

A survey on children's games projects in turkey between the years 2006-2018

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Abstract

Education through games is a way of teaching the children the traditions of the community in which they live. In recent years, a number of projects in this regard are carried out in Turkey. The aim of this study was to examine the projects related to children's games in Turkey between the years 2006-2018 and determine the traditional children's games introduced / played in these projects. The data used in this study was collected between 01.11.2018 - 11.04.2019. In this regard, data collected via books, articles, magazines, newspapers, thesis studies, telephone interviews with institutions and organizations and e-mails are evaluated and the findings are presented in tables and figures. It is determined that the most traditional game promotion in the projects was made with the booklet published by the Ankara Metropolitan Municipality, and the Ministry of National Education carried out the most children's games projects among other institutions and organizations (public / private). In line with the results, some policy suggestions were made for trainers, institutions and organizations.

Keywords: Children's games projects, traditional children's games, coordinators of children's games projects

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1. Introduction

Every society aims to convey material-spiritual values, culture, traditions and customs to all its individuals and its future generations. Game is one of the most important tools used in this process.

Today, children who encounter different cultures through television programs, movies and computer games move away from their tradition and cultural values, become alienated and thus experience an identity crisis. In particular, “traditional” children's games and toys can be seen as effective tools to overcome this problem. Children's games stand out as a very important subject because they teach children the traditions of the society they live in. Moreover, children's games teach educators how to evaluate local materials and enable them to get to know children more closely via learning through play (Sağlam, 1997).

Children who play traditional games, which are an indication of the cultural richness of the society, become both practitioners and conveyors of the game. Traditional children's games are mentioned among the folk culture products that are required to be protected in the UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2003 (Toksoy, 2010; UNESCO, 2019). As for children's games in Turkey, although there are small geographical and cultural differences in some areas, they have some similarities in terms of the core values they aim to convey to children (Sümbüllü & Altınışık, 2016).

In recent years, there are number of studies and projects carried out in Turkey on traditional games. Some studies reveal the contribution of the games to the development of children (Budak, 2016), while some of them are aimed to classify children's games in certain regions (Demir, 2015; Çolak, 2015; Fedakar & Şarman Korkutan, 2016; Kayar, 2018). In addition to some studies on the changing trends of games among generations (Tuğrul et.al, 2014), there are also studies that re-compiles traditional children's games to be played especially in educational environments (Güven, 2018). However, as far as it is known, no extensive review on the traditional game projects in Turkey has been found in the literature. That's why, this gap in the literature is the starting point of this study.²

2. Aim

The purpose of this project is to survey the children's game projects in Turkey between 2006-2018 and determine the traditional children's games introduced / played in these projects. In addition, the units such as institutions, organizations that organized these projects will also be examined.

3. Methodology

In line with its purpose, this research has a descriptive survey research design. This type of research aims to identify past or present situations / events as they exist. (Karasar, 2015). This research covers the data on all provinces and districts of Turkey. The data used in this study was collected between 01.11.2018 - 11.04.2019 via books, articles, magazines, newspapers, thesis studies, telephone interviews with institutions and organizations and e-mails. The theses and articles used in this study are accessed from web site of the Council of Higher Education Thesis Center and electronic information resources database of the Selçuk University Library, respectively. The criteria taken into consideration when examining the projects are that the project was carried out between the years 2006-2018 in Turkey and the project title or content includes following expressions: "Traditional Children's Games", "Children's Games" and "Children's Games Projects". The authorities of the institution responsible for the project were reached

² The sources that not mentioned in this study but in the thesis titled “Traditional Children Games Projects in Turkey” are given in Appendix A.

via telephone and e-mails in order to access information about the projects that were detected as a result of web searches but whose contents are not accessible. Each project, whose information we have reached with this method, has been saved in PDF format by making a detailed report under the titles of its title, dates, coordinators, aims and objectives, phases, and games and activities included. The frequency of the projects according to the institutions, organizations and the regions is shown in the figures.

This study and its literature review is limited with the above-mentioned resources and children's games that have been made between the years 2006-2018 in Turkey.

4. Results and Discussions

In this section, Table 1 shows the traditional children's games in the projects, and Figure 1 and 2 show the distribution of the traditional children's games projects by region, and by institutions and organizations, respectively.

Table 1 shows the first 25 games amongst the 86 most preferred games in the projects. Other games that are preferred only once such as "Hide and Go Seek" are excluded from the table. The results revealed that the most preferred traditional children's games are "Grab the Kerchief" (13), "Burning Ball" (11), "Hopscotch" (10) and "I Sell Butter" (10) respectively. A chi-square normal distribution test is applied to the frequencies in Table 1. The p-value of 0.0000 indicates a rejection of the null hypothesis, showing that the games are not normally distributed among the projects. According to Table 1, the frequency of the first 4 games in projects is very close to each other. The reason why these games, which children are happy to play in the streets and school gardens, are frequently preferred in projects are that the games are dynamic, practical (easy to supply and do not require too many materials (only handkerchiefs, balls)) and games that are passed on from generation to generation. It is noteworthy that the game "hide and seek", which is expected to be one of the most popular games, is less included in the projects. This situation may be related with the fact that the areas where children play are not very suitable as playgrounds for children due to the effect of urbanization. Within the scope of this project, it has been learned that the Ministry of National Education has built active playgrounds for 500 schools in 50 provinces with its project partners. (<https://aktifyasam.org.tr/proje/cik-disariya-oynayalim/>). This fact supports the idea that more playgrounds are needed for children.

Table 1. The Most Preferred Traditional Children's Games in the Projects

Turkish Names of the Games	English Names of the Games	Frequency
Mendil Kapmaca	Grab the Kerchief ^a	13
Yakan Top	Burning Ball ^a	11
Sek Sek	Hopscotch ^a	10
Yağ Satarım Bal Satarım	I Sell Butter ^a	10
Yedi Kiremit	Seven Tiles ^b	5
Tombik	Tombik ^c	5
Çuval Yarışı	Gunnysack Race ^d	4

Kutu Kutu Pense	Ring around the Rosie ^e	4
Deve Cüce	Stand-Up Sit-Down ^j	3
Birdir Bir	“One, it’s one” ^a	3
Halat Çekme	Tug of War ^a	3
İp Atlama	Jump Rope ^a	3
Aç Kapıyı Bezirgan Başı	Open the Door, Head Merchant ^a	3
Körebe	Blind Man’s Bluff ^a	3
Topaç Çevirme	Spinning Top ^f	2
Eski Minder	Old Cushion ^g	2
Beş Taş	Five Stones ^a	2
Köşe Kapmaca	Puss-in-the Corner ^d	2
Çelik Çomak	Steel ^a	2
İstop	Stop ^h	2
Üç Taş	Three Stones ⁱ	2
Dokuz Taş	Nine Stones ^a	2
Misket	Marbles ^d	2
Yerden Yüksek	High Above the Ground ^b	2
Saklambaç	Hide and Go Seek ^a	1

Notes: English translations of the games retrieved from a: Turkishculture (2019a), b: Youtube (2019), c: Turkish National Agency (2017), d: Tureng Dictionary (2019), e: Lithuanian National Agency (2019), f: Wikipedia (2020), g: Brightnewstar (2019), h: Noe, J. (2016), i: Turkishculture (2019b), j: Çokluzeka (2019).

Figure 1 shows the frequency of the projects by geographical regions of Turkey. According to Figure 1, most of the projects were held in Mediterranean (18%) and Aegean regions (18%), followed by Marmara (16%), Central Anatolia (14%), Black Sea (12%) and South-Eastern Anatolia (12%) regions. In contrast to these regions, only a limited number of the projects was done in Eastern Anatolia region (10%). According to Figure 1, there is no significant difference between regions in terms of number of projects implemented.

Figure 2 shows the frequency of the projects by managing institutions and organizations. According to Figure 2, most of the projects were administrated by municipalities and public institutions and organizations (40%), followed by the Ministry of Education (34%) and non-governmental organizations (17%). In contrast, only a limited number of the projects was administrated by private institutions and organizations (9%). It is an expected result that Local Administrations and Public Institutions and the Ministry of National Education are the institutions that support these projects the most. It is possible that these institutions support children's games projects in line with their educational purposes.

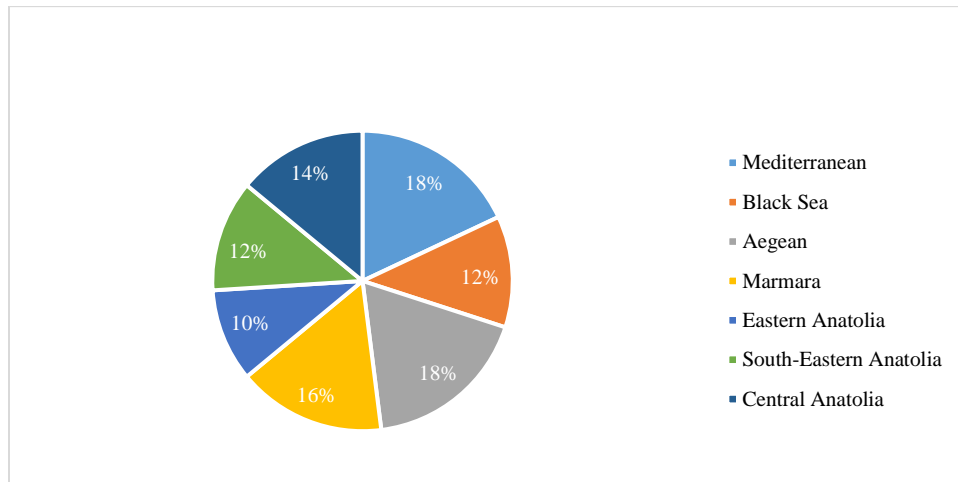


Figure 1. Distribution of the Projects on Traditional Children's Games by Region

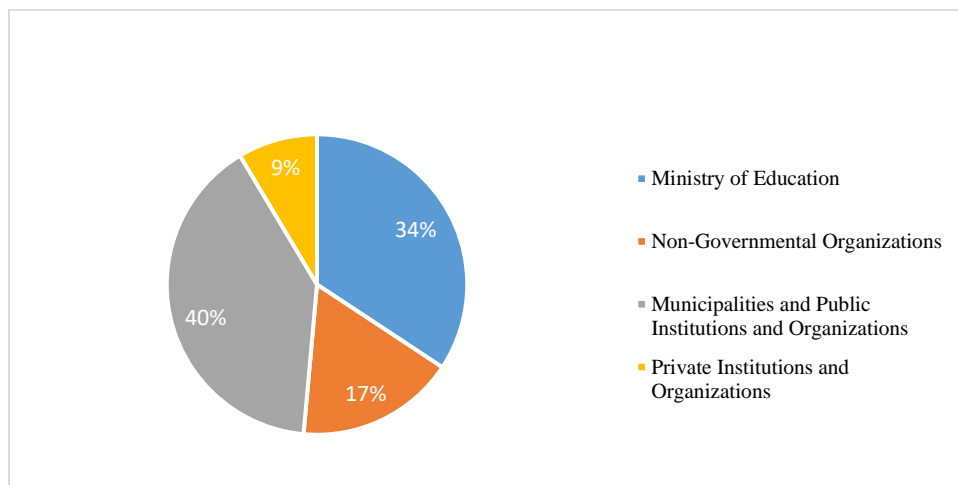


Figure 2. Distribution of the Projects on Traditional Children's Games by Institutions and Organizations

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

In accordance with the limitations of the study, children's games projects carried out between the years 2006-2018 in Turkey are as follows³:

- From Tradition to Future: Children's Games Festival Project (Ankara),
- Project on Traditional Children's Games (Antalya),
- Project on Talent in Sports will Come with Him/Her (Balıkesir, Edremit),
- Project on Teaching Old Games (Bolu),

³ The internet sources of these projects are given in Appendix-B.

- Traditional Children's Games Project (Denizli),
- Games my Grandpa and Grandma Played (Giresun),
- Traditional Children's Games Project: Olly Olly Oxen Free (Isparta-Eğirdir),
- 1. Traditional Children's Games (Kahramanmaraş-Göksun),
- Traditional Children's Games Festival (Kayseri),
- Traditional Children's Games in School Gardens (Kütahya),
- Schools Festive with Traditional Children's Games (Manisa),
- Green Playtime Project (Mersin),
- "I Keep My Culture Alive" Project (Muğla),
- Game Caravan Project (Diyarbakır, Mardin, Siirt, Van, Ağrı, Muş, Bingöl, Tunceli),
- Traditional Children's Games, Cultural and Sport Activities Project (Manisa, Elazığ, Niğde, Kahramanmaraş, Samsun, Siirt, Sakarya),
- 1. and 2. Turkey's Children's Games,
- Traditional Children's Games for Children from RTÜK (Radio and Television Supreme Council of Turkey),
- OMO (Old Mother Owl) Traditional Children's Games,
- Let's Play Out,
- Traditional Children's Games Booklet.

The 86 most promoted / played children's games were determined in these projects. The most promoted / played children's games are "Grab the Kerchief", "Burning Ball", "Hopscotch" and "I sell butter", respectively.

Within the scope of these projects, the publicity of the traditional games was mostly achieved thanks to the 44 traditional games in the Traditional Children's Games Booklet by Ankara Metropolitan Municipality. Moreover, 20 traditional children's games were presented to the children with an introduction film prepared under the project of "From RTUK to Children."

By examining the content of each project, it is determined that the educational purposes in the realization of these projects are generally aimed at the following common goals:

- ✓ To ensure that traditional children's games are played and passed on to future generations as a cultural heritage,
- ✓ To preserve traditions by renewing it,
- ✓ To support children's physical, cognitive, emotional and social development and to educate them with games,
- ✓ To direct children to alternative gaming activities besides television and internet,
- ✓ To save children from technology addiction,
- ✓ To help children be physically active while encouraging them to do sports,

- ✓ To help children to spend their free time effectively while building a strong connection with their past.

Among the institutions and organizations (public / private) that either construct and run their own projects or partner with other institutions, Ministry of National Education is seems to implement the most children's game projects.

In addition, active playgrounds were built at 500 schools in 50 cities of Turkey under the project of “Let’s Play Out” administrated by the Ministry of Education, Coca-Cola Life Plus Foundation and Active Living Association.

While some projects were carried out in line with sports activities, others were done with activities such as toy making and renovation of old toys.

Taking the results of this study into consideration, following suggestions about these projects can be made to instructors, institutions and organizations:

- ✓ To reach out more children with new children's games projects across the country,
- ✓ To increase playgrounds where traditional children's games can be played (especially in schools),
- ✓ To take the projects of private institutions and organizations about traditional children's games as examples and to support such projects,
- ✓ To design game archives with visual content that is easily accessible to educators and families (booklets, website creation, TV broadcasts etc.),
- ✓ To increase the use of mass media and broadcasting organs in the announcement of projects and in sharing information.

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