

Article

Development and Evaluation of Peace-Oriented Education Activity for Preschool Children within the Scope of Sustainable Development

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Abstract: The aim of this research is to develop contemporary peace education that can be implemented in the pre-school period to ensure global citizenship. In this study, action research design, one of the qualitative research methods, was used. The study group of this research consisted of five-year-old children who attend a public kindergarten and their parents, classroom teacher, and researcher. The data were collected by means of the peace value attitude questionnaire prepared for parents and classroom teachers, the technology-supported child interview form, the teacher diary form, and the researcher diary form. Research was carried out in three stages: needs analysis, implementation, and evaluation. Educational activities covering peace education were developed, and they were administered to the children for 12 weeks. Within the framework of the results obtained, it was determined that the five-year-old children who made up the study group consciously gained the value of peace, were sensitive to the multicultural structure, and strengthened their communication with their peers. In light of these results, we should develop integrated programs in preschool education, place the value of peace at the center, and provide peace education widely in the preschool period by all stakeholders for global citizenship.

Keywords: peace education; global citizenship; multiculturalism; early childhood education; sustainable development



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1. Introduction

In today's world, ongoing wars, COVID-19, and earthquake disasters have had a significant impact worldwide and have brought many negative consequences with them. Those most affected by this situation are undoubtedly innocent children [1]. Activities are carried out through international organizations to resolve international conflicts, sustain peace processes, and provide assistance to communities affected by natural disasters.

In 2015, 17 Global Goals were agreed upon to achieve three important tasks by 2030 at the UN: ending extreme poverty, combating inequality and injustice, and addressing climate change. In this context, SDGs 4 and 16 stand out in particular. Goal 4 (Quality Education) and Goal 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) directly address peace education. The success indicators included in these goals highlight the importance of promoting peace and understanding in education [2].

The way to achieve peace is through education. This training includes providing training in developing nonviolent skills and promoting peaceful attitudes. Peace education has five main assumptions: violence has causes, there are alternatives to violence, it encompasses different forms of violence, peace itself is a context-dependent process, and conflict is ubiquitous [3]. Education for peace seeks to nurture the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that comprise a culture of peace. Education for peace is holistic. It embraces the physical, emotional, intellectual, and social growth of students within a

framework of human values. The way to provide peace education is through the process of teaching collective human values [4].

The acquisition of values can be achieved by targeting a culturally sensitive educational approach. Cultural values are defined as an approach that recognizes differences, respects them, and at its core, builds love and peace to serve the entire community [5]. Every day, various events threaten peace and living in a peaceful world in societies. When we look at our present day, societies are in conflict due to economic and various other reasons. Conflict is defined as individuals or social groups attempting to hinder each other's goals and preventing the realization of their interests [6]. The way to prevent conflict is achieved by establishing a peaceful environment. While in the past, peace used to signify ending conflicts and moving away from war, nowadays, it represents having a happy and just life. To achieve the internal and external peace that everyone longs for and to live in a more beautiful and peaceful world, it is necessary to cultivate an understanding of peace in children from a young age and to ensure its continuity. This involves nurturing individuals who believe in peace and can advocate for it [7].

Sustainable Development Goals, which are on the agenda and emphasized in preventing or reducing conflicts, are also important. SDG16 commits to 'promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, ensuring access to justice for all, and establishing effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels'.

The 2030 Agenda states that 'there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development'. Without sustainable peace that goes beyond the absence of violence and includes respect for human rights and the rule of law, development gains will be reversed [8]. Thus, the following expressions are mainly used for SDGs: 'the SDGs effectively address peace and justice with the inclusion of SDG 16, which aims to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, ensure access to justice for all, and establish effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels' [9]. While the language of SDG 16 is quite broad, it has a collective connection to all the other SDG targets. All SDGs are complementary to each other and work in coordination [10].

Teaching SDG16-related topics is the most direct way to contribute to SDG16. Among the most analyzed contributions from a curriculum perspective are peace and conflict studies, a common intervention for those affected by conflict [11]. Building a culture of peace and learning to live together is the responsibility of everyone, and education is the principal means by which this goal can be achieved [12]. It is argued that it is the most appropriate approach to the broad field of critical theory for mapping the positive interactions that exist between education, conflict, and peace building [13]. This can be achieved through effective and functional "peace education" [14].

The path to peace is through universally shared knowledge and values. Peace education is the key to peace. In other words, it should not be forgotten that understanding others and shared important values helps to resolve conflicts between people and societies.

The integration of peace education into the educational process from an early age is crucial. The increasing violent movements, also reflected in the United Nations report, and the increasing types of violence and incidents have made it even more important for children to grow up with a strong understanding of the value of peace [15], because all children deserve to live in an environment of trust, peace, and harmony. Integrated into the preschool education process, values education, due to the program's spiral structure, will enable children to naturally learn values and gain them by experiencing differences in their interactions with peers. These acquired social roles will also contribute to the formation of a culture of values [16].

Value education is a process that begins with the family and continues with the social environment. The starting point of this experience is early childhood. Preschool education, which encompasses all experiences from a child's birth until elementary school, is a planned and structured process that enhances moral and cultural values, emotional development, perceived capacity, and problem-solving skills. It plays a significant role in fostering

creativity and achievements. During this period, children should be closely monitored and the acquisition of social values that contribute to the formation of their character should be ensured. If this education is neglected or provided haphazardly and without a plan, it will negatively impact the child's entire life [5].

Values, as they influence individuals' behaviors and attitudes, should be instilled from the preschool period, making it a significant consideration. Value acquisition does not occur suddenly; it requires a process-based approach. According to [17], values are acquired in the following order: firstly, familial values, followed by school and religious values, workplace values, societal values, national values, human values, and finally, universal values. During the preschool period, a comprehensive values education approach that includes individual, societal, and universal values should be adopted for children and introduced [18,19]. The most important reason for this is that values undergo significant development during childhood. Therefore, preschool education institutions and childcare centers outside the home should prioritize values education, recognizing the crucial role they play in shaping a child's values [20]. The preschool period is recognized as one of the most critical phases in an individual's life, as it is when their social identity largely develops and their future social personality begins to take shape. During this period, the primary goal is to support children both socially and academically, given its crucial role in their overall development [21].

Additionally, preschool education programs should aim to support children academically, emotionally, physically, and socially. It is important to provide a well-rounded education that nurtures their development in all these dimensions [22]. The early childhood period is considered the easiest period for acquiring new concepts [23]. Therefore, it is crucial to carry out activities related to values education in preschool education institutions [24].

Since permanent behavioral change in children occurs over time, effective peace education should be considered as a process and it is essential to include the acquisition of the value of peace within the themes; the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values necessary for individuals, including children, youth and adults, to bring about behavioral changes that can prevent both open and structural conflict and violence, as well as to create conditions conducive to peace in resolving conflicts peacefully at the interpersonal, intergroup, national, or international levels [25].

Research has explored various values that should be taught to children during the preschool period. It is commonly observed that children are taught values such as love, respect, responsibility, kindness, cooperation, friendship, tolerance, sharing, politeness, honesty, self-control, and similar values [26–33]. UNESCO has also focused on these values for peace education in preschool education.

This research is being conducted in Cyprus, a country that has not yet fully established a peaceful environment. Efforts are continuing to establish a peaceful environment [34–37]. Due to the country's multicultural nature resulting from significant immigration and two main different societies (Cypriot Turk and Greek), there is a need for peace education. Greek Cypriots and Turks established the Republic of Cyprus in 1960. They constitute the two main ethnic groups in Cyprus. In 1974, after the war between the two communities, there was a division and this divided life continues to this day. Efforts have been ongoing for over 40 years under the United Nations to reach a solution through negotiations. However, no peace and solution agreement has yet been signed in Cyprus. The conflicts between the two communities in Cyprus continue in two ways. The parties remain locked in mutually destructive and hostile behavior [38].

Although the most important effort to bring the Greek and Turkish communities to peace and a solution was made with the 2004 Annan Plan, it has not been successful [39]. There are many small and large peace education programs and projects with the purpose of fostering reconciliation and comprehension among communities. Cyprus, known for its intricate history of partition, has several initiatives and organizations dedicated to fostering peace and facilitating dialogue. Projects such as the Association for Historical Dialogue

and Research, the Cyprus Community Media Centre, Peace Education Activity in Schools, Youth Exchange Programs, Cyprus Peace Council, UNDP Partnership for the Future, Bi-communal Festivals and Cultural Events, Training Programs for Conflict Resolution, and European Union Initiatives are examples of these.

All projects have their own web pages and activities that are named after them [40]. Therefore, it is very important to create peace education curriculums and to provide these education programs from early childhood, when the child's thoughts are clean and not distorted [15].

Reconciliation refers to a socio-cultural process in which new feelings and beliefs are formed that encompass coexistence and peace between two communities in conflict [41]. This process will be completed through training. The conflict in Cyprus requires a new approach to education and critical multicultural structures. Education can help to build the capacities and structures needed to bring the two communities together [40].

It is stated in the literature that, through education, people can develop certain thoughts and tendencies that will lead to peaceful behaviors. Given the above information, it is believed that Cyprus's preschool peace education program will play a significant role in achieving its sustainable development goals. It is obvious that the foundations of a program to be developed within the framework of UNESCO values will be solid.

Hence, this research aims to develop and assess the effectiveness of peace education for preschool children. In line with this primary objective, the following research questions have been addressed:

1. What are the educational needs of children regarding the value of peace?
2. What should the activity-based instructional design for teaching the value of peace look like?
3. What is the level of effectiveness of peace education developed through activity-based methods?
 - a. What is the level of children's attitudes toward peace education before and after the implementation?
 - b. According to parents, what are the levels of their children's attitudes towards peace education before and after the application?
 - c. According to teachers, what are the levels of children's attitudes towards peace education before and after the application?

2. Method

In this section, the research model is presented and the following aspects are discussed sequentially: research methodology, design, study group, development of the activity-based instructional design, data collection tools, and data analysis.

2.1. Research Model

In this research, the aim is to develop and evaluate the effectiveness of peace education for preschool children. To achieve this goal, the research is designed using the action research method, which is a qualitative research approach. Action research focuses on solving everyday problems, is conducted within small groups, and is a process-oriented research method that is particularly useful for educators [42]. Action research is commonly used for various purposes, including developing school-based programs, professional development, system planning, school restructuring, and as an evaluation tool. It typically consists of six stages or phases. These stages involve problem identification, planning, action, observation, reflection, and then the revision of actions based on reflection. This iterative process allows for continuous improvement and problem-solving within the educational context [43]. In this context, the research has been planned as follows (See Figure 1).

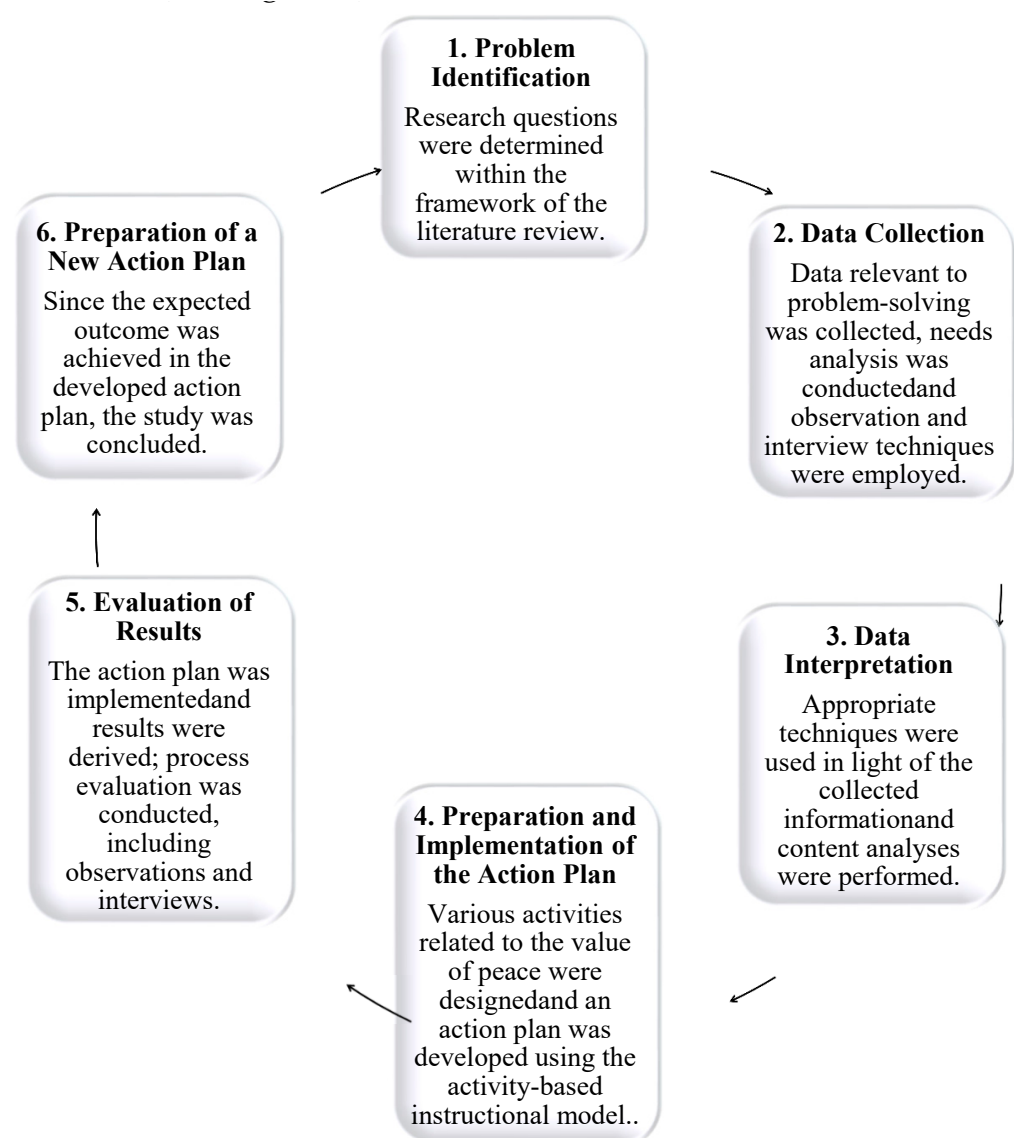


Figure 1. Research model and process.

2.2. Study Group

The research study group was tested in two stages. In the first stage, participants for the needs analysis were included, and in the second stage, participants for the action research were involved. Therefore, the study group was addressed under two separate subheadings.

2.2.1. Needs Analysis Participants

During the needs analysis phase of the research, data were collected from teachers, parents, school administrators, academicians, and managers of 5-year-old children attending kindergarten in Northern Cyprus during the 2021–2022 academic year. Criterion sampling, one of the purposive sampling methods, was used. Since the study group was formed based on voluntariness, during the planning process of the action research, it consisted of 43 preschool teachers, 62 parents, 19 school administrators, 9 academicians, and 4 managers. Voluntary stakeholder participants included in the research process were administered a preschool peace education needs assessment form.

In the stage of determining the education needs related to the value of peace in the preschool period, the demographic characteristics of stakeholders who participated in the peace education needs assessment form are provided in Tables 1–5.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of teachers participating in the needs analysis.

Variables	Subgroups	N	%
Age	20–29	17	39.5
	30–39	20	46.5
	40–49	5	11.6
	50 and above	1	2.3
Gender	Female	43	100.0
	Male	0	0
Years of Experience	1–10 years	24	55.8
	11–20 years	14	32.6
	21–30 years	5	11.6

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of parents participating in the needs analysis.

Variables	Subgroups	N	%
Age	20–29	17	27.4
	30–39	34	54.8
	40–49	11	17.8
Occupation	Housewife	14	22.6
	Teacher	11	17.8
	Civil Servant	10	16.2
	Secretary	4	6.5
	Nurse	4	6.5
	Interior Designer	2	3.2
	Self-Employed	2	3.2
	Beauty Specialist	2	3.2
	Lawyer	2	3.2
	Service Worker	1	1.6
	Physiotherapist	1	1.6
	Psychologist	1	1.6
	Tourism Professional	1	1.6
	Food Engineer	1	1.6
	Pharmacist	1	1.6
	Academician	1	1.6
	Interpreter	1	1.6
	Insurance Agent	1	1.6
	Furniture Maker	1	1.6
	Construction Worker	1	1.6

Table 3. Distribution of demographic characteristics of school administrators in needs analysis.

Variables	Subgroups	N	%
Age	30–39	6	31.6
	40–49	7	36.8
	50–59	6	31.6
Gender	Female	18	95.0
	Male	1	5.0
Teaching Specialty	Classroom Teacher	6	31.6
	Preschool Teacher	10	52.6
	English Teacher	3	15.8
Years of Administrative Experience	10–Jan	9	47.3
	20–Nov	7	36.8
	21–30	3	15.8

Table 4. Demographic characteristics of academics participating in the needs analysis.

Variables	Subgroups	N	%
Age	34–45	6	67.0
	46–57	1	11.0
	58–69	2	22.0
Title	Professor	4	45.0
	Associate Professor	3	33.0
	Assistant Professor	2	22.0
Years of Professional Experience	20–Oct	3	33.0
	21–30	4	45.0
	31–40	2	22.0
Department	Preschool Education	3	33.0
	Child Development	2	22.0
	Primary Education	1	11.0
	Education Programs and Instruction	1	11.0
	Educational Management, Inspection, Planning and Economics	1	11.0
	Social Studies and Turkish Language Teaching	1	11.0

Table 5. Distribution of demographic characteristics of participant ministry experts in needs analysis.

Variables	Subgroups	N	%
Age	30–49	1	25
	50–69	3	75
Educational Background	Master’s Degree	3	75
	Ph.D.	1	25
Years of Professional Experience	15–19	1	25
	20–24	1	25
	25–29	2	50
Position or Job Title	Elementary School District Director	1	25
	Curriculum and Instruction Department Director	1	25
	Member of the Curriculum and Instruction Board	1	25
	Specialist	1	25

When examining Table 1, it is understood that a total of 43 preschool teachers volunteered to participate in the needs analysis. It is evident that all the teachers are female and the majority fall within the 30–39 age range. Regarding their years of professional experience, it is observed that most of them have between 1 and 10 years of experience.

When examining Table 2, it is observed that 62 parents volunteered to participate in the needs analysis. The majority of the parents fall within the 30–39 age range and although their occupations vary, the group is predominantly composed of teachers and housewives.

When examining Table 3, it is observed that 19 school administrators volunteered to participate in the needs analysis. Of these administrators, 18 are female and 1 is male. Their age distribution is almost equal and in terms of years of administrative experience, the majority fall within the 1–10 year and 11–20 year ranges.

When examining Table 4, it is seen that 9 academicians volunteered to participate in the needs analysis. The majority of academicians are in the 40–45 age range and in terms of titles, 4 are Prof. Dr., 3 are Assoc. Dr., and 2 are Assist. Dr. It is also observed that most of them have 21–30 years of professional experience. With respect to their departments, it is noted that the majority are from the field of preschool education.

When examining Table 5, it is seen that 4 Ministry experts volunteered to participate in the needs analysis. In terms of age distribution, one falls within the 30–49 age range, while three administrators are in the 50–69 age range. With respect to their educational backgrounds, most of them have a Master’s degree. Regarding their years of professional

experience, the majority have between 25 and 29 years of experience. Furthermore, when examining the distribution of their positions, it is understood that interviews were conducted with the Elementary Education Department Manager, Curriculum and Instruction Department Manager, Curriculum and Instruction Board Member, and Field Specialist.

2.2.2. Action Research Participants

As part of the practical dimension of this research, the data collection process began in the spring semester of 2022–2023 with 5-year-old children attending a kindergarten in Northern Cyprus, along with their teachers and parents. The study group for the research consisted of 18 children, 1 classroom teacher, and 11 parents. During the implementation phase of this study aiming to develop peace education for preschool children and evaluate its effectiveness, the following tools were applied: the Children’s Peace Attitude Survey (technology-assisted) for children and the Peace Value Attitude Survey for teachers and parents.

The demographic characteristics of the stakeholders who participated in the development and evaluation of peace education for preschool children are provided in Table 6.

Table 6. Distribution of demographic characteristics of action research participant stakeholders.

Participant	Variable	Category	N	%
Children	Age	5	18	100.0
	Gender	Girl	11	61.0
		Boy	7	39.0
Teacher	Age	42	1	100.0
	Gender	Female	1	100.0
		Male	0	
Parents	Age	25–35	4	36.00
		36–46	7	64.00
	Gender	Female	9	82.0
		Male	2	18.0

When examining Table 6, it is observed that, within the scope of the action research design, 18 children from the preschool 5-year-old group participated in the study. It is understood that 11 of the children are girls and 7 are boys. The classroom teacher participating in the study is a 42-year-old woman. When the participant parents are examined, it is seen that their age distribution is mostly in the 36–46 range and 9 of them are female, while 2 are male parents.

2.3. Data Collection and Implementation Process

In this research, all data were collected through interview and survey techniques. The interview technique allows access to unobservable information, such as an individual’s experiences, different experiences, attitudes, thoughts, intentions, comments, mental perceptions, and reactions regarding the researched topic [44]. Thomas defines a survey as research material consisting of a series of questions aimed at describing people’s living conditions, behaviors, beliefs, or attitudes [45].

In the data collection phase of the needs analysis, a semi-structured interview form regarding the value of peace was used to determine the educational needs regarding the inclusion of the value of peace in the pre-school education process.

In the action research process, both before and after the implementation, the Peace Attitude Child Questionnaire was used to determine the attitudes of children towards the peace value and the Peace Value Attitude Survey was used to identify the educational needs of children regarding the peace value.

For the implementation of this research, permissions were obtained from the University’s Scientific Research and Ethics Committee and the necessary permissions were

obtained from the Ministry of National Education for the school where the application was carried out.

In schools that wanted to participate in the needs assessment study voluntarily, interviews were conducted with school principals and preschool teachers using semi-structured interview forms. In addition, ministry experts and academics were contacted and data were collected for needs analysis.

During the action study, the developed Peace Value Attitude Survey was administered to 11 parents and 1 class teacher, and children's attitudes towards peace were determined before and after the action.

During the action study process, a peace attitude child questionnaire specially prepared for children was created using Google Forms. Children marked their answers to the questions themselves using a tablet. A 3-point Likert scale was used in the questionnaire, with expressions such as "yes, undecided, and no", which were concretized with emoji visuals. These emojis were in the form of a smiling face, a sad face, and a thoughtful (undecided) face. This survey was administered before and after the action implementation.

As Ref. [46] explained, the survey creation process was carried out in four stages: "defining the problem", "writing the item (question)", "obtaining expert opinion", and "preliminary application".

After the general structure of the research is written, an action study should be conducted within the framework of the research question. It was necessary to determine the attitude change that occurred in children before and after the action study. For this reason, a technology-supported survey that can be administered to children and a 5-point Likert-type survey that can be administered to families and teachers were created. The survey development process was carried out entirely within the framework of the systematic process described above.

2.4. Semi-Structured Interview Forms

Within the framework of the general purpose of this research, it is necessary to determine the needs for peace education to be developed in early childhood. For this reason, an interview form was prepared. These interview questions were determined by the researcher, and the field expert, curriculum development specialist, and measurement and evaluation expert were consulted for their suitability.

Before the development and evaluation of peace education for preschool children, interviews were conducted with preschool teachers, school administrators, parents, academics, and officials. During these interviews, questions such as "How would you define peace education?", "What should be the outcome statements determined for children?", "What topics should be included in peace education?", "What methods and techniques should be used in peace education?", "Should peace education be provided in preschool institutions?", "What are your thoughts on the importance of parental involvement in peace education?", and "What are your recommendations for the effective implementation of peace education?" were asked. These interviews contributed to the determination of the content of the activity-based instructional design.

2.5. Peace Attitude Child Questionnaire Form

This questionnaire form consisted of 13 questions prepared by the researcher to assess children's attitudes toward peace before and after the implementation. The questions were designed to allow preschool children aged 5 to self-evaluate their attitudes toward peace. Within the framework of the general purpose of the research, the visualization technique was used to measure attitudes toward the value of peace in early childhood. A series of visuals were presented to the children. All of these were small cartoon pictures, symbolizing peace. Under these pictures, emojis were placed. These emojis were in the form of a sad face, a smiling face, and a neutral face. All of the pictures were placed in place of the survey question, and emojis were placed in place of the answer option. Children answered this attitude survey on a tablet. All of the picture questions were created and developed by

taking inspiration from peace education pictures used in different countries in the literature. Support was received for this survey from academicians who have worked on peace education, preschool academicians, and measurement and evaluation experts. During the preparation of the questionnaire, the opinions of education program and instruction experts ($n = 3$) and preschool specialists and field experts ($n = 5$) were obtained to shape the questionnaire. The survey was pilot-tested by administering it to a group of children. After the pilot test, necessary corrections were made, and the survey was ready to be used in the action study.

2.6. Family and Teacher Survey to Determine the Child's Acquired Peace Value Attitude

A survey form was developed to be administered to families and teachers in order to determine children's attitudes toward peace values. The researcher developed a five-point Likert-type attitude questionnaire. During the questionnaire's development process, advanced statistical analyses were not deemed necessary. Therefore, expert opinions were sought to establish content validity, face validity, and item appropriateness. Three subject-matter experts, one measurement and evaluation expert, and one expert in research methods were consulted for their opinions.

In accordance with the feedback received from experts, feedback on each item was collected and examined in a single form. The attitude questionnaire consists of two sections. The first section gathers demographic information, while the second section utilizes a 28-item questionnaire aimed at assessing children's attitudes toward peace values. The questionnaire is designed to measure the attitudes of preschool children aged 5 toward peace values. Assessments related to the Likert statements are as follows: "Definitely Does (5)", "Mostly Does (4)", "Sometimes Does (3)", "Rarely Does (2)", and "Definitely Does Not (1)". It was filled out by classroom teachers and parents before the implementation and after the implementation.

2.7. Activity-Based Peace Education

The development of activities within the framework of needs analysis was planned according to the design of the activity-based instructional model. Activity-based learning is defined as a student-centered method where children actively participate in the learning experience, instead of passively sitting as listeners [47,48]. In order to teach skills to young children, it is essential to leverage their daily interactions with the physical and social environment. Activity-based instruction, which is based on an environmental approach to child development, emphasizes the importance of natural, functional, and meaningful interactions with the environment. The activity-based instructional model is defined as the implementation of planned or spontaneous activities to enhance the competencies of children with disabilities or young children. Within the activity-based instructional model, common approaches include routine activities, child-initiated activities, and planned activity approaches. In this study, the planned activity approach was employed. In the planned activity approach, it is advocated that activities should be pre-planned within a specific program framework to facilitate the child's learning process. A focus group discussion was conducted to determine the activities and content related to peace education.

An expert focus group consisting of five academic experts from various fields, one drama specialist, four preschool teachers, and two curriculum and instructional experts provided their opinions. After necessary adjustments, 24 activity plans were prepared and implemented by the researcher on children over a period of 12 weeks. Detailed information about the teaching activities is included in the findings section.

2.8. The Role of the Researcher

The entire implementation process was carried out by the researcher. Throughout the action research process, the researcher assumed a participatory role. The researcher personally conducted the educational activities and assessed their effectiveness. During this process, the researcher was supported by a classroom teacher and a research intern

who assisted in various stages, including data collection, and took on the role of an observer and assessed their effectiveness. In addition, in this study, a supervisor took part in the planning, conducting, and production of the results of the action research.

Additionally, as part of the process, warm-up games were played with the peace puppet before moving on to the planned games. For children who did not understand the games, the peace puppet was used to re-explain the learning process of the game. After conducting a trial with a small group, the main game was implemented.

During the research process, four parent meetings were organized with the aim of raising awareness among parents. By adopting a motivating and personalized approach, the researcher tried to alleviate parents' prejudices and kindly requested them to sincerely fill out the peace value attitude questionnaire.

2.9. Data Analysis

In this research, after performing the needs analysis and planning the content of the activity-based instructional design and the implementation stages, descriptive analyses were conducted. The data analysis stage began with a semi-structured interview form. The analysis procedures for data collection tools are outlined sequentially below.

2.9.1. The Analysis of Data Obtained from Semi-Structured Interview Forms

In the context of qualitative data for the research, a semi-structured interview form was prepared and collected from preschool teachers, school administrators, parents, academicians, and administrators to determine the needs in the development and evaluation of peace education for preschool children. In this research, an in-depth analysis method was employed. In the in-depth analysis method, data are examined and interpreted in depth. In this method, data are described, classified, coded, and analyzed for interpretations. Deep analysis can be conducted using methods such as content analysis, discourse analysis, or speech analysis [49]. A qualitative data analysis was conducted using the content analysis method in the scope of the research. In content analysis, initially, the qualitative data obtained are individually coded by the researcher and grouped under themes. In the second stage, themes are compared to confirm whether the identified codes represent the conceptual themes. Thus, the aim of this stage is to ensure consistency and validity in data analysis, thus enhancing the research's validity. In the third stage, common themes obtained are grouped within themselves and the findings are interpreted [42]. In this research, interviews were transcribed onto the interview form in accordance with the permissions obtained from the participant stakeholders. Subsequently, for the analysis of the obtained data, the content analysis method was used to analyze the stakeholders' opinions during data analysis.

2.9.2. The Analysis of Data from the Peace Attitude Child Questionnaire and the Children's Attitudes towards Peace Parent and Teacher Survey

Descriptive statistics were utilized during the analysis of the questionnaire data, and percentages, frequencies, and mean of the data, as well as the lowest and highest values, were calculated. The Microsoft Excel and IBM SPSS Statistics Version 26 programs were used for these analyses. In reporting the findings of the action research, graphs were prepared using the Excel program.

2.9.3. Validity and Reliability Process

In qualitative research, more important than validity and reliability is the credibility of the study. Credibility is divided into four criteria: internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity. It is recommended that one or more of these strategies should be specified in a research study to ensure the accuracy of the findings [50]. Therefore, in the scope of this study, validity and reliability work included the following within the internal validity: participant verification, long-term interaction, and direct quoting of codes placed within tables; within external validity: purposeful sampling, providing

detailed descriptions of the environment, and offering detailed participant stakeholder information; within reliability: providing detailed information about the research process, allowing another researcher to review the process and results; and within objectivity: placing importance on reducing researcher biases in validity and reliability efforts. Two researchers took part in the analysis of the data in the content analysis. Both researchers carried out the analysis process separately. In this way, consistency between the findings was ensured.

For statistical calculations of quantitative data, no advanced data analysis process was used. The data collection tool used was a basic-level survey. Only frequency, percentage, and average calculations were performed. Therefore, it was not deemed necessary to conduct a validity and reliability study.

3. Results

In this section, the findings obtained from the data are discussed in the order of the sub-objectives. The first sub-objective of the research is “What are the educational needs of children regarding the value of peace?” The findings regarding the question are given in Tables 7 and 8.

Table 7. General views on the need for peace education.

Opinions	Teacher N	Administration N	Parents N	Academicians N	Ministry Expert N
Yes	43	19	55	9	4
No	0	0	7	0	0

Table 8. Opinions on the content of peace education.

Content	Teacher N	Administration N	Parents N	Academicians N	Ministry Expert N
Respect	37	16	51	7	4
Love	35	15	49	6	4
Empathy	29	14	44	6	4
Friendship	29	14	40	5	3
Tolerance	26	13	40	5	3
Responsibility	25	12	35	5	3
Sharing	24	12	34	4	3
Happiness	24	12	30	4	3
Self-confidence	24	12	25	4	3
Unity	19	11	23	4	3
Mutual aid	19	11	23	3	3
Humility	17	10	22	3	2
Culture of peace	17	10	18	3	2

When determining the educational needs for peace values, participant stakeholders were asked about the necessity of peace education in the preschool period. Upon examining the obtained data, it can be observed that the majority of participant stakeholders, including teachers, school administrators, academicians, and managers, find it appropriate to provide peace education in preschool. However, a small portion of the parents expressed that it may not be suitable to provide peace education in the preschool period.

In the second question, which is part of determining the educational needs for peace values, participant stakeholders were asked about the content of peace education. Com-

monly shared values among participant stakeholders were organized into a table and the content was prepared accordingly. Upon examining the obtained data, it is understood that the participants believe that peace education should primarily include the value of respect, along with love, empathy, friendship, tolerance, responsibility, sharing, happiness, self-confidence, unity, mutual aid, humility, and a culture of peace.

The findings related to the second sub-objective of the research, ‘how should the activity-based instructional design for peace values be?’, are provided in Table 9.

Table 9. Activity contents developed for peace values.

Activity Name	Activity Type	Method–Technique	Outcome
Who has the Star?	Art and Music	Narration	Recognizes their own characteristics
Welcome My Friend	Music and Drama	Question–Answer	Shows respect for differences
My Health	Turkish Activity	Question–Answer, Drama	Uses language for communication purposes
I Know My Responsibility	Pantomime	Brainstorming	Performs their responsibilities
My Butterflies of Help	Game	Story, Question–Answer, Discussion Circle	Applies hygiene rules related to their body
Carpet of Collaboration	Art, Turkish Activity	Drama, Discussion Circle	Understands the meaning of what they hear/watch
Tree of Love	Pantomime	Game	Expresses themselves in creative ways
Circle of Love	Pantomime, Game	Drawing Technique, Story	Focuses on the object/situation requiring attention
I Act Humble	Pantomime	Drama	Motivates themselves to accomplish a task or duty
Rain Clouds	Turkish Activity	Brainstorming–Drama, Game	Uses language for communication purposes
If I Were a Geometric Shape	Turkish Activity	Brainstorming–Drama	Performs physical movements
Let’s Share	Pantomime	Direct Narration, Brainstorming, Question–Answer	Expresses what they hear/ watch in various ways
Wheel of Self-Confidence	Preparation for Reading and Writing	Story, Question–Answer, Discussion Circle	Pays attention to the object/situation/event Has self-confidence
Little Chefs	Game	Game	Reads visual materials
Let’s Carry the Balls	Pantomime	Drama	Has self-confidence
Visit to Unity Forest	Drama and Art	Drama Game and Discussion Circle	Pays attention to the object/situation/event
Draw With Me	Game and Turkish	Game and Question–Answer	Performs fine motor movements
Being Honest	Pantomime	Drama	Performs fine motor movements
My Apple Tree	Game and Art	Game	Understands the meaning of what they hear/watch

Table 9. Cont.

Activity Name	Activity Type	Method–Technique	Outcome
I Am Aware	Drama	Drama and Discussion Circle	Remembers what they perceive
Spin the Wheel	Art and Game	Game and Brainstorming	Reads visual materials
Who Am I	Art	Drawing Technique	Uses their voice appropriately
My Happiness Card	Game	Music and Drama	Remembers what they perceive
Where Is Happiness	Pantomime	Drama	Pays attention to the object/situation/event
Hero Murmur	Turkish Activity	Story, Question–Answer, Discussion Circle	Distinguishes between sounds
Peaceful Butterflies	Game, Music, and Art	Game, Music, Art, and Question–Answer Method	Introduces their own characteristics

In Table 9, all the activities implemented over the course of 12 weeks within the framework of the activity-based instructional design for peace values have been included. Activity name, type, method–technique, and achievement information related to the value are specified separately for each activity. It is understood that the activities undertaken for the attainment of the value of peace during the process address themes such as friendship, responsibility, mutual aid, love, humility, sharing, self-confidence, unity, honesty, tolerance, empathy, respect, happiness, and peace.

The findings obtained from participant stakeholders regarding the third sub-objective of the research, ‘What is the level of effectiveness of peace education developed through activity-based methods?’, are presented in Figures 2–4.

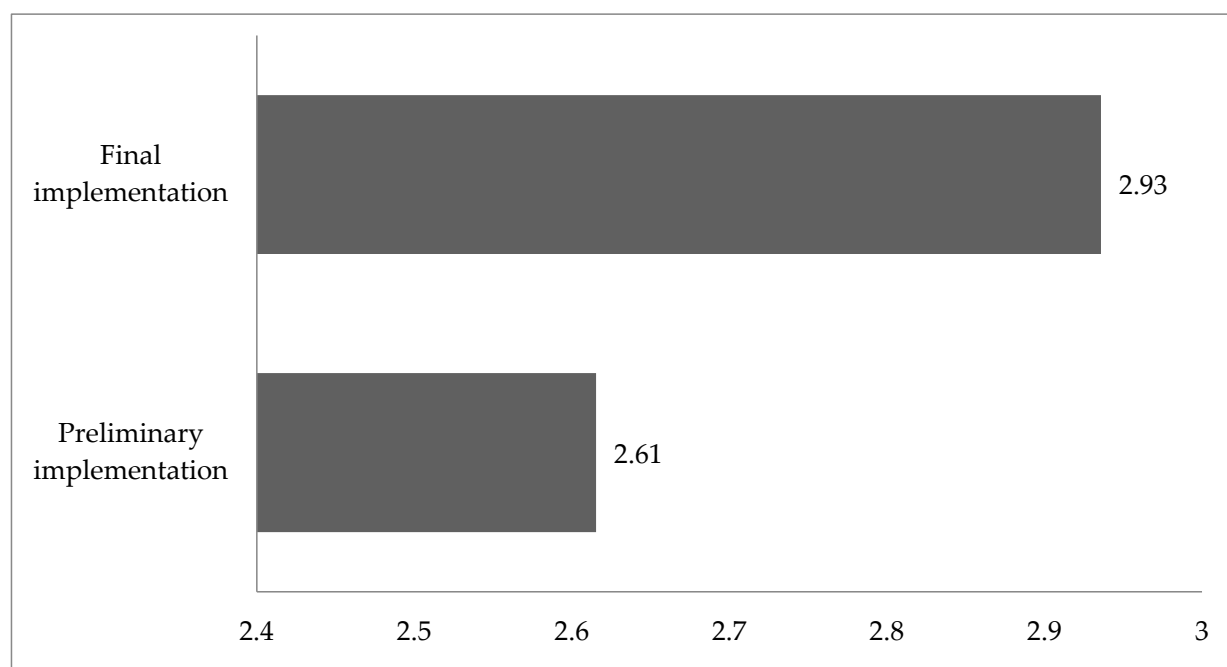


Figure 2. Attitude levels of children toward peace education before and after implementation.

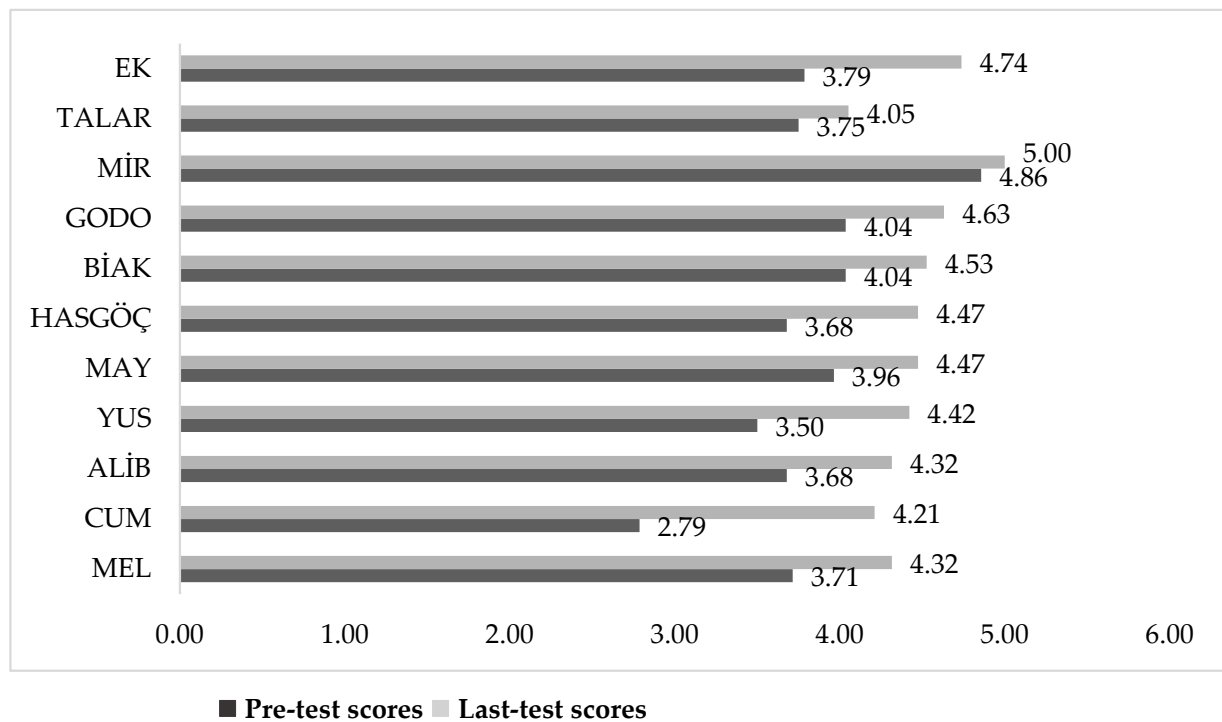


Figure 3. Evaluation of children's attitudes toward peace values according to parents.

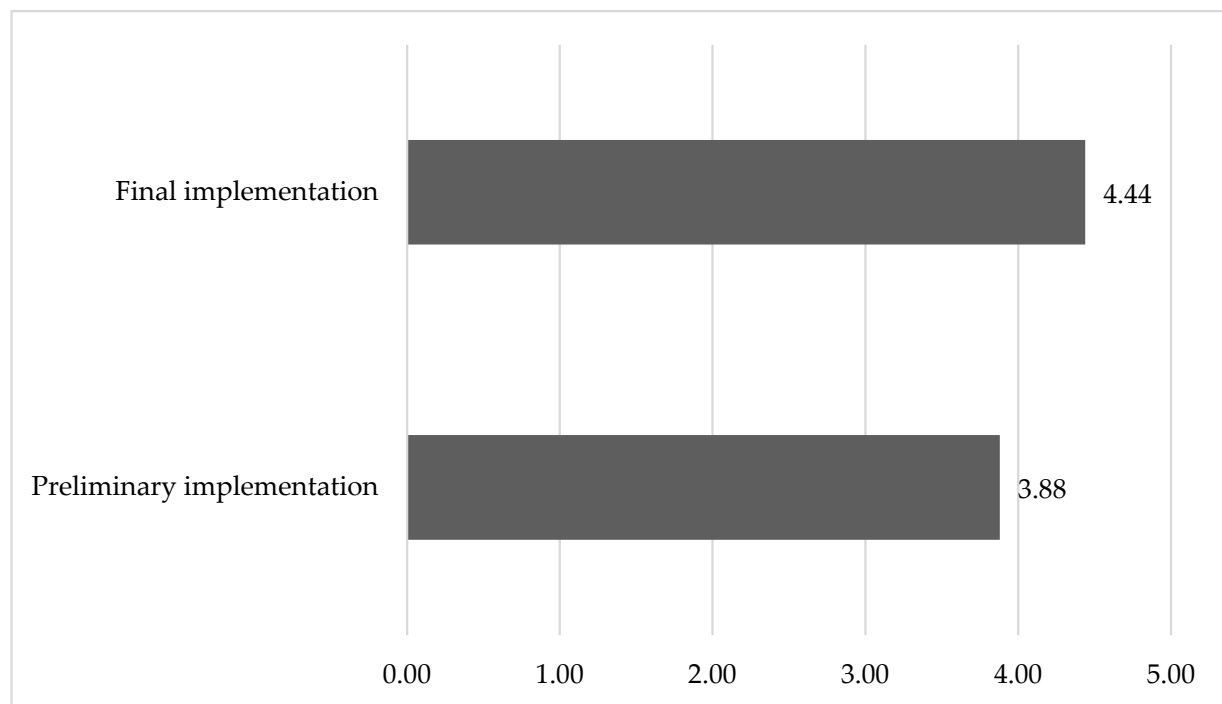


Figure 4. Levels of pre-test and post-test attitudes of children towards peace according to parents.

As seen in Figure 2, when the responses obtained from children using emoji are examined, it can be observed that their attitudes towards peace values have increased to a certain extent after the activity-based implementation.

In Figure 3, the attitudes of each child toward peace values before and after the implementation are given according to parents. When the graph is examined, it can be seen that there is an increase in the attitudes of the children in the study group towards peace

values after the implementation, but these increases vary for each child. The child with the code “Mir” is a third-country national who has migrated. It is stated that he/she has a positive attitude toward peace culture due to the inclusion of peace culture in the education policy of his/her own country. The child with the nickname “Cum”, who showed the highest development in peace attitude, has a Turkish citizen parent. It was understood from the preliminary interview with the parent that they were prejudiced against the culture of peace. However, after participating in subsequent parent information meetings, it is understood that there has been a positive change in their attitudes towards peace culture and it is observed that their child benefited from this situation the most.

In Figure 4, the effectiveness of the activity-based instructional design has been examined according to parent evaluations. In this context, parents have made assessments for their own children and it is understood that they have observed changes indicating that their children’s positive attitudes towards peace values have further developed.

In Figure 5, the attitudes of each child toward peace values before and after the application are given according to the teacher. When the graph is examined, it is stated that all of the children in the study group showed positive increases in their attitudes towards peace values after the application. Despite using the same data collection tool as parents, the results obtained differed. It is thought that this result may be related to the fact that children’s behaviors in the home environment and in the classroom environment may be different.

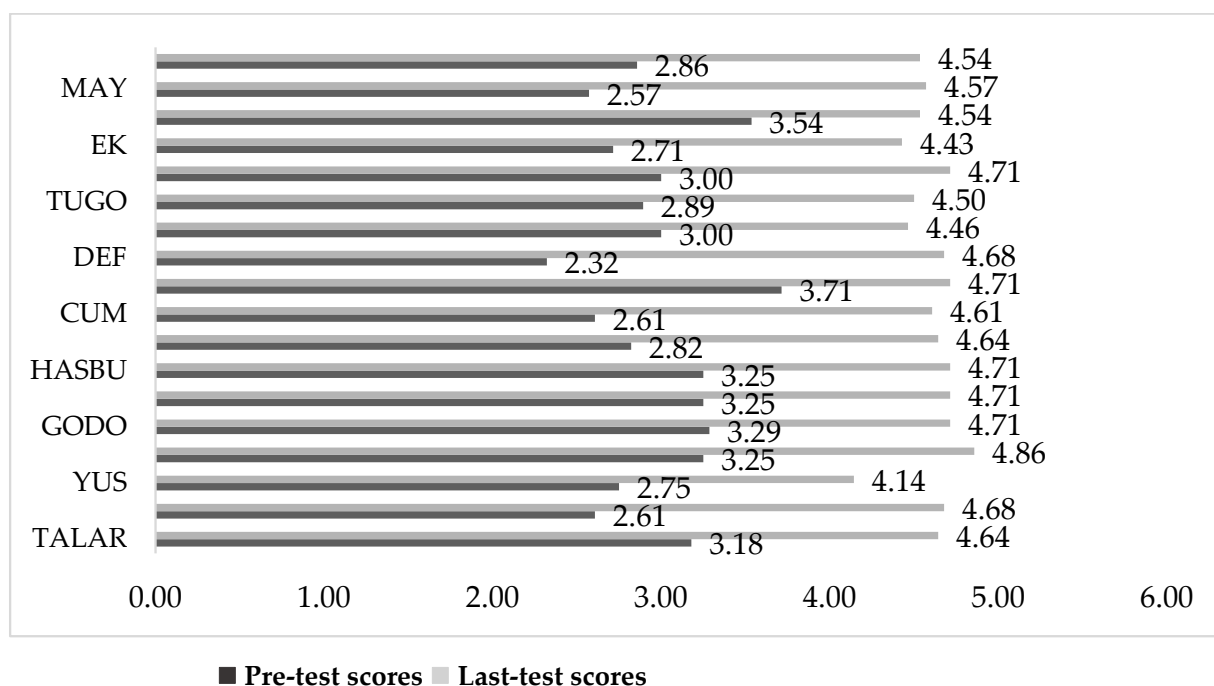


Figure 5. Evaluation of children’s attitudes toward peace values according to teachers.

In Figure 6, the effectiveness of the activity-based developed instructional design was examined according to the classroom teacher. The overall assessment of children’s attitudes towards peace values, as evaluated by the classroom teacher, is given for pre-test and post-test levels. In this context, it is understood that the children’s attitudes towards peace values showed a high level of increase after the implementation.

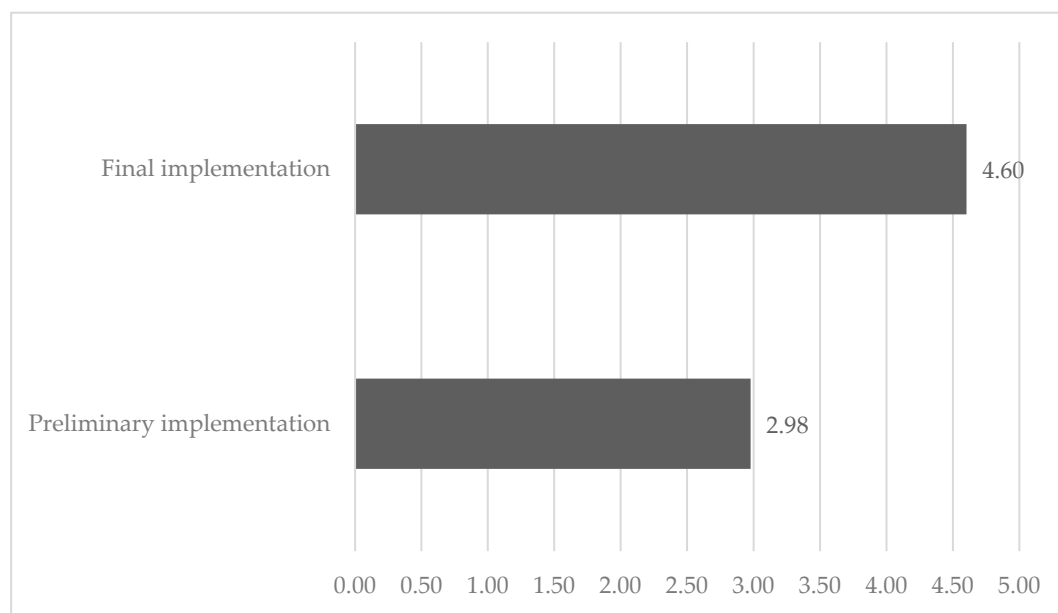


Figure 6. Pre-test and post-test levels of children's peace attitudes according to teachers.

4. Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This research is being conducted in Cyprus and given the current situation in Cyprus, there is a particular need for peace education. In Cyprus, two separate communities coexist. In a country where there are still no peace agreements, the most crucial requirement is peace education to foster a culture of peace. This is because conducting peace education can help to prevent conflicts and enable individuals and communities with different cultures and beliefs to live together harmoniously [51]. Therefore, the general aim of this research is to develop and evaluate the effectiveness of peace education for preschool children.

When examining the findings obtained within the scope of the sub-objectives of this research, it is observed that as a result of the needs analysis, parents, teachers, school administrators, academicians, and officials expressed their opinions in favor of providing peace education during the preschool period. Regarding the content of peace education, they expressed the view that values such as love, respect, tolerance, sharing, responsibility, humility, unity, honesty, empathy, cooperation, friendship, happiness, and peace should be instilled.

The peace education curriculum has to inculcate among the students the value of paying equal respect to all. The UNICEF peace education program also supports teachers' statements, which are generally about the skills that need to be acquired in the knowledge, skills, and attitudinal framework. Values and attitudes such as "Solidarity, social responsibility, joy in living, reconciliation, empathy, gender equity, bias awareness, tolerance, acceptance of others, respect, self-esteem, positive self-image, and strong self-concept" are important for peace education. The methods, techniques, and materials that should be used to teach and use these values have been supported by many different publications [52–54].

When examining the studies in the field literature related to preschool peace values, it has been found that the values addressed within the framework of the UNICEF implemented Living Values Education Program (LVEP) primarily include peace values. In addition to peace, they have also prepared units on values such as respect, love, tolerance, honesty, humility, cooperation, happiness, responsibility, simplicity, freedom, and solidarity [55]. In Ref. [56], the results show that preschool children in peaceful classrooms have more skills in generating interpersonal solutions. Ref. [57], in their study, developed a values education program, incorporating peace values and obtained the result of a positive improvement in children's behavior. Refs. [30–58] conducted studies and revealed that, within the scope of a values education program designed for preschool children, they have

included the value of being peaceful. According to the study conducted in [59], the importance of commencing peace education during the preschool period is emphasized. The study reported in Ref. [60] has concluded that peace education can be achieved through a peace culture program during early childhood. Ref. [17], in their studies, have emphasized the importance of the peace value during early childhood and highlighted it as a value that should be included in program content. Ref. [61], in their studies, demonstrated the importance of peace education by imparting the foundations of Montessori peace philosophy to children.

When the findings of the action research are examined, it is concluded that, based on the technology-supported questionnaire prepared for children, their attitudes toward peace values increased to a certain extent after implementation. Parents mentioned that their children had a moderate level of attitude toward peace education before the implementation and that this level increased after the implementation. Teachers of the 5-year-old children stated that their students' attitudes toward peace showed a significant improvement after the activity-based implementation. The absence of previous studies related to the results obtained from the action research highlights the significance of this study.

Ref. [62] found that the peace education programs they were successful in had a positive impact on the social growth of pre-school children in the 4–6 age group. Ref. [21], in their research, included the achievement of values such as respect, love, and cultural and social acceptance in children, along with the importance of supporting the value of sharing in schools. Ref. [63], in their early childhood peace education program, reached the conclusion that peace culture is a fundamental value and should be instilled during early childhood.

Based on the results obtained from the research, collaborative in-service training sessions can be organized for teachers, administrators, and parents. Initiatives can be taken to promote peace education in the preschool period. Social projects focused on peace education can be developed to raise awareness. Workshop sessions involving relevant stakeholders can be organized for peace education. The preschool education program can be enhanced in terms of values education by adding the value of peace to the program's content. Various in-class and out-of-class activities can be designed to promote the acquisition of the value of peace in preschool children. The content of peace education needs to be kept up to date, taking into account our changing world and its conditions.

The purpose of the peace education curriculum unit will be to raise awareness and action consistent with the principles of nonviolence, interdependence, participation, and economic, social, and environmental sustainability. It should be known that efforts toward sustainable development and peace will not always produce immediate and visible results [51].

With the recent approval of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the importance of peace education, especially in societies experiencing conflict, has been previously highlighted within the framework of the 16th SDG, which aims to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development [14].

There was a war in Cyprus 50 years ago and a bi-communal structure was formed after the war. There is a bi-communal structure that has been going on for many years and peace has not yet been established between the two societies, and a world crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, has recently occurred. Due to these situations, people here migrated, and Cyprus received new immigrants. A multicultural structure has been achieved [36–63].

In such a society, much effort is required to create sustainable peace education within the framework of sustainable development. We think that this study, based on these justifications, is in line with the 16th goal of sustainable development and the indicators of the study results were in this direction.

There are many obstacles on the way to peace in Cyprus. Education serves as the foundation for conquering these obstacles. It is recommended that the program developed with this research be transformed into a form that can be applied to primary, middle, and

high school levels of education. In this way, the value of peace is gained at a stronger level until the completion of basic education.

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