EVALUATION OF OPINIONS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS ON THE METHOD OF EDUCATION WITH GAME

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Abstract:

This study is conducted to determine opinions of primary school teachers on the method of education with game. The study tried to determine general opinions of primary school teachers on the method of education with game, whether they use the method of education with game, the effects of game on learning, types of games they use in education, effects of game in introducing the reading habit, and general recommendations of primary school teachers about the method of education with game. In the study, the data that were obtained from 50 primary school teachers at primary schools within provincial borders of Gaziantep by using the interview method, one of the qualitative research methods, were analyzed using the content analysis method. As a result of the study, majority of participants expressed an opinion on effective use of the method of education with game in the classes. Also, participant primary school teachers offered recommendations about the re-arrangement of primary school programs, providing in-service training courses, supply of course materials, providing physical conditions, compliance of activities with education, and supply of course materials about game. In conclusion, participant primary school teachers stated that game has important effects on development of children, game increases efficiency of students in the classroom, they learn faster and easier, game increases interest of children in a course and they use the technique of education with game in all courses.

Keywords: primary school teacher, game, education with game, method of teaching

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Introduction

Game is an activity that covers the life of a child (Alıncak, 2016). A child knows himself, the nature, environment and other people through games. At the same time, a child learns learning while playing a game. In early childhood education institutions, the most effective method for educating children is game. When interacting with children, games are used to reach information and acquire new skills, abilities and strengthening (Yıkılmaz et al., 2015; Bilgiç et al., 2016). Game activities certainly exist in all environments where the children live. A child comprehends life better thanks to the game. After love, the most important need for a child is game (MoE, 2009).

The concept of game and gains of the game is defined by different scientists in various ways. According to Marsell (2009), game is the most important way that prepares child for his adulthood in the future. Having an effective importance in all periods of life, game is defined as all physical and mental activities that aim to have fun or have pleasure (Büyük Larousse, 1986). Game is a concept that not only provides children with fun and happiness but also offers a socialization environment between individuals as it creates interaction during the game (Alıncak et al., 2016; Alıncak and Abakay, 2016). In this way, characteristics of students, such as mental training ability (Özdal et al., 2013), cooperation, friendship, joint action, self-confidence and taking responsibility can be developed and their personalities can be settled (Aykutlu & Şen, 2004). Game activities are a need for child. Thanks to the game, child expresses himself in a more comfortable way. Everything that is acquired during game becomes permanent. Therefore, children should be equipped with all kinds of gains through the game (Sel, 1974).Educational games develop certain motoric qualities and psychological and social behaviors that are inherent to the game (Ayan et al., 2015). Game is the most effective period of childhood stage. A child likes playing game as a need in his nature (Koçyiğit et al. 2007). Yavuzer (1987) defines game as an activity that offers the opportunity for children to learn by their own experience anything that cannot be taught by anyone.

Game is a phenomenon that exists in all stages of a child's life. Intrinsically, a person expresses himself and becomes energetic when playing a game. In particular, game is the most important stage of a child's development in educational terms (Tekin, 1995). Ergün (1980) stated that the actual game is the one that is played during the childhood. Asking first stage students in primary education to remain still during a class is contrary to developmental characteristics of children (Aykaç, 2005).Game activities are a process of event that satisfies a child in line with his needs (Lindon, 2001).That the game is spontaneous, raises curiosity in individuals and reminds certain

elements that are forgotten in the mind of people gives an educational value to the game (Mead, 2007). Game prepares an individual for life and is an effective method for expression of inner world. A child expresses his inner world through the game. A child tries to understand the world and communicates through the roles he plays during the game and thus his personality is formed and developed. The knowledge that is acquired during the game becomes permanent. Game is thinking for a child through experiment. When playing games, he spontaneously learns the information, skills and experience he needs for his life. Therefore, game is the most important way in education of children. Games are very effective in learning process as they always keep the children active (MoE, 2009). Main objective of pedagogy is to ensure that the most persuasive and effective method is learnt for a society of free individuals. Thus, game has an active role in learning of individuals (Krentz, 1998).

Game is an effective tool for mental and cognitive development of individuals. Individuals have to gain knowledge through enquiry, trial, experience and creative thinking for learning. Children find answer to questions in their mind, find new discoveries, develop their skill of challenging problems and practice their skills through the game (Akman, 2002). Game is one of the essential main sources for a child to be happy. Thanks to the game, we can determine what a child likes and does not like (Öğülmüş, 2009).A child acquires and learns everything by practice and experience in education with game. A child uses his all senses through the game. In this way, a permanent and natural learning process occurs. Considering that children always play games and like playing very much, it is important to use the concept of game in the education process effectively. Game is effective in entertainment and education of child and plays an effective role in physical development of individual. Also, game also helps a child know his body. When we compare children who play games and do no play games, it is observed that those who play develop more healthy, fit and faster compared with others (MoE, 2009).Thanks to games, children communicates with and know their circle better and include their gains in their games as well (Üçer, 1985).

Under current conditions, it is possible to equip children with all courses through drama. Because a child acquires all experiences through the game and develop his ability to challenge and think in the face of problems (MoE, 2006). Children also develop themselves by learning scientific concepts fast thanks to the concept of game (Şahin, 2001).

When age and development characteristics of children in the growth process are examined, education with game stands out as the most suitable method for learning in terms of educational goals and transferring these skills to his attitudes and behaviors. Considering the data of pedagogy, they indicate that learning by experiencing facilitates

learning process and acquiring positive behaviors. Ellialtıoğlu (2005) sees game as an irreplaceable lifestyle and the most effective way of learning for the development of an individual. Children's games emerge as an important issue to lay emphasis on since giving education with game ensures that individuals learn the rules of their society, certain advantages are offered for educators and children are known by means of games (Sağlam, 1997).

According to pedagogy, game is accepted as the most effective and important tool for education. In particular, it is effective in transferring the skills acquired in preschool period, the first period of education, and in school years, to future generations. Thanks to the gains acquired through games, positive qualities are reinforced and important developments are achieved in individuals. We can call learning with game directly as learning by living (Aral, 2000). Poyraz and Dere (2003) stated that game is the most natural learning environment in a child's development stage. We can teach individuals certain knowledge and develop their imagination by means of games, because the games develop an individual's self-expression, freedom and thinking (Gönen & Dalkılıç, 1998). According to Adler (1997) and Stanley (2009), the method of education with game provides an entertaining learning process for children, while it is an effective method for increasing academic success of children.

Majority of games played helps language development of children as well. In particular, playing house and other dramatic games, which have become a symbol, help children in acquiring the ability to form proper sentences and use sound tones properly. From this perspective, games improve children's vocabulary and help children comprehend faster what is taught and express themselves better (MoE, 2009). Game is an important concept in terms of pedagogy. Some experts evaluate game as "*an art of learning*". Also, game is considered as a way for children to release their excessive energy, prevent them from misbehaving and satisfy children's need to imitate. The effect of game on children and its instructive feature cannot be discussed. From a general perspective, the concept of game is not a means of learning for a child. Also, a child does not play to learn but learns while playing and acquires this with life-related experiences (Yavaşoğlu, 2005).

This study is conducted to determine opinions of primary school teachers on the method of education with game. In line with this purpose, answers were sought to the following questions. Regarding the primary school teachers:

- What are their general opinions on the method of education with game?
- Do they use the method of education with game?
- What are their opinions on the impact of game on learning?
- What are the types of games they use in education with game?

- What are their opinions about the effects of game on bringing in the reading habit?
- What are their recommendations about the method of education with game?

Method

In the study, case study pattern, one of the qualitative research methods, was used. Compared with quantitative researches, qualitative research is a method that gives the researcher an opportunity of flexibility and offers more different approaches in data collection methods, data analysis and research design (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2006). Case study is a research method examining the investigated case within its framework; it is mostly used when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the environment were not clearly drawn with sharp lines and more than one evidence or data sources exist (Yin, 1984; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006).

Study Group

An open-ended questionnaire, which was developed to determine opinions of primary school teachers about the method of education with game, was applied to 50 primary school teachers who work at official primary schools affiliated with Gaziantep Provincial Directorate of National Education. Data related to the study group are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Personal Characteristics of the Study Group (N = 50)

Variables	Groups	n	%
Place of Duty	Province	35	80
	District	15	20
Term of Duty	1-5 Years	10	20
	6-10 Years	11	22
	11-15 Years	8	16
	16-20 Years	12	24
	21-30 Years	9	18
Sex	Male	29	58
	Female	21	42
Class	1	15	30
	2	8	16
	3	9	18
	4	18	36
Education	Bachelor Degree	43	86
	Postgraduate	7	14

Table 1 gives some personal characteristics of the study group. 35 (80%) of participant teachers work in the provincial center of Gaziantep, while 15 (20%) work in the districts. When it comes to their term of duty, it is observed that 10 (20%) teachers are serving for 1-5 years, 11 (22%) are serving for 6-10 years, 8 (16%) are serving for 11-15 years, 12 (24%) are serving for 16-20 years, and 9 (18%) are serving for 21-30 years. 29 (58%) of teachers are male and 21 (42%) are female. When it comes to their classes, 15 (30%) teachers serve in the first grade, 8 (16%) teachers serve in the second grade, 9 (18%) teachers serve in the third grade, and 18 teachers (36%) serve in the fourth grade. In terms of their level of education, 43 (86%) teachers have bachelor degree, while 7 (14%) teachers have postgraduate degree.

Preparation and Application of Open-Ended Questionnaire

In order to prepare the interview form that will be used in the research, 95 primary school teachers were asked to write an essay about their opinions on the method of education with game. Draft form of the interview form was developed based on the essays collected and the knowledge obtained from the relevant literature. One of the logical ways used in testing scope validity of measuring tool developed for the research is obtaining expert opinion (Büyüköztürk, 2006).The interview form was presented to the opinion of experts, necessary arrangements were made in line with the opinions obtained, and the interview form, consisting of 5 questions that determine personal characteristics and 6 open-ended questions, was finalized. These questions are as follows:

- What are their general opinions on the method of education with game?
- Do they use the method of education with game?
- What are their opinions on the impact of game on learning?
- What are the types of games they use in education with game?
- What are their opinions about the effects of game on bringing in the reading habit?
- What are their recommendations about the method of education with game?

Final form of the interview form was applied to a total of 50 teachers who serves in the province and districts of Gaziantep (35 in province, 15 in districts) and the data were collected accordingly. During the application, purpose of the research was explained to participants and they were informed about the importance of answers they will give. As a result of the answers given by the participants to the measuring tool, multiple statements were collected under common themes.

Analysis of Data

The data that were obtained from the interview form used in the research were analyzed using the content analysis method utilized in qualitative researches. In qualitative researches, in contrast to normality and statistical process (Shapiro and Francia, 1972) such as quantitative researches (Özdal, 2016a; 2016b), content analysis is used to analyze theoretically unspecific themes and create and analyze sub-themes if any (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006). The data obtained were recorded, grouped and coded separately. These groups and codes were asked to the field experts, and finalized and prepared for analysis based on evaluation of experts. With the content analysis, themes were defined for each question and tables were created by calculating frequency and percentage of these themes. Descriptive analysis method was used to evaluate the data. Finally, a reporting was made and findings were presented.

Results and Findings

This section includes the findings that were obtained as a result of interviews held with teachers in order to determine opinions of primary school teachers serving at official schools of Ministry of National Education about the method of education with game.

Findings and Comments on General Opinions of Study Group about the Education with Game

Table 2 shows breakdown of opinions of study group in relation to their general opinions about the education with game. When opinions of participants about the education with game are examined, 8 themes were found. It was observed that participants expressed more than one theme. From among these themes, the following stand out in order of percentage: learning becomes permanent (19.5%), teaching becomes more effective (19.5%), interest and desire for course increases (14.8%), learning is easier and faster (13.3%), it is beneficial for development of child (13.3%), they learn courses by having fun (9.4%), it increases motivation and attention (6.2%), and it contributes to development of intelligence (4.0%).

Table 2: Breakdown of Opinions of Study Group in Relation to Their General Opinions about the Education with Game

Themes	n	%
Learning becomes permanent	25	19.5
Learning becomes more effective	25	19.5
Interest and desire for course increases	19	14.8
Learning is easier and faster	17	13.3
It is beneficial for development of child	17	13.3
They learn courses by having fun	12	9.4
It increases motivation and attention	8	6.2
It contributes to development of intelligence	5	4
Total	**128**	**100**

Findings and Comments of Study Group on Education with Game During the Courses

Table 3 shows the breakdown of opinions of study group on education with game during the courses. 2 themes were found in the breakdown of opinions of participants on education with game during the courses. Accordingly, 40 (80%) teachers said that they always teach with game during the courses, while 10 (20%) teachers said that they sometimes teach with game during the courses.

Table 3: Breakdown of Opinions of Study Group on Education with Game during the Courses

Themes	N	%
We always teach with game	40	80
We sometimes teach with game	10	20
Total	**50**	**100**

Findings and Comments of Study Group on Effect of Game on Learning

Table 4 shows breakdown of opinions of study group in relation to their general opinions about the effect of game on learning. 7 themes were found from the opinions of participants about the effect of game on learning. It was observed that participants expressed more than one theme. From among these themes, the following stand out in order of percentage: the effect of game on learning substantial (27.1%), learning becomes permanent and effective (27.1%), learning is easier and faster (18.6%), learning happens by having fun (8.5%), students are more interested and willing (8.5%), it increases motivation and attention (5.1%), and it enables multiple thinking (5.1%).

Table 4: Breakdown of Opinions of Study Group about the Effect of Game on Learning

Themes	N	%
The effect of game on learning substantial	32	27.1
Learning becomes permanent and effective	32	27.1
Learning is easier and faster	22	18.6
Learning happens by having fun	10	8.5
Students are more interested and willing	10	8.5
It increases motivation and attention	6	5.1
It enables multiple thinking	6	5.1
Total	**118**	**100**

Findings and Comments of Study Group on Types of Games Used in Education

Table 5 shows breakdown of opinions of study group in relation to their opinions about the types of games used in education. 9 themes were found from the opinions of participants about types of games they use in education. It was observed that participants expressed more than one theme. From among these themes, the following stand out: traditional games (18.9%), classroom games (17.8%), drama and role play games (16.7%), rhythmic counting games (10.0%), picture and card games (10.0%), subject-related games (8.9%), educational and entertaining games (7.8%), word games (5.5%), and song games (4.4%).

Table 5: Breakdown of Opinions of Study Group in Relation to the Types of Games Used in Education

Themes	N	%
Traditional games	17	18.9
Classroom games	16	17.8
Drama and role play games	15	16.7
Rhythmic counting games	9	10
Picture and card games	9	10
Subject-related games	8	8.9
Educational and entertaining games	7	7.8
Word games	5	5.5
Song games	4	4.4
Total	**90**	**100**

Findings and Comments of Study Group on Introduction of Reading Habit with Game

Table 6 shows breakdown of opinions of study group in relation to their opinions about introduction of reading habit with game. 6 themes were found from the opinions of

participants about introduction of reading habit with game. It was observed that participants expressed more than one theme. From among these themes, the following stand out in order of percentage: yes, it introduces the reading habit (55.7%), it reinforces understanding and perception ability (10.1%), it speeds up the reading (10.1%), it races children with award system (10.15), game is not effective in developing reading habit (7.6%), and it improves imagination (6.4%).

Table 6: Breakdown of Data of Study Group about İntroduction of Reading Habit with Game

Themes	N	%
Yes, it introduces the reading habit	44	55.7
It reinforces understanding and perception ability	8	10.1
It speeds up the reading	8	10.1
It races children with award system	8	10.1
Game is not effective in developing reading habit	6	7.6
It improves imagination	5	6.4
Total	**79**	**100**

Findings and Comments on Recommendations of Study Group about the Education with Game

Table 7 shows breakdown of opinions of study group in relation to their recommendations about the education with game. 9 themes were found from the recommendations of participants about the education with game. It was observed that participants expressed more than one theme. From among these themes, the following stand out in order of percentage: other courses should be taught with game (34.8%), the program should be reviewed (18.9%), in-service training should be offered in physical education (15.9%), course materials should be provided (5.8%), books related to the curriculum should be available (5.8%), games should be diversified (5.8%), games should replace exams (5.8%), physical and environmental conditions should be corrected (4.3%), and selected games should be suitable for education (2.9%).

Table 7: Breakdown of Recommendations of Study Group About the Education With Game

Themes	N	%
Other courses should be taught with game	48	34.8
The program should be reviewed	26	18.9
In-service training should be offered in physical education	22	15.9
Course materials should be provided	8	5.8
Books related to the curriculum should be available	8	5.8
Games should be diversified	8	5.8
Games should replace exams	8	5.8
Physical and environmental conditions should be corrected	6	4.3
Selected games should be suitable for education	4	2.9
Total	**138**	**100**

Discussion

This section covers the results that were obtained regarding the education with game as a result of interviews held with primary school teachers who work at official schools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education.

When we look at general opinions of study group about the education with game, majority stated that learning becomes permanent and teaching becomes more effective thanks to the game. Also, the study group expressed that learning becomes easier and faster, game is beneficial for development of child, students learn courses by having fun, game increases motivation and attention of students, and game contributes to development of intelligence. Based on these opinions, it can be suggested that game speeds up learning and perception and makes useful contributions in terms of development of children.

Considering the opinions of study group about education with game during the courses, most of teachers stated that they always teach with games. Also, 10 teachers said that they sometimes teach with games. Based on such opinions of teachers, it can be expressed that game has substantial support on teaching.

Three themes stood our when we look at general opinions of study group about the effect of game on learning. These include the statements that game has substantial effect on learning, learning with game is effective and permanent and learning is easier and faster. Also, the study group stated that learning happens by having fun, student becomes more interested and willing for the course thanks to game, it increases attention and motivation of student and game enables multiple thinking. Accordingly, it can be said that majority of teachers think that game has a high level of effect on learning.

Nine themes were found when we look at the opinions of study group about the types of games they use in education. They include traditional games, classroom games, drama and role-play games, rhythmic counting games, picture and card games, subject-related games, educational and entertaining games, word games and song games.

When we look at the opinions of study group on introduction of reading habit with game, a substantial part of the participants expressed that game is effective in bringing in the reading habit. Accordingly, it can be said that game is a beneficial method for reading in early school period of children. Also, it was found that the study group thinks game develops understanding and perception, game speeds up reading, it races children with award system, and it improves imagination of children, and it should be supported via teacher's beliefs and knowledge (Abakay, 2013).

9 themes were found when we look at the recommendations of study group about the education with game. Majority of participants stated that other courses should also be taught with game. Moreover, the study group recommended that the program should be reviewed; teachers should be provided with in-service training, course materials should be provided, books related to the curriculum should be available, games should be diversified, games should replace exams, physical and environmental conditions should be corrected, and selected games should be suitable for education.

First studies about the education with game were conducted in areas of teaching reading and writing, mathematics, computer, and effect of game on child development in pre-school period. Ayan and Dündar (2009) stated that a child expresses himself easier during the game, children have a freer and creative personality in a game environment, and thus the use of game is an essential need in order to develop creativity skills of students in educational environments.

Fırat (2007) said that they always bring children into the forefront in education with game in foreign language education, they try to keep them active and learn by practice and experience, they ensure that all students participate in courses willingly, students learn the words easily, keep them in their minds without forgetting and tell the words without any difficulty when they are asked to do so.

Er (2008) stated that the use of game in foreign language education makes a positive effect in motivating student as a classroom activity, supports participatory and active learning and makes an important contribution in creating an actual communication environment and use of actual language.

In their study, Ören and Avcı (2004) concluded that compared to traditional teaching, education with game is effective in increasing academic success in teaching science. Bayırtepe and Tüzün (2007) found that game-based environment decreases concern, helps individual learning and supports learning visually.

The results that were obtained from the studies listed above support the results we obtained from this study. In conclusion, majority of primary school teachers thinks that game is beneficial for development and growth of children, learning happens faster and more permanent with game, it is beneficial in bringing in the reading habit, it increases efficiency of student in the classroom and thus it is recommended that other courses should also be taught with game and physical conditions are corrected accordingly.

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