



A Content Analysis of Theses on Public Education Centres in Turkey

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to shed light on future academic studies on this subject by evaluating the postgraduate theses published on public education centres in terms of thematic, methodological and statistical analysis techniques. Qualitative research method was used in the study. Content analysis was used in this study in which the theses in the field of public education centres in the National Thesis Centre database of the Council of Higher Education were examined. In this study, theses were scanned from the National Thesis Centre database of the Council of Higher Education by specifying the keyword "public education centres" without specifying the year. As a result of the search, it is seen that a total of 43 postgraduate theses were conducted between 1983 and 2023. No sample selection was made in the study and the entire study population was reached. Therefore, 43 postgraduate theses constitute the study group of the research. The "Publication Classification Form" developed by the researchers was used to analyse the theses included in the study. This form was analysed under seven main headings to reveal the year of publication, type, subject, university, language of publication, method and study group of the theses. When the results of the research are analysed, it is seen that 43 theses were made in 40 years, theses consisted only of master's theses, and the most theses were made on education and training. Quantitative studies were

mostly conducted in the researches. When the universities where the researches were conducted are examined, it is seen that most of the studies were conducted at Gazi University, more trainees were selected as the study group in the researches and their opinions were consulted. The fact that public education centres provide services for trainees may have caused the studies to focus on them. In addition, it is seen that there are also studies on master trainers, managers and teachers working in Public Education Centres. Taking opinions from different segments such as parents and citizens may contribute to the structuring of public education centres and the revision of course programmes. It is seen that the publication language of the theses is mostly Turkish. It is understood that only English is used as a different language and there are no theses written in other languages. Theses to be written in languages other than Turkish will cause interest in these studies at the international level and may lead to the emergence of proposals for joint studies from different countries.

Key words: Public education centres, non-formal education, content analysis.

Türkiye’de Halk Eğitim Merkezleri ile İlgili Yapılan Tezlere Yönelik Bir İçerik Analizi

Özet

Bu araştırmanın amacı, halk eğitimi merkezleri ile ilgili yayınlanan lisansüstü tezleri tematik, metodolojik ve istatistiksel çözümleme teknikleri açısından değerlendirerek, bu konuda gelecekte yapılacak olan akademik çalışmalara ışık tutmaktır. Araştırmada nitel araştırma yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Yükseköğretim Kurulu Ulusal Tez Merkezi veri tabanında *halk eğitim merkezleri* alanında yapılan tezlerin ele alındığı bu araştırmada içerik analizi kullanılmıştır. Bu çalışmada, Yükseköğretim Kurulu Ulusal Tez Merkezi veri tabanından yıl belirtmeksizin “halk eğitim merkezleri” anahtar sözcüğü belirtilerek tezler taranmıştır. Yapılan tarama sonucunda 1983-2023 yılı arasında yapılan toplam 43 lisansüstü tez yapıldığı görülmektedir. Çalışmada örneklem seçimine gidilmemiş ve çalışma evreninin tamamına ulaşılmıştır. Dolayısıyla 43 lisansüstü tez, araştırmanın çalışma grubunu oluşturmaktadır. Araştırma kapsamına alınan tezlerin analizini yapmak için araştırmacılar tarafından geliştirilen “Yayın Sınıflama Formu” kullanılmıştır. Bu form, Tezlerin; *yayın yılı, türü, konusu, yapıldığı üniversite, yayın dili, yöntemi, çalışma grubu* ortaya çıkaracak şekilde yedi temel başlık altında incelenmiştir. Araştırmanın sonuçlarına bakıldığında toplam 40 yıl içerisinde 43 tez yapılmış, tezler sadece yüksek lisans tezlerinden oluşmuş, en fazla *eğitim ve öğretim* konularında tez yapıldığını görülmektedir. Araştırmalarda daha çok nicel çalışmalar yapılmıştır. Araştırmaların yapıldığı üniversitelere bakıldığında, en fazla çalışmanın Gazi Üniversitesinde yapıldığını, araştırmalarda çalışma grubu olarak daha çok kursiyerlerin seçildiği, onların görüşlerine başvurulduğu görülmektedir. Halk eğitim merkezlerinin kursiyerlere yönelik hizmet vermiş olmaları, araştırmalarda onların üzerine çalışmaların yoğunlaşmasına neden olmuş olabilir. Ayrıca, Halk Eğitimi Merkezlerinde çalışan usta öğretici, yönetici ve öğretmenler üzerine yapılan çalışmaların da olduğu görülmektedir. Veli,

vatandaş gibi farklı kesimlerden de görüşler alınması halk eğitim merkezlerinin yapılanmasına, kurs programlarının yeniden revize edilmesine katkı sunabilir. Tezlerin yayın dilinin ise çoğunlukla Türkçe olduğu görülmektedir. Farklı dil olarak sadece İngilizce yazıldığı, başka dillerde yazılan tezlerin olmadığı anlaşılmaktadır. Türkçe’nin dışında yazılacak tezler, uluslararası düzeyde de ilgi bu çalışmalara ilgi gösterilmesine neden olacak, belki de farklı ülkelerden ortak çalışmalar yapılması tekliflerinin doğmasını sağlayabilir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Halk eğitim merkezleri, yaygın eğitim, içerik analizi.

Introduction

Educational institutions have great duties in order to follow technological developments which are in constant innovation and progress and to benefit from the opportunities they offer. For example, the public should be able to adopt these developments and apply them in their lives, to be in harmony with the society in which the person lives, to keep their knowledge alive and constantly renew it, and to have a profession.

This changing world order brings with it a number of problems and human beings are personally affected by these problems. The task of education immediately appears here because education should ensure the adaptation of human beings to changing conditions. Therefore, education itself should be in constant development and innovation.

Education is the formation or change of desired behaviours in individuals in line with a certain goal. This behaviour change is called "learning". However, this is not a single learning; it is a conscious learning directed in line with certain objectives. Education does not only include the learning that we see in schools within a certain plan; it also includes unplanned learning in which both society and family are effective.

If we want to develop in the economic and social field, education is one of the most important elements for us. Development, on the other hand, is the pursuit of certain economic and social policies in order to improve the living conditions of the people ruled by those who hold the state administration. In underdeveloped countries, human resources have not been sufficiently developed because development depends on the utilisation of manpower and this is mostly through

education. Therefore, developing countries should attach great value to education in order to develop.

Education is responsible for the political, economic, cultural and social development of society because it is the main task of education to bring the individual and the community in which that individual lives to the desired level of life and to organise individuals in this direction and to solve the problems encountered while organising individuals. As Ateş (2008) states, whatever a person's competence or inadequacy is, he/she needs help in order to reach his/her personal life goal and to reveal and use his/her hidden powers. This is best done through education.

As Sarıçam (2013) says, raising the members of the society in line with the demands of that society and in a way that will ensure development; improving the quality of life of individuals and fulfilling their duties and responsibilities in the society in the most effective way depends on the education received by the individual in this regard."

Education is divided into two as formal education and non-formal education. Formal education is education that takes place in officially recognised educational institutions according to a regular programme. In this type of education, students take courses in a physical space such as schools or universities and follow a set curriculum. Formal education is the form of education offered by public or private schools, colleges and universities. These institutions manage the educational process through courses, interactions between teachers and students within the framework of a specific programme and curriculum. In this education, lessons usually take place during set class hours over a period of time and are delivered by teachers face-to-face or sometimes online, and involve a regular teaching programme and a specific discipline. Students interact with other students in the classroom environment, receive live lectures from teachers, participate in laboratory work or utilise school resources. Formal education generally refers to an education process starting from childhood and extending to university or higher education level (Hasgül, 2023). Non-formal education, on the other hand, is a type of education in which an individual can receive the education he/she needs and wants at any time of his/her life without any age, time and place limitations. Non-formal education enables individuals to complete their incomplete education in line with the general aims of national education; helps them to take their existing education to the next level; updates their knowledge; enables them to acquire a new profession. It contributes to the personal

development of the individual and makes leisure time more productive. It also has a complementary role to formal education (Murat, 2009; Ültanır & Ültanır, 2005)

Non-formal education is continued in the same direction with formal education. It is an effective tool for social change and economic development. It is highly effective in teaching citizens how to read and write, completing their incomplete education, protecting and developing our cultural values, enabling individuals to utilise their leisure time in the most effective way and making it a habit, and ensuring that citizens are employed depending on economic developments. Ergun, Ergezer, Çevik and Özdaş (1999) state that non-formal education can be conducted in all institutions and organisations. Therefore, non-formal education can be provided in many institutions. Institutions providing formal education can also organise and implement non-formal education activities. Courses opened by schools are for this purpose. Sometimes non-formal education institutions can also be opened in formal education institutions. For example, we see that practical girls' art school is opened in girls' vocational high schools.

Man is a learning being as long as he lives. Just as individuals are not equal, it is inevitable that learning styles and methods will vary. When we consider these changes, the socio-economic status, family status, and educational readiness of learners also vary. In the formal education system, schools with certain age limitations and a certain environment are indispensable for education. What about other individuals? When we think about where those who cannot be educated, those who cannot read, those who are excluded from the society by their own will or by being exposed to other conditions will receive education, non-formal education institutions that try to provide education without the need for environment or material come into play with the slogan 'Education anytime, anywhere'. The non-formal education needed by individuals in our society is provided by public education centres. They deliver this education to individuals in provinces, districts and neighbourhoods where society needs it.

Public education has the characteristic of integrating out-of-school education without discriminating between people. All out-of-school education falls within the scope of public education and complementary programmes are implemented in the fields of economy, society and culture based on the needs, life demands and cultural levels of people in public education. Therefore, public education is a system that makes educational activities continuous in a wide area and throughout life (Gedikoğlu, 1991). Public education has developed itself based on the

emerging needs of individuals who have to live in communities. One of its aims may be to help citizens who are excluded from society and who are different from other individuals in some ways to fit into the social order. Another aim may be to further develop the skills of people who have different equipment from other people and to raise them to the level of mastery.

Public education provides individuals with the ability and enthusiasm to finish school by completing the deficiencies of the educational experiences they have left behind. The conditions for graduation from schools are not different from normal formal education, and are even clearer and more understandable due to the credit system. These trainings are the education process in which various types of trainings are provided for a specific purpose in the light of the needs of the society, and these trainings are carried out in accordance with the calendar and hours determined by the institutions, and those who request them receive a certificate in return if they are successful.

The aim of this study is to shed light on future academic studies on this subject by evaluating the postgraduate theses published on public education centres in terms of thematic, methodological and statistical analysis techniques. In this direction, answers to the following questions were sought.

Theses Done;

1. in which year,
2. in which type of thesis,
3. on which subject,
4. by which method,
5. at which university,
6. with which study group (population and sample),
7. in which language was it written?

Method

Qualitative research method was used in the research. Content analysis was used in this study in which the theses in the field of public education centres in the National Thesis Centre database of the Council of Higher Education were examined. Content analysis is a research technique that consists of organising, classifying, comparing and drawing theoretical conclusions from texts (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). In addition to these aspects, content analysis was preferred in this study because it brings together similar data within the framework of certain concepts and themes and transforms them into a form that the reader can understand (Bauer, 2003; Fraenkel, Wallen & Hallen, 2012; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005).

Working Group

In this study, theses were scanned from the National Thesis Centre database of the Council of Higher Education by specifying the keyword "public education centres" without specifying the year. As a result of the search, a total of 43 postgraduate theses between the years 1983-2023 were found (Appendix 1). In other words, no sample selection was made in the study and the entire study population was reached. Therefore, 43 postgraduate theses constitute the study group of the research.

Data Collection Tool

"Publication Classification Form" was used to analyse the theses included in the research. This form was developed by the researchers. The theses were analysed under seven (7) main headings to reveal the *year of publication, type, subject, university, language of publication, method, study group (population/sample)*.

Analysing the Data

In this study, both content analysis and descriptive analysis techniques were used to analyse the data obtained. In content analysis, it is aimed to reach concepts and relationships that can explain the collected data. The collected data must first be conceptualised, then organised in a logical way according to the emerging concepts and the themes explaining the data must be determined. The data summarised and interpreted in descriptive analysis are subjected to a more in-depth process in content analysis, and concepts and themes that cannot be noticed with a descriptive approach

can be revealed as a result of this analysis. According to this analysis, the data obtained are classified and interpreted according to predetermined themes (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). Therefore, it was deemed appropriate by the researchers to use descriptive analysis and content analysis together in the study.

While searching from the database of the National Thesis Centre of the Council of Higher Education, data were obtained by selecting the options of (1) *year of publication*, (2) *type*, (3) *subject*, (4) *university*, (5) *language of publication of the theses*; in addition, the theses included in the study were examined in detail and data on (6) *method*, (7) *study group (population/sample)* were also collected. In the examination of the theses; the seven categories mentioned above were predetermined by the researchers. In line with these categories, descriptive analyses were carried out on which year, which type of thesis, which subject, which method, which university, which study group and which language the theses were written in. The data obtained as a result of the analyses were put into charts. The process of analysing and interpreting the research in theses was carried out in four stages: (1) *naming, coding and extraction stage*, (2) *category development stage*, (3) *validity and reliability stage*, (4) *reporting stage* (Hatipoğlu, Özkan Hıdıroğlu & Tok, 2018; Doğan & Tok, 2018).

Findings

In this part of the study, the analyses of the theses published in the database of the National Thesis Centre of the Council of Higher Education are presented in line with the categories determined and the findings obtained. Table 1 shows the findings related to *the year of publication, type, subject, university, language of publication, method, study group (population/sample) of the theses*.

According to the data obtained from the National Thesis Centre database of the Council of Higher Education, it is seen that all of the postgraduate theses on public education centres are master's theses. It is thought-provoking that there is no doctoral thesis on this subject.

The first thesis was conducted in 1983. Three years later, another thesis was conducted, but the third thesis was conducted exactly 10 years later. This is a very long period of time. At this date,

3 theses were conducted, followed by one thesis each in 1997 and 1998 respectively. The number of theses conducted between 1983-2001 is 8 in total. In 2003 and 2005, three theses were made, and the total number of theses made between 2003 and 2010, i.e. in seven years, is 12. It is seen that 23 theses were written in the 13 years between 2011-2023, the most theses were written in 2019, and the number of theses written in that year was 5.

When we look at the thesis subjects, we see that the most theses were made on *education and training* (24). Then, theses were made on *handicrafts* (8), *public administration* (2), *fine arts* (2) respectively. In addition, it is seen that theses have been conducted on *clothing industry technical education* (1), *journalism* (1), *nursing* (1), *labour economics and industrial relations* (1), *sports* (1) and *public health* (1).

Quantitative studies were mostly conducted in the researches. It is seen that 35 theses were conducted using this method and 6 theses were conducted using qualitative method. Mixed method was preferred in one thesis.

When we look at the universities where the researches were conducted, it is possible to say that the most studies were conducted at Gazi University with 18 studies. Afterwards, Boğaziçi (4), Ankara (4), Bartın (3), Marmara (2), Hacettepe Universities (2) come respectively. After that, we see that one study was conducted in 12 different universities.

In the theses, it is seen that the study group is mostly trainees. In a total of 33 theses, trainees were included in the study. Then master trainers/teachers (6) come next. Managers were also consulted in two studies. Document analysis/literature review was conducted in two studies.

When the publication language of the theses is analysed, it is seen that only 6 theses were written in English. We see that all of the remaining theses were written in Turkish. There is no thesis written in another language.

Table 1. *Findings Related to the Theses Included in the Study*

Year	<u>Thesis Type</u>	<u>Subject</u>	Method	University Name	Study Group	Publication Language
1983 (1)	Yük. Lis. (43)	Education and Training	Quantitative	Gazi (18)	Trainee (33)	Turkish (37)
1986 (1)	Doktora (0)	(25)	(36)	Boğaziçi (4)	Teacher (6)	English (6)
1996 (3)		Handicrafts (8)	Qualitative	Ankara (4)	Manager (2)	
1997 (1)		Public Administration (2)	(6)	Bartın (3)	Document	
1998 (1)		Fine Arts (2)	Karma (1)	Marmara (2)	review (2)	
2001 (1)		Clothing Industry		Hacettepe (2)		
2003 (3)		Technical Education (1)		Fırat (1)		

2005 (3)	Journalism (1)	Atatürk (1)
2006 (2)	Nursing (1)	Selçuk (1)
2008 (3)	Labour Economics and	Haliç (1)
2010 (1)	Industrial Relations (1)	Çanakkale 18 Mart (1)
2011 (3)	Sport (1)	Gaziantep (1)
2012 (1)	Public Health (1)	Yalova (1)
2014 (4)		Bursa Uludağ (1)
2015 (1)		Kocaeli (1)
2016 (2)		Pamukkale (1)
2017 (1)		Munzur (1)
2018 (1)		
2019 (5)		
2020 (1)		
2021 (1)		
2022 (2)		
2023 (1)		
TOPLAM		43

Conclusion, Discussion and Suggestions

In this part of the study, the results of the findings of the research are discussed and various suggestions are given. When *the year of publication, type, subject, university, language of publication, method, study group (population/sample)* categories of the theses within the scope of the study are examined;

According to the database of the National Thesis Centre of the Council of Higher Education, it is seen that the first thesis is the study titled "Determination of Knowledge Levels of Trainers and Trained in Ankara Public Education Centres on Mother and Child Health and Family Planning" conducted by Öğün (1983) in 1983. From that date until 2023, i.e. within 40 years, a total of 43 theses were made, and the fact that there is approximately one thesis per year shows the lack of interest in this field. However, as in every country, great responsibilities are imposed on non-formal education and public education centres, which are the institutions where this education is mostly provided. Both the country and the citizens of the country have a great need for these institutions, and these institutions attract great interest from all segments. Universities should show a more intense interest in these institutions where people who are out of formal education or who have left their education unfinished or who want to improve themselves, increase their job opportunities and create a wider social environment receive education. Studies to be carried out in this field will contribute to the development of public education centres, to review some ordinary

course programmes, to determine the needs of trainees and instructors, to make arrangements in line with the determined needs and to increase the interest in these institutions.

It is also interesting that the theses on public education centres consist only of master's theses. It is seen that doctoral studies are not included in this subject. However, including more in-depth doctoral studies can make significant contributions to the field. It may be effective for field experts who advise theses at universities to show interest in these issues and direct their students to study in the field of public education centres.

When the thesis topics are analysed, it is seen that most of the theses are on *education and training*. It is understood that more attention is paid to this subject. Perhaps, the thought that it is necessary to concentrate more on this field may have led to the excess of education and training studies. However, studies in different fields can also increase the attractiveness of public education centres and the interest in these institutions.

Quantitative studies were mostly conducted in the researches. This situation also shows itself in different studies. When Hatipoğlu, Özkan Hıdıroğlu & Tok (2018) and Doğan & Tok (2018) examined the articles published in journals in the fields of educational sciences and educational administration by content analysis, it is seen that quantitative studies are more common in the articles in both studies. However, sometimes in-depth research of public education centres by conducting qualitative or mixed design studies may lead to more interesting results.

When the universities where the studies were conducted are examined, it is seen that the most studies were conducted at Gazi University. The fact that these studies are conducted more in this university may be due to the fact that there is more interest in non-formal education and public education in this institution. Increasing these studies in other universities may provide different perspectives.

In the studies, it is seen that trainees are mostly selected as the study group and their opinions are mostly consulted. The fact that public education centers provide services for trainees may have caused the studies to focus on them. In addition, it is seen that there are also studies on master instructors, administrators and vocational teachers affiliated to the Ministry of National Education working in Public Education Centers. Taking opinions from different segments such as parents and citizens may contribute to the structuring of public education centers and the revision of course programs.

It is seen that the language of publication of the theses is mostly Turkish. It is understood that only English is used as a different language and there are no theses written in other languages. Theses to be written in languages other than Turkish will cause interest in these studies at the international level and may lead to the emergence of proposals for joint studies from different countries.

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