



Identifying Leisure Perceptions and Activities of EFL Teachers in Home Isolation during the Covid-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the thoughts and perceptions of EFL teachers in Turkey on leisure activities during the Coronavirus pandemic, the frequency of their participation in such activities and how their characteristics influence these perceptions. For this purpose, an online questionnaire was filled by a total of 939 EFL teachers working in primary, intermediate and high schools across Turkey. The majority of the EFL teachers are female (85.4%), married (67.8%), middle-aged (68.3%), and have a child or more (59.7%). Most of them hold bachelor's degrees (89.9%) and have 0-20 years of teaching experience (90.8%). EFL teachers' perception was generally positive during the stay-at-home or isolation. Many claimed that as the stay-at-home has increased their leisure activities. Some stated that such activities were a must during the lockdown. Others declared that the lockdown has helped their personal development, and that such leisure time has impacted their family relationships. Moreover, the abundance of free time was "a good opportunity to rest" for the majority, "It is a good opportunity for hobbies" and "It is a good opportunity to participate in social, cultural and professional events" for different groups that participated in the questionnaire. The study revealed that teachers frequently spent time on social networks, kept up to date with the news regularly, watched movies/TV series, listened to music and read books. The answers revealed that the least oft-mentioned leisure activities are online festivals and exhibitions, playing instruments, online hobby courses, online theatres, and knitting. Older, experienced and married and female EFL teachers with children mostly spent more time with their kids and cared for their plants. The study concludes by recommending courses on free-time management and online PD activities for the teachers. Additionally, it advises that pursuing postgraduate education should be incentivized through workplace policies.

ÖZ

Anahtar Kelimeler:

Covid-19,
 İngilizce Öğretmeni,
 Boş Zaman Aktivitesi,
 Algı,
 Türkiye.

Bu çalışma, Türkiye'deki İngilizce öğretmenlerinin Koronavirüs salgını sırasındaki boş zaman etkinlikleri hakkındaki düşüncelerini ve algılarını, bu tür etkinliklere katılma sıklığını ve özelliklerinin bu algıları nasıl etkilediğini araştırmaktadır. Bu amaçla, Türkiye genelinde ilkökul, ortaokul ve liselerde görev yapan toplam 939 İngilizce öğretmeni tarafından çevrimiçi bir anket dolduruldu. İngilizce öğretmenlerinin çoğunluğu kadın (% 85,4), evli (% 67,8), orta yaşlı (% 68,3) ve bir veya daha fazla çocuğu var (% 59,7). Çoğu lisans derecesine (% 89,9) ve 0-20 yıllık öğretmenlik deneyimine (% 90,8) sahiptir. EFL öğretmenlerinin evde

kalma veya izolasyon sırasında algısı genellikle olumludur. Birçoğu, evde kalmanın boş zaman aktivitelerini artırdığını iddia etmiştir. Diğerleri, evde kalmanın kişisel gelişimlerine yardımcı olduğunu ve bu tür boş zamanların aile ilişkilerini etkilediğini belirtmiştir. Ayrıca, boş vakit çokluğu, katılımcıların büyük cogunluğu için ‘dinlenmek için iyi bir fırsat’, farklı gruplar içinse “Hobiler için iyi bir fırsat” ve “Sosyal, kültürel ve mesleki etkinliklere katılmak için iyi bir fırsat” anlamına gelmektedir. Araştırma, öğretmenlerin sosyal ağlarda sık sık vakit geçirdiğini, haberleri düzenli olarak takip ettiklerini, film/dizi izlediklerini, müzik dinlediklerini ve kitap okuduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Katılımcıların verdiği cevaplar, en az bahsedilen boş zaman etkinliklerinin çevrimiçi festivaller ve sergiler, çalma aletleri, çevrimiçi hobi kursları, çevrimiçi tiyatrolar ve örgü olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Daha yasca büyük, deneyimli ve evli olan kadın İngilizce öğretmenleri çoğunlukla çocuklarıyla daha fazla zaman geçirmiş ve bitkileri ile ilgilenmişlerdir. Çalışma, öğretmenler için boş zaman yönetimi ve çevrimiçi mesleki gelişim etkinlikleri hakkında kurslar önererek sonuçlanmaktadır. Ayrıca, lisansüstü eğitime devam etmenin işyeri politikaları yoluyla teşvik edilmesi gerektiğini tavsiye etmektedir.

1. Introduction

Coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic, firstly seen in Wuhan, China [1] and declared as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern [2], has posed a very serious threat to many countries across the world. Several countries around the world shut down schools with the purpose of limiting the spread of the Covid-19 virus. On 12 March 2020, Turkey had announced their suspension of face-to-face education in the schools of Ministry of National Education effective from 16 March 2020 [3] as a precautionous measure against the spread of the Covid-19, and thus the stay-at-home for teachers like many other people had started.

As the teachers, who enjoy an exalted status in the society, have a stressful job in terms of working conditions, it is very important that they spend their leisure efficiently [4]. An effective management of their leisure increases their work productivity, has positive effects on their health and also the accomplishment of their learners [5]. Furthermore, participation of teachers in a leisure activity increases their happiness, provides a sense of achievement and improves social relationships [6].

Leisure is crucial in pursuing man’s fate [7]. It is a free time shaped and occupied based on our own interests and choices. By indulging in leisure activities, people can get motivated, experience new impressions, expand their knowledge, restore their energy, and develop their abilities and interests [8]. In a broad sense, leisure activities are coined as exercise and social activities participated during leisure [9]. Leisure activities can be split into two main categories: active and passive [10]. Passive leisure activities can be considered as the best alternative way by employees required to stay at home during the Covid-19 pandemic.

To date, there are mostly local-scale studies on the participation of different branch teachers in leisure activities but no study on the participation of EFL teachers in passive leisure activities across Turkey. The aim of the current study is to find out (i) the perceptions of EFL teachers in Turkey on stay-at-home and leisure, (ii) the frequency of participation in leisure activities in home isolation, and (iii) the effects of the characteristics of EFL teachers on stay-at-home, leisure perception and leisure activities.

2. Material and Method

The study focuses on EFL teachers working primary, intermediate and high schools in all the provinces across Turkey (Figure 1). The total number of EFL teachers in Turkey is 70,814 [11]. The data are obtained via an online questionnaire. The number of respondents in the questionnaire was 383 with a 5% margin of error based on a heterogenic population and the total number of EFL teachers [12]. However, to get more reliable results, the questionnaire was completed by a total of 939 respondents in the last week of May, 2020 (the lockdown duration was about two months by then).

music; (LA8) I listened to radio; (LA9) I played a musical instrument; (LA10) I played chess, etc.; (LA11) I watched movies/TV series; (LA12) I watched documentaries; (LA13) I spent time on social networks; (LA14) I played computer games; (LA15) I attended online professional courses/webinars; (LA16) I attended online hobby courses; (LA17) I was busy with online international projects; (LA18) I attended online foreign language meetings; (LA19) I attended online museum tours; (LA20) I attended online concerts; (LA21) I did online shopping; (LA22) I attended online festival; (LA23) I attended online exhibition; (LA24) I attended online theatre; (LA25) I spent my time with my kids; (LA26) I did knitting; (LA27) I cared for my plants and (LA28) I looked after my pets.

In reliability analysis, the reliability coefficients for stay-at-home, leisure perception and leisure activity are 0.87, 0.63 and 0.80, respectively. Descriptive analysis, t-test, one-way analysis of variance and Duncan test are done. Whether there is a difference between the means of all the characteristics of EFL teachers in terms of stay-at-home and leisure perceptions and leisure activity are evaluated for a significance level of 0.05. All statistical analyses were performed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) [13].

3. Result and Discussion

The frequencies for the characteristics of EFL teachers are given in Table 1. The vast majority of the respondents are female (85.4%). The number of married and single respondents is 637 and 302, respectively. The ages of respondents vary from 23 to 59 years old, and the middle-aged (31-50) represent the majority (68.3%). EFL teachers mostly have Bachelor's degrees (89.9%). A research [5] conducted on the participation of teachers in leisure activities in Düzce-Turkey showed that 90% of teachers had a bachelor's degrees.

More than half of the respondents have 1 and 2 children (55.9%), and also work in intermediate schools (57.5%). The vast majority of EFL teachers have less than 20 years of teaching experience. The majority of the respondents (90.6%) have a free time over 30 minutes per day. Tok and Balçık [14] stated that teachers in intermediate schools in Denizli, Turkey had 60-120 minutes of leisure duration per day. The majority of EFL teachers (32%) working in secondary schools have 30-60 minutes per day. In this regard, Przepiorka and Blachnio [8] emphasized that stimulation seeking, self-discipline, and hedonistic attitude had a positive correlation with leisure management.

Table 1. Characteristics of EFL teachers (N = 939)

	f	%		f	%
Gender			Child Status		
Female	802	85.4	Yes	561	59.7
Male	137	14.6	No	378	40.3
Marital Status			Number of Children		
Married	637	67.8	0	378	40.3
Single	302	32.2	1	256	27.3
Age			2	269	28.6
20-30	268	28.5	3	31	3.3
31-50	641	68.3	4	5	0.5
Over 51	30	3.2	Teaching Experience		

Education			0-10	466	49.6
Bachelor	844	89.9	11-20	387	41.2
MA	88	9.4	21-30	71	7.6
PhD	7	0.7	Over31	14	1.5
School Type			Leisure Duration		
Primary	168	17.9	Under 30 minutes	88	9.4
Secondary	540	57.5	30-60 minutes	317	33.8
High	231	24.6	60-120 minutes	284	30.2
			Over 120 minutes	250	26.6

As considered the mean values of stay-at-home (Table 2), EFL teachers mostly agree on item SH11 (Stay-at-home has increased my leisure), item SH12 (Stay-at-home required leisure activity), item SH2 (Stay-at-home stay positively affected my personal development), and item SH8 (Stay-at-home positively affected my family relationships). Güzel et al. [15] stated that the respondents would do leisure activities as soon as stay-at-home period finishes. On the other hand, they disagreed on items SH7 (Stay-at-home positively affected my international meetings and projects) and SH9 (Stay-at-home positively affected my social relationships). The current study shows that EFL teachers feel undecided about items SH3 (Stay-at-home positively affected my health), SH4 (Stay-at-home positively affected my family economy), SH5 (Stay-at-home made me feel energetic), SH6 (Stay-at-home has increased my happiness), SH8 (Stay-at-home positively affected my family relationships) and SH10 (Stay-at-home made me use my time rationally). In contrast to this result, Güzel et al. [15] reported that the respondents in Turkey were impacted negatively in the context of economic, psychological, social, and physiological, and positively in terms of family relations, happiness, and spending time during home isolation. Wei et al. [16] also found that passive leisure activities such as watching TV and Internet surfing) had a positive effect on happiness.

As seen in Table 2, all the characteristics of EFL teachers apart from education and school type affect items SH11 (Stay-at-home has increased my leisure) and SH12 (Stay-at-home required leisure activity) ($p < 0.05$). Education has an effect on the most items of stay-at-home. Male, married and older EFL teachers with PhD and no child working in primary schools agree on the items of stay-at-home. Although the number of children and teaching experience are impactful on a few items, it is difficult to make a clear decision about which one is more agreeable.

Table 2. Means for the items of stay-at-home (SH) and effects of the characteristics of EFL teachers. G: Gender, A: Age, E: Education, MST: Marital status, CST: Child status, NUC: Number of child, ST: School type, TEX: Teaching experience.

Items	Mean	Probability							
		G	A	E	MST	CST	NUC	ST	TEX
SH1	1.9 ^a	0.98	0.02	0.00	0.15	0.01	0.54	0.27	0.58

SH2	2.4	0.23	0.19	0.09	0.03	0.00	0.06	0.85	0.02
SH3	2.1	0.29	0.63	0.23	0.14	0.92	0.90	0.43	0.60
SH4	2.2	0.04^b	0.22	0.02	0.55	0.90	0.24	0.59	0.76
SH5	1.6	0.97	0.03	0.00	0.17	0.54	0.79	0.73	0.29
SH6	1.8	0.89	0.11	0.01	0.00	0.02	0.32	0.79	0.58
SH7	1.5	0.88	0.01	0.00	0.10	0.11	0.03	0.01	0.46
SH8	2.4	0.43	0.05	0.36	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.74	0.30
SH9	1.5	0.70	0.01	0.00	0.81	0.90	0.56	0.85	0.35
SH10	1.9	0.01	0.02	0.10	0.25	0.51	0.24	0.66	0.01
SH11	2.5	0.00	0.00	0.92	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.29	0.00
SH12	2.5	0.01	0.00	0.97	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.74	0.01
SH13	2.2	0.19	0.32	0.04	0.01	0.93	0.79	0.92	0.73
SH14	2.3	0.47	0.07	0.11	0.28	0.59	0.92	0.58	0.21
SH15	2.1	0.61	0.68	0.01	0.01	0.53	0.94	0.94	0.89
SH16	1.7	0.81	0.75	0.00	0.02	0.31	0.60	0.50	0.70

^a: Higher means indicate that stay-at-home had more efficient. ^b: The related characteristic of EFL teachers had a significant effect on the related item of stay-at-home.

Table 3 shows the mean values of leisure perceptions of EFL teachers. They mostly agree on item LP1 (It is a good opportunity to rest), LP2 (It is a good opportunity for hobbies) and LP3 (It is a good opportunity to participate in social, cultural and professional events). It is found that they are undecided in terms of the other four items.

All the other characteristics of EFL teachers apart from gender and education have an effect on different items (Table 3; $p < 0.05$). Age, child status and number of child affect items LP1 (It is a good opportunity to rest) and LP2 (It is a good opportunity for hobbies). As expected, while older EFL teachers agree more on item LP1 (It is a good opportunity to rest), youngers agree more on item LP2 (It is a good opportunity for hobbies). Marital status, child status and teaching experience are efficient on items LP6 (It is the time spent with the family) and LP7 (It is the time spent with the friends). Married EFL teachers with child and medium teaching experience agree more on items LP6 (It is the time spent with the family) and LP7 (It is the time spent with the friends). On the other hand, EFL teachers with no or few children agree more on item LP2 (It is a good opportunity for hobbies).

Table 3. Means for the items of leisure perception (LP) and effects of the characteristics of EFL teachers. G: Gender, A: Age, E: Education, MST: Marital status, CST: Child status, NUC: Number of child, ST: School type, TEX: Teaching experience.

Items	Mean	Probability							
		G	A	E	MST	CST	NUC	ST	TEX
LP1	2.7 ^a	0.80	0.02^b	0.84	0.95	0.11	0.47	0.69	0.29
LP2	2.9	0.93	0.03	0.81	0.26	0.04	0.02	0.17	0.67
LP3	2.8	0.78	0.35	0.40	0.32	0.29	0.07	0.36	0.50
LP4	2.0	0.09	0.54	0.67	0.87	0.52	0.43	0.04	0.36
LP5	2.0	0.50	0.86	0.11	0.34	0.98	0.65	0.37	0.90
LP6	1.9	0.80	0.32	0.62	0.00	0.02	0.07	0.17	0.01
LP7	1.8	0.25	0.92	0.10	0.04	0.66	0.10	0.55	0.00

^a: Higher means indicate that leisure time perception had more efficient. ^b: The related characteristic of EFL teachers had a significant effect on the related item of leisure time perception ($p < 0.05$).

EFL teachers indicate that they frequently participate in leisure activities including Items LA13 (I spent time on social networks), LA2 (I followed the news regularly), LA11 (I watched movies/TV series), LA7 (I listened to music) and LA4 (I read book) (Table 4). Similarly, a study [17] investigating the participation of teachers in leisure activities in Halfeti-Şanlıurfa suggested that spending time with family, listening to music and visiting friends and relatives were the most frequent leisure activities. Tok and Balçık [14] reported that teachers working in secondary schools in Denizli frequently read books, and spent time with their friends in their leisure. A research [4] conducted on the participation of teachers in leisure activities working in primary schools in Kırıkkale showed that they highly preferred passive leisure activities including reading books-newspapers, watching TV and listening music. Gültekin et al. [18] found that classroom teachers working in primary schools mostly read books as a leisure activity. Muthoni [6], studying leisure activities of female teachers in Nairobi-Kenya, indicated that the most popular leisure activity was watching television. A study, which leisure activities are explored in Turkey, America, Germany, England, China, Australia, revealed that Turkish, American and British people frequently watched television rather than other passive leisure activities whereas German, Australian and Chinese people mostly participated in active leisure activities such as sports [19].

In the current study, EFL teachers indicated that they sometimes did sports (LA1). In fact, doing physical activity regularly during stay-at-home is a crucial strategy for avoiding health problems because long-term home-isolation can increase inactivity and lead to depression and anxiety [20].

The least participated leisure activities are LA22 (I attended online festival), LA9 (I played a musical instrument), LA16 (I attended online hobby courses), LA23 (I attended online exhibitions), LA24 (I attended online theatres), LA17 (I was busy with online international projects) and LA26 (I did knitting). Aşkın [5] stated that teachers in Düzce-Turkey rarely participated in online artistic activities.

The results show that EFL teachers sometimes attended online professional courses/webinars (LA15). This result of the study demonstrates that teachers have a significant responsibility for their professional growth and development. Similarly, in a previous study by Alfaki [21] revealed that the teachers were anticipated to undertake the responsibility for their own PD to keep themselves constantly up to date and to reflect on their teaching skills for their ongoing PD.

Items LA7 (I listened to music), LA9 (I played a musical instrument), LA11 (I watched movies/TV series), LA13 (I spent time on social networks), LA14 (I played computer games), LA20 (I attended online concerts), LA25 (I spent my time with my kids) and LA27 (I cared for my plants) are affected by the vast majority of the characteristics of EFL teachers (Table 4). Older, experienced, married and female EFL teachers with children participated in leisure activities

coded LA25 (I spent my time with my kids) and LA27 (I cared for my plants). EFL teachers with PhD mostly participate in leisure activities coded LA1 (I did sports regularly), LA3 (I followed scientific publications regularly), LA4 (I read book), LA5 (I read newspaper), LA6 (I read magazine), LA14 (I played computer games), LA15 (I attended online professional courses/webinars), LA20 (I attended online concerts), LA22 (I attended online festival), LA23 (I attended online exhibition and LA24 (I attended online theatre).

Although the number of children and school type are influential on few items, it is difficult to make a clear decision on which one is more agreeable. Likewise, Muthoni [6] reported that number of children and school type did not have a significant influence on leisure activities.

Table 4. Means for the items of leisure activity (LA) and effects of the characteristics of EFL teachers. G: Gender, A: Age, E: Education, MST: Marital status, CST: Child status, NUC: Number of child, ST: School type, TEX: Teaching experience.

Items	Mean	Probability							
		G	A	E	MST	CST	NUC	ST	TEX
LA1	2.5 ^a	0.74	0.02	0.22	0.00	0.01	0.12	0.48	0.03
LA2	3.8	0.60	0.17	0.41	0.49	0.81	0.79	0.71	0.54
LA3	2.9	0.23	0.52	0.00	0.44	0.56	0.40	0.16	0.56
LA4	3.6	0.00^b	0.21	0.15	0.06	0.11	0.70	0.50	0.68
LA5	2.5	0.02	0.00	0.16	0.09	0.05	0.02	0.44	0.00
LA6	2.3	0.58	0.23	0.08	0.73	0.25	0.18	0.38	0.14
LA7	3.7	0.25	0.00	0.43	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.03	0.00
LA8	2.7	0.27	0.04	0.37	0.07	0.02	0.02	0.41	0.66
LA9	1.5	0.00	0.03	0.01	0.04	0.03	0.10	0.07	0.01
LA10	2.3	0.38	0.48	0.37	0.32	0.57	0.32	0.08	0.23
LA11	3.8	0.05	0.00	0.81	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.05
LA12	3.0	0.00	0.02	0.09	0.17	0.71	0.67	0.27	0.07
LA13	4.0	0.37	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
LA14	1.8	0.00	0.00	0.72	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.16	0.01
LA15	2.9	0.55	0.07	0.00	0.46	0.23	0.68	0.02	0.27
LA16	1.5	0.20	0.25	0.25	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.50	0.20
LA17	1.6	0.66	0.01	0.00	0.22	0.07	0.28	0.00	0.00

LA18	1.9	0.56	0.77	0.00	0.06	0.13	0.86	0.06	0.86
LA19	2.2	0.00	0.05	0.07	0.87	0.97	0.61	0.26	0.01
LA20	2.0	0.02	0.01	0.07	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.74	0.01
LA21	3.0	0.05	0.00	0.54	0.64	0.19	0.65	0.07	0.00
LA22	1.3	0.71	0.34	0.40	0.01	0.05	0.15	0.34	0.25
LA23	1.5	0.15	0.20	0.00	0.08	0.35	0.95	0.56	0.52
LA24	1.5	0.26	0.16	0.06	0.04	0.56	0.41	0.01	0.46
LA25	3.2	0.40	0.00	0.48	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
LA26	1.6	0.00	0.81	0.72	0.34	0.14	0.70	0.17	0.43
LA27	2.8	0.00	0.00	0.99	0.00	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.14
LA28	2.0	0.60	0.30	0.64	0.04	0.07	0.22	0.18	0.55

^a: Higher mean indicate that related leisure activity had more efficient. ^b: The related characteristic of EFL teachers had a significant effect on the leisure activity ($p < 0.05$).

4. Conclusions

The study showed that EFL teachers mostly perceived stay-at-home as “Stay-at-home has increased my leisure”, “Stay-at-home required leisure activity”, “Stay-at-home stay positively affected my personal development”, and “Stay-at-home positively affected my family relationships”. Also, they considerably have the leisure perceptions including “It is a good opportunity to rest”, “It is a good opportunity for hobbies” and “It is a good opportunity to participate in social, cultural and professional events”. The study revealed that they frequently spent time on social networks, followed the news regularly, watched movie/TV series, listened to music and read books. The least oft-mentioned leisure activities are online festival, playing the musical instrument, online hobby courses, online exhibition, online theatre, being busy with online international projects and knitting. EFL teachers with PhD mostly did sports regularly, followed scientific publications regularly, read book, newspaper and magazine, played computer games, attended online professional courses/webinars, attended online concerts, online festival, online exhibition and online theatre. Considering these conclusions as a whole, the study sheds light on very important information for both EFL teachers and authorities from Turkish Ministry of Education because it has a wide sampling across Turkey. In this sense, the courses on leisure management and online PD activities should be held for the teachers. They should be supported and encouraged for pursuing their postgraduate education through policies that incentivize personal and educational development. It is recommended that similar researches should be conducted with the inclusion of teachers with different branches across Turkey for the development of the educational system.

Competing Interest / Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they no conflict of interest. The none of the authors have any competing interests in the manuscript.

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