

# What is the Purpose of the Theses Addressing the Issue of Program Evaluation in Turkey? (The Case of Curriculum and Instruction: 1997-2015)

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## Abstract

In the current study, the aim is to investigate the theses addressing the issue of program evaluation in the field of Curriculum and Instruction (C&I) in 1997-2015. The study employed the survey model. The universe of the study consists of totally 87 theses addressing the issue of program evaluation in the field of C&I in 1997-2015. As the data collection instrument of the study, the document analysis technique was used in the current study. The master's and doctorate theses to be analyzed in the current study were obtained by writing "curriculum and instruction" in the search engine of the national thesis center of the Council of Higher Education. The data collected in the study were analyzed by using NVivo10.0. program package through content analysis. The findings of the analysis revealed that nearly half of the theses addressed the issue of program evaluation in elementary education and the other half dealt with program evaluation in other levels of schooling (higher education, high school education, in-service training, pre-school education, adult education, special education). The number of theses addressing program evaluation within the context of in-service training, pre-school education, adult education and special education is quite small. Another important finding of the study is the paucity of the studies aiming to investigate/evaluate hidden curriculum in all the levels of schooling.

**Keywords:** program evaluation, curriculum development, curriculum and instruction, master and doctorate theses

## 1. Introduction

In the information age in which fast changes have been observed in political, social and cultural fields, it is inevitable for education to be affected from the change and transformation waves of globalization. What is expected from education today is to function as an institution adapting to technological changes on the one hand and coming up with solutions to social problems caused by globalization on the other. That is, the role assigned to education is to train mentally, socially, psychologically, ethically and emotionally healthy individuals. Realization of the expectations from education depends on the effects of the elements of the teacher, the student and the curriculum. Yet, the influence of the curriculum seems to be relatively stronger as the behaviors to be imparted to students are stated in curriculums and all the educational activities are carried out as stated in the curriculum. In this regard, for the implemented curriculums to be effective all the obstacles and shortcomings should be eliminated and the curriculums should be designed considering the contemporary developments and changes and the philosophical, historical, psychological and societal background of the nation (Erden, 1998); in short, existing programs should be developed.

Questioning of the effectiveness of a program; namely, evaluation of it, is the starting point for the development of this program (Gözütok, 1999). Therefore, evaluation giving direction to the development process and ensuring its continuity should be integrated into the program development process from the beginning to the end (Varış, 1998).

Program evaluation is defined in different ways in the literature. The most widely known definition is provided by Tyler (1950). Tyler (1950) defined program evaluation as the determination of the extent to which educational objectives have been accomplished (cited by Brinkerhoff et al., 1983). The definition of program evaluation supported by the pioneers of the field such as Lee Cronbach (1963), Dan Stufflebeam (1971) or Marvin Alkin (1969) is the provision of information for decision making (Brinkerhoff et al., 1983). Ornstein and Hunkins (2009), in a similar manner, defined program evaluation as the process of supplying the data required to make alternative decisions and interpretation of

these decisions. Erden (1998) offered a more extensive definition of it by stating that it is a process of collecting data by means of various measurement instruments about the effectiveness of educational programs, interpretation of the collected data on the basis of some criteria and making decisions about the effectiveness of the program (Erden, 1998). Stressing that socio-political and psychological values and human qualifications should be taken into consideration in program evaluation, Urevbu (1991) defined program evaluation as the questioning and interpretation of all the dimensions of the program in terms of their contribution to the success of the program (Urevbu, 1991, cited by Gözütok, 1999).

Program evaluation generally involves the information used in making decisions for the acceptance, change or elimination of the program-based educational resources. The results of the evaluation provide information for program development specialists to decide whether to keep the program as it is, to revise it or to start a new phase (Demirel, 2004). Scriven (1991) states that program evaluation serves diverse purposes but its main goal is to elicit the value and adequacy of the program. Furst (1965) maintains that the main goal of program evaluation is to determine the extent of the effectiveness of the program and to provide the data required for the development of the program (cited by Bilen, 2002). In addition to this, it also aims to determine whether the program works in practice, the aspects that need to be changed, effectiveness of the existing program, whether the products of schools are successful in higher education and business life and whether the cost of the program is feasible (Oliva, 2009). Furthermore, program evaluation serves various purposes ranging from providing viewpoints about how to develop the program to the presentation of evidence about the effectiveness and efficiency obtained from the program (Klenowski, 2010).

In Turkey, professional attempts to develop programs were first observed in 1922. In 1922, a program was developed for elementary and secondary education and expert opinions were sought to be informed about the critics of the program. In 1934, the First School Curriculum developed in 1926 was revised and developed in line with the contemporary requirements. In this way, first evaluation attempt to develop an existing program was partially made. The first example of the program evaluation constructed on a scientific base was first experienced in 1944. In this year, opinions were gathered from teachers, elementary school inspectors and district directors of national education and investigation committees were established for the integration and development of urban and rural schools (Gözütok, 2003). In 1952, K.V. Wofford came to Turkey and evaluated the curriculums of village schools as an expert. In the same year, 25 teachers were sent to America to investigate the educational applications in America and when they came back to Turkey, they prepared "Bolu Village Trial Schools Plan" (Gözütok, 2003). The program plan they prepared was decided to be piloted in Bolu and Istanbul for a year and then to be implemented across Turkey (Yüksel, 2003). The most remarkable work in the field of program evaluation is the evaluation of 1948 elementary school program conducted by a commission in 1964 and approval of 1968 Elementary School Program Scheme (Gözütok, 2003). Another development making contribution to the execution of program evaluation in a planned way is the construction of a program evaluation model in 1982. It was decided that this model would be tried for a year, then evaluated and developed based on the results of the evaluation (Yüksel, 2003). In 1993, a new program development model was established by The National Education Office of Research and Development of Education. In the last phase of this model, program evaluation was included (Gözütok, 2003). In order to facilitate the piloting of the developed programs, Curriculum Laboratory Schools were set up within the framework of the Project of Developing National Education in 1994. It was decided that the developed programs would be tried and evaluated in these schools (Yüksel, 2003). When the literature on program development in education is examined, it is seen that since the foundation of the Republic, some research has been conducted in the field of program evaluation together with program development research. However, this research mostly focused on the evaluation of pilot programs up to 2000. As not all dimensions of piloting programs were evaluated, such works are not considered to be complete evaluation works (Selvi, 1996).

The most recent development experienced in the field of program evaluation in Turkey is the evaluation of 2005 elementary education programs constructed on the basis of constructivist approach (GDPE, 2004) as of 2004-2005 school year through piloting. The evaluations conducted from the foundation of the Republic onward are program evaluation works conducted at a formal level by The Directorate of Research and Development and General Directorates of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Besides Ministry of National Education, academicians from university and particularly those working in the field of curriculum and instruction and researchers completing their post-graduate education in this field have also been conducting research on program evaluation. When the studies of academicians/researchers on program evaluation are analyzed, it is seen that instead of evaluating programs comprehensively and systematically, they mostly evaluate the curriculums of separate courses. Some of these studies are national studies working with bigger universes; yet, high majority of the studies deal with program evaluation within the context of a specific residential area or school (Özdemir, 2009). It can be argued that the best and most efficient way of eliciting the tendencies and areas of interest in program evaluation research is the analysis of the studies conducted at this level. Analysis of this research at certain time

intervals and systematically on the basis of some determined criteria are of great importance to reveal the general framework of program evaluation research.

When we reviewed the literature in Turkey, we found a number of studies examining the articles and master thesis that have been conducted in a selected time period and in the certain fields. These researches are more focused on identifying the studies in the field of physical science (Polat, 2013), Turkish education (Yağmur, Şahin at al., 2011), special education (Can, Yaşar & Aral, 2011), drama at early childhood education (Coşkun, Dündar & Parlak, 2014), educational science (Fazlıoğulları & Kurul, 2012), vocational education (Adıgüzel & Berk, 2011), and science education (Doğru at al., 2012).

When the research focusing on the analysis of the studies addressing the issue of curriculum and instruction in Turkey is examined, it is seen that there is a very little amount of research. One of these studies is by Gömleksiz and Bozpolat (2013) conducted to investigate the post-graduate theses completed in the field of curriculum and instruction in terms of some variables such as research area, research model, research sampling or study group, data collection instruments and data analysis techniques. A similar study was carried out by Hazır-Bıkmaz et al. (2013) to investigate doctorate theses addressing the issue of curriculum and instruction in terms of various variables such as gender of researcher, universities where the theses were completed, institutes to which the theses were submitted, approval year of the theses, research topics, research design, type of sampling, data collection instruments etc. Another study was done by Ozan and Köse (2014) to determine the research tendencies of the articles published in the field of curriculum and instruction in the period of 2007-2011. Another similar study was carried out by Erdoğan et al. (2015) to analyze 50 studies aiming to determine teachers' opinions about curriculums.

Only two studies directly focusing on the analysis of the theses addressing the issue of program evaluation have been detected in the related literature in Turkey. One of them is the meta-analysis research of the post-graduate theses addressing the issue of program evaluation conducted by Semerci and Meral (2007). The researchers analyzed the theses dealing with program evaluation in terms of content (validity of the measurement operations, reliability of the analyses, making use of program evaluation models etc.); researcher (training and experience of the researcher to conduct a thesis of program evaluation) and reporting (discussion of the findings in relation to other findings reported in the literature, analysis of the thesis on the basis of the reports of the thesis defense jury etc.). The other study is by Kurt and Erdoğan (2015) to investigate the research conducted in the field of program evaluation in 2004 – 2013 in terms of methods, sampling groups, content characteristics, type of program evaluation and decisions made in relation to the evaluation. However, no study has been detected in the literature investigating the purposes and topic tendencies of the research conducted in the field of program evaluation. Thus, the current study aims to investigate the purposes of the theses completed in the field of C&I between 1998 and 2015. The current study is believed to be important as it will reveal the tendency of the research in the field of C&I, offer insight into frequently and rarely investigated topics and thus will give a direction to future program development and evaluation research.

## **2. Method**

### *2.1 Research Model*

The current study aiming to investigate the general purposes of the master's and doctorate theses addressing the issue of program evaluation in the field of C&I employed the survey model.

### *2.2 Universe of the Study*

The universe of the current study consists of totally 87 theses addressing the issue of program evaluation in the field of C&I in 1997-2015. The reason for the inclusion of the theses completed in the field of C&I in the universe of the study is that this area is an area of specialization and the research conducted in this area comes primarily from the master's and doctorate theses. The reason for the inclusion of the theses completed as of 1997 in the current study is the restructuring efforts in the field. Within these restructuring efforts, the undergraduate program in the field was abolished by the decree issued by the Council of Higher Education on 6 November 1997 and it was decided that the program should be conducted under the roof of "Educational Sciences Program" at the level of post-graduate education. The distribution of the theses conducted in the field of C&I in relation to program evaluation across the years is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of the theses done in the field of C&amp;I across the years

Years	Master's Theses	Doctorate Theses	Years	Master's Theses	Doctorate Theses
1998	-	-	2008	8	-
1999	2	-	2009	9	4
2001	-	1	2010	11	1
2003	2	-	2011	5	5
2004	1	-	2012	5	1
2005	3	-	2013	2	2
2006	4	-	2014	7	-
2007	7	3	2015	4	-
Total: Master's Theses=70, Doctorate Theses=17					

As can be seen in Table 1, of the 87 theses evaluated in the current study, 70 are master's theses and 17 are doctorate theses. It is also seen that the highest number of the master's theses were completed in 2010 and no master's thesis was done in 1998, 2000 and 2002. When the doctorate theses are examined, it is seen that the highest number of theses were completed in 2011 and no doctorate thesis was done in 1998, 1999, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2014 and 2015.

### 2.3 Data Collection Process

In the current study, document analysis technique was used to collect the data. Document analysis is the analysis of written texts including information about the investigated phenomenon or phenomena (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005). The master's and doctorate theses to be analyzed in the current study were obtained by writing "curriculum and instruction" in the search engine of the national thesis center of the Council of Higher Education. The abstracts of theses whose full texts were not available in the site were analyzed. The data were collected between April and June 2015.

### 2.4 Data Analysis Process

The data collected in the current study were analyzed through content analysis in NVivo10.0. program package. During this analysis process, the purpose of each thesis was written in Microsoft Word files separately and entered into the program. The purpose of each thesis was read in the program and coded. The resulting 87 codes were reread to determine their similarities and differences (sample codes: "Evaluation of science and technology instructional programs in terms of imparting scientific process skills to students", "Evaluation of girls' vocational school curriculums in terms of employment"). The related codes were combined and it was tried to determine what each part consisting of codes conceptually meant and thematized (e.g., "Evaluation of the effectiveness of life sciences course curriculum", "Evaluation of life sciences course curriculum in terms of inculcation of critical thinking skills", "Evaluation of life science course curriculum in terms of character training" were all collected under the theme of "Life sciences curriculum"). The themes were supported with direct quotations. To establish the reliability of the study, another researcher different from the researcher conducting the analysis investigated each main theme, sub-theme and codes together with their quotations. Then, the researchers came together and tried to agree on the controversial codes and themes. To establish the reliability of the study, the obtained structure was submitted to the scrutiny of a researcher specialized both on the field and qualitative research and his/her opinions were sought about the goodness of the obtained structure. In line with the feedback taken from this researcher, the reliability of the study was calculated by using the reliability formula proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994). As a result of this calculation, the reliability of the study was found to be 96%. As this value is over 70%, the current study can be considered to be quite reliable (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In order to establish the internal validity of the study, expert investigation was resorted to and research report was submitted to the scrutiny of a field and qualitative research expert. In light of the feedbacks taken from the expert, required corrections were made on the research report.

## 3. Findings

In this section, findings obtained from the analysis of the master and doctorate theses about program evaluation are presented.

Table 2. Theses related to program evaluation

Themes	f
Evaluation of elementary education programs (elementary-secondary school)	46
Evaluation of higher education programs	18
Evaluation of high school programs	11
Evaluation of in-service training programs	4
Evaluation of pre-school programs	4
Evaluation of adult education programs	3
Evaluation of special education programs	1
Total	87

As can be seen in Table 2, majority of the theses addressing the issue of program evaluation (f:46) aimed to evaluate elementary education programs. It is followed by the theses aiming to evaluate higher education (f:18) and high school (f:11) programs. The number of studies aiming to evaluate in-service training (f:4), pre-school education (f:4), adult education (f:3) and special education (f:1) programs is quite small.

Table 3. Purposes of the theses aiming to evaluate elementary school programs

Themes	f
Evaluation of Formal Curriculums	42
Evaluation of elementary school curriculums in relation to specific courses	35
Science and technology curriculum	11
Evaluation of the effectiveness of science and technology curriculum	4
Longitudinal evaluation of science and technology curriculums	1
Evaluation of the curriculum in comparison with the former curriculums	1
Evaluation of the curriculum in terms of its compliance with the philosophy of the curriculum	1
Evaluation of the curriculum in terms of inculcation of scientific process skills in students	1
Evaluation of the activities in the program in terms of imparting critical and creative thinking skills	1
Evaluation of the curriculum in terms of inculcation of sub-disciplines	1
Evaluation of the curriculum in terms of its compliance with the full learning model	1
Social studies curriculums	8
Evaluation of the effectiveness of social studies curriculum	3
Evaluation of the activities in the curriculum in terms of inculcation of critical thinking skills	1
Evaluation of the curriculum in terms of imparting values	1
Evaluation of the curriculum in terms of instilling human rights and democracy	1
Evaluation of the program in terms of its effect on scientific literacy	1
Evaluation of the program in terms of its contribution to the catering of social needs	1
Mathematics curriculums	4
Evaluation of the effectiveness of mathematics curriculum	3
Longitudinal evaluation of mathematics curriculums	1
Life sciences curriculum	4
Evaluation of the effectiveness of life sciences curriculum	2
Evaluation of the curriculum in terms of inculcation of critical thinking skills	1
Evaluation of the curriculum in terms of character training	1
Turkish language curriculum	4
Evaluation of the curriculum in terms of imparting of reading and writing skills	2
Evaluation of the effectiveness of Turkish language curriculum	1
Evaluation of the curriculum in terms of its effect on the development of creative thinking	1
English language curriculum	1
Evaluation of the effectiveness of English language curriculum	1
Technology and design curriculum	1
Evaluation of the effectiveness of technology and design curriculum	1
Citizenship and democracy curriculum	1
Evaluation of the effectiveness of citizenship and democracy curriculum	1
Media literacy curriculum	1
Evaluation of the effectiveness of media literacy curriculum	1
Evaluation of elementary education curriculums as a whole	7
Evaluation of the effectiveness of elementary education curriculums	4
Evaluation of elementary education curriculums in terms of the values to be imparted	2
Evaluation of elementary education curriculums in terms of inculcation of creative thinking skills	1
Evaluation of the hidden curriculum	4
Evaluation of the hidden curriculum in schools and classrooms	1
Evaluation of the hidden curriculum in terms of imparting values	1
Evaluation of educational branch activities	1
Evaluation of the hidden curriculum in terms of inculcation of social skills	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>

As can be seen in Table 3, high majority of the theses done to evaluate elementary education curriculums (f:42) aimed to evaluate the formal curriculums and very few of them (f:4) aimed to evaluate the hidden curriculum. Again high majority of the theses done to evaluate formal curriculums evaluated the curriculums of separate courses (f:35) and only some of them (f:7) evaluated the curriculums as a whole.

Most of the theses done to evaluate elementary education curriculum in terms of separate courses focus on science and technology course curriculum (f:11) and it is followed by social studies (f:8), mathematics (f:4), life sciences (f:4) and Turkish language (f:4) curriculums. Though few in number, there are also theses focusing on English language (f:1), technology and design (f:1), citizenship and democracy (f:1) and media literacy (f:1) curriculums.

Nearly half of the theses investigating science and technology curriculum (f:4) aimed to evaluate the curriculum as a whole in terms of its goals, content, learning-teaching process and measurement-evaluation process. While one of these theses is a longitudinal study investigating the curriculums since the foundation of the Republic, another one conducted a comparative analysis of the old and new curriculums. One thesis evaluated the curriculum in terms of its compliance with its philosophy. One thesis evaluated it in terms of inculcation of scientific process skills, another one in terms of critical and creative thinking skills and another one in terms of imparting sub-disciplines. In a study, the curriculum was analyzed in terms of its compliance with the full learning model. Some related excerpts are presented below:

*D\_71. The purpose of this study is to determine the compliance of 5th grade science and technology curriculum with the principles of program development.*

*D\_53. The main purpose of the study is to investigate the effect of the activities in the text book and activity book of the fifth grade science and technology curriculum having been in effect since 2005-2006 school year on the development of students' creative and critical thinking skills on the basis of teachers' opinions.*

Nearly half of the theses investigating social studies curriculum (f:3) aimed to evaluate it as a whole in terms of its goals, content, learning-teaching process and measurement-evaluation process. Some theses evaluated the curriculum in terms of inculcation of critical thinking skills, values, human rights and democracy and scientific literacy. In one the theses, the curriculum was evaluated in terms of catering of social needs. Some related excerpts are given below:

*D\_37. The main purpose of this study is, on the basis of the opinions of students and teachers, to evaluate the general objectives of elementary school 4th and 5th grade social studies curriculums having been in effect since 2005-2006 in terms of their applicability, problems experienced in their implementation, the extent of accomplishing the goals and the desired extent of goal achievement.*

*D\_43. General purpose of this study is to determine the extent to which the fifth grade students in Adana adhere to the values stated in social studies curriculum according to Kohlberg's cognitive ethical development theory, the extent to which the students have acquired these values according to teachers' opinions and the problems experienced during this process.*

Majority of the theses investigating mathematics curriculum (f:3) aimed to evaluate the curriculum in terms of its goals, content, learning-teaching process and measurement-evaluation process. The other one conducted longitudinal research on the curriculums developed between 1948 and 1991. Some related excerpts are given below:

*D\_60. This study was conducted to determine the extent to which the expectations of 5th grade students from mathematics course match with the objectives of mathematics course.*

*D\_14. Do 1948 and 1962 elementary education curriculums and 1968, 1983 and 1991 elementary school 5th grade curriculums comply with the evaluation principles related to the elements of the curriculum?*

Majority of the theses investigating life sciences curriculum (f:2) evaluated the curriculum in terms of its goals, content, learning-teaching process and measurement-evaluation process. Moreover, one of the theses evaluated the inculcation of critical thinking skills by the curriculum and another one evaluated it in terms of character training. Some related excerpts are given below:

*D\_12. The main purpose of this study is to evaluate 2005 elementary education 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade life sciences curriculum on the basis of the opinions of the teachers working at schools in the city of Uşak implementing this curriculum.*

*D\_39. The purpose of this study is to determine the extent to which the objectives of elementary education life sciences course related to critical thinking can be achieved on the basis of expert opinions.*

Majority of the theses investigating Turkish language curriculum (f:2) evaluated it in terms of inculcation of writing skills. One of them evaluated its effectiveness as a whole and another one evaluated it in terms of imparting creative thinking. Some related excerpts are given below:

*D\_58. The purpose of this study is to elicit the opinions of teachers about the effect of Turkish language curriculum in the first level of elementary education on students' creative thinking skills.*

*D\_79. The purpose of this study is to investigate the opinions of secondary school Turkish language teachers about the different dimensions of the curriculum.*

The theses investigating English language (f:1), technology and design (f:1), citizenship and democracy (f:1) and media literacy (f:1) curriculums in general evaluated the effectiveness of these curriculums as a whole. Some related excerpts are given below:

*D\_27. The current study aims to investigate the opinions of teachers, students and parents about the new high school English language teaching curriculum through qualitative research method.*

Majority of the theses aiming to evaluate elementary school curriculums as a whole (f:4) evaluated the effectiveness of elementary school curriculums. One of them evaluated the curriculums in multi-grade classes, two of them evaluated the measurement-evaluation process of the curriculum and one of them evaluated learning-teaching process. In addition to these, few theses evaluated elementary education curriculums in terms of inculcation of values (f:2) and creative thinking skills (f:1). Some related excerpts are given below:

*D\_44. This study aims to determine the effectiveness of the process of change experienced in the elementary education of our education system on the basis of the opinions of the teachers of multi-grade and single-grade classes.*

One of the theses aiming to evaluate the hidden curriculum evaluated the hidden curriculum in schools and classes as a whole; one of them evaluated the hidden curriculum in terms of imparting values; another one evaluated it in terms of educational branch activities and another one evaluated it in terms of inculcation of social skills. Some related excerpts are given below:

*D\_42. The purpose of the current study is to determine the social skill levels of the fifth grade students from elementary schools located in the city of Elazığ and the function of the hidden curriculum in imparting these skills.*

Table 4. Purposes of the theses aiming to evaluate higher education curriculums

Themes	f
Evaluation of higher education curriculums as a whole	16
Evaluation of teacher training curriculums	7
Evaluation of the effectiveness of English prep-school curriculum	2
Evaluation of post-graduate educational sciences curriculum	2
Evaluation of the effectiveness of academician training program	2
Evaluation of Erasmus program	1
Evaluation of the effectiveness of higher education curriculums	1
Evaluation of higher education curriculums in terms of employment	1
Evaluation of higher education curriculums in relation to specific courses	2
Evaluation of the effectiveness of the curriculums of professional teaching knowledge courses	2
Total	18

As can be seen in Table 4, majority of the theses done to evaluate higher education curriculums (f:16) aimed to evaluate higher education curriculums as a whole and very few of them (f:2) evaluated them in relation to specific courses. Nearly half of the theses aiming to evaluate higher education curriculums as a whole (f:7) evaluated the effectiveness of teacher training curriculums. While four of them focus on the general evaluation of teacher training curriculums, one of them evaluated pre-school teacher training curriculum, one of them evaluated foreign language teacher training curriculum and the other one aimed to evaluate classroom teacher training curriculums. Besides these, some of the theses aiming to evaluate higher education curriculums as a whole (f:2) aimed to evaluate English prep-school curriculum, some of them (f:2) evaluated educational sciences post-graduate curriculums, some others (f:2) evaluated academician training curriculums and one of them evaluated Erasmus program. In one of the theses, effectiveness of higher education curriculums in terms of measurement-evaluation process is evaluated and in another in terms of employment. The theses aiming to evaluate higher education curriculums in relation to specific courses (f:2) evaluated the effectiveness of the curriculums of professional teaching knowledge courses such as teaching practicum, development and learning, planning and evaluation in education. Some related excerpts are given below:

*D\_33. The purpose of the current study is to elicit the pre-school teachers' opinions about the teacher training departments they graduated from.*

*D\_21. The general purpose of the current study is the evaluation of post-graduate educational works conducted in the field of educational sciences by the institutes of social sciences and educational sciences on the basis of the opinions of academicians and post-graduate students.*

Table 5. Purposes of the theses done to determine the high school curriculums

Themes	f
Evaluation of formal curriculums	9
Evaluation of high school curriculums in relation to specific courses	8
Evaluation of the effectiveness of English language curriculum	2
Evaluation of the effectiveness of biology curriculum	1
Evaluation of the effectiveness of introduction and guiding curriculum	1
Evaluation of the effectiveness of the professional teaching knowledge courses' curriculums taught in Anatolian Teacher Training High Schools	1
Evaluation of the effectiveness of the curriculum of Turkish literature course	1
Evaluation of the effectiveness of the curriculum of the counseling course	1
Evaluation of the effectiveness of mathematics curriculum	1
Evaluation of curriculums as a whole	1
Evaluation of girls' vocational high school curriculum in terms of employment	1
Evaluation of the hidden curriculum	2
Evaluation of the curriculum of information technologies course	1
Evaluation of student clubs	1
Total	11

As can be seen in Table 5, majority of the theses done to evaluate high school curriculums (f:9) investigated formal curriculums and very few of them (f:2) aimed to evaluate the hidden curriculum. Majority of the theses done to evaluate formal curriculums (f:8) focused on the curriculums of separate courses, only one of them evaluated it as a whole.

The theses aiming to evaluate high school curriculums in relation to special courses focused on the evaluation of the effectiveness of the curriculums of English language, biology, introduction and guiding, professional teaching knowledge courses, Turkish literature, counseling and mathematics. The only thesis aiming to evaluate high school curriculums as a whole evaluated girls' vocational high schools in terms of employment. Some related excerpts are given below:

*D\_68. In the current study, the aim is to determine students' opinions about the effectiveness of 9th grade counseling course curriculum and these opinions were compared according to gender, type of the school, the mother's education level, the father's education level and the number of counseling teachers in the school.*

*D\_1. In the current study, the aim is to determine the effectiveness of household management-nutrition education course curriculums taught in girls' vocational high schools.*

One of the theses aiming to evaluate the hidden curriculum evaluated the hidden program observed in the information technologies curriculum and the other one evaluated the hidden curriculum in student clubs.

Table 6. Purposes of the theses aiming to evaluate in-service training curriculums

Themes	f
Evaluation of the effectiveness of the curriculums of in-service training for teachers	3
Evaluation of the effectiveness of the curriculums of in-service training for the members of other professions.	1
Total	4

As can be seen in Table 6, the theses done to evaluate in-service training curriculums (f:4) aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of in-service training curriculums. While three of them focused on in-service training programs for teachers, only one of them investigated the in-service training program for the staff of the central bank. Some related excerpts are given below:

*D\_56. The purpose of the current study is to evaluate in-service training programs in terms of preparing teachers for the profession of teaching.*

*D\_15. This study was conducted to collect data about the effectiveness of the in-service training program offered to the staff of The Central Bank of The Turkish Republic.*

Table 7. Purposes of the theses aiming to determine pre-school curriculums

Themes	f
Evaluation of the effectiveness of pre-school curriculums	2
Evaluation of pre-school curriculums in terms of their effect on the success in elementary education	2
Total	4

As can be seen in Table 7, some of the theses aiming to evaluate pre-school curriculum (f:2) evaluated the curriculum in terms of its elements. While one of these theses evaluated the curriculum as a whole in terms of its goals, content, learning-teaching process and measurement-evaluation process, another one evaluated the curriculum in terms of its anticipated outcomes. Some of the theses aiming to evaluate pre-school curriculum (f:2), on the other hand, evaluated



the curriculum in terms of its effect on the success in elementary education. Some related excerpts are given below:

*D\_35. This study was conducted to determine the effect of pre-school education on the success in elementary education.*

Besides these, three theses were determined to be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of adult education curriculums and one thesis was conducted to evaluate special education curriculums. Some related excerpts are given below:

*D\_11. The main purpose of this study is to make an evaluation of the training programs called “reading and writing” and “use of industrial machines” conducted within the framework of the campaign of Support For National Education and to determine the success of the programs on the basis the opinions of the participants and trainers.*

*D\_21. Opinions of the teachers working in state and formal institutions offering special education to the deaf about the new reading and writing instruction curriculum.*

#### **4. Discussion and Implications**

From the findings of the current study, it is clear that nearly half of the theses addressed the issue of program evaluation in elementary education and the other half dealt with program evaluation in other levels of schooling (higher education, secondary education, in-service training, pre-school education, adult education, special education). It is remarkable that the number of theses aiming to evaluate the curriculums of in-service training, pre-school education, adult education and special education is very small. Hazır Bıkmaz et al. (2013) analyzed the doctorate theses done in the field of curriculum and instruction in 1974-2009 and found that the number of studies conducted to evaluate in-service training programs is quite limited. In the same study, parallel to the findings of the current study, it was also found that pre-school curriculums, teacher training curriculums and high school curriculums have not been investigated much at doctorate level. As stated by Demirhan-İşcan & Hazır-Bıkmaz (2012), an important reason for this may be the lack of emphasis put on the courses such as “pre-school curriculums” and “adult education curriculums” within the framework of post-graduate programs offered in the field of C&I (Demirhan-İşcan & Hazır-Bıkmaz, 2012). Post-graduate students not developing awareness of and not gaining information about these courses may have avoided investigating the curriculums of the related areas in their theses. Moreover, acceptance of students into C&I programs primarily depends on foreign language exam and academic personnel and postgraduate education entrance exam and this may make it difficult for students having graduated from the programs of pre-school education or special education to be accepted to C&I post-graduate programs. All these factors may make it more challenging for students to focus on pre-school education and special education. This is partially supported by Erişti (2013) stressing that academicians direct students to the fields and topics, during their research topic determination process, they are interested in or for which they see themselves adequate.

Again parallel to the findings of the current study, Altın (2004) reported, as a result of his study analyzing master’s theses done in the field of C&I, that the topics of the theses done in 1985-2002 concentrate on “elementary and secondary education”. Polat (2013) analyzed the master’s theses done in the field of natural sciences education and reported that most of the theses deal with second level of elementary education. The reason for most of the program evaluation theses to focus on elementary education may be the fact that in line with the report prepared by John Dewey invited to Turkey in 1924; more emphasis was put on the development of elementary school programs. This tendency can be clearly seen throughout the history. For example, in the National Education Council convened in 1953, development of elementary school curriculums was the central theme, in 1948 most of the discussions focused on the obligation of developing elementary school curriculums and in 1970s, with the introduction of eight-year elementary education, development of elementary school curriculums became again the main theme of discussions (Demirel, 1992). In short, from the foundation of the Republic to 1980s, program development attempts made in 1926, 1936, 1948, 1968, and even in 1995 focused mainly on elementary and secondary education and all these attempts gave direction to future program evaluation research.

Theses done to evaluate elementary education curriculums in general aim to evaluate formal curriculums of some specific courses. In these theses, the most widely investigated curriculums are science and technology curriculum, social studies curriculum and they are followed by mathematics curriculum, life sciences curriculum and Turkish language curriculums. The number of theses aiming to evaluate the curriculums of English language course, technology and design course, citizenship and democracy course is quite small. In these theses, in general, the effectiveness of course curriculum has been evaluated. Some of them evaluated curriculums in terms of their inculcation of critical thinking, creative thinking skills and values in students. When compared to the number of the theses aiming to evaluate formal curriculums, the number of theses investigating hidden curriculums is quite limited. The theses aiming to evaluate hidden curriculums focused on the evaluation of the hidden curriculum in schools and classes, the evaluation of it in terms of imparting values and social skills and the evaluation of educational branch activities.

The courses whose curriculums were developed from 1980 to 2005 are; Turkish language (1981), mathematics (1983);

physical education (1987); social studies-handicraft training (1990); science-art-religious culture and moral knowledge (1992), music (1994); foreign language-traffic and first aid (1997); life sciences (1998); science-religious culture and moral knowledge (2000) (Akbaba, 2004; Arslan, 2000; Yaşar, 2007). In 2005, elementary school program development attempts started with the development of the curriculums of the main courses given in the first five years of elementary education (Turkish language, mathematics, life sciences, social studies, science and technology). Given that program development and program evaluation are inextricably connected, it is expected that all the curriculums developed should be seen as worthy of researching and evaluating. However, the findings of the current study revealed that while great emphasis was put on researching and evaluating the curriculums of some courses, almost nothing was done to evaluate the curriculums of some others. This may lead us to think that most of the academicians working in the field of C&I are not graduates of the disciplines such as physical education, music, art, religious culture and moral knowledge. Moreover, it may indicate that curriculums of some courses are not dealt with in C&I post-graduate programs.

Studies investigating the tendencies of the theses done in the field of natural sciences (1990–2009) (Doğru et al. 2012) and those of the theses done in the field of life sciences (2005-2012) (Bektaş et al. 2013) reported findings parallel to the findings of the current study. The theses evaluating curriculums in terms of inculcation of some skills in students were mostly seen after 2005 because skill instruction, value education and sub-discipline teaching appeared as aspects of 2005 elementary education programs (GDPE, 2004) and drew the attention of researchers and academicians working in the field of C&I especially in the last two years.

The theses done to evaluate the curriculums of high school courses in general focus on the evaluation of the formal curriculums of some courses. In the literature in Turkey, such theses aimed to evaluate the curriculums of English language, biology, introduction and guiding, teaching professional knowledge, Turkish literature, counseling and mathematics. In addition to these, one thesis evaluated girls' vocational high school curriculum in terms of employment. When compared to the number of theses evaluating formal curriculums, the number of theses evaluating hidden curriculums is quite limited. The reason why few studies investigated the effectiveness of mathematics curriculum is explained by Baki et al. (2011). The authors conducted a study to elicit the tendencies in studies aiming to evaluate mathematics curriculums in Turkey and found that mathematics education research is “teaching” oriented. The authors also stated that following the changes made in elementary and secondary school mathematics curriculums in 2005, some theses were done on mathematics curriculum. Yağmur Şahin et al. (2013) reported that the number of studies aiming to evaluate the effectiveness of Turkish language curriculums is quite limited and this finding concurs with the finding of the current study.

The theses aiming to evaluate higher education curriculums generally investigated the effectiveness of a higher education program such as teacher training programs, English preparatory school programs, educational sciences post-graduate programs, academician training programs and Erasmus program as a whole. The theses, on the other hand, aiming to evaluate the curriculums of specific courses in higher education are restricted to the theses evaluating the effectiveness of the curriculums of teaching professional knowledge courses. One reason for the theses aiming to evaluate higher education curriculums to mostly focus on the effectiveness of teacher training programs might be the fact that both program evaluation and teacher training programs are the specialized areas of the field of C&I.

Most of the few theses done to evaluate in-service training programs aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of in-service teacher training programs. The theses aiming to evaluate pre-school education curriculums focused on the effectiveness of the curriculums and their effect of the success in elementary school. There is almost no thesis looking at the curriculums of adult education and special education. These findings of the current study are supported by studies conducted on pre-school education (Ahi & Kildan, 2013; Can Yaşar & Aral, 2011); on special education (Coşkun, Dündar & Parlak, 2014) and on adult education (Yıldız, 2004). This finding is indirectly supported by the fact that pre-school education (Ahi & Kildan, 2013) and adult education (Yıldız, 2004) are not among the popular research topics of post-graduate programs. Moreover, in a study investigating the doctorate theses done in the field of educational sciences in Turkey (Fazlıoğulları & Kurul, 2012), it was found that pre-school education, special education, post-graduate education, in-service training and adult education are not among the popular research topics. Thus, it can be argued that the related finding of the current study is not limited to the field of C&I but holds true for all the field of educational sciences.

Another remarkable finding of the current study is that the number of studies investigating the hidden curriculum in all levels of schooling is quite limited. This finding concurs with Hazır Bıkmaz et al. (2013). The authors concluded that the hidden program is only investigated at doctorate level, only in recent years and by very few studies. In the literature, it is also pointed out that the concept of hidden curriculum is a new concept in the field of educational sciences in Turkey and the number of studies on this concept is quite limited (Sarı 2007; Veznedaroğlu, 2007). Furthermore, elicitation of the outcomes of the hidden curriculum requires long-run studies and thus, not much research prefers to focus on this concept.

Another remarkable finding of the current study is that there is no research focusing on the evaluation of the curriculums of vocational training and art education at any level of schooling. Fazlıođulları and Kurul (2012) support this finding. An important reason for this may be the long-term negligence of curriculum development works in vocational and technical education in Turkey.

In light of the findings of the current study, it can be suggested that studies aiming to evaluate curriculums of higher education, high school education, in-service training, pre-school education, adult education and special education should be conducted in the field of C&I. Some other research may focus on the evaluation of elementary school curriculums in terms of their different aspects (e.g. sub-disciplines, thinking skills, values). There is also a need for studies to evaluate the effectiveness of vocational training and art education curriculums. Future research may also look at the hidden curriculum at every level of schooling. Finally, in the future research, theses addressing the issue of program evaluation can be analyzed in terms of some variables such as research methodology, research findings and research conclusion.

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