LEARNING BY TRAVELING:

CLASSROOM TEACHERS' VIEWS ON FIELD TRIPS

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PREFACE

School field trips are important activities that enable students to gain learning experience outside the classroom. However, in addition to their educational benefits, they also bring with them various risks. Identifying and managing these risks is of great importance both for the safety of students and for the legal responsibilities of educational institutions. Such excursions are especially risky for primary and secondary school students, as children in this age group may find it difficult to fully comply with safety rules. In this context, it is very important to emphasize the importance of field trips and to reveal the opinions of primary school teachers about field trips in a comprehensive way, and I think that this study will make a great contribution to future studies.

30.04.2025

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1. INTRODUCTION

Out-of-school education is education to strengthen students' learning and at the same time to improve their cognitive, affective, social and psychimotor skills (Tatar & Bağrıyanık, 2012). It is the linking of ideas, concepts and subject matter in which students interact with the environment, displays and exhibits to gain an experiential perspective (Krepel & Duvall, 1981). Field trips help students develop social skills. Group work and cooperative activities strengthen students' communication skills. In addition, these trips increase students' self-confidence and allow them to learn social rules. In addition, children also enjoy the school field trip. For children, traveling with their peers is quite fun and exciting (Arslan, 2022).

Field trips are an important educational tool that enables students to gain learning experiences outside the classroom. These trips allow students to relate their academic knowledge to the real world and make learning more meaningful (Behrendt & Franklin, 2014). Group excursions help students develop teamwork skills. At the same time, students gain skills such as taking responsibility, making plans and managing time (Coughlin, 2010).

Out-of-school spaces help children to develop their creativity and make discoveries. In such areas, children have the opportunity to learn

by using their various senses effectively. By examining many natural materials found in nature, such as water, plants, stones and soil, they have the chance to directly experience the different properties of these objects. Out-of-school spaces offer both a natural and rich learning environment for children (Handler & Epstein, 2010).

Field trips give students the opportunity to revisit the concepts they have learned in the classroom and make connections to their understanding. They allow students to develop thinking strategies that increase their knowledge base and encourage further learning and higher levels (Behrendt & Franklin, 2014). Trips to universities, science centers or factories can help students gain insight into their future job and career choices. Such trips also contribute to career planning as they offer the opportunity to get to know professions closely (Salmi, 2003). Michie (1998) stated that trips can be planned for the following five purposes:

- Providing first-hand experience,
- Encouraging interest and motivation in science,
- Bringing relevance to learning and mutual relationships,
- To strengthen observation and perception skills and
- Promote personal (social) development.

Studies conducted in Turkey show that field trips increase students' motivation to learn and engage them more by involving them in the learning process. Teachers, on the other hand, have a positive view of

learning in out-of-school environments, but mostly do not prefer these environments (Dağal & Bayındır, 2014). Bozdoğan (2008) states that the reasons for this are that teachers see time, cost, responsibility and bureaucratic work as problems. However, taking the lessons outside the classroom increases students' interest in the subjects and increases their motivation. In particular, field trips to places such as science centers, museums, and historical sites take the learning process out of its usual flow and make it very enjoyable (Greene, Kisida, & Bowen, 2014). Field trips allow students to experience the information they learn in the classroom in the real world. For example, visiting the site of a war described in a history lesson provides students with the opportunity to better comprehend the events (Falk & Dierking, 2000).

Risks of School Trips

School field trips are important activities that enable students to gain learning experience outside the classroom. However, in addition to their educational benefits, they also bring with them various risks. Identifying and managing these risks is of great importance both for the safety of students and for the legal responsibilities of educational institutions. Such excursions are especially risky for primary and secondary school students, as children in this age group may find it difficult to fully comply with safety rules.

School trips also involve organizational and legal risks. Any negativity that may occur during the trip may put the school administration and teachers under legal responsibility. For this reason, risk assessment plans should be made in advance (Gill, 2011). Risk

management is critical to ensure that field trips are safe and productive. In this context, teachers, administrators and parents should act in cooperation (Fägerstam, 2014). In addition, identifying potential risks in advance and creating an action plan accordingly will be effective in preventing negative situations.

In order to plan an effective field trip, it is very important for teachers to consider factors such as transportation and safety, the characteristics of the area to be visited, the needs of the children and its compatibility with the curriculum. When these factors are taken into consideration, it can be ensured that the field trip is carried out in a purposeful, safe and efficient manner. Teachers' attention to these criteria increases the quality of the learning and experiences to be gained from the field trip and reduces risks (Tutkun et al, 2019).

The psychological risks of field trips should not be ignored. Some students may experience anxiety and stress in unfamiliar environments, which may negatively affect the learning process (Rickinson et al., 2004). Such problems are especially common in students who have not experienced a field trip before. There are also social risks that can be encountered on field trips. Conflicts, exclusion or bullying among students can negatively affect both individual development and group dynamics (Beames, Higgins, & Nicol, 2011). Therefore, it is important for teachers to develop strategies that encourage communication and cooperation within the group.

Due to their age, primary school students are curious, energetic and eager to explore their surroundings. This can lead to increased

physical risks during excursions. Accidents, especially during transportation, can cause injuries to students. Safe transportation is one of the most important aspects of school trips and school buses are often the safest option. In addition, students should be ensured to move in groups and regular counts should be taken (COBIS, 2023).

While primary school field trips offer important opportunities for students' development, they also bring with them various risks. Being aware of these risks and taking the necessary precautions is of great importance both to ensure the safety of students and to improve the quality of education. Effective risk management is possible through detailed planning, adequate supervision and informing all stakeholders.

The Role of The Teacher in School Trips

In field trips, students learn through active participation and develop their knowledge, skills and attitudes in the process. These field trips expand students' learning environments and combine in-class learning with out-of-class experiences (Krepel & Duvall, 1981). In this way, students' out-of-class learning experiences are enriched and the activities become an important educational tool that contributes to students' academic, emotional and social development (Dağal & Bayındır, 2014). According to Dewey (1983), individuals learn best through direct experiences. Students in learning environments have the opportunity to see real objects and places that cannot be brought to the classroom environment in the environments where they belong, to

gain concrete experiences about abstract and complex phenomena, and to learn by doing (Martin, 2004).

Although the positive effects of field trips on students are known, there are some reasons why teachers do not want to participate in field trips. Some of these reasons are technical reasons such as taking time off and service work, while other reasons are the cost of the trip, time constraints, students' disciplinary problems, and concerns about keeping up with the curriculum (Orion, 2010). Teachers are the main actors who direct students' learning process in field trips. In this context, the teacher should be a guide who encourages students to interact directly with knowledge on field trips. The teacher should fulfill this role by preparing before the field trip, guiding during the field trip and evaluating after the field trip. For an effective field trip, the teacher should ensure students' active participation in the process by using methods appropriate to the constructivist learning approach.

2. METHOD

In this study, phenomenology (phenomenology), one of the qualitative research method designs, was used. Phenomenological studies are studies that can provide experiences, explanations, situations and examples that will enable us to better understand a phenomenon/event (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021). Phenomenological design allows the researcher to collect detailed data on the subject and to reveal the individual experiences of the participants in depth (Patton, 2014). In this framework, classroom teachers' perspectives on field trips were

examined and presented from a holistic and detailed perspective through their own discourses.

2.1. Working Group

The study group of the research consists of 26 classroom teachers, 10 female and 16 male, working in the center of Malatya in the 2024-2025 academic year. Purposive sampling, one of the non-random sampling methods, was preferred in the study. In purposive sampling method, information-rich situations that are compatible with the purpose of the study are selected in order to conduct detailed research. In this respect, purposive sampling allows in-depth study of situations with rich information/data (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016).

Table 1. Demographic Information on the Teachers Participating in the Study

		N
Gender	Female	10
	Male	16
Professional Seniority	1-15 year	13
	15-25 year	9
	25 years and above	4
Your Region of Duty	Province Center	18
	District Center	6

	Village	2
Title	Teacher	5
	Expert Teacher	19
	Chief Teacher	2
Total		**26**

When Table 1 is analyzed, it is seen that 10 of the classroom teachers participating in the study are female and 16 of them are male. It was determined that 13 of the teachers had a seniority of 1-15 years, 9 of them had a seniority of 15-25 years and 4 of them had a seniority of 25 years or more. It was determined that 18 of the classroom teachers participating in the study worked in the provincial center, 6 in the district center and 2 in the village. It was also seen that 19 of them had the title of expert teacher, 2 of them had the title of head teacher and 5 of them had the title of teacher.

2.2. Data Collection

The data in the study were collected with semi-structured interview questions in the second half of the 2024-2025 academic year. Before the interview, the participants were informed about the interview and the subject. The semi-structured interview form consisted of two parts: interview questions and personal information of the participants. While preparing the semi-structured interview form, the relevant literature was reviewed in detail. Then, considering the purpose of the

study, interview questions were prepared for this purpose. All questions were clearly and explicitly stated. The prepared form was submitted to the evaluation of three experts. The suggestions and opinions of the experts were taken into consideration and the form was finalized. Before the semi-structured interview form was used in the actual application, a pilot application was conducted with three classroom teachers currently working in public schools affiliated to the Ministry of National Education. After the feedback from the participants revealed that the questions served the purpose and were clearly understood, they were used in the actual implementation.

2.3. Data Analysis

The data obtained from the interviews conducted for the research were analyzed by content analysis method. In the content analysis method, similar data are brought together within the framework of certain themes and concepts and are organized and interpreted in a way that readers can understand (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). For this purpose, the opinions of the participants in the study were presented in tables.

2.4. Validity and Reliability

In qualitative research, “expert opinion” and “expert review” are among the specific methods applied to ensure validity and reliability (Merriam, 2015). The draft interview form was presented to three experts in the field. The interview form was finalized by making the necessary corrections in line with the feedback. In qualitative research, presenting quotations/opinions in their most natural form

and making direct quotations from the participants in the study group increase the reliability of the studies (Büyüköztürk et al., 2009). In this study, the researcher presented the collected data as it was in order to increase the reliability of the study. In order for the participants to give comfortable, sincere and sincere answers, they were informed that their identity and school information would not be shared under any circumstances and approval was obtained from the participants. In this context, the participants were coded as T1, T2, T3. In addition, the research process was explained in detail.

3. FINDINGS

In this section of the study, the data obtained are analyzed.

Classroom Teachers' Opinions on Whether They Have Previously Conducted School Field Trips

The classroom teachers who participated in the study were first asked the question “Have you ever organized a field trip with your students as part of a school trip?”. When the answers given were analyzed, it was seen that the teacher responses differed. Teachers' opinions are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Classroom Teachers' Opinions on Whether They Have Ever Organized a Field Trip

Categories	**Participants**	**f**
Yes	1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20,	**20**

	22, 23, 24, 25, 26	
No	5, 6, 8, 11, 16, 21	**6**
Total		**26**

When Table 2 is analyzed, the majority of the classroom teachers (20 teachers) reported that they had participated in a field trip before. 6 teachers answered no and stated that they did not participate in a field trip with their students.

Classroom Teachers' Views on the Contribution of Field Trips to Students

The second question asked to the classroom teachers participating in the study was "What kind of contributions do you think school trips with students make to students?". When the responses were analyzed, it was seen that the teacher responses differed. Teachers' opinions are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Classroom Teachers' Opinions on the Contributions of Field Trips to Students

Codes	**Participants**	**f**
Learning by Doing/Living	7, 8, 12, 18, 25	**5**
Permanent Learning	2, 6, 8, 22, 25	**5**
Recognizing/Exploring the	10, 19, 20, 22, 26	**5**

Environment		
Cultural Contribution	22, 23, 24	**3**
Self-confidence	7	**1**
Embodiment	3	**1**
Experience	6	**1**
Socialization	1, 3, 5, 8, 9, 15, 17, 21	**8**
Different Experiences	3, 4, 16	**3**
Having Fun	27	**1**
Interaction	13, 14, 15	**3**
Increase in Academic Success	16	**1**
Positive Attitude Towards School	11	**1**
Total		**38**

When Table 3 is examined, 8 classroom teachers stated that school trips contributed to students' socialization, 5 classroom teachers stated that they contributed to permanent learning, 5 classroom teachers stated that they contributed to learning by doing-living, and 5 classroom teachers stated that they contributed to students' getting to know and discovering their immediate environment. 3 classroom teachers stated that it increased student-teacher interaction,

contributed to students' acculturation, and they experienced different experiences. 1 classroom teacher stated that school trips contribute to students' positive attitudes towards school, have fun, increase academic achievement, concretize the subjects learned, increase students' self-confidence and provide them with different experiences. The opinions of some classroom teachers on the subject are as follows:

"I think such activities are very useful because they allow students to get to know each other and their teachers outside of school. I also think that exploring and getting to know different environments with their friends is one of the most effective methods for students' socialization." T15

"It makes what is learned more permanent. At the same time, various experiences help them develop their perspectives. I think the most important thing is that the children have fun and it leaves a good memory for them, which is one of the best contributions..." T22

"First of all, field trips increase students' awareness. Students gain positive experiences through field trips. They feel valuable. This increases academic success over time." T16

Classroom Teachers' Opinions on the Risks They Encounter on School Trips

The third question asked to the classroom teachers participating in the study was "What are the most common problems/risks you experience during field trips?". When the responses were analyzed, it was seen

that the teacher responses differed. Teachers' opinions are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Classroom Teachers' Opinions on the Risks They Face on School Trips

Codes	**Participants**	**f**
Discipline (Student Control)	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 16, 17, 19, 21, 22, 24, 25	**16**
Transportation	1, 2, 3, 7, 15, 26	**6**
Security	10, 14, 18, 20, 21, 23, 24, 26	**8**
Accommodation	15	**1**
Total		**31**

When Table 4 is analyzed, it is seen that classroom teachers experienced the highest number of problems and risks in the field of student control and discipline (16 teachers). 8 teachers stated that they had problems with security, 6 teachers with transportation and 1 teacher with accommodation. The opinions of some classroom teachers on the subject are as follows:

"The most common problems I experience during school trips are transportation problems and controlling students. Organizing

excursions with students involves great risks both during traffic and in the excursion area." T2

"The lack of supervising teachers according to the number of students causes us to have problems. When the number of supervisors is insufficient, it can be insufficient to ensure student control." T25

"Since the places where school trips take place are usually crowded, it is a problem to ensure the safety of students." T10

"One of the biggest risks on school trips is that children exhibit behaviors that can pose a danger to themselves." T22

Classroom Teachers' Opinions on Precautions Taken During School Trips

The fourth question asked to the classroom teachers participating in the study was "What precautions do you take or have you taken regarding these risks you experience on school trips?". When the responses were analyzed, it was seen that the teacher responses differed. Teachers' opinions are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Classroom Teachers' Opinions on the Precautions They Take on School Trips

Codes	**Participants**	**f**
Audit/Surveillance	5, 6, 12, 15, 17, 23, 22, 24	**8**
Planlama/Bilgilendirme	1, 3, 4, 8, 18, 22, 26	**7**

Cooperation with Parents	9, 10, 14, 20	**4**
Teacher Collaboration	2, 10, 14, 16, 21, 25	**6**
Grouping	6, 13, 19	**3**
Total		**28**

When Table 5 is analyzed, 8 classroom teachers stated that they took precautions against possible risks by frequently taking attendance and supervising students during school trips. 7 classroom teachers stated that they took various precautions by making a good planning before the trip, 6 classroom teachers by cooperating with other teachers, 4 classroom teachers by getting support from parents, and 3 classroom teachers by dividing students into small groups and determining a group leader. The opinions of some classroom teachers on the subject are as follows:

"Since we go on school trips with crowded groups, it is difficult to control them. To prevent this, I divide the students into groups of two or three and try to make sure that they keep an eye on each other." T13

"I always take attendance on school trips so that I can keep track of all of them and prevent possible disappearances. By assigning each student to another student, I ensure that they control themselves." T6

"I take precautions against accidents that may occur by assigning one or two parents to help the teacher in the places where we go on excursions." T9

Classroom Teachers' Suggestions to the Ministry and District Directorates of National Education against Potential Risks and Dangers

The fifth question asked to the classroom teachers participating in the study was "What suggestions can you make to the Ministry and District Directorates of National Education in order to prevent the dangers and risks that may occur during school trips?". When the responses were analyzed, it was seen that the teacher responses differed. Teachers' opinions are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Suggestions of Classroom Teachers to the Ministry and National Education Directorates

Codes	**Participants**	**f**
Attendant Request	2, 4, 5, 10, 12, 13, 14, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26,	**13**
Transportation Contribution	1, 2, 3, 21, 24, 25, 26	**7**
Collaboration	8, 9, 16, 17, 18	**5**
Budget	1, 7, 8, 15	**4**

No Suggestion	6, 11	**2**
Total		**31**

When Table 6 is analyzed, 13 classroom teachers suggested that the authorities should provide police, hostesses or a security officer to accompany them on field trips. In addition, 7 classroom teachers suggested contributions for transportation fees, 5 classroom teachers suggested cooperation with the Directorates of National Education, and 4 classroom teachers suggested school-based budget support. 2 classroom teachers stated that they did not have any suggestions. The opinions of some classroom teachers on the subject are as follows:

Such risks can be minimized by planning school trips by national education directorates and providing support for transportation and security issues by national education." T26

"The Directorates of National Education or the Ministry can provide support in terms of service provision and security during school trips." T24

"Excursion areas should be more protected. Personnel may be assigned for security purposes during the excursions." T14

"As is known, excursions involve serious risks. Therefore, a police officer may accompany the excursion." T20

4. CONCLUSION DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the research, classroom teachers stated that school trips have positive effects on students such as permanent learning, socialization, learning by doing-living, concretization, positive attitude towards school, effective experience, student-teacher interaction, socio-cultural contribution and increase in academic achievement. It was determined that classroom teachers face the most risks during school trips such as transportation, discipline/student control and security. Classroom teachers stated that they used measures such as obtaining parental support, taking attendance frequently and conducting audits, making detailed plans before the trip, dividing students into groups to ensure control, and getting support from fellow teachers to reduce risks during field trips. Teachers asked the Ministry of National Education and District Directorates of National Education to support and cooperate with them in terms of transportation, support staff and budget.

Karslı and Kurt (2022) examined the research on out-of-school learning environments in Turkey. When the results are examined, it is seen that they are consistent with the results obtained from this study. They found that these studies positively affected students' attitudes, interests and perceptions. Field trips are a powerful educational tool that supports students' academic and social development. They encourage students' active participation in the learning process and enable them to make connections with the real world. Saraç (2017), in his content analysis study on out-of-school learning environments in

Turkey, stated that such environments are especially effective in the field of science and make positive contributions to students' interest, attitudes and learning products. Küçük and Yıldırım (2021) examined the effect of teaching the human and environment unit in out-of-school learning environments on students' academic achievement and found that the academic achievement of the students in the experimental group increased in a short time and this achievement was permanent in the long term. He stated that it positively affected students' perceptions that out-of-school learning environments are exciting and interesting in terms of establishing direct relationships with life and gaining first-hand experience.

It was determined that classroom teachers faced the most risks such as transportation, discipline/student control and security during school trips. The problems experienced by teachers during school trips are similar to the results obtained from this study, and in different studies, it has been stated that there are dangers such as student discipline problems, financial problems and security (Bozdoğan, 2015, Demirtaş & Çayır, 2021, Yaşar, 2021). In his study, Bayındır (20224) found that classroom teachers had the most problems in student management, meeting the needs and security issues in school trips, and therefore, more institutional and personal preparations should be made. Again, Bayrak et al. (2022), in their study with pre-service teachers, found that the majority of pre-service teachers thought that it was necessary to take security measures first and foremost expressed. School field trips are one of the educational methods that contribute significantly to

the academic and social development of students. However, the efficiency of these trips is largely dependent on the pedagogical, organizational and safety roles of the teacher. The teacher is not only a transmitter of information, but also a guide, administrator, and safety officer with a multidimensional role. For an effective field trip, it is of great importance that teachers fulfill these roles in a conscious and planned manner.

As a result of the study, classroom teachers stated that field trips have positive effects on students such as permanent learning, socialization, learning by doing, concretization, positive attitude towards school, socio-cultural contribution and increase in academic achievement. Tatar and Bağrıyanık (2012) obtained a similar result in their study and the majority of teachers stated that out-of-school educational activities were effective in students' learning by doing and experiencing. They also stated that they used these activities to increase students' interest and curiosity towards the lesson and to evaluate their performance. Tutkun et al. (2019) found in their study that field trips entertain students and provide permanent learning. Küçük and Yıldırım (2021) found that field trip activities were perceived as more interesting and exciting by students. Torun and Yıldırım (2022), in their study with social studies teachers, stated that teachers included out-of-school learning activities and expressed the socio-cultural contribution it provided to students, while some teachers stated that they encountered many problems such as legal procedures and time constraints during the implementation process.

Field trips are one of the important activities that support children's psycho-motor development. In addition to coordination, balance and physical skills, it helps children get to know the culture, history and environment of the society they live in more closely. During these trips, children increase their social interaction by sharing their experiences and become more aware of their environment. In addition, field trips encourage children to develop a sense of curiosity and strengthen their ability to observe, comprehend and relate events. This process feeds their imagination, increases their desire to explore and allows them to interpret the world in a more meaningful way (Gordon, 2014).

As a result of the research, teachers asked the Ministry of National Education and District Directorates of National Education to support and cooperate with them in terms of transportation, support staff and budget. Although the purpose of out-of-school education is to provide students with opportunities to get to know the natural world, unfortunately, it is not always possible for teachers to provide these opportunities to their students. Limited instructional tools or resources prevent teachers from carrying out these activities (Wagner & Gordon, 2010). In the regulations made by the Ministry of National Education, it is stated that school trips improve students' knowledge, manners and social skills, and also support the culture of adaptation to social rules and coexistence (MoNE, 2019). Bayındır (2024) suggested that teachers should be trained on legal, administrative, guidance, road safety, health and first aid issues, administrative support should be

provided to complete the procedures before the trip, academic support should be provided for the trip and learning efficiency during the trip, and managerial systems should be developed to provide expert support to intervene in case of problems during the trip.

Involving parents in field trips is of great importance in terms of raising their awareness about the process and the contribution of the activities to children's development. In addition, parents who have a supportive attitude towards field trips can play a role in facilitating the organization of these activities by helping teachers. In this way, the participation of parents both creates awareness in the process and contributes to the realization of activities more efficiently (Tutkun et al., 2019).

In out-of-school learning activities, teachers' preparation, implementation and evaluation competencies as well as their knowledge and experience competencies are very important (Göloğlu Demir & Çetin, 2021). A successful and quality field trip requires teacher preparation and interaction. Some factors should be addressed before the trip. The experience needs to be planned. The teacher should visit the venue in advance to meet the staff and organize the activities, and then familiarize the students with the layout, activities and expectations of the venue. Student groupings should be arranged before arrival at the venue. Training of chaperones is also necessary. The requirements for the journey should be linked to the curriculum and students should actively participate. Teachers should consider safety issues and be ready to embrace unexpected situations (Behrendt

& Franklin, 2014). Future research should examine the long-term effects of field trips and their implementation at different educational levels.

Ethics Declaration

This book was presented as an abstract at the conference "International Aegean Conferences-XI April 04-06, 2025/ Izmir, Turkey" before its publication. For academic and scientific purposes only and the results of the research will not be used for any personal gain or manipulated with conflicts of interest in mind.

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