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The Content Analysis of Dissertations Completed in the Field of Curriculum and Instruction (2009-2014) *

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to analyze dissertations completed in the field of Curriculum and Instruction (2009-2014) in terms of various aspects. Out of 165 dissertations, totally 121 dissertations were included in detailed analysis because 44 of them were unauthorized. In this research, the dissertations were analyzed with document analysis in terms of variables such as university, year, research topic, method, design, sample type, sample size, data collection methods and data analysis techniques. In addition, descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages were also used by using SPSS-18 program. As a result of the study, it was found that mostly preferred topics in dissertations in the field of Curriculum and Instruction between the dates 2009-2014 are teaching-learning approaches/models/ methods and techniques, evaluation of formal education curricula, teaching-learning strategies/styles and their instruction, evaluation of teacher education curricula and teacher development practices. Furthermore, curriculum evaluation studies were mostly descriptive in which target curricula were evaluated based on perceptions of teachers, students, academicians etc. It was also found that in most of the dissertations between the dates 2009-2014 survey/descriptive design was mostly preferred, the most used research method is mixed method, mostly preferred sampling types [target sample] are teachers and undergraduate students, the most used data collection tools are scales and interview form. Considering the current state of Curriculum and Instruction field according to the results of the research, it can suggested that dissertations should be in a way that contributes to the theory of the field.

Keywords

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Introduction

Societies have been changing to a great extent and people' needs in these societies have become more and more challenging and complex. Education is one of the most important systems enabling to meet the needs of people in such societies (Senemoğlu, 1991). Therefore, investment in education should be considered as an investment in the future of the society. Education system has many components such as student, teacher, curriculum, instruction etc. Curriculum is a very important element of the education process. When historical foundations of the curriculum is examined, it is found that while curriculum was seen as list of subject areas or content as transmitters of cultural heritage in the past, now according to contemporary curriculum studies it is defined as a plan of learning experiences with the developments in the field of education throughout the world. Curriculum basically addresses to these questions: What educational objectives should the school try to attain?, how can learning experiences be selected in order to attain these objectives?, how can learning experiences be organized for effective instruction?, and how can the effectiveness of learning experiences be evaluated? (Tyler, 1949).

Historical Foundations of the field "Curriculum and Instruction" in the World

In Europe and America in the 19th century, critics regarding the educational programs and practices have led to creation of the modern understanding of the curriculum. Despite the criticism of the European educational thinking, American education is greatly influenced by European thought. Limitations of traditional education began to be recognized with reform movements in Europe and America. In the 20th century, various changes were needed in schools to meet the demands of a changing society. Scientific research methods, the influence of psychology, child-focused studies, developments in the industry, and progressive movements in the society also affected education and educators began to question the traditional curriculum. The curriculum began to be considered as a science rather than only content or subject area. These changes in the curriculum were influenced by scientific movements in education and psychology, and the theories of philosophers and educators such as Pestalozzi, Herbart, Froebel, Spencer. These scientists have advocated scientism opposed to classical or traditional curriculum approach (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004; Tanner & Tanner, 2007).

Bobbitt's "The Curriculum" is known as the first book that covers the curriculum as a science and with all phases of curriculum development. Bobbitt stressed the importance of standards (features that are aimed to attain), tasks and assessment in curriculum development process. Charters also adopted a scientific approach. Charters defined the curriculum as "a number of objectives that students have to attain with a series of learning experiences". Bobbitt and Charters were influenced by the theory of Taylor's scientific management principles (Bobbitt, 1918; Charters, 1929; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004). In this respect, Bobbitt and Charters are known as the pioneers of behavioral and scientific approach in the field of "Curriculum and Instruction".

In 1930, in the United States, a board was created which consisted of 12 members including Charters, Bobbitt, Killpatrick etc. This board published the annual called "The Twenty- Sixth Yearbook" in two sections; yesterday, today of curriculum development and the foundations of curriculum development. In the first section, traditional education and its ideas on subject area, memorization and mental discipline were criticized harshly. Then, the synthesis of progressive education applications and curricula were made. In the second section, the foundations concerning the basic nature of curriculum development were given (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004).

In 1949, Ralph W. Tyler made a significant contribution to the field by publishing the book "Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction" which is one of the main sources of the field. It is said that Tyler made the curriculum more systematic and understandable. As Charters' assistant, Tyler was influenced by the ideas of Bobbitt and Charters. In 1962, Hilda Taba made a significant contribution to the field by publishing her book "Curriculum Development: Theory and Practice". Taba and Tyler offer a rational, logical and systematic approach in curriculum development (Fraenkel, 1992; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004; Läänemets & Kalamees-Ruubel, 2013).

Examining the historical development of the curriculum in the world, it is seen that the curriculum has become more systematic and regular in the process. The curriculum began to be addressed as a scientific discipline especially with the emphasis on scientific principles progressive philosophy in the 20th century.

The movement of reconceptualism that emerged in the 1970s in America and pioneered by William F. Pinar began to question the current situation of "Curriculum and Instruction" field and opposed to the current curriculum development concept. Advocates of this movement criticized curriculum development applications through behavioral objectives, plans and curriculum evaluation (Bümen & Aktan, 2014). Understanding of the curriculum is highlighted as necessary rather than just implementation or evaluation of the curriculum (Pinar et al., 2004). This view puts emphasis on individualized educational programs by objecting to the objectives in curricula and the standardization of the education. Therefore, it can be said that in America, new ideas and trends are discussed in the field of "Curriculum and Instruction" within recent years.

Historical Foundations of the field "Curriculum and Instruction" in Turkey

Educational Sciences Professorial Chair ('Eğitim Bilimleri Kürsüsü' in Turkish), established in 1965 and existing in Ankara University - Faculty of Education, forms the base of Curriculum and Instruction department (Tanju, 1990). Also, master and PhD programs implemented at Postgraduate Faculty of Education that was established for postgraduate education at Hacettepe University (1967) and Middle East Technical University, Postgraduate Faculty of Education's Çukurova University Postgraduate School (Sağlam, 2010) have made great contribution to this field scientifically (cited in Demirhan-İşcan & Bıkmaz, 2012). The aim of Curriculum and Instruction department established in 1971 is "to train curriculum specialists for institutions of Ministry of National Education (MONE) giving formal education and sectors including educational unit. This department aims to train prospective teachers with theoretical and practical approaches in teacher development institutions." (Tanju, 1990). However, in 1997, Council of Higher Education (COHE) removed undergraduate programs in the field of Curriculum and Instruction in accordance with the decision of 04.11.1997 date and 97.39.2761 number, on the account of the fact that graduates of this program were mostly unemployed or had to work at jobs outside their fields (Gömleksiz & Bozpolat, 2013). Since 1997, all the divisions including Curriculum and Instruction in educational sciences department (except Counseling and Guidance) continued to function at only postgraduate education level.

Curriculum and Instruction (EPO), which is still a division within the educational sciences department in many universities having Faculty of Education, carries out educational and research studies with master and PhD programs at postgraduate level. Although Curriculum and Instruction (EPO) does not have an old history like other educational science disciplines, the number of postgraduate studies in this field is increasing rapidly (Bıkmaz, Aksoy, Tatar & Altınyüzük, 2013). As in other educational science disciplines, these postgraduate studies, dissertations (PhD theses) have a great contribution to the development of this field as a scientific discipline. In this respect, PhD students are expected to bring innovation to the science and carry out unique/original studies. Dissertations as scientific research papers are an indication of researcher's knowledge or competency in carrying out independent research and producing scientific knowledge that contributes to the development of target discipline (Tavşancıl et al, 2010).

It is seen that in the literature, similar studies in recent years (Özdemir & Arı, 2008; Saracaloğlu & Dursun, 2010; Bıkmaz et al, 2013; Gömleksiz & Bozpolat, 2013) was conducted concerning analysis of master theses or/and dissertations, and research trends in the field of Curriculum & Instruction (Ozan & Köse, 2014). Bıkmaz et al. (2013) analyzed dissertations completed in the field of Curriculum and Instruction between the dates 1974-2009 in terms of various aspects. However, it could not be reached any study focusing on dissertations in the field of Curriculum & Instruction since 2009. This demonstrates the need for determining the changes and trends in this field within recent years. In this respect, this study can be seen as a continuation and complementary of the study done by Bıkmaz et al. (2013).

The future of education or future education cannot be shaped by educational practices that have been inadequate in solving current education problems (Türk Eğitim Derneği, 2011). In order to look for the next century through the present century concerning education , it is necessary to review qualifications and principals that are required to play a role in the future of education (Erdem, 2012). So, to give direction to the future education, it is considered to examine the dissertations in the field of "Curriculum and Instruction" for putting forward the current situation.

The purpose and importance of the study

The purpose of this research is to analyze dissertations completed in the field of Curriculum and Instruction between the dates 2009-2014 in terms of various aspects such as university, year, research topic, method, design, sample type, sample size, data collection tools, data analysis techniques It is expected that the findings of this study will guide researchers and educators in that the knowledge about frequently preferred research topics, methods, designs, data collection tools, data analysis techniques etc. in the field of Curriculum & Instruction will lead them in determining the scope and methodology of their studies. Therefore, by determining current tendencies, shifts, topics, methods concerning the dissertations in the field of Curriculum & Instruction, this study has importance in terms of guiding researchers in this field, giving them the opportunity to make evaluation of the studies done, allowing them for self-criticism, directing them for further studies concerning what should be done by noticing deficiencies and needs in the field.

Method

This research is a qualitative study and is conducted with using document analysis which is one of the qualitative methods. Documents are an important source of information in qualitative researches and can include both public and private documents (Cresswell, 2005, p. 219). In this study, the documents are dissertations carried out in the field of Curriculum and Instruction between the dates 2009-2014 in accordance with the aims of this research.

Data Source

In order to determine the dissertations according to division included in this research, a comprehensive review was made through the thesis database of Council of Higher Education (COHE). Out of 165 dissertations, totally 121 dissertations were included in detailed analysis because 44 of them were unauthorized.

Analysis of Data

In the analysis of dissertations, as a data analysis technique of qualitative research method, content analysis was used. Content analysis is a data analysis technique in qualitative research that gives the researcher opportunity to study human behaviors indirectly through an analysis of usually written communication patterns (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012, p. 478). Since content analysis is usually used for the analysis of written texts such as interview transcripts, diaries or documents (Patton, 2002, p. 453), it is proper for the purpose of this study.

In order to analyze the dissertations included in this study, a content analysis form was prepared by the researchers. Since the results of this study will be compared to the results of dissertations between 1974-2009, in categorization of content analysis form, categories used in that study (Bıkmaz et al, 2013) were taken into consideration, but some other categories were also added. The categories were determined as university, year, research topic, method, design, sample type, sample size, data collection tools and data analysis techniques. Furthermore; in order to analyze curriculum evaluation studies; the categories such as curriculum evaluated, evaluation model, duration of the experiment etc. were used. Dissertations included in this study were coded based on content analysis form prepared by researchers and the findings were presented accordingly. Examples of category and coding for a better understanding of the data analysis are given in Table 1:

Table 1. Examples of Coding of the Dissertations

Category	Coding
Research method	Mixed – Quantitive - Qualitative
Research design	Survey/descriptive– Experimental - Qualitative

Firstly, approximately 20 (25 dissertations) percent of the dissertations were selected randomly. Then, these dissertations were coded according to content analysis form by two raters separately. In order to enable internal consistency in the study, the correspondence between two raters (intercoder reliability) was calculated by using the formula (reliability= number of agreements / total number of agreements + disagreements) suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994). As a result of calculation, it was found that intercoder agreement between two raters was found %96 which shows that correspondence of coding is quite high, because based on the size and range of the coding form; indercoder correspondence is expected to be in % 90 range (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 64). In addition, in the presentation of the data, descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages were used by using SPSS-18 program.

Results

Completion Year and University

The findings obtained from the dissertations are presented in the order of questions to be answered in this study. First of all, concerning university and completion year of the dissertations, it was found that out of 165 dissertations; 20 (%12,1) were completed in 2009, 26 (%15,8) in 2010, 25 (%15,2) in 2011, 32 (%19,4) in 2012, 44 (%26,7) in 2013 and 18 (%10,9) were completed in 2014. The number of the dissertations completed in the universities can be aligned from the highest number to the lowest one like that: 22 (%13,3) dissertations in Fırat University, 15 (%9,1) in Abant İzzet Baysal University, 14 (%8,5) for each in Anadolu and Middle East Technical University, 13 (7,9) in İnönü University, 11 (%6,7) for each in Hacettepe and Ankara University, 10 (%6,1) in Yıldız Technical University, 9 (%5,5) in Gazi University, 7 (%4,2) for each in Necmettin Erbakan and Adnan Menderes University, 6 (%3,6) in Selçuk University, 5 (%3,0) for each in Dokuz Eylül, Ege and Mersin University, 4 (%2,4) in Çukurova University, 3 (%1,8) in Atatürk University, 2 (%1,2) for each in Balıkesir and Dicle University.

Research Topics

Concerning 165 dissertations completed in 19 different universities, there are different kinds of topics studied. Research topics were determined based on dependent variable or variables in the dissertations. It was found that mostly preferred topics in dissertations in the field of Curriculum & Instruction between the dates 2009-2014 are teaching-learning approaches/ models/methods and techniques (%17,6) including blended learning, research-based learning, learning approaches, problem-based learning, lifelong learning, constructivism, mastery learning model, differentiated teaching methods etc.; evaluation of formal education curricula (%13,9) including evaluation of primary and secondary education curricula, English preparatory curriculum, post-graduate education and vocational high school curricula, medical ethics education curriculum; teaching-learning strategies/styles and their instruction (%12,7) including meta-cognitive teaching strategies, self-regulation strategies, teaching and learning styles/strategies, reading strategies etc.; evaluation of teacher education curricula and teacher development practices (%12,7) including evaluation of teacher education curricula, in-service training, comparative analyses of teacher education curricula and practices, teacher competencies, teacher education policies and model proposals for teacher education etc.; skills and their instruction (%9,1) including higher order thinking skills, critical thinking, reflective thinking, creative thinking etc.; education and information technologies (%7,9) including distance education, web-based teaching, multi-media learning, scenario-based teaching, e-learning etc. On the other hand, the least preferred topics are evaluation of informal education curricula, curriculum development studies, teaching-learning environment, special education (%1,8),

environmental education and other topics (%1,2) such as the intellectual bases of curriculum theory, the historical development of the primary school in Turkey, bilingual-bicultural education models.

Curriculum evaluation studies

It was found that out of 165 dissertations, in 37 dissertation curriculum evaluation was studied. Therefore, curriculum evaluation studies (evaluation of teacher education curricula, formal and informal education curricula) which are mostly studied in the dissertations (%22,4) were analyzed in terms of variables such as curriculum evaluated, evaluation model, design, duration of the experiment etc. Out of these 37 curriculum evaluation studies, 16 dissertations (%43,2) evaluated primary and secondary curricula (science and technology [2], technology and design, social sciences [2], English language [3], mathematics, physical education, primary and secondary curricula [2], life sciences [2], integrated curriculum implementation, civic issues and democracy education), 2 dissertations (%5,4) evaluated high school curricula (modular education program), 11 dissertations (%29,7) evaluated teacher education and teacher development curricula (pre-school education [2], teaching profession courses [2], primary school curriculum [2], professional development, pre-service teacher education, in-service training [2], teaching practice), 3 dissertations (%10,8) evaluated informal education curricula (Erasmus student mobility program, science and art centers' education curriculum, school support education), and medical ethics education, English preparatory education curriculum, post-graduate education curricula, vocational high school (tourism) curriculum, curriculum evaluation standards were studied in one dissertation for each. The content of 10 dissertations out of 37 was not accessed, because only 27 of them were authorized. So, out of 27 dissertations in which curriculum evaluation was studied, only 3 dissertations used one group pre-test – post-test design, in other 24 dissertations curricula were evaluated on the basis of target people' opinions (students, teachers, academicians, administrators etc.). Concerning the dissertations in which one group pre-test – post-test design was used, in one of them, one unit was evaluated, achievement test and interview form were used as data collection tools; in one of them, school support education continuing during 12 weeks was evaluated, achievement test and interview form were used as data collection tools; in one of them, English curriculum was evaluated, observation was made during 12 weeks, placement test, interview form, observation form, scale and survey were used as data collection tools. Concerning the dissertations in which curricula were evaluated on the basis of target people' opinions; in 11 dissertations, survey/scale and interview form were used for data collection; in 9 dissertations only quantitive data collection tools (survey, scale, evaluation form) were used; in 2 dissertations, survey, interview form and observation form were used for data collection; in 2 dissertations, only qualitative data collection tools (interview form, observation form, document analysis) were used. Out of 27 dissertations, in 8 dissertations curriculum evaluation models (CIPP (context-input-process-product) evaluation model [3], Tyler and Eisner evaluation model, standard-based and Stake's responsive evaluation, Erden's program evaluation model, Provus's discrepancy evaluation model, Hammond model) were used, in other 19 dissertations any curriculum evaluation model wasn't used.

Research Designs

In the dissertations, it was found that there are different kinds of research designs such as experimental, survey, phenomenology, action research, case study etc., but they were categorized as survey/descriptive, experimental and qualitative designs in that study. In terms of research designs; in most of the dissertations survey /descriptive designs (%56,2) were preferred, it is followed by experimental designs (%30,6) and qualitative designs (%13,2) respectively.

Dissertations with experimental designs

In the dissertations in which experimental designs were used, the experiments were mostly conducted with secondary school students (%43,2 /16 dissertations) and university students (%40,5 /15 dissertations). On the other hand, four of them were conducted with primary school students (%10,8), one with bank employee and one with teachers (%2,7). In terms of subject area, it was found that the experiments were conducted in diverse subjects such as the courses concerning information

technologies, computer programming, communication etc. (%18,9 /7 dissertations), science and technology (%16,2 /6 dissertations), social sciences (%13,5 /5 dissertations), English (%10,8 /4 dissertations), mathematics (%8,1 /3 dissertations), Turkish (%8,1 /3 dissertations), pedagogic courses for prospective teachers (%8,1 /3 dissertations), teaching of learning strategies (%2,7 /1 dissertation), in-service training program (%2,7 /1 dissertation), integrated program (%2,7 /1 dissertation), graph and animation (%2,7 /1 dissertation), and values education (%2,7 /1 dissertation). In terms of duration of the experiments, it was found that most of the experiments lasted between 4 and 8 weeks (%45,9 /17 dissertations), some of them lasted between 9 and 13 weeks (%18,9 /7 dissertations), some of them lasted between 14 weeks and more (%18,9 /7 dissertations), and a few of them lasted between 2 weeks and less (%10,8 /4 dissertations).

Research Methods

In terms of the research method, it was found that the most used research method is mixed method (%51,2), followed by quantitive (%34,7) and qualitative method (%14,0), respectively.

Sample Types (Target Sample)

In terms of target sample, it was found that there are diverse sample types. It was found that mostly preferred sampling types [target sample] are teachers in 41 dissertations (%33,9), undergraduate students in 39 dissertations (%32,2), secondary school [5-8] students in 35 dissertations (%28,9) and academicians in 22 dissertations (%18,2). On the other hand, the number of dissertations that are conducted with high school (9-12) students (%2,5-3 dissertations) and post-graduate students (%0,8-1 dissertation) are quite low.

Sample Sizes in Terms of Research Designs

In the dissertations, it was found that sample sizes differ according to research design used. In terms of sample size, it was found that in descriptive studies sample size is generally "above 1000" (%35,3), in experimental studies sample size is mostly between 31-100 (%75,7) and in qualitative studies sample size is mostly under 100 (%93,7).

Data Collection Tools in Dissertations

In terms of data collection tools used in dissertations, the most used tools are scale/inventory used in 74 dissertations (%55,4), interview form in 65 (%53,7), survey in 39 (%32,2), achievement tests in 36 (%29,8) and observation form in 23 dissertations (%19,0). The least used data collection tools are mostly qualitative tools such as journals (%6,6), video-audio records (%5,8), study/evaluation notes/reports (%4,9) and scenario-performance tasks (4,1).

Data Analysis Techniques in Dissertations

The data collected with these tools were analyzed with different data analysis techniques. In terms of data analysis techniques used in dissertations, mostly preferred techniques are one variable analyses-correlational analyses-qualitative analyses together in 52 dissertations (%43,0), one variable analyses-correlational analyses together in 34 (%28,1), and qualitative analyses in 18 dissertations (%14,9). The least preferred data analysis technique is inferential analyses only (%0,8). One variable analyses refer to frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation etc.; correlational analyses refer to correlation, chi-square, t-test, Anova, Manova, Kruskas Wallis etc.; inferential analyses refer to regression, path analysis, structural equality model etc; qualitative analyses refer to descriptive and content analysis (Karasar, 2013).

Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions

Concerning the dissertations in the field of Curriculum and Instruction between the dates 2009-2014, it is seen that the number of dissertations completed at Fırat University and Abant İzzet Baysal University respectively is higher than Middle East Technical University, Hacettepe and Ankara University which is quite interesting comparing with the results of 1974-2009 (Bıkmaz et al, 2013) in which the dissertations have highest numbers in Middle East Technical University, Ankara and Hacettepe University. So, it can be said that between the dates 2009-2014 more dissertations were completed in developing universities such as Fırat and Abant İzzet Baysal University; the number of dissertations completed in developed universities such as Middle East Technical University, Hacettepe and Ankara University has decreased. Concerning the number of dissertations in terms of year, it is seen that the number of dissertations is increasing from 2009 to 2013. Similarly, in the study of Bıkmaz et al (2013), it was found that most of the dissertations were completed in last ten years (1999-2009). It is somewhat because of the fact that the number of institutes having PhD programs in the field of Curriculum and Instruction has increased in last two decades. And, in the study by Tavşancıl et al (2010) concerning investigation of theses completed at the institutes of educational sciences, it was found that the number of dissertations in 2009 is nearly 9 times more than dissertations completed in 2000. According to OSYM data, the number of PhD. degree graduates is 676 in 1983, 1.365 in 1992, 2.472 in 2002 and 4.506 in 2012 (YÖK, 2014). So, it can be concluded as in the increase within recent years in the number of individuals taking post-graduate education, there is a increase in the number of people taking post-graduate education in the field of Curriculum and Instruction.

Concerning the research topics in dissertations in the field of Curriculum & Instruction between the dates 2009-2014, it was found that mostly preferred topics are teaching-learning approaches/ models/methods and techniques, evaluation of formal education curricula, evaluation of teacher education curricula and teacher development practices, teaching-learning strategies/styles and their instruction, the skills and their instruction (critical thinking, reflective thinking, creative thinking, problem solving etc.), education and information technologies, respectively. The researches (Saracaloğlu & Dursun, 2010; Bıkmaz et al, 2013; Gömleksiz & Bozpolat, 2013; Ozan & Köse, 2014) on analysis of theses or articles in the field of Curriculum and Instruction reported similar results. On the other hand, the least preferred topics are evaluation of informal education curricula, curriculum development studies, teaching-learning environment, special education and environmental education. But, compared to results of dissertations between 1974-2009, it is seen that there is an increase in the topics such as teaching-learning strategies/styles-their instruction and education/information technologies. It may be because of the fact that the use of technology in education has gained more importance and individual differences such as students' learning strategies and learning styles have been given more importance in recent years. Similar to the new trends in education around the world, Ministry of National Education (MONE) has emphasized the objectives concerning higher order thinking skills, usage of teaching-learning approaches/ models/methods and techniques in the curricula. So, this may have effect on the topics intensively studied in the dissertations.

In 2005-2006, MONE made dramatical changes in curricula; new curricula were developed and implemented in total education system. Therefore, there has been dramatical increase in curriculum evaluation studies since 2009. It was found that out of 165 dissertations, in 37 dissertation curriculum evaluation was studied. Similarly Gömleksiz and Bozpolat (2013) reported curriculum evaluation studies as the most preferred topic in their study concerning analysis of master theses and dissertations in the field of Curriculum and Instruction. However, in the study conducted by Altın (2004) investigating master theses in the field of C&I between the years 1985-2002, it was found that curriculum evaluation was not studied enough. So, it can be said that especially in the last decade curriculum evaluation studies were more preferred by the researchers which is quite promising for the development of effective curriculum studies. Out of these 37 curriculum evaluation studies, 16 dissertations evaluated primary and secondary curricula, 11 dissertations evaluated teacher education

and teacher development curricula, 3 dissertations evaluated informal education curricula and 2 dissertations evaluated high school curricula. So, similar to the results of dissertations between 1974-2009 (Bıkmaz et al, 2013), it can be said that there is a need for evaluating the effectiveness of high school curricula, pre-school curricula and post-graduate education curricula because there are so few or no dissertation concerning these kinds of curricula.

Out of 27 dissertations authorized in which curriculum evaluation was studied, only 3 dissertations used one group pre-test – post-test design, in other 24 dissertations curriculum was evaluated on the basis of target people' opinions (students, teachers, academicians, administrators etc.). Although the discipline of curriculum evaluation emerged in order to solve the problems arising during the implementation of the curriculum, experimental studies are quite rare (Lewy, 1977, p. 9). This situation is in line with the results of this study. So, it can be said that there is a need for more experimental studies in curriculum evaluation, because experimental studies in curriculum evaluation will provide more robust evidence about the effectiveness of curricula in practice and will shed light on the development of more effective programs by determining the problems encountered in implementation of the curriculum, what kind of shortcomings that the curriculum has and what should be done in the curriculum.

It was found that in most of the dissertations concerning curriculum evaluation, survey/scale and interview form was used together or only survey/scale /evaluation form were used for data collection. As in most of these studies observational data and objective achievement tests aren't used, it can be seen as a shortcoming of these studies. The dissertation in which interview form, observation form, scale and survey are used together is only one. So, it can said that as the usage of different kinds of data collection tools in a study increases the validity and reliability of the findings, both observational data, judgmental data and students' products should be included in the studies for comprehensive evaluation. Besides, out of 27 dissertations, in only 8 dissertations curriculum evaluation models were used. Therefore, it can be concluded that researchers usually prefer eclectic evaluation rather than depending on a particular curriculum evaluation model. Although eclectic approach has a limitation in itself depending on researcher's knowledge and experience, it can be more convenient to combine elements from different approaches in accordance with the aims of the research instead of using an available approach, because the researchers' adhering to a single model may prevent a more comprehensive evaluation by limiting the researcher. In addition, it can be said that Stufflebeam's CIPP model (context, input, process, product) was preferred more than others because of the fact that this model allows a clear, comprehensive and systematic evaluation by evaluating context, input, process and product steps separately.

In terms of research design, it was found that in most of the dissertations survey /descriptive design was preferred, followed by experimental design and qualitative designs respectively. The researches (Altın, 2004; Saracaloğlu & Dursun, 2010; Tavşancıl et al, 2010; Gömleksiz & Bozpolat, 2013; Ozan & Köse, 2014) on analysis of master theses/dissertations or articles in the field of Curriculum and Instruction/Educational Sciences reported similar results. However, in their study concerning the dissertations between 1974-2009, Bıkmaz et al (2013) found that between the years 1974-1982 most of the dissertations were in descriptive design, between the years 1983-1998 the number of experimental studies increased dramatically, between the years 1999-2009 there was diversity in research designs, but descriptive and experimental designs were preferred to a great extent. And, it was found that approximately half of the dissertations were in experimental design and the other half were in descriptive design. So, considering the results of this study (%56,2 descriptive, %30,6 experimental), it can be said that between the years 2009-2014 there is a decrease in the number of experimental designs. Also, the numbers of dissertations using qualitative designs are quite low compared to descriptive and experimental designs. This may be the case because both implementation and data analysis of qualitative designs are more time-consuming and laborious compared to descriptive designs in which the researcher can reach more people in a shorter time.

Furthermore, in the dissertations in which experimental design was used, the experiments were mostly conducted with secondary school students and university students. However, Bıkmaz et al (2013) found that the experiments were mostly conducted with primary school students and university students. So, it can be concluded that there is a tendency towards secondary school curricula and practices in last five years. In terms of subject area, it was found that the experiments were conducted in diverse subjects such as the courses concerning information technologies, computer programming, communication etc., science and technology, social sciences, English, mathematics, Turkish, pedagogic courses for prospective teachers, teaching of learning strategies, in-service training program, integrated program, graph and animation and values education, respectively.

In terms of the research method, it was found that the most used research method is mixed method followed by quantitive and qualitative method respectively. On the other hand, in their study concerning the dissertations between 1974-2009, Bıkmaz et al (2013) found that the most used research method is quantitive method (%55,9) followed by mixed (%36) and qualitative method (%8,1), respectively. They found that mixed method increased in recent years to a great extent and between the years 1999-2009 got closer to the quantitive method. Furthermore, Tavşancıl et al (2010) found that in the dissertations completed at the institutes of educational sciences, the most used research method is quantitive method (%69,89) followed by mixed (%17,74) and qualitative method (%12,37), respectively. So, it can be said that in the dissertations in the field of C&I between the years 2009-2014, mixed method was preferred more than ever. Since integrating both quantitive and qualitative methods provides research problems and questions to be better understood compared to single method researches (Creswell, 2014, p. 215), it is significant for mixed method being the most preferred research method. Bıkmaz et al (2013) found that there wasn't any dissertation using qualitative design before 1980, so it is promising that now there is diversity in the dissertations in terms of research methods, but qualitative designs are still too rare in the dissertations. Similarly Saban (2009), Saban et al (2010) found that the use of qualitative designs in the studies of educational sciences is not at a sufficient level. This may be the case because in Turkey most of post-graduate education curricula don't include courses concerning qualitative research methods, so researchers do not have enough knowledge and skills in qualitative research methods. Furthermore, qualitative designs require more time and effort in both data collection and analysis. Therefore, the number of dissertations that qualitative method is used should be increased for deeper and more comprehensive researches especially for case and phenomenological studies that require deeper understanding.

Concerning sample types used in dissertations, it was found that mostly preferred sampling types [target sample] are teachers, undergraduate students, secondary school [5-8] students and academicians. Some researches (Gömleksiz & Bozpolat, 2013; Ozan & Köse, 2014) on dissertations/articles in the field of C&I reported similar results. It can be concluded that there is a tendency towards teacher education and teacher development in recent years. Also, data collection from undergraduate students is easier for the researchers. Bıkmaz et al (2013) found that mostly preferred sampling types are undergraduate students and elementary school students. So, it can be concluded that there are more dissertations concerning secondary school [5-8] students than primary school students since 2009. On the other hand, the number of dissertations conducted with high school [9-12] students and post-graduate students are quite low. These results show that there is a need for studies at lower levels such as pre-school and early years in primary education, high school levels as well as post-graduate education levels.

In terms of data collection tools used in dissertations, the most used tools are scale/inventory, interview form, survey, achievement tests and observation form, respectively. Similarly, as the most used tools, Saracaloğlu and Dursun (2010), Ozan and Köse (2014) and Gömleksiz and Bozpolat (2013) reported survey, scale, achievement test; Bıkmaz et al (2013) reported tests; Karadağ (2011) reported scale and interview form as the most used tools in dissertations in the field of educational sciences. The usage of data collection tools in the dissertations may be related to research methods preferred.

Furthermore, it was found that in most of the dissertations one type or two different types of data collection tools were used and in a few dissertations five and more different types of data collection tools were used. Although they are not so many, it is promising that different kinds of data collection methods are used at the same dissertation. Because, when a conclusion is supported by using data collected from a variety of different instruments, its validity is increased (Fraenkel et al, 2012, p. 458).

Evaluation of the dissertations in the field of "Curriculum and Instruction" within "Future Education" context

Creating a better future in social, cultural and economic sense can be achieved by a more innovative approach and innovative applications in all areas of education (Türk Eğitim Derneği, 2011). When assessing the current state of Curriculum and Instruction field according to the results of the research, it can suggested that dissertations should be in a way that contributes to the theory of the field, because it is seen that the dissertations cannot provide a theoretical contribution to the field and cannot put forward a new model. Therefore, in future education, it is required that postgraduate studies in the field of "Curriculum and Instruction" should contribute to the development of the field and application of more innovative educational practices. In addition, it is noticed that in dissertations, there is a emphasis on specific topics (teaching-learning approaches/models/methods and techniques, program evaluation studies, teaching-learning strategies/styles and their instruction etc.), they are mostly carried out on specific samples (teachers, undergraduate students, secondary education students etc.), certain programs (primary and secondary education programs, teacher education programs etc.) are evaluated and some areas are ignored. Therefore, for the improvement of Curriculum and Instruction field in the future, it is suggested that in the dissertations, research topics such as curriculum development studies, teaching-learning environment, special education, environmental education, values education, evaluation of high school curricula, pre-school curricula and post-graduate education curricula should be studied. The variables that effect success of pre-school, high-school, and post-graduate students may be studied. In curriculum evaluation studies, experimental designs should be preferred more in order to deal with practical problems in the field of curriculum development and evaluation.

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