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Views of Teachers and Headteachers about Outdoor Learning in Pre-School Education Institutions in Turkey and England

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Abstract

In the study, it is aimed to determine the views and experiences in outdoor learning of preschool teachers and headteachers in preschool institutions in Turkey and England with phenomenological research. The data was collected by interview forms which consisted of open-ended questions. Teachers, and head teachers in preschool institutions were interviewed both in Turkey and England. The study group determined 9 headteachers and 9 teachers from 6 school in Turkey and England.

As a result, according to views of headteachers and teachers school gardens, equipment, and spent time outside are insufficient in Turkey unlike in England. It is seen that family participation in outdoor learning is more common in Turkey. However, in Turkey, teachers and headteachers feel more family pressure. These pressures arise from situations such as the safety of their children, the fact that they are sick and their clothes are dirty. The fact that teachers are alone in the classroom without help also makes teachers feel anxious about the safety of children in outdoor learning activities. Teachers in both countries emphasized the positive effects of outdoor learning in terms of learning, children and teachers. On the other hand, teachers and headteachers in Turkey also mentioned the negative effects of outdoor learning in the context of child, teacher and program. It is seen that the subject of outdoor learning is not sufficiently included in vocational education and in-service trainings in both countries.

Physical facilities can be developed in Turkey. Parent's education, teacher assistant, and economic supports will be effective in overcoming the obstacles with outdoor learning in Turkey. In both countries, teacher training programs should more include outdoor learning topics and teachers should be supported with in-service training.

Keywords: Outdoor Learning, Intercultural Comparison, Teacher and Headteacher's Views, Pre-School Education, Learning

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2023, 12 (3), 1412-1434 | Araştırma Makalesi

Türkiye ve İngiltere'deki Okul Öncesi Eğitim Kurumlarında Açık Alanda Öğrenmeye İlişkin Öğretmen ve Okul Müdürlerinin Görüşleri

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Öz

Araştırmada, Türkiye ve İngiltere'deki okul öncesi kurumlarda görev yapan okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin ve okul müdürlerinin açık alanda öğrenme konusundaki görüş ve deneyimlerinin fenomenolojik araştırma ile belirlenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Veriler, açık uçlu sorulardan oluşan görüşme formları ile toplanmıştır. Türkiye'de ve İngiltere'de okul öncesi eğitim kurumlarında görev yapan öğretmenler ve okul müdürleri ile görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Çalışma grubunu, Türkiye ve İngiltere'deki 6 okuldan, 9 okul müdürü ve 9 öğretmen oluşturmuştur.

Sonuç olarak, okul müdürleri ve öğretmenlerin görüşlerine göre Türkiye'de İngiltere'den farklı olarak okul bahçeleri, araç-gereçler ve dışarıda geçirilen zaman yetersizdir. Türkiye'de açık alan etkinliklerine aile katılımının daha çok olduğu görülmektedir. Ancak Türkiye'de öğretmen ve okul müdürleri aile baskısını daha çok hissetmektedirler. Bu baskılar, çocuklarının güvenliği, hasta olmaları ve üstlerinin kirlenmeleri gibi durumlardan kaynaklanmaktadır. Öğretmenlerin sınıfta yalnız ve yardımsız olması, okul dışı öğrenme etkinliklerinde çocukların güvenliği konusunda öğretmenlerin kaygı duymasına neden olmaktadır. Her iki ülkedeki öğretmenler açık alan etkinliklerinin öğrenme, çocuk ve öğretmen bağlamında olumlu etkilerine vurgu yapmışlardır. Ancak Türkiye'deki öğretmen ve müdürler açık alan etkinliklerinin çocuk, öğretmen ve program bağlamında olumsuz etkilerine de değinmişlerdir. Her iki ülkedeki mesleki eğitim ve hizmet içi eğitimlerde açık alanda öğrenme konusuna yeterince yer verilmediği görülmektedir.

Türkiye'de fiziki imkanlar geliştirilebilir. Türkiye'de açık alanda öğrenme ile engellerin aşılmasında veli eğitimi, öğretmen yardımcısı ve ekonomik destekler etkili olacaktır. Her iki ülkede öğretmen yetiştirme programlarında açık alanda öğrenme konularına daha fazla yer verilmeli ve öğretmenler hizmet içi eğitimlerle desteklenmelidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Açık Alanda Öğrenme, Kültürlerarası Karşılaştırma, Öğretmen ve Okul Müdürü Görüşleri, Okul Öncesi Eğitim, Öğrenme

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Introduction

Outdoor Learning in The Schools

Considering the changing living conditions, the increase in urbanization, the decrease in green areas, and the time children spend in schools, the importance of outdoor learning activities in schools is constantly increasing. Outdoor learning activities, away from the restrictions of the classroom environment, allowing teachers and students to interact freely, it is the learning process in which the child takes initiative, providing rich experience to the child and the environment, allowing the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes (Bailey, 2003; Ford, 1981; Ouvry, 2003; Perry, 2001; White, 2008). In this process, the child can choose the learning environment, create a new learning environment, and change the existing learning environment. In this way, they can freely discover themselves and their abilities by reaching the highest level of creativity and understanding in a flexible learning field, with activities based on experimentation and research (Ouvry, 2003; Studer, 1998). It allows them to face problems by handling them on their own (White, 2004). Cognitive skills of children, such as reasoning, inference, decision making, planning; engine such as attention, coordination, endurance, balance and flexibility; language skills such as expressing oneself and emotions; personal skills such as concentration, autonomy and self-discipline develop. Children's antisocial behaviour, sharing, cooperation, conflict resolution, reconciliation increase (Bilton, 2004; Burdette & Whitaker, 2005). It allows the child and the adult to play together, allowing the adult and the child to bond (Bilton, 2004; Dillon, Morris, O'Donnell, Rickinson & Scott, 2005). Thanks to the quality activities performed in the outdoor, it is observed that teachers interact with children more and exhibit more facilitating and supportive attitudes in children's experiences (Wilson, 2008). But national regulations and decisions effect on outdoor practices in the school. Also, cultural and social rules, values, beliefs and practices of the adults around the child (family members, teacher, head teacher, caregiver, decision makers etc.) create different effects on outdoor practices. So, these practices can chance from society to society, in different cultures, in family and school. Especially, in preschool education institutions, teachers and headteachers play an important role in creating outdoor opportunities (Davies, 1996).

Teachers and Headteachers as Stakeholders

As education leaders, teachers and headteachers are responsible for planning, implementing and evaluating activities according to the needs of children, preparing the indoor and outdoor environment, and guiding families. Although headteachers and teachers generally have a positive perspective on outdoor learning, there are differences according to teachers' confidence in outdoor learning (O'Donnell, Morris & Wilson, 2006), time allocated to outdoor activities (Mart & Bilton, 2014), the perspective on outdoor equipment (Davies, 1996), and the interaction with children in the outdoor (Chakravarthi, Hatfield & Hestenes, 2009; Davies, 1996).

O'Brien and Murray (2007) state that some teachers are unfamiliar with teaching children outdoors and are nervous. Leather (2018) emphasized that it is easier to adopt outdoor learning as a place of learning for teachers, whom he describes as outdoor natives, and that teachers, whom she describes as outdoor immigrants, are less likely to feel comfortable in natural environments. Maynard and Waters (2007), on the other hand, mention cultural difference and emphasize that the external environment is not a central

feature of British cultural identity and, consequently, for some teachers, the idea of being out for a long time may have been anathema. On the other hand, it is revealed that the views of headteachers about outdoor practices also affect the amount of outdoor activity addressed by teachers (O'Donnell, Morris & Wilson, 2006).

In the light of these research, we can say that teachers and headteachers' views on outdoor are effective in outdoor activities, and headteachers and teachers play a key role in outdoor activities at school. In addition, cultural differences are thought to affect outdoor activities.

The Present Study

Supportive education policies are observed in England regarding outdoor learning (EYFS, 2012; DCELLS, 2008; DCSF, 2008; OFSTED, 2004). In Turkey, the preschool education curriculum that has been currently implemented emphasizes the importance of outdoor activities and encourages teachers to conduct activities outside as much as possible (The Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 2013). Further, Provincial Directorates of National Education in different cities have recently published the "Outdoor Learning Environment Guide", an important framework about outdoor learning. However, these supportive approaches cannot prevent differences between educational policies and educational practices. One of the sources of this difference is the beliefs and attitudes of education leaders. Early childhood institutions can provide important opportunities for children for outdoor learning. If this opportunity is not taken into consideration by teachers and headteachers, children will spend less time outside (Blanchet Cohen & Elliot, 2011; Dowdell, Gray & Malone, 2011). There are studies compared outdoor learning practices in England and Turkey (Mart & Bilton, 2014), However, this study did not aim to determine the beliefs and attitudes of key teachers and headteachers and to reveal cultural differences and similarities by comparing these views.

In this study, teachers and headteacher's in England and Turkey views on outdoor learning will put forward. The views of educators who play a key role in children's learning and development will provide insight into the planning and implementation of outdoor learning activities in schools, and a cross-cultural comparison will help to identify the differences between these practices, good practices, and find answers to the question of what we can do to develop and disseminate outdoor learning activities. Presenting these views can provide information for the development and quality of outdoor learning practices.

Aim of Study

The aim of this study can be stated as to determine the opinions of the education leaders regarding outdoor learning in both countries based on the interviews of teachers and headteachers. In accordance with this aim, the following question will be tried to be answered.

1)What are the ideas of teachers and headteachers about outdoor learning in England and Turkey context?

Methods

Research Design

The research was designed in accordance with the pattern of phenomenology from qualitative research methods. The purpose of phenomenology, to elucidate a particular situation, to reveal the qualitative differences in the experiences, conceptualizations, perceptions and perceptions of people about events and events in their environment. In phenomenological studies, many methods such as interviews, focus group interviews, participant observation and personal text analysis are used (Lester, 1999; Marton, 2001). In the research, data will collect by semi structured interview technique.

Study Group

Easily accessible situation sampling, which is one of the purposeful sampling methods, was used in the study. In Turkey, 6 headteachers and 6 teachers who work in three schools in the Aegean region in Turkey participated to the study. In England, 3 headteachers and 3 teachers from 3 primary schools in the Essex region participated to the study. Preschool educational institutions where data is collected in Turkey are the only providing education for children between 3-6 years. All three schools have a garden.

Schools included in the study group in England provide education from Reception class to year six. Children in the reception class are 4-5 years old. Reception class have independent gardens, and they can also use the public-school garden. In addition, there is a forest school area in one of the schools. There is a teacher and an assistant teacher in reception class where the interviews are held in England. Reception classes range from 25 to 32. In Turkey, 20-29 children are in each class and teacher assistant is not available.

Data Collection Tools

In this research, developed by the researcher teacher and head teacher interview form will be used.

Data Collection Process

After receiving the necessary permission to carry out the research from Provincial National Education Directorate in Turkey, the contact established with the telephone with school headteachers about study, has requested an appointment for an interview. In this first meeting, headteachers and teachers were also informed about the research, and two volunteer teachers from each school were included in the study group. Interviews with the teachers and headteachers were carried out by the first researcher on the day and time they wanted, in a suitable room of the school (guidance room, interview room and headteacher's room).

10 schools in England were contacted by invitation letters, email and phone to work, appointments were made from these schools that accepted to study, and meetings were held with headteachers and teachers on the specified days and hours. These interviews were conducted by the first researcher in individual meeting rooms, support classes, and the headteacher's office.

All interviewers were informed about the study and their consent was obtained for the audio recordings. The duration of the meeting lasted between 10 and 25 minutes on average.

Data Analysis

In phenomenology research, it is aimed to conceptualize the data with content analysis and to reveal the themes that can define the phenomenon. While the results are presented in a descriptive manner are frequently used. Semi-structured interviews were written and subjected to content analysis by the researchers. Based on the data, themes and sub-themes containing the main themes were created. The data were encoded in accordance with the created categories.

Ethical Permissions

This study has been approved by the Faculty of Health, Education, Medicine and Social Care Research Ethics Panel (FREP) under the terms of Anglia Ruskin University Research Ethics Policy and Ethical approval is given.

Validity and Reliability

Participants were given an information form to increase the internal validity of the research. In this information form, it was emphasized that the anonymity of participants and their answers will be guaranteed, and they can withdraw from the study at any stage until the study is ready to be published, and that they can contact the researchers if they have such a request and their consent were taken. The interview questions were prepared in line with the conceptual framework, and subjects were asked whether there were any other matters they would like to add on the subject apart from these questions. The researcher read and reviewed the obtained data several times. For external validity, the entire research process was explained in a way that the readers could understand, to create a similar, if not identical, understanding.

To increase the consistency of the research, two researchers coded separately on the obtained data, and the consistency ratio was calculated by comparing the coding. To ensure the verification of the research, the work done in the process was explained in detail, and the obtained data and coding were stored so that they can be examined later.

Findings

The findings of general views of headteachers and teachers about outdoor learning in Table 1., the findings of time allocated to outdoor learning at school according to the views of headteachers and teachers in Table 2., the findings of headteacher and teacher's views on the factors affecting outdoor learning are shown.

Table 1. General views of headteachers and teachers about outdoor learning

Themes	Sub-Themes	Headteacher		Teachers			
		Codes	TR	EN	Codes	TR	EN
Positive effects	In terms of learning	It is the most enjoyable way to learn.	+		Activities are more interesting.	+	
		It provides a social learning environment.	+		Learnings are more effective and permanent	+	
		It provides the opportunity to learn by doing.	+	+	Children learn with fun.	+	+
		It provides opportunities for environmental	+	+	It supports the development of children	+	+

		activities.				
		It provides a learning space that encourages children.	+	An essential part of learning in school.		+
		It takes learning beyond the walls of the classroom.	+			
		Children are happier.	+	They are more active outside		+
		It reduces stress.	+	Children like to be outside more.		+
		It allows them to act independently and spontaneously.	+	They spend their energy.		+
In terms of child		It allows them to set up different plays.	+	They learn to be able to act spontaneously.		+
		They spend their energy.	+	Children enjoy working with natural and natural materials		+
		It increases their desire to explore.	+	Be independent		+
		They take advantage of the sun.	+	Experiencing things that he cannot experience in the classroom		+
		Their healthy development is supported.	+			
		Supports the development of children	+			
		It calms the children.	+			
		It is beneficial for mental health.	+			
		It helps better self-expression.	+			
		It provides experiences they cannot get with the book.	+			
		It enables them to connect with the outside world and explore the environment and nature.	+			
		It reduces stress on the teacher.	+	Outdoor sounds good.		+
In terms of teacher		It improves the creativity of the teacher.	+	Being outside makes me feel happy.		+
		The role of the teacher decreases, he becomes less active.	+	It is relaxing and calming.		+
		It affects the teacher in a positive way.	+	Good for my mental health.		+
		It makes them happy.	+			
		It provides the opportunity to see children from a different perspective.	+			
Negative	In terms	Children face risky	+			

effects	of child	situations.			
		There is a risk of injury.	+		
		Children get dirty.	+		
	In terms of teacher	It is tiring.	+	Having to control the kids more outside	+
		Outdoor activities can be difficult for teachers.	+	Difficulty doing activities outside the play	+
		They feel anxious about children's safety and cleanliness.	+		
	In terms of program			Don't think that gains and indicators are missing	+
				Having activities to do in the classroom	+

Positive and negative effects, at the end of the analyses, headteachers and teachers in both countries expressed positive opinions about outdoor learning in terms of learning, children and teachers. Teachers in England emphasized that learning in outdoor learning is an important part of learning at school. Teachers in Turkey in terms of children's learning, the teacher in England talked about the benefits for themselves.

However, headteachers and teachers in Turkey also emphasized the negative side of outdoor learning especially due to parent pressure. Except for a school head teacher, they also stated that because of encountering risky situations, getting injured and dirty, outdoor learning activities creates pressure on the teacher due to safety and cleaning reasons. Teachers in Turkey mentioned that they forced children to check out, gains and indicators remains incomplete because of time spent outdoors. This situation may cause the teacher to be unwilling to plan activities in outdoors.

Teachers in Turkey stated outdoor activities done in the school as sporting activities and games in the school garden activities they do in Turkey in the outdoor, storytelling, artwork, flower and vegetable cultivation and picnics with family outside the school, that the investigation insects with a magnifying glass. The children brought bicycles and scooters to school on the outdoor classroom day (one-day activity). Teachers in England stated that they use the garden as a continuation of classroom practices and that there are discovery centres outside.

In terms of learning, headteachers stated that outdoor learning is the most enjoyable way of learning, it carries learning beyond the walls of the classroom, it provides one of the best environments for children to learn by saving education from boredom, children learn by doing and living, that they can acquire skills they cannot gain in the classroom and with books, especially important for children who do not want to learn on paper. Briefly, they stated that it enriches the learning environment.

In terms of child, headteachers talked about a lot than teachers. They stated that outdoor activities make children happier, enable the child to connect with the outside world, explore the environment and nature, spend their energy in the outside, reduce stress, increase their desire to explore, develop their ability to move independently and spontaneously, establish different plays, benefit from the sun and develop healthily. They

also underlined the importance of its holistic development (designing new things, creativity, communication and friendship, sharing, psychomotor skills, observation skills, scientific process skills, problem solving, endurance, ability to act independently, and mental resilience of children)

In terms of the teacher, headteachers stated that outdoor learning has positive effects on teachers as it reduces the stress of the teacher and gives the teacher the opportunity to look at children from a different perspective. On the other hand, three headteachers in Turkey stressed that outdoor learning activities are more strenuous and challenging for traditionalists teachers who do not like discovering and researching. One teacher in Turkey talked about positive effect on herself other teachers talked about its difficulties.

Table 2. Time allocated to outdoor learning at school according to the views of headteachers and teachers

Themes	Headteachers		Teachers			
	Codes	TR	EN	Codes	TR	EN
Time spent outside at school	One day per week	2		Half an hour 1-3 days a week, except on cold days in winter	3	
	A few times a week	2		Half an hour 1-3 days a week, except in winter	1	
	15-25 minutes every day	1		We cannot go out (because of cold and hot)	1	
	1 hour every day	1		We stay 45 minutes-1 hour every day in April and May.	1	
	2.5-3 hours every day		3	Every morning and afternoon		3
Adequacy of time	Adequate	1	3	Adequate		3
	Inadequate	5	-	Inadequate	6	-

When the table is examined, it is seen that time spent outside at school varies considerably between the two countries. Head teachers in England stated that they allocate 2.5-3 hours a day for outdoor learning and this time is adequate. However, they stated that adequate time was not allocated in other primary school levels.

In Turkey, head teachers stated that's they have enough time for outdoor learning, but the day and time spent going out is not enough. Also, they stated that time spent outside varies from teacher to teacher. It can be said children in Turkey spent less time than children in England.

Teachers in in Turkey stated that climatic conditions affect the time spend outside, and limited spent time in the garden because of hot in summer and cold in winter. On the other hand, they are aware that the time is inadequate.

Teachers in England stated that they have morning and afternoon out routines every day. In addition, a teacher said that they use the outdoors a lot, but they always want to be outside more, go out whenever they want, the weather conditions do not affect them, they are only careful because things can fly in windy weather.

Table 3. Headteacher and teacher's views on the factors affecting outdoor learning

Themes	Headteachers			Teachers		
	Codes	TR	EN	Codes	TR	EN
Physical facilities	Resources are insufficient	+		Equipment problem	+	
	School garden is suitable		+	School garden is suitable		+
Teacher training	Vocational education		1	Vocational education		
	In-service training		+	In-service training		+
Parent attitude	Parents' participation	Yes (6)	Yes (1) Rare (1) No (1)	Parents' participation	+	+
	Parent pressure	+		Parent pressure	+	
In terms of child	The time families spend outside is insufficient.	5	3	The time families spend outside is insufficient.	+	
	Being vulnerable to microbes	+		Children having trouble obeying the rules	+	
	Getting sick often	+		Number of children in classes	+	
In terms of teacher	Being afraid of not having control alone	+		Difficulty controlling children	+	
	Anxiety about child safe	+				
Assistant Planning				Lack of assistant	+	
				Ready plan usage	+	
				Planning for weekly outdoor learning		+
Economic Legal procedures				Lack of time	+	
				Paid events	+	
				Family leave requirement	+	
Weather conditions	Sunny and rainy days	+				
	It is preferred in October and April	+				
Administrative reasons				Support is sufficient	+	+
				Importance to its visuality than its functionality.	+	
				Adaptation period	+	
Plans for development	There are planning but economic resources are insufficient	2	2	Garden arrangement recommendations	+	
	There are planning but to change the school garden is very difficult	1		Teacher training		+

There are and they collect	1	Encouraging children to go outside	+
To plan improvements in the program	1		
Parent education	1		
There are and new equipment selected	1		

Head teachers and teachers in England stated that reception classes have good resources for outdoor learning. They stated that children have a special area where they can find everything they need and where they can do many things. However, headteachers stated that there is not enough equipment and resources for other classes (from year 1 to year 6) and that starting from year 1, the curriculum puts pressure on teachers, and they do not have enough time for outdoor learning activities due to national assessment requirements.

According to headteachers in the England, only the reception and nursery teacher training program emphasizes outdoor learning activities. It is emphasized truly little on other levels. They also stated that trainee teachers in reception classes can gain a lot of experience in outdoor learning activities, but other teacher candidates could not gain this experience. Especially one headteacher stated that newly graduated teachers (in the last 2-3 years) are extremely interested in outdoor learning activities and they support them in this regard. But teachers in England stated that outdoor learning is not included in teacher training. Regarding in-service training, the headteacher of the two schools stated that two teachers had received forest school education and the teachers were very enthusiastic and encouraged children to learn outside. In Turkey, teachers stated that some lecturers gave information about the importance of outdoor and playing in outdoor, but this is not enough and none of the teachers received in-service training on outdoor learning.

One of headteachers in England stated that parents did not participate in outdoor learning activities at school, other head teacher reported that they rarely participated, the other one (no forest school) stated they did 10-session forest school practice in their gardens with parents once a week outside during summer term. He mentioned that they learned how to light fire and make shelter with children. A teacher stated that when they go out-of-school trips several times, although not often, they receive parent support whenever they need, and another teacher invites parents to an activity called discovery cafes. All teachers and headteachers stated that it is a good idea to have parents participate more in outdoor activities and they can do this more.

All headteachers and teachers in Turkey indicated that they give importance to family participation and they garden for some of the activities. They stated that they did different outdoor activities such as out artwork in the garden, parkour games, morning gymnastics, changing car tires in outdoors, according to the parents' professions, caressing and milking a goat, orientation with a cartographic engineer, traffic rules with the traffic police, and examining the engine used by the traffic police. On the other hand, all school headteachers stated that parents used the school garden after school, and families participated in trekking and picnics organized by school.

Headteachers and teachers in Turkey stated that parents put pressure on them. They

indicated that parents have overprotective attitudes, and they have a worrywart attitude as the child might sweat, feel cold, gets sick, fall and hurt, get dirty. In addition, a teacher stated that some families do not send their children on field trips for safety reasons. None of the headteachers in England stated negative attitudes or pressure of parents in outdoor learning activities within the scope of the school program.

The majority of headteachers in each country evaluated the families' time spent outside as insufficient. One headteacher in England especially stated that this is a typical problem, and families do not try to go out and do something, and they prefer playing video games and watching TV. In Turkey, headteachers stated that families do not spare enough time outdoor, families prefer to spend more time in shopping centres, also they stated that the city hasn't got convenient area to spent time outside. Teachers in England stated that the spent time outside varies from family to family, and teachers in Turkey are at a minimal level.

Headteachers in Turkey stated that children who vulnerable to microbes, frequent illness, fear and anxiety of the teacher to control the outside environment, weather condition effect on outdoor learning. Teachers reported that the number of children affected outdoor learning activities. One teacher said that they had difficulties because they did not have any assistant staff and that they could go out more easily if there were students. Three teachers stated the school's first 1-2 months of being with the children in outdoor that is very difficult, the children find difficult to comply with the rules. A teacher mentioned that ready plans do not include enough outdoor activities. Two teachers mentioned the lack of time. Two teachers said that they did not have much time for outdoor learning because of not being able to train the achievements in the program and one teacher because of the work to be done in the classroom. Teachers in Turkey except of these obstacles, have stated that parental permission is required upon leaving the school garden as a hindrance. A teacher said that some trips outside the school, shuttle, or ticket fees, etc. She mentioned that some families had difficulties due to some reasons and therefore she could not plan often.

Teachers in England and Turkey stated that headteachers support outdoor learning activities. However, one teacher in Turkey stated that the headteacher attaches more importance to visual beauty than to being functional, while another stated that the headteachers has suggested that children should not go out during the adaptation process.

A teacher in England stated that if the number of children in the classrooms is too little or too much, it may affect some things, when the number of children is high, children cannot use every field, and when they are less, it will affect learning from each other. The other two teachers stated that they do not think that the number of children influences outdoor learning. A teacher stated that they were lucky to have a large enough area, that they would plan in the same way, and that they would plan activities according to the needs of the group, not the group size. The other teacher stated that the large number of groups would require not only one but two adults outside, but it would not have any other effect, and that there was enough staff. Teachers regarding planning stated that they plan the outdoor space on a weekly basis, and they try to change every week that they are based on the needs of the children and the inside subject while doing this planning. One teacher emphasized that children are always with technology at home, they are stuck at home, so they should give children outdoor and first-hand experiences at school as

much as possible. Teachers stated that the door is open all day, and the time they do not go out is only the reading time. They really allocate enough time for the children to go out.

Two headteachers in England stated that the Forest School program could be implemented to improve outdoor learning activities, but their budgets were insufficient to provide resources for this. A headteacher, who has a forest school in their school, stated that they have the necessary space to develop outdoor learning activities and they are raising money to develop the forest school. A teacher in the England stated that teachers should first receive training to use outdoor learning as a learning tool, understand and make sure they are doing, and then only allow children to experience it. Another teacher said that they had appropriate and enough space, and the next step would be to encourage some children who do not want to be outside to go out.

Two headteachers in Turkey mentioned that they are aware of the problems in their garden, and they have plans to improve but they have economic hardship. One of these headteachers stated that although they have plans for improvement, it is difficult for them to make the changes they want because the school garden is concrete. A headteacher highlighted the program and stated that they are trying to develop a routine of going outdoors for at least one hour every day. She also emphasized that to increase outdoor learning activities, it is necessary to start with educating parents. Teachers in Turkey has made recommendations to improve the school yard, but there are no plans for it.

Results and Discussion

Headteachers and teachers in both countries emphasized the positive effects of outdoor learning on children, teachers, and learning. As education leader, the positive views of their on the subject are valuable for both countries for the development of outdoor learning in the pre-school education. But it is seen that there are differences in practice in Turkey. The practices are mostly limited to private schools and the financial opportunities of the educators. In this study, which is conducted in public schools, it is expected that the level of awareness and positive attitude of headteachers will be effective in overcoming the obstacles with outdoor learning and in spreading the practices. Because in England, two headteachers stated that they supported their teachers to get forest school education and it was seen that they designed a pond, wildlife, and environmental area in this school.

Besides the positive opinion of the headteachers and teachers in Turkey; they stated that risks may arise for the child, children getting dirty; so that teachers are experiencing difficulties because of safety and cleanliness. Similarly, it was found that teachers experienced similar concerns expressed by headteachers (Ihmeideh & Al-Qaryouti, 2016; Kos & Jerman, 2013; McClintic & Petty, 2015; Yalçın & Tantekin Erden, 2021). These situations cause teachers to be reluctant to plan outdoor activities. In studies, it is seen that children are mostly warned by their families and teachers about the dangers that may occur in outdoors (Sicim Sevim & Bapoğlu Dümenci, 2019). Teachers in Turkey reported that outdoor plays were risky (Güler & Demir, 2016; Güngör & Göloğlu Demir, 2022). As a result, the teacher's risk perception may influence the child, the family's risk perception and attitude may influence the teacher and the child. These findings reveal the necessity of making efforts to change the attitudes and behaviours of adults towards outdoor learning and the concept of risk in Turkey.

Children usually do not wear uniforms in pre-school educational institutions in Turkey. In fact, especially girls are sent to school in fancy clothes and often this is supported by adults with reinforcing expressions. Some families expect to receive cleanly their children who come to school in this way. Also, some teachers may prefer unsuitable clothing for outdoor activities. Children and teacher should wear comfortable clothes that will not cause any difficulty while accompanying the children in all kinds of activities at school. In addition, for some families, buying a new one instead of torn and worn-out clothes and sending the child who is dirty every day to school with suitable clothes again creates economic pressure. However, in England, children wear school uniforms, and school uniforms are available at reasonably cheap prices in every market. Also, the materials such as boots, raincoats etc. that children use at school are available at prices accessible to every family. In addition, another striking situation is that the use of second-hand goods is not an indication of poverty, so people from all socio-economic levels are open to second-hand goods and they can also access second-hand items. When a child gets dirty, injured, or falls that may culturally create pressure on mothers and teachers to be labelled as “uninterested mother” and the “uninterested teacher” respectively. The mother, who is seen as the person responsible for the child’s care, may also be reflecting this pressure to the teacher. Risk and outdoor activities can also be considered in the context of social discourses about “good motherhood” (Allin, West & Curry; 2014).

The time spent outside at school varies considerably between countries. Teachers and headteachers in England stated that children stay outside for 2.5-3 hours a day in a standard way, and they find that sufficient. Although the weather conditions are generally rainy, it is especially important that this standard has been reached. Rain and cold are perceived as a part of life and do not constitute an obstacle to go outside. One teacher emphasized that we have to make sure that the time children spend outdoors at school is sufficient, because we do not know whether every child goes out enough outside school. The research conducted by Berland (2016) confirms the teacher’s opinion. His research on more than 12,000 families in the UK shows that 1 out of 10 children never play outside, and 80% of their children prefer to do virtual sports on computer screens compared to real life (Berland, 2016). This result reveals how important it is to plan outdoor activities at school.

The preschool education program in Turkey is game-based and child-centred. Learning through play is seen as an integral part of the program and pre-school education. Play in the classroom and in the outdoor is emphasized in the program. All attainment indicators in the pre-school education program can be accessed through outdoor activities. The important thing is to offer children a stimulating environment that will support their learning experience and to change this environment in a planned way. School gardens can offer these experiences to children with qualified arrangements. But there are no official guidelines regarding the frequency of outdoor learning or the content that children should experience during such learning. It is stated in the curriculum that teachers should guide the development of children and create a supportive environment for them. Therefore, each teacher can use their own judgement as to how often to engage children in outdoor learning.

The time spent by teachers in England, the time they spend in the outdoor, their evaluation of outdoor learning as a part of learning at school, and their allocation of sufficient time show that they believe in the power of outdoor and play. This point of

view has resulted in the proper arrangement of the school gardens and the provision of the necessary equipment. Teachers in England also emphasized the positive effects on them more than teachers in Turkey. Gardens are organized as a learning centre, as a continuation of the classroom, and enough time is allocated for outdoor activities. The first step to developing outdoor learning activities is to believe in the power and value of these activities (Maxwell, Mitchell & Evans, 2008; Perry, 2001; Thomas & Harding, 2011), enjoyable experience extended by the teacher's genuine interest and enthusiasm (Kernan, 2010; Waller, 2011).

In Turkey, time spent in outdoors at the school, varies from school to school, from class to class, from every day to one hour in a day per week. As reported by previous studies the time spent outdoors in preschool education institutions in Turkey is sometimes limited to 10 minutes during the winter months, (Güler & Demir, 2016; Mart & Bilton, 2014; Erdem, 2018). While Turkish teachers allocate 1.5-6 hours for outdoor activities per week, British teachers allocate 15-25 hours per week (Mart & Bilton, 2014). Although in preschool education program in Turkey it is suggested that time for outdoor activities should be allocated practices have shown that allocated time is limited, and a certain standard could not be achieved. Except for one of the headteachers they are aware that the time spent outdoors is not enough.

Headteachers and teachers emphasized unsuitability of equipment and school garden in Turkey. Unfortunately, numerous research reveals that the school gardens are not appropriate (Alat, Akgümüş & Cavali 2012; Çelik, 2012; Erdem, 2018; Karaküçük, 2008; Karatekin & Çetinkaya, 2013; Şişman & Gültük, 2011; Özdemir & Yılmaz, 2009; Yılmaz, 1995). However, it can be asserted that attempts to improve school gardens are incomplete due to both economic reasons and the thought of being difficult. Schools are designed with a centralized approach in Turkey, education stakeholders are not included in the design process. After the schools are built, it is exceedingly difficult to make changes. Preschool building was built as still multi-storey concrete garden. In England, it is striking that the schools are designed horizontally, each class is opened to the school garden and the gardens are very wide, with different ground features such as asphalt, grass and soil. It is hoped that in the design of schools and gardens in Turkey, it is expected to benefit from good examples. Teachers and headteachers can carry out important studies to improve school gardens through families, local administrations, and benefactors. There are similar examples abroad (Bradley, 1995) Encouraging teachers, headteachers and families with such examples will be an important step towards change. High family participation in preschool education in Turkey will facilitate the improvement of school gardens.

It can be asserted that outdoor learning activities in teacher training program is an important deficiency in both countries. Although it is seen that teachers in England overcome this deficiency with in-service trainings, outdoor learning should be included more in teacher education programs. In training program, not only does it create awareness, but also how to implement outdoor activities, how to make landscaping, how to plan, what principles to pay attention to during implementation should be discussed in detail. Teacher training programs in Turkey were updated in 2018, and "Out-of-School Learning Environments" were recommended as an elective course (yok.gov.tr). However, the environmental education module in teacher training courses has been removed in most UK colleges (Higgins & Nicol, 2002; National Association for

Environmental Education UK). This situation shows that in every country, there should be more place for outdoor learning topic for teacher training.

Parental involvement activities are different held in the school gardens. Two school headteachers in England stated that families do not or rarely participate in outdoor learning activities, but this is a particularly good idea, and they should do so. On the other hand, unlike England school gardens in Turkey are used by families before and after school. Parental involvement activities during pre-school period are especially highlighted in Turkey. It aims to support the participation of parent in the education process of their children and expand participation. The preschool education program, which was last updated in 2013, also includes the "MEB Preschool Program Integrated Family Support Education Guide (OBADER). This guide includes the importance, purpose, and principles of family participation. According to the views of headteachers and teachers, parent participant includes outdoor activities. But these activities have a rich content, it is thought that they are not sustainable and common practices.

Headteachers in both countries have the opinion that the time families spend in outdoors is not sufficient. They reported that families spend more time at home in front of screens in the England. Headteachers in Turkey reported that families prefer spending time in shopping malls. Teachers in England stated that the spent time outside varies from family to family, and teachers in Turkey are at a minimal level. This view may reveal that in both countries, families are moving away from outdoors for different reasons. This increasingly widespread problem brings with it disconnection from nature. Sometimes busy work life, sometimes laziness of the family, sometimes not knowing what to do with your child outdoors can be seen among the reasons for this situation.

Teachers in Turkey stated that they have difficulties in controlling children outside, doing different activities except of the game, and there is no time for class activities, so the gains in the program are incomplete. These results show that teachers cannot use outdoor and play activities effectively. It can be said that teachers have the idea that rather than learning by doing in school gardens, the skills can be gained through the activities initiated and directed by the teacher in the classroom environment by writing, telling, and watching at the desk. In the research, the most discussed activity in preschool classrooms is mostly art activities performed at the desk (Özkan & Girgin, 2014; Ünal, 2018; Ayvalı & Şimşek, 2020). It is seen that class activities are used more than outside activities (Davies, 1996; Renick, 2009; Wellhausen, 2002). Families also seem to support especially teacher-led outdoor activities (Hunter, Syversen, Graves & Bodensteiner, 2020). This situation may have affected the teachers' preferring the activities.

As a result of the research, it was found that the lack of physical facilities, parents' attitude, teacher training, lack of teacher assistant, number of children, difficulties of teachers in controlling children outside, lack of outdoor activities in planning, economic reasons, legal procedures and administrative reasons, climate conditions (Whereas the climate in the city where the research was conducted is mild.) were effective on outdoor learning in Turkey. Unlike teachers and headteachers in Turkey, in England did not mention these obstacles. It can be said that there are countries with similar characteristics in perception of barriers, as well as countries with different characteristics. Studies conducted in different countries have also revealed that teachers believe in the benefits of outdoor activities, but they see factors such as weather conditions, family, space characteristics, lack of equipment and laziness, number of children in classrooms, lack of

time, teachers' lack of knowledge and experience, and security problems (Ernst, 2014; McClintic & Petty, 2015; Tuuling & Ugaste, 2019).

However, studies show that children who spend time outdoors have less absenteeism due to illness, that children are more resilient, and allergies are reduced (Fjørtoft, 2001; Hendricks, 2001). It can be said that just as rain and cold are a part of culture in England, rain has not become a part of culture in Turkey. The lack of natural and artificial shaded areas in school gardens, the absence of covered sheltered areas, and the lack of appropriate clothing for children may be another reason for this concern. It is quite right for the teacher to be concerned about classroom control.

The biggest disadvantage of a teachers in Turkey working with 20-25 children in city centres is the lack of assistant staff. Moreover, the unsuitable garden conditions and the lack of sufficient material to the children, can make the control of class for the teacher difficult. Especially considering the conditions of the school gardens, the lack of areas that children can explore individually or in small groups makes the control more difficult for the teacher. In England, assistant teachers in the classes are a big advantage to do outdoor activities. An adult always accompanies the children inside and outside. Learning centres have also been established in school gardens as learning centres, class doors is open at the invitation time. Teachers' use of ready-made plans is not an approved situation, but it is a common situation. The notion that outdoor activities are not included in ready plans is simply adding on the wrong thing. The teacher must plan according to the needs of his / her students and the conditions of the educational environment.

It is important to inform the families and obtain written permission in every situation that will go outside the school boundaries. It is protective for both the teacher and headteacher in any adverse situation. Therefore, it should not be considered as an obstacle. However, by informing the families, permits for field trips to nearby places can be withdrawn at the beginning of the year.

It is thought that some headteachers attach importance to the visuality of the school garden being clean and tidy, as the family has the idea that my child will get dirty. It can be said that the understanding of cleanliness and order is far ahead of the useful and beneficial understanding for the development of the child. A teacher expressed this situation as "I want to do activities with the children, I cannot find a stone, a leaf or a stick in the garden." This point of view can be changed by considering the best interests of the child by sharing information and experiences with families.

It is seen that both countries have an effort to improve outdoor learning activities, but that economic resources are an obstacle to this, and they think that the idea of changing the school garden is difficult. In Turkey changes planned in the program, parent education can be regarded as significant efforts. Also, the purchase of new equipment in one school in each country and the effort to raise money are important steps.

Limitations

The observation of outdoor learning activities, which was planned within the scope of the research, was incomplete because of the constraints arising from the pandemic. Researchers may also be advised to add the observation dimension to increase the variety of data in their studies.

Conclusion and Suggestions

The results of the research show that according to the opinions of teachers and headteachers in England, the time allocated for outdoor learning activities is sufficient, but the time spent by children in Turkey in outdoor at school should be increased. Especially the pandemic process experienced has once again shown that, in addition to the many benefits it provides for children, outdoor are safer than closed areas. Outdoor activities in schools are too important to be left to individual choices and practices. Interviews with headteachers and teachers in Turkey show that although they are aware of the shortcomings in this regard and offer suggestions, there are almost no plans to improve learning in the outdoor.

Headteachers in both countries mentioned the economic conditions for the development of school gardens. Schools and teachers should not be left alone, national, and local support should be provided for the improvement of school gardens. Businesspeople, local governments, charitable people can provide economic support in improving garden conditions. Relevant teacher training programs of universities may offer in-service training.

In each country, courses for outdoor learning can gave teacher training. On-duty teachers can be supported by in-service training. It is seen that these trainings in the England are especially Forest School-based and long-term. In-service trainings to be held in Turkey should not be limited to only a few hours of seminars, comprehensive information and examples from theory to practice should be presented, how to organize outdoor and how to develop activities should be presented to teachers. Planning can be developed so that forest school practices in schools in England can be a part of the program throughout the year.

In both countries, headteachers, teachers and families can carry out joint studies in the design of school buildings and gardens, from headteachers to teachers, from families to children, educators, landscape architects and local administrations. Especially in Turkey, school gardens should be designed as a continuation of the classroom.

Considering the concerns of families in Turkey on teachers, the time they spend outside with their children, families should increase their awareness and level of knowledge about the benefits of outdoor learning, how they can spend time outside of school with their children. "Getting dirty is good", which is frequently emphasized in Turkey, should be the main emphasis of these trainings that the benefit of the child should be ahead of everything, without staying only in advertising campaigns. As stated by a headteachers, the education of families and the establishment of a routine to go out every day regardless of climate conditions will be important steps in the development of outdoor activities. In addition, comfortable and economical clothes that are accessible to every family (tracksuits or shorts and t-shirts) can be offered to preschool children in Turkey as a uniform.

In each country, local and national campaigns and special days can be organized to encourage families to spend time outside with their children. In both countries, gardening activities can be expanded within the scope of family participation activities.

Resources should be created for the implementation of assistant teacher who graduated from high school and degree child development programs for each class in Turkey.

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