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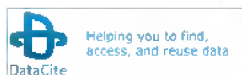
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VIEWS OF CLASSROOM TEACHERS ON EDUCATIONAL GAME TECHNIQUES

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Abstract:

Various teaching methods and techniques have been benefited in the light of constructivist approach adopted in today's educational system. These methods and techniques provide students to develop more efficient learning participating into the educational process actively and construct the knowledge substantive. One of these techniques is educational games. Educational games provide motivation of students in lessons, develop their physical and mental activities, and increase their active participation into the process. The purpose of this study was to determine the views of classroom teachers on the technique of educational games. The educational that had different types according to their variances and purposes were tried to be determined for what purposes and at what frequency they were used by classroom teachers, and also to what extent classroom teachers had knowledge on these games was tried to be specified. Qualitative research design was used in the study. The study group of the research included classroom teachers carrying on their duties in 11 elementary education schools affiliated to Central District of Mersin province. The data were collected from 50 teachers lecturing the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grades using semi-structured interview form including 6 open-ended questions developed for this research. Content analysis was performed to qualitative-dimensional data, and digitalized under specific categories. In the research, it was determined that teachers used 2 games in lessons as average, and these were mostly used for providing students to learn entertainingly, and providing motivation in lessons. The participants frequently expressed that classroom teachers were incompetent on educational games, and classroom teachers were determined not possible to go beyond using classical games and classical materials during the educational process. As result of obtained findings,

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some suggestions were offered for overcoming the incompetence of classroom teachers on educational games benefiting from the expressions mentioned by teachers.

Keywords: classroom teachers, educational games

1. Introduction

The constructivist approach adopted by the modern educational system depends upon students' constructing the knowledge and concepts. This constructing process appears by means of various activities providing active participation into the educational process and their having experiences and thinking critically and creatively.

1.1. Definition of Game

According to And (1974), game, to an extent, is a type of entertainment that has specific rules. According to some, game is outpouring of physical and mental energy in any ways without any beneficial purposes. And according to others, game is satisfying the instinct of simulation, the willing for developing an innate ability, the willing for competing and winning, or recovering lost energy with a one-way dynamism, action.

According to Schiller, game is spending the energy, but not consuming. It is consistency of all competences, harmony of tendencies, and freedom of feelings.

According to Piaget, game is a harmony. Games include the actions with concrete rules children choose themselves or some students in the groups choose.

According to Fröbel, founder of Kindergartens, who turned games into educational instruments, game is the core determining whole life. Children need playing games. For that reason, everything can be taught better through games to children. Children have better physical and mental development through games. The knowledge acquired during games engraves better in children (Çalışkan and Karadağ, 2014: 10).

Rousseau who is the biggest defender of freedom principle in education mentioned that sense organs of Emile whom he abandoned for education in nature should primarily be educated, and this was possible through education. Pestalozzi stated that game was an environment holding children on real life and revealing their lives naturally (Ergün, 1980:102).

According to Gross, game is a practice. Adults acquire their behavioral patterns in future through games. Montaigne defined game as the most real pursuit of children (Çalışkan and Karadağ, 2014: 10).

Stuart Brown who is the author of "Play" as one of the National Bestsellers mentioned for game that game was more than entertaining, it has a vital importance; and intended that game deficiency was noticed in childhood of serious criminals (Girgin, 2011: 37).

1.2. Properties of Game

- Game is amusing and entertaining for children.

- Games provide children to express their feelings naturally.
- Games appear at sense organs, nerves and muscles, and at mental level, and progress together at three levels.
- Games help children to combine inner world with the social world outside.

It is necessary to include emotionality, active experiences during the educational processes. For active participation of children into the educational process, it is necessary for children to enable their feelings, imagination power, imagination ability, fictional thinking and dreams. And this is only possible with games (Kuyumcu, 2007:17).

The belief of learning's not including games and entertaining, and acquiring the knowledge's being possible with studying has still been common in today's world. In contrast to this belief, games and entertaining should be an inseparable part of education. So that education ceases to be a painful and unpleasant process, and acquired moral values and knowledge can become permanent.

Several rules that are taught hard to children can be taught more easily benefiting from games. During the games, children, without realizing, learn and adopt several rules and concepts such as learning, decision making, cooperation, listening, organizing, sharing, respecting to the rights of others and helping (Çoban and Nacar, 2006).

Games that are the most important instruments for children to understand complicated situations, events and abstract concepts also have significant effect upon creative thinking and affective skills. On the other hand, children have the opportunity of developing themselves and acquire their first experiences by means of games (Varışoğlu, Şeref, Gedik and Yılmaz, 2013: 1060).

In education, regarding the natural tendencies of human and organizing the teaching process in accordance with natural tendencies of students are believed to be necessary. For that reason, it has been considered that including games into the educational process makes lessons more interesting and motivates the students (Açıkgöz, 2008: 145).

Game is an important activity that should be benefited especially in pre-school teaching period and at any grades of elementary education. There are educational games at various forms. For example, it is possible to plan an educational game related to numbers in mathematics lesson, or to design games related to words in Turkish lesson. Furthermore, group games and competitions can be organized in order to develop social skills of the students. So, positive addiction feeling of students develops, as well. On the other hand, computer-assisted games can also be played for strengthening the knowledge of students.

Rules of the game should be understandable for the students, and elaborately expressed by teachers. The lessons become more beneficial, interesting and entertaining through the games organized according to the subjects (Kaptan and Korkmaz, 1999).

Because games have a significant power in integrated education of students, students have the opportunity of developing and improving their physical, emotional, social, mental, etc. properties while participating into the games. And teachers have to

have a full command on games they use at any grades of teaching and have the skill of designing games appropriate to the purpose. An educational environment without games cannot be considered for the development of students.

2. Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this study was to determine the views of classroom teachers on technique of educational games.

2.1. Problem Sentence of the Research

What are the views of classroom teachers on technique of educational games?

2.2. Sub-Problems

1. Which educational games do the classroom teachers use?
2. For what purposes do classroom teachers use the educational games?
3. What are the views of classroom teachers on functionality of educational games?
4. What are the materials that classroom teachers use for the educational games?
5. What are the views of classroom teachers on contribution of the educational games upon educational process?
6. What are the views of classroom teachers on educational game competences?

3. Material and Methods

3.1. Research Model

The research that was carried out for determining the views of classroom teachers on educational game technique was structured with a qualitative approach. The data in this research were obtained benefiting from "Semi-Structured Interview Form" as one of the qualitative research methods. Interview method is a highly efficient method for obtaining information related to attitudes, experiences, complaints, views, feelings and beliefs of individuals. This method provides advantages for revealing the social structure and social processes creating the viewpoints of individuals and for regarding a situation from the viewpoints of the individuals working on the field (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006).

3.2. Study Group

The study group of the research included 50 classroom teachers in 11 elementary education schools affiliated to central district of Mersin province.

3.3. Data Collection

The data in the research were collected with "Semi-Structured Interview Form" developed by the researcher. During the process of preparing the questions in the interview form, the purpose of the research was primarily determined, and relevant literature in accordance with this purpose was reviewed and analyzed. At the end of

this review, questions in accordance with the purpose of the research were created. Views of experts were also asked besides the reviewed literature for preparing the expressions.

For collecting the data in the research, semi-structured interview technique as one of the qualitative research data collection techniques was used. Views of the teachers were tried to be determined by means of this form including 6 open-ended questions. One-by-one individual interview was made with 50 participants determined in the sample, these were recorded, and subsequently, the records were turned into significant texts. The formula below was used for testing the reliability of coding created by the research (İftar & Tekin, 1997; cited by Gökçe, 2012).

$$\text{Consistency between Observations} = (\text{Agreement} / (\text{Agreement} + \text{Disagreement})) \times 100$$

Because the reliability between the observations was above 80%, it was concluded that the themes used in the research were possible to be used (İftar & Tekin, 1997, cited by Gökçe, 2012).

3.4. Data Analysis

Content analysis was performed to the qualitative-dimensional data obtained into research, and the data were digitalized under specific categories. The basic purpose in content analysis was to reach concepts and relationships that were possible to explain collected data. Content analysis includes conceptualizing collected data, organizing these according to revealed concepts logically, and determining the theme explaining the data (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2005: 227). The answers of the participants were coded according to the frequency of participants for using similar sentence or word structures. The codes are the symbols defining the similar answers of the questions and analyzing these organizing the data (Robson, 2001: 252). Subsequently, the categories explaining the codes, in general, were determined and interpreted.

Direct quotations were frequently included for reflecting the views of the interviewed participants dramatically. While performing the analyses related to the quantitative data, each participant was qualified with a code name. Female teachers who participated into the research were coded as F1, F2, F3, ..., and the male teachers were coded as M1, M2, M3, ...

3.5. Findings and Interpretation

Table 1: Frequency and percentage distributions table according to gender of the teachers who participated into the study group

Gender Distribution	f	%
Female	22	44%
Male	28	56%
Total	50	100%

Table 2: Frequency and percentage distributions table according to grade teachers who participated into the study group lectured

Level of Grade	f	%
1 st grade	17	34%
2 nd grade	15	30%
3 rd grade	10	20%
4 th grade	8	16%
Total	50	100%

Totally 50 classroom teachers including 22 female and 28 male participated into the research. Among these teachers, 17 lectured elementary education 1st grade, 15 lectured 2nd grade, 10 lectured 3rd grade, and 8 lectured the 4th grade.

The findings related to the first sub-problem of the research were presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Educational games used by teachers during the lessons

Educational Games	f
Grabbing the Handkerchief	11
Volleyball, Basketball, Football	10
Sit Down-Stand Up	8
I Spy	8
Dodge-ball	7
Duck Duck Goose	5
Hot-Cold	6
Boom	4
Charade	3
Blind Man's Buff	3
Puss-in-the Corner	3
Ront	3
Drama	3
One Way or the Other	2
Fruit Basket	2
Crouch Down and Get Off	2
Day and Night	2
Prance Around	2
Which is Not Here	2
Chess	1
Dart	1
Checker	1
Odd or Even	1
Who is Not Here	1
Hopscotch	1
Touch	1
Go Around Back-Go Your Point	1
Seven Towers	1
Finding the City on the Map	1
Rabbit and Fox	1
Here you Count	1
Eagles and Crows	1
Fly Above	1
Jackstones	1
Nine-Stones	1
Stop	1
Podgy	1
Total	104

When Table 3 was analyzed, 50 classroom teachers who participated into the research were noticed to use “37” different games in lessons. The number of mentioning these methods was found to be “104.” In other words, 50 classroom teachers who participated into the research used 2.08 games as average in lessons. The games classroom teachers mentioned to use most in lessons were “grabbing the handkerchief” with 11 participants, “volleyball, football, basketball” with 10 participants, “I spy” with 8 participants, and “sit down-stand up” with 8 participants.

The findings related to the second sub-problem of the research were presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Views of classroom teachers related to purposes of using the educational games

Views	f
Providing the students learn by entertaining	14
Arousing the attention (interest) of students	13
Improving the mental and physical activities of students	12
Developing positive personality traits	11
Providing more permanent learning	9
Providing students to acquire the skill of acting in groups	8
Providing students to socialize	7
Providing students to relieve psychologically	5
Developing self-confidence and self-control	5
Providing students to learn the rules	4
Providing students to understand the concepts of success and failure	4
Discovering the abilities of students	4

When Table 4 was analyzed, classroom teachers were noticed to mention “12” different views related to their purposes on using educational games in lessons. The most frequent purposes for using educational games were “providing students to learn by entertaining” with 14 participants, “arousing the attention/interest of students” with 13 participants, “improving the mental and physical activities of students” with 12 participants, and “developing positive personality traits” with 11 participants. Sample participant expressions were as below;

F1: *“I get students play one of these games when I notice that there is a decrease at interest of students towards the lesson, and they get bored. At the end of game, they start lesson with more interest.”*

M25: *“I use educational games for arousing the interest of students, to make the lesson more entertaining, and to teach subjects more efficiently.”*

M28: *“I use educational games for following the physical and mental developments of children, and to develop their feeling of competition and playing together.”*

A. Views of Classroom Teachers on Functionality of the Educational Games

The views of teachers were categorized into 2 dimensions as the ones considering as functional and the ones as non-functional.

The findings related to the third sub-problem of the research were presented in Table 5 and Table 6.

Table 5: The Views on Functionality

Views	f
Providing concrete experiences	8
Providing students to socialize	8
Providing students to have amusing time	6
Providing permanent learning	5
Increasing the willingness of students towards lessons and school	3
Providing students to be active	3
Developing the self-confidence of students	3

When we analyzed Table 5, classroom teachers were noticed to mention that educational games were functional stating that “providing concrete experiences” with 8 participants, “providing students to socialize” with 8 participants, and “providing students to have amusing time” with 6 participants.

F6: *“I think educational games make learning more permanent, and students spend very amusing time when benefited accurately.”*

M24: *“I believe that behaviors and knowledge that have been tried to be acquired through educational games become more concrete and intensive.”*

Table 6: The views on non-functionality

Views	f
Teachers’ not having adequate gaming equipment	4
Having narrow playgrounds	4
Missing materials for the games	2
Not caring much about the game	2
Games’ being defeated by technology	1
Total	13

In Table 6, classroom teachers mentioned educational games as non-functional stating that “teachers do not have adequate gaming equipment” with 4 participants, and “playgrounds are narrow” with 4 participants. Sample participants views were as below;

F20: *“I think games are not functional because these are not cared much.”*

F19: *“Games are being defeated by technology, games are rarely used. Games are not taught to children, there are no game materials, and playgrounds are very narrow.”*

The findings related to the fourth sub-problem of the research were presented in Table 7.

Table 7: The materials used for the educational games

Materials	f
Ball	25
Rope	18
Handkerchief	9
Game Cards	6
Whistle	5
Computer	4
Chalk	4
Cardboard	3
Paper	2
Stone	2

Pencil	2
Puzzle	2
A Piece of Wood	2
Play Dough	1
Chair	1
Paint	1
Abacus	1
Puzzle Books	1
Legos	1
Basket	1
Drawings	1
Cushions	1
Stick	1
Hat	1
Puppet Socks	1
Total	96

As could be seen in Table 7, classroom teachers were noticed to mention the materials they used much for educational games as “ball” with 25 participants, “rope” with 18 participants, and “handkerchief” with 9 participants. For what games they used these materials were sampled in views of the participants mentioned below;

M8: *“Seven pieces of wood for podgy, cardboard for nine-stones, etc.”*

M18: *“We use the materials such as ball, rope, whistle, handkerchief, etc. Such as using ball for stop and dodge-ball, using rope for tug of war and rope-jumping, and using the whistle for starting games, etc.”*

The findings related to the fifth sub-problem of the research were presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Views of classroom teachers on contributions of educational games upon teaching-learning

Views	f
Providing motivation for the lesson	11
Making the learning more permanent	9
Providing the lessons to be more entertaining and interesting	9
Providing the lessons to be more productive	5
Students’ learning more easily and fast	4
Providing students to relieve having a nice time	4
Providing concrete experiences	3
Providing efficient learning	3
Increasing the success in lessons	2
Being appropriate to the development level of students	2
Providing active participation of students	2
Developing problem-solving skills of the students	1

According to Table 8, the most frequent views of classroom teachers related to the contribution of educational games upon education were as “providing motivation for the lesson” with 11 participants. Also, the view of “making the learning more permanent” was the subsequent with 9 participants, and “lessons’ becoming more entertaining and interesting” was the one that was mentioned frequently with 9 participants. Views of the participants sampling these expressions were as below;

M17: *"I notice that students get rested and participated into the subsequent lesson with more pleasure after educational games. Most of the time of the children is spent with games, and the children who play games study more."*

F11: *"Games make the lesson no more boring. They provide students focus their attention again."*

F6: *"Educational games shorten the period for the teaching process of behaviors requested to be acquired, and make learning more permanent."*

M6: *"Children are in games, and games are the reason of being for children. I regard children who are deprived of games as thrown out of the world. The children who grow up with games will find themselves, will be free and responsible. If you deprive children out of games, then it will be total opposite."*

B. Views of Classroom Teachers Related to their Competences on Educational Games

In interview form of classroom teachers, 9 participants answered the question of "What do you think about competences of classroom teachers on educational games?" as "I considered them competent," and 41 participants answered as "I do not consider that they are competent," and they offered some suggestions for overcoming being not competent. These suggestions were presented in Table 7;

The findings related to the sixth sub-problem of the research were presented in Table 9.

Table 9: The suggestions offered by classroom teachers related to their incompetency on educational games

Suggestions	f
Applied game trainings should be lectured by experts	7
Studies on games should be organized during the seminar periods	5
In-service trainings should be organized	5
Games should be emphasized in curriculums of classroom teaching in universities	3
Classroom teachers should develop themselves	2
Games should be emphasized in guidebooks	2
Classrooms and school environments should be provided to be appropriate for games	2

As could be seen in Table 9, upon overcoming the incompetence of classroom teachers, 7 participants offered that "applied game trainings should be lectured by experts," 5 participants offered that "studies on games should be organized during the seminar period," and 5 participants offered that "in-service trainings should be organized." Sample participant views were as below;

M10: *"I definitely do not believe that classroom teachers have competence on games. Programs can related to educational games should be organized during the seminar period. Monthly applied game playing studies should be carried out with experts on educational games."*

M13: *"We are definitely not competent. Studies should be carried out on this during the seminar periods."*

M14: *"I think educational games are not benefited efficiently. Our competences on educational games should be developed through in-service trainings."*

F6: *"I think classroom teachers are not very adequate on educational games. I believe that applied trainings should be organized on educational games."*

M2: *"I think the institutions training classroom teachers so not carry out satisfying studies on game teaching. Therefore, this depends upon the effort of teachers. I consider that games can be included into guide books relieving the load in curriculums."*

4. Results and Discussion

It was concluded in this research that was carried out for determining the views of classroom teachers on educational game technique that teachers used as average 2.08 games in their lessons. This average was considered to be fairly low when considering that curriculums that provided students to be more active, develop students in terms of cognitive, affective and psycho-motor aspects, and provide students to have more efficient and permanent learning experiences using their sense organs more were developed in the light of constructivist approach. Because educational game technique is a multi-dimensional technique providing students to be more active developing their self-confidences making them more social and administering mental and physical activities together. When considered in terms of teaching, educational games provide students to spend pleasant time and to be more willing for school and lessons.

Children both meet some of their physical, mental, social and intellectual needs on their own and sometimes need support in some other needs as being different from adults. Games are one of the most important instruments providing them to meet some of their needs on their own. In fact, game is the leading of basic needs for children subsequent to nutrition (Gökşen, 2014:230).

The effect of game upon learning is definitely undeniable; however, there have been no adequate researches on approach of elementary education teachers towards game regarded as the most ideal period in learning with games by the educationalists. This caused questions related to what the method of teaching with games meant for teachers to remain without answers (Öztemiz and Önal, 2013:75).

In the light of teachers' views obtained in this research, it was determined that teachers used educational games for providing students to learn by entertaining, to arouse their attention, and to improve their physical and mental activities, and they believed that games caused students to have more permanent learning and concrete experiences. However, they were noticed not to have much knowledge on varieties of game, and ignored educational games in education. They suggested as reason for this to be happen that they had no adequate equipment for games, and required conditions (playground, material, classroom size) for games could not be provided. In fact, games appropriate to any situations and conditions could be designed and developed. The most frequently used games were determined to be grapping the handkerchief, volleyball-football-basketball, I spy and stand-up-sit-down.

In the experimental study carried out by Hanbaba and Bektaş (2011) upon the effect of educational games in 3rd grade Life Sciences lesson upon academic success and attitudes of the students, it was observed that educational games had significant effects

upon academic success in Life Sciences lesson. In the experimental study of Kaya and Elgün (2015), it was concluded that lecturing Science and Technology lesson with educational games contributed upon student success. And the findings of these studies were associated with the views of classroom teachers in this study upon functionality of educational games.

The findings Öztemiz and Önal (2013) obtained in their study depended upon views of teachers related to acquiring reading habit with game technique were consistent with the findings of this study. These findings were as below;

- Games are the basis for education through the viewpoints of teachers. The games included in curriculums provide opportunities for the physical and mental development of students and turning the learning process into a more efficient, permanent and entertaining process.
- Teachers more frequently preferred the traditional games such as hide and seek, blind man's buff, grapping the handkerchief and playhouse (Öztemiz and Önal, 2013: 81).

The results of the study carried out by Koçyiğit, Tuğluk and Kök (2007) on educational games were associated with the interpretations made depending upon the findings of this research.

In the study carried out by Çavuş et al. (2011), as well, it was concluded that games provided motivation in students towards the lesson, and this was consistent with the findings of this study.

At the end of the study carried out by Toptop and Ocak (2010) upon views of classroom teachers related to the implementation of educational games, it was concluded that classroom teachers regarded them adequate at formation level for the educational games, and this was not consistent with the finding of this study.

Elementary education students cannot be considered as being deprived of games when started to elementary education grade subsequent to pre-school teaching that is embedded with games and being subjected to constant information load. It is necessary to melt information into various games and these should be designed as appropriate to the properties of the development age the children are in.

In Psycho-Social Development Theory, Ericson qualified the period between 2 and 5 years old as "game age," and the period between 6 and 15 as "school age." In game age period, games have a vital importance for the development of children. With games, children learn to overcome the reality repeating difficult subjects and tasks (Ulusoy, 2008:144). This is a period when children acquire assertiveness.

In school age period, cognitive skills of the children and the new social roles they learned are tested. Children endeavor for managing the best of what they are expected to do (Ulusoy, 2008, 145). Depending upon the properties of this period is possible to mention that games are remarkable for children to feel themselves adequate and be socialized developing self-confidence. Furthermore, students can be provided to comprehend the feeling of competition developing the feelings of tolerance, respect and responsibility through games.

According to the findings of the research, it was noticed that most of the teachers could not go beyond classical games and classical materials for years, and could not develop themselves on games. And 41 out of 50 teachers expressed this mentioning that “classroom teachers are not competent on educational game technique.” Some suggestions were possible to be offered depending upon the findings of the research and suggestions offered by classroom teachers for overcoming this incompetence.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

1. More time and content should be created for the games included within the scope of drama lesson in classroom teaching curriculums of universities.
2. By MNE (Ministry of National Education), in-service trainings related to introduction and implementation of educational games should be organized for classroom teachers.
3. The games possible to be used for any lessons should be organized, and seminars on this should be organized for classroom teachers.
4. Trainings should be organized for the school management on preparing the physical structure of school as appropriate to games.
5. Various projects should be designed on games, and these projects should be provided to be at an inter-classroom, inter-school level.

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