



Teacher and Parent Views on The Instruction of 5th Grade Students by Branch Teachers in The 4+4+4 Education System

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Abstract: The objective of this study is to examine the teacher and parent views on the instruction of 5th grade students by branch teachers. This study is designed according to the phenomenology design and uses qualitative data. In order to collect data, open-ended questions were asked to 18 teachers and 16 parents of 5th grade students on the subject, and the responses were analyzed. According to the results of the study, for parents, the disadvantageous aspects of instruction of 5th grade students by branch teachers are that the students could not express themselves in the new class, there is no one knowing and monitoring them closely in the new class and students have difficulty in doing the performance homework. On the other hand, advantageous aspects for students according to parents are that branch teachers give instruction as they have command on the subject and students take multiple teachers as models. The study found the disadvantageous aspects for teachers as having difficulty in completing the curriculum, following homework and maintaining classroom discipline..

Keywords: education, education system, parents' views

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Introduction

Educational institutions are the most important element after family that prepare individuals for life. The structure created by the combination of educational institutions is called the "Education System" (Akgun and Şimşek, 2011). Education systems are structures that vary depending on various qualities of countries and cultures. Some views suggest that education systems are different due to political and financial reasons (Cetkovic, Knezevic, Vujovic and Cerovic, 2012). According to another view, education systems differ due to various requirements. In this context, it would be inevitable for the differing education systems to create results with different qualities (Urooj and Ahmed, 2012). In this context, there will be changes in the society with the changes of individuals raised in the education system.

When it comes to the change of education systems, systems that are not contemporary will not be able to fully raise individuals (Çakir, 2010). In addition, it will be possible to change education systems qualitatively by studying the matter from different angles (Henderson, Beach and Finkelstein, 2011). One should not forget that a generation is being raised differently with each amended education system (Ergun, 1985).

Countries who wish to amend the education system will have an advantage if they make changes in the education systems by taking the current education system into consideration (Ozgur, 2005; Erol, 2011).

The needs of individuals and societies constantly change and differ. In this sense, changes in the education system should be done by considering the requirements of individuals and society as well as linking to current scientific and cultural elements (Yapici, 2006). One of the basic reasons for differentiation in education systems is the defects in the current education systems. In this context, states carry out some changes in the education systems and attempt to improve the current status (Morpeth and Creed, 2012).

Changes in education systems affect students as well as teachers, who are the most important part of the education process. As a result of rapid changes, students and teachers may face some difficulties in adapting to the new system. Teachers may lose their professional sensitivities and regard themselves as failures (Elma, 2003; Uredi and Uredi, 2007).

The education system in Turkey was subject to several changes. Especially, there were many changes with respect to compulsory education. Compulsory education was increased in the first years of the republic from 3 years to 5 years. It has been long discussed whether 5-year compulsory education was sufficient. This ended with the increase of compulsory education from 5 years to 8 years in 1997 (Baş, 2004). Finally, it was decided to implement the 4+4+4 years education systems in the academic year of 2012-2013, increasing the compulsory education to 12 years in

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order to ensure international standards in education (Demir and Pinar, 2013).

Branch teachers instruct on a certain field or subject in contrast with classroom teachers (MEB, 2014). In this context, branch teachers are specialists in one of the subjects such as sciences and social sciences and teach these fields to students. Classroom teachers have general knowledge on all subjects, not specialized knowledge (Karabay, 2014).

Duties of branch teachers should be to train students in their specialized subjects and to instil cognitive and social values. In this context, branch teachers can explain the elements not understood by students because of their specialization and serve to provide them with a convenient education environment (Recep, 2013).

Increase of compulsory education from 8 years to 12 years as a result of the 4+4+4 change caused a huge differentiation in the education system. The primary school of 5 years and the secondary school of 3 years in the previous 8-year system were totally different (Güven, 2012). This differentiation in the education system had a great effect on teachers, especially, branch teachers of Sciences and Social Sciences who had to instruct 5th grade students. These branch teachers used to teach secondary school students in the previous system and started to teach 5th grade students in the new system which caused different conditions to take place. This study will address advantages and disadvantages of instruction of 5th grade students by branch teachers.

Method

This study was designed according to the phenomenology design using the qualitative survey model in order to examine the subject in detail, as the objective of the study is to evaluate the instruction of 5th grade students by branch teachers according to the views of branch teachers and parents. The study group consists of 18 teachers of 5th grade students in 3 different secondary schools in Ankara including 6 mathematics teachers, 3 social sciences teachers, 4 Turkish teachers and 5 science and technology teachers as well as 16 parents of 5th grade children, making a total of 34 people. Interview forms were used to collect qualitative data. Parents and teachers were asked 3 open-ended questions. When the responses were analyzed by the content analysis method, the views of parents were divided into the sub-skills of student adaptation skills, student-teacher relationships and teacher-parent relationships while the views of teachers were divided into 3 sub-dimensions including views on curriculum, views on discipline and motivation and views on the developmental period and characteristics.

Findings and Interpretation

Findings on the views of parents and teachers were obtained by analyzing the responses received from the

interview forms thoroughly using the content analysis method.

Findings on Parents' Views

As a result of the content analysis, the parent views were examined in 4 tables including student adaptation skills, student-teacher relationships, teacher-parent relationships and advantageous aspects according to parents.

Table 1. Views on Students' Adaptation Skills

	f	%
Cannot express themselves in the new class	5	31,2
They change environment without having the primary school behaviour settled	2	12,5
Difficulty in doing homework	7	43,7
Difficulty in puberty matters	4	25
Difficulty in finding new friends	3	18,7
Difficulty in pursuing education activities on their own	4	25
Early start and late finish of lessons due to busy weekly lesson schedule causes a problem	2	12,5
They have mental disaggregation	3	18,7

Looking at the views of parents on students' adaptation skills, 43,7% of the students have problems in doing homework, 31,2% of them have difficulty in expressing themselves in the new class and 25% of them have puberty problems and difficulty in carrying out education activities on their own. In addition, a parent said that they try to stand out with hair styles and clothing in this puberty period.

When the table is examined, it can be concluded that the students had difficulties with respect to adaptation skills and could not act on their own and that they needed assistance from a counsellor whom they could trust.

Table 2. Views on Student and Teacher Relationships

	f	%
There is no one in the new class who knows and monitors the student closely	8	50
Difficulty in getting used to new teachers	4	25
Student does not share secrets with new teachers	3	18,7
Student has difficulty in choosing a teacher as an example	3	18,7
Branch teachers do not embrace students	4	25
Branch teachers do not know the students as they are with them only during class and they attend to several classes	2	12,5

Looking at the views of parents on student and teacher relationships, 50% of parents stated that there is no

one in the class who knows and monitors the students closely, 25% of them stated that branch teachers do not embrace students and branch teachers do not know their students as they are with them only during class and they attend to several classes. One teacher stated that class teachers consider students as their own children while branch teachers see them as step-children.

When the table is studied, it was found that students did not know the new teacher, and the teacher did not know the new students. It was concluded that students had difficulty in getting used to the teacher and did not trust him or her and could not unveil their secrets as they did not know the teacher.

Table 3. Views on Teacher and Parent Relationships

	f	%
We have chance to meet classroom teachers daily while we can only see the branch teachers once in a semester.	2	12,5
We are able to get information from classroom teachers about every subjects, while we can only discuss one subject with branch teachers	3	18,7
Class teachers can know the student very well as they have more time with students	4	25
Difficulty in communicating with the branch teachers	3	18,7
Difficulty in following up on homework as branch teachers assign separate homework	4	25

When we examine the views of parents on the relationships of parents and teachers, 25% of parents stated that class teachers know children very well as they spend more time with students, and as parents they have difficulty in following up on the homework of their children because they are assigned separately by the branch teachers.

When we examine the table, it can be concluded that parents could not establish complete dialogue with the branch teachers, and they had the expectation to achieve close relationships with multiple teachers in one year as they did with one classroom teacher throughout four years.

Table 4. Views of Parents on Advantageous Aspects

	f	%
Branch teacher gives better instruction as he has command of the subject	3	18,7
Students do not take only one teacher as a model but several teachers	2	12,5
Students are no more dependent on a single class teacher	2	12,5

When we study the views on advantageous aspects, 18,7% of parents stated that branch teachers give better instruction as they are specialists in their fields.

Although parents expressed the negative aspects of the system, they also stated that they did not consider the system as completely wrong, negative or inapplicable.

Findings on Teacher Views

As a result of the content analysis, the views of teachers were examined in 4 tables including their views on curriculum, views on discipline and motivation, views on the developmental period and characteristics and advantageous aspects according to teachers.

Table 5. Views on Curriculum

	f	%
I have difficulty in completing curriculum	6	33,3
I have difficulty in lowering to the level of students	4	22,2
I have difficulty in conducting activities	3	16,6
Students have difficulty with hand writing in the primary school and plain text writing in the secondary school	4	22,2
5th class curriculum is very heavy for students	4	22,2
They have difficulty with the performance assignment	5	27,7

With respect to views of teachers on curriculum, 33,3% of teachers stated that they have difficulty in completing the curriculum while 27,7% of teachers stated that students have difficulty in carrying out the performance homework.

When we examine the table, it can be concluded that the 5th grade curriculum is heavy with too many units and that the teachers had difficulty to lower themselves to the level of students. That is, it can be said that the curriculum is not suitable for the level of students in its current version.

Table 6. Views on Discipline and Motivation

	f	%
I have difficulty in following up on homework	5	27,7
I have difficulty in maintaining discipline in the classroom	4	22,2
I have difficulty in pulling the class together after breaks	3	16,6
I have difficulty in pulling the class together while the class starts too late	2	11,1
I have difficulty in motivating the students as the lessons are too long	2	11,1

When we examine the views of teachers on discipline and motivation, it was stated that 27,7% of teachers have difficulty in following-up on homework, and 22,2% of them had difficulty in maintaining discipline in the class.

When we examine the table, it can be concluded that classrooms are crowded and lesson durations are long,

students failed to adapt to the new classroom and the teacher had difficulty in conducting an efficient lesson.

Table 7. Views on the Development Period and Characteristics

	f	%
They have problems in group assignments	3	16,6
Students do not know how to behave as there are different teachers for each subject	4	22,2
Students have difficulty in understanding as there are too many abstract concepts	7	38,8
Difficulty in drawing geometrical shapes	5	27,7
Difficulty in drawing shapes	3	16,6
Mental disintegration as it is puberty period of many children	3	16,6
They have difficulty in maintaining body coordination	2	11,1
They try to show off themselves with their clothes	3	16,6
Students have difficulty as they are not ready for abstract matters	4	22,2

When we examine the views of teachers on the development period and its characteristics, 38,8% of them stated that students have difficulty in understanding as there are too many abstract concepts in the curriculum, while 27,7% of them stated that they have difficulty in drawing geometrical shapes.

When the table is examined, it can be concluded that the students had difficulty in getting used to a different environment and different teachers in this period as they were in a transition period with respect to their developmental period characteristics, that their muscle development was not completed and students had puberty period problems.

Table 8. Views on Advantageous Aspects According to Teachers

	f	%
Branch teacher has better command of the subject as they focus on only one lesson	6	33,3
Branch teachers are more disciplined with students	2	11,1
Students benefit from each different teacher	2	11,1

When we examine the views on advantageous aspects according to teachers, 33,3% of the teachers stated that the branch teachers were more useful to students than the classroom teachers as they focused on only their branches.

Discussion

When we look at the studies on this subject, we see that a majority of the studies are on the general advantages

and disadvantages of the 4+4+4 system. The findings of the limited studies on the instruction of 5th grade lessons by branch teachers are in parallel with the findings of this study.

In this study, parents expressed their views on the instruction of 5th grade lessons by branch teachers and said that the students had problems with adaptation skills, teacher-student relations and teacher-parent relations, while it was an advantage that students met multiple teachers. According to teachers, students had problems with the curriculum, discipline and motivation and characteristics of the developmental period, while advantageous aspects included the facts that branch teachers had more in-depth knowledge of their subject, they were more disciplined than classroom teachers and it was better for students to be instructed by different teachers.

With this study, it was concluded that the curriculum of the 5th grade was heavier for students, there were too many units, and; students had difficulty in doing the activities. Similarly, Demir, Dogan and Pinar (2013), Epçaçan (2014) and Demir (2014) stated that the 5th grade curriculum was heavy for students and not suitable for them.

This study determined that teachers had difficulty in completing the curriculum and in lowering themselves to the level of students.

This study determined that there was difficulty in motivating students as the lessons were long in duration and in maintaining discipline within the class while students had difficulty in returning back to class after breaks. In parallel to that, Ors, Erdogan and Kipici (2013) stated that students had an adaptation problem while Demir et al (2013) stated that classroom sizes should be reduced for healthy conduction of programs and lesson lengths should be shortened to motivate students for lessons.

Again, in parallel to the findings of this study, Tangulu and Çidaçi (2014) conducted a study on the problems of the secondary school 5th grade social sciences teachers and determined that the teachers had problems with classroom management, the physical and cognitive preparedness of students, the learning and teaching process, counselling and assessment-evaluation.

Conclusion

According to the results of the study, there are both advantageous and disadvantageous aspects of instruction of 5th grade students by branch teachers. Disadvantageous aspects for students were found to be that they cannot express themselves in the new class, they have difficulty in puberty matters and difficulty in carrying out studies on their own, they have difficulty in understanding as there are too many abstract concepts, there is no one in the class who knows and monitors students very well, students have difficulty in doing performance homework, branch teachers do not embrace students, branch teachers do not know

students as they are with students only during the class and as they attend to many classes, and parents have difficulty in following up on the homework of students as each branch teacher assigns different homework. Advantageous aspects for students are found to be that branch teachers give better instruction as they have better command of their fields, and students take several teachers as models and are no longer dependent on one class teacher. Disadvantageous aspects for teachers are found in the study to be difficulty in completing the curriculum, carrying out homework follow-up and maintaining classroom discipline.

Suggestions

1. The study determined that students had difficulties in adaptation skills and, teacher-student relationships. Parents had difficulties with parent-teacher relationships. As a solution to these problems, it is suggested that this program will be more efficient with the participation of parents, students, former and current teachers in a one-week orientation program for these classes in the beginning of the year under the control of a guide whom students might trust.
2. The study determined that the 5th grade curriculum was not good for the level of students that classrooms were crowded and lesson lengths were long, that students had difficulty in getting used to a different environment and different teachers in this period as they were in a transition stage in their developmental period characteristics. For the solution of these problems, it is suggested that daily lesson hours and the number of units should be reduced, unit contents should be simplified, activities should be suitable for student levels, classroom sizes should be reduced, more assistance should be provided by the school counsellors to maintain discipline in and out of the classroom and to solve the developmental period problems.
3. This study determined that parents could not establish complete dialogue with the branch teachers and that parents had the expectation to achieve close relationships with multiple teachers in one year as they did with one classroom teacher throughout four years. For the solution of this problem, it can be suggested that an in-service training should be given to branch teachers about getting in contact with parents and that trainings for teachers and parents should be planned.

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