

Primary-Grade Teacher Candidates' Views on Museum Education

Ayşe Mentiş Taş
Konya University, Konya, Turkey

This study identifies the primary-grade teacher candidates' views on museum education. The research is a descriptive research that used survey model. The study group is made up of 209 primary-grade teacher candidates who were seniors in the Primary-Grade Teaching Program. They were all attending Konya University's Faculty of Education. A survey prepared by the researcher was used to get teacher candidates' views on museums and museum education. During data analysis, frequency and percentage were used. As a result, it was found that teacher candidates had positive opinions about museum education, but a significant number of them (71.30 %) perceived that museum education should be used especially during history lessons. They mentioned that museum education was discussed mostly in social studies and civilization history courses during their university education. For the teacher candidates who think multi-directionally on this subject, museum education as an effective method should be used in every lesson.

Keywords: museum education, teacher candidates, primary grade

Introduction

According to the ICOM (International Council of Museums, n.d.) Statutes, adopted during the 21st General Conference in Vienna, Austria in 2007, a museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, and it is open to the public and acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment (Retrieved from <http://icom.museum/who-we-are/the-vision/museum-definition.html>). Museums that collect, research and preserve the cultural heritage of the society and that present this cultural heritage for the education of the public, are accepted as one of the basic institutions to be found in contemporary society. However, starting from the mid-20th century, education became one of the basic functions, and to make the audiences reach museum collections through education was accepted as one of the most important duties of a museum. Thus, in museology, a separate field called "museum education" has emerged (Akmehmet & Ödekan, 2006).

Museum education serves the goals, such as understanding oneself and others especially in time and space, maintaining the cultural heritage, associating the past, the present and the future in a meaningful way, acknowledging and understanding one's own culture and different cultures with a multi-faceted and tolerant approach, making the museum a way of life, making the museum a living institution and developing

Ayşe Mentiş Taş, Ph.D., assistant professor, Primary-Grade Teaching Program, Ahmet Kelesoglu Faculty of Education, Konya University.

understanding and empathy between cultures (Paykoç, 2000-2002).

Museum education includes purposes and topics, exhibitions, artefacts, environment, and using the museum as an active learning and development area in the light of fundamental education theories and principles with its student-centered and interdisciplinary aspects (MOE, 2009).

Using museums for educational purposes will be beneficial in many ways. First of all, museums provide a suitable environment where the education's learning by living principle comes to life. In these environments, since learning will happen by living and observing, what was learned will be more permanent. Therefore, students' motivation will be kept alive. Students who have been in the same environment, without moving, will have the opportunity to get to know each other and their cultural values better and be socialized by getting together with many different activities in museums. With these aspects, museums not only support the curriculum, but can also contribute to the socialization of individuals and for them to becoming more cultured and knowledgeable. During the process of teaching with museums, students can observe, relate to objects with their senses, express their thoughts and emotions better, make sense of the museum's perspective and its message, and be more willing to share cultural values and life and to understand the truth. In this way, museum education will help students to associate the past, the present and the future, make them understand and protect the cultural assets and historical artifacts better and make them more tolerant (retrieved from <http://www.akademycfe.com>).

Museums are effective places for the child to understand the historical values and for them to live the processes of visual perception and active learning. With his/her research in the museums, the child will differentiate between the values of the past and the present by first learning the "past" and the "present" (Artut, 2007).

It is obvious that museums are an indispensable part of education. Given the educational function of museums, the results of using the museums by children are as follows:

- (1) Children learn ways to develop their knowledge and gain the custom of comparing this knowledge with book knowledge;
- (2) Children have the opportunity to see the real artifacts that belonged to the historical periods and that they have read in books;
- (3) They try to relate historical events with objects of that period. This helps them to acquire a correct historical awareness;
- (4) They compare the artifacts in the museum with today's objects;
- (5) Children develop their observation, logic, creativity, imagination and sense of appreciation;
- (6) They develop aesthetic appreciation;
- (7) They learn creative thinking (Gartenhaus, 1997);
- (8) Museums show children that development and changes are inevitable;
- (9) Museums teach children to think and evaluate all aspects of events (Abacı, 2005).

Museum education is an effective teaching method, based on the educational learning by living principle. Today's educational systems state that students are more successful in application-based (doing-living) learning activities in terms of ensuring information retention. Among application-based teaching methods, the using of museums for educational purposes is inevitable. Preparing educators who are experienced in transmitting the information acquired from the museums to the students and adults emerges as an important subject to be put emphasis on. Turkish museums, with a few exceptions, are serving as institutions that do not include education and that do not depart from a traditional structure. In general, museums are perceived as warehouses that store

art objects and historical artifacts by the public and by even some educators (Gökay & Özalp, 2009). Museum education that incorporates the effective experienced-based using of museums is a new and needed field in rich history and culture of Turkey (MOE, 2009). Museums can be utilized in the student-centered teaching and learning activities where the students are active. For this reason, teachers, teacher candidates and students should have positive opinions about museums and museum education. Museums should effectively benefit from the teaching and learning process. Taking these into consideration, in this study, the primary-grade teacher candidates' views on museum education was identified.

Method

Research Model

This research is a descriptive study in the form of survey model. Survey models are research approaches that aim to describe a situation in the past or an existing situation (Karasar, 1991).

Study Group

The study group of the research is made up of 209 primary-grade teacher candidates who were seniors in the Primary-Grade Teaching Program of Konya University's Ahmet Keleşoğlu Faculty of Education.

Data Collection Tool and Application

In the study, a survey prepared by the researcher was used to get teacher candidates' views on museums and museum education. While developing the survey, the related literature, the studies made in Turkey related to the subject and surveys about this subject were examined (Mercin, 2002; 2006; Akmehmet & Ödekan, 2006; Şahan, 2005; MOE, 2009). The survey was prepared as a draft including 23 items. Twenty three-item survey consists of two sections. In the first section, 23 items are related to museums and museum education, and in the second section, two open-ended questions were asked. In the first section, the survey was prepared by using 4-rating scale. This section was made using "Strongly agree" (4), "Partially agree" (3), "Disagree" (2), "Strongly disagree" (1) ratings. The most negative statement was given 1 point and the most positive statement was given 4 points. Afterwards, the appearance and content validity of the survey was ensured by consulting experts' opinion. To ensure the reliability of the first section of the survey, pre-application was done. The survey was applied to 104 social studies education students who were outside the sample. According to the responses given by them, the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the 23 items in the first section was 0.82. After some changes were made, the survey was applied to 209 primary-grade teacher candidates who were seniors.

Data Analysis

After the survey application was completed, SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) 10 package program was used to analyze the data. Frequency and percentage were used to evaluate the responses given to open- and close- ended questions that were prepared to identify the teachers' views on museums and museum education.

Findings

When teacher candidates' views on museum education are examined, it can be said that their responses are generally positive. However, 34.4% of the candidates responded with "Disagree" to the eighth item. Less than 50% of the participants responded with "Strongly agree" to the sixth and 21st items. When the other items are taken into consideration, it can be stated that teacher candidates' views on museum education are positive (see Table 1).

Table 1

Primary-Grade Teacher Candidates' Views on Museum Education

Museum education	Strongly agree 4		Partially agree 3		Disagree 2		Strongly disagree 1	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
1- Museum education teaches students the ways to improve their knowledge.	140	67	65	31	4	1.9	-	-
2- Museum education provides the opportunity to compare their knowledge.	143	68.4	61	29.2	4	1.9	1	0.5
3- Museum education develops students' creativity and imagination.	141	67.5	57	27.3	10	4.8	1	0.5
4- Museum education develops students' sense of aesthetic appreciation.	161	77	40	19.1	6	2.9	2	1.0
5- Museum education improves observation and investigation-based learning.	180	86.1	24	11.5	4	1.9	1	0.5
6- Museum education contributes to students' cognitive development.	99	47.4	92	44	15	7.2	3	1.4
7- Museum education contributes to students' affective development.	112	53.6	82	39.2	15	7.2	-	-
8- Museum education contributes to students' psychomotor development.	38	18.2	84	40.2	72	34.4	15	7.2
9- Museum education enables students' societal and cultural development.	168	80.4	37	17.7	2	1.0	2	1.0
10- Museum education enables students to gain thinking skills in addition to knowledge.	113	54.1	82	39.2	11	5.3	3	1.4
11- Museums are only the places to exhibit works.	12	5.7	37	17.7	112	53.6	48	23
12- Museum education unravels the effect the classes, conferences and books could not.	123	58.9	74	35.4	10	4.8	2	1.0
13- Museum education is a process where the student is active.	119	56.9	73	34.9	14	6.7	3	1.4
14- Museum education associates the past, the present and the future in a meaningful way.	173	82.8	31	14.8	5	2.4	-	-
15- Museum education enables students to know and understand their own culture.	173	82.8	30	14.4	6	2.9	-	-
16- Museum education enables students to know understand other cultures.	160	76.6	42	20.1	6	2.9	-	-
17- Museum education makes students approach their own culture in a multi-faceted and tolerant way.	144	68.9	62	29.7	2	1.0	1	0.5
18- Museum education makes students approach other cultures in a multi-faceted and tolerant way.	122	58.4	83	39.7	4	1.9	-	-
19- Museum education makes students understand, protect and keep alive old works.	168	80.4	34	16.3	7	3.3	-	-
20- Museum education enables students to gain historical and cultural accumulation.	171	81.8	31	14.8	5	2.4	2	1.0
21- Museum education contributes to individuals' life-long education process.	97	46.4	89	42.6	22	10.5	1	0.5
22- Museum education should be provided just to raise historical awareness.	137	65.6	58	27.8	12	5.7	2	1.0
23- Museum education ensures permanent retention in students.	156	74.6	44	21.1	6	2.9	3	1.4

Table 2

During Your Education, in Which Classes Museum Education Was Mentioned?

	<i>n</i>	%
Social studies	107	51.20
History of civilizations	75	35.88
Service learning	27	12.92

Teacher candidates reported that museum education was mostly mentioned in social studies (see Table 2).

Table 3

In which Classes Will You Especially Want to Take Your Students to the Museum?

	<i>n</i>	%
History	149	71.30
All classes	45	21.53
Visual arts	15	7.17

Teacher candidates reported that they would want to take their students to the museum especially for history classes (see Table 3).

Discussion

When the primary-grade teacher candidates' views on museum education were examined, the ratio of participants who responded with "Strongly agree" to 20 items out of 23 items in Table 1 is quite high. Eighty percent or more of the candidates responded with "Strongly agree" to the fifth, ninth, 14th, 19th and 20th items. These items are: "Museum education improves observation and investigation-based learning", "Museum education enables students' societal and cultural development", "Museum education associates the past, the present and the future in a meaningful way", and "Museum education enables students to know and understand their own culture", "Museum education makes students understand, protect and keep alive old works" and "Museum education enables students to gain historical and cultural accumulation". Atasoy (1978), Earl (1995), Paykoç and Baykal (2000) and Artut (2007) also stated that museums help individuals to associate societal, cultural and historical past with the present, and emphasized the importance of museums.

The item "museum education improves observation and investigation-based learning" is also an item that the teacher candidates highly approved. Since observation and investigation make the individual have new experiences, learning will be more permanent and effective. Mclean (1996), Hein (1998) and Constantino (2004) also supported this notion.

The items the teacher candidates least responded with "strongly agree" were items 6, 7, 8, 10, 11 and 21. These items are: "Museum education contributes to students' cognitive development", "Museum education contributes to students' affective development", "Museum education contributes to students' psychomotor development", "Museum education enables students to gain thinking skills in addition to knowledge", "Museums are only the places to exhibit works", and "Museum education contributes to individuals' life-long education process". When these items are examined, it is apparent that the participation rate to the item 11, "Museums are only the places to exhibit works", is very low. The lowest participation rate in this survey was to this aforementioned item. However, this is positive, because teacher candidates are aware that museums' function is not only to display works. Schommer (1963) drew attention to the museum as an "institution" that is not just a building. According to Schommer's definition, museum is "a permanent institution that is founded to examine, evaluate and exhibit various artifact collections for public's enjoyment and education and to protect them with various tools". From this definition, it is evident that museums are places that not only protect artifact collections, but also do investigation-research about and exhibits these for public's information. On the other hand, Atagök (1985) called attention to museum's another function, that is, its function to connect the past with the future. According to Atagök (1985), museum is "an informal education institution that reflects the

society's scientific and cultural past and that researches, collects, protects, exhibits, documents, preserves and directs the elements that will shape the society's future". With this definition, Atagok (1985) highlighted that the museum is an informal educational institution. When compared with other items, teacher candidates stated that they agreed less with the items "museum education contributes to students' cognitive development", "museum education contributes to students' affective development" and "museum education contributes to students' psychomotor development". However, in their research, Temme, Sas, and Derks (1986) stated that museums contributed to students' cognitive and affective development. In a project done by METU Development Foundation (1997), the effects of museum education program in cognitive, affective and psychomotor areas were examined, and it was stated that museum education has positive effects in these areas (Retrieved from <http://www.erg.sabanciuniv.edu/iok2004/bildiriler/Nurgul%20Ugur.doc>). Less than 50% of the participants responded with "strongly agree" to the item "museum education contributes to individuals' life-long education process". Yet, in literature museum, education is referred as a life-long process. Buyurgan, Mercin, and Özsoy (2005) and Hsieh (2010) expressed that museum education is an education that can last a lifetime.

Fifty one point two percent of the teacher candidates answered "social studies" to the question "during your education, in which classes' museum education was mentioned". Furthermore, 71.30% of the teacher candidates responded with "history" to the question "in which classes will you especially want to take your students to the museum". However, museum education is not a subject that should only be included in social studies or history classes. It is a subject that can be taught in visual arts class and other classes when it is necessary. The responses of the teacher candidates show that they do not think comprehensively about museum education, but instead, they have a narrow perspective on the issue. Tal and Steiner (2006), Dewitt and Osborne (2007), Mercin (2008), Erim (2005), Boyer (1999), Rapp (2005), Doğan (2010), and Mayfield (2005) expressed that museums are effective learning tools when they are used for subjects in science, social studies, visual arts and preschool. Altın and Oruç (2007) pointed out that in every subject, it is necessary to use subject-related museums and they, also, pointed out that history and archeology museums are effective tools in history and geography teaching.

Conclusions

As a result, it is found that teacher candidates have positive views about museum education, but considerable number of the participants (71.30%) perceive museum education as a subject to especially benefit from in history classes. They specified that museum education was mostly mentioned in social studies and history of civilizations classes. The reason why teacher candidates believed that museum education should be used mostly in history classes maybe is that because museum education was mostly mentioned in social studies and history of civilizations classes and a majority of social studies subjects were made up of history subjects. For the teachers candidates to think comprehensively about this subject, during their education, museum education should be included in every class as an effective method. Furthermore, there is not a course about museum education in primary-grade teaching undergraduate program. A course related to museum education should be included in the primary-grade teaching undergraduate program.

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