

The Analysis of First-Grade Teachers' Need of Consultation in the First (FALL) Term of Academic Year

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ABSTRACT This study aims at disclosing the consultation needs of first-grade teachers, who are responsible for orienting first-year pupils and teaching them how to read and write. There is a limited number of studies on the need for consultation of classroom teachers who must apply the main intervention techniques to achieve the necessary tasks during that period. Study data were collected from 7 first-grade teachers by means of semi-structured interviews that were conducted during the first semester of the 2015-2016 academic year. This study was designed according to a qualitative research model. The data were analyzed with qualitative content analysis. As a result, three main themes were derived, with 24 subthemes in different months of the semester. It was discovered that consultation needs of first-grade teachers differ by month. Consequently, it is recommended that these needs be considered in the context of future studies on consultation.

INTRODUCTION

Consultation is a process whereby a psychological counselor tends psychological and educational advice to an individual or group of pupils to help them with orientation or the advancement of their education. Consultation works fall under “*the indirect services*” section of comprehensive, developmental psychological counseling and guidance programs that are offered at schools. The works applied in schools in the 21st century are based on the protective and preventive approaches that were used by the public in the 1970s and adapted to the education system by CA plan. The following four consultation models are applied in today’s schools: 1) the mental health consultation model that is based on Caplan’s approach, 2) the behavioral consultation model, 3) the Adlerian consultation model, and 4) the educational and instructional consultation model (Erchul and Martens 2010; Gladding 2013; Muro and Kotman 1995; Stone and Bradley 1994). Consultation works for individuals, groups, and social units can be offered at three levels. The services that are provided by school psychological counselors cover parents, students, teachers, school principals, and other school personnel or systems (Dinkmeyer and Carlson 2006; Dougherty 2000; Gladding 2013; Sheridan and Kratochwill 2008).

Borders and Durry (1992 as cited in Karakus 2008) conducted a survey of consultation studies over a period of 30 years. They revealed that consultation works with teachers, parents, or both led to the improvement of students’ academic achievement scores, attention, classroom behavior, motivation, and self-concept. In the same study, it was discovered that teachers who consulted with the school counselor could prepare a more productive learning environment, were more positive in their communication with students, had higher views about themselves as teachers, and reported higher levels of job satisfaction.

Research on consultation services in Turkey has concentrated on the primary school period, mainly investigating teachers’ methods of coping with students’ problematic behaviors in the classroom, orientation at school, the definition of guidance activities in primary education, and teacher-school psychological counselor cooperation (Atici 2006; Seyhoglu 2016; Yoleri and Tanis 2014). In the study that Kalin (1999) conducted with psychological counselors, it was found that guidance and counseling works in the first 3 years of primary schooling must be conducted in ways such as friendship, positive communication with pupils, and reading habits. The study also reported that par-

ents should be educated about parent–child relationships.

Karakus (2008) also found that psychological counselors used methods such as interviewing students and parents, getting information about students from classroom teachers, and referring students to related institutions when needed as part of their consultation works. However, they did not have a specific model of consultation because they did not have sufficient knowledge about the models of consultation.

In his research, Avsar (2010) concluded that first-grade teachers were lagging behind other grade levels in terms of increasing students' educational achievement, fulfilling all the guidance services that were scheduled for the first class, and adjusting to the school environment. The studies that have analyzed the rates of primary-school teachers' fulfillment of guidance services by gender (Basaran 2008; Kiliç 2002; Özdemir 2008 as cited in Avsar 2010; Poyraz 2007) report that female teachers have higher levels of realized guidance services compared to males.

The literature provides examples of the difficulties faced by first-grade teachers in regard to preparing for reading and writing, starting to read and write, and improving reading and writing. The difficulties were found to originate from the students, parents, community, curriculum, education system, school, and teachers (Akça 2014; Akin 2016; Keyik 2014; Köksal 2010; Öz 2009; Ünüvar 2002; Vural 2007).

Studies on orientation in first grade demonstrated the need for increased involvement of teachers, parents, and students in the consultation process. The need for support from school guidance services for this process is reported as another result, which has also been indicated by these studies (Çeliktürk 2011; Yalman 2007).

Parlakkaya (2010) conducted a study on the unwanted behaviors of students from the perspective of first-grade teachers. It was found that such behaviors include violence applied by students against each other, language problems, students' lack of materials in class, abusive speech, and absenteeism. Likewise, research on elementary schools, regardless of grade levels, revealed adverse effects of unwanted behaviors on pupils, teachers, and parents (Boz 2004; Saltan 2014; Terekeci 2010).

According to Gözükküçük (2015), primary-school students who are not native Turkish

speakers have communication problems in regard to recognizing and distinguishing sounds and forming phonemes, words, sentences, and texts by using the sounds when preparing for reading and writing.

Havighurst (1953 as cited in Muro and Kottman 1995) mentions the developmental tasks that students at different education levels must achieve. Individuals experience unhappiness, disapproval from the community, and failure to advance to the next grade if they cannot successfully complete the relevant developmental tasks. In particular, the tasks that include adapting to school, preparing for reading and writing, starting to read and write, and improving literacy may also affect the entire life correspond to the elementary first grade (Boz 2013). A review of the literature shows that consultation works are mostly done in primary schools (Alpert and Yammer 1983; Gresham and Kendell 1987; Karakus 2008 as cited in Erchul and Martens 2010). In a nutshell, the findings in the literature reveal that teachers, students, parents, school administration, and the overall system both need and benefit from consultation services.

It was found that most of the research mentioned above was conducted in the context of education programs, classroom teaching, and educational administration that require consultation support. However, only a few examples were in the area of psychological counseling and guidance, which is supposed to offer consultation services at the elementary school level (Akman 2000; Boz 2004; Karakus 2008). Particularly, there is nearly zero research into consultation works for the elementary first grade as a level where in tasks that must be accomplished are numerous.

Purpose of the Study

As a result of the study, it is expected a) to identify consultation needs of the first class teachers during the first semester (fall), and b) to provide contribution to the narrow literature on those teachers' consultation needs.

METHODOLOGY

Design

This qualitative research was designed in compliance with the phenomenological ap-

proach. Phenomenological studies describe the common meaning of several people's experiences of a phenomenon or concept (Creswell 2013; Merriam 2009). A homogeneous sampling method was used in the study. Patton (2014) maintained that homogeneous sampling is best used for situations in which in-depth work with a particular subgroup is required. The sub-group in this study is the first-grade teachers, who are one of the steps of basic education. This is a unique grade level because it corresponds to a period when adaptation to schooling, regular learning, preparation for reading and writing, and initiation and advancement take place. No other level of basic education has a class that is exposed to such intensive interventions from parents, teachers, students, and administrators (Boz 2013).

Study Group

This study was carried out with 7 first-grade teachers from an elementary school with 650 students that is located in the Odunpazari District of Eskisehir Province during the autumn term of the 2015-2016 academic year. The specific number of participants was selected because Patton (2014) stated that the number of participants should be between six and eight to attain in-depth knowledge about a particular subgroup. The school has students from the middle socioeconomic level. Of the total, 120 students are from six different ethnicities (Iraqi, Syrian, Turkish, Iranian, Afghan, and Kurdish) and speak five different languages. One of the study participants was male, and six were females. On average, they have worked with first-graders six times so far. The participants are aged between 44 and 64 years with professional experience of 19 to 42 years.

Data Collection

The data of the study were collected by the researcher during the first semester of the 2015-2016 academic year. The researcher is a psychological counselor who has worked in different schools with students, teachers, parents, and principals of first graders for 17 years. A semi-structured interview technique was used to collect the data. Using this semi-structured interview technique, the questions are prepared in advance; still, it allows flexibility during interviews to reach the depth of the desired knowl-

edge (Merriam 2009). Before starting to collect data, the researchers prepared an interview form in consideration of the study objectives and in accordance with semi structured interview techniques. While preparing the interview form, the literature was examined to remember the unique features and stakeholders that were involved in the first semester of the elementary first grade. To check the form's content validity, two experts from each of Psychological Counseling and Guidance and Classroom Teaching were consulted. The form was revised in the light of the experts' opinions. Participating teachers were then contacted and appointments were made for the fourth week of October, November, and December and the third week of January (the last week of January is within the semester break), and four meetings were held with each participant in total. The interviews were realized at four different times due to the literature review and the researcher's experience that the first-grade level has its own particular dynamics. First-grade teachers deal with situations that require various intervention methods during the fall period, including the initial orientation, the process of learning to learn, preparation for reading and writing, the process of beginning to read and write, and progression. Besides this, works are carried out during each of the intertwined and subsequent months in relation with each of the abovementioned activities. The interviews were conducted by the researcher herself and took an average of 18 minutes. The interviews were recorded with a voice recorder.

Ethical Considerations

Before the interviews, the nature of the research and the principle of confidentiality was explained again, and the participants completed an "informed consent" form, which provides information about the study. It was then checked as to whether the participants wanted to ask or say something. They were coded in data transcription, and the quotations were written in italics. Finally, the transcriptions were checked again by the participants during data analysis.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, the voice recordings of the interviews were first transcribed, and the raw data were categorized by qualitative content

analysis in order to identify the themes. At this stage, a technique was used to describe and interpret the experience of the participants. Anderson and Arsenault (2002 as cited in Urfali Dadandi et al. 2016) stated that descriptions aim to reveal the situation under scrutiny as it is, along with the present conditions and the nature of the situation. This technique was inspired by the approach interpretive of phenomena in research related to life experience developed by Lindseth and Norberg (2004). In this regard, the researcher's 17-year experience with first-grade teachers paved the way for the selection of the data analysis method. Teachers who use multiple intervention systems during the first semester of the first year have made frequent applications to the researcher throughout their professional life due to emotional trauma and frustration. Lincoln and Guba (1985 as cited in Creswell 2013) referred to four main criteria to ensure validity of qualitative data. These criteria are credibility, dependability, confirm ability, and transferability. In this study, the triangulation method was used to boost reliability. In this scope, the written text was cross-checked with the voice recordings by both the researcher and two other researchers. Throughout the analytical process, some or all of the sentences in the transcript were categorized into units with meaning in their paragraphs. The "color coding" method was used to emphasize different meanings. The units with strong resemblance were transformed into themes and sub-themes (Braun and Clarke 2006; Saldana 2009). All operations related to the analysis of the data support the validity and reliability of the study. Macnee (2004 as cited in Lim et al. 2011) pointed out that transferability is achieved by means of high similarity between two contexts. Due to the scarcity of studies in Turkey, it is more difficult to demonstrate transferability. However, sufficient information was collected in connection with the literature available in the Turkish language in order to increase the transferability of the study.

RESULTS

As a result of the analysis, the consultation needs of first-grade teachers in the fall semester were based on three themes: 1) Parents come in all shapes and sizes, soil in all shapes and sizes (Turkish Folk Poet Asik Veysel); 2) Today's children are weird; and 3) What will we do? Then,

24 sub-themes that differ by month were identified under the three themes. The sub-themes arranged by month are as follows.

Theme 1: Parents Assorted, Soil in All Shapes and Sizes (Asik Veysel)

The first theme summarizes the consultation needs of the teachers due to the parents. There are eight sub-themes under this theme for different months.

October

Sub-theme 1: Traffic Warden-like Parents

The teachers mentioned that there are some parents who tell them how to treat other people's children and their own children outside and inside the classroom.

T3: There were a few parents who turned up like a bad penny. I go out in the corridor in break time, they immediately ask me about how their children are doing, such as "How are they, who are their companies, I wish you make them sit next to...." They are still waiting around the school during the second week. When they do not see me, they ask their own child, "Sit next to ..., right?" or they approach a student called ... they know from the kindergarten and say "You... sit together, okay? "I realize only when I get into the class.

Some teachers expressed their emotions and ways of coping with such prescriptive parents.

T4: I sometimes ignore nervous parents who often come up to see their children, I leave them to time. And sometimes I try to comfort them by talking. They think their children will not be able to adapt. This makes me angry. God give me patience, I beg.

Sub-theme 2: Grapevine-like Parents

The teachers said that after dropping their children at class, some parents spread rumors about the behaviors of their own children and other children in front of the door with other parents.

T2: Parents are talking among themselves outside, the next day they come and say "Teacher, it seems that the children of the next class are calmer, the children in our class are very active, we have talked to the other parents so

we think we will have a trouble.” They egg each other on nothing with rumors. I get down in this situation.

T7: I learnt that they come and secretly listen to the class doors, first-class corridor. Then another parent comes and talks to me about their conversations outside. They’re really funny. “The teacher of blah blah class is shouting too much, the blah blah class is too noisy.” If they talk like that at home by the children, the children will not respect that teacher any longer. All the teachers have to behave the way they expect, they think. They are a bit weird.

Sub-theme 3: Money, Money, Money!

The teachers stated that some parents cannot even afford to buy school equipment such as notebooks and pencils.

T1: Five students of my class are too poor to buy food. I can see that from their lunch box, too. We will help to meet their needs.

Another financial problem reported by teachers was regarding the donation process launched by the class parents to meet the common needs of the class.

T4: It happens every time I have a new classroom. They talk among themselves. Then they say “I won’t donate because that parent doesn’t give” so they make it harder for us to help children in need. First, I leave it to the classroom mother to talk and convince them. If not, I explain the situation both in meetings and in individual meetings. As if I’ll take the money.

November

Sub-theme 4: “I Wasn’t Longing for You Guys!”

Regarding refugee parents, the teachers reported difficulties such as the parents not having children review lessons at home, always putting fast food in the lunch boxes, complaining to the police, and threatening to complain to the administration.

T2: “The children want to eat fast food, so we give them money.” The parents explain the reasons like this. In such a case, the rule of money one day a week is ruined. We receive complaints from other parents then.

T1: Whenever I talk to them about having the children review lessons, they immediately

go to the administration and complain “The teacher is telling us off.” Or they just swoop in. I wasn’t longing for you guys, I say in my mind.

Sub-theme 5: Local Parents that Pretend

As reported by teachers, although local parents seem to be overprotective of their children and constantly query about their children’s schooling, the children say that their parents apply violence to them. Another problematic parental behavior reported by teachers is that parents do the students’ homework, or they keep erasing the children’s handwriting because they do not like it. On the contrary, some parents give money to their children instead of lunch boxes. Some parents are not interested in the work of the child for a week. These difficulties were mentioned by the teachers.

T1: The pages I assign for review at home are done but the next day the child comes with a bruise on the cheek. What’s even worse, it is by the parents who seem to be the most concerned ones.

T4: The worksheets I assign as homework are returned wonderfully done. There is no problem in this but the homework is done by a parent, not the student. You can tell from the handwriting. The child also says that dad did it.

December

Sub-theme 6: “You are Wrong!”

It was noted by teachers that the parents show resistance when they are informed about the characteristics of their child that need to be improved (such as repetition of reading and writing).

T3: When I said that the speed of reading of ... should be increased, the mother said “but ... reads fast at home, why can’t she here?” A few other parents are doing this. Other friends are talking about this when we talk to ourselves. As if we lie to parents. They are not willing for cooperation.

In order to reinforce the newly learned situation, repetition of reading and writing texts at home is regarded as important by teachers. However, the lack of support at home in this regard causes the teacher to feel alone.

T1: I tell them to repeat the reading texts and writing passages at home. The next day when the child comes, I find no improvement. I ask, "Teacher, my mother had guests; so we could not study." The children of uninterested parents are left behind. We can't make it without support from parents.

Sub-theme 7: Foreign Parents

Another difficulty reported by teachers is regarding foreign parents. Although refugee parents are informed about school rules and office hours at parents' meetings through older students who can speak Turkish, they do not attend meetings on time; rather, they pay unplanned visits in the middle of classes, which is a source of distraction.

T5: Although the Arab parents know the day and time of the meeting, they come for a meeting in the middle of the class. I then shut the door of the class, saying that it is not the time for meeting by indicating my wrist watch.

January

Sub-theme 8: "Parents Have Had Enough of It, Too"

The teachers say that they assign homework to improve reading comprehension skills, but children come back to class without doing it. Although the guidelines are explained to the parents in meetings, teachers find that parents do not support the children in this regard.

T7: All my students but one foreigner have learnt reading and writing. However, when children read the paragraphs we assign, it is obvious that the parents do not listen and ask questions. And the kids are saying this. The parents are fed up, understandably.

Theme 2: Today's Children are Weird

The second theme relates to the consultation needs of the teachers regarding students. There are 12 sub-themes listed for this theme by month.

October

Sub-theme 1: "Teacher, I can't"

The participants stated that some students cannot open their school bag, remove the school

supplies, or open their lunch box, and they ask the teacher to do those things for them.

T7: Two or three students do not do anything when I tell them to take out notebooks, papers, etc. from their school bags or remind them of lunch time. When I go back to them and repeat my order, some say "Teacher, I cannot open my bag, I cannot take out my lunch." So, I feel obliged to take it out for them. What else can I do?

Similarly, two teachers said that the students have trouble with potty training.

T5: My students calledthey have not been able to unbutton their clothes a few times so they messed their clothes. I called their mothers to change the kids' wet clothes.

T3: The children are used to using the water closet at home. But school toilets are pan closets. They come back to class without defecating I heard from parents that some children get home with abdominal pain because of the reason above. Children should be taught to use pan closets at home before they start the first class.

Sub-theme 2: "My Fingers are Tired"

The teachers referred to some students who did not have preschool education because of their young age (66-71 months of age) and thus have much difficulty doing line exercises.

T3: They need to go to kindergarten this year, but they are directly accepted to the first class. Even before writing one line, he says, "My teacher, my fingers hurt; is that enough?" The fine motor skills are not developed.

Sub-theme 3: "I Want to Go Home"

The teachers referred to students who are anxious about being left in school, teachers' getting angry with them, and students who state their desire to go home.

T6: My voice tone is a bit high. When I say something, I am answered with the question "Are you angry with us, teacher?"

T7: I noticed that he packed his school bag. I approached and said "My son, we still have 2.5 hours to finish the lessons." He said "None of my business. I wanna go home, I am bored of school." I sat next to him. I told him that if he goes, his friends will be very upset, that school has rules, and we will not be able to leave before it is time.

T3: We spent three weeks chasing ...in the garden. Suddenly, he hangs his head and jumps out. I cannot catch. Okay, he can go out, but it's a pity for me and the other kids. He might have an accident in the garden; we are trusting after all. I get exhausted until I convince him to get back to the class; I get angry.

November

Sub-theme 4: "In Addition, We have the Arabs"

The teachers stated that refugee students find literacy activities difficult because they are not ready for schooling.

T6: When they do not understand the lessons, their faces fall, they get upset, and after a while they are absent. Even if they miss one letter during instruction of sounds, there are big breaks. I'm reporting to parents through a translator; there is nothing else to do on my side.

Another challenging situation for teachers is when refugee students get bored after a while and talk among themselves because they do not understand the rules. Additionally, they use violence against their classmates.

T2: A scream right in the middle of the class... "Teacher, blah blah person hits me!" Or talking in Arabic among themselves, which distracts the whole class, and me. I get furious and start shouting.

Sub-theme 5: I Feel Like Screaming, "Help!"

The respondents explained that in literacy work and homework, children have much difficulty, and their fine motor skills are not developed.

T3: If they do two lines in handwriting works, they won't do four lines. They say they are tired. I accept as much as they do then.

T5: Right during the class, they start wandering in class and chasing each other; I get incredibly angry. I know their ages are young and they have been put in school before being ready. They are still kids who like to play, but I have a curriculum that I need to work on. It's unfair to me and other children.

The participants also pointed out that students complain and ridicule during the lesson, which makes it difficult to concentrate on the lesson.

T6: Another complaint in each class. "My teacher... called me fatty," "Teacher, poked me with a pen," just before I respond, these complaints consume my energy. I feel like screaming "Help!"

Sub-theme 6: Mad Cow-like Kids

The teachers said that the students push others on the stairs for the sake of getting out to the garden first, which is dangerous.

T1: One of my girl students fell off the stairs as she was pushed by a boy student while walking downstairs; luckily it was the bottom steps. She wasn't injured.

T4: They play tag in the classroom. They're like mad cows. Of course, they can collide with their friends as they pass through their desks. A student hit the desk in this way and his front tooth was broken. I cannot follow them all the time during break time.

December

Sub-theme 7: "Underage"

The teachers stated that the children who started school when they were younger than 72 months of age were still lagging behind the class. They had already started reading, though behind others, but their writing was still not at the desired level.

T3: I noticed that ... is faster in reading but his fingers are still very weak in writing. We are now doing less writing. I delayed it until the second semester. I focused on reading. T5: Young ones progressed, yes, but still far behind the class; they do not understand what they read. Let me not talk about writing at all.

T2: age is not too young but failed to read. I referred to the guidance department, you know, tests are given.

Sub-theme 8: They have Not Been Trained Well at Home

Regarding this sub-theme, the teachers mentioned unwanted behaviors in class such as scribbling on the walls or desks, refusing to collect their food, violence, profanity, using others' belongings without permission, and kissing friends on the lips.

T4: Some students take their mates' stuff unnoticed without permission in class or during break time. The next day, if it is the child of an interested family, the family sends the child to class saying: "My teacher, accidentally took the crayons of the mate." If it is an unconcerned family, the family does not see or care about it. In this case, the behavior of using without permission becomes reinforced.

T6: The violence and pushing cases during break time have decreased of course. Even if they play tag, they can protect themselves; they do not fall anymore.

T2: My boy student ...kisses all mates, boys or girls, on the lips. Things happen at break time. They tell their parents at home before telling me. As things continued the next week, the parents came to swoop in. They thought their children were being harassed. Anyway, I said I talked to the child, and sent the parents' home relaxed. I warned the kid not to repeat it of course.

Sub-theme 9: "Arabs, Absentee"

The participants stated that foreign students are involved in more absenteeism when it is time to start reading and writing and progress.

T7: I, administration, and the counselling service called the foreign students and we talked, you know. Nevertheless, they are absent. As courses become harder, they do not understand topics. As they do not understand, they play turan; they're absent because there is no sanction on them.

January

Sub-theme 10: "We Started Math"

The teachers said that they started work for mathematics, and the students had difficulty adapting to the new class.

T4: By the end of December, we started to study mathematics. Most of my students are getting used to this situation. We are merely at the starting point. They will get more accustomed to the subject in the second semester of course.

Sub-theme 11: "They Do Not Know the Meaning"

Participants reported that foreign students face much difficulty in improving reading and writing, and they are often absent.

T3: A foreign student ... has started reading since he was not absent but does not understand what he reads because his vocabulary knowledge is missing. He is good at writing and reading but cannot respond to questions about the text.

Sub-theme 12: A Sister's Death

It was noted that the death of a third-grade student's elder sister affected the whole class, and some of them began questioning the concept of death.

T4: ...'s elder sister died. We paid a visit for condolences. The next day, most of my students began asking questions about death. Apparently they're also asking their parents at home, too. I answered as best I can, but do not know if I said the right or wrong thing.

Theme 3: Other Issues Challenging the Teachers ("What will Happen to us Next?")

This theme describes the consultation needs of teachers related to administrators and their personality traits. The theme contains four sub-themes, varying by month.

October

Sub-theme 1: Voodoo Doll-like Teachers

The teachers referred to the challenges they face regarding school management, particularly facing intrusive parents alone, comparison and competition of classes, and moving students into and out of the class without the teacher's knowledge.

T6: The administrators gave a student to me from ...class under the excuse that the parents did not like the teacher of that class, so they were constantly visiting the administrator's office. School started weeks ago. The teacher also has no news about it.

T3: You know in films, there are voodoo dolls poked with needles. Teachers are like them. Parents insert a needle. Students insert a different needle. A different needle. Administration a completely different one. Theirs is even an awl.

Sub-theme 2: "What If I Cannot Manage to Get Them to Start Reading?"

The teachers pointed out that they have concerns about the first-grade courses. The prob-

lems they reported about themselves include the inability to get students to start reading and low patience.

T5: I continually put effort into... When I turn my back, they have understood nothing. I feel concerned that they will never start reading.

T1: I have got to be patient with the never-ending questions of parents, I know. "My teacher, how did ... do today? How was his writing, my teacher?" Sometimes I get angry. As if children's success shows instant changes like the stock exchange.

November

Sub-theme 3: Coterie Races

Some first-grade teachers reported specific challenges. They try to teach all the sounds quickly, before they are fully understood, and parents of other classes voice it.

T7: Ministry of Education (MONE) has given us a timetable; we talked about that at the coterie meeting in the beginning of the academic year. Some colleagues insisted on teaching the sounds fast. As a result, we are being compared despite keeping up with the schedule. Blah blah teacher is behind on four letters, he goes so slowly, blah blahblah. How can parents know our schedule?

December

The teachers specified that they experienced no difficulty with school management or themselves in December.

January

Sub-theme 4: "It Was a Very Difficult Period"

The respondents added that the various work done during that semester was exhausting, both physically and mentally.

T3: My hair turned white apparently. Dealing with both parents, children and the administration at the same time, I am even thinking to retire.

T1: Sometimes I used to cry when I got home, I swear. My spouse was criticizing me for exhausting myself to that extent.

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to identify the consultation needs of first-grade teachers during the fall semester by using semi-structured interviews. Analysis of the interviews yielded three main themes with 24 sub-themes that vary by month. The themes and sub-themes seem to be descriptive of the consultation needs of first-grade teachers.

Boz (2004) found in his study that parents' attitudes and views about school readiness vary depending on their socioeconomic status. In one of the rare studies on parents with children attending the first grade, Köksal (2010) concluded that when teaching literacy, teachers should take into account the perceptions of students and parents. They should investigate the facts of that area as well as the expectations of students and parents before starting to teach reading and writing, and they should revise the lesson plans accordingly. Both studies seem to support the finding that teachers need consultation works about parents.

Available findings suggest that developmental tasks for the first grade can be achieved only if physical, cognitive, social-emotional, and language development are completed. Developmental characteristics progress in connection with age (Boz 2013; Krogh and Slentz 2001; Polat 2014). Yoleri and Tanis (2014) found that those accepted to school at 7 years old showed better adaptation than those starting at 5 years old, and those who received preschool education did the same in comparison with those who did not go to kindergarten before schooling. The finding also seems to support the results of this study. Again, Atici (2006) reported primary school teachers 'in-class problems such as students' lack of interest in class, speaking without permission, distraction, learning disabilities, mocking, name-calling, violence, diffidence, swearing, wettingtheirpants, and intentional acts to attract attention.

Susar Kirmizi et al. (2016) demonstrated that in areas where Turkish is spoken less, teachers face difficulties with students and parents regarding adherence to the instructions and communication problems during the period when reading and writing is first started. It was concluded that this, in turn, has a negative psychological impact on students and limits the participation of parents. Likewise, studies are avail-

able which investigate parental participation levels of children who are native speakers of another language (Intxaustia et al. 2013; Karadas 2017). They found that involvement of students in schooling in a language other than their mother tongue results in challenges for students, parents, and teachers.

Previous research has revealed that varying ages of students in the first grade causes much difficulty for teachers when teaching reading, writing, and mathematics, and unless teachers hold a specific certificate regarding training of students from different age groups, they cannot avoid burnout. In addition, it is noted that students, parents, and school management have respective roles to assume in overcoming the difficulties (Boz 2013; Kahveci 2017; Polat 2014).

Caplan (1993, 1999 as cited in Erchul 1993) categorized the consultation needs of teachers under four reasons: lack of knowledge, lack of talent, lack of self-confidence, and lack of self-impartiality. It was also added that managerial dysfunction may explain the poor work performance of teachers. Again, the findings by Aslan (2017) seem to be in compliance with our results in relation with administrative challenges and the challenges arising from teachers' personality.

The researcher hopes that his findings will contribute to the literature on consultation studies regarding the need for interventions in the first grade, which are among the indirect services of the psychological counselling and guidance field. Moreover, it is expected that determining first-grade teachers' consultation needs will form the basis for proposing solutions (Yoleri and Tanis 2014).

CONCLUSION

In this study, consultation needs of first grade teachers were examined by using semi-structured interview method. Consultation needs of such teachers were collected under three main headings in relation with parents, students, administrative and personality traits of teachers. The themes were branched into a total of 24 sub-themes by months of the year. The findings in our study seem to be consistent with the consultation needs of teachers concluded from other studies, such as education programs, educational management, pre-school and classroom teaching. In conclusion, present study reveals consultation needs of first-grade teachers during the first semester (fall) of the academic year,

who are supposed to apply the essential intervention techniques in developmental tasks to be attained by first graders. It is also thought to contribute to the limited literature on consultation needs of first grade teachers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the study limitations and results, following recommendations are proposed.

- ♦ The relationship between teachers' years of service, the grades, branches, gender and personality traits and their need for consultation can be explored.
- ♦ In further research, consultation needs of parents should also be examined since they are the other group closely affected from this critical period.
- ♦ The study can be reproduced using alternative data collection techniques such as observation and focus group discussion.
- ♦ The consultation needs of teachers were found to vary according to months. As a consequence, programmed group consultations also including emotional support for teachers could be run for teachers considering the topics of support they need every month.
- ♦ Teachers indicated the difficulty faced in keeping children seated during literacy learning process. So, assistant teachers could be provided to support both teachers and students in the first grade particularly.

LIMITATIONS

- ♦ Because this research was conducted only in one school, the results of the research can not be generalized to cover consultation needs of first class teachers in all schools.
- ♦ Only one of the seven teachers comprising the study group is male and their working years range from 20 to 40 years.
- ♦ This study dealt with consultation needs of teachers of first class only.
- ♦ The data collection method of the research is limited to semi-structured interview.

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