

Determination of the Nutritional Habits of the Primary Teacher Candidates for the Game and Physical Activities Teaching Course

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Abstract

Today, countries implement policies and programs for childhood obesity. However, the effect of classroom teachers in preventing obesity is in a position to be a role model for students. Therefore, the awareness of the pre-service classroom teachers about nutrition and their nutritional behaviors have an important place on the students. On the other hand, a regular and correct nutrition behavior that the teacher candidates who are trained in the primary school teaching program will receive can gain this behavior to the students they will teach. In addition, there is a balanced and regular eating habit in the physical activity and nutrition section of the Physical Education and Play Lesson Curriculum in primary schools. In this study, it was aimed to examine the dietary habits of primary school teacher candidates. For this purpose, the questionnaire revealing the eating habits was applied to the primary school teacher candidates. In the analysis of the data, percentage and frequency tests were performed with the SPSS program. In the research results; it was discovered that most of the primary school teacher candidates did not receive nutrition education, did not have alcohol and smoking habits, and did not engage in any sports activities. It has been stated that almost all of the primary school teacher candidates have the habit of breakfast, but they skip meals, and the most skipped meal is lunch. They stated that the reason for skipping meals was that they did not have the opportunity. It was seen that the majority of the participants consume less than two liters of

water per day and less than five cups of tea/coffee per day. As a result of the study, it was determined that the primary school teacher candidates' nutritional habits and knowledge levels were deficient.

Keywords: Nutrition, Nutritional habits, Physical education and game curriculum

1. Introduction

Children spend the majority of their time in school, consuming 50% of their total daily calories during school hours, compared to any environment outside the home. Therefore, school environments play a critical role in promoting healthy eating (Story, Nannery, & Schwartz, 2009). Since more than half of obesity prevention programs involving nutrition or dietary behaviors are intended to be implemented by teachers, teachers can have a great influence on students' dietary intake and health-related behaviors (Ickes, McMullen, & Haider, 2014).

In addition to serving as delivery agents for structured programs, teachers are role models for their students given their proximity and interaction throughout the school day. The nutrition pyramid included in the Physical Education and Game Curriculum of the Ministry of National Education includes gaining a balanced and regular nutrition habit by being injured (MEB, 2018). In addition, in the Game and Physical Activities Course Curriculum, it is recommended that children participate in physical activities for at least 1 hour every day in a week in order to be healthy and improve their health (WHO, 2010). For this reason, students participating in the game and physical activity course should acquire the habits of engaging in games and physical activities that are appropriate for the targeted time and intensity, on a regular basis, every day of the week. During this participation, they should be supported to choose healthy eating, cleaning habits, non-safety activities and sports clothes suitable for games and physical activities. For this, there is the "Physical Activity and Nutrition Pyramid Card" in the Yellow card group as Physical Activity Cards (FEK). Students are asked to gain the acquisition of regular and balanced eating habits while participating in games and physical activities (MEB, 2012). In this, by making use of the "My Nutrition Pyramid" card, opportunities are created for students to express their thoughts about their regular and balanced diet before, during and after the games and physical activities. Here, primary school 1st and 4th grade students are required to gain eating habits according to the program. Classroom teacher candidates should also have a good command of this subject and they should also be role models for students.

Teachers can support healthy student behaviors by being role models for healthy eating behaviors, incorporating personal nutritional information into daily classroom activities, and avoiding unhealthy food practices (for example, meal rewards or meal-based celebrations) (Nutrition Service, 2016). Despite this effect, teachers' obesity-related behaviors, especially during school days, have not been adequately studied. In addition, few studies have examined the relationship between pre-service classroom teachers' individual eating behaviors and classroom practices related to healthy eating. In the education program of the primary school teacher candidates, the nutrition pyramid and the amount of calories that should be taken are included in the program content of the primary school teacher candidates who take the game and physical activities curriculum undergraduate course. According to this program, the diet, the amount of calories to be taken, the importance of meals, etc. information is included in the

program. Studies show that pre-service classroom teachers' dietary behaviors may not be in line with national dietary recommendations, with frequent consumption of high-fat products and the purchase of sugary drinks or calorie-dense snacks in school settings (Hartline-Grafton, Rose, & Johnson, 2009). In order to improve the efforts to prevent school-based obesity, more information is needed about the nutrition behaviors of primary school teacher candidates and how these behaviors are related to their classroom practices related to nutrition. This study explores these relationships. This study is conducted assuming that pre-service classroom teachers with healthier nutritional quality will include more positive practices related to nutrition in the classroom (Kubik, Lytle, & Hannan, 2002).

2. Materials and Methods

In this study, the general survey model, one of the quantitative research methods, was used (Karasar, 2011). In the study, data were collected by questionnaire method. As a result of adapting the questionnaire developed by Yücel (2015), a questionnaire consisting of 25 items in total was applied to classroom teachers and analyzed. In addition to the section with general and personal information, the questionnaire includes sections measuring nutritional habits and nutritional knowledge. The questionnaire was developed to measure general nutritional information. The questionnaire was adapted with the permission of Yücel (2015) in line with the purpose of the study and applied to the primary school teacher candidates to obtain data.

2.1 Study Group

The study group of the research consists of 141 primary school teacher candidates studying at Kırıkkale University, Department of Primary Education. The table below contains information about the participants.

Table 1. Demographic information of participants

Variable	Trait	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	96	68.1
	Male	45	31.9
Age	19.0	36	25.5
	20.0	45	31.9
	21.0	51	36.2
	22.0	9	6.4
Marital status	Single	141	100.0
School Type	High School and equivalent schools	135	95.7
	College	6	4.3
Size	150-160	42	29.8
	161-170	42	29.8
	171-180	45	31.9
	181 and above	12	8.5
Weight	40-50	24	17.0
	51-60	27	19.1
	61-70	36	25.5
	71-80	27	19.1
	80 and above	27	19.1

When Table 1 is examined, it has been determined that 68.1% of the classroom teacher candidates participating in the research are female and 31.9% are male. On the other hand, it is seen that 25.5% of the participants are 19 years old, 31.9% are 20, 36.2% are 21 and 6.4% are 22 years old. It is seen that all of the research participants are single. The table also shows that 95.7% of the participants are high school graduates or equivalent, and 4.3% are college graduates.

According to the participant information in Table 1, it has been found that 29.8% of them are 150-160 cm, 29.8% are 161-170 cm, 31.9% are 171-180 cm and 8.5% are 181 cm and over. It has been determined that 17.0% of the participants in the study were 40-50 kg, 19.1% of them 51-60 kg, 25.5% of them 61-70 kg, 19.1% of them 71-80 kg and 19.1% 80 and above kilograms.

2.2 Analysis of Data

According to the adaptation of the questionnaire developed by Yücel (2015), the questionnaire consisting of a total of 25 items was applied to the primary school teacher candidates and analyzed. In the analysis of the data, percentage and frequency tests were performed using the SPSS package program.

3. Findings and Comments

The information of the primary school teacher candidates about healthy eating habits and nutrition and the results obtained from the results were presented in a table and interpreted.

Table 2. The results of the research participants' nutrition education

Quality	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	9	6.4
No	132	93.6

6.4% of the classroom teacher candidates participating in the research stated that they received nutrition education, while 93.6% stated that they did not receive nutrition education.

Table 3. The results of the research participants' chronic disease

Quality	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No	108	76.6
Diabetes	18	12.8
Hashimoto	3	2.1
Anemia	9	6.4
Other	3	2.1

12.8% of the classroom teacher candidates participating in the research had Diabetes; 2.1% of them stated that they had Hashimoto and 6.4% of them had chronic disease Anemia. 76.6% of the prospective classroom teachers who participated in the study stated that they did not have any chronic diseases.

Table 4. The results of the medicines used by the research participants

Quality	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	33	23.4
No	108	76.6

23.4% of the classroom teacher candidates participating in the research stated that they used medicines, and 76.6% of them stated that they did not use any medication.

Table 5. The results of the research participants' smoking habits

Quality	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	18	12.8
No	123	87.2

12.8% of the classroom teacher candidates participating in the study stated that they smoke, and 87.2% of them stated that they do not smoke.

Table 6. The results of research participants' alcohol use

Quality	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	9	6.4
No	132	93.6

6.4% of the classroom teacher candidates participating in the study stated that they consumed alcohol, and 93.6% stated that they did not consume alcohol.

Table 7. The results of the research participants' regular sports habits

Quality	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	57	40.4
No	84	59.6

It is seen that 40.4% of the primary school teacher candidates participating in the research do sports regularly, and 59.6% do not do any physical activity.

Table 8. The results of the research participants on the number of main meals

Quality	Frequency	Percentage (%)
2 meals	36	25.5
3 meals	57	40.4
4 meals or more	48	34.0

25.5% of the classroom teacher candidates participating in the research stated that they consumed 2 meals, 40.4% 3 meals and 34.0% 4 or more meals.

Table 9. The results of the research participants' breakfast habits

Quality	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	117	83.0
No	24	17.0

While 83.0% of the classroom teacher candidates participating in the research stated that they had breakfast regularly every day, 17.0% stated that they did not have a regular breakfast every day.

Table 10. The results of the research participants' skipping meals during the day

Quality	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	57	40.4
No	39	27.7
Sometimes	45	31.9

40.4% of the classroom teacher candidates participating in the research stated that they skipped meals during the day, 27.7% of them did not skip meals during the day, and 31.9% of them sometimes skipped meals during the day.

Table 11. The results of the research participants' most frequently skipped meal

Quality	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Breakfast	51	36.2
Lunch	87	61.7
Dinner	3	2.1

36.2% of the classroom teacher candidates participating in the research stated that they skipped breakfast, 61.7% skipped lunch, and 2.1% skipped dinner.

Table 12. The results of the research participants' reasons for skipping meals

Quality	Frequency	Percentage (%)
I skip meals because I have forgotten.	3	2.1
I skip meals because I can't find the opportunity.	51	36.2
I skip meals because I don't want to.	42	29.8
I skip meals to lose weight.	6	4.3
I don't have a habit of skipping meals.	6	4.3

2.1% of the primary school teacher candidates participating in the research skipped meals during the day because they forgot, 29.8% did not want to during the day, 36.2% skipped meals because they could not find the opportunity during the day, 4.3% stated that they skipped meals to lose weight, and 4.3% of them stated that they skipped meals because they did not have a habit.

Table 13. The results of the research participants regarding the number of snacks per day

Quality	Frequency	Percentage (%)
None	9	6.4
1 meal	39	27.7
2 meals	42	29.8
3 meals or more	51	36.2

While 27.7% of the classroom teacher candidates participating in the research stated that they consumed one snack a day, 29.8% two snacks a day, 36.2% three or more snacks a day, 6.4% never They stated that they do not consume snacks.

Table 14. The results of the research on the type of food and beverage consumed by the participants between meals

Quality	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Tea. coffee	45	31.9
Carbonated/Acidic drinks	9	6.4
Juice	12	8.5
Cake/Cookie/Biscuit	27	19.1
Candy/Chocolate etc.	21	14.9
Fruit/Dried fruit	12	8.5
Nuts	12	8.5
Other	3	2.1

Of the classroom teacher candidates participating in the research, it is seen that 31.9% consume tea/coffee, 6.4% consume acidic-carbonated drinks, 19.1% consume cake-cookies-biscuit, 8.5% consume fruit-dry fruit, % 8.5% consume fruit juice, 14.9% consume sugar-chocolate, 8.5% consume dry nuts and 2.1% consume other food and beverage types.

Table 15. The results of the research participants' daily water consumption

Quality	Frequency	Percentage (%)
2 liters and below	84	59.6
2.5 liters	18	12.8
3 liters or more	39	27.7

It is seen that 59.6% of the primary school teacher candidates who participated in the research consume 2 liters or less per day, 12.8% consume 2.5 liters per day, and 27.7% consume 3 liters or more per day.

Table 16. The results of the research participants' daily tea-coffee consumption

Quality	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Between 1-5 glasses	117	83.0
Between 6-10 glasses	18	12.8
11 glasses and above	6	4.3

83.0% of the classroom teacher candidates who participated in the research stated that they consumed 5 glasses or less a day, 12.8% of them between 6-10 glasses a day, and 4.3% of them stated that they consumed 11 glasses or more of tea and coffee a day.

Table 17. The results of the research participants' salt preference in meals

Quality	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Without salt	27	19.1
Low salty	33	23.4
Medium salty	81	57.4

The classroom teacher candidates who participated in the research stated that they consumed their meals with 19.1% without salt, 23.4% with low salt and 57.4% with medium salt.

Table 18. The results of the research participants' eating speed

Quality	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Fast	15	10.6
Normal speed	117	83.0
Very slow	9	6.4

10.6% of the classroom teacher candidates who participated in the research stated that they ate their meals quickly, 83.0% of them at a normal pace, and 6.4% of them very slowly.

Table 19. The results of the research participants' food consumption status when they are sad-tired

Quality	Frequency	Percentage (%)
I never eat.	6	4.3
I eat less than usual.	54	38.3
I eat more and more often than usual.	39	27.7
There will be no change.	36	25.5
Other	6	4.3

When they are sad-tired, 4.3% of the classroom teacher candidates participating in the research stated that they do not eat at all, 38.3% eat less than usual, 27.7% eat more and often than usual, 25.5% stated that there was no change.

Table 20. The results of the research participants' food consumption status when they are happy-excited

Quality	Frequency	Percentage (%)
I never eat.	3	2.1
I eat less than usual.	36	25.5
I eat more and more often than usual.	42	29.8
There will be no change.	54	38.3
Other	6	4.3

When the primary school teacher candidates participating in the research are happy and excited, 2.1% stated that that they do not eat at all, 25.5% eat less than usual, 29.8% eat more and often than usual, and 38.3% stated that there was no change in the level of eating.

4. Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

A large proportion of the participants stated that they did not receive nutrition education. Similar results were also found in the research findings of Bozkurt and Erdogan (2019) about classroom teachers. Kayapınar (2011) stated in his research that the habits and knowledge level of classroom teachers towards nutrition are deficient. Bozkurt and Erdogan (2019) investigated the knowledge levels of classroom teachers on general nutrition and sports nutrition and found that they were deficient. Likewise, Congar and Ozdemir (2004) investigated physical education teachers' knowledge levels on sports nutrition as well as nutrition and determined that their knowledge level was lacking. While El-Ahmady and El-Wakeel (2017) compared boys and girls in their study, they stated that girls had higher nutritional knowledge and habits,

while Metos, Sarnoff, and Jordan (2019) stated that the nutritional knowledge level of the participants was low in their study.

A large proportion of the participants stated that they did not have any chronic diseases and did not use medication. Bozkurt and Erdogan (2019), in their study, determined that the classroom teacher participants did not have chronic diseases and did not use medicines. Bayramoglu et al., (2018) stated that most of the academicians do not have any chronic diseases in their study in which they investigated the nutritional habits of academicians. In a study examining teachers' health beliefs and dietary status, Yardımcı, Başpınar, and Özçelik (2018) found that most of the teachers did not have any chronic diseases.

A large proportion of the participants stated that they did not use alcohol or cigarettes and did not engage in regular physical activity. Bozkurt and Erdogan (2019), in their study, found that most of the classroom teachers do not use alcohol, do not smoke, and do not engage in regular physical activity. Guleç et al. (2008) examined the dietary habits of female students and found that most of the students staying in the dormitory do not drink alcohol or smoke. Most of the prospective classroom teachers who participated in the study stated that they regularly ate three meals a day and regularly had breakfast. According to similar results, Bozkurt and Erdogan (2019) found that the majority of classroom teachers do not consume alcohol or cigarettes and do not engage in regular physical activity. Sözen et al. (2009) found in their study on metal workers that most of them never used alcohol or cigarettes or quit later.

About half of the pre-service classroom teachers who participated in the study reported that they skipped meals during the day, the most skipped meal was lunch, and they did this because there was no opportunity. According to similar results, Bozkurt and Erdogan (2019) found that about half of the classroom teachers skipped meals during the day, and the skipped meal was the lunch that could not find the opportunity. Ozyazıcıoğlu et al. (2009) reported in their study that the meals that the participants skipped the most were breakfast and lunch. Zemzemoglu et al. (2019) reported that lunch was the most skipped meal in the nutritional habits review of students. Bayramoglu et al. (2018) in their study in which they examined the nutritional habits of female academicians, stated that the most skipped meal was lunch and the reason for skipping meals was not having an opportunity.

The primary school teacher candidates participating in the research stated that they consume the most tea/coffee, 5 cups or less of tea and coffee per day, and that they consume less than two liters of water. Similar results were also found in the research findings of Bozkurt and Erdogan (2019) about classroom teachers. Orak, Akgün, and Orhan (2006) examined the nutritional habits of Süleyman Demirel University students and stated that the majority of students consume tea and coffee. Saygın et al. (2011) stated that the majority of university students consume acidic-carbonated beverages. Irwin, Speechley and Gilliland (2019) stated that the participants consumed the most water.

A large proportion of the participants stated that they ate their meals at a normal pace and their salt consumption was moderate. Similar results were also found in the research findings of Bozkurt and Erdogan (2019) about classroom teachers. Oner et al. (2013) stated in their study that the daily salt consumption level of most of them is higher than the World Health

Organization's recommendation (5 g or less per day). In the study conducted by Ulas (2018), it was determined that most of the health school students ate at a normal pace.

The prospective classroom teachers who participated in the study stated that they ate less than normal when they were sad-tired, and that there was no change in their eating levels when they were happy-excited. In the research findings of Bozkurt and Erdogan (2019) on classroom teachers, they stated that they ate more food than usual when they were sad-tired, and there was no change in their eating levels when they were happy-excited. Yücel (2015) stated in his study that the majority of the participants ate more or less when they were sad and tired, but there was no change in their eating habits when they were happy and excited. Ozçelik (2000) stated in his study that the participants ate less when they were sad-tired, and there was no change when they were happy-excited. In their study, Cetin and Sarper (2013) reported that most of the participants never eat when they are sad and tired, but they eat more when they are happy-excited (Cetin & Sarper, 2013).

5. Recommendations

- Training on the importance of nutrition should be given to prospective classroom teachers.
- A study should be conducted showing the importance of water consumption of primary school teacher candidates.
- A study should be conducted showing the importance of skipping meals on the negative impact of nutrition.
- Training on the importance of nutrition can be given to prospective classroom teachers who take the game and physical activities curriculum undergraduate course.
- The relationship between the application of the game and physical activities teaching program in primary schools and the nutrition pyramid can be researched.
- The studies of the classroom teachers of the game and physical activities course in primary schools can be researched.
- Researchers can investigate the erroneous information that the pre-service classroom teachers know about their eating habits.
- Researchers can carry out studies to measure the physical activity levels of primary school teacher candidates.

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