

## **History Teaching Facilities in Ottoman Archive: Archivists' Opinions about Student Visits**

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### **Abstract**

Archives are the memory of society and the states and known as the kitchen of the historians. They usually serve to historians and other researchers but in context of learning history they also can to serve teaching history. The Ottoman Archive is one of the institutions that contribute to teaching history. Ottoman Archives' contribution to teaching history will be discussed in this study. The study includes five guiding experts' feedback about student groups' visit and their experience in the Ottoman Archives exhibition site. The study designed as a qualitative research and a semi-structured interview form used as data collection tool. According to the results guiding experts stated that the visits which organised under the guidance of history teachers within the framework of a plan in advance are becoming more efficient. Students who know to read Ottoman writing are more concerned and they seem more satisfied after the visit. The sections that attract students are Ottoman modernization, firmans and berats which have an attractive manuscript. Teachers from different branches, the indifference of the students and the lack of Ottoman Turkic writing knowledge are the main problems that have been identified regarding the visits to the exhibition area

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## Introduction

Archives have a rich content that gives us opportunities to learn our individual or social past. Beyond being a kitchen for history researchers and author's, archives have roles in history teaching as one of the most important sources of historical knowledge. The main task of archivist is to protect the documents and present them to the researcher. Archivists have also been seen as historians and social scientists and these roles have been discussed since the second half of the 20th century (Spencer, 1983). At the end of this century archivists' educational role emphasized by some researchers like Osborne (1986: 16) and Cook (1997). After that, collaborative work between archivists and educators has been increased and many studies which support teaching have been carried out in the archives (Carini, 2009; Clearly, & Neumann, 2009; Cox, Alcalá, & Bowler, 2002; Hendry, 2007). Today, many archives carry out educational activities by giving place to educational experts in their organization. For this purpose some of the archives organize educational workshops and exhibitions and, they include educational sections on their web pages.<sup>1</sup> These initiatives increase the interaction between archives and schools, and act as a bridge between archivists and educators.

In this study, firstly, as an important archive, the Ottoman archives and its educational functions will be mentioned in the context of functions of archives. Regarding this, information about the Permanent Exhibition Area in the Ottoman Archives will be given. Afterwards, in the light of interviews with the experts who works as guides in Ottoman Archive opinions on Permanent Exhibiton Area and studens visits to this area will be discussed.

### Educational Functions of Archives

There are tangible, intangible attributes and values conveyed to the new generation as cultural heritage in every society. Cultural assets and cultural heritage are among the most important requirements of being a nation. One of the most important elements of this heritage is archives. Archives are the title of the country, the identity of the people and the sign of their existence. They are the most valuable historical and cultural treasure of the country that connects the past with the day-today and the future (Can, 2009; Binark, 1995: 258).

The main task of archivists is to store and manage documents and present them to researchers. In addition to these duties, it should not be overlooked that archivists also have roles in history and education (Vassilakaki & Papaconstantinou, 2017; Carini, 2009; Robyns, 2001; Osborne, 1986; Hendry, 2007). Archives, on one hand, have the capacity to provide materials for historians but, on the other hand they provide materials for teachers and students (Şentürk, 2013). In this respect, it is necessary to strengthen the links between schools and archives. To achieve this, history teaching supported by primary resources needs to be developed and resources-based activities need to be augmented.

Osborn (1986) notes that strengthening the link between schools and archives will contribute to teaching. Some of Osborn's suggestions are as: exhibition and visits, projects involving students in archival research, the formation of school-based archives and classroom units of instruction on the role of archives. Osborn (1986) also suggests that pre-service and in-service teacher training activities on using archives and archival materilas will enhance the interaction between teachers and archivists. He highlights that establishment of organizational linkages between teachers and archivists will be beneficial.

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<sup>1</sup> See some examples: National Archives of USA (<http://www.archives.gov>), British National Archives (<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk>); Australian National Archive (<http://www.naa.gov.au/-visitus/education/resources/index.aspx>), Canadian National Archives (<http://www.collections.canada.gc.ca/education/index-e.html>). In addition to these, the web pages [www.europeana.eu](http://www.europeana.eu) and [www.beta.historiana.eu](http://www.beta.historiana.eu) can be viewed

The curriculum and teacher qualifications have a supportive approach to the cooperation between archivists and teachers. Out-of-school history teaching was encouraged by emphasizing the visits of historical places and museums in the history curriculum. Analysis and interpretations of sources, identification of evidence that contained in sources and evaluation of primary sources as evidence are addressed in the context of historical thinking skills (MoNEa, 2017). The use of evidence has also been included in the basic skills of the Social Studies Curriculum. It is stated that out-of-school teaching as visits to museums, factories, historical, geographical or archaeological sites should be used in teaching social studies. It is also stated in the curriculum that local and oral history studies can be made in this context (MoNEb, 2017).

Benefiting from archives in history teaching has been strongly emphasized in the statement of B7 as "Making applications about first and second hand resources" in Field Education Information Proficiency in History Teacher Specific Field Qualifications (HTSFQ). Utilizing archives in history lessons and out-of-school history teaching supported in different items like A1.2, A1.3, A1.5, B4,7, B5.2, B5.3 in HTSFQ (MoNE, 2011). Likewise in the General Proficiency of Teaching Profession, there are proficiency indicators that support the use of primary resources and communication with archivists (MoNEc, 2017; MoNE, 2006).

When we look at the educational literature, it is seen that the contribution of the archives to the education is mostly related to the use of primary resources and its influence are linked to the increase of students' knowledge and skills. In this context, the use of primary sources in archives is often mentioned<sup>2</sup> (Jarosz & Kutay, 2017; Barton, 2005; Fines, 1994; Sandwell, 2008; Işık, 2008; Doğan, 2007).

There are numerous studies which addressing archives and archivists contribution to the education by using primary sources. However, standards for archival skills in the context of historiography or history teaching have not yet been drawn. This prevents historians or history teachers from being able to provide adequate guidance when they are working with their students on primary resources. It is a necessity for archive specialists to play an active role in establishing these standards (Morris, Myktiuk & Weiner, 2014).

The education services of the Ottoman Archives at secondary education level can be handled in four titles. These are: publications, documentary exhibitions which are prepared in various subjects but mainly in local history, visuals sent to the schools for history corners and guiding service for students who visits to Permanent Exhibition Area of the Ottoman Archives. This study focused on the views of the archivists about student visits to the Permanent Exhibition Area in Ottoman Archive. Guidance services are provided to student groups during the visits and this study based on the guide archivists' views on students visits to Permanent Exhibition Area.

### **Ottoman Archives and Permanent Exhibition Area**

The Ottoman archive is the institution where the remaining documents from the Ottoman Empire are stored. It is in the premises of the General Directorate of State Archives, which is affiliated to the Prime Ministry. Although the studies on archiving can be taken back to the Ottoman Empire's powerful periods, the Ottoman Archives were established in 1849 with the opening of Hazine-i Evrak building. There are approximately 95 million documents and 400 thousand record notebooks that produced by the central and provincial organizations of the Ottoman State in the Ottoman Archives (GDoSA, 2017, p. 3).

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<sup>2</sup> When the subject is scanned with the words 'primary sources' on the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) web site lists 1875 titles for the last ten years, 699 titles for the last five years and 126 titles for the year 2017. <https://eric.ed.gov>, Access Date: 24.12.2017

The Ottoman Archives were moved to the new campus in Kagithane a district of Istanbul in 2013. This site, built as one of the world's largest historic archive complex, has been packed with warehouses and workspaces that have previously been scattered. In addition to many units, there is also a permanent exhibition area called Hazine-i Evrak' in the archive site. The exhibition area is arranged as a museum and various materials related to Ottoman Empire period and archive's history are exhibited there (GDoSA, 2013).

There is a classroom and nine sections in the exhibition area. In these sections there are objects and imitation documents that related to Ottoman history and Turkish archival history. There is a classroom for 40 people organized as a seminar hall at the entrance of the exhibition area. Incoming groups are given preliminary information about the exhibition area in this classroom area. This area has a structure that can be used in the context of interactive lectures or evaluation of the visits. Apart from the classroom, the sections in the exhibition area are:

- History of archive,
- Firman and Berats,<sup>3</sup>
- Handwritings by the sultans and princesses,
- Ottoman style of management,
- Ottoman modernization,
- Foundation documents,
- Medals and Ottoman monetary,
- Treaties and letters,
- Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs (GDoSA, 2013).

There are various materials related to Ottoman history and archival history in each section. Document imitations, examples of money and medals, various archiving materials are among the displayed items. In addition, visitors are informed by five multimedia applications displayed on eight different screens in exhibition area. The multimedia applications are titled as '*paper*', '*pencil and ink*', '*social life*', '*Ottoman nations*' and '*diplomatika*'. The content of these multimedia applications were composed in the light of archive documents and reflecting the Ottoman era in the context of the titles.

The first part of the exhibition area is related to the history of Ottoman archive. In this section, there are various archival materials used since Ottoman period, such as a guillotine, boxes, tables and cabinets, envelopes, and nets. In addition to these materials, document imitations on the history of the archive are also exhibited in this section. Some of the documents exhibited in this section are: The instruction of classification and separation of documents and record books that to be moved to the new department of Hazine-i Evrak. Permission granted to Dr Marte, a Stockholm museum officer, to conduct research on the King of Sweden, 12th Charles. The order to build the Hazine-i Evrak building for the protection of documents and record books.

Other parts of the exhibition area are about Ottoman history. In these sections some materials such as coins, medals, miniatures and imitations of many important documents that related to Ottoman history are exhibited. Some of the exhibited items are: The copy of Kanun-ı Esasi, Islahat Firman, the

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<sup>3</sup> Documents containing the orders, approvals and permits of the Sultan.

document of Gülhane Hattı Hümayunu, the order to remove the Janissaries and replace the Asakiri Mansure-i Muhammadiyye army, Berlin Treaty, Küçük Kaynarca Treaty, Bosphorus Bridge Plan.<sup>4</sup>

There are no studies on the contribution to the archives of history education in Turkey. Moreover, there have been no studies on the educational functions of archives. Given that such studies have not been done yet, the views of archivists about teaching history in Ottoman Archive should be analyzed as a basic start. In light of this view, the purpose of this study is to discuss the history teaching facilities in the Ottoman Archives and evaluate student visits to the Permanent Exhibition Area in the light of the opinions of archive experts. For this purpose, firstly information was given about the Permanent Exhibition Area in the Ottoman archives. Then, the educational contribution of the Archive and Permanent Exhibition Area was tried to be determined according to the opinions of the archivists who works as guides in the Permanent Exhibition Area in the Ottoman Archive. To this end, the study addresses the following research questions:

1. What are the possibilities of contributing to the history teaching of the Ottoman Archives?
2. How are organizing trips to the exhibition area of the Ottoman Archives?
3. What are the opinions of archivists regarding student visits to the exhibition area?
4. What should be done to develop the Permanent Exhibition Area in the context of contribution to history teaching?

## Method

The study is a qualitative study aimed at examining the views of archivists on the contribution of the archive to history teaching. The research was a phenomenological study and interview was used as a data collection tool. Phenomenology is a method that offers the possibility to investigate phenomena that are known but can not produce clear discourse in more detail (Yıldırım ve Şimşek, 2011, p. 77). Due to the lack of studies on the educational functions of archives in the literature, phenomenology has been viewed as the most appropriate method to demonstrate the aims of the study.

The working group consists of five archive specialists who work at the Publicity Department and guide visitors to the Permanent Exhibition Area. All of the participants were state officials working in the Ottoman Archive connected to the General Directorate of State Archives. Information on the participants of the study is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Participant Guides**

Guide	A	B	C	D	E
Gender	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male
Experiences in the Ottoman Archive	30	31	30	24	7
Experience in publicity unit	12	10	4	5	3
Field of graduation	History	Religion	History	Librarianship	History

<sup>4</sup> See this web page for the visuals of Permanent Exhibition Area: <https://www.devletarsivleri.gov.tr/foto-galeri/16/hazine-i-eyrak-daim-sergisi/>

A semi-structured interview form consisting of seven questions was used as data collection tool in the study. The prepared questions were reviewed by two history educators, one of them being a history teacher, and the final form given to the interview form. The interviews were recorded by taking notes by the researcher to be used during the writing phase. Interviews were held in the Ottoman Archive and each one took about one hour.

### **Opinions of Archivists on Student Visits**

The main task of archives is to classify documents, create index and summary information, and present them to the researcher. However, contributing to education and teaching is also among the basic tasks of the archives (Güvenbaş, 2013, p.1-11). The most important educational activity of Ottoman Archives is the guiding service for visiting students. Students are informed about the archives and the Ottoman State by increasing their interest towards the history with these guidance service.

More than 20 thousand students have visited the exhibition area since it opened. The majority of student visits were made within the scope of the project of "Istanbul Trips for High School Students" project, jointly conducted by the General Directorate of State Archives, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality and Provincial National Education Directorate (GDoSA, 2018).<sup>5</sup> Apart from this project, it is understood from the records kept by the Puplicity Department that many student groups at primary, secondary and university level visited the exhibition area. These visits provide students the opportunity to see documents and objects related to the history of the archives and the history of the Ottoman State. In this study, student visits to the Permanent Exhibition Area in the Ottoman Archives were discussed in the light of the opinions of the five experts who guide these visits. The information gathered from the interviews is presented below.

### **How are the visits of the students planned, and how long do they last?**

It is understood from the answers given that student visits to the Ottoman Archives were made before the opening of the Permanent Exhibition Area. These visits carried out in some undergraduate level courses for the purpose of introducing the archive and demonstration of the research methods and principles. It is understood that after the opening of the Permanent Exhibition Area student visits have increased and students from different levels have visited the archive site.

The exhibition area can be visited individually or in groups. Guidance services are provided for group visits if it the visit reported and scheduled in advance. Visits of student groups from schools are usually reported in official correspondence. However, it is also possible to schedule visits by telephone without official correspondence. Student groups at higher education level, can also visit different units such as classification, restoration, preservation and digitalization in the archive with prior notice and permission.

The five interviewed guides stated that the introductory tour held in the Permanent Exhibition Area was planned according to the number and level of students who came to the archive site. According to the guide archivists, groups of 10-20 people are ideal in number, and student groups with more than 30 students are divided into smaller groups. According to the guidelines, the time spent in the exhibition area varies between 30-90 minutes depending on the age, level, and interest of the student group. Guide A used the following phrases in his interview: *"If the student group knows Ottoman Turkic writing and has interest to the history, the tour takes quate long. As students' questions increase, we can enter different topics via these questions. However, if the student group is*

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5 For news on the project, see: <https://www.devletarsivleri.gov.tr/icerik/3074/ortaogretim-ogrencilerine-istanbul-osmanli-arsivi-galerisi-gezileri/>; <http://www.ibbgenclikmeclisi.com/Kurumsal/Makaleler/Ayrinti/606-Istanbul-Tanitim-Gezileri>

*not interested in history and if they do not know the Ottoman Turkic writing, they only look at the images and take selfies. In such groups, we follow a standard template that takes about half an hour."*

In the interview, the differences of the guidance service to the students from different levels were asked as a sub-question of this question. Participant guides have indicated that the student levels have a limited effect on the content, but the content could be shortened or extended according to the interest of the students. Guides also stated that if the incoming student group had little interest, they passed on without mentioning some subjects. Guide C answered this question as follow: *"For example, student groups that are under the supervision of English or Physical Education teachers can come. When such groups arrive, the relevance is often low and I skip some parts of the standart discourse. Sometimes 3-5 of the group members show interest, and I organize the content in the direction of their questions and interests."*

### **What are the elements that affect students' interest in the exhibition area?**

The second question asked to participant guides was related to interest and motivation of the visitor students. The interviewed guide B stated that the name of the Ottoman Archives is a source of motivation for many students. In his answer guide B used the following statements: *"Ottoman Empire is the strongest Turkish States in history. So, everything that carries the name of Ottoman is important for students who are interested in history. When we see the documents related to the lessons learned at school, the interest of the students increase, and they ask more questions. But if the students are not interested in history, they just look over and pass the sections."* The guide A, used expressions as: *Visuality is getting interest and the images in exhibition area are attracting students interrest. The entrance of the foyer area and the exhibition area also influences the focus of the students and increases their impressions. For example, the article entitled 'Mucebince Amel Oluna'(fullfill the requirement) attracts attention, and when we explain it, we attract the attention of the students."* Guide D stated that the welcoming at the entry and the attitude of the guides towards visitors are important. However, according to guide D, the main factors affecting the interest of the students are their expectations and attitude toward history and history lessons. Similarly guides C and E stated that the main factors affecting the interest of the students are the level of the students, the knowledge of history and the knowledge of the Ottoman History.

### **What kind of contributions does the visit of the Permanent Exhibition Area provide to students?**

The third question asked to the guides was related to the contribution of the visits made to the Permanent Exhibition Area. When the answers were evaluated, it was understood that the visits provide cognitive and affective contribution to the students. Guide A stated that *"Students who come to the exhibition area learn about what the archive is, as well as develop a sense of admiration for the past. For example, they see the ornaments in the Fermans and realize the elegance of the Ottoman ... "*

According to expert guides, visits to the Permanent Exhibition Area reinforce the knowledge of students on various topics, especially the Ottoman diplomacy. Also they learn a lot of new information during the visit. During the trips, as well as the archive history, many topics are mentioned under the headings such as Ottoman modernization, bureaucracy and correspondence, economy, foreign politics and international relations, foundation institutions. All of the interviewed guides expressed that students who have interest and curiosity had reinforced their knowledge on these topics.

In his answer to the question, guide E stated that beside the information about history of the archives and Ottoman Empire were developed students also can develop their archival and exhibition preparation skills. His expressions has continued as follows: *"... We provide information to the students about the storage conditions. When we talk about how the documents are created and stored, how are they became available for researchers, we actually contribute to the archival skills of the students... We can also contribute to the preparation of exhibitions. For example, students from*

*Kandilli High School for Girls wanted to make an exhibition about Adile Sultan. We advised them on how to prepare an exhibition then we prepared an exhibition which contain some texts about Adile Sultan's life, her charities, and some photos. So if appropriate projects are prepared, beyond knowledge and values skills can be developed via exhibition visits.. "*

Archival visits also contribute to affective gains in the context of historical empathy and values. The guide B stated this as follow: *"After finishing the tour in the exhibition area, the teachers who are supervising the student group came to say: 'Here we can perceive the spirit of the Ottoman soul. We were able to perceive the eccentric spirit. Some things we talked about in school are embodied here'."* Other guides also used similar expressions. It is understood that the visits made to the Permanent Exhibition Area have improved students' interest, adherence, and loyalty towards the Ottoman State.

### **What attracts students' the most attention in the exhibition area?**

The fourth question asked in the research relates to what visiting students are most interested in. The key elements highlighted in the answers to this question are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Exhibit Materials that attract student interest in the Permanent Exhibition Area**

<b>Interesting Exhibition Material</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>Guide</b>
Firman and berats	5	A, B, C, D, E
Guillotine	5	A, B, C, D, E
Visuals	4	A, C, D, E
The writings of the Sultan	4	A, B, C, E
Multimedia applications	3	A, B, E
Monetary and medals	3	A, C, E
Treaties	3	A, C, E
Tanzimat Edict (Edict of Gülhane)	2	A, C
The writing of 'Mucebince Amel Oluna'	2	B, E
Islahat Edict (Ottoman Reform Edict of 1856)	1	A
Senedi Ittifak (The Charter of Alliance)	1	A
The Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca	1	E
Tiles	1	D

All of the participant guides stated that the displayed firman and berats and the guillotine attracted the students. Firman and berat are concepts used in history lessons. In addition to this they have an aesthetic and artistic pleasure. According to the guides, due to these characteristics, firmans and berats attract students and other visitors attention. For example guide E says: *"Firmans about women are more colorful and ornamented. When we say this, the interest of the students grows naturally."* The guillotine used to cut paper is one of the other element which attract students' attention. According to all guides, the guillotine gets student attention because it is the object that the students have heard its name but have never seen before.

According to the answers given by the guides, the visuals in the exhibition area are also noteworthy. Istanbul's historical appearance and images containing cross-sections from miniatures have been attract great interest. The guides stated that the students asked many questions about these visuals. Other topics such as the writings of the sultan, multimedia applications, monetary and medals, treaties are the topics that attract students' attention. In addition to these, the tiles and the writing of "Mucebince Amel Oluna" at the entrance of the Permanent Exhibition Area are other interesting elements which students interested in.



### **What are the most asked questions?**

Another question asked at the interviews in the scope of the research relates to the questions asked by the students. The guides stated that the level of students, their interest to the history and the teachers who directs the group were important determinants of the questions asked by the students. Teachers who are at the head of the group of students who come under the cooperation protocol with the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality are not history teachers but at different branches. These visits are more like cultural excursions. However, if the visits are carried out in accordance with the wishes and plans of history teachers, the interest of the students increasing and more questions are raised by the students.

The interview guide A stated that students have often asked questions about if the documents were original and whether the writings of the sultan were indeed written by them. According to Guide A, the subjects that students often ask questions are as following: "...Are there documents belonging to each sultan's period, how the bricks are pulled, how firman and berats are ornamented and, how the letters and treaties embellished? Guide A, gave examples as Williams IVth and Iranian Shahs ornamented letters. He continued as: "The visuals created from miniature details attract students' attention and they ask questions about these visuals." Guide B also stated that the originals of the documents were being asked too much. He expressed that popular TV series effect students questions and gave the following example: "Students ask questions such as; are there documents about Hurrem Sultan or are there intelligence documents?" Guide C has also been expressed that students often asked questions as whether images and documents are original. He stated that the questions have changed according to the level of the incoming students, and gave the following example: "For example, middle school students ask why the letters are curled up at the end of the lines in the firman and berats. Those who are undergraduates ask how they can get work in Ottoman Archives." According to guide C, the subjects that students are learned in history classes are influencing their questions. In this context, he stated that students ask lots of questions such about Jews emigration from Spain, Ottoman modernization, Tanzimat and Islahat Firmans.

The guides D and E used similar expressions about asked questions. Guide D gave the following example: "There is a carpet visual in the section of History of Archive. Students think it's real and touch it with care. When they realize it's paper, they ask with surprise if the exhibited documents are ariginal." According to Guide D, there are some other questions that are frequently asked such as The Bosphorus Bridge Plan, the order given for the discovery of the Suez Canal and etc.

Guide E stated that he was asked questions about treaties and monetary as well as firmans and berats. Examples given by the guide E on the questions asked by the students are as: Are the treaties in one language ore more, is the monetary real, is the guillotine working, how the writers of the documents have been trained, are there still such writers here. It is understood that when the answers are evaluated, the topics that the students are interested in are overlapped by the subjects they asked more questions.

### **What are the problems experienced during student visits to the exhibition area?**

The sixth question asked to interviewed guides within the scope of the research is related to the negativities experienced during student visits to the Permanent Exhibition Area. Elements highlighted in the given answers are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3. Negativities of Student Visits**

<b>Negativities</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>Guide</b>
The lack of interest to history	5	A, B, C, D, E
Younger students (in primary or secondary level)	5	A, B, C, D, E
Low level of knowledge of students	5	A, B, C, D, E
Unprepared teachers	4	A, B, C, E
Students do not know Ottoman Turkish alphabet	3	A, C, E
The lack of evaluation process	3	B, C, E
Teachers who are not history teachers	3	A, B, E
Unequal knowledge level of students	3	B, D, E
Disciplinary issues in crowded groups	2	A, D
Static exhibition concept	2	B, E
Inadequate visuals in the exhibition area	1	E

According to the guides, the most important problem in visiting the exhibition area is the lack of interest of the students. The guides noted that students who are not interested in history lessons and do not have a sympathy towards to Ottoman State are only looking at the visuals in a meaningless way. On the other hand, the visits by students who are history-conscious are efficient. But, guides indicated that the number of students with these characteristics is not high. According to the guides, the visits of the students from Social Sciences High School and Religion High Schools (İmam HatipLisesi) are more efficient because of these reasons.

Most of the student visits made to the Permanent Exhibition Area were carried out within the scope of the protocol made between the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, Provincial Directorate of National Education, and General Directorate of State Archives. At the beginning of the Project archival visits were only planned for high school students however, secondary school and elementary school students were later brought to archival visits under this protocol. The interviewed guides stated that this caused two major problems. These problems are the low level of student knowledge and the fact that teachers at the head of the groups are not history teachers. Being young students in elementary or secondary level considered as a disadvantage by the guides because it affects knowledge level negatively.

All of the guides stated that the problems stemming from the fact that the students do not know Ottoman Turkish alphabet. According to the guides, despite the document summaries written in Latin, the lack of students' knowledge on Ottoman Turkic writing is decreasing the interest. Because most of the exhibited material is written in Ottoman Turkic writing. Guides stated that the number of visuals and multi-media applications should be increased and the material exhibited in the sections should also be changed at certain periods.

Teachers are another factor that directly affects the interest of students. According to the guides, the students who came with the history teachers were more interested, while the ones who were supervised by the teachers from the other branches were irrelevant. Therefore teachers from different branches have been considered as a negativity in archival visits. Another factor considered as negativity is that teachers should not prepare for archival visits in advance. According to the guides, it would be beneficial for students to be informed before visiting the exhibition area. The guide A used the following statements regarding the situation: *“Some students think they will come to the library. However, if the teachers inform their students in advance, and they come to see the exhibition area in advance, a much more productive job can emerge. If they see the exhibition area, they will inform the students in advance, draw attention to some topics and make it possible for students to benefit more. However, such practices are not very common.”*

The guides interviewed within the scope of the research talked about the negativities caused by the students, the teachers and the exhibition area, but they did not mention anything about the negativities caused by themselves.

### **How do you evaluate the Permanent Exhibition Area in the context of educational contribution and how can it be improved?**

According to the guides, the exhibition area is the showcase of the archive where the history and functions of the archive can be explained at every visitor. The exhibition area is also a place where educational activities can be done. The guides stated that student visits to the exhibition area contributed to the teaching of history, and students who are interested in Ottoman history enjoy being there. The content which is told to the students in the exhibition area contributes to the acquisition of information about the Ottoman history and archives, as well as enriches them in the context of historical consciousness. The guides also stated that some changes to the exhibition area would increase the educational function of the archive. These are the following:

- Some of the elements in the exhibition area contain detailed information. However, a more curriculum-friendly content should be created. For example, most of the exhibited materials are related to financial issues; diversification of topics could be more beneficial.
- Multimedia applications and visuals need to be increased considering that students are more influenced by visual objects. This leads to a more dynamic display style.
- A link can be created on the archive web page to allow teachers and students to see the exhibited materials without coming to the library.
- Regional contents can be created by considering the Ottoman geography. Regional content can be created under headings such as Balkans, Caucasus, Middle East, Africa, Hijaz. This content can be configured in accordance with high school curricula.
- Some sections can be changed periodically with a thematic approach. For example, in February and March, content can be created under the topics Dardanelles and the First World War. Some other contents likewise, medicine, sports, women, etc can be exhibited for certain periods.
- The exhibition area in the archive can be enriched with the subjects such as writing, reading, document repair, paper making etc.

### **Conclusion and Suggestions**

In this study, Ottoman Archives contributions to the history teaching were discussed. In this context firstly history teaching opportunities in Ottoman Archives briefly mentioned. Then, student visits to the Permanent Exhibition Area in the archive were handled according to archivists' opinions who guide visitor students. As a result of the interviews, it was seen that archivists were aware of the training function of archives and they also suggested to develop it. In this regard, it is understood that the experts who guide students on their trips are open to the modern archival standards expressed by Theimer (2011).

The study showed that the Permanent Exhibition Area in the Ottoman Archives had facilities and equipment that could be used as a history teaching workshop venue within the context of exhibited materials and contents. It is understood from the answers given by the guides that the students are cognitively and emotionally supported in terms of Archivalism and Ottoman history with visits to the exhibition area. However, despite the existence of a classroom area, it is understood that there are no workshops in various topics that can draw the attention of the students such as the drawing, tuğras and

its features, the changes and properties in diplomatic, illumination and gilding ore reading and writing activities of the Ottoman Turkish documents. Such out-of-school teaching activities which increase the relevance of the students to the history lesson need to be done at the secondary level as well as at the undergraduate level.

Given the fact that there are many factors affecting students' interest in visits, it is understood that the approach of guides is also important. In this context, it will be useful for guides to develop themselves in areas such as effective communication, teaching methods and techniques. This is also one of the clearest indicators that it is necessary to increase the interaction between archivists and educators

Although the student visits are made with official correspondence, the teaching content is not planned in advance, just the standart content is told by archivists for every incoming student group. And also it is understood that even the majority of the teachers who brought the student groups did not plan the content. However, in order to maximize the usefulness of museum visits and museum education, it is necessary for teachers to prepare instructional content before the trip and motivate the students by informing them (Cook, 1997). Moreover archivists need to create differentiated content according to the level of the student groups rather than to describe standard content. In this respect, it is necessary that both archivists and teachers should be educated about museum education.

Considering the students' interest in the exhibition area and the questions they ask it is understood that there is more interaction with groups of students who are accompanied by history teachers. From here it is possible to conclude that it would be more beneficial to bring the groups of students to the archival exhibition area in accordance with subjects in the history lessons. Visits to be made before the lessons will attract students towards the subject, while visits after the lessons will reinforce the learning.

The interviewed guides are aware of the educational function of archive; but it is also observed that they do not have the pedagogical background about how education should be in the museums. Because, instead of developing a method of how to introduce the exhibition area to younger students they have stated that it is not beneficial for younger students (primary and secondary students) to come to archive. Similarly, while listing the negativities encountered on students' visits, they never expressed their own educational competence, and and also in the context of the development of the Permanent Exhibition Area they have never touched their own needs about museum education. These are interpreted as indicatives of the lack of pedagogical background on the museum education of interviewed guides.

The suggestion that the exhibition area can be made available to teachers and students via the web page of the General Directorate of State Archives is remarkable. In addition, the reorganization of the exhibition site and the development of guides on museum education are among the recommendations of the study. This step may be an important first step in creating online educational content based on archive documents. In this way, archival and educational cooperation can be maintained even in the digitized educational environment.

The use of archival materials in history teaching allows students to learn to use historical materials. This gives them the opportunity to think like a little historian and interpret history. Thus, students can develop various high-level thinking skills, especially analysis, synthesis and evaluation (Castle, 2002; Cook, 1997: 107). In order to achieve this, students need to meet archival material. The Permanent Exhibition Area in the Ottoman Archives has the potential to be a history teaching workshop venue where such studies can be conducted. Using these opportunities provided by this place the interaction and cooperation between history teachers and archivists need to be increased. With this study, it is desired to draw attention to this necessity and to create awareness in this direction.

Visits to the Permanent Exhibition Area in the Ottoman Archive increase students' interest in history lessons and contribute to the cooperation between archivists and trainers as specified by Osborne (1986). Increased interactivity, as evidenced by the results of this study, will enrich the educational contents of the archivists while enriching the teaching methods that history teachers use in their classrooms. In this context, it would be beneficial to encourage and increase student visits to the Permanent Exhibition Area in the Ottoman Archives.

As a result of the work being done, the following suggestions emerged in order to improve the exhibition area in terms of history education and to be aware of the educational functions of the archives:

1. Archivists who guide students in the exhibition area should improve their quality of service given to the students.
2. Different content and stories should be created for student groups from different class levels instead of standard content.
3. The themes in the exhibition area should be enriched and special exhibitions should be formed in different topics at different times of the year.
4. Visual elements in the exhibition area should be diversified and multimedia applications should be increased.
5. Diversified workshops should be held in the class area in the exhibition area.
6. Student visits should be done in relation to the subjects in the curricula within the scope of history and social studies courses.
7. History and social studies teachers (and other teachers) who will bring their group of students to the exhibition area in the Ottoman Archives should visit the exhibition area before the trip and plan their activity in detail. In addition, the plans must include an evaluation section.
8. Educational contents based on archival documents should be created and these contents should be presented to the teachers and students in the web page of General Directorate of State Archive (GDSA).

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