

PERCEPTIONS OF COVID 19 AND ONGOING PANDEMICS BY CHILDREN IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

İLKOKUL ÇAĞINDAKİ ÇOCUKLARIN COVID 19 VE DEVAM EDEN PANDEMİYE İLİŞKİN ALGILARI

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Abstract

The present study is aimed to define how the COVID-19 pandemic was perceived amongst the primary school children by the pictures they did. The study group, in which the qualitative research method was used, included 241 first grade students in a primary school in the Antalya Kepez region, which was selected by the convenient sampling method. While collecting data in the research, students were asked "what do you understand when the COVID-19 is mentioned?" and to draw a picture of their feelings. The data were evaluated as a percentage (%) and frequency with the SPSS program. In the conclusion of the study, it was observed that most of the students in the study group perceived the COVID-19 as "an insect", and less of the students perceived it as "a disease". COVID-19 pandemic is drawn by the children generally as a free time activity at home.

Keywords: Covid-19, perception, children pictures

Özet

Çalışma, ilkokul çağındaki çocukların COVID-19 pandemisini yaptıkları resimlerle nasıl algıladıklarını belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Nitel araştırma yöntemi kullanılan çalışmada; çalışma grubu, uygun örnekleme yöntemi ile seçilen Antalya Kepez bölgesinde bir ilkokulda öğrenim gören 241 birinci sınıf öğrencisinden oluşmaktadır. Araştırma verileri öğrencilere "COVID-19 sözünden ne anlıyorsunuz?" sorusu yöneltilmiş ve duygularını yansıtan resim çizmeleri istenmiştir. Bulgular SPSS programı kullanılarak yüzde (%) ve frekans olarak belirtilmiştir. Çalışma sonucunda, öğrencilerin büyük çoğunluğunun COVID-19'u "böcek", bir grup öğrencinin ise "hastalık" olarak algıladığı görülmüştür. Küçük bir grup ise COVID-19 pandemisini evde boş zaman etkinliği olarak betimledikleri anlaşılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Covid-19, algı, öğrenci resimleri

INTRODUCTION

Currently, an abnormal process in education, health, the economy and the different fields is being experienced in our country as in all over the world due to COVID-19 pandemic. The first case of the COVID 19 in Turkey was announced on March 11, 2020, and the education in the primary and the secondary schools has been suspended on March 13, 2020, which was declared by the ministry of health on March 16, 2020.

All of the authors of the education community experienced a great panic due to the interruption of education. The education methods were adopted quickly to the distance education model. This situation dragged either the students and the teachers and the parents into obscurity. In recent times, during which the face to face education was being planned to re-start, it is crucial to define how the children perceive the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Every child notices the world around unlike due to the different cultural, environmental, and individual factors, which cause different imaginations of the pictures by the children (Artut, 2004). Painting is a way of method to recognize a person, which is a more effective and alternative approach for children than adults in particular. Oral communications in children, who can reflect their psychological world; feelings, thoughts, their interactions with the environment, via pictures are restricted if compared with the adults (Dogru, Turcan, Arslan & Dogru, 2006).

There are some researches in Turkey, including different age groups, related to children's pictures e.g. reflections of the medical profession to the pictures in a study with 109 children ranging in age from 7 to 12 (Tas, Aslan & Sayek, 2006), similarly the perceptions of the teaching profession in 1000 children in ongoing primary school education (Aykaç, 2012).

Additionally, in a study involving 65 students in the 5th class of a primary school and 48 senior teacher candidates (Turkmen, 2008) and with 287 fifth-grade students, the perception of the scientist was evaluated (Oguz-Unver, 2010). In studies with similar age groups, the perception of technology with 28 fifth grade students (Eristi & Kurt, 2011), and the perception of the internet with 23 primary school fourth-grade students (Ersoy & Turkkan, 2009) were tried to be determined. In studies with different special groups, the maternal perception in 400 children grown up either with family or in the institution without family ranging in age from 7 to 11 (Cakmak & Darica, 2012) or the hospital perception of 60 children between the ages of 9-12, who were hospitalized or not hospitalized, was evaluated through pictures (Sen-Beytut, Bolisik, Solak & Seyfioglu, 2009). There are some studies with preschool children e.g. the perception of the family in 109 children between 55 and 74 months (Akgun & Ergul, 2015), the perception of to be a teacher in 240 children ranging in age from 5 to 7 (Daglioglu, 2011), the perception of to be a scientist in 30 children ranging in age from 5 to 8 (Buldu, 2006). Tiryaki, Zengin ve Çınar (2021), this study aimed to determine the perceptions of children aged between 7 and 11 years of nurses, who are actively involved in the pandemic hospital, of the Covid-19 pandemic by evaluating their answers to open-ended questions and the pictures they drew. According to the evaluation results, it was observed that the pictures drawn by the children were compatible with the rules of wearing masks, washing hands, using disinfectants, and staying at home. In our study, it is aimed to determine using the pictures drawn by the primary school first-year students how the covid 19 pandemics is perceived amongst the children.

Problem Statement

On January 5, 2020, the World Health Organization identified a new corona virus that has not been detected in humans before. Initially referred to as 2019-nCoV, this disease was later it was named as Covid-19 and after it emerged in China, it affected the whole world in a short period of three months (WHO, 2020). Like other countries, our country has been affected by this virus and according to the statement made by the Ministry of Health, on March 11, 2020. The first case was seen in our country (Turkey Ministry of Health, 2020). At the same time, the World Health Organization declared Covid-19 as a pandemic disease affecting a large part of the world. A pandemic is expressed as an epidemic that spreads beyond a certain region and begins to affect a large population and even a whole humanity (Aslan, 2020). The highly contagious Covid-19 pandemic has created a worldwide panic and uneasiness, countries have temporarily suspended their education processes to support the call to "stay at home", instead they have directed their students to distance education as much as possible (Üstün & Özçiftçi, 2020). As the study is focusing on first grade students, understanding the background to why these students have been chosen is important. First graders are typically 6 or 7 years old and, generally, have some basic reading knowledge. The planned curriculum for this age group challenges students to learn more and build on skills introduced in kindergarten. They are adjusting to school and valuing their friendships in more meaningful ways. They are also learning new skills faster than you can keep up with, and growing both physically and emotionally. The based question that guided the research and dialogue with all students were:

How do the primary school children perceive the covid 19 and ongoing pandemics?

The Significance of Research

The covid 19 and ongoing pandemics is a universal crisis, which has profound influences in several ways in the different countries depending on the culture, the socio-economic status etc. That is why the harmful effects of the pandemics were not distributed equally amongst the children in all around the world. The perception of this universal crisis by the primary school children in our country needs to be determined to find out the exact solutions and the way of the psychological support plans thereby the guidance strategies.

Limitations

The research is limited to first-year primary school students in Kepez district of Antalya municipality in the 2020-2021 academic year. The limitations of the study were that the sample group was highly selective involving students who are 6-7 years old, have participated in the grade 1st at primary school. The limitations, along with the sample size, make the data from the study have little transferability because of the specificities of the sample group and qualitative design (Moustakas, 1994). Further, the study is limited because of the choice to use a school in which we have a prior affiliation.

METHOD

In the present study, the document analysis method, which is one of the qualitative research techniques, was used in the study. Documents are important resources for the information, which should be used effectively in qualitative researches. In such researches, the researcher can obtain the data needed without either the observation or interview, which means, the document analysis will contribute to the researcher in terms of saving time and money. Which documents are important and can be used as data resources are closely related to the research problem. For example, in research on education, various resources can be used as data; the textbooks, program (curriculum) instructions, in-school and out-of-school correspondences, student records, meeting reports, student guidance notes and files, student and teacher handbooks, students' homework and exams, lessons' and units' plans, teachers' files, educational official documents etc. can be used (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992). Student pictures were used in our study as a data resource. Student pictures were analysed by content analysis technique. According to the themes obtained as a result of the analysis, the pictures were re-examined and compared.

Working Group

The participants of the study consists of the first grade of the primary school students, who were volunteer, in the Kepez district of the Antalya Municipality, and oral informed consent was obtained from either the parents or the teachers. 127 males and 114 females, a total of 241 students were included in the study group.

Data Collection Tools

The documents in this study were the pictures of the first grade of the primary school students, who were asked to draw a picture of the question as "What do you understand when told "covid 19 (Corona) and pandemics?"

The pictures were coded after the examinations of each picture, made by 241 first grade primary school students. The student pictures were re-examined after creating codes and the perceptions of the covid 19 and pandemics were tried to be defined by the means of the predetermined themes.

Data Analysis

Data obtained from the documents might not need to be digitized or quantified. The researchers can prefer the results of the categorizations or the findings of the analysis identified to be as the prose. If the researcher would like to present the data by obtained quantifying or digitizing, there are the following three ways (Forster, 1994); **Present or not:** If the relevant category exists in the document, the value "1" is given easily, if do not exist, the value "0". Thus, it will be possible to compare two documents in terms of the number of times the relevant categories are repeated in two different documents. **Percentage distribution:** This works similarly to the method above, but category repeats are counted and presented as percentages. In this way, the researcher can reach a more precise judgment about comparing the two documents. **Area covered:** Here, instead of determining whether a category exists in a document, the area, which is covered by a category in the relevant document, can also be used as a criterion. This method can easily be used, e.g., in a study aiming to measure how much space is allocated in different textbooks to some predetermined categories. It is assumed that the size or scope of the area devoted to a particular unit or subject in a textbook is directly proportional to the emphasis given by the author or, to the same extent, the curriculum. In this study, the data to be analysed were digitized as percentage distribution. First of all, the features found in all pictures were coded and their percentage distributions were given according to the analyse of the codes.

RESULTS

The data obtained in the present study, which was aimed to understand how the COVID-19 pandemic was perceived amongst the primary school children by the pictures, are given below.

Findings regarding perceptions of Covid 19

Table 1. Visual contents in the pictures

Images in the picture	Frequency	Percentage %
Monster	124	51
Insect	69	29
Illness	48	20

When all the pictures are examined, it is seen that the students perceive Covid 19 as either insect, 29% or monsters, 51%, mainly due to the way of information from TV and/or the internet. These situations are exemplified by the pictures given below.



After analysing the pictures in the study it is understood that Covid 19 is described by the % 20 of the students only as a disease, which created the least number of a student group and exemplified the finding by the pictures below.



Findings regarding the pandemic process

It is seen that the students describe the pandemic as a process of staying at home and trying to be protected from the insects (covid 19). The situation was pictured in the samples given below.



CONCLUSION AND COMMENTS

It is seen that primary school children perceive COVID 19 as an insect, a monster or a disease according to the results obtained from the findings. It might be concluded that the children perceive COVID 19 and pandemic as a dangerous situation that should be avoided. Considering that even adults do not sufficiently fear and some adults do not care about the pandemic, the children are more aware of the seriousness of the situation than adults, which is a positive finding. They perceive the pandemic process as a circumstance during which should be stayed at home. It is observed that they take all the warnings seriously to stay at home and not to go out.

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EXTENDED SUMMARY

İnsanlık tarihin her döneminde büyük buhranlarla karşı karşıya kalmıştır. Bunlar savaşlar, salgın hastalıklar, doğal afetler gibi peki çok alanda meydana gelmiştir. 21. Yüzyılda dünya her ne kadar teknoloji, iletişim ve bilim alanında ilerlemiş olsa da insanoğlu tüm dünyayı etkileyen küresel bir sorunla 2019 yılında karşılaşmıştır. Bu yüzyılda dünyayı etkileyen olaylardan biri de covid- 19 salgın hastalığıdır. Dünya genelinde pek çok sektörde etkisini gösteren covid-19 salgın hastalığının en çok etki yaptığı alanlardan biri de eğitim sistemidir. Pek çok ülke salgının en yüksek seviyelerde görüldüğü dönemde okulları ya tam kapatmış ya da kısmi olarak eğitime ara vermiştir. Bu uygulamalardan birini de ülkemiz gerçekleştirmiş ve salgın sürecinde online ve kısmi olarak okulları açarak eğitim öğretim süreçlerinin en az etki ile bu salgından etkilenerek çıkması hedeflenmiştir. Çok kısa bir süre içinde oluşturulan online eğitim platformları ile milyonlarca öğrenci eğitim süreçlerine devam etme imkanı bulmuştur. Öğrenciler okul dışında günlük yaşamlarında salgın hastalığının etkilerini somut bir şekilde yaşamışlardır. Hem günlük yaşamdaki etkisi hem de eğitim süreçlerindeki etkisi nedeniyle öğrenciler tüm eğitim seviyelerinde doğrudan bu salgından etkilenmişlerdir. Bu etkilenme sadece eğitim öğretim süreçlerine katılmama ya da okula gidememek olmayıp en yakını veya yakın çevresinde hastalık nedeniyle yaşamını yitiren birini bilmeleri olarak da belirtilebilir. Toplumun tüm kesimlerini her yaş grubunu etkileyen bu küresel salgın hastalığına ilişkin öğrencilerin bire bir etkilendikleri, gözlemledikleri ve yaşadıkları bu salgın hastalığının nasıl algılandığı önem taşımaktadır. Alan yazın incelendiğinde covid-19 hastalığını resimlerle belirlemeyi konu alan çalışmalarda öğrencilerin farklı resimlerle hastalığı betimledikleri görülmektedir. Yayan (2020) üniversite öğrencilerinin salgın sürecine ilişkin resimlere yansımaları incelemiştir. Öğrenciler, hastalığın neden olduğu kaygı ve korku ile sağlık çalışanlarının fedakarlıkları ve iyileşen hastaların mutluluklarını resimlere yansıtmışlardır. Pek (2021) 4. ve 5. Sınıf öğrencilerine covid-19 ile ilgili algılarını çizdirdiği çalışmasında öğrenciler covid-19 pandemisini duygu, şekil, virüsten korunma yöntemleri ve virüse yönelik korkular açılarından ifade etmişlerdir. Benzer şekilde Tiryaki, Zengin ve Çınar (2021) çalışmalarında covid-19 pandemisini hastalığa karşı önlemler alma ve hastalıktan korunma temalarında resmettikleri ve kaygılı oldukları sonucuna ulaşmışlardır. Bu kaygı durumunda araştırma grubunun pandemi servisinde çalışan hemşire çocuklarından oluşması etkili olmuştur denilebilir. Nazlı ve Çat (2021) araştırmalarında çocukların covid-19 pandemisini olumsuz temalarla ifade etmişlerdir. Ayrıca, oyun ve sosyal yaşam özlemini de belirttikleri sonucuna ulaşmışlardır. Bu çalışmanın amacı ilkökul öğrencilerinin covid-19 salgınına yönelik algılarını resimlerle nasıl ifade ettiklerini ortaya çıkarmaktır. Araştırma nitel araştırma yöntemi ile yapılmış ve araştırmada nitel araştırma tekniklerinden doküman inceleme yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Nitel araştırma

kişilerin çevrelerini, içinde oldukları süreçleri algılayışlarını ve buna ilişkin düşüncelerini, bakış açılarını ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlayan araştırma yaklaşımlarından biri olarak ifade edilebilir. Yaşanmışlık, deneyimleme ve bunlara verilen anlamlar nitel araştırmanın ortaya çıkarmayı amaçladığı durumlardır (Turan,2018). Bu çalışmada dokümanlar veri kaynağıdır. Öğrencilerin çizdikleri resimler doküman olarak kullanılmıştır. Çalışma grubu bir ilkokulda öğrenim gören 241 birinci sınıf öğrencisinden oluşmuştur. Araştırmada öğrencilere "Covid-19 denilince ne anlıyorsunuz?" sorusu sorulmuş ve bu soruyla ilgili olarak covid-19 hastalığını resimle çizmeleri istenmiştir. Öğrencilerin çizdiği resimler içerik analizi tekniği ile çözümlenmiştir. İçerik analizi, dokümanlardaki anlamı ortaya çıkarmak, öğrencilerin çizmiş olduğu resimlerdeki mesajları ifade etmek için kullanılmıştır. Çalışma sonucunda öğrencilerin %51'i f (124) covid-19 hastalığını canavara, %29'u f (69) böceğe, %20'si de f (48) hastalık olarak resmetmişlerdir. Öğrencilerin büyük bir çoğunluğu covid-19 salgınını canavar ve böcek olarak algıladıkları görülmektedir. Dünyada ve ülkemizde ölümcül etkileri nedeniyle korkulması gereken bir durum olduğu için öğrenciler hastalığı somut bir canlıya benzetmişlerdir. Ayrıca öğrenciler pandemiyi evde kalma ve böceklerden korunma olarak algıladıkları görülmektedir. Salgın sürecinde evde kalma zorunluluğu ve ev dışı ortamlarda hastalığın bulaşma riskindeki yükseklik evde kalma düşüncesinin oluşmasında etkili olmuştur denilebilir. Öğrencilerin resimlerinde ev dışındaki ortamlarda virüslerin yoğun olarak yer aldıkları ve insanları evin içinde çizdikleri görülmektedir. Virüsü şekil olarak da görsel medyada yer alan bir şekilde çizmektedirler. Öğrencilerin küçük yaşlarda olmasına rağmen hastalığın tehlikesi göz önüne alındığında iyi birer gözlemci ve medyayı takip ettikleri sonucuna ulaşılabilir. Mikroskop altında virüsün şekline benzer çizimlerin yapılması öğrencilerin farkındalık düzeylerinin yüksek seviyede olduğunu göstermektedir. Çizimlerde ev güvenli ortam olarak gösterilmektedir. Hastalık sürecinde sokağa çıkma yasağı ve evde kalınmasına yönelik uyarı ve zorunluluklar öğrencilerin zihinlerine yansımış olduğu söylenebilir. Yazılı ve görsel basında ve kamu spotlarında yer alan evde kalma temalı açıklamalar bu düşüncenin oluşmasında etkili olmuştur denilebilir. Öğrencilerin bu yaş düzeyinde salgına yönelik algıları için yeterli düzeyde bir algılama içinde oldukları olarak ifade edilebilir. Bu tür salgınlar tarihin farklı dönemlerinde görülmüştür ve gelecekte de görülebilme ihtimali yüksektir. Bu nedenle eğitim sistemleri ders programları aracılığı ile öğrencilere bu tür durumlarda nasıl hareket edilmesi gerektiği konusunda işlevsel özelliklere sahip kılınmalıdır. Toplumda oluşabilecek panik ve kaygı ortamı tutarlı kararların alınmasını engelleyebileceği için yeni yetişen nesiller bu tür salgın hastalıklara hazırlıklı olarak eğitilmelidir. Sosyalleşme okul çağı öğrencileri için önemli olan unsurlardan biri olduğu için bu tür hastalıklarda sosyalleşme problemini ortadan kaldıracı önemler ile ilgili projeler oluşturulmalıdır.