A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION GRADUATE
THESES WRITTEN IN TURKEY

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Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science/Arts/Doctor of Philosophy.

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ABSTRACT

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This study aims to investigate descriptive characteristics, research topics and methodological procedures of master's theses and doctoral dissertations regarding early childhood education in Turkey. Within the scope of the current study, 931 M.S. theses, and 171 Ph.D. dissertations were analyzed according to university, institute, department, publication year, the degree held by the advisor, research topic, the sample group, the city where the study took place, research setting of the study, the type of research, instruments, statistical analysis and sampling methods. Data of the current study covers the theses published in between 1989-2016 years. In the data analysis process content analysis method was used. The current study found that students are the most frequently used subject groups, in regards to both M.S. theses (37.39%) and Ph.D. dissertations (53.39%). In the M.S. theses, researchers mostly prefer research topics regarding the education of young children (29.95%) but in PhD. dissertations, researchers focused on developmental issues (32.78%). Nearly, all of the graduate theses were conducted in city centers and central districts.

Keywords: early childhood education, content analysis, graduate education, graduate theses

ÖZ

TÜRKİYE'DE YAPILAN OKUL ÖNCESİ EĞİTİM KONULU LİSANSÜSTÜ TEZLERİN İÇERİK ANALİZİ

Demirtaş İlhan, Seden

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Bu çalışma Türkiye'de yapılan okul öncesi eğitim konulu yüksek lisans ve doktora tezlerinin tanımlayıcı özelliklerini, araştırma konularını ve metodolojik prosedürlerini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma kapsamında 931 yüksek lisans, 171 doktora tezi yayınlandıkları üniversite, enstitü, anabilim dalı, yayın yılı, tez danışmanının akademik ünvanı, araştırma konusu, araştırma türü, veri toplama aracı, istatiktiki analiz yöntemi ve örneklem alma yöntemlerine göre incelenmiştir. Çalışmanın verisi 1987-2016 yılları arasında yayınlanan yüksek lisans ve doktora tezlerinin kapsamaktadır. Veri analizi sürecinde içerik analizi kullanılmıştır. Çalışmanın sonuçlarına göre; öğrenciler hem yüksek lisans tezlerinde (37.39%) hem de doktora tezlerinde (53.39%) en çok tercih edilen örneklem grubudur. Yüksek lisans tezlerinde araştırmacılar genellikle erken çocukluk döneminde eğitim (29.95%) konusunu araştırmayı tercih ederken, doktora tezlerinde araştırmacılar çoğunlukla gelişimsel (32.78%) konulara odaklanmışlardır. Neredeyse çalışmaların tamamı şehir merkezlerinde ve merkezi yerleşim bölgelerinde gerçekleştirilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: okul öncesi eğitim, içerik analizi, lisansüstü eğitim, lisansüstü tezler

To God
Who has blessed me
With a wonderful
family, and love

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1.   Background of the Study

Definition of education has changed over the years but basically education refers to "…the process of facilitating learning which has been an integral part of human societies since before we were even human" (The Worldwatch Institute, 2017). Since ancient times, enabling people to reach their full potential as human beings has been one of the ongoing purposes of education. Moreover, providing intellectual development, meeting social needs, contributing to the economy and creating effective workforce, providing job and career opportunities for students and enhancing political and economic systems are the other widely accepted purposes of education. According to Foshay (1991), the broadest educational purpose statement covers all of them and seeks to contribute to all domains of human experience (As cited in Brandt, 2000)

In the body of educational literature, research on alternative education systems employs the concepts of 'formal education', 'in-formal education' and 'non-formal education' among other terms to refer to different approaches to education (Dib, 1988; Smith, 2002; Soh & Meerah, 2013). While in-formal education refers to the learning process of people based simply on observing the environment, formal education involves planned learning activities that take place in educational institutions (Duarte, 2016). According to Dib (1988), formal education refers to a rather structured education model governed by a set of laws and norms. Moreover, a strict curriculum is presented in formal education in accordance with objectives, content and methodology. In addition to structured organization and a pre-determined curriculum, formal education is a ''chronologically graded educational system running from primary school through to University and including, in addition

to general academic studies, a variety of specialized programs and institutions for full-time technical and professional training" (Baguma & Okecho, 2010, p. 2). According to Shen (2001), formal education aims to provide students with the opportunity to gain multiple perspectives in classrooms by means of interaction with their classmates. Based on the definitions, we can conclude that formal education includes not only learning activities taking place in traditional schools but also tertiary or higher education programs (Kocanova, Paolini, & Borodankova, 2011).

Higher education, i.e. university education, is described as a non-compulsory education given in universities or colleges after secondary education (Sanchis, Saura, Contrí, & Blasco, 2013). In most countries, such as the U.K., higher education systems include only undergraduate and graduate education but in some other countries (e.g. United States and Turkey), higher education systems also include vocational education in addition to the formal undergraduate and graduate education (Kalkbrenner, 2015).

All around the world, countries have their own national higher education systems and the systems vary in terms of university characteristics, missions, social and educational purposes and goals. Moreover, the size of the institutions varies and they possess diverse academic programs, admission requirements and standards in accordance with their academic purposes and goals (Badat, 2009). Although there are differences among the countries' higher education systems and university structures, university education has some primary universal goals; first of all, universities aim to contribute to humanity's amassed scientific and cultural heritage by means of producing knowledge that improve understanding of nature and society (Boulton & Lucas, 2008). Secondly, universities seek to develop students' cognitive skills so that they not only acquire but also produce information. Finally, universities aim to undertake community engagement which provides reciprocal benefits for both the community and universities (Australian Universities Community Engagement Alliance, 2006). Graduate education programs are at the heart of higher education and refer to Master's and Ph.D. degrees, a specialty in medicine or proficiency in art programs (Bozan, 2012).

Graduate education constitutes the last stage of formal education and these programs are managed by graduate schools. The master's degree and the doctoral

degree programs are offered at this stage. In European countries, in addition to the term *post-graduate education*; the terms *graduate education, further education* and *continuing education* are used to refer to both higher and graduate education (Bamdas, 2014). These graduate programs combine both research and coursework. Graduate education differs from undergraduate education in terms of training and instruction. While undergraduate classes appeal to larger groups, graduate education appeals to smaller groups in which individual effort and self-directed learning are essential. Deeper training is provided in graduate education with increased specialization (Targonski, 2003). In higher education institutions, it is aimed by the graduate education that being examined carefully by some administrators, faculty members, students, and other stakeholders (Robinson, 2008). To this end, graduate education provides more specialized education in a particular field or a sub-field. Furthermore, a well-qualified graduate education program improves skills of problem solving, academic writing, oral presentation and technology usage (Ebel, 2010).

The lexical meaning of master's degree is ''an advanced college or university degree'' (Cambridge University Press, 2017), and the term also represents the second level of the higher education system after baccalaureate study. In general, the Master's degree indicates an advanced knowledge and understanding in particular fields, or practical and theoretical expertise in a special subject or profession, and it is directly linked to the continuing process of professional development in some particular areas (UniversitiesUK & GuildHE, 2010). These programs are generally provided in universities or equivalent higher education institutions. In master's degree education, there is a variety of education programs both with and without thesis, and the degrees are awarded in many fields either academic or professional. Academic master's degree programs include Master of Science (M.S.) and Master of Arts (M.A.) degrees. A M.S. degree is awarded in both social and natural science fields (e.g. arts, education, engineering and agriculture) (Targonski, 2003). According to The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2015), both M.S. and M.A. degree programs aim to prepare students for different stages in their future careers, whether in the academic or professional field or in a different type of employment.

In an academic master's program with thesis, it is necessary to complete a research project or thesis to be awarded (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization institute for Statistics (UIS), 2012). A master's thesis is one of the most important requirements of master's degree programs in most of the national higher education systems. The thesis process generally involves a complete original research performance with the help of an individual supervisor (de Kleijn, Mainhard, Meijer, Pilot, & Brekelmans, 2012). It is aimed, by means of the master thesis, to deepen students' understanding, abilities and approaches within the framework of the education provided. Broadly, a master thesis is used by the student as a way to reflect his/her knowledge and skills necessary for autonomous work as Master of Art/Science (Rilby, 2016). Moreover, the completion of a master's thesis successfully is a preliminary step for starting a doctoral degree. Master's degree is a requirement of admission for most doctoral programs.

The last step of the graduate education is the doctorate program, which aims to train research scholars and faculty members for higher education institutions (Targonski, 2003). Tinker and Jackson (2004) stated that the doctoral degree (Ph.D.) is the highest academic competence officially awarded by higher education institutions. Moreover, a Ph.D. degree is a significant reward with international validity. It reflects accumulated knowledge and training in research skills to be a scholar in a specific field (Johnston, 1997). Until the early twenty-first century, the only purpose of pursuing a doctorate program was to have an academic profession, but today, a doctorate degree provides a variety of professional opportunities for graduates. On the other hand, students attend doctorate programs out of personal interest without any professional concerns.

Doctoral education programs include advanced coursework and seminars in addition to a complete scientific research (dissertation) with the guidance of a supervisor (Targonski, 2003). Writing a dissertation is one of the essential requirements of doctoral programs. Furthermore, writing a thesis provides students with an opportunity to learn how to conduct research. Hamilton, Johnson and Poudrier (2010) state that during the dissertation process, students are required to use further skills like analytical thinking, problem solving and technology use to reach knowledge. Consequently, the quality of a dissertation is the indicator of ''how much

effort the student has investigated in the program as well as how much society can benefit from the higher education doctoral program'' (Laosum, Kanjanawasee, & Pitayanon, 2016, p.139).

As in the case of a master's degree, different doctoral degrees are awarded in doctoral education. Ph.D. (doctor of philosophy) is the most frequently awarded degree at this level, and other degrees are awarded based on professional disciplines (National Science Foundation, 2014). In the Turkish Higher Education context, all graduate programs serve as academic graduate programs and only M.S. and Ph.D. degrees are awarded to students NSF who graduate from master's and doctorate programs. In the current study, both graduate programs and degrees refer to M.S. and Ph.D.

Graduate Education in the Field of Education

Education is described as a multi-disciplinary field, which also serves as a system to educate students. Moreover, the study of education has a variety of sub-specialties which require special knowledge, such as educational administration, teacher training, special education and educational psychology (Golde & Walker, 2006; Walker, Golde, Jones, Conklin Bueschel, & Hutchings, 2008).

Today, education has become one of the high producing disciplines of graduate degrees. In United States, approximately 13% of all doctorates were awarded in the field of education in 2012 (Gonzales, Allum & Sowell, 2013). While ''traditionally the Ph.D. has focused on research and scholarship while emphasizing greater breadth and depth in theory and research methodology (Dobbs, 2016, p.41)'', in graduate programs in the field of education, classroom practices and research skills are combined to improve skills of students as faculty members, researchers and practitioners. Wiseman (2017) suggests that in general, these programs aim to teach learners' characteristics, developmental properties, contextual influences, educational practices and policy issues which are effective on teaching and learning. In general, graduate programs in the field of education operate within the Graduate School of Education, and the curriculum of a graduate program depends on the specialized knowledge of the sub-specialty of the field, such as educational administration, teacher training, special education and educational psychology (Masterman, 2014).

Master of Arts or Doctor in Philosophy degrees do not require one to be a teacher in most countries, but many inspiring teachers opt to pursue an advanced degree in a sub-specialty of education (Feiman-Nemser, 1989). For instance, having an advanced degree in early childhood education is a good way to enhance professional knowledge and career potential. Moreover, a graduate degree in early childhood education provides various opportunities for teachers not only in the classroom environment but also out of the classroom. Having a graduate degree in early childhood education is an integral part of a career in academia and prepares one for positions as an administrator or a lead teacher in early childhood education settings. Furthermore, these graduate programs enable teachers to promote learning and development in young children who are from diverse cultural backgrounds and have different abilities in preschool settings (Guha, 2017).

An advanced degree in early childhood education programs include coursework and applied activities. Additionally, conducting original research (M.S. thesis and doctoral dissertation) is a common requirement. The purpose of graduate theses is to equip students with specialized skills and advanced knowledge in early childhood pedagogy, technology, administration, community collaboration and policy analysis (The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), 2017).

In addition to the contribution graduate programs make to teachers and the teaching itself, graduate studies also enhance the literature of the studied field. According to Jin (2004), graduate studies consist of valuable knowledge, which is produced by scholars and experts that serve in the field. Moreover, the studies shed light on the amount of research that has been conducted until the current study and serve as a foundation for future graduate studies.

Considering the significance of graduate studies regarding early childhood education in Turkey, the current study aims to reveal the descriptive characteristics, methodological procedures and statistical techniques used in M.S. theses and Ph.D. dissertations disregarding the year or the department in which the study was conducted.

1.2.   **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the current study is threefold: (1) to investigate descriptive characteristics of master's theses and doctoral dissertations regarding early childhood education in Turkey in order to obtain a full picture of the investigated theses without any department or time limitation; (2) to investigate contextual characteristics of master's theses and doctoral dissertations regarding early childhood education in Turkey, and (3) to investigate methodological procedures of master's theses and doctoral dissertations regarding early childhood education in Turkey to reveal the research trends based on research methods and statistical techniques used in these theses. As a result of this study, the body of the early childhood education literature will be framed inclusively.

1.3.   Research Questions

The following research questions will be answered by analyzing master's theses and doctoral dissertations:

1)   What are the descriptive characteristics (university, institute, department, publication year, language of thesis and the degree held by the advisor) of master's theses and doctoral dissertations regarding early childhood education in Turkey?

2)   What are the contextual characteristics (research topic) of master's theses and doctoral dissertations regarding early childhood education in Turkey?

3)   What are the methodological procedures (the sample group, the city where the study took place, research setting of the study, the type of research, instruments, the statistical analysis and sampling methods) of the master's theses and doctoral dissertations regarding early childhood education in Turkey?

1.4.   Significance of the Study

Doing scientific research, producing information, disseminating produced information and making new discoveries are the social functions of universities. Graduate studies have a significance value in terms of producing scientific knowledge. Investigating this scientific knowledge provides the opportunity to

evaluate the current situation of the investigated field (Kaya, Yazıcı, Deliveli, & Hoşgörür, 2015). Master's theses and doctoral dissertations are the most comprehensive examples of scientific studies conducted in each field (Ahi & Kıldan, 2013). Each year numerous graduate studies have been conducted in higher education programs and these studies contribute to the literature. In Turkey, 22,803 dissertations have been awarded in higher education institutes in 2016 (Council of Higher Education, 2017). Increase in the number of scientific studies in a field makes the compilation of these studies obligatory to provide a common view to the field. In addition, according to Hart (2000), compilation of scientific studies is necessary (1) to reveal which aspects of the field were studied, and which aspects and variables of the field have not yet been investigated, (2) to gain a perspective related with the field, (3) to compose the content of the field and (4) to specify methods and techniques which were used in these studies. Moreover, qualitative and quantitative information about scientific studies conducted in a field sheds light on the scope of the current situation of the field (Yıldız, 2004).

The current study aims to investigate the descriptive characteristics, research methods and statistical techniques of master's theses and doctoral dissertations regarding early childhood education in Turkey. Hence, the study brings studies on early childhood education to light. In this study, early childhood education is considered as an interdisciplinary field, and ample studies from different departments were included in the sample of the study. Thus, the study is of unique significance in relation to attracting the interest of other fields to the early childhood education.

Descriptive characteristics of the theses, such as university, publication year, major and academic degree of the advisor were provided in the study. According to Rone (1998), describing characteristics of theses belonging to a higher education program in a country promotes information about the state of higher education of the country. Thus, the study will contribute to our knowledge about Turkish Higher Education. In addition, the study serves as a means of assessing the higher education programs in Turkey by a research based overview.

As the study gathers all early childhood education theses, it provides a comprehensive literature review built upon graduate studies produced by scholars. Results also aided in recognizing the aspects of early childhood education, which

subjects are well presented and which subjects are undervalued. In this way, a national dialogue can be constructed about the future of early childhood education in the Turkish context.

This study offers a starting point for research candidates. Results of the study also include information about sampling (the sample group and size) and settings (areas of study and schools) of previous studies. Therefore, the study emphasizes the neglected areas of the early childhood education discipline and intercepts reputation of the same studies.

Findings of the study include information about methodological procedures of early childhood education graduate theses published between the years 1987- 2016. According to Duncan and Pnyzwansky (1988), graduate studies represent the most current methodological trends in the area of research. Therefore, findings of the current study provide information about current methodological and statistical trends together with the prevalence of different methods and statistical analysis used in early childhood education graduate studies. Moreover, the results provide an opportunity to observe the change in the methodological preferences of the scholars over the years.

Finally, describing the current state of early childhood education theses and dissertations will contribute to the early childhood education research community and provide the opportunity to make comparisons between early childhood education studies in Turkey and other countries.

In fact, when the body of early childhood education literature was examined, similar studies investigating early childhood education departments could be found (Altun, Şendil, & Şahin, 2011; Ahi & Kıldan, 2013; Durukan, Atalay & Şen, 2014). Unfortunately, however, these studies remain uninfluential because of their limited content and scope. Hence, as the current study involves a comprehensive analysis with a large sample group and an interdisciplinary understanding, the study is significant in addressing the gap in the literature.

1.5. Limitation of the Study

In this study, the researcher collected the graduate theses via the National Theses Database. Because of time and budget limitations, university libraries could not be searched.

During the content analysis process, it is assumed that the researchers have defined their studies' descriptive characteristics, methodological procedures and contextual characteristics of their studies in a correct way.

1.6.   Definition of Terms

Higher Education: ''*Means formal education beyond high school, but includes education in community or state colleges, vocational education, apprenticeship programs at colleges including tribal colleges, entry-level undergraduate programs as well as the final two years of an undergraduate program, and any professional development courses taken at an undergraduate institution*'' (Bamdas, 2014, p.117).

Graduate Education: ''*… is an education activity which leads to have a graduate degree in university, contributes to knowledge base by means of scientific research and aims to train scientists and instructors to meet the needs of developing society*'' (Higher Education law no. 2547).

Dissertation: ''*... fulfils two major purposes: 1) it is an intensive, highly professional experience, the successful completion of which demonstrates the candidate's ability to address a major intellectual problem and arrive at a successful conclusion independently and at a high level of professional competence, and (2) its results constitute an original contribution to knowledge in the field*'' (Council of Graduate Schools, 1991, p.21).

Thesis: ''*… is used to satisfy academic requirement for a graduate degree*'' (West, 1992, p.132)

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, literature related with the research topic and studies investigated in theses and dissertations are presented by the researcher. First of all, an overview of higher education and teacher training systems in Turkey is provided. Subsequently, sample studies investigated in theses and dissertations from both the national and international literature are presented.

Higher Education System in Turkey

The Turkish education system consists of formal and non-formal education. Formal education includes preschool education, primary education, secondary education and higher education. Higher education includes four different types of degrees: associate degree, undergraduate degree, master's and doctorate degrees. Master's and doctorate programs are graduate programs (Karakütük, 2000). According to the law no. 2547 in higher education, article 3. defines graduate education as ''*an education activity which leads to have a graduate degree in university, contributes to knowledge base by means of scientific research and aims to train scientists and instructors to meet the needs of a developing society.*'' Higher education degrees are defined by the Council of Higher Education (YÖK, 2014) as follows:

Associate Degree: Awarded at the end of 2 two years of education. The associate degree programs are offered by universities and post-secondary vocational schools. Some distance education programs are also available. The associate degree programs may require a period of on-the-job training.

Bachelor's Degree: Awarded after the completion of a four-year course of study. The duration of study for dentistry, veterinary medicine and pharmacy is five

years and that of medicine is six years. The qualifications in these four fields are considered to be the equivalent of a Master's degree.

Master's degree: is a higher education program, a follow up education of undergraduate education and the program aims to present results of training activities and scientific research.

Doctorate degree: is a higher education program which includes either at least six semesters following a graduate program or at least four semesters following an undergraduate program or a specialization gained in a laboratory area based on the principals determined by the Ministry of Health by a medical school or faculty of pharmacy student, aims to present results of an original research.

Specialty in medicine: is a higher education program based on principals determined by the Ministry of Health. The program aims to provide the necessary skills and competence in a specific branch of medicine to medical doctors who complete the program carried out in the Ministry of Health, universities, social insurance institution and other training and research hospitals.

Proficiency in art: is a higher education program equivalent to a doctoral degree which includes at least eight semesters following a graduate program or at least four semesters following a master's program and aims to stage an authentic art piece if conducted in the departments of music or performing arts, requiring creativity and outstanding performance.

Functions of graduate education, which are very similar to those of the undergraduate education are basically generating and spreading science/art, perceiving the societal problems correctly and producing possible solutions, and contributing to the development of qualified man power (Arıcı, 2001; Tosun, 2001; Yılmaz, 2008; Karaman & Bakırcı, 2010). The degree to which universities perform these functions has changed in the historical process varies from one country to country and the level of development (Dahlman, 2007).

Throughout history, functions of production, interpretation, enrichment, critic and transportation of the knowledge have been associated with higher education institutions and universities. Cultivating the new generation, improving the cultural and scientific accumulation of knowledge and enhancing critical thought are other functions attributed to universities. Furthermore, higher education institutions,

especially universities, have a significant role in shaping the future of societies. Institutions have an impact on the society by producing and transferring knowledge, circulating innovative and critical perspectives, improving the quality of workforce and providing freedom of expression. As a result, governments regard the universities as effective institutions (Keohane, 2006). In addition to these functions, higher education institutions have their own social and educational aims, which are shaped by educational philosophies.

Higher education is a platform that teaches cultural and national values, contributes to the moral development, creates future citizens, and prepares the next generation of leaders of a society. Thus, higher education is an arena where university students will be preparing to shape the future direction of a country, and in this context, Turkey (Mabokela & Seggie, 2008).

The main purpose of the Turkish higher education system is to provide students with education in order for them to be loyal to Ataturk, preserve his reforms and principles, understand cultural values, and develop a sense of national unity (YÖK, n.d.c). In addition, the higher education is regarded as a vehicle to a better life and career, so it is one step higher in the society ladder (Metz, 1995).

Durkheim defends that higher education has been redefined according to changing socio-economic conditions, and it has undergone significant conversions in accordance with these changing definitions (Serrano-Velarde, 2008). The most important revolution in higher education is that it became accessible for a larger segment of the society after World War II. Up until this time, higher education has been available for a close associate of the society. Codling and Meek (2006, p.2) listed five phases in the development of higher education after World War II all around the world as follows:

1. Rapid expansion in the 1950s and 1960s

2. Diversification in the 1960s and early 1970s

3. Consolidation and the establishment of more economical alternatives to the university in the late 1970s

4. A focus on specific issues, such as diversity, quality improvement, efficiency and internationalization in the 1980s, and

5. Reduction in public expenditure and a focus on economic viability in the 1990s.

The history of Higher education in Turkey can be traced back to 1933, when the first university was established in İstanbul. The first higher education attempt was made in the tenth year of the Republic Period, in 1933. The first 14-item law no. 2252 in higher education was enacted on June 1, 1933 (Dölen, 2009; İhsanoğlu, 2010; Günay & Günay, 2011). Turkish universities had academic and institutional autonomy thanks to the university law issued in 1946 (Metz, 1995). In 1960, with article no.120, 'university' was mentioned in the constitution for the first time (Tekeli, 2010). The Council of Higher Education was mentioned in the 4th article of Law of Universities, issued in 1973, but the article was canceled by the constitutional court. After ten years, The Law of Higher Education (No.2547) was issued in 1981 (Günay & Günay, 2011). Until 1981, there were four types of higher education institutions: universities, academies, vocational schools and teacher training institutes. While universities had institutional autonomy but were financially state governed, the academies, vocational schools and teacher training institutions were, in all respects, under the control of the Ministry of Education. In 1981, with the enactment of the basic Law on Higher Education (No. 2547) (YÖK, 1981), higher education in Turkey was comprehensively reorganized. The system thereby has gained a centralized structure, with all the higher education institutions bound to the Higher Education Council (HEC). Duties of the HEC include planning, coordinating, and supervising higher education. State universities are strictly under the control of HEC, and private universities are regulated by special provisions (Metz, 1995).

By this restructuring movement, all institutions of higher education were designated as universities. The expansion of higher education throughout the country was consolidated, access to higher education was centralized, and a central university entrance exam was introduced. Student contribution fees at public universities were also introduced, and non-profit foundations were allowed to establish private higher education institutions. Since then, both public and private universities have been controlled and supervised by the Council of Higher Education, which regularly checks these programs (Mizikaci, 2006). Some of the reorganizations made during the Republic Period, 1931, 1946 and 1981, are defined as 'revolutions' in the Turkish

Higher Education System (Ataünal, 1993). There was a steady increase in the number of universities in Turkey between 1933 and 1982. Until 1982, the number of state universities was 19 and in 1982, eight new state universities were established. In 1984, the first private university, Bilkent University, was established by the İhsan Doğramacı Foundation. With the establishment of 24 state universities in 1992, the number of universities increased to 54 (53 state universities and 1 private university). In 2017, over 6.5 million higher education students are currently enrolled at universities or distance education programs. In total, there are 183 universities (112 state universities, 65 private universities and 6 private vocational schools of higher education) in Turkey, in which each province has at least one public university. The number of students enrolled in higher education programs is presented in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1. Number of Higher Education Students (the 2015-2016 academic year)

	f	%
Associate Degree	2 285 406	34.2
Bachelor's Degree	3 900 601	58.3
Master's Degree	417 084	6.2
Doctorate	86 094	1.3
Total	6 689 185	100

The main language of instruction in Turkish higher education institutions is Turkish, but English, German and French are also used as the language of instruction in some universities, in which one year of preparatory school education is given to provide students with language education. In addition, some universities apply curricula in which 30% of the courses are implemented in English (YÖK, 2015). There are two types of education in the Turkish higher education system, the first of which is face to face education and the second of which is distance education. Although most higher education institutions implement face to face education, today distance learning or e-learning programs are offered by means of many open faculties of universities. The first distance higher education program was initiated by Anadolu University in 1982. In Turkey, state universities are founded and financed by the government. However, these universities also generate revenue from student

fees, publications, sales and institutions. Private universities are established and financed by foundations, but they also depend on student fees (YÖK, 2015).

As in the rest of the world, the quality assurance issue is one of the current issues on the agenda of the Turkish Higher Education Council, and participating in the Bologna Process is a significant step toward the process of quality assurance.

The Turkish Higher Education and the Bologna Process

Changing economic conditions and increasing comparativeness among higher education institutions compelled European countries to found a way to make their higher education institutions internationally recognized, which requires meeting the requirements of a number of quality assurance systems. As a result, the Bologna Process Agreement, which provides comparability in the quality of higher education qualifications, was signed by European countries in 1999 (Bugday, 2014). The Bologna process showed that many reforms were needed to provide comparability and competitiveness, so targets of the Bologna Process agreements were listed as below:

•Enhancement of the capacity of European Higher Education to compete at an international level.

•Establishment of a European Higher Education Area and development of European Higher Education worldwide.

•Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, also through the implementation of the Diploma Supplement, in order to promote European citizens' employability and the international competitiveness of the European Higher Education System.

•Adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate. Access to the second cycle shall require successful completion of first cycle studies, lasting a minimum of three years. The degree awarded after the first cycle shall also be relevant to the European labor market as an appropriate level of qualification. The second cycle should lead to the master and/or doctorate degree as in many European countries.

- Establishment of a system of credits - such as in the ECTS system - as a proper means of promoting the most widespread student mobility.

- Promotion of mobility by overcoming obstacles to the effective exercise of free movement for students, researchers, academicians and administrative staff (Erçetin, 2006, p. 19).

Turkey has become a part of the Bologna Process in 2001 in a Bologna meeting in Prague. Since then, there has been an increasing concern about increasing the quality in academic works in Turkish universities. Buğday (2013) states that with the Bologna Process ''Turkey has set priorities in aligning its higher education system with those of other European countries. This has steered Turkey's educational system onto a path of internationalization, which is projected to produce internationally competitive students.'' Moreover, the Bologna Process aims to create a common education system for all partner countries by using the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS or AKTS) with the two-cycle higher education system (undergraduate and graduate) and promotion of lifelong learning. CoHE gave importance to fulfilling the requirements of the Bologna process and made regulations especially to ensure quality assurance criteria. Moreover, mobility among countries for students, academics and staff is provided by educational programs like ERASMUS, Socrates and Youth programs (Köse, 2014).

Although Turkey actively participates in the Bologna Process, as the universities are not aware of the opportunities provided by the Bologna Declaration, neither the universities nor the university staff and students can benefit from these opportunities. In addition, as higher education institutions, especially the state universities, have different problems, such as lack of financial and administrative autonomy, these universities are not competitive enough (Erçetin, 2006). On the other hand, the Bologna Survey, which was conducted in the same year, indicated that Turkey did not face any serious problems while implementing the objectives of the Bologna Declaration (Association of European School of Planning Bologna Survey, 2006).

A study by Bugday (2014), which aimed to investigate the effects of the Bologna Process on the quality assurance of the Turkish higher education system, concluded that the Bologna Process had a positive effect on the Turkish Higher

Education system, and accelerated the quality assurance movements of CoHE. In the same study, Bugday also reports that higher education institutions should become autonomous entities in order to have an efficient and effective higher education system in Turkey.

Graduate Education in Turkey

In today's world, graduate education has a significant value as it contributes to both social and individual welfare. Zhang (2004) states that graduate education not only serves as a fundamental stage of human capital accumulation but is also regarded as a prerequisite for most of the well-paid and highly demanded professions. In addition to economic gains, graduate education provides a high social status for individuals.

According to Bourdieu (1984), people have different reasons to pursue graduate or professional studies. Although most of the time it is the economic gains that attract people, others pursue graduate education as they consider gaining an advanced degree as an important success for them. Another study, conducted by Gill and Hoppe in 2009, proposed five common reasons to pursue graduate education: becoming a part of academia, developing and advancing professionally, embarking on a new career and enhancing oneself.

Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) stated that one of the most significant functions of education and graduate schools is transmitting the most complex form of knowledge to the modern society. In the same years, Foucault (1995) argued that one of the functions of educational institutions is producing 'docile bodies' that do not have the ability to think critically. On the other hand, Yamamoto (2013) refutes Foucault's idea by means of her study, proving the idea that graduate education and graduate schools train students to become critical thinkers. Furthermore, Yamamoto states that graduate education functions as an increase in self-awareness and developing individual having agency. Moreover, the Council of Graduate Schools and Educational Testing Service (2010) emphasize the importance of graduate education by describing graduate education as going beyond the undergraduate education which provides students with solely advanced knowledge and skills in a

certain area. Graduate education aims to produce creative thinkers and innovators. Thus, graduate education ''*is the application of knowledge and skills in creative and innovative ways that will help ensure our country's future economic prosperity, influence social growth and maintain our leadership position in the global economy*'' (Council of Graduate Schools and Educational Testing Service, 2010, p.1). As the graduate education is of capital importance for the future of countries, all countries around the world (with different levels of development) place increasing emphasis on graduate education. Moreover, reforms have been made according to the aims and the structure of graduate education (Ibiş, 2014). Turkey is one of the countries which made reforms in the structure of graduate education.

In Turkey, graduate education was applied as a 3- to 4-year doctorate program in the form of master-apprentice relationship until the end of the 1960s (Karaman & Bakırcı, 2010). The master's degree program was not regarded as part of the graduate program yet. Since there were no formal graduate education programs provided by universities during that time period, these programs were not available for non-research assistant graduate students. This program, generally guided by a professor, was completed with a doctorate dissertation. Between the years of 1970-1982, graduate education was categorized as a master's and a doctorate degree based on the U.S.A. model, and writing a thesis was made compulsory for each stage (Bozan, 2012). As of the 1970s, a two-stage program, including first a master's and then a doctorate degree, has started to be implemented. Until today, rules and methods of this graduate education program have been totally or partially amended many times in accordance with regulations (Çakar, 1997). In 1981, according to the law on Higher Education (no. 2547) article 65, it is stated that the principles of teaching within the scope of graduate education are arranged by a regulation issued by the Interuniversity Board (RG.1981: 17506). One year after the law was enacted; the graduate training activities which were conducted in faculties were transferred over to graduate schools. Today in Turkey, all graduate education related activities are carried out by graduate schools based on the principles of the Council of Higher Education (CoHE). Until this time, the German Graduate Education System was taken as a model in graduate education, but together with the regulation issued in

1981, the U.S. model, which is still in use, has started to be applied (Ağıralioğlu, 2013).

In developing countries, reforms aim to increase the rate of higher education schooling, to improve and expand graduate education, to promote the economic leadership of universities by developing high technological devices, to constitute high quality graduate education programs, to prepare a substructure for universities and research, and to train qualified university staff in and out of the country (Johnson, 2009). In 1981, the Turkish higher education system had 19 state universities and approximately an overall schooling rate of 6% with 237 000 students in total, while in 2017 the number of universities has increased to 183, 112 of which are state universities, 65 are private universities and 6 are private vocational high schools. By the year 2016, the overall higher education schooling rate was about 94% and the number of students enrolled in higher education had exceeded 6 million (Günay & Günay, 2016). As a result, the Turkish higher education does not only have a large and complex structure both also a universal stage with 12,209 master's programs, 5281 doctorate programs, 130 proficiency in arts and 26,110 undergraduate programs (CoHE, 2017).

To apply to graduate programs, applicants are required to have an undergraduate degree and a score of at least 55 from the Academic Personnel and Postgraduate Education Entrance Exam (ALES) according to the type of program implemented. In addition to the undergraduate GPA, written or oral exam points are considered in the evaluation of graduate program applicants (CoHE, 2016)

Master's Degree Programs in Turkey

Within the framework of the undergraduate education regulation, there are two types of master's degree programs: non-thesis master's program and master's with thesis. It is possible to transfer from a non-thesis program to a master's degree program with the recommendation of the department and the decision of the graduate school administration. Furthermore, the Higher Education Council (CoHE, 2016) made it possible to institute distance education programs in higher education institutions by using information and communication technologies.   A master's

program with thesis consists of seven courses including at least 21 credits, a seminar course and a thesis study. Seminar and thesis studies are non-credit courses and are assessed as successful or unsuccessful. On the other hand, non-thesis master's programs aim to make students gain in-depth information about the profession and to demonstrate how to apply theoretical knowledge into practice (CoHE, 2016).

According to regulations enforced by the Higher Education Council in 2015, to initiate a master's degree program in a faculty, it is required to have a total of three lecturers, at least two of whom need to be either professors or associate professors.

Doctoral Degree Programs in Turkey

Doctorate programs provide students with independent study, equipping them with the skills of problem solving, interpreting, analyzing and synthesizing. As indicated in the 2017 Postgraduate Education and Training Regulation of Dokuz Eylül University, ''Doctorate program for the ones accepted with master's degree with thesis consists of eight semesters (max. 12 semesters) as beginning from the semester in which the lessons about the program applied are given without looking whether enrolled or not for each semester excluding the time which passes during scientific preparation, for the ones accepted with the undergraduate degree, it consists 10 semesters (max. 14 semesters).''.

The criterion for a doctorate program is having a total of six lecturers, at least two of whom are professors or one professor and two associate professors. In addition to this criterion, the departments providing these programs should have the essential qualities, such as libraries and laboratories (CoHE, 2015).

Teacher Training and Graduate Education of Teachers in Turkey

Formal teacher education covers all the training activities (pre-service and in-service) aiming to equip teachers with the required knowledge, skills and attitudes for teaching (UIS, 2009). According to Enes (2013), teacher education programs are updated based on the policies of countries. In addition, the definition of teachers varies based on the political context.The difference between the Turkish and German

teacher training systems could be given as examples. To be a preschool, elementary school or secondary school teacher in Turkey, it is necessary to complete a bachelor's degree in teaching programs (Kamal, 2017). On the other hand, in Germany, in addition to university training, teachers receive a two-year practical education in order to start teaching (Humbold University of Berlin, 2011). As Tarman stated,

> ''… As globalization and knowledge societies expand, reform on the teacher education programs is becoming an important issue because teachers are always seen as moderators of a changing society. Consequently, countries had to improve their educational systems in order to provide their people enough knowledge to use this technology. Paralleling fast changes in Turkish society, like in other countries, there have been some changes in the purpose of the functioning of education. Hence, the necessity to make improvements in teacher preparation and training is a current issue.'' (Tarman, 2010, p. 78).

The major reform in the teacher training system in Turkey was established in 1973. In the same year, the 'Basic Law for National Education', which made higher education for teachers compulsory, was accepted. Since this time, teacher training schools have been transferred to higher teacher training schools, and educational institutions, which provide a two-year post-secondary education, started to train classroom teachers for elementary schools. The next major reform in the teacher training system in Turkey was made in 1981. With the establishment of the Council of Higher education, the Ministry of National Education transferred the responsibility for teacher training to CoHE. Four-year teacher training colleges were transferred to faculties of education. In 1989, with the decision of CoHE, a four-year undergraduate education program within education faculties were made compulsory for all teachers regardless of the level they teach. Until this time, the duration of the education process of elementary education departments within education faculties was increased to four years (Binbaşıoğlu, 1995; Gürşimşek, Kaptan & Erkan, 1997; Çakıroğlu & Çakıroğlu, 2003). All the reforms made in the Turkish teacher training system were parallel to the trends in teacher training in European countries (Clay & George, 200).

CoHE made another significant attempt in the academic year of 1998-99 to establish an accreditation system for education faculties by means of the World Bank Pre-Service Teacher Education Project. The project proposed to improve the quality

of teacher education in Turkey, and teacher education programs applied in education faculties were restructured with this purpose. As CoHE did not make any changes in the previous standardized curricula, the project only affected the quality of teacher qualifications county-wide (Bugday, 2014). Eris and Durman (2011) argued that the project was not able to meet the current requirements of teacher training programs as the project did not aim to increase flexibility and the diversity required for higher education. Grossman, Sand and Brittingham (2010) stated the reason of failure as inconsistency in the management of the process and the lack of a follow-up program subsequent to the pilot project.

Relations with Europe have also been influential on teacher training programs in Turkey. In 2003, Turkey attended the European Higher Education Area Project, which aimed to describe the same learning outcomes of undergraduate programs by determining the subjects of the programs and also the duration and methods to teach these subjects. To secure similar standards with the European higher education, education faculties needed to undergo a reform, and in accordance with this purpose, in 2006, the teacher training program was updated (CoHE, 2007). Other reasons for updating undergraduate teacher training programs were to renew the primary education program and to train well-equipped teachers having knowledge and skills gained by the age. A new teacher training undergraduate program, which also included 16 early childhood education programs, was put into practice in the 2006/07 academic year. The major innovation of the new training program was made in relation to the content of the program; the new program included 50% subject knowledge and skills, 30% professional teaching knowledge and skills and 20% general knowledge. The current teacher training program applied in Turkey is consistent with the teacher training programs applied in European Union countries, and the program aims to train teachers who teach how to learn (HEC, 2007). The current teacher training program started to be applied in the 2006/07 academic year and is still in application. This program is also applied in all undergraduate education programs in the faculty of education of 90 universities. The program lasts 8 semesters and entails teaching field knowledge, professional teaching knowledge and general knowledge within 127 theoretical, 48 practices, 151 course credits in total.

Graduate Education in the Field of Education

The significant role of the teaching profession in the development of a country is known by all communities around the world, and variations in regulations have been made by governments with respect to this notion. Studies on developing the teaching profession show that professional development is imperative for teachers in order for them to carry out the profession as required and to increase the quality of education provided at schools (Cerqua, Gauthier & Dembélé, 2014). In an environment where the knowledge base is constantly growing, teachers, who are the most significant part of the system, need to be more qualified. In fact, the role of graduate education in terms of increasing the quality of teachers and educationalists cannot be ignored (Karakütük, 2000). Furthermore, the effects of the labor market have begun to be become influential on the educational institutions, which supply labor for markets, as in many other areas. The increase in the number of jobseekers holding a bachelor's degree directs people to seek a graduate education degree and to become equipped with different qualities. In this regard, graduate education could be seen as an investment in oneself to increase future revenue and social status (Bülbül, 2003). On the other hand, when we consider the national education system of Turkey, it is possible to fulfill the functions of a high-quality education by means of graduate education in the field of education by means of

Training qualified teachers

Training qualified education managers

Developing high-quality education programs

Developing, applying and evaluating highly valid and reliable assessment tools

Executing high-quality student counsel services (Hacettepe University Workshop Report, 2012).

In both national and international literature, there are a lot of studies addressing teachers' expectations from graduate education (Oluk & Çolak, 2005; Kyriacou & Kunc, 2007; Bertram, Mthiyane & Mukeredzi, 2012; Turhan and Yaraş, 2013). International studies prove the idea that teachers prefer graduate education to promote personal growth and to learn new methods and techniques (Kyriacou & Kunc, 2007; Bertram, Mthiyane & Mukeredzi, 2012). Furthermore, results of a study

conducted by Oluk and Çolak in 2005 indicate that academic career and working in universities are some basic reasons underlying teachers' decisions to start graduate education. In addition, teachers think that graduate education contributes to their personal growth in terms of professional development in the field. It enables them to provide solutions for educational problems, fulfils their scientific curiosity, develop efficacy in educational programs, following innovations and wish to be trained in a sub-branch. According to Turhan and Yaraş (2013), graduate education meets the expectations of teachers and school managers; the new acquisitions educator gains from graduate education programs go even beyond their expectations. Moreover, graduate education contributes to educators' professional qualifications like making decisions, using resources efficiently, cooperating with others, communicating effectively, impressing others and setting evaluation criteria. In 2007, Kuzu and Mecit identified problems that students of educational science graduate programs confronted and proposed solutions for these problems. In the directions of the results yielded by the study, the researchers categorized the problems of the students into two groups; problems caused by the organization that graduate students work at and their faculties. Negative attitudes of school managers and time limitations are problems caused by work places. The researchers suggest redefining authority of managers and adjusting course hours. Compulsory attendance and inadequate education counselling service are the problems that are caused by faculties. Based on these problems, the researchers recommend increasing counseling service and adjusting course schedules according to students' working hours (providing evening education and weekend courses). On the other hand, some incentives by the Ministry of National Education are another effective factor on graduate education in educational sciences, and some scientific studied are conducted to demonstrate the ministry's approach. According to the findings of these studies, the Ministry of National Education does not seem to be appreciative of the importance of higher education yet, and teachers are not encouraged to apply to postgraduate education programs. There is not a clear policy on higher education and the related legislation is not informative and explicit (Karakütük, 2000; Doğusan, 2003; Turhan & Yaraş, 2013). Similarly, Oluk and Çolak (2005) stated that teachers cannot benefit from their right that is legally recognized for their education, and any financial resource is

not provided for postgraduate education of teachers. Moreover, rewards for postgraduate education of teachers are dissatisfying.

In the current Turkish higher education system, graduate education programs are managed by graduate schools established by universities in accordance with the law on higher education issued on November 04, 1981. Graduate schools are described as higher education institutions in which postgraduate education, scientific research and applications of more than one similar or related department are made. In the organization and functioning of the Regulation of Higher Education published in the Official Newspaper on March 03, 1983, Graduate School of Social Sciences, Graduate School of Natural and Applied Sciences and Graduate School of Health Sciences are listed as the graduate schools offering graduate education in Turkey. The establishment of the Graduate School of Education based on the 30ᵗʰ article annexed to the law no. 2809. This article enables the Council of Ministers to establish a faculty, graduate school or a college within the scope of universities based on the proposal of the Board of Higher Education and the Ministry of National Education (Buluç, 2012). Currently in Turkey, there are 45 Graduate Schools of Educational Sciences actively functioning within the scope of 45 universities (CoHE, 2017). Beside these institutions, many postgraduate programs in the field of education are carried out within the scope of Graduate Schools of Social Sciences and Graduate Schools of Natural and Applied Sciences.

According to the Official Newspaper published on 19 April 2015 (No. 29331), postgraduate programs are opened on the basis of department and art majors of institutions or faculties, but the second article of the same law allows instituting a new graduate program under a different name from an existing department by means of presenting a proposal to the Board of the Institute, receiving the approval of the Senate and the permission of the Board of Higher Education (CoHE, 2015). In accordance with the related regulation, Graduate Schools of Educational Sciences mainly offer postgraduate programs (master's with and without thesis, and doctorate programs) on the basis of teacher training departments. In addition to these postgraduate programs, a variety of postgraduate programs which are not based on any department are available within Graduate School of Educational Sciences. Educational Management and Supervision, Curriculum and Instruction, Instructional

Technology, Social and Historical Foundations of Education and Assessment and Evaluation programs, which are sub-branches in the Educational Sciences department, are examples for these master's degree and doctorate programs. These programs are can be applied to by graduate students of any teacher training department (Buluç, 2012).

According to the Official Newspaper published on 19 April 2015 (No. 29331), graduate programs are established on the basis of departments and art majors of institutions or faculties, but the second article of the same law allows the institution of a new graduate program with a different name from an existing department by means of making a proposal to the Board of the Institute, receiving the approval of the Senate and the permission of the Board of Higher Education (CoHE, 2015). In accordance with the related regulation, Graduate Schools of Educational Sciences mainly provide postgraduate programs (master's with and without thesis, and doctorate programs) through the teacher training departments. In addition to these graduate programs, a variety of graduate programs which are not offered by any specific department is available within the Graduate School of Educational Sciences. Educational Management and Supervision, Curriculum and Instruction, Instructional Technology, Social and Historical Foundations of Education and Assessment and Evaluation programs, which are sub-branches in the Educational Science departments, are examples for these master's degree and doctorate programs. These programs can be applied to apply by graduate students from any teacher training department (Buluç, 2012).

The selection of students and the education programs are the critical aspects of graduate education. Graduate education is not a part of compulsory education. In order to fulfil the functions and the goals of the graduate education, it is essential to make a careful selection of students. In addition to high qualities, students should have the potential to learn and do research in order to be selected for a graduate program. Moreover, student selection should be done in accordance with the policies of the graduate program and the plan devised to train qualified human force needed for a country's development (Varış, 1973). Although student selection for graduate programs show variations across departments, graduate student candidates' foreign language exam score, graduate education entrance exam (ALES) score, grade-point

average of the previous faculty or institute they graduated from and oral exam score are considered as basic criteria (Alhas, 2006). Standards stipulated in the student selection regulations prepared by institutions should not be fall below the minimum requirements stated in the Higher Education Regulation published by CoHE (İşcan & Bırakmaz, 2012).

Along with the scientific studies on Graduate School of Educational Sciences in Turkey, annual workshop reports of educational science institutes provide information about the current situation of these higher education institutions. Studies on problems of and the need for a reconstruction of educational science institutes summarized these problems as follows (Buluç, 2012; Hacettepe University, 2012; Katılmış, Çelik & Kop, 2013)

• Graduate Schools of Educational Sciences should take part among the main institutes in the organization and functioning of the Regulation of Higher Education. In addition, CoHE should establish a unit dealing solely with graduate education to execute processes related with graduate education more rapidly and in the desired direction.

• Although the number of Graduate Schools of Educational Sciences has increased gradually, the number of faculty members holding a Ph.D. degree is not sufficient to fulfil the criteria of CoHE in relation to instituting a graduate education program. The inadequate number of faculty members with a Ph.D. degree causes problems related with both training and preparation of the thesis.

• As in the other Graduate Schools, Graduate Schools of Educational Sciences do not have their own teaching staff. The teaching staffs of faculties serve in departments and art majors of Graduate Schools at the same time. Therefore, this situation causes a jurisdictional dispute between institutes and faculties.

• One of the most significant problems of the Graduate School of Educational Sciences is a structural problem related with the building, classroom and technological substructure. Most of the Graduate Schools do not have their own classrooms and use classrooms located in faculties and post-secondary schools. This condition causes a decrease in the quality of the education provided.

• Another problem of Graduate Schools of Educational Sciences is related with courses that partake in the institutional cooperation program. These programs are

beneficial in that they provide cooperation among the Graduate Schools, but Graduate Schools scarcely have any cooperation with international educational organizations. To increase the quality of education given in the graduate programs and to be a global education institution, Graduate Schools should ensure this cooperation and open up to the world.

• Significant differences among curricula and course contents of collateral master's and doctorate degree programs carried out in different Graduate Schools cause serious problems in Graduate Schools of Educational Sciences. Because of the inadequate number of teaching staff in some of the Graduate Schools, some elective courses, even compulsory educational science courses, cannot be provided in graduate educational science programs.

• Inconsistency in the student selection criteria of Graduate Schools of Educational Sciences is also one of these problems. There are significant differences in the student selection applications of Graduate Schools for collateral graduate programs. CoHE defines the minimal criteria for the student selection examination for graduate programs in regulation, but each institute applies different criteria academic personnel and graduate education entrance exam, foreign language exam, diploma grade and oral exam scores. In this process, setting common standards to increase the quality of education is crucial for graduate schools.

On the other hand, as Johnson stated in the National Science Foundation Workshop (2009), the relationship between industry and universities, state investments in graduate education and mobility of graduate students are considered as common problems of world countries regarding graduate education.

Need of Academic Staff for Higher Education

In universities, the high number of students per instructor, course overload, and deficiency in the number of training programs geared towards the teaching staff, crowded student population, deficiency in physical conditions and financial difficulties cause a decrease in the level of quality and productivity in higher education (Manolova, 2005). To reach the highest potential in higher education and increase the quality of the education provided, these problems should be resolved. In

Turkey, the most fundamental problem of the higher education system is training qualified teaching staff. Demand for academic staff has been on Turkey's agenda for a very long time and continue to be so (Karakütük & Bülbül, 2009). According to research on higher education in Turkey, there are four main reasons underlying the increase in demand for academic staff;

• Rapid increase in the number of higher education institutions as a result of high demand for higher education,

• Transfer of qualified academic staff from public universities to private foundation universities,

• Establishment of many secondary education programs in universities,

• The academic staff's demands to live and work in developed cities, such as İstanbul, Ankara and İzmir (Günay & Günay, 2011; Karaman, 2007; Karakütük & Özdemir, 2009; Özer, 2011; Sargın, 2007; Erdoğan, 2013).

When the number of academic staff in different fields was examined, it was observed that the faculty of education is one of those faculties that have the highest number of students per academic staff. In many faculties, the number of students per academic staff is about 20, but in education faculties, the number increases to about 32 (Özoğlu, 2010). In addition to the high teaching staff-student ratio, the course load per academic staff is about 20 hours. This amount is two and a half times higher than the standard course hour of a teaching staff stated in the Strategy Plan of CoHE (Eğitim-Sen, 2008).

As improving the capacity of higher education depends on improving the capacity of academic staff, education faculties should seek to meet the deficit of faculty members with Ph.D. In line with this purpose of increasing the quality and expanding the research capacity of higher education, it is necessary to train academic staff for every institution (Arıcı, 2001).

In order to meet the demand of academic staff, different practices have been made at one time or another. Having students study at high quality universities within the country and then sending students abroad for graduate education by governmental agencies like MoNE and CoHE are the main examples of these practices (Karakütük & Bülbül, 2009). Beside these practices, faculty members from abroad were transferred into the country in order to have the required teaching staff

in universities (Kahraman, 2009). Another practice that has recently been initiated is the Faculty Development Program (Öğretim Elemanı Yetiştirme Programı). This program aims to train academic staff with the coordination of CoHE; research assistants of universities in need of academic staff can complete their graduate education in high quality universities within the scope of the Faculty Development Program (CoHE, 2010).

Considering the current state of the Turkish higher education, it can be said that in most of the fields, the number of master's and doctoral graduates is less than the required amount. Moreover, the scientific study performance of the current teaching staff is low in general. With the purpose of increasing the number of teaching staff in universities, in 2016, the number of academic staff was increased from 100 thousand to 141 thousand, but the number of articles published remained the same as that in previous years. In other words, increasing the number of teaching staff and higher education capacities could not be effective in increasing the quality of higher education (as cited in Doğan, Koyuncu, Gökdemir & Kahveci, 2016).

Higher Education in Early Childhood Education Program

Teacher training for early childhood education started in 1927 with the establishment of 'Ana Muallim Mektebi' in Ankara, but this school ended its educational activities in 1932. In the following year, the needs of preschool teachers were met by vocational schools for girls. In compliance with the Basic Law of National Education, teacher training for preschools at a higher education level started in 1970 (Öztürk, 2001). Since the 1970s, early childhood education programs have been available in Turkey. In the 2015-2016 academic year, there were 87 early childhood education undergraduate programs (66 day-time and 21 evening education) within 66 universities in Turkey. Furthermore, graduate programs have been operation within both Graduate Schools of Educational Sciences and Graduate Schools of Social Sciences since 1992. In Turkey, the first doctorate degree was awarded in 1937 by the Agriculture Institute in Ankara, and the current graduate education system started to be applied in 1981 (Ağıralioğlu, 2013). Although there is inadequate information about the first early childhood education graduate studies

published in Turkey in the literature, Altun, Şendil and Şahin (2010) stated that the first early childhood education graduate program was established in 1993. Nevertheless, when the National Thesis Database is examined, it is possible to find graduate studies regarding early childhood education dating back to as early as 1987. Also, there are a large number of theses conducted in a variety of departments related to early childhood education. Today, the number of graduate education programs in early childhood education department is 24 with 19 masters' and 5 Ph.D. programs. The list of the early childhood education programs is presented in Table 2.2.

Table 2. 2. Early Childhood Education Higher Education Programs
(2015-2016 Academic Year)

Name of the University	Under graduate	Evening Education	Master's Program with Thesis	Master Program without thesis	PhD.
Abant İzzet Baysa	*				
Adıyaman	*				
Adnan Menderes	*	*	*		
Afyon Kocatepe	*	*			
Ağrı İbrahim Çeçem	*				
Ahi Evran	*				
Akdeniz	*	*			
Aksaray	*				
Amasya	*				
Anadolu	*		*		
Ankara	*		*		*
Atatürk	*	*			
Bahçeşehir (English)	*				
Balıkesir	*				
Başkent	*				
Boğaziçi	*				
Bozok	*				
Bülent Ecevit	*				
Cumhuriyet	*	*			
Çanakale	*	*	*	*	
Çukurova	*	*	*		*
Dicle	*				
Dokuz Eylül	*	*			
Dumlupınar	*	*	*		
Düzce	*				
Ege	*		*		
Eskişehir Osman Gazi	*				
Fatih	*		*		
Fırat	*				
Gazi	*		*		*
Gazi Osman Paşa	*				
Giresun	*	*			
Hacettepe	*		*	*	*
Hasan Kalyoncu	*				
İnönü	*	*	*		
İstanbul Aydın	*				
İstanbul Kültür	*				

Table 2. 2. Cont'd.

Istanbul Medipol	*			
İstanbul S. Zaim	*			
İstanbul	*			
Kafkas	*			
KTÜ	*			
Kastamonu	*	*	*	
Kırıkkale	*			
Kilis	*			
Kocaeli	*			
Maltepe	*			
Marmara	*		*	*
Mehmet Akif Ersoy	*	*	*	
Mersin	*	*		
Muğla S. Kocaman	*			
Muş Alparslan	*			
Necmettin Erbakan	*	*	*	
Okan	*		*	
Ordu	*			
Ondokuz Mayıs	*	*		
ODTÜ-METU	*		*	*
Pamukkale	*	*	*	
Sakarya	*	*		
Selçuk		*		
Sinop	*			
Trakya	*	*	*	
Uludağ	*	*		
Uşak	*			
Yüzüncü Yıl	*			
Yıldız Teknik	*			

In general, the medium of instruction is Turkish in these programs, but in Bahçeşehir, Boğaziçi, METU and TED universities, instruction is offered in English (OSYM, 2016). In the same academic year, the number of teaching staff in this department was 521 in total (24 professors, 44 associate professors, 210 assistant professors and 201 research assistants) (CoHE, 2017). The distribution of the academic degrees among the early childhood education academic staff is presented in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3. Academic degrees of early childhood education academic staff

Academic title	f	%
Professor	24	4.6
Associate Professor	44	8.3
Assistant Professor	214	40.6
Research Assistant	205	38.8
Lecture/Specialist	41	7.7
Total	528	100

2.1. Similar Studies on Theses and Dissertations

a. International Studies

When the international literature is examined, it is seen that studies investigating M.S. theses and doctoral dissertations to reveal research trends date back to the 1970's (Novak, 1975). The studies were conducted in different fields like education, health and science (Rone, 1998; Al Kathiri, 2002; May & Holzemer, 1985; Dong, 1998). Moreover, different research methods were employed in these studies. Although the studies are prevalent in the education field (curriculum and instruction, blended learning, higher education), the number of studies investigating early childhood education, to our knowledge, is limited (Rule, 2011; Hännikäinen, 2010).

In 1998, Rone investigated 115 doctoral dissertations and 262 research articles regarding higher education in Canada in his doctoral dissertation. The theses were selected from those published in the Higher Education Group of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education within the University of Toronto. The articles were gathered from the Canadian Journal of Higher Education. The author aimed to reveal research trends and relationships among variables. The studies were investigated according to the gender of the researcher, the research method, the duration of the study, the subject group, the research setting and the method of statistical analysis.

The results of the study show that, except for the first ten years, the number of male and female researchers were almost equal. In the first ten years, however, the research practice was highly male-dominated. When the research methods of the studies were examined, it was found that qualitative research designs were the most common research method, while the survey design was found to be the second and

historical methods the third most commonly utilized methods in dissertations. The results regarding the relationship among variables indicated that while male researchers mostly preferred historical studies, most of the female researchers employed qualitative and survey research designs (Rone, 1998).

Similar to Rone's dissertation study, Al Kathiri (2002) investigated the M.S. theses completed in the Curriculum and Instruction Department of King Saud University in Saudi Arabia in his doctoral dissertation. The theses published between the years 1983-2002 in the department of curriculum and the instruction were analyzed according to their descriptive features (publication year, gender, major), methodological trends (topics, contexts of the studies, types of research, sampling methods etc.) and references. Research trends of the theses were presented in two separate time periods with the aim of comparing the studies published in these two time periods (1983-1992 and 1993-2002).

According to results of this study, most of the studies were conducted in public schools and the elementary and secondary schools were the most preferred organizations among the studies. While the questionnaire was the most frequently used data collection tool, observation was found to be the least frequently utilized means of data collection. On the other hand, there was not sample any study applying the interview protocol to collect data among the sample studies. It was also concluded form the findings that females are more likely to use general curriculum major and teachers as sample groups in their studies. In the specific recommendations based on major, it is recommended that male authors should also study education of females in their graduate theses.

Beside specific departments of the education field, specific subjects of education were mentioned in these research studies. Blended learning was one of the specific subjects frequently used in these studies. For example, in 2013, Halverson, Graham, Spring, Drysdale and Henrie conducted a study to analyze the research trends in blended learning theses and dissertations. The sample of the study was collected from the ProQuest Theses and Dissertation database and research universities in the U.S.A. and Canada. Within the scope of this study, 205 theses and dissertations were analyzed according to demographic, methodological and topical trends in total. Descriptive statistics were used in the study to present the results.

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As indicated in the results part of the study, a significant number of theses is about higher education, student performance and comparison of blended learning with other methods of instruction. Also, most of the blended learning dissertation studies are conducted in higher education institutions. The results indicate that qualitative methods and inferential statistics were found to be utilized with essentially equal frequency in the theses. Inferential statistics was the most preferred method for data analysis (Halverson, Graham, Spring, Drysdale and Henrie, 2013).

Another international study was conducted by Bozkurt, Keskin and Waard in 2016. In this study, research trends in massive open online course theses and dissertations were analyzed. Sample theses were collected from multiple data bases, including Google Scholars, ProQuest, Open Access Theses and Dissertation, WorldCat, Anadolu University Database, Athabasca University Database and Open University database. Purposive sampling was employed in the sampling process and 51 theses were analyzed according to research topics, theoretical background and research designs. Both document analysis and content analysis techniques were applied as data collection methods.

The results of the study suggest that massive open online course theses are generally produced in the departments of education, engineering, computer science and information and communication technology. According to results related with the research design of the theses, qualitative studies employing the case study research method was found to be the most common type of studies used in massive open online course theses. Moreover, the results show that in almost half of the theses, researchers do not use theoretical/conceptual backgrounds in their thesis (Bozkurt, Keskin & Waard, 2016).

Lastly, graduate theses in the international literature regarding early childhood education were reviewed. Two studies were chosen as samples. One of them was from South Africa, while the other one was from Finland.

The first study conducted in Finland by Hännikäinen (2010) aims to describe the policy and basic characteristics of early childhood education settings providing service to 1 to 3-year-old children. The study covers eight doctoral dissertations published in the last 15 years from educational and other human science departments. The sample of the study was gathered from ERIC, PSYCINFO and Google Scholar

databases and only doctoral dissertations were used and the dissertations comprise scientific literature. The dissertations were investigated by aim, theoretical perspective, method, main findings and pedagogical implications.

The results of the study indicate similarities and differences among dissertations. First of all, all the dissertations were conducted by female researchers. While two of the dissertations were written in English, the others were written in Finnish. All of the dissertations aimed to develop and improve education and care in early childhood education settings. When the frameworks of the graduate studies were examined, it could be observed that cultural-historical, socio-cultural and activity-historical perspectives were used. The research topics of the dissertations covered specific content areas of early childhood education, such as play, music and mathematics. In all of the dissertations, qualitative and mixed method research designs were applied, and the observation technique was the most commonly used method of data collection.

The second study was conducted by Rule in 2011. The study investigated graduate research regarding both early childhood and basic adult and training in South Africa. The writer combined these two topics as he identifies the fields of early childhood and adult education as the stepchildren of the South African education system. Within the scope of the study, basic adult education and early childhood education theses were published between the years of 1995-2004. Theses and dissertations were investigated according to regional and institutional profile, methodology and thematic focus. Moreover, the relationship between policy development in South Africa and the research corpus was analyzed by the researcher. In the final part, fractions in the institution, degree, time period, methodology, thematic focus and the analyzed topics were discussed from the perspective of education in South Africa and lifelong learning.

The results of the study indicated that adult and early childhood educations were considered as insignificant fields. There was a deficiency in the number of doctoral dissertations regarding early childhood education. In addition, from the academic perspective, lack of research in early childhood education reflects the idea that ''early childhood education is not of great interest and complexity as a field of study and a concomitant focus on schooling and higher education'' (Rule, 2011,

p.335). Ignoring early childhood education shows that both national media and politicians focus on matric (Senior Certificate) results. From the theoretical perspective, lifelong learning emphasizes both early childhood and adult education (Rule, 2011).

Although the number of international studies regarding early childhood education graduate theses is limited, there are available studies in which journal articles regarding early childhood education were examined.

In 1973, Hanson wrote a literature review about 8 qualitative studies focusing on the comparison of early childhood education models within an instructional theory framework. The main focus of the studies was teacher-child interaction, and both qualitative and empirical studies were included in the literature review. Subject studies investigated in the literature review include a wide variety of early childhood education models. The Bank Street Program, Britain's Primary Schools, Montessori and Kamii's Piagetian Schools are example models mentioned in qualitative studies. On the other hand, in empirical studies investigated in the review, Montessori and Head Start programs were the most frequently research settings. Studies examined in the review criticized because of the global use of crucial terms like 'model' and biases of writers. The results revealed that the articles mostly evaluated data and observations according to their opinions. Finally, there was a trend toward competition among early childhood education models in the articles (Hanson, 1973).

Another study published in 2012 by Soojin Lee analyzed studies on music education in early childhood published in Young Children Journal a. The study was written in a literature review format and 32 articles published between 1985 and 2010 about music education were investigated. Articles used in the study were analyzed in terms of numerical value and content of the articles and background information about the authors. Compared to the other years, most studies (4 articles) were published in 1996. Since 1998, at least one article on music education has been published in each year. When the background information of the authors was analyzed, it was found that only five studies were written by co-authors, but there was an increasing trend in co-author studies. 38% of the investigated studies were written by authors who were interested in music, 59% of the studies were written by authors who were from the early childhood education discipline, such as specialists,

teachers and directors of early childhood education settings, and only 3% of the studies (one study) written by an editor. Almost in all studies examined in the study, it was mentioned that including music into early childhood curriculum provided numerous advantages for children's development and learning. In general, articles were divided into three groups according to their content. The first group included articles which aimed to improve children's development across all domains. The second group covered articles using music to teach the value and theoretical knowledge of music, to enhance musical development and to create a musical environment. The final group of studies was those using music to reach both of the goals. The results, indicated that 17 studies fell within the first group, 11 studies took place in the second group and 4 studies were included in the third group (Lee, 2012).

Another review study published by Zhang in 2015, analyzed journal articles written about early childhood education in Australia and New Zealand. This study aimed to categorize early childhood education articles according to how they were related with voice of children (at which degree they included children's perspective). Articles were selected from both early and general education journals of Australia and New Zealand. Studies including children from 0 to 5 years of age were used in the research. 14 journals from Australia and 7 journals from New Zealand were selected for the study, and 381 articles published in these journals between the years of 2005 and 2014 were analyzed in total for the study. According to results, only fifty percent of these studies had explicit child-related data, and approximately ten percent of the articles did not have data related with children. In more than one third of the articles, the voices of children were existent, while in 10% of these studies, data related with children were used with the purpose of physical, physiological, psychometric and academic assessment. The findings showed that in practice using the voice of children in research remained unfulfilled.

b. National Studies

In Turkish literature, there are a number of journal articles attempting to investigate graduate theses regarding early childhood education (Bertan, Haznedaroğlu, Yurdakök, & Güçiz, 2009; Altun, Şendil & Şahin, 2011; Yaşar & Aral, 2011; Ahi & Kıldan, 2013; Kaytez & Duru Alp, 2014; Durukan, Atalay & Şen,

2015; Taştepe, Öztürk Serter, Yurdakul, Taygur Altıntaş & Bütün Ayhan, 2016). Although some of these studies discuss early childhood education in general, some of the studies focus on specific aspects of the topic, such as drama, play and inclusion. When the studies are examined, it is seen that all of the theses use document analysis as the data collection method and that most of the theses are collected from the National Theses Database. On the other hand, the sampling methods of the studies vary according to the research questions. Both convenience and criterion based sampling methods are used by the researchers. In terms of data analysis, descriptive statistics are preferred to present the results of the studies.

In 2009, Bertan et al. published an article in which their aim was to review early childhood education with respect to health and education studies published between the years of 2000-2007. The sample group of the study included 107 scientific studies, 71 M.S. theses, 13 doctoral dissertations, 16 graduation dissertations, 13 studies of medical specialty, 30 projects, 9 reports and 14 academic publications covering early childhood health and education issues. The sample of the study was selected from scientific studies published by different associations, such as universities, Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Health and nongovernmental organizations. All the scientific studies were examined according to type of publication, research topic, publication year, age group and the city where the study was conducted. The document analysis method was used to collect data from the sample studies. The results of the study indicated that most of the scientific studies were applied in metropolitans. Although early childhood covers the first 8 years of life, studies mostly focus on 5-to-6-year-old children. On the other hand, studies on child development concentrate on younger (2-to-3-year old) children. Moreover, AÇEV and UNICEF, together with other institutions, are the most productive nongovernmental associations publishing scientific studies (Bertan et al., 2009). Although scientific studies and projects led by the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Health are available, these studies are not sufficient in number and scope. In consideration of the findings, Bertan et al. suggest that the increasing number of scientific studies regarding 0-to-2-year-old children will have a positive impact on child development. Moreover, producing governmental policies related with child development and education will accelerate the social and economic

growth rate of Turkey. Lastly, early childhood development should be discussed within the scope of children's right, and the importance of early childhood education should be emphasized with right-based approach (2009). This study recommends that interests of different disciplines regarding early childhood development should be identified.

With a similar purpose, Altun, Şendil and Şahin examined 410 graduate theses for their studies in 2011. The sample of the study was gathered from the National Theses Database by using the keyword of 'early childhood education'. The sample includes 349 M.S. theses, 48 doctoral dissertations, 12 medical specialties and a proficiency in art studies. The study covers the theses published between the years of 1987-2010. The document analysis method was employed in this study, and the theses were analyzed according to year of publication, university, department and subject. Altun et al. (2009) point out that some prestigious universities lead the theses published in the field. It was revealed that early childhood education is used as a research topic in theses published from various departments, such as agriculture, nursing and religion. This result was interpreted by the researcher as early childhood education being an interdisciplinary area, which leads to an increase in the collaboration with other disciplines. Finally, the researcher points out the research topics. Although some aspects of the early childhood education have been studied in detail, some issues related with the topic have not been covered yet. There are some issues which need to be studied in more detail way. One example is special education.

In the same year, Can Yaşar and Aral examined graduate theses within the field of drama in early childhood education. The survey study aimed to investigate the thematic distribution of graduate theses via the document analysis method. The sample group of the study included 33 M.S. theses and 7 Ph.D. dissertations published between 1990-2010. The results of the study indicated that in the earlier years, the usage of drama in early childhood education, social and emotional development, the ability to take perspectives, music, science and math education, creativity, nutrition and role playing themes were used in theses on drama. In these years, teachers' views were evaluated by the researchers too. In later years, the themes of language development, social development, ability in mathematics and

mathematical operation have gained importance. The Self-efficacy beleifs of pre-service and in-service teachers towards drama were investigated in graduate theses (Can Yaşar & Aral, 2011). As a result of the analyses, researchers claim that the present studies remain incapable of satisfying the gap in the literature so, new studies with different research methods and data collection methods are required.

In 2013, Ahi and Kıldan conducted a qualitative survey study investigating early childhood education graduate theses published in between the years of 2002-2011. Different from the previous studies, in this study the researchers used criterion sampling in their selection of the sample of the study. The data were gathered by means of document analysis, and descriptive statistics were used as the method of data analysis. The sample group of the study included 75 M.S. theses and 2 Ph.D. dissertations. Thus, 77 graduate theses were examined in total according to thesis type, university, year of publication, research topic, subject group, research method, data collection method, statistical analysis, foundation (scholarship) and the city where the study was conducted. The results of the study revealed that in most of the studies, the subject group was comprised of 3- to 6-year-old children. The studies cover only a small number of cities. Ankara, İstanbul and Adana are the cities hosting most of the graduate studies. When the methodological trends of the theses were analyzed, it was found that most of the theses had employed quantitative research methods, and questionnaires designed by the researchers were the favorite data collection tools used in the theses (Ahi & Kıldan, 2013).

In common with Can Yaşar and Aral, Ahi and Kıldan (2013) suggest producing new scientific studies by using different research methods to provide detailed information. Moreover, they suggest increasing the number of experimental design studies to obtain more reliable results in the field. The results also revealed that none of the theses that were examined was supported by TUBITAK scholarships. Hence, the criteria adopted by TUBITAK to support graduate studies from social and educational science should be reviewed.

Another study regarding early childhood education graduate theses was conducted by Kaytez and Durualp in 2014. In this study, Kaytez and Durualp analyzed graduate theses in the field of play in early childhood education. The sample group of the study was chosen by means of the purposive sampling method.

The group included 32 M.S. theses and 6 doctoral dissertations. Similar to the study conducted by Can Yaşar and Aral in 2011, the study employed document analysis to identify thematic dissertations of early childhood education related with the play concept. The results of the study showed that language, cognitive and social-emotional development, self-care skills, concept development, math education, communication, social and perspective-taking abilities, and special education are the themes used in the field of early childhood education graduate theses. Views of parents, teachers and administrators about play are mentioned in the theses. In addition, scale adaptation studies are available in play related theses (Kaytez & Durualp, 2014). Kaytez and Durualp (2014) came to the conclusion that the number of early childhood education theses regarding play was insufficient. Most of the theses were published in 2006, and the experimental research design appeared to be the most favored research design in the theses examined. In addition, a suggestion was made to organize an international congress to represent the results of the theses and to establish in-service training for teachers related to the planning of in-class play activities.

In addition to these studies, Durukan, Atalay and Şen investigated early childhood M.S. theses in their study published in 2015. The sample of the study included 340 M.S. theses published between the years 2000 and2014. Criterion sampling was utilized in the sampling process of the study. In this document analysis study, M.S. theses were analyzed according to year, gender of the researcher, language of the study, university, graduate school, department, research topic, academic degree of the advisor, and resources. In addition, frequency and percentages were used to present the analyzed data. The results of the study revealed that most of the M.S. theses were published in 2010. The most productive graduate school in which early childhood theses were written was found to be the Graduate School of Social Sciences. When the theses were analyzed according to research topic, it was seen that theses on children focused on social development. Other theses focused on schools' and parents' interests in education programs and the viewpoints of the parents. Consistent with previous studies, the study revealed that quantitative studies were the most frequently conducted studies, and in most of the theses researchers benefit from national resources (Durukan, Atalay & Şen, 2015).

The authors suggest that an increase in the number of available theses on the National Theses Database will increase the opportunity to access other researchers and sources, and that this is important to improve the quality of new studies. What's more, making use of solely Turkish resources in theses hinders the expansion of studies in the international context. Using international resources in theses will increase the number of sources in the literature and provide the opportunity to follow global research trends. Lastly, the writers point out those quantitative studies utilizing questionnaires to collect data is a limitation for child-centered studies. Hence, increasing the number of studies on children will improve the quality of early childhood education in Turkey (Durukan, Atalay & Şen).

In 2016, Taştepe, Öztürk Serter, Yurdakul, Taygur Altıntaş and Bütün Ayhan investigated early childhood education theses in a specific area, namely inclusion. In this survey study, 32 M.S. theses and 2 doctoral dissertations on inclusion in early childhood education were examined by using the document analysis method. Convenience sampling was employed in the study.

The results of the study indicated that the number of theses reached the maximum level in 2010, and an increase in the number of theses had started to take place as of 2005. Most of the theses were found to bear quantitative research characteristics, and the number of descriptive theses was higher than that of other research designs. The themes used in connection to the topic of inclusion in the theses were view and attitudes toward inclusion in early childhood education, children with and without special needs in inclusion environments, effectiveness of inclusion programs, assessment of teachers during inclusion applications (Taştepe, Öztürk Serter, Yurdakul, Taygur Altıntaş & Bütün Ayhan, 2016).

In accordance with the results of the study, the researchers of the study concluded that theses frequently focused on social development, teachers did not have sufficient knowledge and skills about inclusion and that the physical conditions of early childhood education settings were insufficient (Taştepe, Öztürk Serter, Yurdakul, Taygur Altıntaş & Bütün Ayhan, 2016).

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

In this chapter detailed information regarding the methodology of the current study is provided. Firstly, the researcher describes the design of the study and indicates the research method, which is content analysis. Secondly, the population and sampling procedure is presented by the researcher. Thirdly, the instrumentation process and the trustworthiness of the instrument are explained. Lastly, the data analysis procedure utilized in the study is described by the researcher.

3.1. Design of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the descriptive characteristics, research topics and methodological settings of the graduate theses regarding early childhood education in Turkey. The researcher employed a qualitative research design to answer the research questions of the current study.

According to Denzin, Norman and Lincon (2000), the qualitative research design is an approach to the world bearing naturalistic and interpretive characteristics. In qualitative studies, researchers attempt to define or interpret the subject with regard to the meanings that people attach to them. In other words, qualitative study is a process which questions and interprets problems regarding community and human problems with specific methods to make interpretations (Creswell, 1998). Furthermore, Yıldırım and Şimşek (2005) define qualitative design as an approach in which observation, interview and document analysis methods are used as data collection methods. Beliefs and events are revealed in their natural setting in a realistic and holistic way in qualitative studies.

In the current qualitative study, document analysis was used as a data collection method. Document analysis is a process in which all written documents related with the target phenomena are analyzed to obtain data. According to Yıldırım and Şimşek (2011), document analysis can be used as a solitary data collection method as well as in combination with other methods. The data collection method is

related with the situation of a phenomenon at a certain time or development of the phenomenon throughout a time period (Best & Khan, 2006). Ekiz (2009) defines document analysis as a data collection tool by which data is analyzed systematically to make evaluation mostly in qualitative studies. The document is described as the information source. The data provided by this information source can entail written, oral, visual materials and archeological ruins (Caulley, 1983). Many different types of materials can be used as source of information in document analysis, such as records, reports, letters, autobiographies, diaries, compositions, academic studies, books, articles, catalogs, movies, photos and cartoons. The critical point in this period is that a researcher should ensure validity and reliability of the obtained documents (Best & Khan, 2006). In the current study, master theses and doctoral dissertations approved by graduate schools were used as sources of information in the document analysis process.

In the data analysis process, the content analysis method was used in the analysis process of master's theses and doctoral dissertations. According to Weber (1990), content analysis is a data analysis method in which data is summarized, classified and interpreted. Content analysis is also described as a systematic and replicable technique for contracting a large amount of text into fewer content categories by means of specific principles of coding (Berelson, 1952; GAO, 1996; Krippendorff, 1980; and Weber, 1990). In addition, Riffe, Lacy and Fico (2005) define quantitative content analysis as a systematic technique which can be replicated by using statistical methods to categorize communication symbols and analyze relationships having the same categories. In other words, content analysis enables researchers to study human behaviors indirectly by analyzing their communications (Freankel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). As the current study aims to examine descriptive characteristics and methodological settings of the graduate theses, the content analysis method was found to be an appropriate method to use for data analysis. Freankel et al. (2012) list five main reasons to apply content analysis:

- To obtain descriptive information
- To formulate themes (i.e., major ideas) that help to organize and make sense out of large amounts of descriptive information
- To check other research findings

- To obtain information useful in dealing with educational problems
- To test hypotheses.

3.2. Population and Sampling

In accordance with the purpose of the current study, all graduate theses regarding early childhood education in Turkey compose the population. In this study, working with the population of the study is impractical because of time and budget limitations. For this reason, the convenience sampling method was applied. Convenience sampling is one of the purposive sampling methods mostly used in qualitative studies (Devers & Frankel, 2000) and includes individuals who are conveniently accessible for the researcher (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). The number of theses written on the subject of early childhood education is not known as there are numerous theses written on the subject from a large variety of different departments. For this reason, the researcher acquired the theses and dissertations from two online sources. Firstly, the National Theses Center (CoHE) was scanned by using the keywords of "okulöncesi eğitim" (preschool education), "anasınıfı"(nursery class), "erken çocukluk eğitimi" (early childhood education), "aile katılımı"(parent involvement). Then the theses which had an access to the full text were identified and downloaded. Secondly, online databases of 109 state and 76 foundation university libraries were scanned online by the researcher. The same keywords were used in the second data collection procedure. Theses written in Turkish and English languages were included in the sample. At the end of the data collection process, 1,102 theses regarding early childhood education between 1986 - 2016 years were identified. In the end, a total of 1,102 graduate theses including 171 doctoral dissertations and 931 master's theses from 72 universities were included in the sample.

Data collection process of the current study was started in 1 September 2016 and the process was completed in 20 May 2017. Investigation of the theses were conducted by the researcher. First the researcher dowloaded the theses which have the full access permnission then the cover pages and the abstracts parts of the were examined. Afterward, the researcher continued the examination by investigating

summary, introduction, method and the findigs parts of the theses to answer the research questions of the study.

Table 3.1 Distribution of master's theses and doctoral dissertations

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative Percent
M.S.	931	84.5	84.5	84.5
Ph.D.	171	15.5	15.5	100.0
Total	1102	100.0	100.0	

3.3. Instrumentation

In this part, the instrumentation procedure is presented in three stages. Firstly, the researcher gives information about coding and categorization. Secondly, the plot study process is presented and finally, validity and reliability issues are discussed by the researcher.

3.3.1. Coding and Categorization

Characteristics of content analysis can be varied according to the purpose of analysis and the format of the communication which is subject to analysis. Nevertheless, converting descriptive information into categories is a common threat to all content analysis (Freankel et al., 2012). According to Mayring (2014), category systems are the most significant part of analysis studies. In addition, category systems provide inter-subjectivity for the analysis of studies by enabling repetition of the same analysis for other researchers. Krippendorff (1980) emphasizes the definition of categories by defining the categorization process as an art. According to Sarantakos (2005), ''category is a set of criteria that are integrated around theme or value'' (p.302). Content category is also defined by Prasad (2008) as compartments having distinct borders in which units of communication are coded for analysis. Furthermore, Fraenkel et al. (2012) emphasize the importance of using clear categories in content analysis to enable other researchers to obtain the same results by using the same categories. Sarantakos (2005) lists six characteristics that the categories should have. Firstly, the categories should be clearly defined by the researcher and should not be ambiguous. Secondly, categories should be exclusively

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related to the inquiry topic. Thirdly, each of the categories should focus on specific aspects of the topic under inquiry. Fourthly, they should be exhaustive and accurate and finally, categories should be unique; that is, they should be independent of each other.

Fraenkel et al. (2012) define two different methods of creating categories in content analysis: the first method of creating categories is conducted prior to the analysis procedure. The researcher creates the categories on the basis of related literature, similar studies and also previous knowledge, theory and experiences. The second method is implemented during the analysis process. The researcher has more information about the content of the communication and proceeds with the creation of categories. Prasad (2008) states that content categories are highly related to literature and the research question; that is, categorization should respond to the query of the research question. Moreover, Neuendorf (2002) highlights the necessity of creating content categories before starting the analysis process. In this study, the researcher devised a categorization based on the related literature and similar M.S. theses and Ph.D. dissertations.

Table 3.2 Thesis Examination Categories

Categories	Sub-Categories
Descriptive characteristics	CoHE Thesis number
	Thesis type
	Year of publication
	Name of the University
	Name of the Institute
	Department
	Academic degree of the advisor
	Language of the thesis
Content Knowledge	The Sample group
	Content of the thesis
	City/Region of Application
	School setting
	School status
Methodological Knowledge	Research Type
	Research Design
	Scale type
	Data Analysis Technique
	Sampling Method
	Sample size

After defining the categories of the content analysis, the unit of content (unit of analysis) was defined by the researcher. Prasad (2008) defines unit of analysis as the smallest part of the content, which is classified into the categories defined by the researcher. Any data can be used as a unit of content analysis, such as a letter, word, symbol etc. In this study, each M.S. thesis and Ph.D. dissertation is defined as the unit of analysis. Subsequently, based on these categories and the unit of analysis, a tentative codebook was prepared by the researcher to be used as a coding instrument. The tentative codebook included the descriptive characteristics, the methodological settings and the publication information of the theses. Then, the tentative codebook and the detailed explanation of the categorization process report were sent to an early childhood education expert to receive expert opinion. According to the feedback of the expert, the codebook was reconfigured. Recommendations of the expert were mostly related with the vocabulary of the category titles and terminology. Some of the codes were redesigned by searching the related literature. Finally, the thesis

examination form was created by the researcher. Afterwards, a pilot study of the thesis examination form was designed in the light of the expert opinion and thesis advisor suggestions. The form took its final version at the end of the pilot study.

3.3.2. Pilot Study

According to Schreier (2012), since constructing a perfect codebook is impossible for any researcher, a pilot study should be conducted to test the coding instrument. Hence, a pilot study was conducted to test the coding instrument of the current content analysis study. In the pilot study, 18 Ph.D. dissertations and 82 M.S. theses were analyzed and the theses were selected randomly from the sample of the main study. As a result of the pilot study, categories were revised according to the analysis and new subcategories (art, school management, educational tech.) were added under the categories to make the coding easier for the coder. The last version of the thesis examination form can be found in the appendices (Appendix A). Graduate theses used in the pilot study were also included in the main study.

In addition, recoding and inter-coder agreements were measured by the researcher during the pilot study period. After constructing the last version of the thesis investigation form, the sample of the pilot study was coded once more by the researcher. Afterwards, a research assistant with a master's degree in early childhood education and experience in content analysis re-coded the theses, and the coding consistency was measured by using Cohen's Kappa. Cohen's Kappa is a robust statistic showing coding consistency of two inter-coders (McHugh, 2012). Kappa value ranges from -1 to +1 and Cohen (1960) suggested that Kappa values between .81- 1.00 indicate almost the perfect agreement. The Kappa value for the current study was calculated to be .86, which was a sufficient degree of agreement between the coders. As the revised codebook was used in the second part of the pilot study, the result of the pilot study was included in the results of the main study.

3.3.3. Validity and Reliability

Krippendorff (2004) defines validity as the quality of research results that leads us to accept them as true. Validity is also defined by Neuendorf (2002) as the degree to which a measuring procedure represents the intended and only intended concept. In another definition, the validity of content analysis is described as the consistency between the goals and the instrument of the study (Bilgin, 2006). In the current study, validity issue was considered in terms of face validity, external validity and content validity. In addition to validity, the reliability of the study was assessed by the researcher.

First of all, the face validity issue was handled by the researcher. According to Neuendorf (2002), face validity is related with the appearance of the instrument. Krippendorff (2004) states that face validity refers to whether or not the instrument has an appearance to make the intended measurement. In the current study, the instrument was developed by the researcher, and the related literature and similar studies were considered during the construction of instrument. The researcher also received expert opinion by sending the instrument to an expert from the early childhood education department after preparing the first draft. Based on the expert opinion, the instrument was revised, and the last version of the instrument was constructed via a pilot study. At the end of the pilot study, the instrument was evaluated to be valid, bearing the quality of being able to make the intended measurement.

Secondly, the external validity of the instrument was checked by the researcher. External validity is related with the representativeness of the study. To provide external validity, the sample of the study should be chosen large enough to represent the population (Neuendorf, 2002). The population of this study includes all graduate theses written on the subject of early childhood education in Turkey. For this reason, it is almost impossible to reach all the theses, but theses having online full-text access were included in the study. Therefore, the instrument has the ability to represent the population of the study

Thirdly, content validity was ensured by the researcher. According to Neuendorf (2002), content validity is ''the extent to which the measure reflects a specific domain of content'' (p.32) and content validity can be assessed by a small

inspection (Böke, 2011). During the construction of the thesis examination form, the researcher benefited from similar studies and related literature, and two different research assistants who had conducted content analysis studies reviewed the instrument. In addition, the coding and categorization process as well as the codebook of the study were scrutinised by the field expert.

Lastly, the reliability of the study was ensured by the researcher. According to Joppe (2000), reliability is ''The extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable'' (p.1). Another definition for reliability is proposed by Kirk and Miller. Their definition, in relation to qualitative research, includes three features: "(1) the degree to which a measurement, given repeatedly, remains the same (2) the stability of a measurement over time; and (3) the similarity of measurements within a given time period'' (p.41-42). Neuendorff (2002), states that it is not sufficient to provide a reliable content analysis by applying the coding procedure just once via a single coder. In the current study, both the inter-coder reliability and the test-retest techniques were applied to provide reliable results (the inter-coder procedure is explained in the pilot study part). The test-retest technique is described as repeating the same measurement at two different times, referred to as stability. ''If we are dealing with a stable measure, then the results should be similar'' (Golafshani, 2003, p.599). There is not a certain time interval to reapply the measurement for the second time, but it is suggested that in most educational research, two to three months is considered as sufficient to apply the test-retest reliability coefficients (Fraenkel et al., 2012). Eight weeks after the first coding was completed by the researcher, another coder applied the coding procedure once more. The second coder, who was a master's degree research assistant in early childhood education, became familiar with the instrument and the coding rules before doing the coding. The correlation between the coding scores was calculated via Cohen's Kappa (McHugh, 2012).

3. 4. Data Analysis Procedure

Descriptive statistics and frequencies were employed for the analysis of the data. Further, the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 22.0 was used for data analysis. In content analysis studies, generally frequency and percentiles are used for the presentation of the collected data (Fraenkel et al., 2012). In reporting the findings of the study, the descriptive and methodological characteristics of the graduate theses were presented in frequency tables.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

In this chapter detailed information about findings of the current study is provided by the researcher. As indicated in the introduction chapter, this study aims to provide information about (1) descriptive characteristics and (2) methodological procedures of master's theses and doctoral dissertations regarding early childhood education in Turkey. Frequency tables and diagrams are used to present information about the findings. Detailed information regarding the statistical analyses is also conveyed within the text.

4.1. Results of Research Question No. 1

What are the descriptive characteristics of master's theses and doctoral dissertations regarding early childhood education in Turkey?

In this part, information about the year of publication, the name of the university, the type of graduate school, academic title of the thesis advisor and the department of the thesis are provided as descriptive characteristics of both M.S. theses and Ph.D. dissertations.

Firstly, 931 M.S. theses regarding early childhood education founded by CoHE were examined according to publication years. Results related with the publication years of the M.S. theses are displayed in Figure 4.1.

As indicated in Figure 4.1, the first available M.S. thesis regarding early childhood education in Turkey was published in 1989. Moreover, the figure indicates that the highest number of M.S. theses were published in 2016 (n=100).
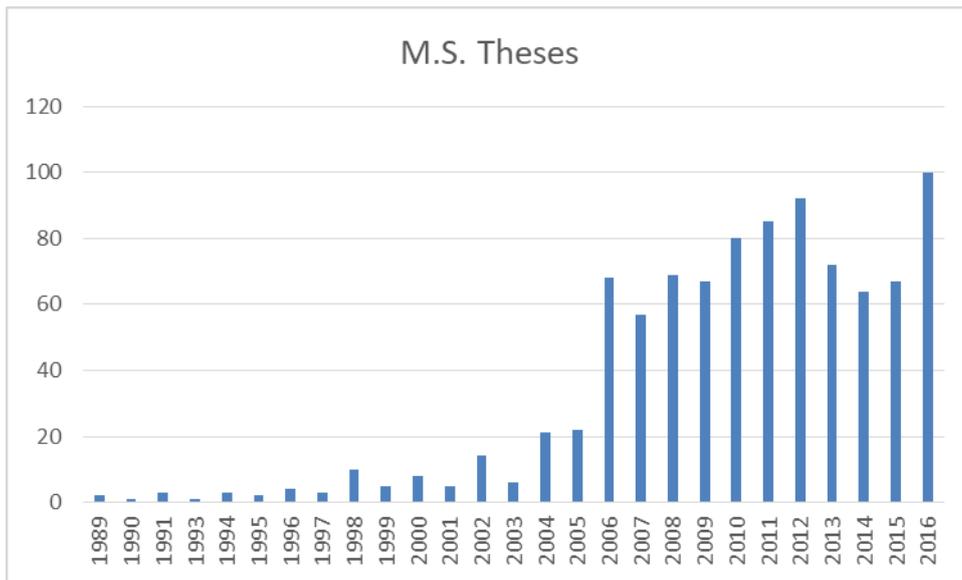
Figure 4.1. Publication years of M.S. theses

In addition, 171 PhD. dissertations regarding early childhood education were indicated according to descriptive characteristics. Results related with the publication years of the Ph.D. dissertations are displayed in Figure 4.2.
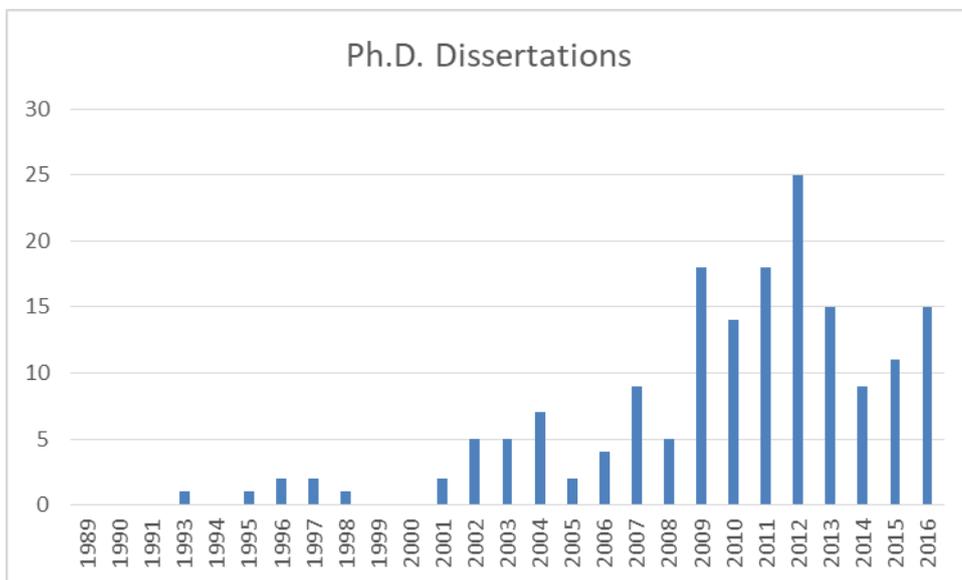
Figure 4.2. Publication years of Ph.D. dissertations

According to Figure 4.2, the first available Ph.D. dissertation regarding early childhood education in Turkey was published in 1993. The results also show that the highest number of Ph.D. dissertations were published in 2012 (n=25).

Secondly, the names of the universities that the theses and dissertations were published by were examined by the researcher. The list of the names of universities at which the M.S. theses were published is presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1. Names of the Universities – M.S. Theses

University	Frequency	%
Marmara University	128	13.75%
Gazi University	88	9.45%
Selçuk University	85	9.13%
Middle East Technical University (ODTÜ)	43	4.62%
Hacettepe University	40	4.30%
Ankara University	39	4.19%
Eskişehir Anadolu University	31	3.33%
Abant İzzet Baysal University	30	3.22%
Çanakkale 18 Mart University	30	3.22%
Yeditepe University	28	3.01%
Adnan Menderes University	25	2.69%
9 Eylül University	18	1.93%
Çukurova University	17	1.83%
Pamukkale University	17	1.83%
Maltepe University	16	1.72%
Boğaziçi University	15	1.61%
Atatürk University	14	1.50%
İnönü University	13	1.40%
Beykent University	12	1.29%
Erciyes University	11	1.18%
Afyon Kocatepe Univesity	10	1,07%
Dumlupınar Univesity	10	1,07%
Mehmet Akif Ersoy Univesity	10	1,07%
Necmettin Erbakan University	10	1,07%
Fırat Univesity	9	0,97%
Haliç Univesity	8	0,86%
Koç Univesity	8	0,86%
Karadeniz Technical university	8	0,86%
Muğla Sıtkı Kocaman University	8	0,86%
Uludağ University	8	0,86%
Okan Univesity	7	0,75%
19 Mayıs University	6	0,64%

Table 4.1. Cont'd.

Arel Univesity	6	0,64%
Bahçeşehir Univesity	6	0,64%
İstanbul Technical University	6	0,64%
Kafkas Univesity	6	0,64%
Akdeniz Univesity	5	0,54%
Çağ Univesity	5	0,54%
Gaziantep Univesity	5	0,54%
Istanbul Univesity	5	0,54%
Niğde University	5	0,54%
Sakarya University	5	0,54%
Trakya University	5	0,54%
Other	46	9,94%
Total	931	100.00%

As presented in Table 4.1., most of the M.S. theses were published in Marmara University (13.75 %). The number of M.S. theses published in this university is 128.

On the other hand, the distribution of Ph.D. dissertations across universities is presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2. Names of the Universities – Ph.D. Dissertations

University	Frequency	%
Gazi University	41	23.98%
Marmara University	36	21.05%
Ankara University	25	14.62%
Middle East Technical University (ODTÜ)	17	9.94%
Selçuk University	14	8.19%
Hacettepe University	7	4.09%
Dokuz Eylül University	5	2.92%
Atatürk University	5	2.92%
Uludağ University	4	2.34%
Eskişehir Anadolu University	4	2.34%
İstanbul University	2	1.17%
Çukurova University	2	1.17%
Adnan Menderes University	2	1.17%
Koç University	1	0,58%
Karadeniz Technical University	1	0,58%
İstanbul Technical University	1	0,58%
Fırat University	1	0,58%
Ege University	1	0,58%
Bülent Ecevit University	1	0,58%
Abant İzzet Baysal University	1	0,58%
Total	171	100

As can be seen in Table 4.2., most of the Ph.D. dissertations were published in Gazi University (23.98%). The number of dissertations published in this university is 41.

Thirdly, the distribution of graduate schools regarding both M.S. theses and Ph.D. dissertations was investigated by the researcher. The distribution of graduate schools of graduate theses is presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3. Name of the Graduate Schools

M.S. Theses			Ph.D. Dissertations		
Graduate Schools	**Frequency**	**%**	**Graduate Schools**	**Frequency**	**%**
Graduate School of Social Sciences	455	48.87%	Graduate School of Social Sciences	55	52.36%
Graduate School of Educational Sciences	406	43.61%	Graduate School of Educational Sciences	90	52.63%
Graduate School of Natural and Applied Sciences	33	3.54%	Graduate School of Natural and Applied Sciences	14	8.19%
Graduate School of Medical Sciences	32	3.44%	Graduate School of Medical Sciences	11	6.43%
Graduate School of Fine Arts	1	0.11%	Graduate School of Informatics	1	0.58%
Graduate School of Informatics	2	0.21%			
Institute of Security Sciences	1	0.11%			
Institute of Ataturk's principles and reforms	1	0.11%			
Total	931	100	Total	171	100

As indicated in Table 4.3., most of the M.S. theses were hosted by the Graduate School of Social Sciences (48.87%). The number of M.S. theses hosted by the Graduate School of Social Sciences is 455. Also, it can be interpreted from Table 4.3., most of the Ph.D. dissertations were hosted by the Graduate School of Educational Sciences (52.36%). The number of Ph.D. dissertations hosted by the Graduate School of Educational Sciences is 90.

Fourthly, the academic title of the thesis advisors was indicated for both M.S. theses and Ph.D. dissertations. The results of the analysis for M.S. theses and Ph.D. dissertations are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4. Academic Title of the Thesis Advisor

M.S. Theses			Ph.D. Dissertations		
	Frequency	**%**		**Frequency**	**%**
Prof.	206	22.13%	Prof.	115	67.3%
Assoc. Prof. Dr.	225	24.17%	Assoc. Prof. Dr.	39	22.8%
Asst. Prof. Dr.	484	51.99%	Asst. Prof. Dr.	17	9.9%
Lecturer	16	1.72%			
Total	931	100	Total	171	100

It can be seen in Table 4.4. that most of the M.S. theses were supervised by assistant professors (51.99%). The number of M.S. theses supervised by assistant professors is 484. According to the findings, most of the Ph.D. dissertations were supervised by professors (67.3%). The number of Ph.D. dissertations supervised by professors is 115.

Moreover, the departments of the M.S. theses and Ph.D. dissertations regarding early childhood education were analyzed by the researcher. The distribution of graduate theses across different departments is presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5. Departments

M.S. Theses			Ph.D. Dissertations		
Departments	**Frequency**	**%**		**Frequency**	**%**
Early Childhood Education	383	41.14%	Early Childhood Education	47	27.49%
Child Development and Education	112	12.03%	Child Development and Education	40	23.39%
Educational Administration and Planning	48	5.16%	Elementary Education	18	10.53%
Curriculum and Instruction	40	4.30%	Special Education	7	4.09%
Elementary Education	38	4.08%	Educational Sciences	4	2.34%
Educational Sciences	35	3.76%	Curriculum and Instruction	4	2.34%
Psychology	33	3.54%	Psychology	4	2.34%
Primary School Teaching	29	3.11%	Educational Psychology	4	2.34%
Special Education	17	1.83%	Music Education	4	2.34%
Art Teaching	12	1.29%	Physical Education	3	1.75%
Developmental Psychology	12	1.29%	Computer Education and Instructional Technology	3	1.75%
Physical Education	12	1.29%	Business Administration	3	1.75%
Music Education	11	1.18%	Turkish Language Education	3	1.75%
Business Administration	8	0.86%	Educational Administration and Planning	3	1.75%
Other	141	15.15%	Other	18	10.53%

As shown in Table 4.5., most of the M.S. theses regarding early childhood education were hosted by early childhood education departments (41.14%). The number of M.S. theses hosted by the early childhood education departments is 383. It can be seen from the data in Table 4.5. that, similar to the M.S. theses, most of the Ph.D. dissertations were hosted by early childhood education departments (27.49%). The number of Ph.D. dissertations hosted by early childhood education departments

is 47. It can be seen from the data in Table 4.5. that, similar to the M.S. theses, most of the Ph.D. dissertations were hosted by early childhood education departments (27.49%). The number of Ph.D. dissertations hosted by early childhood education departments is 47.

Finally, languages of the graduate theses were analyzed. Results of the analysis presented in the table 4.6.

Table 4.6. Language of the theses

M.S. Theses			Ph.D. Dissertations		
Language	**Frequency**	**%**	**Language**	**Frequency**	**%**
Turkish	857	82.05%	Turkish	153	89.47%
English	74	17.95%	English	18	10.53%
Total	931	100	Total	171	100

According to the data presenting in the Table 4.6. most of the graduate theses were written in Turkish.

4.2. Results of Research Question No. 2

Research topics of the M.S. theses and PhD. dissertations were investigated by the researcher. Results of the investigation of MS theses regarding research topics are provided in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7. Research Topics

M.S. Theses			Ph.D. Dissertations		
Research Topic	**Frequency**	**%**		**Frequency**	**%**
Education	431	29.95%	Development	98	32.78%
Development	399	27.73%	Education	92	30.77%
Teacher/ Administrator	161	11.19%	Teaching Method	35	11.71%
Family issues	123	8.55%	Scale dev./adopt.	24	8.03%
Teaching Methods	121	8.41%	Family	21	7.02%
Health	56	3.89%	Teacher/ Administrator	9	3.01%
School	48	3.34%	Health	7	2.34%
Child Literature	38	2.64%	School	6	2.01%
Scale dev./ Adopt.	35	2.43%	Media	5	1.67%
Media	23	1.60%	Children's Literature	1	0.33%
Children's Rights	4	0.28%	Children's Rights	1	0.33%
Total	1439	100	Total	299	100

According to the data presented in Table 4.7., education (29.95%) was the most frequent research topic that emerged among the analyzed M.S. theses. The number of M.S. theses on educational issues is 431. Also, the results of the analysis of Ph.D. dissertations are represented in Table 4.7. It can be interpreted from the data presented in Table 4.7 that, different from the MS theses, development (32.78%) was the most common research topic in Ph.D. dissertations. The number of dissertations regarding developmental issues is 98. In addition, educational issues (30.77%) are also frequently studied in Ph.D. dissertations.

Sub-dimentions studied in graduate theses regarding educational issues are presented in table 4.8.

Table 4.8. Educational Research Topics

M.S. Theses			Ph.D. Dissertations		
Research Topic	**Frequency**	**%**	**Research Topic**	**Frequency**	**%**
Special Education	41	9.51%	Special Education	12	13.04%
School Readiness	38	8.82%	Literacy Skills	10	10.87%
Curriculum	36	8.35%	Curriculum	8	8.70%
Science Education	29	6.73%	Music Education	7	7.61%
Music Education	28	6.50%	School Readiness	6	6.52%
Literacy Skills	26	6.03%	Teacher Education	6	6.52%
Concept Education	19	4.41%	Education Policies	4	4.35%
Art Education	19	4.41%	Science Education	4	4.35%
Teacher Education	18	4.18%	Value Education	3	3.26%
Language Education	17	3.94%	Environmental Education	3	3.26%
Environmental Education	16	3.71%	Concept Education	3	3.26%
Educational Technology	16	3.71%	Montessori Approach	3	3.26%
Education	14	3.25%	Vygotsky	3	3.26%
Educational Materials	13	3.02%	Mathematic Education	3	3.26%
Montessori Approach	11	2.55%	Movement Education	3	3.26%
Education Policies	10	2.32%	Education in EU	2	2.17%
Mathematic Education	9	2.09%	Turkish Education	2	2.17%
Assessment And Evaluation	9	2.09%	Educational Environment	2	2.17%
Movement Education	9	2.09%	Constructivism	1	1.09%
Turkish Education	8	1.86%	Effects of ECE on school success	1	1.09%
Multicultural Education	7	1.62%	Language Education	1	1.09%
Constructivism	6	1.39%	Art Education	1	1.09%

Educational Research Topics					
Effects of ECE on School Success	6	1.39%	Assessment And Evaluation	1	1.09%
Other	26	6.03%	Free Time Activities	1	1.09%
			Gender Education	1	1.09%
			Educational Technology	1	1.09%
Total	431	100	Total	92	100

Further research shows that special education (n=41), school readiness (n=38) and education programs (n=36) are the main sub-topics commonly studied under the title of education among M.S. Theses. Special education (n=12) and curriculum (n=8) are also popular educational research topics in Ph.D. dissertations. In addition to these sub-dimension, researchers preferred to study literacy skills in Ph.D. studies. Additionally, developmental research topics studied in graduate theses presented in table 4.9.

Table 4.9. Developmental Research Topics

M.S. Theses			Ph.D. Dissertations		
Research Topic	**Frequency**	**%**	**Research Topic**	**Frequency**	**%**
Social-Emotional Dev.	227	56.89%	Social-Emotional Dev.	45	45.92%
Cognitive Development	102	25.56%	Cognitive Development	35	35.71%
Language Development	42	10.53%	Language Development	8	8.16%
Physical Development	22	5.51%	Physical Development	8	8.16%
Moral Development	6	1.50%			
Total	399	100	Total	98	100

When the developmental areas studied in Ph.D. dissertations were examined it is seen that social-emotional development (n=45) and cognitive development (n=35)

are the most common research topics among Ph.D. theses. Developmental issues (27.73%) were also studied in early childhood education M.S. theses, nearly as much as educational issues, and social emotional development (n=227) was the most preferred the research topic in these studies.

4.3. Results of Research Question No. 3

What are the methodological procedures (the sample group, the city where the study was conducted, the school setting, the type of research, the research design, instruments, statistical and sampling methods) of master's theses and doctoral dissertations regarding early childhood education in Turkey?

In this part, detailed information about sample groups, the cities where the studies were conducted, the school settings, the types of research, the research design, instruments, statistical analysis and sampling methods were presented as methodological procedures of both M.S. theses and Ph.D. dissertations.

Firstly, the subject groups of both M.S. theses and Ph.D. dissertations were examined by the researcher to demonstrate methodological procedures. The results of the examination of the graduate theses are presented in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10. Subject Groups

M.S. Theses			Ph.D. Dissertations		
Subject group	**Frequency**	**%**	**Subject group**	**Frequency**	**%**
Children	462	37.38%	Children	126	53.39%
Teacher (in-service- preservice)	425	34.39%	Teachers (in-service-preservice)	54	22.88%
Parent (father-mother)	216	17.48%	Parent (father-mother)	41	17.37%
School Management	56	4.53%	School Management	8	3.39%
Children's Books	29	2.35%	Children's Books	1	0.42%
Curricula	21	1.70%	Curricula	4	1.69%
School	16	1.29%	School	0	0
Other	11	0.89%	Other	2	0.85
Total	1236	100	Total	236	100

As indicated in Table 4.10, children (37.38%) were found to be the most frequently used sample group in M.S. theses. The number of theses using students as the subject of the research is 462. Further analyses show that the group comprised of 3- to 6-year old children (86.36%) is the age group which is mostly preferred by the researchers (n=399). Teachers (34.39%) compose the second most frequently preferred sample group in M.S. theses.

According to the data presented in Table 4.10., similar to the M.S. theses, children (53.39%) were the mostly frequently used subject group in Ph.D. dissertations. In 110 Ph.D. dissertations, the groups comprised of 3- to 6-year-old children were used as the sample group (87.30%). As in the M.S. theses, teachers (22.88%) and parents (17.37%) were the second and third most preferred sample group, respectively.

Moreover, the areas in which the studies were conducted were analyzed by the researcher. First, the information regarding the field of graduate theses is presented in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11. Study Areas

M.S. Theses			Ph.D. Dissertations		
Area of the Study	**Frequency**	**%**	**Area of the Study**	**Frequency**	**%**
City Center/ Central Distinct	845	90.76%	City Center/ Central Distinct	153	89.47%
Cross-Cultural	20	2.15%	Cross-Cultural	7	4.09%
Rural + Central District	16	1.72%	Rural + Central District	2	1.17%
Rural Area	6	0.64%	Rural Area		
Not Applicable	33	3.54%	Not Applicable	4	2.34%
Not Specified	11	1.18%	Not Specified	5	2.92%
Total	931	100	Total	171	100

According to Table 4.11., most of the M.S. theses were conducted in city centers and central parts of the cities (90.76%). The number of M.S. theses is 845. The results show that only 0.64% theses were conducted in rural areas (n=6). On the other hand, a few of the studies cover both rural and central districts (n= 16). Furthermore, there are cross-cultural studies in the analyzed M.S. theses (n=20).

Further research showed that Germany was the most frequently studied country in cross-cultural M.S. theses (14.71%).

As indicated in Table 4.11., most of the Ph.D. dissertations were conducted in city centers and central districts (89.47%). Similar to the M.S. theses, cross-cultural studies (4.09%) and studies covering both rural and central districts (1.17%) follow these studies. There appears to be no Ph.D. dissertations conducted in rural areas. Germany (17.39%) and the United States of America (17.39%) were the most frequently studied countries in Ph.D. dissertations.

In addition to the area of the study, the cities and countries where the studies were conducted were analyzed by the researcher. The results of the analysis of M.S. theses are presented in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12. City of the Study – M.S. Theses

City	Frequency	%
Istanbul	217	23.31%
Ankara	141	15.15%
Multiple	57	6.12%
Konya	55	5.91%
Eskisehir	34	3.65%
Not Applicable	33	3.54%
Izmir	27	2.90%
Cross-Cultural	20	2.15%
Adana	19	2.04%
Aydın	19	2.04%
Denizli	16	1.72%
Çanakkale	16	1.72%
Afyon	13	1.40%
Bolu	12	1.29%
Not Specified	11	1.18%
Balıkesir	10	1.07%
Kayseri	10	1.07%
Bursa	9	0.97%
Erzurum	9	0.97%
Mersin	9	0.97%
Samsun	9	0.97%
Antalya	8	0.86%
Gaziantep	8	0.86%
Kars	8	0.86%
Kocaeli	8	0.86%
Kütahya	8	0.86%
Sakarya	7	0.64%
Elazığ	6	0.54%
Burdur	6	0.54%
Diyarbakır	6	0.54%
Karaman	6	0.54%
Muğla	6	0.54%
Other	109	11.71%
Total	931	100

The results in Table 4.12. show that the number of studies conducted in Istanbul (23.31%) and other cities (n<10) (23.74%) was almost equal, and Ankara (15,15%) followed these cities. The number of M.S. theses conducted in İstanbul is 217. The results also indicate that some M.S. theses covered multiple cities (6.12%).

The results of the analysis of Ph.D. dissertations can be found in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13. City of the Study – Ph.D. Dissertations

City	frequency	%
Ankara	57	33.33%
Istanbul	31	18.13%
Konya	10	5.85%
Multiple	8	4.67%
Izmir	7	4.09%
Cross-Cultural	7	4.09%
Not Specified	5	2.92%
Eskişehir	5	2.92%
Not Applicable	4	2.34%
Adana	3	1.75%
Antalya	3	1.75%
Edirne	3	1.75%
Erzurum	3	1.75%
Aydın	2	1.17%
Bolu	2	1.17%
Zonguldak	2	1.17%
Other	19	11.11%
Total	171	100

From the data in Table 4.13., we can maintain that most of the Ph.D. dissertations were conducted in Ankara (33.33%). The number of Ph.D. dissertations conducted in Ankara is 57.Lastly, the countries studied in cross-cultural M.S. theses and Ph.D. dissertations are presented in Table 4. 14.

Table 4.14. Cross-Cultural Studies

MS Theses			Ph.D. Dissertations		
Country	**Frequency**	**%**	**Country**	**Frequency**	**%**
Germany	5	14.71%	USA	4	17.39%
EU	4	11.76%	Germany	4	17.39%
USA	4	11.76%	France	2	8.70%
Japan	3	8.82%	U.K.	2	8.70%
France	3	8.82%	Italy.	1	4.35%
Italy.	2	5.88%	Norway	1	4.35%
Indonesia	2	5.88%	Austria	1	4.35%
Denmark	2	5.88%	Canada	1	4.35%
Austria	1	2.94%	Finland	1	4.35%
Spain	1	2.94%	Croatia	1	4.35%
Iran	1	2.94%	Ireland	1	4.35%
Poland	1	2.94%	Sweden	1	4.35%
Holland	1	2.94%	Switzerland	1	4.35%
Moldova	1	2.94%	Pakistan	1	4.35%
PISA	1	2.94%	Romania	1	4.35%
Philippines	1	2.94%			
Croatia	1	2.94%			
Total	34	100	Total	23	100

Data from Table 4.14. provides the opportunity to compare cross-cultural M.S. theses and Ph.D. dissertations. It can be concluded from the table that in most of the cross-cultural M.S. theses, Germany (14.71%) was studied the most frequently. Then follow United States of America (11.76%) and European Union countries (11.76%) follow. On the other hand, the number of Ph.D. dissertations concerning the United States of America (n=4) and Germany (n=4) is equal. These two countries (17.39%) are the most frequently studied countries in Ph.D. dissertations.

The researcher also investigated the research settings of the graduate studies. The results related with the analysis of M.S. theses are conveyed in Table 4.15.

Table 4.15. Research Setting

M.S. Theses			Ph.D. Dissertations		
Research Setting	**Frequency**	**%**	**Research Setting**	**Frequency**	**%**
Preschool	633	48.62%	Preschool	99	50.51%
Preschool Class	322	24.73%	Preschool Class	43	21.94%
Crèshes/ Nursery School	83	6.37%	Crèshes/ Nursery School	9	4.59%
Primary School	75	5.76%	Primary School	9	4.59%
High School	27	2.07%	High School		
College	42	3.23%	College	6	3.06%
Counseling and Research/ Rehabilitation Center	18	1.38%	Counseling and Research/ Rehabilitation Center	7	3.57%
Other	20	1.54%	Other	7	3.57%
Not Applicable	49	3.76%	Not Applicable	9	4.59%
Not Specified	33	2.53%	Not Specified	7	3.57%
Total	1302	100	Total	196	100

Findings indicate that kindergartens (48.62%) were the most frequently used research setting in M.S. theses. Kindergartens cater to 3- to 6-year-old children. Preschool classes functioning independently or within a primary school (24.73%) were the second most frequently used research setting in M.S. theses. Thirdly, crèches and nursery schools were used as research settings too.

Ph.D. dissertations were also analyzed in terms of research settings. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 4.15. As indicated in Table 4.15., kindergartens (50.51%) are the most frequently used research settings in M.S. theses. Then follow preschool classes (21.94%). Primary schools (4.59%) and crèches (4.59%) were the third most preferred by the researchers as the research setting in Ph.D. dissertations.

Next, the status of the research setting in graduate theses can be observed in Table 4.16.

Table 4.16. Research Setting Status

M.S. Theses			Ph.D. Dissertations		
Setting Status	**Frequency**	**%**	**Setting Status**	**Frequency**	**%**
Public	502	53.9%	Public	105	61.4%
Private/ Foundation	103	11.1%	Private/ Foundation	9	5.3%
Both of them	248	26.6%	Both of them	38	22.2%
Not Applicable	51	5.5%	Not Applicable	13	7.6%
Not Specified	27	2.9%	Not Specified	6	3.5%
Total	931	100	Total	171	100

Results presented in Table 4.16. indicates that researchers mostly preferred public (53.9 %) research settings in M.S. theses.

The list of the status of research settings preferred in Ph.D. dissertations can be found in Table 4.16.

As can be interfered from Table 4.16., most of the researchers used the public research setting (61.4%) in PhD. dissertations. In both M.S. theses and Ph.D. dissertations, private/foundation (5.3%) research settings were the second most preferred by the researchers.

Then, the researcher analyzed the types of research the graduate theses carried out. The results obtained from the analysis of the graduate theses are presented in Table 4.17.

Table 4.17. Research Type

M.S. Theses			Ph.D. Dissertations		
Research Type	**Frequency**	**%**	**Research Type**	**Frequency**	**%**
Quantitative	638	68.53%	Quantitative	102	59.65%
Qualitative	166	17.83%	Qualitative	29	16.29%
Mixed Method	127	13.64%	Mixed Method	40	23.39%
Total	931	100	Total	171	100

As can be seen in Table 4.17., in most of the M.S. theses (68.53%), the quantitative research method was employed. Then follow qualitative (17.83%) research methods, and mixed method (13.64%) studies were the least preferred type of studies. Moreover, results regarding Ph.D. dissertations can be seen in Table 4.17.

When Table 4.17. is examined, it can be seen that in most of the Ph.D. dissertations, the researchers employed quantitative (59.65%) research methods. On the other hand, different from the M.S. theses, in Ph.D. Dissertations, the mixed method (23.39%) was employed as the second popular research type. The qualitative research was the least preferred method of research.

In addition to the type of research, research designs of the graduate studies were analyzed by the researchers. Results regarding the M.S. theses are provided in Table 4.18.

Table 4.18. Research Design – M.S. Theses

Research Design	Frequency	%
Survey	551	56.45%
Experimental	189	19.36%
*Interview	43	4.41%
Case study	36	3.69%
Descriptive	33	3.38%
Not specified	29	2.97%
Content Analysis	15	1.54%
Phenomenological	13	1.33%
Correlational	10	1.02%
Literature Review	6	0.61%
Action research	5	0.51%
Field Research	5	0.51%
Document Analysis	6	0.61%
Causal Comparative	4	0.41%
Other	31	3.18%
Total	976	100

*Researchers define their research design as interview

It is apparent from Table 2.18. that the survey (56.45%) was the most preferred research design used in the M.S. theses. The number of the survey design used in the M.S. theses is 551. The second favorite research design turned out to be the experimental design and the third one was the interview. Research designs preferred less than 4 times are indicated as 'other' in the table.

The distribution of the research designs preferred in Ph.D. dissertations can be found in Table 4.19.

Table 4.19. Research Design – Ph.D. Dissertations

Research Design	Frequency	%
Experimental	86	43.65%
Survey	52	26.40%
Case study	12	6.09%
Phenomenological	7	3.55%
*Interview	5	2.54%
Single subject	5	2.54%
Literature Review	4	2.03%
Descriptive	4	2.03%
Other	22	11.17%
Total	197	100

*Researchers define their research design as interview

As can be seen from Table 4.19., the most favored research design among Ph.D. dissertations was the experimental design (43.65%). Different from the M.S. theses, the survey design (26.40%) was the second preferred design in dissertations. In addition, the case study (6.09%) was the third favorite design emerging in PhD. dissertations.

Beside the research design, the data collection tools used in graduate studies were analyzed, and the results are demonstrated in the tables below. The data related with the data collection tools utilized in the M.S. theses are provided in Table 4.20.

Table 4.20. Data Collection Tool – M.S. Theses

Data Collection Tool	Frequency	%
Questionnaire	531	37.00%
Achievement/Apt. Test	217	15.12%
Interview	187	13.03%
Document Analysis	106	7.39%
Performance/Dev. Test	103	7.18%
Attitude Scale	85	5.92%
Observation Form	73	5.09%
Rating Scale	64	4.46%
Checklist	30	2.09%
Personality Test	21	1.46%
Audio-Visual Materials	12	0.84%
Socio-Metric Devices	4	0.28%
Other	2	0.14%
Total	1435	100

According to Table 4.20., questionnaires (37.00%) are preferred the most by the researchers as the data collection tool in most of the M.S. theses. Then follow achievement/aptitude tests (15.12 %) and interviews (13,03%).

The distribution of the data collection tools used in Ph.D. dissertations is presented in Table 4.21.

Table 4.21. Data Collection Tools – Ph.D. Dissertation

Data Collection Tool	Frequency	%
Questionnaire	78	24.84%
Ach./Aptitude Test	68	21.66%
Interview	43	13.69%
Performance Dev./Test	34	10.83%
Observation	33	10.51%
Document Analysis	18	5.73%
Rating Scale	17	5.41%
Attitude Scale	11	3.50%
Checklist	10	3.18%
Socio-Metric Devices	2	0.64%
Total	314	100

As can be observed in Table 2.21., questionnaires (24.84 %) were the most frequently preferred data collection method in Ph.D. dissertations, just as in the M.S. theses. Similar to the M.S. theses, then follow achievement/aptitude tests (21.66%) and interviews (13.69%).

The statistical tests used in the graduate theses were also identified. The distribution of the statistical tests used in the graduate theses is presented as nonparametric, univariate, multivariate and bivariate test in Table 4.22.

Table 4.22. Statistical Tests

M.S. Theses			Ph.D. Dissertations		
Statistical test	Frequency	%		Frequency	%
Non-Parametric	461	23.77%	Non-Parametric	116	29.86%
Bivariate	161	8.30%	Bivariate	28	7.19%
Univariate	891	45.95%	Univariate	156	40.10%
Multivariate	426	21.97%	Multivariate	89	22.87%
Total	1939	100	Total	389	100

As indicated in Table 4.22., Univariate tests (45.95%) were the most preferred statistical test in M.S. theses. Non-parametric tests (23.27%) turned out to be the second most popular statistical test used in the theses, and Multivariate tests (21.97%) were the third favorite tests employed by the researchers to analyze the data collected in the M.S. theses. As can be observed in Table 4.22., the findings regarding the distribution of data analysis methods employed in Ph.D. dissertations are similar to those reported for the M.S. theses. Univariate (40.10%) was the most frequently used statistical test in Ph.D. dissertations. Then follows Non-parametric (29.86%), but for the Ph.D. theses' third favorite statistical test turned out to be the Multivariate (22.87).

Another variable examined by the researcher is the sampling method used in the graduate theses. The results of the analysis regarding M.S. theses are presented in Table 4.23.

Table 4.23. Sampling Methods

M.S. Theses			Ph.D. Dissertations		
Sampling Method	**Frequency**	**%**	**Sampling Method**	**Frequency**	**%**
Purposive	223	24%	Purposive	65	38
Simple Random	285	30.6%	Simple Random	49	28.7%
Convenience	220	23.6%	Convenience	32	18.7%
Cluster Random	50	5.4%	Cluster Random	8	4.7%
Stratified Random	30	3.2%	Stratified Random	6	3.5%
Population	36	3.6%	Population	3	1.8%
Not Specified	59	6.3%	Not Specified	4	2.3%
Not Applicable	26	2.8%	Not Applicable	4	2.3%
Total	931	100	Total	171	100

From the data in Table 4.23., it is apparent that in most of the M.S. theses, the simple random sampling method (30.6%) was used to define the sample of the studies. Then follow purposive (24.00%) and convenience (23.6%) sampling methods.

As indicated in Table 4.23., contrary to M.S. theses, purposive sampling (38.00) was revealed to be the most preferred sampling method among the Ph.D.

dissertations, while simple random sampling (28.7%) was the second most preferred method of sampling.

Lastly, the researcher investigated sample sizes of the M.S. theses and Ph.D. dissertations. Findings of the investigation regarding sample sizes are conveyed in Table 4.24.

Table 4.24. Sample Sizes

M.S. Theses			Ph.D. Dissertations		
Sample size	**Frequency**	**%**	**Sample Size**	**Frequency**	**%**
n<50	238	25.6%	n<50	56	32.7%
50<n<100	154	16.5%	50<n<100	49	28.7%
100<n<150	91	9.8%	100<n<150	11	6.4%
150<n<200	90	9.7%	150<n<200	4	2.3%
200<n	329	35.3%	200<n	47	27.5%
Not Applicable	26	2.7	Not Applicable	4	2.3%
Not Specified	3	0.3	Not Specified		
Total	931	100	Total	171	100

Table 4.24. shows that in most of the M.S. theses, the sample groups included more than 200 subjects (35.3%). On the other hand, in 25.6% of the M.S. theses, the sample groups had less than 50 subjects. According to Table 4.24., in Ph.D. dissertations, most of the studies had sample groups smaller than 50 subjects (32.7%). Secondly, subject groups including 50-to-100 subjects were preferred by the researchers.

According to the further analysis, average sample size for the M.S. theses is 192.08. On the other hand, average sample size for the Ph.D. dissertations is 184.58.

4.4. Summary of the Results

Within the scope of the current study, 931 M.S. theses (84.48%), and 171 Ph.D. dissertations (15.51%) were analyzed. According to the results of the analysis, M.S. theses regarding early childhood education became available in the National Theses Database, as early as 1989. Furthermore, the first available Ph.D. dissertation regarding early childhood education was published in 1993. When the distribution of M.S. theses and Ph.D. dissertations across 30 of years, was analyzed, 2006 was the most productive year, with the greatest number of the M.S. theses published. However, the maximum number of Ph.D. dissertations was written in 2012. The largest number of graduate theses was published from Marmara and Gazi

Universities. Ankara, Middle East Technical (ODTU) and Selçuk Universities also showed to be among the most productive universities, in regards to the number of published graduate theses regarding early childhood education. Not surprisingly, of the M.S. theses and Ph.D. dissertations analyzed, Early Childhood Education departments host the largest number of works. Results regarding the distribution of graduate theses, according to the academic title of the advisor, show that advisors of M.S. theses were primarily assistant professors (51.99%). In comparison, in the majority of Ph.D. dissertations, professors (67.3%) took on the advisory role.

When the methodological procedures of these graduate studies were analyzed, it was determined that students were the most frequently used subject groups, in regards to both M.S. theses (37.39%) and Ph.D. dissertations (53.39%). In the M.S. theses, authors mostly preferred research topics regarding the education of young children (29.95%) but in PhD. dissertations, researchers focused on developmental issues (32.78%). Nearly, all of the graduate theses were conducted in city centers and central districts. One unexpected finding was the number of M.S. theses, 6 in total (0.64%) that were conducted in rural areas. Conversely, no Ph.D. dissertation was found to be conducted only in rural areas. Kindergartens were the most frequently used research settings in both M.S. theses (48.62%) and Ph.D. dissertations (50.51%). Furthermore, in both M.S. theses (68.53%) and Ph.D. dissertation (59.65%), quantitative research is the most frequently employed research type. Contrary to research types employed in graduate theses, different research designs were applied to graduate theses. While survey design was the most frequent research design in M.S. theses (56.45%), in Ph.D. dissertations, authors mostly preferred experimental research design (43.65%). In data collection processes, questionnaires were the favorite method of the both M.S. theses and PhD. dissertations. Also, t test was found to be the most common statistical analysis method in the data analysis processes of these graduate theses. In accordance with the common research design, in M.S. theses, subject groups were mostly determined by using simple random sampling method. On the other hand, purposive sampling method was the favorite sampling method used in PhD. dissertations. While sample sizes used in M.S. theses were larger, generally consisting of more than 200 participants, in the majority of PhD. dissertations sample sizes were smaller than 50.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, firstly, the results of the study are discussed. Then, the implications and recommendations are presented.

5.1. Descriptive characteristics of master's theses and doctoral dissertations

The first research question posed by this study was, what are the descriptive characteristics (university, institute, department, publication year, the degree held by the advisor and language of the thesis) of master's theses and doctoral dissertations regarding early childhood education in Turkey? In regards to the question of descriptive characteristics, this study has found that M.S. theses concerning early childhood education were first published in 1989, under the department of child health and education. On the other hand, the first Ph.D. dissertation regarding early childhood education was published in 1993, by department of Architecture. Although the first graduate early childhood education program was established in 1993, graduate studies regarding early childhood education itself, were published earlier.

As can be seen from the findings of the current study, graduate studies regarding early childhood education were not only published under the scopes of Early Childhood Education departments. The first M.S. thesis produced from the early childhood education department was published in 1996. Also, the first Ph.D. dissertation was published in 2001, by a student from the same department. In 2016, the total number of graduate theses regarding early childhood education was 1,102, and 931 (84.37%) of them were M.S. theses and 171 (15.52%) were Ph.D. dissertations.

When the fluctuation in the number of graduate theses was examined, there were short-term increases in the number of M.S. theses produced in the years 1998 and 2002. Also, a further increase in the number of M.S. theses was determined between the years 2004 and 2012. In the following year, 2013, the number of available M.S. had decreased. By the year 2016, the highest level (n=100). In

accordance with M.S. theses, Ph.D. dissertations have gradually increased until 2012, however since 2012; there has been a decrease in the number of available Ph.D. dissertations. These findings are in agreement with Ahi and Kılda's (2009) study, whose findings show the number of theses steadily increased by 2006 and had an irregular distribution. A possible reason for this result may be due to authorization issues. A researcher may want to restrict the availability of their thesis until they publish the findings of their study. These results are consistent with previous studies. Altun, Şendil and Şahin (2011) stated that this decrease might have been caused by a delay in the registration process and the uploading of new theses to the online database.

When the universities of graduate theses were examined, it was inferred that some universities, in particular, led the field. Marmara and Gazi Universities were the most productive universities, producing the highest number published graduate theses. Ankara, METU (ODTÜ), and Selçuk Universities follow these universities. Although most of the graduate theses were published from these particular universities, the result of the analysis showed that 128 universities have published M.S. theses, and 41 universities have published Ph.D. dissertations, regarding early childhood education under various departments. This result can be interpreted that although the number of early childhood education graduate programs is limited, the importance of early childhood education is appreciated by other departments and early childhood education is mentioned in the graduate theses written in these departments.

Moreover, it has become clear that graduate theses regarding early childhood education have come from several graduate schools. While the majority of the investigated M.S. theses were published in the Graduate School of Social Sciences, a considerable number of Ph.D. dissertations were also published in the Graduate School of Educational Sciences. These findings further support those determined by Durukan et al. (2015). There are several possible explanations for this result. First of all, until recently, early childhood education graduate programs have served within the purview of the Graduate School of Social Sciences. Furthermore, Graduate Schools of Educational Sciences have only become prevalent recently. Another explanation for this result may be a rise in the popularity of interdisciplinary studies.

The interests of different departments, which provide the opportunity to study education under different graduate schools, resulted in graduate studies regarding early childhood education to be published under the scope of different graduate schools. In addition, one unexpected finding suggests that M.S. theses regarding early childhood education were also published in the Graduate School of Security Science and Graduate School of Ataturk's principles and reforms.

The results of the current study indicated that early childhood education, and child development and education, were the most productive departments to produce graduate theses regarding early childhood education. Even so, the majority of the graduate theses were produced within departments of early childhood education. However, the findings of previous studies also presented that the number of child development and education theses was higher than early childhood education graduate theses. One of the possible explanations for this result is that child development and education departments have started to provide undergraduate, master's degree and doctorate degree programs since the 1970's, while the establishment of early childhood education programs only began in 1998 (Haktanır, Dağlıoğlu & Güler, 2010). Nevertheless, this may explain why today, early childhood education departments are the main source of early childhood education related graduate theses.

Alternatively, in accordance with the findings of Altun, Şendil and Şahin's (2011) study, early childhood education was also mentioned in variety of departments. One surprising finding of the current study was that there are sample studies related with early childhood education, which were published under a variety of departments, including manufacturing and marketing, occupational health and safety, veterinary medicine, and finance and business administration. Based on these findings, it can be determined that early childhood education was an interdisciplinary area that drew interest from different departments. Moreover, these studies may provide the ability to consider studies concerning early childhood education from different perspectives.

When comparing the academic titles of the thesis advisors of M.S. theses and Ph.D. dissertations regarding early childhood education, the findings show that there is a divergence in the academic titles of the advisors. While more than half of the

M.S. theses were guided by Assistant Professors, the majority of Ph.D. dissertations were guided by Professors. According to Yavuz (2016), it is an expected result, as the number of M.S. students is higher than Ph.D. students and the majority of academic staff holds the position of Assistant Professor, therefore M.S. theses were guided by Assistant Professors. Conversely, Polat (2013) suggested that Ph.D. students prefer to study with Professors. Another reasonable explanation for this finding might be that guiding a Ph.D. dissertation may require more academic skills and experience. Moreover, according to current Graduate Education Regulations, an Assistant Professor should first successfully complete a M.S. theses guidance role, in order to be able to guide a Ph.D. dissertation.

5.2. Contextual Knowledge of master's theses and doctoral dissertations

Findings regarding research topics in graduate theses, showed that education development and teacher/administrator related topics were the most common research topics used in M.S. theses, regarding early childhood education. As Ahi and Kıldan's (2013) study argued, education was the most frequent research topic in early childhood education graduate theses. Special education (9.51%), school readiness (8.82%) and curriculum (8.35%) were the subject mostly focused on among education- related research topics. M.S. theses regarding developmental issues mostly focused on social-emotional (56.89%), cognitive (25.56%) and language (10.53%) developments. Social skills, including adaptation, self-confidence, self-regulation and self-efficacy (29.96%) were the most frequently studied research issues among social-emotional development topics.

Meanwhile, in Ph.D. dissertations, researchers mostly concentrated on development (32.78%), education (30.77%) and teaching methods (11.71%) issues. As in the case of M.S. theses, social-emotional development, especially social skills, were the most studied areas s in Ph.D. dissertations, regarding early childhood education. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Taştepe et al. (2016), which show that graduate theses frequently focused on social development. Special education (13.04%) and literacy skills (10.87%) were the most frequently studied fields among educational research topics in Ph.D. dissertations. Moreover, Altun and

Sarı (2017) found that number of studies which focus on literacy skills like letter-sound relation, phonological awareness and spelling is increasing each year.

5.3. Methodological procedures of master's theses and doctoral dissertations

The second research question of the current study was, what are the methodological procedures (i.e. the study group, the city where the study took place, the school hosting the study, the type of research, instruments, the statistical and sampling methods) of the master's theses and doctoral dissertations regarding early childhood education in Turkey? The results of the current study indicate that children/students are the most frequent subject group for both M.S. theses and Ph.D. dissertations. As children are the participant in the area of early childhood education, this was not an unexpected finding. However, when the age groups of the samples were examined, it was seen that almost all graduate theses focused on 3- to 6-year-old children (86.36 % of M.S. theses, 87.30% Ph.D. dissertations). 0-to 3- years-old children were the most under-studied age group in graduate theses (0.87% of M.S. theses, 0.79 of Ph.D. dissertations). This finding corroborate the ideas of Ahi and Kıldan (2013), who suggested that the majority of theses (or studies) covering early childhood education, focused on children between the ages of 3 and 6. This result may be explained by the fact that, in contrary to international agreements, according to the Turkish Ministry of National Education, early childhood education covers the education of children who are 3- to 6- years old and this age group has the highest population in a pre-school setting. For this reason, researchers prefer to include 3- to 6- years old children in their studies.

The second sample group used most frequently in graduate studies is that of teachers, including in-service, preservice and field teachers. Although elementary school teachers were included in the sample groups of the M.S. theses (6.59%), no Ph.D. dissertation was found to have focused on elementary school teachers. In-service teachers were the most frequent sample group among graduate theses that focus on teachers (82.12% of M.S. theses, 88.89% of Ph.D. dissertation). There are several possible explanations for this result. Firstly, in Turkey, most graduate students work as research assistants or teachers, and therefore, teachers and students are the most convenient research group for these researchers. Also, as most of the

graduate theses were published in early childhood education departments, researchers were mostly interested in teachers and students as they are the principle actors in early childhood education.

In most of the graduate studies focused on parents, only mothers, or mothers and fathers together, were the groups were used. The number of studies focused on fathers only (n=7 for M.S. these, n=1 for Ph.D. dissertations) was significantly lower than studies covering only mothers and/or both parents. This finding is also in accordance with earlier studies (Altun et al., 2011). However, studies also included grandparents, academicians, inspectors, visual materials and adjunct staff as sample groups in M.S. theses and Ph.D. dissertations.

Further analysis showed that, teacher and student sample groups were preferred mostly by early childhood education researchers. In other respects, parents and children sample groups were mostly focused on by child development researchers.

What is surprising is that although family related research topics had been studied more frequently in the early years, this focus lost its significance in later years. Language development was the most popular research topic among graduate theses published in 2016. A possible explanation for this result may be the results of current scientific research on language development which defends successful early language development is a vital part of later achievements.

The current study also revealed the characteristics of research settings in which these studies were conducted. Findings of the study indicated that nearly all of the graduate theses were conducted in city centers or central distinct (90.76%of M.S. theses, 89.47% of Ph.D. dissertations). While 22 of the M.S. theses (2.38%) included research settings in rural, and rural and central districts, in Ph.D. dissertations only two dissertations (1.17%) cover research settings in rural districts. It seems possible that this result is due to the low schooling rate in rural regions. Graduate studies conducted in cities were found to have been located most in metropolitans, including Ankara, İstanbul, Konya, Eskişehir and İzmir. There are several possible reasons to explain this finding. First of all, the universities in which most of these studies were produced are also located in these cities, and secondly, the crowded population of these cities provided easily available sample groups. Another important finding was that there are cross-cultural studies in both M.S. theses and Ph.D. dissertations.

Germany is the most frequently studied country in both M.S theses (14.71%) and Ph.D. dissertations (17.39%). Another regularly studied country in graduate theses was the USA (11.76% of M.S. theses, 17.39% of Ph.D. dissertations). Also, European Union Countries were studied in graduate theses. A possible explanation for these findings might be that international relations regarding graduate studies allow for easier access to data and anlysis. Labor migration from Turkey to Germany and the undergoing process of Turkey trying to obtain European Union membership could had had an effect on the choice of countries studied in graduate theses.

In contrast to the findings of previous studies, not surprisingly, pre-school is again the most preferred level of education investigated in graduate theses. Also, as kindergartens cater to 3- to 6-year-old children, they are the most frequent research setting in both M.S. theses and Ph.D. dissertations. This finding is consistent with earlier findings in the current study, as it was indicated in the result part, that 3- to 6-year-old children were the most frequent sample group in graduate theses. For this reason, researchers may have preferred to use kindergarten as a research setting to collect data for their studies. The study also found that in both M.S. theses and Ph.D. dissertations, researchers mostly preferred public-school settings. This result agrees with the findings of other studies, which reported g that most research focused on public schools (Dungan and Pryzwansky, 1988). According to Al Kathiri (2002), private schools did not welcome graduate students to conduct studies in their schools, as some parents did approve the study. Therefore, business concerns might be a possible reason for this finding.

As indicated in the current study, most of the graduate theses employed quantitative research methods. In M.S. theses, qualitative were less frequent than quantitative studies and mixed method studies were the least frequent studies. Moreover, mixed method studies were the second most frequent studies among Ph.D. dissertations. The number of qualitative studies was higher in Ph.D. dissertations because Ph.D. dissertations require more in-depth research. Contrary to this finding, according to Hännikäinen (2010), almost all Ph.D. dissertations regarding early childhood education in Finland used qualitative methods or at least combined both qualitative and quantitative methods to collect data. Also, in his study, Rule (2011) found that most of the early childhood education graduate theses were qualitative in

style. On the other hand, this finding is in agreement with Ahi & Kıldan's (2013) and Durukan et al.'s (2015) conclusions, which defended that in early childhood education theses, quantitative research methods were more frequently used than other methods. It is difficult to explain this result, but it might be related to the cultural differences of researchers.

According to the findings of the current study, although the most frequent research design has varied according to the type of theses, survey and experimental designs were the most popular research settings used in both M.S. theses and doctoral dissertations. In M.S. theses, survey was the dominant research design, followed by the experimental design. According to Erdoğmuş (2009), in survey studies, researchers surveyed the opinions and attitudes of learners, teachers, parents and administrators in regards to computer use in education and different variables. In accordance with this idea, it might be possible that the researchers of early childhood education graduate theses, who provided the surveys, intended to study and analyze the opinions, beliefs and attitudes of sample groups. On the other hand, in Ph.D. dissertations, researchers generally employed an experimental research design. This result may be explained by the fact that in Ph.D. dissertations, researchers aimed to reveal the effects of different variables on child development. For this reason, experimental designs, which provided the ability to check cause and relationships among variables (Frankel & Wallen, 2006) were preferred by the researchers.

Another important finding of the study is that questionnaires, achievement/aptitude tests and interviews were the most common data collection methods of the graduate theses. Also, the study found that most of the time, researchers combined more than one data collection method. This result may be explained by the fact that in accordance with survey research design, researchers use questionnaires to collect data. As Fowler stated in 2002, the questionnaire is one of the most common data collection methods used in survey design studies. Another explanation for this finding can be that, the results of the questionnaires are easily analyzed by researchers. Aptitude and achievement tests were used to measure the sample's intelligence and skills or to test knowledge of an individual in a particular area (Frankel & Wallen, 2006). Researchers, especially in experimental design

studies, may have used this data collection method to measure the effect of treatment on the intendent variable.

The third most common data collection method in graduate theses was the interview protocols. Interview protocols aimed to reveal what was on the subject's mind, what the subject thought or how the subject felt about a particular issue (Frankel & Wallen, 1993). Considering the purpose of the interview method, it may be claimed that researchers preferred this data collection method in order to discover the thoughts and feelings of the subjects. Also, as the most common sample group in the graduate theses was 3-to 6- year- old children, questionnaires sometimes remain incapable of reaching the ideas of young children due to their possible, limited understanding of the questions.

In contrast to the findings of the current study, Rule (2011) found that observation, rather than interviewing, was the most common method in the studies conducted in day care centers in Finland. Both participant and non-participant observation procedures were used as data collection methods. However, researchers combined observation methods with other data collection approaches so, this finding confirms the association between graduate theses conducted in Turkey and Finland. A possible explanation for the underuse of observation techniques in Turkey might be time limitation. As the observation method is a time-consuming technique, researchers use more practicable techniques like questionnaires. Also in Turkey, it is very difficult to receive permission from the school administration to be able to observe sample subjects.

When the statistical test used in the data analysis process of M.S. theses was analyzed, it was found that researchers mostly used Univariate statististical tests to analyze data. Multivariate statistical tests are the third most used method among M.S. theses.

In addition to that, SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) is the most common package used in graduate theses and this package program easily allows for the application of T-test and ANOVA analyses.

Moreover, the study revealed that sampling methods used in the M.S. theses and the Ph.D. dissertations vary in accordance with research designs. Simple random sampling is the most common method used in M.S. theses. Al Kathiri (2002) found

that using population was the most common sampling method in curriculum and instruction master's theses. It is difficult to explain this result but perhaps due to their findings, which mostly used survey studies, M.S. theses researchers preferred to apply simple random method to define sample groups. Also, as most common sample groups were children, teachers and parents in M.S. theses, simple random sampling can be considered as the proper method to define sample group in such large groups. Not surprisingly, the sample group of the M.S. theses was generally larger than 200 members. It might be said that the representativeness of M.S. theses was high.

However, in most of the Ph.D. dissertations, researcher preferred purposive sampling which was the most common sampling method used in these experimental research studies. Erdoğmuş (2009) also defended this finding in her study by suggesting that purposive sampling was one of the most common sampling methods used in instruction technology Ph.D. dissertations. There are several explanations for this result. Firstly, researchers do not consider the representativeness of the sample group in purposive sampling. Secondly, experimental design researches are the most common research design in Ph.D. dissertations; therefore, the result might be related with the research designs. Also, purposive sampling may have provided time and money-saving. Researchers preferred purposive sampling in particular, n when faced with a limited time to complete their studies. In accordance with sampling method, the sample groups of Ph.D. dissertations were smaller than 50 members.

5.3. Educational Implications

In this study, both descriptive characteristics and methodological procedures were investigated and the results have been presented by descriptive statistics and frequency tables. The main finding of the current study is that early childhood education was the topic of graduate theses since 1989, in several departments. Some specific universities, located in metropolitan areas, that had advanced academic staff, led the field by producing the majority of graduate theses. Therefore, there was an uneven distribution of graduate theses among universities. To prevent this inequality, quality and quantity of academic staff in other universities should be optimized.

Also results regarding the academic titles of thesis advisors have indicated that most of the time Assistant Professors took on the advisory role in regards to M.S. theses, while Professors guided Ph.D. dissertations. The large number of Assistant Professors staffed at universities, as all as the preference of Ph.D. students may be the reasons for this result. To provide academic progress for Assistant Professors and prevent crowding in the number of Assistant Professors, the Council of Higher Education should revise the academic positions in universities.

Sample groups preferred in both M.S. theses and Ph.D. dissertations had the same characteristics. Children stayed at the heart of the early childhood education field and they were the most popular form used in graduate theses. However, some age groups, including 0- to 3- year old children and 6+ ages were undervalued in graduate studies. To increase the studies covering 0- to 8- years old children, both master's and doctorate students should be encouraged to expand their sample pools. On the other hand, teachers were the second most popular group in graduate theses, but most of the graduate studies focused on in-service teachers. Training of preservice teachers has value as much as in-service training and the number of studies regarding prospective teachers should be increased. Also, fathers, academicians, ancillary professionals and educational materials should be used as samples in graduate theses.

In Turkey, the government aims to increase the attendance rate within preschool level education all around the country; however, the results showed that apart from the Istanbul, there is a big gap in the preschool enrolment rates in the Western and Eastern parts of the country (MoNE, 2014). According to Ağirdağ, Yazıcı and Sierens (2015), one promising strategy to improve schooling rates at the preschool level is to increase quality of preschool education in less developed provinces and to improve the accessibility of preschool education for children from a low socio-economic status. Therefore, to increase the quality and accessibility of preschool education, less developed provinces should be considered. When research settings of the graduate theses are examined, it is seen that almost all of the studies were conducted in central districts and thus, rural areas and less developed provinces were also ignored within graduate studies. An increasing number of graduate studies

conducted in rural districts would provide the ability to cultivate the quality and access of early childhood education in these districts.

While educational and developmental issues have been frequently studied in graduate theses, some educational and developmental topics are undervalued. Peace education, democracy education and gender education are examples of educational topics, which are undervalued in graduate theses. On the other hand, physical development and moral development are understudied topics among developmental studies. Furthermore, some topics regarding interdisciplinary studies, such as children's rights, child abuse and media should also be considered in graduate theses.

According to the findings, the number of quantitative studies was significantly higher than qualitative studies. Research employing qualitative research methods can provide in-depth information about the nature of the studied materials. For this reason, the number of qualitative studies should be increased in order to attain more in-depth information. Furthermore, using different types of research designs and data collection methods can provide the ability to develop different perspectives in regards to the field.

5.4. Recommendations for Faculties

To improve the quality of graduate theses, faculties and schools should be receptive for such studies.

In-service training, concerning how to support scientific studies in their schools, should be arranged for the School principals and managers.

Seminars should be organized for researchers in faculties, to encourage them to study new research topics, areas and sample groups (especially younger children and fathers).

Also, researchers should be informed about different research designs and research methods (especially qualitative methods).

5.5. Recommendations for further Study

Based on the findings of the current study, some recommendations for further research are given.

In this study, the researcher collected the graduate theses via the National Theses Database. To reach more graduate theses, university libraries can be searched in further studies.

Data of the current study consists of graduate theses published only in Turkey. However, future studies can include comparative approaches, which investigate early childhood education graduate publications in other countries.

The current study includes only graduate theses regarding early childhood education. In the further studies, both journal articles and other academic publications can be included in the data, in order to provide more comprehensive results.

Moreover, instead of using descriptive statistics, parametric statistics can be used to reveal research trends in graduate studies concerning early childhood education in Turkey.

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APPEDICIES

APPENDIX A: Codebook

Çalışmanın Tanımlayıcı Özellikleri
YOKTEZ Numarası:
Tez Türü:
0.   Master
1.   Doktora
Yayın Yılı:
Universite:
      Enstitü:
      Anabilim Dalı:
      Danışman Ünvanı:
         0. Profesör
         1. Doçent
         2. Yardımcı Doçent
         3. Öğretim Görevlisi

Çalışmanın Yöntemsel Özellikleri
  I.   **Tezin çalışma grubu:**
        0. Çocuk   Yaş Grubu:
        1. Öğretmen
            0.   Okul öncesi öğretmeni
            1.   Sınıf öğretmeni
            2.   Brans öğretmeni
            3.   Öğretmen adayı
        2. Veli
            0.   Anne
            1.   Baba
            2.   Diğer
        3. Okul müdürü
        4. Okul
        5. Çocuk kitapları
        6. Eğitim programı
        7. Diğer
  II. **Tezin çalışma konusu**
       1.   Gelişim
          1.1   Zihinsel gelişim
             1.1.1   akıl yürütme becerileri
             1.1.2   bilişsel süreç becerileri
             1.1.3   bilişsel tempo

        1.1.4   erken öğrenme becerileri
        1.1.5   görsel algı
        1.1.6   kavram gelişimi
        1.1.7   problem çözme
        1.1.8   metacognitive beceriler
        1.1.9   matematik başarısı ve becerileri
        1.1.10 other

1.2   Dil gelişimi

1.3   Fiziksel gelişim
    1.2.1 Spor
    1.2.2 Motor gelişim
    1.2.3 Psikomotor gelişim

1.4   Ahlak gelişimi
    1.4.1   din gelişimi

1.5   Sosyal-Duygusal gelişim
    1.5.1   akran ilişkileri
    1.5.2   benlik kavramı
    1.5.3   gender
    1.5.4   davranış problemler (davranış ketleme- kaygı düzeyi)
    1.5.5   sosyal beceriler (adaptasyon, öz-güven/düzenleme/yeterlilik, self-exp.)
    1.5.6   yaratıcılık
    1.5.7   problem çözme (kişiler arası)
    1.5.8   empati/ empatik düşünce
    1.5.9   iletişim/ iletişim becerileri
    1.5.10 Bağlanma stilleri/seperation
    1.5.11 Sosyal-duygusal gelişim
    1.5.12 Sosyal-duygusal gelişim
    1.5.13 Other

2. Eğitim
    2.1 ilköğretime hazırlık/ okul olgunluğu
    2.2 okuma-yazma becerisi/ aktiviteleri
    2.3 matematik eğitimi
    2.4 Y.dil eğitimi
    2.5 türkçe eğitimi
    2.6 fen eğitimi
    2.7 müzik eğitimi
    2.8 beden/hareket eğitimi
    2.9 sanat eğitimi

III. Çalışmanın yapıldığı Alan
- 0. İl/ ilçe merkezi
- 1. Kırsal
- 2. Tümü
- 3. Kültürlerarası

Çalışmanın Yapıldığı Şehir:
Çalışmanın Yapıldığı Bölge:
Çalışmanın yapıldığı Kurum:
- 0. Anaokulu
- 1. Anasınıfı
- 2. Kreş/gündüz bakım evi
- 3. İlkokul
- 4. Lise
- 5. Üniversite
- 6. RAM/Özel eğitim
- 7. Diğer
- 8. Uygun değil
- 9. Belirtilmemiş

Çalışmanın Yapıldığı Kurumun Statüsü
- 0. Resmi
- 1. Özel
- 2. Tümü
- 3. Uygun Değil
- 4. Belirtilmemiş

Çalışma Türü

    0. Nitel

    1. Nicel

    2. Mix method

    3. Diğer

Veri toplama aracı

    0. Değerlendirme ölçeği

    1. Görüşme

    2. Gözlem

    3. Kontrol listesi

    4. Tesler

        0. Gelişim testi

        1. Başarı testi

        2. Performans testi

        3. Kişilik testi

    5. Doküman analizi

    6. Anket

    7. Tutum ölçeği

    8. Sosyometrik araçlar

    9. Ses ve görüntü kayıtları

    10. Diğer

Çalışmanın Dizaynı

İstatistiki testler

    0. Spearman's r

    1. Chi square

    2. Mann Whitney U test

    3. Wilcoxon

    4. Kruskal Wallis

    5. Friedman test

    6. Pearson's r

    7. Cohen's d

    8. t test

    9. ANOVA

    10. Post-hoc Tukey

    11. Regression

    12. Multiple Regresion

    13. Faktor analysis

Örneklem Metotları

0. Basit gelişigüzel Örneklem
1. Kademeli Gelişigüzel Örneklem
2. Kümeden Gelişigüzel Örneklem
3. Sistematik Örneklem
4. Uygun Örneklem
5. Amaçlı Örneklem
6. Popülasyom
7. Belirtilmemiş
8. Uygun değil

Örneklem Büyüklükleri

0. $n \leq 50$
1. $50 < n \leq 100$
2. $100 < n \leq 150$
3. $150 < n \leq 200$
4. $n > 200$
5. Belirtilmemiş
6. Uygun değil

APPENDIX B: Turkish Summary / Türkçe Özet

GİRİŞ

Gerekli Bilgiler

Eğitimin tanımı yıllardır değişmektedir. Temel olarak eğitim ''...tarih boyunca insan topluluklarının ayrılmaz bir parçası olmuş, öğrenmeyi kolaylaştırma süreci'' anlamına gelmektedir (The Worldwatch Institute, 2017). Antik çağlardan beri, insanların potansiyellerine tam olarak erişebilmesini sağlamak, eğitimin süregelen amaçlarından biri olmuştur.

Eğitim alanyazınına bakıldığında, alternatif eğitim sistemleri araştırmalarının, eğitime farklı yaklaşımları belirtmek için çeşitli kavramların yanısıra formal, informal ve non-formal eğitim kavramlarını kullandığı görülmektedir (Dib, 1988; Smith, 2002; Soh & Meerah, 2013). Dib'e göre (1988) formal eğitim, yasalara ve kurallara göre yönetilen oldukça yapılandırılmış eğitim anlamına gelir. Yapılan tanımlar göz önüne alındığında, formal eğitimin sadece geleneksel okul ortamındaki öğrenme etkinliklerini değil aynı zamanda yüksek öğretimi de içerdiği söylenebilir. (Kocanova, Paolini & Borodankova, 2011).

İngiltere gibi birçok ülkede yüksek öğretim sistemi, sadece lisans ve lisansüstü eğitimi içermektedir. Amerika ve Türkiye gibi bazı ülkelerde ise yüksek öğretim formal lisans ve lisansüstü eğitime ek olarak mesleki eğitimi de kapsamaktadır (Kalkbrenner, 2015). Lisansüstü eğitim formal eğitimin son basamağını oluşturmaktadır ve enstitüler tarafından yönetilir (Bamdas, 2014). Bu programlar sınıf çalışmalarını ve araştırmayı bir araya getirmektedir. Lisansüstü eğitim, eğitim ve öğretim olarak lisans eğitiminden farklılıklar göstermektedir.

Çalışmanın Amacı

Bu çalışma iki temel amaç taşımaktadır: (1) Türkiye'de okul öncesi eğitim konusunda yazılan yüksek lisans ve doktora tezlerinin tanımlayıcı özelliklerini

incelemek; (2) Türkiye'de yazılan okul öncesi eğitim konulu yüksek lisans ve doktora tezlerinin araştırma konularını analiz etmek; (3) Türkiye'de yazılan okul öncesi eğitim konulu yüksek lisans ve doktora tezlerinin yöntemsel prosedürlerini inceleyerek, araştırma yöntemleri ve istatistiki tekniklerine dayalı araştırma eğitimlerini ortaya koymak. Bu çalışmanın sonucunda Türkiye'deki okul öncesi eğitim alanyazını kapsamlı olarak çerçevelenecektir.

Araştırma Soruları

Yüksek lisans ve doktora tezleri incelenerek aşağıdaki sorular yanıtlanmaya çalışılmıştır:

1) Türkiye'de yazılmış okul öncesi eğitimi konu alan yüksek lisans ve doktora tezlerinin tanımlayıcı özellikleri (üniversite, enstitü, anabilim dalı, yayın yılı ve tez danışmanının akademik ünvanı) nelerdir?

2) Türkiye'de yazılmış okul öncesi eğitimi konu alan yüksek lisans ve doktora tezlerinde ele alınan araştırma konuları nelerdir?

3) Türkiye'de yazılmış okul öncesi eğitimi konu alan yüksek lisans ve doktora tezlerinin yöntemsel prosedürleri (örneklem grubu, çalışmanın yapıldığı şehir, çalışma alanı, araştırma çeşidi, veri toplama aracı, kullanılan istatistiki analiz yöntemi, örneklem yöntemi ve örneklem büyüklüğü) nelerdir?

Çalışmanın Önemi

Bilimsel bilginin incelenmesi, incelenen alanın güncel durumunu değerlendirme olanağı sağlar (Kaya, Yazıcı, Deliveli & Hoşgörür, 2015). Yüksek lisans ve doktora tezleri, alanda yapılan bilimsel çalışmaların en kapsamlı örneklerindendir (Ahi & Kıldan, 2013). Her yıl çok sayıda lisansüstü tez, lisansüstü programlardan yayınlanmakta ve literature katkıda sağlamaktadır. Türkiye'de sadece 2016 yılında enstitüler bünyesinde yayınlanan lisansüstü tezlerin sayısı 22.803'e ulaşmıştır (YÖK, 2017). Bir çalışma alanında yapılan bilimsel çalışmaların sayısındaki artış, alanda ortak bir kanının sağlanabilmesi için bu çalışmaların derlenmesini zorunlu kılar. Hart'a (2000) göre bilimsel çalışmaların derlenmesi: (1) çalışma alanlarının hangi yönlerinin daha önce çalışıldığı ve hangi yönlerin ve

değişkenlerin henüz incelenmediğini ortaya çıkartmak, (2) çalışma alanı ile ilgili bakış açısı kazanmak, (3) çalışma alanın içeriğine hakim olmak, (4) alanda yapılan çalışmalarda hangi yöntem ve tekniklerin kullanıldığını ortaya çıkartmak açısından önemlidir. Ayrıca alandaki bilimsel çalışmalarla ilgili nitel ve nicel bilgiler alanın güncel durumuna ışık tutmaktadır (Yıldız, 2004).

Bu çalışma Türkiye'de yazılmış okul öncesi eğitim konulu lisansüstü tezlerin tanımlayıcı özelliklerini, araştırma yöntemlerini ve bu tezlerde kullanılan istatistiki teknikleri incelemeyi amaçlamıştır. Dolayısıyla çalışma okul öncesi eğitim üzerine yapılan çalışmaları günyüzüne çıkarmaktadır. Çalışmada okul öncesi eğitim disiplinler arası bir alan olarak ele alınmıştır, konu ile ilgili farklı ana bilim dallarında yapılan lisans üstü çalışmalar örnekleme dahil edilmiştir. Bu sebeple çalışma diğer çalışma alanlarının ilgisini okul öncesi eğitime çekecek bir öneme sahiptir.

Çalışma aynı zamanda araştırmacı adayları için bir başlangıç noktası sunmaktadır. Sonuçlar önceki çalışmaların örneklem yöntemleri ve çalışma alanları ile ilgili bilgi içerdiği için okul öncesi eğitimin ihmal edilen yönlerini ortaya çıkartıp alanda aynı çalışmaların tekrar edilmesini önceleyecektir.

Çalışmanın bulguları 1987-2016 yılları arasında yayınlanan okul öncesi eğitim konulu lisans üstü çalışmaların yöntemsel prosedürleri ile ilgili bilgi içermektedir.

Lisansüstü çalışmalar, alandaki en güncel yöntemsel eğilimleri temsil eden çalışmalardır (Duncan & Pnyzwansky, 1988). Sonuç olarak çalışmanın bulguları hem güncel istatistiki ve yöntemsel eğilimler hem de farklı araştırma yöntemleri ve istatistiki yöntemlerin dağılımları hakkında bilgi vermektedir. Buna ek olarak bulgular alandaki yazarların metodolojik eğilimleri üzerindeki değişimleri yıllara göre inceleme olanağı sağlamaktadır.

Son olarak okul öncesi eğitim konulu lisansüstü tezlerin güncel durumunu tanımlamak, araştırmacı çevrelerine Türkiye'deki ve diğer dünya ülkelerindeki okul öncesi eğitim çalışmaları hakkında karşılaştırma yapma imkanı sunar.

Gerçekte, okul öncesi eğitim alanyazını incelendiğinde bu alanda benzer çalışmalar bulunabilmektedir (Altun, Şendil & Şahin, 2011; Ahi & Kıldan, 2013; Durukan, Atalay & Şen, 2014). Yine de bu çalışmalar içerik ve kapsamları bakımından yetersiz kalmaktadır. Sonuç olarak bu çalışma disiplinler arası anlayışı ve geniş örneklem grubuyla kapsamlı bir analiz içermektedir. Bu nedenle çalışma alandaki boşluğa ışık tutmaktadır.

YÖNTEM

Çalışmada araştırma sorularını cevaplandırmak için nitel araştırma yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Yıldırım ve Şimşek (2005) nitel çalışmayı gözlem, görüşme ve doküman analizinin veri toplama aracı olarak kullanıldığı bir yaklaşım olarak tanımlamıştır. Nitel çalışmalarda inanışlar ve olaylar doğal ortamlarında, gerçekçi ve bütüncül bir yol ile ortaya çıkarılırlar.

Bu nitel çalışmada veri toplama yöntemi olarak doküman analizi kullanılmıştır. Ekiz'e (2009) göre doküman analizi verinin sistematik olarak analiz edildiği, çoğunlukla nitel çalışmalarda kullanılan bir veri toplama yöntemidir. Doküman bilgi kaynağı olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Bu bilgi kaynağı olarak tarafından sağlanan veri gerektiğinde yazılı, sözlü ya da görsel materyal veya arkeolojik bir kalıntı olabilir (Caulley, 1983). Doküman seçimi sürecinde önemli olan nokta, araştırmacının elde edilen dokümanın geçerliliğini ve güvenirliliğini sağlamasıdır (Best & Khan, 2006). Bu çalışmada enstitüler tarafından onaylanmış yüksek lisans ve doktora tezleri, doküman analizi için bilgi kaynağı olarak kullanılmıştır.

Veri analiz sürecinde, yüksek lisans ve doktora tezlerinin analizi için, içerik analizi kullanılmıştır. Weber'e (1990) göre içerik analizi; verinin özetlendiği, sınıflandırıldığı ve yorumlandığı bir veri analiz yöntemidir. Buna ek olarak nicel içerik analizi; iletişim sembollerinin istatistiki yöntemler kullanılarak kategorize edildiği ve aynı kategorilere sahip sembollerin ilişkilerinin incelendiği, tekrarlanabilir sistematik bir tekniktir (Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 2005). Başka bir deyişle,

içerik analizi insanların iletişimlerini analiz ederek, araştırmacılara insan davranışlarını dolaylı olarak inceleme imkanı sunar (Frankel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). Bu çalışma Türkiye'de yazılan okul öncesi eğitim konulu yüksek lisans ve doktora tezlerinin tanımlayıcı özelliklerini ve yöntemsel prosedürlerini incelemeyi amaçladığı için, içerik analizi yöntemi en uygun veri inceleme yöntemi olarak belirlenmiştir. Frankel vd. (2012) içerik analizi uygulamak için beş ana neden listelemiştir:

- Tanımlayıcı bilgi elde etmek

- Yüksek miktardaki verileri anlamlandırmak ve organize edebilmek için temalar oluşturmak

- Diğer araştırmaların bulgularını kontrol etmek

- Eğitimsel sorunlara çözüm üretirken kullanılabilecek veri elde etmek

- Hipotezleri test etmek.

Evren ve Örneklem

Çalışmanın amacı doğrultusunda, Türkiye'de yayınlanan tüm okul öncesi eğitim konulu tezler çalışmanın evrenini oluşturmuştur. Bu çalışmada, zaman ve bütçe kısıtlamaları sebebi ile çalışmada evrenin kullanılması kullanışsız bulunmuş, bu sebeple ulaşılabilir örneklem kullanılmıştır. Ulaşılabilir örneklem nitel çalışmalarda en çok tercih edilen amaçlı örnekleme yöntemlerinden biridir (Devers & Frankel, 2000). Birçok bölümden sayısız okul öncesi eğitim konulu tez yayınlandığı için, bu konudaki tezlerin kesin sayısı bilinmemektedir. Konu ile ilgili yazılan yüksek lisans ve doktora tezlerine ulaşabilmek için iki çevrimiçi kaynaktan yaranılmıştır. İlk olarak YÖK tarafından yönetilen Ulusal Tez Merkezi, 'okul öncesi eğitim' ve 'okulöncesi eğitim' terimleri kullanılarak taranmıştır. Ardından, erişim izni olan tezler belirlenmiş ve kayıt altına alınmıştır. İkinci olarak 109 devlet ve 76 özel üniversitenin kütüphanesi çevrimiçi olarak incelenmiştir. Türkçe ve İngilizce olarak yazılan tezler örnekleme dahil edilmiş, bir adet Almanca yüksek lisans tezi

örnekleme dahil edilmemiştir. Veri toplama süreci sonucunda, 931'i yüksek lisans, 171'i doktora tezi olmak üzere toplam 1102 tez örnekleme dahil edilmiştir.

Veri Toplama Araçları

Kodlama ve Kategorizasyon

Frankel vd. (2012) içerik analizi sürecinde, kategorilerin belirlenmesi için iki farklı yöntem tanımlamıştır: İlk yöntemde, kategorilerin belirlenmesi analiz sürecinden önce gerçekleştirilir. Araştırmacı kategorileri ilgili alanyazını temel alarak, benzer çalışmalardan, önceki bilgilerinden, teori ve deneyimlerden faydalanarak belirler. İkinci yöntemde kategoriler analiz süresince belirlenir. Araştırmacı mesajların içeriği hakkında daha çok bilgiye sahiptir ve kategorilerin oluşturulmasıyla süreç devam eder. Prasad (2008) içerik analizi kategorilerinin alanyazın ve araştırma soruları ile yakından ilgili olduğunu belirtmiştir. Oluşturulan kategoriler araştırma sorularına cevap verebilir nitelikte olmalıdır. Ayrıca, Neuendorf (2002) kategorilerin oluşturulmasının analiz sürecinden önce tamamlanmasının önemini vurgulamıştır. Bu çalışmada kategori oluşturma işlemleri ilgili literatür ve benzer yüksek lisans, doktora tezlerine dayanarak yapılmıştır. İçerik analizi kategorileri belirlendikten sonra, analiz birimi araştırmacı tarafından tanımlanmıştır. Prasad'a (2008) göre analiz birimi araştırmacı tarafından tanımlanmış ve kategorilerin içerisine sınıflandırılmış, içeriğin en küçük birimidir. Herhangi bir bilgi analiz birimi olarak kullanılabilir; mektuplar, kelimeler, semboller gibi. Bu çalışmada her yüksek lisans ve doktora tezi, analiz birimi olarak tanımlanmıştır. Sonuç olarak, kategoriler ve analiz birimi temel alınarak geçici bir kodlama kitabı oluşturulmuştur ve okul öncesi eğitimi alanında uzmanlaşmış bir akademisyene uzman görüşü için sunulmuştur. Uzman görüşü ve yapılan araştırmaların ardından tez inceleme formu oluşturulmuş ve pilot çalışması yapılmıştır.

Pilot Çalışma

Schereier (2012) mükemmel kodlama kitabının oluşturulmasının bütün araştırmacılar için imkansız olduğunu ve kodlama aracını test etmek için pilot çalışma yapılması gerektiğini belirtmiştir. Sonuç olarak, örneklem grubundan basit seçkisiz yöntemle seçilmiş 82 yüksek lisans ve 18 doktora tezi üzerinde kodlama

aracı test edilmiştir. Pilot çalışmanın sonuçları doğrultusunda kategoriler gözden geçirilmiş ve kodlamayı kolaylaştırmak amacı ile yan-kategoriler eklenmiştir. Kodlama aracının son hali Ek A'da verilmiştir. Buna ek olarak, pilot çalışma sürecinde tekrar kodlama ve kodlayıcılar arası güvenilirlik katsayıları da hesaplanmıştır. Kodlama aracının son hali verildikten sonra, pilot çalışmanın örneklemi araştırmacı tarafından tekrar kodlanmıştır. Ayrıca, pilot çalışmaya dahil edilen tezler daha önce içerik analizi tecrübesi bulunan, yüksek lisans mezunu ve okul öncesi eğitim bölümünde araştırma görevlisi olarak görev yapan başka bir araştırmacı tarafından kodlanmış ve kodlar arasındaki tutarlılık Kohen's Kappa değeri kullanılarak hesaplanmıştır. Kodlayıcılar arası tutarlılık kat sayısı .86 olarak hesaplanmıştır. Pilot çalışmanın ikinci kısmında kodlama aracının son hali kullanıldığı için sonuçlar ana çalışmanın sonuçlarına dahil edilmiştir.

Geçerlik ve Güvenirlik

Krippendorff (2004) geçerliği çalışma sonuçlarının doğru olarak kabul edilmesini sağlayan kalitesi olarak tanımlamıştır. Ayrıca geçerlik çalışmanın gerçekte ölçülmek istenen kavramı ne derece temsil ettiği ile ilgilidir (Neuendorf, 2002). Bir başka tanımda, içerik analizinin geçerliliğini amaçlar ve çalışmanın kodlama aracı ile arasındaki tutarlılık olarak açıklanmıştır (Bilgin, 2006). Bu çalışmada, araştırmacı geçerliği görünüş geçerliği, kapsam geçerliği ve içerik geçerliği olarak ele almıştır.

İlk olarak görünüş geçerliği ele alınmıştır. Neuendorf'a (2002) görünüş geçerliği ölçme aracının görünüşü ile ilgilidir. Bu çalışmada ölçme aracı araştırmacı tarafından geliştirilmiş ve pilot çalışmanın ardından uzman görüşüne sunulmuştur. Uzman görüşü ve pilot çalışmanın sonuçlarına göre revize edilen kodlama aracının istenen ölçümü yapmak için görünüş geçerliğine sahip olduğu kanısına ulaşılmıştır.

İkinci olarak kodlama aracının kapsam geçerliği kontrol edilmiştir. Kapsam geçerliği çalışmanın temsil edilebilirliği ile ilişkilidir. Kapsam geçerliği sağlanabilmesi için çalışmanın örneklem grubu, evreni temsil edebilecek kadar geniş seçilmelidir (Neuendorf, 2002). Bu çalışmada evren Türkiye'de okul öncesi eğitim

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konusunda yazılmış tüm yüksek lisans ve doktora tezlerini kapsamaktadır. Bu sebeple evrene ulaşmak neredeyse imkansız denebilir fakat çevrimiçi tam metin erişimi olan tüm yüksek lisans ve doktora tezleri örnekleme dahil edilmiştir. Sonuç olarak, çalışma evreni temsil edebilme yeteneğine sahiptir.

Üçüncü olarak ölçme aracının içerik geçerliği kontrol edilmiştir. Neuendorf'a (2002) göre içerik geçerliği, yapılan ölçümün içeriği ne derece yansıttığıdır. İçerik geçerliği küçük bir denetim ile değerlendirilebilir (Böke, 2011). Bu çalışmada kullanılan tez inceleme formu benzer çalışmalar ve ilgili alan yazından faydalanılarak hazırlanmıştır. Ayrıca daha önce içerik analizi deneyimi olan iki araştırma görevlisi ve bir alan uzmanının ölçüm aracı, kodlama ve kategorizasyon süreci ile ilgili görüşü alınmıştır.

Son olarak, çalışmanın güvenirliği araştırmacı tarafından sağlanmıştır. Kirk ve Miller'in güvenirlik tanımı üç temel özellik içermektedir. (1) tekrarlanan ölçümün ne derece aynı kaldığı. (2) ölçümün zaman geçmesine rağmen tutarlılığı ve (3) verilen zaman aralığında yapılan ölçümlerin ne derece benzediği. Bu çalışmada güvenir sonuçlar elde edebilmek için hem kodlayıcılar arası tutarlılık, hem de test tekrar test teknikleri uygulanmıştır. Araştırmacı ilk kodlamanın ardından sekiz hafta sonra kodlama işlemini tekrarlamıştır. İki kodlama arasındaki tutarlılık Cohen's Kappa değeri ile hesaplanmıştır.

Veri Analiz Süreci

Veri analizi sürecinde tanımlayıcı istatistikler ve frekanslar kullanılmıştır. Buna ek olarak, veri analizi SPSS (Sosyal Bilimler İçin İstatistik Paketi) 22.0 versiyonu kullanılarak yapılmıştır. İçerik analizi çalışmalarında, toplanan veriyi temsil etmek için genellikle frekans ve yüzdelikler kullanılır (Fraenkel vd., 2012). Bulguların raporlanması sürecinde, yüksek lisans ve doktora tezlerinin tanımlayıcı ve yöntemsel özellikleri sıklık tabloları kullanılarak temsil edilmiştir.

SONUÇLAR

Çalışma kapsamında 931 yüksek lisans (%84.48) ve 171 doktora tezi (%15.51) analiz edilmiştir. Analiz sonuçlarına göre, Ulusal Tez Merkezine kayıtlı okul öncesi eğitim konulu yüksek lisans tezlerin 1989 tarihinden itibaren yayınlanmaya başladığı görülmüştür. Buna ek olarak, ulaşılabilen ilk doktora tezi 1993 yılına aittir. Yüksek lisans ve doktora tezlerinin 30 yıllık dağılımı incelendiğinde, 2016 yılının en çok yüksek lisans tezinin yazıldığı yıl olduğu görülmektedir. Diğer taraftan, 2012 yılı en yüksek sayıda doktora tezinin yazıldığı yıldır. Marmara ve Gazi Üniversiteleri en fazla tezin yayınlandığı üniversitelerdir. Ankara, Orta Doğu Teknik ve Selçuk Üniversiteleri de en fazla okul öncesi eğitim konulu lisansüstü tezinin yayınlandığı üniversiteler arasındadır. Beklentilere uygun olarak bu konudaki en fazla yüksek lisans ve doktora tezinin okul öncesi eğitim anabilim dalı programlarında yayınlandığı görülmektedir. Tez danışmanlarının akademik ünvanlarına göre incelendiğinde; yüksek lisans tezlerinin genellikle Yardımcı Doçent (%51.99), doktora tezlerinin ise Profesörler (%67.3) tarafından yönetildiği görülmektedir.

Lisansüstü tezlerin yöntemsel prosedürleri incelendiğinde; öğrencilerin her iki tez grubunda da en çok tercih edilen örneklem grubu olduğu görülmüştür. Araştırmacılar yüksek lisans tezlerinde genellikle okul öncesi dönemdeki çocukların eğitimleri (%29.95) ile ilgili konuları tercih ederken, doktora tezlerinde araştırmacılar gelişimsel konulara (%32.78) yönelmiştir. Neredeyse tezlerin tamamı il ve ilçe merkezlerinde uygulanmıştır. Beklenmedik sonuçlardan biri sadece altı yüksek lisans tezinin (%0.64) kırsal alanlarda gerçekleştiğini, doktora tezleri arasında kırsal alanda gerçekleşen çalışma olmadığını göstermiştir. Anaokulları hem yüksek lisans (%48.62) hem doktora tezleri (%50.51) için en çok tercih edilen uygulama alanlarıdır.

Nicel araştırmalar her iki lisansüstü tez türünde de en çok kullanılan araştırma çeşidi olsa da yüksek lisans tezlerinde en çok tarama tipi (%56.45) araştırma desenleri kullanılırken, doktora tezlerinde en çok tercih edilen araştırma deseni deneysel desendir (%43.65). Veri toplama aracı olarak anketler her iki lisansüstü tez

tipi için de en çok kullanılan yöntemdir. Kullanılan araştırma desenine uygun olarak, yüksek lisans tezlerinde örneklem grupları genellikle basit seçkisiz örneklem yöntemi (%30.6) kullanılarak belirlenir. Diğer taraftan doktora tezlerinde ise amaçlı örneklem (%38.0) en çok tercih edilen örneklem alma yöntemidir. Yüksek lisans tezlerinde kullanılan örneklem grupları genellikle 200 üzerinde örneklem içerirken, doktora tezlerinde genellikle örneklem grubunun boyutu 50'nin altındadır.

TARTIŞMA

Yüksek Lisans ve Doktora Tezlerinin Tanımlayıcı Özellikleri

Çalışmanın bulgularına göre, Türkiye'de okul öncesi eğitim konulu ilk yüksek lisans tezi 1989 yılında Çocuk Gelişimi ve Eğitimi anabilim dalı altında yayınlanmıştır. Diğer taraftan ulaşılabilen ilk doktora tezi 1993 yılında Mimarlık anabilim dalında yayınlanmıştır. Türkiye'de ilk okul öncesi eğitim lisansüstü programı 1993 yılında kurulmasına rağmen, konuyla ilgili tezlerin tarihi daha eskiye dayanmaktadır. Çalışmanın sonuçlarından da anlaşılabileceği üzere, Türkiye'de okul öncesi eğitim konusu sadece Okul Öncesi Eğitim programları tarafından değil daha birçok lisansüstü program tarafından ele alınmaktadır. Okul Öncesi Eğitim Anabilim dallarından yayınlanan tezler incelendiğinde, ilk yüksek lisans tezinin 1996, ilk doktora tezinin 2001 yılında yayınlandığı görülmektedir. 2016 yılı itibari ile ulaşılabilen okul öncesi eğitim konulu tezlerin sayısı 931'i yüksek lisans 171'i doktora olmak üzere 1102'ye ulaşmıştır.

Okul öncesi eğitim konulu yüksek lisans tezi sayılarındaki dalgalanma yıllara göre incelendiğinde 1998 ve 2002 yıllarında kısa süreli artışlar olduğu görülmüştür. 2004-2012 yılları arasında istikrarlı bir artış yaşanmış fakat 2013 yılında sayı tekrar azalmıştır. 2016 yılında ise en yüksek seviyeye ulaşmıştır. Doktora tezlerinin sayısı ise 2012 yılına kadar sürekli olarak artmış fakat 2012 yılından itibaren doktora tezlerinin sayısında düşüş yaşanmıştır. Bu sonuçlar Ahi ve Kıldan'ın 2013 yılında

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ulaştığı sonuçları desteklemektedir. Bu sonucun sebepleri arasında tezlerin izin durumları gösterilebilir.

Tezlerin bağlı bulunduğu üniversiteler incelendiğinde ise en çok tezin Marmara ve Gazi Üniversitelerinden yayınlandığı sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Bunun dışında tezlerin Okul Öncesi Eğitim başta olmak üzere çeşitli anabilim dallarından yayınlandığı sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Bu anabilim dalları arasında maliye ve pazarlama, iş sağlığı ve güvenliği, veterinerlik ve işletme yönetimi gibi beklenmedik anabilim dalları da yer almaktadır.

Lisansüstü tezlerin tez yöneticilerinin akademik ünvanına göre dağılımına bakıldığında, tez tiplerine göre danışman ünvanlarının değiştiği görülmektedir. Yüksek lisans tezlerinin yarısından fazlası Yardımcı Doçentler tarafından yönetilirken, doktora tezlerinin büyük bir bölümünde Profesörler danışmanlık görevini üstlenmektedir. Yavuz'a (2016) göre bu beklendik bir durumdur. Yüksek lisans öğrencilerinin sayısı doktora öğrencilerinin sayısından fazladır ve akademik personelin büyük bölümü Yardımcı Doçent ünvanını taşımaktadır bu sebeple, yüksek lisans tezlerin büyük bölümü Yardımcı Doçentler tarafından yürütlmektedir. Bunun yanısıra Lisansüstü Eğitim Yönetmeliği de bu sonuca sebep olabilmektedir. Yönetmeliğe göre; Yardımcı Doçentlerin doktora tezi yönetmeden önce, en az bir yüksek lisans tezini başarılı bir şekilde yönetmiş olması gerekmektedir.

Yüksek Lisans ve Doktora Tezlerinde Ele Alınan Araştırma Konuları

Çalışmanın sonuçlarına göre; okul öncesi dönemde eğitim, çocuk gelişimi ve öğretmen ve idarecilerle ilgili konular yüksek lisans tezleri arasında en sık kullanılan konulardır. Eğitim konulu tezlerde ise araştırmacılar sıklıkla özel eğitim, ilköğretime hazırlık ve müfredat konularını ele almıştır. Gelişim konulu yüksek lisans tezlerinde ise sosyal-duygusal gelişim, bilişsel gelişim ve dil gelişimi en çok tartışılan konulardır.

Doktora tezlerinde ise araştırmacılar gelişimsel, eğitimsel konuların yanında öğretim yöntemlerini konu edinmiştir. Yüksek lisans tezlerinde olduğu gibi sosyal-duygusal gelişim en çok incelenen gelişim alanıdır. Özellikle sosyal beceriler, hem yüksek lisans tezlerinde hem doktora tezlerinde araştırmacıların sıkça üzerinde

durduğu araştırma konularındandır. Yıllara göre araştırma konuları ve örneklem grupları incelendiğinde önceki yıllarda ailelerin çalışmalarda sıkça incelendiği, son yıllarda aileye verilen önemin azaldığı görülmüştür. Dil gelişimi son yıllarda önem kazanan araştırma konuları arasındadır. Bunun sebebi son dönemde uygulanan bilimsel çalışmaların dil gelişiminin çocuğun ilerdeki başarısında hayati önem taşıdığı sonuçlarını ortaya koyması olarak gösterilebilir.

Yüksek Lisans ve Doktora Tezlerinin Yöntemsel Prosedürleri

Lisansüstü tezlerin yöntemsel eğilimleri incelendiğinde; öğrencilerin en çok tercih edilen örneklem grubu olduğu görülmüştür. Çocuklar okul öncesi eğitimin en önemli parçası olduğundan bu beklenmedik bir sonuç değildir. Fakat katılımcıların yaş aralıkları incelendiğinde, neredeyse öğrenciler ile çalışılan tezlerin tümünde 3-6 yaş çocukların tercih edildiği görülmüştür. Bu bulgu Ahi ve Kıldan'ın 2013 yılında bulduğu sonuç ile örtüşmektedir. Bu sonuç şu şekilde açıklanabilir; dünya çapında kabul edilen okul öncesi eğitim tanımını aksine, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı'nın tanımına göre okul öncesi eğitim 3-6 yaş aralığını kapsamaktadır. Ayrıca, okul öncesi eğitim kurumlarında en yüksek popülasyon 3-6 yaş grubuna aittir. Bu sebeplerden dolayı araştırmacılar bu yaş grubuna araştırmalarında daha sık yer vermektedir.

Lisansüstü tezlerde sıkça tercih edilen örneklem gruplarından bir tanesi de ebeveynlerdir. Bu çalışmaların çoğunda anne ve baba birlikte kullanılırken bir kısmında sadece annelerle çalışılmıştır. Sadece babalar ile çalışılan çalışmaların sayısı ise yüksek lisansda yedi (n=7), doktorada ise bir (n=1) ile sınırlı kalmıştır. Bu sonuç baba katılımı çalışmalarının sayıca azlığını vurgulayan diğer çalışmaların bulguları ile örtüşmektedir (Altun vd. 2011). Bunun yanı sıra az sayıda örnek lisansüstü tezi bulunmasına rağmen, anneanne, dede, akademisyenler, müfettişler, sınıfiçi materyalleri ve yardımcı elemanları örneklem olarak kullanan çalışmaların sayısı artırılmalıdır.

Çalışmanın bulgularında belirtildiği gibi lisansüstü tezlerin çoğunda nicel araştırma yöntemleri kullanılmıştır. Yüksek lisans tezlerinde, nitel çalışmaların sayısı nicel çalışmaların sayısından azdır. Karma çalışmalar ise en az kullanılan çalışmalardır. Doktora tezlerinde karma yöntem kullanılan çalışmaların sayısı nitel

yöntem kullanılan çalışmaların sayısından fazladır. Doktora tezleri daha derinlemesine araştırmalar yapılan çalışmalar olduğu için bu tezlerde nitel yöntemler daha fazla kullanılmış olabilir. Çalışmanın bulgularının aksine Rule 2011'de ki çalışmasında okul öncesi eğitim alanında yapılan tez çalışmalarında nitel yöntemlerin daha sık kullanıldığını belirtmiştir. Bu sonuçları açıklamak zor olsa da aradaki farkın kültürel farklardan kaynaklandığı söylenebilir.

APPENDIX C: TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü ☐

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü ☐

Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü ☐

Enformatik Enstitüsü ☐

Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü ☐

YAZARIN

Soyadı :
Adı   :
Bölümü :

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce) :

TEZİN TÜRÜ : Yüksek Lisans ☐   Doktora ☐

1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir. ☐

2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir. ☐

3. Tezimden bir bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz. ☐

TEZİN KÜTÜPHANEYE TESLİM TARİHİ: