GAME PERCEPTION IN PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS (ISPARTA EXAMPLE)

PERCEPÇÃO DE JOGO EM PROFESSORES DE ESCOLA PRIMÁRIA (EXEMPLO DE ISPARTA)

PERCEPCIÓN DE JUEGO EN PROFESORES DE PRIMARIA (EJEMPLO DE ISPARTA)

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ABSTRACT: The aim of this research is to reveal the attitudes of primary school teachers about the participation of primary school students in the game, how the classroom teachers perceive the game, how they interpret the relationship between the game and the child, and how they evaluate the game in line with the curriculum. In the 2020-2021 academic year, 343 primary school teachers selected randomly among 1230 primary school teachers working in primary schools affiliated to the Isparta Provincial Directorate of National Education participated in the study. Google Forms platform was used for data collection. This method has been preferred to maintain social distance during the pandemic process. As a result, it has been understood that teachers have an important role in the students' ability to benefit from the game sufficiently, and it is thought that the differences seen in the sub-dimensions are due to the differences in the nature of the information, its origin and accuracy, understanding and evaluation, change, and the perceptions of the teachers in the processes of producing and acquiring information.

KEYWORDS: Primary school. Play. Play perception.

RESUMO: *O objetivo desta pesquisa é desvelar as atitudes dos professores do ensino fundamental sobre a participação dos alunos do ensino fundamental no jogo, como os professores percebem o jogo, como interpretam a relação entre o jogo e a criança e como eles avaliar o jogo de acordo com o currículo. No ano letivo de 2020-2021, 343 professores primários selecionados aleatoriamente entre 1230 professores primários trabalhando em escolas primárias afiliadas à Direção Provincial de Educação Nacional de Isparta participaram do estudo. A plataforma Google Forms foi usada para a coleta de dados. Este método foi preferido para manter distância social durante o processo pandêmico. Como resultado, entendeu-se que os professores têm um papel importante na capacidade dos alunos de se beneficiarem suficientemente do jogo, e pensa-se que as diferenças observadas nas subdimensões se devem às diferenças na natureza das informações, sua origem e exatidão, compreensão e avaliação, mudança e as percepções dos professores nos processos de produção e aquisição de informação.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Escola primária. Brincadeira. Percepção da brincadeira.*

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***RESUMEN**: El objetivo de esta investigación es revelar las actitudes de los profesores de primaria sobre la participación de los alumnos de primaria en el juego, cómo los profesores de aula perciben el juego, cómo interpretan la relación entre el juego y el niño, y cómo lo interpretan. evaluar el juego de acuerdo con el plan de estudios. En el año académico 2020-2021, participaron en el estudio 343 maestros de primaria seleccionados al azar entre 1230 maestros de primaria que trabajan en escuelas primarias afiliadas a la Dirección Provincial de Educación Nacional de Isparta. Se utilizó la plataforma Google Forms para la recopilación de datos. Se ha preferido este método para mantener la distancia social durante el proceso pandémico. Como resultado, se ha entendido que los docentes tienen un papel importante en la capacidad de los estudiantes para beneficiarse suficientemente del juego, y se piensa que las diferencias observadas en las subdimensiones se deben a las diferencias en la naturaleza de la información, su origen y veracidad, comprensión y evaluación, cambio, y las percepciones de los docentes en los procesos de producción y adquisición de información.*

***PALABRAS CLAVE**: Escuela primaria. Juego. Percepción del juego.*

Introduction

Research on the contribution of physical education and play to the development of primary school children has gained momentum recently. However, the resistance to game education and innovative ideas about game education continues (KIRK; CLAXTON, 1999). The fact that teaching methods and techniques are determined by the curriculum, teachers' beliefs about education and training should be considered as an important step for innovation and change (BEHETS, 2001). In this case, it is clear that the game can affect existing methods.

Play is an important factor for teachers to achieve educational goals. At the same time, teachers have an important role in ensuring that children benefit from the game sufficiently and in directing the game (SANDBERG *et al.,* 2012).

Studies have been conducted show that active participation in games can contribute to children's active life competencies (GUVENDI; SERIN, 2019) and those children prefer to participate in activities that they think are fun (PEKER; TAŞ, 2019) and active (ESENTAŞ; GUZEL; VURAL, 2018). It can also be seen to reflect the growing concern of children in participating in play and the potential consequences of this for their healthy development (ARNAS, 2020). While the game is accepted as a means by which primary school children can meet their daily activity needs, there is increasing thought that children may not participate in games that include enough activities.

There are many studies that reveal the importance of play in terms of child health. Kuru and Baştuğ (2008) state that it has a positive effect on personal characteristics, while

Orhan (2019), Ayan and Memiş (2012), Bailey *et al*. (2009) stated that it affects all aspects of his development, including his physical, emotional, cognitive, and social development. Alp and Ergül (2018) emphasized that game plays an active role in children's problem-solving skills, Alp and Çamliyer (2015) contributes to the positive development of social adaptation processes and Alp (2016) plays an active role in reducing their aggressive attitudes. In addition, there are studies emphasizing the positive relationships between muscle strength and endurance, flexibility, musculoskeletal health, body composition and cardiovascular endurance (BIDDLE; SALLIS; CAVILL, 1998). In addition, there are studies that draw attention to improvements in concentration time and academic performance (SATTELMAIR; RATEY, 2009) and increased motivation, self-confidence, and general well-being (MALINA, 2011). It is known that the child acquires various life skills such as thinking, perceiving (ALP, 2021), contributing positively to his personal and social development, communication, leadership, teamwork, empathy, developing social interaction and communication. Burdette and Whitaker (2005) emphasized the importance of play for brain development and stated that a strong focus should be placed on free play to improve children's health, development, and happiness. Pellegrini and Smith (1998) focused on the physical component of play and argued that active play can be psychologically important and have a significant impact on the child's rules, symbolic and acceptable behaviors.

The inadequacy of the free playground in primary schools is not limited to our country (BERESIN, 2012), studies from England and the USA have also noted that the time allocated to playing games has decreased (TUĞRUL *et al.,* 2019). It is understood that the need to maximize the time devoted to learning plays a key role in achieving educational goals, and the time children spend on play is greatly reduced. As a matter of fact, Kuschner's (2012) pointing out that games are over-structured and under the pressure of academic curriculum and exams also reveals the significant decrease in children's play opportunities throughout their school life. Trudeau and Shephard (2008), in their studies that support the learning-enhancing benefits of the game, stated that allocating more time to the students for the game does not cause a decrease in their academic performance.

Therefore, it appears that there is much to be gained by providing children with opportunities for play during their school days.

Despite the wealth of information on the benefits of play for children, it is seen that children are less active than desired (FISHER *et al.,* 2005) and there is an increase in overweight or obese individuals in primary school children (FEDA *et al.,* 2012). Various studies provide evidence that children's active outdoor play with their peers is lower than in

previous generations (CLEMENTS, 2004) and that children now have much less opportunity to play (GRAY, 2011). Başal (2007) stated that games become individualized day by day, therefore, traditional game perception begins to disappear in traditional childhood.

In the light of the information given, it is one of the basic principles of child education that children learn by playing and that it is the responsibility of teachers to organize play environments for the continuation of learning. The game allows teachers to discover the talents of their students and to support children's education in this respect (POYRAZ, 2003). Trawick-Smith, Swaminathan and Liu, (2016) stated that besides increasing children's abilities, games will improve many intellectual skills, including mathematical thinking and communication. In this direction, it is understood that primary school teachers can correct the negative behaviors of children through games and contribute to their developmental areas (DILEKMEN; BOZAN TURUN, 2018). Today, the system in which the teacher is the only judge and administrator has been replaced by an understanding that aims to develop children's interests and abilities, and to learn by doing and experiencing (ULUTAŞ 2011).

The aim of this research is to reveal the attitudes of primary school teachers about the participation of primary school students in the game, how the classroom teachers perceive the game, how they interpret the relationship between the game and the child, and how they evaluate the game in line with the curriculum.

Method

Research Model

In the research, a descriptive survey (questionnaire) method aimed at revealing the current situation was used. Descriptive survey models are research approaches that aim to describe a past or present situation as it is. The event, individual or object that is the subject of the research is tried to be defined in its own conditions and as it is. No effort is made to change or influence them in any way (KARASAR, 2004).

Study Group

In the 2020-2021 academic year, 343 classroom teachers selected by random method (ÇINGI, 1994) among 1230 primary school teachers working in primary schools affiliated to Isparta Provincial Directorate of National Education participated in the study.

Table 1 – Descriptive Statistics of Participants

Variables	Groups	N	%
Gender	Female	105	30.6
	Male	238	69.4
	Total	343	100
Age	-25	32	9.3
	26-35	114	33.2
	36+	197	57.4
	Total	343	100
Marital status	Single	70	20.4
	Married	273	79.6
	Total	343	100
Year of Service	1-10	85	24.8
	11-20	115	33.5
	21+	143	41.7
	Total	343	100

Source: Prepared by the authors

When Table 1 is examined, it was seen that 30.6% of the participants were female, while 69.4% were male. It was determined that 9.3% were under 25 years old, 33.2% were 26-35 years old, 57.4% were over 36 years old. According to marital status, 20.4% were single and 79.6% were married. Looking at the years of service, it is seen that 24.8% of them are 1-10 years, 33.5% are 11-20 years, and 41.7% are 21+ years.

Data Collection Tools

Google Forms platform was used for data collection. This method has been preferred to maintain social distance during the pandemic process. During data collection, information about the study and questionnaires were communicated to the participants via social networks. Volunteers participating in the study were asked to fill in the personal information form and the Game Perception Scale.

Personal Information Form

Four questions including gender, age, marital status and years of service of the primary school teachers participating in the study were applied.

Game Perception Scale

Guneş *et al*. (2020) and aims to examine the perceptions of the game. The scale, which is scored on a 5-point Likert scale and has three sub-dimensions, has a total of 20 items, and

11 of them show reverse coded items. Item-total correlation coefficients were calculated in the range of .157≤ r ≤ .656 and Cronbach alpha value was calculated as 0.728.

Data Analysis

The skewness and kurtosis values of the answers given by the classroom teachers participating in the study to the scales are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 – Skewness-Kurtosis Values of Participants' Scale Scores

	N	Skewness	Kurtosis
Function of the game and interest/ curiosity/ discovery in the game.	343	.768	.798
Game originality and purpose	343	-.258	-.076
The nature and origin of the game	343	-.194	.113
Game Perception Total	343	-.393	1.032

Source: Prepared by the authors

First of all, normality test was performed to determine whether all the data conformed to the normal distribution. In Table 2, it was observed that the skewness and kurtosis values were in the range of ±1.5. The test results are based on the criterion that the skewness and kurtosis value are in the range of ±1.5 to show that the data has a normal distribution. (TABACHNIK; FIDELL, 2013). In the light of this information, it was decided to use parametric statistical analysis tests. In the study, t-Test was used for independent tests for binary variables, and Anova Test for three or more variables, which are parametric statistical analysis tests. Bonferroni test was used to determine between which groups the difference in scores was.

Findings

Table 3 – Descriptive Statistics of Scores Obtained from Scales

	N	Min	Max	X±Sd
Function of the game and interest/ curiosity/ discovery in the game.	343	19.00	38.00	25.639±3.223
Game originality and purpose	343	10.00	27.00	20.102±3.403
The nature and origin of the game	343	5.00	20.00	12.784±2.434
Game Perception Total	343	36.00	74.00	58.525±4.798

Source: Prepared by the authors

When Table 3 is examined, it has been determined that the participants' game perception sub-dimensions are Function of the game and interest/ curiosity/ discovery in the

game 25.639±3.223, Game originality and purpose 20.102±3.403, The nature and origin of the game 12.784±2.434, and the total game perception score is 58.525±4.798.

Table 4 – Examining the Game Perceptions of the Teachers according to the gender variable

	Gender	N	X± Sd	t	P
Function of the game and interest/ curiosity/ discovery in the game.	Male	238	25.752±3.184	.983	.326
	Female	105	25.381±3.312		
Game originality and purpose	Male	238	20.164±3.343	.506	.613
	Female	105	19.962±3.546		
The nature and origin of the game	Male	238	12.567±2.446	-2.505	.013
	Female	105	13.276±2.343		
Game Perception Total	Male	238	58.483±4.894	-.241	.809
	Female	105	58.619±4.594		

Source: Prepared by the authors

According to the gender variable of the teachers participating in the study, a statistically significant difference was found in the sub-dimension of the nature and origin of the game in the direction of women.

Table 5 – Examining the Game Perceptions of the Teachers according to the age variable

	Age		X± Sd	f		Bonferroni
Function of the game and interest/ curiosity/ discovery in the game.	-25	32	25.906±3.541	.142	.867	
	26-35	114	25.561±3.080			
	36+	197	25.640±3.265			
Game originality and purpose	25	32	21.375±3.240	2.519	.082	
	26-35	114	19.912±3.541			
	36+	197	20.005±3.319			
The nature and origin of the game	-25	32	13.219±1.930	1.016	.363	
	26-35	114	12.912±2.487			
	36+	197	12.640±2.474			
Game Perception Total	-25	32	60.500±5.285	3.043	.049	a>c
	26-35	114	58.386±4.686			
	36+	197	58.284±4.731			

Source: Prepared by the authors

According to the age variable of the teachers participating in the study, a statistically significant difference was found between the ages of -25 and 36+ in total game perception.

Table 6 – Examining the Game Perceptions of the Teachers according to the marital status variable

	Marital Status	N	X± Sd	t	P
Function of the game and interest/ curiosity/ discovery in the game.	Single	70	25.400±2.901	.693	.489
	Married	273	25.670±3.303		
Game originality and purpose	Single	70	20.314±3.728	.584	.559
	Married	273	20.048±3.320		
The nature and origin of the game	Single	70	12.986±2.306	.776	.438
	Married	273	12.733±2.468		
Game Perception Total	Single	70	58.700±4.418	.342	.733
	Married	273	58.480±4.897		

Source: Prepared by the authors

According to the marital status variable of the teachers participating in the study, no significant difference was found in the total and sub-dimensions of game perceptions.

Table 7 – Examining the Game Perceptions of the Teachers according to the years of service variable

	Years of service	N	X± Sd	f	P	Bonferroni
Function of the game and interest/ curiosity/ discovery in the game.	1-10	85	25.977±3.433	1.428	.241	
	11-20	115	25.244±2.787			
	21+	143	25.755±3.407			
Game originality and purpose	1-10	85	20.153±3.905	.189	.828	
	11-20	115	20.226±3.098			
	21+	143	19.972±3.336			
The nature and origin of the game	1-10	85	13.353±2.250	3.489	.032	a>c
	11-20	115	12.739±2.264			
	21+	143	12.483±2.621			
Game Perception Total	1-10	85	59.482±4.980	2.268	.105	
	11-20	115	58.209±4.501			
	21+	143	58.210±4.876			

Source: Prepared by the authors

A statistically significant difference was found between the ages of 1-10 years and 21+ years in the sub-dimension of the nature and source of the game according to the service year variable of the teachers participating in the study.

Discussion

When the results of the research were examined, it was determined that the participants' game perception sub-dimensions were at an average level of function of the game and interest/ curiosity/ discovery in the game, an average level in the game originality and purpose sub-dimension, an insufficient level in the nature and origin of the game sub-dimension, and the total game perception score was at a sufficient level. Soydan (2013) stated that teachers do not use freedom of choice as a strategy to arouse curiosity in children, and that they are insufficient in preparing appropriate programs and educational environments. For this reason, it is thought that teachers' taking this into account while planning the program and environment will be effective in terms of curiosity in students. Piaget and Vygotsky were the first scientists to research about play and to mention its contribution to children's cognitive development. In the following process, many studies have revealed that skills such as attention, curiosity, problem solving, and self-control can be developed through play (BARDAK; TOPAÇ, 2019). It is thought that the differences seen in the sub-dimensions of the study stem from the differences in the independent variables, different age, gender, marital status and years of service factors cause differences in the sub-dimension levels, but the fact that the total score of game perception is at a sufficient level is due to the understanding of the importance of the game in the developmental stages of the child.

According to the gender variable of the teachers participating in the study, a statistically significant difference was found in the sub-dimension of the nature and source of the game in the direction of women. Arikan (2020), on the other hand, stated in his study that there is no significant difference according to gender in the dimensions of the nature and source of the game in preschool teachers. Likewise, Dilekmen and Bozan Turun (2018) stated in their studies that there was no significant difference between the opinions of teachers about the game according to the gender variable. It is thought that the detected differences are due to the cognitive, affective, and physical readiness of the students, and therefore to addressing different age groups.

According to the age variable of the teachers participating in the study, a statistically significant difference was found between the ages of -25 and 36+ in total game perception. Arikan (2020), on the other hand, stated that, unlike our study, there is no significant difference according to age in the dimensions of the game function and interest/curiosity/exploration in the game, the originality and purpose of the game, the nature and source of the game. In the study of Dilekmen and Bozan Turun (2018), there was a

significant difference in favor of 20-30 and 41+ teachers in the sub-dimension of the effect of the game on learning, a significant difference was observed against the teachers over the age of 41 in the effect of the game on the development, and no significant difference was found in the effect of the game on the practice. This situation can be interpreted as the age factor increases the teacher's experience, thus increasing their awareness of the relationship between play and learning.

According to the marital status variable of the teachers participating in the study, no significant difference was found in the total and sub-dimensions of game perception. In the literature review, no study was found that examines the perception of the game according to the marital status of the teachers. Considering its importance for the education of children in the developmental age, it is understood that it is necessary to allocate time to play in terms of motor skills, social-emotional, cognitive and language development. Therefore, it is necessary for teachers to gain competencies in the mentioned development areas through games and to provide the necessary environment for this. Considering these factors, it is thought that the reason why no significant difference was found in the study according to the marital status variable of the teachers is due to the use of the game by considering the pedagogical principles in education.

A statistically significant difference was found between 1-10 years and 21+ years in the sub-dimension of the nature and source of the game, according to the service year variable of the teachers participating in the study. In the study of Dilekmen and Bozan Turun (2018), a significant difference was observed in favor of those with a professional seniority of 1-5 years and those with 21 years or more. This shows that professional seniority is significantly effective on the effect of game learning. In the same study, there was no significant difference in terms of seniority in the sub-dimensions of the effect of the game on the development of the teachers and the effect on the practice. Howard and Mcinnes (2013) interpret this situation as a place in the learning environment as they understand the benefits of the game more in parallel with the increase in experience. The reason for obtaining different results in similar studies can be explained by the fact that teachers with more years of service emphasize their experiences, while teachers with less seniority use the game as a tool for a more productive learning environment because they are energetic and idealistic.

It is understood that children should be able to benefit from the game sufficiently in order to have fun, to meet their physical activity needs, to ensure their mental and social health, to ensure personality development and to increase their academic success, and classroom teachers have an important role in this regard. It is thought that the differences seen

in the sub-dimensions are due to the differences in the nature, source and accuracy of the knowledge, understanding and evaluation, change, and teacher perceptions in the processes of knowledge generation and acquisition on the basis of the game.

Conclusion and Recommendations

- Families can be made aware of the contribution of the game to the development and education of children.
- Similar studies can be carried out with the participation of families.
- The concept of game can be studied in different age groups, regions, and cultures.
- With the cooperation of the school counselor service, students' game-academic performance relationships can be examined.
- Teachers who have Physical Education as a side area in play activities in primary schools can be considered as leaders, and awareness can be raised with in-service seminars and courses in this direction.
- To maintain national culture, traditional games can be included in education and training activities and studies can be carried out on this subject.

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