

ASSESSMENT OF LEISURE ACTIVITIES LESSON BASED ON THE VIEWS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS¹

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Abstract

Education is a process starting from birth of an individual and continuing until his/her death. It is defined as the whole well-planned activities, which aim at making improvements in attitudes of individuals in line with pre-determined objectives. Therefore, education is defined as the advertent change of behavior of an individual through his/her life. For this reason, teachers have a great role for the teaching process to be influential. The objective of this study is to reveal the views of elementary school teachers concerning leisure activities lesson. In this research study, it was attempted to determine the general views of elementary school teachers about the leisure time activities lesson, the way of planning of the lesson, the kinds of activities applied during the lesson, and solution recommendations for the encountered problems. As the data collection tool, open-ended questions developed by the researcher were given to the elementary school teachers. Using the interview method that is among the qualitative research methods, we analyzed the data collected from 25 elementary school teachers, who were actively working at the schools under the National Education Governorate of Gaziantep province, via content analysis. As the conclusion, elementary school teachers stated that the leisure activities lesson was necessary and important. However, it was concluded that due to factors such as lack of necessary facilities and absence of needed material and sources, it became even harder to reach the objectives of the lesson. Additionally, due to the abovementioned factors, it was also determined that while planning the lesson, the teachers considered rather the personal features of their students and the existing opportunities provided by their schools; thus, it was concluded that they needed more improved facilities at the schools and they demanded source books complying with the objectives of the lesson.

¹ Bu çalışma “2.Uluslararası Avrasya Sosyal Bilimler Kongresi”nde bildiri olarak sunulmuştur.

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Key Words:Elementary school teacher, leisure activities, elementary school.

Serbest Etkinlikler Dersinin Sınıf Öğretmenlerinin Görüşlerine Göre Değerlendirilmesi

Özet

Eğitim, bireyin doğumundan başlayarak, yaşamının sonuna kadar devam eden bir süreçtir. Daha önceden belirlenmiş amaçlara göre bireylerin davranışlarında birtakım gelişmeler sağlamaya yarayan planlı programlı etkinliklerin tamamıdır. Dolayısıyla eğitim bireyin davranışlarında kendi yaşantısı yoluyla kasıtlı olarak istendik yönde davranış değiştirme olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Bu nedenle eğitim öğretim sürecinin etkili olmasında öğretmenlere büyük görevler düşmektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı sınıf öğretmenlerinin, serbest etkinlikler dersi ile ilgili görüşlerini ortaya koymaktır. Araştırmada sınıf öğretmenlerinin; serbest etkinlikler dersi ile ilgili genel olarak görüşleri, dersin nasıl planlandığı, derste hangi tür etkinliklerin yapıldığı ve bu derste karşılaşılan sorunların çözüm önerilerinin neler olduğu belirlenmeye çalışılmıştır.

Araştırmada veritoplama aracı olarak araştırmacı tarafından geliştirilen açık uçlu sorular sınıf öğretmenlerine sunulmuştur. Araştırmada nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden olan mülakat yöntemi kullanılarak, Gaziantep İl Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğüne bağlı okullarda görev yapmakta olan 25 sınıf öğretmeninden elde edilen veriler, içerik analizi yöntemi ile çözümlenmiştir. Sonuç olarak, sınıf öğretmenleri, serbest etkinlikler dersinin gerekli ve önemli bir ders olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Ancak, dersin uygulanması aşamasında, fiziksel imkânların yetersizliği, material ve kaynak eksikliği gibi nedenlerin dersin amaçlarına ulaşmada sorunlar ortaya çıkardığını, belirtilen yetersizliklerden dolayı dersi planlarken daha çok öğrenci özellikleri ve okulun imkânları doğrultusunda hareket ettikleri, okulun fiziki imkânlarının artırılarak ve dersin amaçlarına uygun kaynak kitaplar verilmesini taleptikleri sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sınıf öğretmeni, serbest etkinlikler, ilköğretim

INTRODUCTION

Individuals in a society need to keep pace with the scientific and technological improvements by changing and modernizing themselves. Therefore, it is necessary to use the leisure time more effectively and efficiently. When we mention the 'leisure time activities', we actually mean the activities that are conducted with pleasure and comfort (Tucker, 2001). Wilson et al.

(2009) summarized the leisure time activities, for students, as taking charge in sports or academic clubs that necessitates a target and an effort, or participate in their activities at spare times after the classes. Sellick (2002), on the other hand, reported that leisure time activities are important in improving the thinking ability and the sense of self-confidence of the individuals. Leisure activities lesson in our country was started in 2010-2011 education year at the 1st to 5th grades of the elementary schools. As per now, it continues through 1st to 4th grades of the elementary schools (MEB, 2010).

When we examine the targets of the leisure activities, we observe that its objective is rather to help the students embrace both their school and friends, by improving inter-student communication via informative and educational activities. Additionally, they are systematical implementations in order to contribute to the active participation of the students in certain social activities (MEB, 2010). Concerning the development of the child in general terms, there is vast information about influences of environment, school, and teacher; however, there is not much information concerning the effects of leisure activities on the developments of children (Fletcher, Nickerson, and Wright, 2003). Therefore, we can split leisure activities into two; structured and unstructured leisure activities (Eccles and Barber, 1999; Larson, 1989; Mahoney and Stattin, 2000; Meeks and Mauldin, 1990).

Leisure activities not only aim at contributing to the social developments of the children, but also provide benefits for their mental developments. Additionally, the skills and values that are planned to be added to the basic skills and values of students via leisure activities are involved within the curriculums (MEB, 2010).

In previous studies it is reported that leisure activities make positive contributions to the cognitive, behavioral, and academic developments of the children (Hansen, Larson and Dworkin, 2003; Wilson et al., 2009; McHale and Crouter, 2000; Bianchi and Robinson, 1997; Garton and Pratt, 1991). In our country, it is observed that activities that are outside the curriculum are not sufficiently supported and no due importance is given. This study was conducted aiming at determining the views of the elementary school teachers concerning leisure activities lessons. In line with this objective, answers were sought for the following questions:

1. What are the views of the elementary school teachers about leisure activities?
2. Which issues are considered while planning leisure activities lesson?

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3. What are the activities that the teachers conduct during the leisure activities lesson?
4. What are the problems that they encounter in the leisure activities lesson?
5. What are their solution recommendations for the problems encountered in leisure activities lessons?

METHOD

In this research, the case-study design was used, which is one of the qualitative research methods. Compared to the quantitative methods, the qualitative methods provide more flexible opportunities for the researcher, and provide various approaches concerning data collection tool and designing of the research and analysis (Gay, Mills and Airasian, 2006).

Examining the fact within the framework of its life, the case study is a research design used in situations, where the borders between the facts and their settings are ambiguous and where there are more than one proof or data sources (Yin, 1984; Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006).

Research Group

An open-ended question form, which was prepared to determine the views of the elementary school teachers concerning the Leisure Activities lesson, was applied to 25 elementary school teachers actively working at the schools under the National Education Governorate of Gaziantep province. The data of the research group are in Table 1.

Table 1: Personal Features of the Teachers in the Research Group (N = 50)

Variables	Groups	n	%
Time of Office	1 – 5 Years	9	36
	6 – 10 Years	4	16
	11 – 15 Years	2	8
	16 – 20 Years	4	16
	21 – 30 Years	6	24
Gender	Women	17	68
	Men	8	32
Teaching Grade	1 st	10	40

Education	2 nd	9	36
	3 rd	4	16
	4 th	2	8
	Two-year degree	2	8
	Undergraduate (4-year)	20	80
	Postgraduate	3	12

Some personal features of the research group are given in Table 1. When the *time of office* variable of the participant teachers are examined, it is observed that 9 teachers (% 36) have a work experience of 1-5 years, 4 of them (% 16) 6-10 years, 2 of them (% 8) 11-15 years, 4 of them (% 16) 16-20 years, and 6 teachers (% 24) have 21-30 years of experience. When the *gender* variable is examined, it is observed that 17 teachers (% 68) are women, while 8 teachers (% 32) are men. When the *grades that the teachers instructed* are examined, it is observed that 10 of them (% 40) are teaching the 1st grades, 9 of them (% 36) are teaching the 2nd grades, 4 of them (% 9) are teaching the 3rd grades, and 2 of them are teaching the 4th grades. When the *education status* variable is examined, it is observed that 2 teachers (% 8) have two-year degrees, 20 teachers (% 80) have undergraduate degrees, and 3 of them (% 12) have postgraduate degrees.

Preparation and Implementation of the Open-Ended Question Form

In order to prepare the interview form that will be used in the research, firstly, one on one interviews were conducted with 100 elementary school teachers asking them to write a composition about their views concerning the leisure activities lesson. Based on the collected compositions and information obtained from related literature, the draft version of the interview form was prepared. One of the logical ways to test the validity of the assessment instrument prepared for the research is to apply for the expert opinion (Büyüköztürk, 2006). The interview form was presented to the domain experts and necessary regulations were implemented in line with the expert views. Thus, the interview form was put into its final form, which was comprised of 4 personal-feature determining questions and 5 open-ended questions. The questions are as follows:

1. What are the views of the elementary school teachers about leisure activities?
2. Which issues are considered while planning leisure activities lesson?
3. What are the activities that the teachers conduct during the leisure activities lesson?

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4. What are the problems that they encounter in the leisure activities lesson?
5. What are their solution recommendations for the problems encountered in leisure activities lessons?

The last version of the interview form was implemented to 25 elementary school teachers actively working in Gaziantep province, thus, the data were collected. During the implementation, the objective of the study was explained to the participants, and they were informed about the importance of the answers they would provide. Based on the answers of the participants to the assessment instrument, multiple statements were grouped under common themes.

Analysis of the Data

The data obtained from the interview form of the research were analyzed by means of content analysis, which is used in qualitative research. The use of content analysis in qualitative research is preferred in case of ambiguous themes and in creating and analyzing the sub-dimensions, if any (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006). The obtained data were recorded separately and coded after being grouped. These grouping and coding were presented to the domain experts and they were prepared for the analysis after putting them into their final forms according to the views of the experts. With the content analysis, the themes were determined for each question and tables were prepared based on the calculated frequency and percentages of the given themes. Descriptive analysis was used in the assessments of the data. Lastly, reporting was conducted and findings were revealed.

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

In this section, the findings obtained from the interviews conducted with elementary school teachers actively working at the state schools under the Ministry of National Education concerning leisure activities lesson are given.

Table 2. The distribution of the general views of teachers in the research group concerning the leisure activities lesson.

Themes	n	%
It is a necessary and important lesson	22	46.8
It is a productive lesson for the development of the children	10	21.2

The lesson should be conducted in line with its objectives	7	14.9
The facilities and available opportunities of the school are insufficient	5	10.7
The hours of the lesson should be increased	3	6.4
Total	47	100

The distribution of the general views of teachers in the research group concerning the leisure activities lesson is given on Table 2. When the general opinions of the participants concerning the leisure activities lesson are examined, 5 themes emerged. It is observed that the participants stated more than one theme.

It is observed that the following ranking is emerged among these themes according to their percentages; "It is a necessary and important lesson" (46.8 %); "It is a productive lesson for the development of the children" (21.2 %); "The lesson should be conducted in line with its objectives" (14.9 %); "The facilities and available opportunities of the school is insufficient" (%10.7); "The hours of the lesson should be increased" (6.4 %).

Table 3. The distribution of the opinions of the research group concerning the issues that they consider in the planning of the leisure activities lesson.

Themes	n	%
Activities based on student features	22	41.6
Activities improving attention and intelligence	11	20.8
Activities in line with demands and expectations of students	7	13.2
Classroom activities	6	11.3
Activities necessitating awareness	4	7.5
Studying other lessons	3	5.6
Total	53	100

The distribution of the opinions of the research group concerning the issues that they consider in the planning of the leisure activities lesson is given in Table 3. 6 themes emerged in the distribution of the opinions concerning the issues that the participants consider in planning the leisure activities lesson.

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Accordingly, 22 teachers (41.6 %) stated that they consider activities based on student features; 11 teachers (20.8 %) consider activities improving attention and intelligence; 7 teachers (13.2%) stated that they prioritize activities in line with demands and expectations of students; 6 of them (11.3 %) reported that they consider classroom activities; 4 teachers (7.5%) think of activities necessitating awareness; and 3 teachers (5.6%) stated that they let the students study other lessons, in leisure activities lesson.

Table 4. The distribution of the opinions of the research group concerning the activities that they conduct during the leisure activities lessons.

Themes	N	%
I organize classroom games	16	27.2
I organize sportive activities	13	22
I organize book readings	8	13.5
I make them watch a movie	7	11.8
I organize puzzles and crosswords	6	10.2
I let them study other lessons	6	10.2
I make students draw pictures	3	5.1
Total	59	100

The distribution of the opinions of the research group concerning the activities that they conduct during the leisure activities lessons is given in Table 4. 7 themes emerged in the distribution of the opinions of the participants concerning the activities that they conduct during the leisure activities lessons. It is observed that the participants stated more than one theme.

It is observed that the following ranking is emerged among these themes according to their percentages; "I organize classroom plays" (27.2 %); "I organize sportive activities" (22%); "I organize book readings" (13.5 %); "I make them watch a movie" (11.8 %); "I organize puzzles and crosswords" (10.2 %); "I let them study other lessons" (10.2 %); "I want the students draw pictures" (5.1%).

Table 5. The distribution of the opinions of the research group concerning the problems that they encounter during the leisure activities lessons.

Themes	N	%
Lack of physical space	17	28.4
Material deficiency	10	16.6
Individual differences	10	16.6
Lack of resource books and guides	8	13.3
Indifference displayed by students towards the lesson	7	11.6
High expectations of the parents	4	6.6
I encountered no problems	4	6.6
Total	60	100

The distribution of the opinions of the research group concerning the problems that they encounter during the leisure activities lessons is given in Table 5. 7 themes emerged in the distribution of the opinions of the research group concerning the problems that they encounter during the leisure activities lessons. It is observed that the participants stated more than one theme. It is also observed that the following ranking is emerged among these themes according to their percentages; "Lack of physical space" (28.4 %); "Material deficiency" (16.6 %); "Individual differences" (16.6 %); "Lack of resource books and guides" (13.3 %); "Indifference displayed by students towards the lesson" (11.6 %); "High expectations of the parents" (6.6 %); "I encountered no problems" (6.6 %).

Table 6. The distribution of the data about the solution recommendations of research group concerning the problems that they encounter during the leisure activities lessons.

Themes	N	%
The facilities and available opportunities in the school should be increased	15	36.5

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A resource book should be prepared	8	19.5
Physical education teacher should instruct this lesson	8	19.5
The activities should be attractive	7	17.1
Preschool education should be mandatory	3	7.4
Total	41	100

The distribution of the data concerning the solution recommendations of research group concerning the problems that they encounter during the leisure activities lessons is given in Table 6. 5 themes emerged in the distribution of the data about the solution recommendations of research group concerning the problems that they encounter during the leisure activities lessons. It is observed that the participants stated more than one theme. It is observed that the following ranking is emerged among these themes according to their percentages; "The availabilities in the school should be increased" (36.5 %); "A resource book should be prepared" (19.5 %); "Physical education teacher should instruct this lesson" (19.5 %); "The activities should be attractive" (17.1 %); "Preschool education should be mandatory" (7.4 %).

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

In this section of the research the results are presented, which were obtained from the interviews made with the elementary school teachers actively working at the state schools under the Ministry of National Education, concerning the leisure time activities lesson.

When the general opinions of the research group concerning the leisure activities lesson are examined, majority of them state that this lesson is important and necessary. Moreover, the research group reports that this lesson is productive for the development of the children as well. In a study conducted by Gömleksiz and Özdaş (2013) on teacher views about the realization of the achievements of leisure activities lesson, it was reported that positive views were obtained. In a study conducted by Aydın et al. (2012), it was determined by the administrators, teachers, and students that the leisure activities lesson had positive influences on students.

Concerning the issues that the teachers consider in planning the leisure activities lessons, it is determined that majority of the teachers prefer activities complying with the features of the students, and additionally, activities that enhance attention and intelligence. However, when we examine the activities they prefer (classroom games, reading books, watching movies, puzzle and crossword solving, drawing pictures or studying other lessons), we observe that teachers mostly prefer classroom activities. When the motive behind this preference is examined, it is observed that mainly the reason is lack of material (such as lack of physical space, material deficiency, lack of resource book and guides) and insufficient facility opportunities of the school. When the solution recommendations of the teachers are examined, it is observed that they expect (the opportunities of the school should be increased, resource book should be prepared, physical education teacher should attend this lesson) that these insufficiencies in physical conditions and material be eliminated.

From this viewpoint, it can be mentioned that the problems such as lack of information concerning the content of the lesson, insufficient physical conditions of the school, and lack of material create problems in teaching the lesson appropriately.

There are previous studies which have similar results to those of ours. In a study conducted by Dündar and Karaca (2011) it was reported that most of the teachers organized activities to supplement other lessons, and stated that there were problems in conducting the lesson due to factors such as the facilities of the school are insufficient and oversized classrooms. In a study conducted by Bozak et al. (2012), it was reported that the lesson was not taught well due to reasons based on lack of information concerning the leisure activities lesson. Another study conducted by Kazu and Asan (2013) it was mentioned that elementary school teachers had problems in teaching due to lack of resource books and insufficient facilities.

In previous studies in the literature, problems such as lack of material, time limitations, and oversized classrooms are generally reported to be important problems for the implementation of the programs (Acat and Uzunkol, 2010; Karacaoğlu and Acar, 2010; Oğuz and Bayındır, 2009; Kırıkkaya, 2009).

As the conclusion, elementary school teachers stated that leisure time activities lesson is a necessary and important lesson. However, it was concluded that reasons such as lack of facilities, material, and resources created problems in reaching the objectives of the lesson, thus the teachers rather considered the personal features of the students in planning these lessons. Finally it was demanded by the teachers that the facilities of the schools should be improved

and resource books complying with the objectives of the lesson should be provided.

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