

Teachers' Views On Activities Practised In Elementary Schools

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ABSTRACT

In this research, positive and negative effects of club activities, the difficulties students had and the thoughts of teachers on how to conduct club activities effective are tried to be determined. In the research, where qualitative research and interview techniques are applied, ten teachers who work in Ankara Tevfik Fikret Private Elementary School, are chosen incidentally to be interviewed. During the interviews with the teachers, four questions were asked and their answers were recorded. Data were resolved with descriptive analysis and these results were found: Teachers think that these club activities help students to discover and improve their interests and talents and help them to learn how to socialise and work with a plan. These activities also improve their general knowledge, creative thinking skills and push them to take responsibility. According to teachers, normally club activities have no negative effects on students but some problems can occur because of not choosing the suitable club according to student's interests and talents. The most frequent problems that teachers face during club activities are the insufficiency of time, not being able to find an appropriate place to perform club activities and lack of material and activity variations. Due to these reasons, teachers offered to extend the spare time of club activities and they also offered to find new and more appropriate places and enriching materials for club activities. After all those suggestions, teachers requested students to channel themselves to club activities according to their interests and talents.

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Keywords:

Club Activities, Elementary school, Students

INTRODUCTION

Every society tries to raise individuals who has learnt qualities with the education system. In order to gain these qualities to individuals, not only the activities within classroom are important but also the activities outside classroom are contributing significantly to their personality. In the past, "social activities" and "club activities" were known as "activities outside classroom". Activities outside classroom are becoming more important because schools are the first and most important places for the personality development but these activities have been of secondary importance and unappreciated. Education has come down to only the activities within classroom, the contributions of activities outside classroom have been ignored and even the times that were supposed to be spared for them were given to the activities within classroom (Varış, 1997). Some skills that are tried to be redounded to students with social events and club activities do exist. The skills that are tried to be redounded are self-confidence, responsibility, creative thinking and solving problems in the fields of social, cultural and art.

The skills that are stated in the regulation of Social Events and Club Activities is published in 2005 by the Ministry of National Education can be summarised as; respecting the rights of others, embracing the democratic principles, realizing their skills, creating personal targets, improving their talents and interests in various fields, making use of their spare time, working with plans, respecting different views and opinions, improving their tolerance (MEB, 2005). Social activities and club activities are organised by a guidance teacher. These activities are practised for one hour in two weeks. These studies that are conducted by student clubs and charity services, are carried out by the cooperation of school administration and parents. Students who are responsible in these activities and guidance teachers decide together to the studies that will be done. These studies can be culture and literature, music, painting/visual arts, informatics and network, folk dances, theatre, librarianship, chess. Different student clubs can be created suitable to the social, physical and geographical conditions of schools (MEB, 2005).

Club activities that fulfills the purposes of education programme and defined as increase in possibilities are an important part of education programme (Varış, 1997). In these studies many attitudes, behaviours and skills are gained. With these activities, students can develop many different skills and

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values such as; sense of responsibility, planning managing time effectively . Moreover, with these activities, students find the opportunity to practise their skills and knowledge (Başaran, 2000).

In elementary schools, students are obliged to be in these activities but it was noticed that these activities were not practiced with enough importance, usually activities were performed just to complete and they were decreasing from the aim and even teachers were not volunteering for these activities, so mainly they were not considered very important (Ankara ili Eğitim Denetmenleri Başkanlığı, 2011)..

Social events and club activities are based on "volunteering". However, in practice, this "volunteering" turns into an obligation. No individual can be forced into any of these social activities. Due to its nature, social activities do not accept forcing and conditioning. This "individual" word covers school directors, teachers, families, students and in short, it covers everyone who is in education. Since social activities are based on "volunteering", determining what type of activities they will be are all up to teachers and school administrators. At this point, although regulation and circulars published regarding with social activities brought certain standards, it is still not enough to put activities in procedures and documents into action in real use (EARGED, 2009).

Students need a guidance during the social activities are practised and planned. This situation requires teachers and school administrators to be the guidance teacher. Their role must be shaped behind students interests, talents and wishes and never gets beyond them. Practising or not practising social activities at school or how much of it is practised are closely related to the interests, instructions, controls and attention of school administrators. Adaption of required attitudes, behaviours and purposes by teachers and school administrators can only teach students to do the same. Practising these activities is relevant to its purposes, determining and removing of difficulties encountered during club activities can only be possible if more effective methods are brought forward. The purposes of this research is to reveal the views of teachers who are working in Ankara Tevfik Fikret Private Elementary School on club activities. Answers will be replied in accordance with this framework:

1. What are the positive effects of club activities on students according to teachers?
2. What are the negative effects of club activities on students according to teachers?
3. What are the difficulties teachers face during club activities?
4. What are the suggestions of teachers on how to do club activities more effective?

METHOD

Qualitative research method was used in this study. Qualitative research provides more in depth information than quantitative researches. With interviews, observations, documents and content analysis more in depth and detailed information can be acquired (Tavşancıl and Aslan, 2001; Şencan, 2005). Since the purposes of the research is to determine the views of teacher, application of qualitative research model is decided.

Research is organised as a case study. Case studies can be conducted in a natural environment, a class, a neighborhood, a group, an organisation etc... These studies aim to interpret the research environment in depth and as a whole. The researcher who is conducting a case study searches the answers for the questions of "what", "how" and "why". For this, methods like observing, interviewing and document analysis can be used (Şencan 2005; Yıldırım and Şimşek 2004).

Material

Interview technique is used to gather data in the research. Interview is a method, which requires mutual interaction, based on asking people who are included to research and getting the answers of those questions (Stewart and Cash, 1985. Akt. Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2004). An interview form was created to gather data. The form of the interview is gathered to collect opinions of different people on same topics (Patton, 1987. Akt. Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2004). In this interview method, four questions were asked to the teachers and data were recorded.

Data Analyses

Since the research was conducted as a case study, the environment of the study was Ankara Tevfik Fikret Private Elementary School teachers. Ten teachers are determined incidentally as a sample. While determining samples, names of teachers are written on a piece of paper and put in a bag and ten of them were determined by lot. Eight of the teachers are women and two of them are men. The teachers are coded as T1, T2... The acquired data are analysed with descriptive analysis method. Data, which are acquired from descriptive analysis, are summarized and interpreted according to the determined categories. The purpose in this analysis is to present these acquired and interpreted data to the reader (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2004). Acquired data are regulated and presented within the framework of research questions.

FINDINGS

Teachers views about positive effects of club activities on students are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Teachers views about positive effects of club activities on students

Theme(categories)	Codes	n	%
Positive effects of the club activities	Happiness of students(T1)	1	10
	Students gathering information about life(T2)	1	10
	Students increasing their general knowledge(T3,T8,T10)	3	30
	Socialization of students(T2,T6,T8)	3	30
	Students discovering their interests and talents(T3,T5,T6,T7,T9)	5	50
	Students improving their skills of planned study, taking responsibility and creative thinking abilities(T3,T8)	2	20
	Relaxation of students(T4)	1	10
	Students improving self-confidence(T5)	1	10
	Students experiencing individual success(T6,T10)	2	20
	Students working in cooperation(T7,T10)	2	20

When we study the first Table we can see that fifty percent of teachers think that club activities improve students discovery of interests and talents. According to thirty percent of teachers club activities help students socialize and develop their general knowledge. This is followed by twenty percent of teachers say that club activities improve students creative thinking, planned study and responsibility skills and cooperation. Some quotations from the teachers as follows.

I think that students learn a lot of things about life in extra curricular different club activities. This will help students not only culturally but also in their daily lives also as students work with other students from different classes this will help them improve socially.(T2)

It supports students' social development. In addition, it helps them to discover their interests and talents. They can improve themselves about working according to a plan, taking responsibility and being creative.(T3)

Gathering around with different classes improves their communication skills. It contributes them to socialise. It teaches them to act with a sense of duty. It creates new fields of information.(T8)

Teachers views about negative effects of club activities on students are presented in Table 2.

Table2. Teachers views about negative effects of club activities on students

Theme(categories)	Codes	n	%
Negative effects of the club activities	No negative effects(T2,T3,T4,T5,T8)	5	50
	Gathering around of different students making adjustment period difficult(T2)	1	10
	Reluctancy of students who cannot use their time effectively(T9)		
	Slow learners having sense of failure(T9)	1	10
	Not being in an appropriate club for Their interests and talents(T10)	1	10

When Table 2 is analyzed, it is seen that fifty percent of teachers don't think club activities have a negative effect. This is followed by ten percent of teachers thinking gathering around of different students making adjustment period difficult, reluctancy of students who cannot use their time effectively, slow learners having sense of failure and in case of not being in an appropriate club for their talents and interests. Some quotations from theachers as follows.

Generally, I don't see any negative side about club activities. Only because different students gathering around in the same club, it can cause some problems in the adjustment period.(T2)

Students may feel unsuccessful if the club they choose is inappropriate. Apart from that I don't think it will have a negative effect of club activities. I think it is a necessity to have a well-planned club activity.(T3)

I don't think it has a negative effect.(T5)

Reluctancy of students who can't use their time effectively, slow learners not being able to finish their tasks on time.(T9)

Teachers views about the difficulties during club activities are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Teachers views about the difficulties during club activities

Theme(categories)	Codes	n	%
Difficulties during club Activities	Insufficiency of time(T1,T2,T3,T4,T5,T6,T8,T10)	8	80
	Teachers not being a volunteer(T3)	1	10
	Having difficulties in making school trips(T3)	1	10
	Low motivation levels of students who is not in an appropriate club for their interests and talents(T3,T5)	2	20
	Absence of material(T3,T5)	2	20
	Lack of places(T3,T4,T5,T8,T10)	5	50

When Table 3 is analyzed, it is seen that eighty percent of teachers indicate that the most common difficulty during club activities is insufficiency of time. After that fifty percent of teachers think that there is a lack of place. This is followed by twenty percent of teachers stating that the absence of material. Lastly, ten percent of teachers say that reluctance of teachers, having difficulties in making school trips, students being demoralized in case of not being able to find a suitable club for their talents and interests, having problems finding activities and students' not being known by teachers are among difficulties.

It is too hard to organise trips about activities. Because there is only one hour for activities so there is no sufficient time for it. At the same time, students who don't have the interests and talents can join the clubs, too. This may also cause motivational problems.(T2)

Limitation of time , place and material(T5)

Insufficiency of time, problem of finding activities, reluctance of some group members(T6)

Physical conditions can influence activities in a negative way. Restricted study time decreases productivity.(T8)

Teachers suggestions about how to make club activities more effective are presented in Table 4.

Table 3. Teachers suggestions about how to make club activities more effective

Theme(categories)	Codes	n	%
Suggestions for making club activities more effective	Coming up with a product as a result of club activities(T1)	1	10
	Increasing the duration(T2,T3,T4,T5,T8)	5	50
	Directing students to clubs according to their talents(T2,T3,T6,T9)	4	40
	Receiving help from experts about the activities(T2)	1	10
	Preparing appropriate places for club activities(T3,T4,T5,T8)	4	40
	Enriching activities and materials(T5,T7)	2	20
	Doing activities outside the school(T7)	1	10
	Doing activities during the lesson(T9)	1	10
	Increasing type of the clubs(T10)	1	10
	Limiting the number of students in clubs(T10)	1	10

When Table 4 is analyzed, it is seen that fifty percent of teachers suggest increasing duration to make club more effective. It is followed by forty percent of teachers suggestions on directing students to club activities in accordance with their abilities and preparing appropriate places for club activities. Enriching activities and materials are suggested by twenty percent. These are followed by ten percent of teachers suggesting coming up with a product as a result of club activities, receiving help from experts about the works, doing activities out of the school, doing club activities during the lesson, increasing different types of the clubs and limiting the number of students in club.

Provided that they are on different days, two lessons should be held in a week. Appropriate places should be prepared.(T4)

Special classrooms or application areas should be established. Materials should be enriched. Students should be given opportunity to work not only in specific hours but also in the hours appropriate to them.(T5)

There can be club classrooms. Students should be able to maintain their activities without time concerns. Apart from club hours they should be able to maintain their activities by setting a specific meeting time.(T8)

Students should be able to go to clubs which they preferred, club activities should be spreaded during the lesson.(T9)

RESULT, DISCUSSION, AND SUGGESTIONS

In this study of determining teachers views on club activities can be summarised as follows; Teachers think club activities have positive effects on students. The positive effects that teachers think club activities have for students are discovering and improving their interests and talents. It also provides other oppurtunities such as, to socialise, to improve their general knowledge, to work with a plan, to improve their sense of responsibility and creative thinking skills, to work cooperatively and to taste individual success. Based on these views, it can be said that club activities are helpful for students to gain many positive qualities and it helps them to discover and improve their interests and talents. The datas acquired in the research showed similarities with the research of "Karşlı"(2006). Karşlı has also found many positive effects of club activities on students in the research where teachers and school administrators took part in. Some of those effects are, understanding yourself, realising your talents and working with a plan. Adopting to different situations and expressing your views are among those effects. Again, approaching with tolerance towards different views and understandings and being considerate and attentive in social relations are also among them. There are some similarities between this research and the research "Ulucan and the others"(2010) made. Ulucan and the others states that social clubs provides more oppurtunity for students to express themselves. Helping students realise their interests and desires, increasing their wish to make researches and examinations, providing a high motivation for studens to produce projects are among the possitive effects of club activities that are found in this research. Most of the teachers think that club activities have no negative effects on students. However, teachers said that students who couldn't take part in clubs according to their interests and talents, have motivational problems and students who couldn't use time well have feelings of being unsuccessful and unwilling. "club activities have no negative effects on students"(as stated in first answer) and "club activities have many positive effects on students" are demonstrating consistency. The negative effects of club activities on students can be related to choosing the suitable clubs according to their interests and talents. This is mentioned in the suggestions part. The biggest problems teachers encounter during club activities are the insufficiency of time, finding the appropriate place to do club activities, the shortage of materials and diversity of activities. Insufficiency of the spared time for club activities and practising just for completing them shows that the importance of club activities are not fully appreciated. Not being able to find a place, materials and activities also shows the lack of preparation made for these programmes. The problem of finding required materials for club activities, which was found in the research of EARGED(2009) coincides with the findings of this research. Teachers believe that doing club activities more effective depends on increasing the spared time, preparing appropriate places, enriching activity types and materials and channeling students to clubs according to their interests and talents. The suggestions teachers made are coinciding with the difficulties encountered during club activities stated in third answer and it is once more revealing the difficulties teachers have during club activities on time, place, material and activities. The suggestions made depending on these results are as follows: The time spared for club activities must be increased. Programmes of club activities must be prepared and detailed activities and materials must exist in these programmes. The physical conditions of the school must be taken into consideration, so that every club can be done according to its nature. Clubs must be described effectively to students, so that students can choose the club according to their interests and talents. Students must be directed to clubs according to their interests and talents. The projects that are made by students must be exhibited at the end of education year in order to encourage

students to participate in these activities. Teachers should carry out club activities according to their interests and talents. Parents must be lectured on the importance of club activities.

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