a phenomenological approach, one of the qualitative research methods, and the sample is comprised of 13 Montessori educators working in 4 different institutions located in Istanbul's Basaksehir, Umraniye, Sancaktepe, and Sariyer districts. The data was obtained through individual face-to-face interviews and a follow-up interview by using the questions prepared by researchers. The findings were obtained by descriptive analysis. Data on the classroom management practices were collected under the theme of management of misbehaviors and 18 practices were identified under this theme. According to findings of the follow-up interview, educators associate the practices they apply for behavior management with classroom management within the frame of the prepared environment, prepared adult, and didactic materials. Future researchers can design studies to compare the practices of Montessori educators and educators working in different approaches towards misbehaviours.

Keywords: early childhood, management of misbehaviors, montessori educator, classroom management practices

INTRODUCTION

In the classrooms where the education is intended to get children to adopt a habit and behavior, the quality of classroom management practices determines the effectiveness of the education. (Basar, 2013). In a general sense, effective classroom management includes three main elements: Clear and arguable discipline; rules, principles, and procedures; educators having a

management system and effective management skills (Laut, 1999). The classroom management concept comprised of these elements has changed over time and become more comprehensive for more contemporary practices. This approach, which used to focus on misbehaviors of the child and preventing such behaviors, currently has a framework in which education and training activities are carried out within the scope of a plan (Tertemiz, 2017). The literature review has indicated that educators' classroom management practices have been divided into various dimensions and analyzed in this way. Dimensions of the classroom management specified in Burden and Byrd's research (1994) are as follows: Creating rules and procedures, organizing classroom and materials, reinforcing desirable behaviors, drawing children's attention to activities, creating a positive classroom atmosphere and applying a management system. Martin and Shoho (2000) investigated classroom management in three dimensions: Teaching method, people management, and behavior management. Besides, Sahin-Sak (2015) has put forward eight different classroom management dimensions: Preferring philosophic classroom management and a discipline model, ensuring classroom security and prosperity, organization of physical environment, management of students' behaviors, relationship and communication management, management of planning and programming activities, interacting with colleagues, parents, and others to realize the targets related to time and classroom management. In this study, researchers dealt with behavior management as sub-dimension of the classroom management and in this regard, analyzed the practices that Montessori educators prefer in case of misbehaviors.

There are certain critical periods during which human beings gain knowledge, skill, and habits to survive as a social entity. During the preschool period which has a crucial role among these periods, it is necessary to support the development of the children for them to continue their lives in a healthy way and to get in touch with other people. In addition to genetic factors, environmental stimulus, and social settings to which the child is exposed play a crucial role in his/her socialization process. It has been observed that children whose developmental processes are not supported sufficiently display problematic behaviors in the future (Uysal & Dincer, 2013). Moreover, it has been determined that most of the misbehaviors emerge in preschool children and continue in the following periods (Hutchings et al., 2011; Pelletier et al., 2006).

The misbehaviors of the children also have a determining role in their relationships with their peers. It is occasionally seen that a misbehavior of a child is also exhibited by a peer group in a similar way (Uysal & Dincer, 2012). Since exclusion and displaying similar behaviors as a group are often seen in the preschool period, this period could be deemed as critical in that child's basic knowledge, behaviors, and habit foundations are laid during that time. For this reason, it is of importance to determine the desired and problematic behaviors of the child, to have sufficient knowledge on the developmental period of the child, and to apply appropriate education services and early intervention programs in that sense (Sen & Ari, 2011).

Providing children with the necessary skills throughout their life -such as establishing healthy communication, problem-solving, paying attention to rules and being sensitive to the environment- renders these skills more permanent and effective. Teachers' classroom management practices play a crucial role in the acquisition of these skills at the school (Akgun et al., 2011). Studies have revealed that the classroom management practices applied by educators in an effort to deal with misbehaviors depend on the educators' experiences (Sadik, 2004; Yesilyurt & Cankaya, 2008). One of the factors affecting this situation is how educators perceive such behaviors and how they react to these behaviors. Educators' knowledge and attitudes towards misbehaviors of children differ from each other. Whereas one group of educators regard a behavior undesired or inappropriate, others could deem the same behavior

normal (Cangemi & Khan, 2001). However, misbehaviors have certain characteristics differing from other behaviors. Such behaviors could lead to a child's disturbing and endangering both herself/himself and his/her friends, harming educational equipment, and hampering the learning process (Korkmaz, 2007). Moreover, these behaviors are not appropriate for social expectations and they prevent fulfilling responsibilities (Ozturk, 2005).

There are some steps to be followed the educator detects misbehaviors in the classroom. The next step is determining and applying appropriate classroom management practices to do away with, prevent and decrease such behaviors (Basar, 2013). The key point at this step is to determine the underlying reasons for misbehavior (Sahin & Arslan, 2014). In the next stage, the educator includes classroom management practices that s/he has determined in the process. At this stage, the practices that educators prefer could vary. For instance, whereas some teachers prefer punitive, curative, and preventive practices (Alptekin et al., 2011), some others apply various methods such as giving the children responsibility, reminding classroom rules, depriving them of the things they like and giving a verbal warning (Ozer et al., 2014). Furthermore, in a study conducted to determine pre-school teachers' practices in case of misbehaviors, it was observed that educators applied some practices such as reminding rules, asking questions, warning with signs, warning by name, keeping quiet, warning by establishing physical intimacy and intimidation (Uysal et al., 2010). Another study revealed that pre-school teachers use negative statements more than positive ones when they encounter misbehaviors during the activities (Akgun et al., 2011).

There are different education approaches applied in the preschool period in Turkey. One of these approaches is the Montessori education approach developed by Montessori. The Montessori approach provides an environment where children in mixed-age groups receive individual education by giving them freedom together and within certain limits. Classrooms, named as prepared environments where education and training activities are carried out, are created by the educators defined as prepared adults, and the environment is prepared with didactic materials (Polk-Lillard, 2014). Prepared environment, educators -namely prepared adults-, and didactic materials –which are the key elements of Montessori classrooms- have a crucial role in classroom management. Within the scope of these elements, children have the opportunity of self-learning, self- control, and self-assessment with the support provided in accordance with their needs (Polk-Lillard, 2013).

Montessori educators –named as "prepared adults"- work together with at least two educators in one classroom. While one of them is the lead educator who is responsible for all process in the classroom, another educator supports the lead educator as an assistant educator. Educators are responsible for guiding children, preparing the environment, and functioning as a bridge between child and environment (Association Montessori Internationale, 2020). According to the Montessori approach, educators are the agents helping the children who are at the center of education when they need educators (Arslan, 2008). Educators' responsibilities also include preparing the classroom environment where the idea of simplicity is dominant and making necessary arrangements by observing a child's reaction to the environment (Smith, 2018). Furthermore, it is another responsibility of the educator to establish a relationship with the family and the society of which the child is a member and to maintain cooperation with these actors (Polk-Lillard, 2013).

While the freedom provided to the child in the Montessori classrooms comprise a child's selfhood in, discipline tried to be acquired by the child comprises both the selfhood and the benefit of the community. Discipline in the classroom is realized by the child's doing the

activities s/he likes as much as s/he wants and by no external intervention in his/her good-motive behaviors (Montessori, 2016b). This discipline gained by the child is divided into two categories: Internal and external discipline. Internal discipline is acquired by providing the child with the activities s/he is interested in and his/her repeating such activities. On the other hand, external discipline is acquired and maintained by intervening in child's behaviors that disrupt classroom arrangement in an instant and all the time. Thus, since the child knows that such behaviors will be prevented, s/he is led to exhibit appropriate behaviors in that sense. To this end, the factor ensuring discipline here is the borders created in the classroom, not the punishment (Polk-Lillard, 2013).

In addition to the borders created in the classroom and discipline, not employing methods like reward or punishment is effective in the management of children's behavior in Montessori classrooms. Experiments and observations conducted while establishing a Montessori education approach revealed that reward and punishment do not influence children (Eissler, 2017). Besides, Montessori (2016a) asserted that children allowed to learn on their own do not need any external reward or punishment. Arguing that authorizing the adult with external control would be problematic, Montessori also pointed out that they provided the child self-control and self-evaluation with the error check included in didactic materials. Thanks to error check, children could realize their mistakes and understand how much of their activities is right and how much is wrong (Stoll-Lillard, 2018).

It has been determined that in Turkey, especially after the 2000s, there has been an increase in the number of public and private schools providing education in line with the Montessori approach and trainings for Montessori educators to work in these institutions (Korkmaz, 2005). Besides, considering the increase in social media users who share posts about the Montessori education approach and the informal observations regarding follower groups, it could be argued that parents show interest in the Montessori approach. Furthermore, the preschool period is a critical process during which children's all crucial developmental processes occur. In Montessori classrooms, namely in an environment prepared with didactic materials, improvement of children's skills such as independence, taking initiative, self-learning, and self-regulation are supported with the guidance of educators. Studies have indicated that this approach has a positive effect on all developmental processes of children in the preschool period (Mutlu et al., 2012). The relevant literature review has presented studies regarding the philosophy of Montessori education approach within the scope of early childhood period, children's developments, parenting education and examination of architectural features (Beken, 2009; Dereli, 2017; Durkaya, 2019; Iflazoglu-Saban & Bulut-Ozsezer, 2016; Kayili, 2015; Kececioglu, 2015; Selcuk, 2016; Seker, 2015; Temel et al., 2016; Toran & Temel, 2014; Yildiz, 2018; Yildiz & Cagdas, 2018; Yigit, 2008); yet, studies focusing on behavior management as part of classroom management have not been found in the relevant literature. Considering the increasing interest in Montessori approach, education's effect on the development of children, and the fact that there is no study regarding classroom management, this research is considered to make a remarkable contribution to relevant literature.

Hence, this research seeks answers to these questions: "What are the classroom management practices of Montessori educators who work in the early childhood departments at public or private preschool institutions in Turkey?" and "How do these educators correlate their practices with the classroom management?"

METHODOLOGY

This section includes the research model, study group, data collection tools, data collection and data analysis of the research.

Research Model

This research intends to determine the classroom management practices of Montessori educators –who work in three-six-year-old early childhood departments at public or private pre-school institutions affiliated with the Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education- in sense of classroom management and how they correlate these practices with the classroom management. To this end, phenomenological research design –one of the qualitative research models- was used for the research. In qualitative research, the researcher interprets the data obtained through integrative and in-depth interviews carried out with participants (Creswell, 2017; Yildirim & Simsek, 2013). Phenomenological research design, which is one of the qualitative research models, helps to investigate the cases that we encounter in our daily lives or the situations of which we are deeply and thoroughly aware. Non-precise and non-generalizable data could be obtained through people and groups who have experienced the case and could transfer it to other people (Creswell, 2018). The phenomenon of the research is "classroom management practices". Within the frame of this phenomenon, the research investigates Montessori educators' classroom management practices in sense of behavior management and how they correlate these practices with the classroom management.

Study Group

The study group was comprised of 13 Montessori educators working at three-six-year-old early childhood departments of four different institutions located in Istanbul's Basaksehir, Umraniye, Sancaktepe, and Sariyer districts. Participants were determined in line with "criterion sampling" which is one of the purposeful sampling methods. The criteria for the participants were as follows: Working at three-six-year-old early-childhood departments of public or private schools, having an official Montessori training for educators, and completing one-year internship period. Thanks to the purposeful sampling method, it was ensured that participants have experienced the researched case; they represent the universe in the best way and have enough information about the case (Guclu, 2019). Furthermore, by selecting different people and environments that could provide maximum diversity, it was ensured that the study group best represents all diversity situations (Maxwell, 2018).

The educators in the study group were coded as "E1, E2". E1, E2, E3, E4, E5 and E6 work in the school A, E7, E8 and E9 work in the school B, E10 and E11 work in the school C and E12 and E13 work in the school D. The demographic information of educators is indicated in Table 1.

Table 1
Demographic Information of Study Group

Participant	Gender	Duration of Work Experience	Montessori Guidance Duration	Montessori Educators Training	Job Description in the Classroom
E1	F	4	1	Had	The Head
E2	F	7	1	Had	Teaching Assistant
E3	F	2	1	Had	Teaching Assistant
E4	F	5	4	Had	The Head
E5	F	1	1	Had	Teaching Assistant
E6	F	2	2	Had	The Head
E7	F	8	6	Had	The Head
E8	F	1	1	Had	The Head
E9	F	6	6	Had	Teaching Assistant
E10	F	3	1	Had	Teaching Assistant
E11	F	6	3	Had	Teaching Assistant
E12	F	17	2	Had	Teaching Assistant
E13	F	18	1	Had	The Head

All educators are female and have an AMS certificate of İstanbul Montessori Institude. Educators have worked for a minimum of one year, a maximum of 18 years as pre-school teachers. Besides, all educators have completed the internship period after having got Montessori educator training. Educators have a minimum of one year, maximum of six-years work experience duration in Montessori classrooms. Six of the educators work as the head and seven of them work as teaching assistants.

Data Collection Tools

The data of the research was obtained through the first interview and follow-up interview conducted via Personal Information Form and the questionnaire prepared by the researchers.

Personal Information Form

Through this form, demographic data such as gender, work experience, duration of working as a Montessori educator, job description in the classroom, whether s/he has received educator training, and whether s/he has completed the internship period were obtained.

First Interview and Follow-up Interview

Personal and face-to-face interviews were carried out by getting appointment from the participants. In the first interview, an open-ended question was asked to identify the practices for the management of misbehaviors: *"Which methods do you use to decrease, eliminate or prevent the misbehaviors of children?"* Through this open-ended question, it was tried to identify participant educators' classroom management practices in sense of behavior management. The question was finalized by taking expert opinion from three faculty members who are experts in the field and conducting a pilot scheme with a Montessori educator. The practices of educators were identified via the data obtained as a result of the first interview. Afterward, a follow-up interview was carried out to determine how educators correlate their practices with classroom management. The educators were contacted again for the follow-up interview and personal and face-to-face follow-up interviews were carried out with volunteer E1, E3, E6, and E10 educators. How educators correlate their practices with classroom management was tried to be interpreted through the question *"What do you think about the effect of behavioral regulation practices on classroom management?"* The question of the follow-up interview was finalized by taking the expert opinion from a Montessori educator who is an expert in the field.

Data Collection

In order to carry out interviews, the principals of the kindergartens determined by the permission letter from the Directorate of National Education in Istanbul were contacted and educators were informed about the research. Educators who agreed to participate in the research voluntarily were determined and appointments were organized for interviews. According to appointments, personal and face-to-face interviews were conducted with educators either in an available classroom in their schools or their homes. Participant's consent for the research and permission for voice recording to be taken during the interview were taken before the interview. First interviews were held between 15 December 2019 and 15 January 2019 depending on the appointments. After the analysis of data, follow-up interviews were carried out between 2 March 2020 and 7 March 2020 in accordance with the appointments.

Data Analysis

After the approval of participants, all personal and face-to-face interviews were recorded. These records were transcripted within a maximum of three days as what participants said and without even any spelling correction. Firstly, data of participants were transcribed in different files organized with code names for each participant. Researchers listened to voice records again and corrected errors in the data. Then, different files were formed for each question. In these files, the answers of the participants were written below the code names, and answers given for the same questions were collected together with one under the other. Thus, the errors were prevented for the coding process to be conducted in the next step, and researchers saved the time. The list of the theme determined as a result of the literature review is indicated in Figure 1.

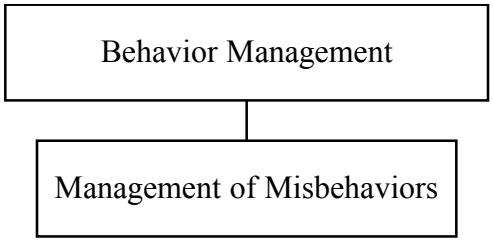


Figure 1. List of the Themes for Behavior Management

Practices were coded and gathered under the determined themes. Then, it was tried to interpret how these practices were correlated with classroom management according to the data obtained through the follow-up interview.

Validity-Reliability, Limitation and Ethical Issues of the Study

More than one strategy was used in the research to ensure validity and reliability. First of all, the literature was examined in order to create the semi-structured interview form, expert opinion was sought for the prepared questions, and the questionnaire was prepared according to the feedback of the field experts. Secondly, before starting the data collection process, a pilot interview was conducted with a Montessori instructor and the interview form was finalized according to the feedback received from the instructor. Third, more than one interview was conducted with the trainers participating in the research. After the data collected in the research were written down, peer review was conducted, in-depth descriptions were used, the participants' expressions were used without changing, and strategies such as re-checking transcriptions and audio recordings were applied. The limitation of the study is the collection of research data by interviewing 13 Montessori instructors only twice. However, in terms of research ethics, the participants of the research were chosen impartially, the purpose and content of the research were clearly explained to all the trainers, the data collection process was based on volunteerism, and the real names and identity information of the trainers were not included in the research.

FINDINGS

In this section, findings of the interviews are included as separate titles.

First Interview Findings Regarding the Management of Misbehaviors

According to the interview with the educators, 18 different practices for the management of misbehaviors were detected. These practices are as follows:

i. Shadowing the student
ii. Guiding to the peace table
iii. Playing the silence game
iv. Waiting for her/him to calm down by moving her/him away from the environment
v. Not overreacting
vi. Giving a verbal warning
vii. Reminding the rules

viii. Setting new rules or updating existing ones
ix. Ignoring
x. Talking face-to-face or having a meeting with children
xi. Talking or discussing on the circle
xii. Sharing with the family and demanding support
xiii. Not punishing
xiv. Warning a few times and giving extra time
xv. Guiding to work
xvi. Reminding the study circle by making a presentation
xvii. Taking the damaged material away from the child, putting it on the shelves and distract him/her from the activity
xviii. Maintenance and repair of the damaged material

Montessori educators apply various practices to decrease, eliminate, or prevent misbehaviors. One of these practices is shadowing students. Educators told that students displaying misbehaviors grab the apron of the educator and follow him/her like a shadow during the time determined by the educator. Educator depicts this practice as:

> *"We apply the practice of shadowing the students. For instance, I have a student with whom I practiced shadowing and there has been a remarkable improvement in the child. The student is always with me, grabs my apron when necessary or stands next to me. While I present some work to someone else, s/he watches and learns. However, when s/he gets bored, s/he could study at a place where I could observe him/her. S/he was a child with serious behavioral problems. We guide him/her by bothering him/her without any offense." (E3)*

Another practice to deal with misbehaviors is guiding the child to the peace table. According to educators, this practice requires children having trouble with each other to go to the peace table to talk with each other. Furthermore, it was determined that when children damage others or materials, these children were led to the peace table. Educators' statements on such cases are as follows:

> *"We use the peace table for the child to calm down." (E2)*

> ***"****We use the peace table generally when a dispute between two kids occurs and they have difficulty in overcoming it. We make them sit at this table and talk." (E5)*

Another practice often applied for misbehaviors is the silence game. Educators highlighted that they prefer silence game when children's energies are above the normal course, they have difficulty in controlling themselves and educators want to remind children to use classroom voice. Their comments on this practice are as follows:

> *"We could play silence game for the students who cannot control their bodies or use the classroom voice." (E1)*

> ***"****Besides, the energy of the classroom could be too high some days. They calm down to a great extent thanks to the silence game. If a circle is to be created, especially on the days when they are too active, silence game is played to ease the educator's job and to help him/her." (E3)*

Furthermore, another practice for the students having problem to calm down is moving the student away from the environment and waiting for him/her to calm down. Educators noted that they waited for the kid to calm down and then communicate with him/her before talking about his/her misbehaviors. Educators' comments on this practice are as follows:

> *"Or we lead the student out of the circle and tell him/her to come when s/he calms down." (E1)*

> *"If the student insists on his/her misbehavior, I tell him/her 'I have warned you once and see that you still do the same thing.' Then I take him/her out of the classroom or to a quieter environment. I ask him/her why s/he did this and want him/her to explain the reasons." (E6)*

Other practices preferred by the educators for misbehaviors are not overreacting, giving verbal warnings, reminding the rules, setting new rules, or updating current rules and ignoring. Educators mentioned that when they encounter a problematic behavior, they generally do not overreact to the child, sometimes ignore the case, and remind the rules through verbal warnings or update the rules. They elaborate on such cases:

> *"We do not overreact like 'How could you do that? Get out, you are punished.' I try to maintain a similar stance in both positive and negative situations. Since we prepare the child for real life and they encounter such situations in daily life, I react to the child accordingly." (E4)*

> *"At first, I warn the child with eye or body movements and then make a verbal warning." (E2)*

> *"Generally, when we form a circle, the rules of grace and kindness are relayed to the children through presentations. We tell the whole group how we protect our classroom and how we should use our materials." (E13)*

> *"Firstly, we ignore it." (E5)*

> *We ask how it could be fixed and what can be done. Then we get their opinions. Afterward, we make a general evaluation and create a rule list." (E6)*

According to the data of the present study, it has been determined that in case misbehaviors of the children continue, either educator talks to children face-to-face or they have a meeting. Besides, educators noted that either they talk about the misbehavior on the circle or they prefer discussing it to lead students to display appropriate behaviors by giving such misbehaviors as examples. Their comments on such cases are as follows:

> *"I talk about the reasons for the behavior face-to-face. I give him/her time to calm down and then talk to him/her. We talk about how s/he should behave or how s/he would feel if s/he were treated in that way." (E8)*

> *"We could have an emergency meeting and could talk about the events that occurred. We ask children's opinions on how we could fix it and what we could do. Then, we make a general evaluation and create a rule list." (E6)*

Educators also noted that they share misbehaviors with families and demand their support in that sense. Data of the present study indicate that educators do not punish children by themselves and prevent families from punishing children by informing them about the situation. Besides, educators expressed that they warn children a few times, thus give them time and lead them to do the exercise for their self-regulation. They give details on such cases:

> *"We even share with the family and ensure that they support too." (E9)*

> *"Generally, we speak with the child privately and treat him/her in a way that s/he does not perceive as punishment." (E10)*

> ***"**We apply three-warning practice for the misbehaviors displayed during the circle hour. After three warnings, we ask the student to get out of the circle and wait there till s/he is ready." (E10)*

> ***"**We generally guide the child to another exercise, and this is generally an exercise which the kid likes." (E11)*

The data demonstrates that educators prefer different practices to eliminate misbehaviors when children damage didactic materials. These practices are as follows: Reminding the study circle by making a presentation, taking the damaged material away from the kid, putting it on the shelves and distract the kid from the activity, and having the kid maintain and repair the damaged material. Educators touch upon these practices:

> ***"**When the child damages the material, the educator goes to the child and shows how to use the material with a presentation." (E11)*

> ***"**Children could often damage the material not while doing the exercise, but while taking it from the shelf. When s/he damages it or does not use it appropriate to its purpose, we immediately stop the child and take the material away. We put the material at its place and move the child away." (E11)*

> ***"**When s/he damages the material, we have him/her fix it if s/he could do so." (E1)*

Findings of the Follow-up Interview on the Management of Misbehaviors

Findings of the follow-up interview indicate that educators correlate their practices regarding the management of misbehaviors with "prepared environment", "prepared adult" and "didactic materials" which are the main elements of Montessori classrooms. It has been detected that educators -defined as prepared adults- maintain classroom management through the prepared environment and didactic materials. Educators' comments on these elements with which they correlate behavior management are as follows:

> *"Other children clearly realize the relationship between the educator and the child displaying misbehavior. Thus, s/he clearly sees how it is going to be when s/he displays a misbehavior. Thus, instead of being indifferent to the problematic behavior of the child, it is necessary to react at that moment. When children clearly see the reaction to a particular behavior, they comprehend the*

case as 'If I behave in this way, here is the reaction. As I do not want such a reaction, I should not behave that kind of behavior.' And this has a positive effect on classroom management in that it deters the child." (E1)

"We do not punish, offend, or mistreat the child. We just show him/her the results of his/her behaviors. When s/he is warned or sees the outcome of his/her behavior, s/he quits defying. In this way, an environment where classroom management is maintained, and desirable behaviors are displayed is created." (E3)

"For instance, we were playing a brand game with Ayşe (nickname) the other day. She brought the materials I wanted in a very long time; she got distracted and started to behave reluctantly. I brought a sandglass, told her clearly to do the exercise according to that sandglass and she started to do activity for a while. When you use that kind of materials, children start to behave in a way that you wish for and you could render classroom management more convenient and effective." (E6)

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study intends to identify Montessori educators' practices aimed at maintaining classroom management and how they correlate these practices with classroom management. Educators' practices in line with classroom management were gathered under the theme of management of misbehaviors and 18 different practices were identified within the scope of this theme. It has been determined that educators correlate the practices they applied for the management of misbehaviors with the prepared environment, prepared adult, and didactic materials, all of which are Montessori classrooms' main elements. Findings regarding the case addressed in this section will be discussed in the light of studies carried out in the field.

In the study, it has been identified that Montessori educators' practices to maintain management of misbehaviors are not the same as traditional classroom management practices. Educators' attitudes towards children's behaviors are far from the concepts of punishment and reward (Montessori, 2015; Polk-Lillard, 2013) as a requirement of Montessori philosophy. These findings do not coincide with Ozturk and Gangal's study (2016) through which preschool educators' attitudes and convictions towards misbehaviors have been examined. According to Ozturk and Gangal's study (2016), preschool educators apply traditional classroom management practices contrary to their conviction and this finding is not compatible with this study's findings. It is necessary to prefer the practices necessitating the educator to have effective classroom management skills to prevent misbehaviors instead of traditional classroom management through which desired behavior is generally reinforced and problematic behaviors are punished (Uysal et al., 2010). Jibola-Kadir and Abdulganiyu-Adebayo (2019) found that providing collaborative and game-based learning experiences is important for preschool children to learn on their own and develop skills. Considering the practices like shadowing students, guiding to the peace table and playing silence game mentioned in this study, in all of these practices, an attitude towards eliminating or reducing the misbehavior without punishing the child or pushing him/her out of the classroom was observed. The child stays near the educator for a certain period determined by the educator and follows him/her like a shadow during the practice of shadowing students. In this way, the educator enables the child to observe appropriate behaviors and learn them on his/her own

through the situations in which both educator's behaviors and the child are included. While doing all these, the child does not leave the educational environment and learns to manage his/her behaviors thanks to the opportunity provided. When it comes to peace table practice, this practice allows talking about the reasons for the problem, the process and possible solutions with the child while sitting at the table put in the classroom. Thus, under the guidance of the educator, the child could positively change his/her behavior by discussing it on his/her own or with the person s/he has problems with. Moreover, the silence game is an activity often carried out at Montessori classrooms when all children take part in the circle activities. This activity enables the children to realize what is going on around them and to control their bodies.

The study has also revealed that Montessori educators also prefer practices like warning the child verbally, taking him/her away from the environment, and then waiting for him/her to calm down and sharing the situation with the family and demanding support. These practices partially coincide with the relevant literature. In this sense, Ongoren-Ozdemir and Tepeli's study (2016) indicates that preschool teachers also make verbal warnings, change the child's place, have a break, and collaborate with the family to handle aggressive behaviors. Furthermore, contrary to traditional methods including inflicting I. and II. types of punishments, that study also reveals that educators do not punish children for their misbehaviors. Besides, it has been observed that some educators apply punitive, therapeutic, and preventive practices (Alptekin et al., 2011). In this regard, as the study conducted by Ritz et al. (2014) indicates, preschool teachers often prefer offering alternatives, guiding the child, and taking him/her away from the environment to manage the classroom. It could be argued that Montessori educators generally have personal and face-to-face meetings with the child and cares for the children so that they do not perceive such meetings as punishment. Educators have noted that they avoid overreacting as opposed to reward or punishment. Coleman et al. (2013) have maintained that sharing the problematic behaviors with family and informing the family about the methods to deal with problematic behaviors are among the tools that facilitate behavior management. In this sense, this study has demonstrated that educators share the misbehaviors of children with their families and demand support to ensure the management of these behaviors.

Besides, this study has also indicated that Montessori educators apply practices -which do not lead to a conflict between child and educator- such as ignoring at times, warning a few times and giving time, talking, and discussing at the circle and guiding the child to do the activity. All these practices aim at controlling the misbehaviors of children. These findings partially coincide with the relevant literature. It has been determined that close relationship between the child and educator has a positive effect on the child's social competence, behaviors, and problem-solving skills (Dereli, 2016). On the other hand, a conflict with the child causes the educator to focus on misbehaviors and makes the child feel himself/herself as a threat in the classroom (Webster-Stratton et al., 2008). In light of this study, it could be claimed that situations –which do not lead to conflicts- such as sometimes ignoring the child or giving him/her time to regulate himself/herself are healthy methods for the relationship between educator and child. Moreover, educators' presenting misbehaviors to children at the circle and doing so without targeting any child could make it easier for all children to learn and display appropriate behaviors. Educators' such practices also coincide with the relevant literature. The study carried out by Snell et al. (2012) demonstrates that educators apply practices like guiding to appropriate behavior, being a role model, and talking with the child about appropriate behaviors to handle challenging behaviors. Besides, instead of having a direct conflict with the child, educators lead the child to do an activity with an aim to keep his/her away from problematic situations and to distract his/her. The fact that such conflicts are

not created, and children feel that their educators like them make them feel safe in their environment (Durmusoglu-Saltali & Erbay, 2013).

Through the study, it has been detected that educators use and benefit from the classroom rules to deal with children's misbehaviors. Educators noted that they maintain the behavior management by reminding current rules, setting new rules, or updating present rules. These findings partially coincide with the relevant literature. Durmusoglu-Saltali and Arslan's study (2013) has indicated that preschool teachers set new rules for the relationships between children. Besides, it has been observed that educators set the rules together with children, remind them in order not to be forgotten and punish children in case they do not obey the rules. Preschool teachers frequently review classroom rules for behavior management and then develop new preventive strategies (Ritz et al., 2014). It was also seen that Montessori educators set new rules with children or remind present rules and show the students how they should behave. However, in this study, it was not found that educators do not punish children when they do not obey the rules.

A subject that does not appear in the literature and has been revealed in this study is the fact that Montessori educators clearly teach the children how to use didactic materials through the study circle they have provided to children. Thanks to study circle, children could learn how to take the work from the shelf, how to work on it, and what to pay attention while putting it back to its place. Educators have noted that when the child damages material, they take it away from him/her, thus deprive him/her of the material and hold the child responsible for the maintenance and repair of material. In Montessori classrooms, children voluntarily assume their duties and responsibilities after a while and thus feel belonged to the classroom (Montessori, 2016a; Polk-Lillard, 2014). Moreover, another study carried out with children has indicated that children's assuming a duty and improvement of their social skills decrease problematic behaviors (Mahon et al., 2020). It could be argued that the discipline and responsibility given to the child through the work cycle have a positive effect on children's attitudes towards didactic material. Thanks to this discipline and responsibility, children use didactic materials more meticulously and carefully. Therefore, it could be claimed that materials –one of which is placed in each classroom- are used by all children for a long time.

According to the findings of the study, it could be maintained that Montessori educators' practices for children's misbehaviors are appropriate and contemporary approaches for the development. These findings are promising in line with Ocak and Arda's study (2014) highlighting that different and contemporary approaches to misbehaviors should be discussed in detail in Turkey. Partee et al. (2020) found that preschool teachers' pre-service training focused on their professional development and teacher-child interaction has a positive effect on teachers' coping with undesirable behaviors. The increase in the quality of teachers' practices with these trainings has led to a decrease in the problem behaviors that children exhibit throughout the year. On the contrary, it was found that teachers with low education levels complained about the curriculum they used in their classrooms (Logie et al., 2013). Moreover, it has been observed that Montessori educators' practices are contemporary and such practices are contrary to the notion that teachers generally apply traditional discipline and they are not open to innovations (Hirahall & Martens, 1998). In that sense, it could be put forward that having Montessori educator training and one-year of internship experience have a positive effect on the use of contemporary approaches by the educators in this study. Considering these findings, this study is crucial in terms of contributing to the relevant literature.

CONCLUSION

The practices identified in light of educators' statements in the study and findings on how they correlate these practices with the classroom management are limited to the viewpoints of the educators who participated in the study. For this reason, it is not possible to generalize all Montessori educators in that sense. Educators may have different viewpoints on the practices different from traditional methods and the relationship between these practices and classroom management. This study carried out in the phenomenological research design, which is one of the qualitative research methods, describes and depthly examines the meaning that a certain number of participants attribute to the researched phenomenon. Therefore, this research design does not allow generalizing the results of the study. In this sense, it is important to consider these limitations in the evaluation of the current study results, which cannot be generalized to all Montessori educators. Future researchers can design studies to compare the practices of Montessori educators and educators working in different approaches towards misbehaviours.

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