

The Examination of Turkish Pre-service Teachers' Attitudes to the Functionality of Field Knowledge Courses and the Efficiency of Courses' Content, Material and Range of Theory-Practice Distributions Regarding Various Variables

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Abstract

In the present study, it is aimed to estimate the views of the pre-service teachers on the functionality of the "Field Knowledge Courses" (FKC), taught in the recent Turkish Education Undergraduate Program (TEUP) in 2006-2007 academic year, in their professional life, content (topic, scope), material (book, article, etc.) and on the efficiency in the range of theory-practice distributions. 605 pre-service teachers, senior students from the department of Turkish Education, at the Faculty of Education of 14 universities participated to this study. This study was designed in the format of general survey model. The data collected through "The Attitude Scale of Turkish Candidate Teachers' Field and Professional Knowledge Courses" was applied in the study and the collected data was analyzed at SPSS 17 software. In the study, in respect to the views of the pre-service teachers, it was found that FKC was at a high level functionally, at an average level in content, and at a low level in material and theory-practice distributions. Also, it was revealed that the views of pre-service teachers on the FKC showed significant differences depending on the universities they are from. On the other hand, it was stated that the general grade-point average was not a significant predictor in the views of the Turkish pre-service teachers' about the FKC.

Key Words

Turkish Teaching, Field Education, Turkish Teaching Program.

Education programs make up the basis of the education systems of countries because the question of how a person will be educated is answered in the education programs (Yüksel, 2003).

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"The generally known issue in teacher training is to teach pre-service teachers with pedagogical and professional knowledge, and to make them gain general culture and teaching skills. Discussions and applications should be about how these will happen, how much and in which level the related knowledge and skills will be given." (Okçabol, 2005, p. 17).

Nowadays, teachers in learning-teaching process have gained new roles, and the ideas in the past that teachers were the Center of the knowledge and the only one transferring it have changed due to new trends (Temizyürek, 2008). From now on, teach-

ers are the one teaching how to reach the knowledge and how to learn, rather than transferring the knowledge itself. In that sense, the education of pre-service teachers has gained importance and the search on the new approaches on the teacher education programs became necessary. (Yükseköğretim Kurulu [YÖK]-Dünya Bankası, 1998) Since 1998-1999 academic year, restructuring processes at Faculties of Education by YÖK have started (YÖK, 2007a). In that sense, the teacher education programs' efficiencies on the training teachers having knowledge and skills parallel with the era they have lived in, and suggestions on problem-solving have been discussed in the studies on the teacher education programs which were restructured in the 1998-1999 academic year; and also they have been based on the scientific research data and experts' views in the related field.

The most provoking power in the revision and reorganized of the program is the program change at the primary school curriculum applied at the beginning of the 2003-2004 academic year by National Education Ministry (YÖK, 2007b). In parallel to this change, from the 2006-2007 academic year on, the first teachers from the new TEUP graduated in 2009-2010 academic year having been educated in the Field Education, Professional Education, and General Culture Courses.

Related to this, it is seen that the theory and practice discrimination at the new TEUP of the courses, 162 hours in total, are based on theory in 79 % and practice in 21%. On the other hand, when Professional Education, Field Education and General Cultures courses are analyzed according to the content discriminations, 12 of 59 different courses are Professional Education, 33 are Field Education courses, and 14 are General Culture Courses. The total course discrimination adds up to 55, 9 % of the FKC.

The problems in TEUP on the functionality, the content (topic, scope), the material efficiency (book, article, etc.), and the theory-practice distributions of FKC, the determination of these problems and solutions to these problems, reorganizations in the programs, are important to increase the professional efficiency of the pre-service teachers.

Generally, when teacher education in Turkey, more specifically teacher education programs and their applications in Turkey are observed (Aşkın, 2002; Büyükkaragöz, 1987; Coşkun, 2005; Çifçi, 2011; Çoban, 1999; Gerger, 1986; Güzel, 2003a, 2003b; Kırkkılıç & Akyol, 2007; Uçgun, 2006; Yıldız, 2010), it can be stated that teacher education and Turkish teacher education programs are better

when compared to the previous programs and applications even though there are still a number of deficiencies.

Even though it is expected that all variations and innovation studies in an education system would result in the education of successful future-oriented applications of the teachers (Varış, 1973), it is also a fact that the content of TEUP in teaching Turkish as a native language has a determining characteristic in Turkish teacher training. The content which is thought in every phase in the formation of the education-teaching programs is necessary for a qualified education-teaching (Çoban, 2010).

Method

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to determine the views of the Turkish pre-service teachers considering the content of the FKC on the functionality of the courses for professional life and the efficiency levels of these courses in various dimensions.

Research Design

It is a descriptive study designed in general survey model with the purpose of "the examination of the views of Turkish pre-service teachers' about FKC". The research was designed qualitatively and the scale was used under the consideration of the general searching method among the descriptive research models. In the searching model, a statement is analysed as it is, and this model is used for the discovery, description and explanation (Rubin & Babbie, 1997). The general searching model is the study of searching on a whole universe or a group, sample or sampling with the purpose of reaching a general idea on a universe being formed by a number of people (Karasar, 2009).

Population and Sampling

The universe of this study is all pre-service teachers, in other words, senior students studying at the department of Turkish Education at public universities in Turkey; the sampling of the study is 605 pre-service teachers, senior students in the department of Turkish Education, at the Faculty of Education of total 14 universities. According to Young (1968), a sufficient sampling is the sampling that provides people with reliable results. The universe's representation strength of the data collected from 605 pre-service teachers is 99 % at the reliability space and

5% mistake rate. If the unit at the normal scatter is ± 2.59 , it includes 99 % of the whole scatter (Erkuş, 2005). Regarding this knowledge, 99 % reliability level and 5% mistake rate, it can be stated that the sampling, 605 people, has a representation strength of a universe including nearly 10.000 people, and it can be said that this rate is sufficient to fulfill the aim of the study. In the research, the general grade-point average is transferred according to the table “*4'lük Sistemdeki Notların 100'lük Sistemdeki Karşılıkları*” (YÖK, 2008) and the dispersion based on the transferred scores are stated at the Table 4.

Instrument

The data collection tool of the study is the “*The Attitude Scale of Turkish Candidate Teachers' Field and Professional Knowledge Courses*” developed by Özkan (2010). In the first part of the scale, there are 64 items that determine the functionality of the FKÇ in their professional life by regarding the views of the pre-service teachers on, content (topic, scope), material (book, article, etc.), and the efficiency in the range of theory-practice distributions. After factor analysis was used to analyze the collected data, it was found the KMO value of 64 items was “.846”. As a result of the reliability analysis in the determination of the reliability of the scale, it was found that the Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency was “.931”.

Validity and Reliability Values

The validity and reliability values of the scale is analyzed by the data collected from the group. In the validity study of the scale, Basic Component Analysis was used in the scope of Exploratory Factor Analysis. Factor analysis is a statistical analysis used to determine the number and factor loads of the independent variables explaining a variable which is dependent on more than one variable (Gömleksiz, 1996). The relations among all variables are examined in the analysis. Based on the relations, the data are presented briefly in a meaningful way (Balci, 2001).

Considering the knowledge stated above, factor analysis is applied to the scale. The factor load value of the items, “.45” or higher than “.45” is a good measurement (Büyükoztürk, 2010). According to the result of the factor analysis on 64 items, the range of the factor loads of all items are “.452-.837”. To determine the factor values of the items, factor rotation table (Rotated Component Matrix) is used. For Büyükoztürk (2010), a researcher can do rotation to supply “independence, clarity and meaningfulness in interpretation” of the items in a factor analysis.

To measure the adequacy of the sampling for the factor analysis, the application of KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) test is necessary. If the KMO value is close to 1.00, it is thought that the application of the factor analysis for the sampling is suitable (Bayram, 2004). If the KMO value is lower than 0.50, the application of the factor analysis to the related sampling is not suitable. To measure the adequacy of the group to which the factor analysis is applied, KMO test is used and the KMO value of the 64 items is found “.846”. Bartlett's Test Value given with the KMO value is 21777,297 ($p = .000$).

According to the results of the factor analysis, the real value of the 64 items is stated as collected under 7 factors that are higher than 1. The common variance of the 7 factors (communalities) is observed between “.532-.817”, and the total variance of the factors related with the scale is 68,459 %. In this sense, it is observed that the 7 factors related to the scale explain most of the variance.

Data Analysis Methods

SPSS 17 was used to analyze the collected data of the research. The data was analyzed through one way ANOVA, simple linear regression analysis, frequency and percentage analysis in descriptive statistics.

Results

Findings for the First Sub-Problem

61,16 % of the Turkish pre-service teachers (370) thought FKÇ functional at a high level while 44,30 % of them (268) thought FKÇ at an average level in content, and 44,46 % of them appreciated the course efficiency at a low level in material. In addition to these findings, it was seen that 35,37 % of the pre-service teachers (214) found four courses (*Input Techniques [Reading-Listening], Output Techniques [Writing-Speaking], Writing Techniques, Theatre and Drama Applications*), included in the practice process of FKÇ efficiency at a low level in terms of theory-practice process, and also it was found out that 34,88 % of the pre-service teachers (211) thought the courses were efficient at an average level in terms of theory-practice process.

Findings for the Second Sub-Problem

The Turkish pre-service teachers, by regarding the functionality of the FKÇ in their professional life by regarding the views of the pre-service teachers

on, content (topic, scope), material (book, article, etc.), and the efficiency in the range of theory-practice distributions, under seven sub dimensions, were considered to have positive attitudes to the stated courses according to the universities they have studied, the arithmetic means (\bar{X}) and the standard deviation (S). It can be stated that *Nigde University*, considering the views on *grammar/linguistics courses related with the field*; *Canakkale and Nigde University*, considering the views on *main language skill courses*; *Kırıkkale and Mustafa Kemal University*, considering the views on *literature courses supporting the field*; *Kırıkkale University*, considering the views on *literature courses related with the field*; *Cumhuriyet University*, considering the views on *skill courses supporting the field*; and *Mustafa Kemal University*, considering the views on *grammar/linguistics courses supporting the field*, have more positive attitudes.

Findings for the Third Sub-Problem

In the study, it can be stated that the general grade-point average was not a significant predictor in the Turkish pre-service teachers' views on functionality and efficiency of the FKC, and pre-service teachers' views, examined by general grade-point average and seven different dimensions, have a relation at a low level (almost zero) on the relationship between functionality and efficiency of FKC.

Discussions

Discussion for the First Sub-Problem

In data analysis results of the first sub-problem, it was stated that 60 % of Turkish pre-service teachers found the FKC of the recent TEUP *functional at a high level*. In Temizkan's (2008) research on 160 Turkish pre-service teachers at the former TEUP in 2005-2006 academic year, it was assigned that the pre-service students thought that the number of the field courses was high. The finding that the course contents in the recent TEUP were determined as highly functional by the pre-service teachers is a positive development. On the contrary to these positive attitudes to the recent TEUP, it was found that pre-service teachers thought that *Ottoman Turkish* course at the FKC was not functional. When the total dispersion of the pre-service teachers thinking that *Old Turkish Literature* and *Teaching Turkish to the Foreign Students* were not functional and nearly functional, was issued, these two courses have some deficiencies (Özkan & Şahbaz, 2011).

It was determined that 40 % of the pre-service teachers found FKC efficient at an average rate in terms of content. According to Özkan and Şahbaz (2011), the content of *Phonetics* course in the program was almost efficient however; *Ottoman Turkish* and *Teaching Turkish to the Foreign Students* courses were not efficient. Even though the pre-service teachers found FKC efficient in terms of content, it was stated that *Morphology, Vocabulary, Syntax, Writing, Speaking, Literature and Theory, General Linguistics, Old Turkish Literature, World Literature, Turkish Course Book Analysis and Language and Culture* courses were lacking richer contents. On the other hand, 38,3 % of the pre-service teachers were seen efficient at the low level in terms of material. In the previous studies on the efficiency of FKC in terms of material in the literature, it was emphasized that *Syntax, Writing, Speaking, Literature and Theory, Turkish Folk Literature and World Literature* courses were almost efficient; *Phonetics, Morphology, Vocabulary, Ottoman Turkish, General Linguistics, Old Turkish Literature, Turkish Course Book Analysis, Teaching Turkish to the Foreign Students* courses were not efficient. It was found out that *New Turkish Literature, Child Literature, and Language and Culture* courses had some deficiencies. Lastly, it was revealed that 27,8 % of the pre-service teachers found the four courses based on both theory and practice among FKC, (*Input Techniques [Reading-Listening], Output Techniques [Writing-Speaking], Writing Techniques, Theatre and Drama Applications*) efficient at very low levels in terms of theory-practice process.

The negative perception towards the content can be said to be the result of the deficiency of the material. Durukan and Maden (2011) reached the result in his research that there should be restructuring in the content of the courses.

According to Özkan and Şahbaz (2011), the theory-practice discrimination of the courses out of *Theatre and Drama Applications* was found to be inadequate by pre-service teachers. When the discrimination of *Writing Techniques, Comprehension Techniques (Reading and Listening) and Output Techniques (Writing and Speaking)* courses were investigated, it was seen that the theory-practice discrimination of these courses had some inadequacies as well.

According to Durukan and Maden (2011), theory and the other applications should be reconstructed properly in regards to the aims of the Turkish teacher training, and in that sense, the revision of PCKC in theory and practice processes should be considered.

Discussion for the Second Sub-Problem

While there are not any significant differences in the Turkish pre-service teachers' views on the *courses supporting the main language skills* in terms of universities pre-service teachers study, there are significant differences in the Turkish pre-service teachers' views on the *grammar/linguistics courses related with the field, main language skills courses, literature courses supporting the field, literature courses related with the field, skill courses supporting the field, and grammar/linguistics courses supporting the field.*

Discussion for the Third Sub-Problem

In the study, it was lastly stated that the pre-service teachers' general grad-point averages were not significant predictors of their views on functionality and efficiency of the *grammar/linguistics courses related with the field, main language skills courses, literature courses supporting the field, literature courses related with the field, skill courses supporting the field, and grammar/linguistics courses supporting the field.*

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