



## The Trend Analysis of Graduate Level Curriculum and Instruction Studies in Türkiye<sup>1</sup>

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### Article Info

### ABSTRACT

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Educational processes are reshaped by developing technologies, economic conditions, and cultural dynamics. Educational programs should be designed to provide the necessary skills for the future of individuals and societies. Careful analysis of these transformation processes is essential to improve the effectiveness of the systems. There is a need for trend analysis of the studies carried out so far in the field of curriculum and instruction in order to contribute to curriculum development studies, educational policy-making processes and to enable scientists to conduct more comprehensive literature review. Therefore, this study is designed to determine the trends in subject and research methods used in the graduate theses completed in the department of Curriculum and Instruction in Türkiye. This research was carried out using the case study approach. The collected data were analyzed using trend analysis and content analysis. Findings revealed that the most researched subject is curriculum, and the least researched subject is curriculum development. Quantitative descriptive research is the most preferred research method and questionnaires are the most common data collection tool. Educators and students were mostly selected as samples in studies. Usually, the preferred sample size range is between 101-500 in graduate theses. It is recommended that researchers include observation, document analysis and achievement test for the data collection to ensure data diversity. Finally, it is surprising that graduate theses written in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction are rarely conducted on the curriculum development. It is strongly recommended for future graduate studies to accommodate curriculum development as a subject.

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## INTRODUCTION

Education systems change with the change of social needs. Educational processes are reshaped by developing technologies, economic conditions, and cultural dynamics (Spatar-Kozachenko et al., 2024). Educational programs should be designed to provide the necessary skills for the future of individuals and societies. Careful analysis of these transformation processes is essential to improve the effectiveness of the systems. Change in education manifests itself not only in educational programs but also in educational policies. The changing dynamics of societies have increased the expectations of flexibility and adaptation from education systems. In this context, trend analysis is a critical tool to understand transformations in education and to be able to adapt quickly when necessary.

Trend analysis is used to understand and improve the dynamic nature of education systems (Hwang & Xie, 2018; Kansal, et al., 2021; Shin, et al., 2021; Tieben & Wolbers, 2010). In today's world where changes in education are taking place rapidly, it is of great importance to evaluate the current situation and predict future trends. The curriculum is one of the cornerstones of the educational process. In the past, the education program was seen only as a tool for the transfer of knowledge and cultural heritage, but today a student-centered approach has been adopted. This transformation necessitates the adoption of a more systematic and scientific approach in education. Trend analysis is an important method to evaluate the effects of curriculum changes and to identify which areas are experiencing problems. Trend analysis follows current trends in education, allowing educators and administrators to develop more effective strategies. Thus, it becomes possible to improve the quality of education systems and make them suitable for needs.

Trend analysis not only assesses the current condition but also predicts the future directions of educational policies and practices (Kaplan & Jude, 2022). The direction in which changes in education will develop can be determined by systematic reviews. Which methods and approaches are more effective in education sheds light on future curriculum development processes. Such analyses provide guidance on updating teaching methods and materials. The fact that the education system is in constant change is possible not only with the adequacy of current practices but also with the prediction of future needs. Trend analysis is an important process for understanding the development of education systems and developing more effective education policies. It is critical for educators, students, and policymakers to benefit from such analyses to improve the quality of the education system and ensure sustainable development. In today's world where changes in education are taking place rapidly, trend analysis is an inevitable necessity to respond to the needs of education systems and to determine their future orientation. Therefore, the role of trend analysis cannot be ignored to ensure continuous innovation and development in the field of education. Continuous updating of education policies and practices will increase the effectiveness of education systems and allow individuals to be better prepared for the future.

Universities are among the institutions that conduct high-level education and scientific research, produce knowledge, reveal new discoveries and strive to make them more functional (Mohrman & Baker, 2008). Researchers working in these educational institutions examine the topics previously included in the research by conducting a literature review in order to determine their roadmaps. The number of books being published around the world is increasing, in the last half century, more information has been processed than in human history, and this rate is doubling every eight years. Failure to complete the literature review effectively can cause researchers to waste time and turn to the wrong areas. There is a need for trend analysis of the studies carried out so far in the field of curriculum and instruction in order to contribute to curriculum development studies, educational policy-making processes and to enable scientists to conduct comprehensive literature review (Erdem, 2011).

The purpose of this study is to determine the research methods and subject trends used in the master's and doctoral theses in the Department of Curriculum and Education in Türkiye by trend analysis.

Research on curriculum has been carried out by different researchers to determine the trend in different countries. In their study, Chang and Jeon (2022) analyze Korea's revised special education curriculum for 2015 by examining academic articles from the 2016-2022 period. It is emphasized that the curriculum aims to meet the special educational needs of students with disabilities and to comply with international education standards. The study focuses on the evaluation of the applicability of the curriculum and future revision aspects. According to previous research, difficulties in ensuring the connection of the curriculum with both special and general education have been identified. By examining 29 academic papers, the researchers focused on the main components of the curriculum, its applicability, and the main competencies. The study's findings show that the 2015 curriculum presents challenges for teachers in terms of implementing individualized approaches, and that some of the achievement standards are complex. However, the curriculum has been successful in providing autonomy and flexibility in schools. In conclusion, the curriculum has brought significant improvements, but the need remains to increase the alignment of achievement standards with student abilities and strengthen the implementation process. It is suggested that future revisions should focus on improving teacher education and strengthening the link between general and special education.

In another study, Kurt & Erdoğan (2015) examined the trends of curriculum evaluation research in Türkiye between 2004 and 2013. In the program development process, it is of great importance to conduct regular evaluations to determine the success of the programs and to reveal the improvement needs. Changes in education and current needs have increased the need for such studies. Although there is a lot of research on curriculum evaluation in literature," studies that systematically analyze trends in this area are limited. This study revealed that mathematics, science and English courses were evaluated especially at the primary education level with the content analysis and thematic analysis carried out with the meta-synthesis method. Surveys are the most common data collection tool, while teachers and students are the most frequently used sample groups. Evaluation models such as CIPP and objective performance models have also been widely used. The research identifies trends in curriculum evaluation studies in Türkiye, sheds light on future research and emphasizes the importance of systematic analyses to improve these processes.

Similarly, Kozikoglu and Senemoğlu (2015) examined the theses made in the field of curriculum development in Türkiye. The study aims to determine emerging trends, research designs and frequently studied topics by examining theses in the field of curriculum development and teaching between 2009-2014. As effective curriculum development in education gains importance, the study of these theses offers insights into how educational research is evolving and guides future studies. It has been stated that previous studies have covered the period before 2009, but there is no analysis made after this date. In the study, content analysis was made on 121 theses, and it was determined that topics such as teaching strategies, curriculum evaluation and teacher development came to the fore. Mixed methods were generally used in the studies, and questionnaires and scales were preferred as data collection tools. As a result, it is emphasized that future theses should make more theoretical contributions to the field of curriculum and instruction, turn to experimental designs, and explore understudied areas such as informal education curricula and special education programs.

In another study, Taşdemir and Kuş (2011) examined the news about the Renewed Primary Curriculum in national newspapers using Content Analysis. The research examines how the revised primary school curriculum between 2004 and 2007 was presented to the public through the national media. Emphasizing the importance of education reforms in shaping public opinion, the literature reveals that structural changes in Türkiye encourage student-centered learning. The research evaluated 484 news items in this period through content analysis on 14 national newspapers with a qualitative case study method. These contents, which first reached the highest number of news in 2004, have evolved from bureaucratic explanations to more detailed discussions about the philosophy and implementation process of the curriculum over time. Initially met with mixed reactions, the media gradually focused more on the

inadequacies of the curriculum and evaluation methods. As a result, the media's presentation of the curriculum has shifted from a positive vibe to a critical one as implementation challenges have arisen. This study highlights the need for continuous and accurate media coverage for the effective communication of education reforms to the public.

Trend analysis has also been used to determine trends in different areas of education. For example, Özüdoğru (2018) analyzed the foreign language curriculum evaluation studies carried out between 2005-2016. The increasing importance of curriculum evaluation in foreign language education, combined with the lack of comprehensive analyses, reveals the necessity of this research. Although there are many evaluations in the literature in fields such as science, social studies and mathematics, it is seen that comprehensive studies on foreign language curricula are limited. Using a descriptive content analysis method covering 87 studies, the study examined various criteria such as research methods and sample sizes. The results show that the assessments mostly focused on primary school curricula, and the most common data collection tools were questionnaires and interviews. However, the fact that many studies do not use a specific curriculum evaluation model reveals the deficiencies in systematic evaluation approaches. Overall, the findings of the study emphasize the preference for mixed methods and small to medium-sized samples, but the need to use more comprehensive evaluation models. It is suggested that future research incorporates more systematic models to improve reliability and validity.

Another area where trend analysis is used in education is distance education research. In their study, Yavuz, Kayalı and Tural (2021) examined the trends in distance education research during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research, which was carried out through bibliometric and content analysis of 220 studies, addresses the research explosion created by the transition of institutions to online and distance learning after major disruptions in education during the pandemic process. While previous studies have focused on a variety of topics, such as student and teacher experiences and the effectiveness of distance education, this study aimed to fill the gap in the literature by analyzing the most cited authors, journals, and methodological trends. The results of the research show that the highest number of publications took place in the last quarter of 2020, with the USA and China being the leading contributors. It has been determined that quantitative research is the most common method, surveys are frequently used as a data collection tool, and keywords such as "COVID-19," "online education," "distance education" come to the fore. The study highlights important areas for future research, frequently used methodologies, and influential authors, suggesting comparative studies across larger sample sizes and education levels.

In another trend analysis study for distance education studies, Tuncay and Uzunboylu (2010) examined the current trends in the literature on distance education (UE) between 1972-2008. Despite the growing popularity of distance education, emphasis has been placed on the lack of a comprehensive literature review. In the study, 9866 documents were analyzed in databases such as Web of Science, Scopus, EBSCOhost and Science Direct, and 160 publications were examined in detail by content analysis method. Most of the studies were published in English and concentrated in fields such as social sciences, engineering and computer science. Since 1972, there has been a significant increase in distance education publications, with the highest number of publications reaching in 2006. Most of the documents are in the form of articles and conference papers, with English being the most common language. With the advancement of technology, the importance of distance education has increased, so it has been suggested that content and citation analysis should be used together in future research. In addition, similar studies are conducted every ten years, emphasizing a better understanding of distance education trends.

Utilizing the trend analysis method, Yılmaz and Banyard (2020) also emphasized the increasing importance of student participation in distance education and determined instructional design, media characteristics and student characteristics as factors affecting participation in their research examining 154 studies. While the results support the importance of student engagement in distance education, new factors such as teaching methods, course design, and instructor competencies should also be considered. In addition, the role of technologies such as LMS, Web 2.0 tools, and mobile learning in increasing

engagement is also highlighted. As a result, it is stated that student engagement should be prioritized for its success in distance education, and further research has been suggested.

Another study using trend analysis was conducted on cooperative learning studies. In this study, Akdemir & Arslan (2012) analyzed 2037 studies in the ERIC database between 1966 and 2010 and examined the trends in collaborative learning research. The study aimed to identify prominent researchers in this field, popular topics and at which education levels these methods are used. The results of the research show that the first article was published in 1988 and Robyn Gillies did the most work. In most studies, it has been determined that educational technologies are used, and the participants are generally high school and above students. The study identified popular topics and scientific journals to guide new researchers.

Another research aimed at determining the trend is the studies that use the keywords of physical education and program development together. Ghazali et al. (2021), in their study examined the literature published between 2013 and 2020 and revealed trends and patterns in curriculum research. The literature review determines the effects of the curriculum on teachers and the trends in its evaluation, and it is emphasized that the most effective study is the article titled "Management of Curriculum Implementation: Strategies for Strengthening the Implementation of the 2013 Curriculum". In the analysis carried out using the VOSViewer application, 89 articles were examined and the keywords "physical education" and "curriculum 2013" came to the fore. As a result, there has been an increase in the number of publications on the 2013 curriculum, indicating an increased interest in the curriculum. It has been determined that issues such as teachers' implementation strategies and evaluation methods should be examined for future research. It has been stated that this study constitutes an important step in developing a more comprehensive understanding of the effects of the curriculum and the ways in which it is implemented.

## **METHOD**

### **Research design**

This research was carried out using the case study approach, which is one of the qualitative research methods (Büyüköztürk, Kılıç-Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz, & Demirel, 2010). A case study is used in the in-depth study of a particular phenomenon or event (Tekindal & Uğuz-Arsu, 2020). The case study is used for a detailed understanding of the phenomenon within the scope of the study (Yin, 2018). In this study, it was focused on the selected situation to understand the changes and trends in graduate studies in the field of curriculum and instruction.

Document analysis was used in the collection of research data as a data collection technique based on revealing certain themes and trends by analyzing written materials (Tekindal & Uğuz-Arsu, 2020; Kırıl & Kırıl, 2011; Zulfiqar, 2022). In this context, the documents of the period determined in the research were examined and a trend analysis was carried out on these documents (Hwang & Xie, 2018; Kansal, et al., 2021; Shin, et al., 2021; Tieben & Wolbers, 2010). Trend analysis is preferred to determine the changes that occur over time.

### **Research Sample**

The study population of this research consists of 294 graduate theses published between 2017 and 2023 in the pdf format in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the National Thesis Center of the Council of Higher Education (YÖK). Comprehensive sampling was used in the sample selection and all graduate theses in the population were included in the study.

### **Research Instruments and Processes**

Document analysis was used in the collection of research data as a data collection technique based on revealing certain themes and trends by analyzing written materials (Tekindal & Uğuz-Arsu, 2020; Kırıl & Kırıl, 2011; Zulfiqar, 2022). In this context, the documents of the period determined in the research were



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### Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using trend analysis and content analysis. Trend analysis was used to examine and visualize the changes over time. During the analysis of some of the data, the content was created into categories by coding. Theses are categorized by years, type, province, universities, languages, rank of advisors, subjects, sample size, research methods, means of data collection and data analysis.

### FINDINGS/RESULTS

This section contains the findings related to the data gathered within the scope of the research. First of all, the results of the correlation analysis regarding the relationship between preschool children's play behaviors and the opinions of the parents and teachers are presented in Table.

**Table 1.** *Distribution of theses by year and type*

Years	Master's Thesis f	Percentile %	Ph.D. Thesis f	Percentile %	Sum f
2017	27	11	6	14	33
2018	38	15	9	21	47
2019	64	25	10	23	74
2020	35	14	5	12	40
2021	53	21	7	16	60
2022	34	14	6	14	40
<b>Sum</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>294</b>

The year in which the least master's thesis was written was 2017, the number of master's theses written was 27 and the percentage rate was 11%. An increase in master's theses written up to 2019 has been observed. Shortly after the first COVID-19 case was seen in Türkiye on March 11, 2020, the distance education period started in universities (Budak & Korkmaz, 2020, p. 62-79). Due to the fact that the first days of this process, which have not been experienced before, were quite difficult, there has been a noticeable decrease in academic studies. In case studies and surveys, it can be thought that there are slowdowns due to the pandemic. Therefore, the number of Master's theses written in 2019 decreased from 64 to 35. With the decrease in restrictions, the number of theses written has also increased. In 2021, the total number of master's theses increased to 53, the percentage was 21%.

### Distribution of Theses by Provinces

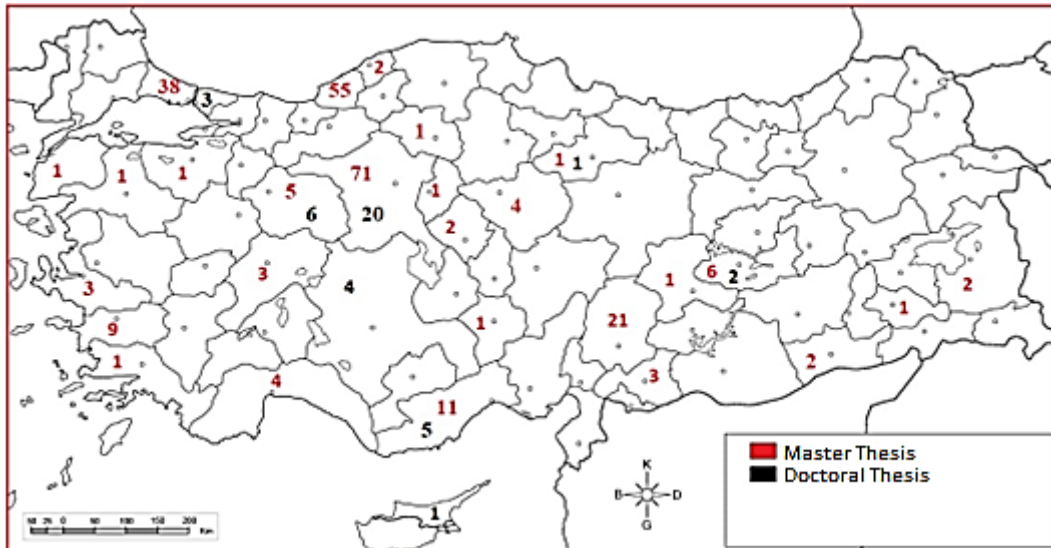
The distribution of 294 graduate theses according to the provinces in Türkiye is given in Table 2.

**Table 2.** *Distribution of graduate theses by provinces*

Cities	Theses Written	Type Of Theses	Sum f	Percentage Rate %
Ankara		Master	71	28
		Doctoral	20	47
Zonguldak		Master	55	22
		Doctoral	0	0
Istanbul		Master	38	15
		Doctoral	3	7
Kahramanmaraş		Master	21	8
		Doctoral	0	0
Mersin		Master	11	4
		Doctoral	5	12
Eskisehir		Master	5	2
		Doctoral	6	14

Aydin	Master	9	4
	Doctoral	0	0
Elazığ	Master	6	2
	Doctoral	2	5
Konya	Master	0	0
	Doctoral	4	9
Antalya	Master	4	2
	Doctoral	0	0
Yozgat	Master	4	2
	Doctoral	0	0
Afyon	Master	3	1
	Doctoral	0	0
Gaziantep	Master	3	1
	Doctoral	0	0
Izmir	Master	3	1
	Doctoral	0	0
Bartın	Master	2	1
	Doctoral	0	0
Other Provinces	Master	18	7
	Doctoral	3	7
<b>Sum</b>	<b>Master</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>100</b>
	<b>Doctoral</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that the provinces with the highest number of graduate theses are Ankara, Zonguldak and Istanbul, followed by Kahramanmaraş, Mersin and İzmir. According to the data obtained, it is understood that the geographical regions where the universities are located do not influence the number of theses written (Figure 1).



**Figure 1: Distribution of Graduate Theses by Provinces**

### Distribution of Graduate Theses by Universities

The distribution of 294 graduate theses according to the universities where they were published is given in Table 3.

**Table 3.** *Distribution graduate theses by universities*

Universities Theses Written	Type Of Theses	Years						Sum N	%
		2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022		
		f	f	f	f	f	f		
Zonguldak Bulent Ecevit University	Master	3	8	20	6	6	12	55	22
	Doctoral	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University	Master	11	13	7	3	16	3	53	21
	Doctoral	2	2	1	0	1	1	7	16
Istanbul Aydın University	Master	0	0	3	0	0	1	4	2
	Doctoral	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aydın Adnan Menderes University	Master	0	2	0	3	3	1	9	4
	Doctoral	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Anadolu University	Master	0	1	0	0	0	2	3	1
	Doctoral	0	0	2	1	1	1	5	12
Yozgat Bozok University	Master	0	0	0	0	2	2	4	2
	Doctoral	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mersin University	Master	0	1	3	4	1	2	11	4
	Doctoral	0	1	0	0	1	3	5	12
Middle East Technical University	Master	2	0	3	1	7	1	14	6
	Doctoral	1	2	4	0	2	0	9	21
Yeditepe University	Master	3	3	8	1	4	4	23	9
	Doctoral	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	5
Fırat University	Master	2	1	1	1	1	0	6	2
	Doctoral	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	5
Kahramanmaraş Sutcu Imam University	Master	3	1	6	6	5	0	21	8
	Doctoral	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Marmara University	Master	0	1	1	1	1	0	4	2
	Doctoral	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Necmettin Erbakan University	Master	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Doctoral	1	1	1	0	1	0	4	9
Akdeniz University	Master	1	1	1	0	1	0	4	2
	Doctoral	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gazi University	Master	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	1
	Doctoral	1	1	0	1	1	0	4	9
Afyon Kocatepe University	Master	0	0	2	1	0	0	3	1
	Doctoral	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eskisehir Osmangazi University	Master	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	1
	Doctoral	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
Ege University	Master	0	0	2	0	0	1	3	1
	Doctoral	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gaziantep University	Master	1	2	0	0	0	0	3	1
	Doctoral	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yıldız Technical University and Istanbul Aydın University (Jointly Conducted)	Master	0	0	0	4	1	0	5	2
	Doctoral	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
Other Universities	Master	1	4	7	2	4	4	22	9
	Doctoral	1	1	1	0	0	0	3	7
Sum	Master	27	38	64	35	53	34	251	
	Doctoral	6	9	10	5	7	6	43	
	Sum	33	47	74	40	60	40	294	

When Table 3 is examined, 55 of the 251 master's theses written between 2017 and 2022 came from the Zonguldak Bülent Ecevit University. This was followed by İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University with 53 master's theses. According to the percentage rates, the theses written in these two universities constitute approximately 43% of the total theses. In the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, graduate theses were written in a total of 38 universities in 6 years (2017-2022).

When the doctoral theses published according to Table 3 are examined, is seen that the number of



doctoral theses has decreased compared to the universities that publish master’s theses. A total of 13 universities have published doctoral theses in the field of Curriculum and Instruction. According to Table 3, the university that published the highest number of doctoral theses was the Middle East Technical University with 9 theses. This number corresponds to 21% of all doctoral theses in Table 3. This university is followed by İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University with 7 doctoral theses and Anadolu University and Mersin University with 5 doctoral theses. The proportion of doctoral theses published by these four universities is 61%, which is more than half of the total doctoral theses.

**Distribution of Graduate Theses by the Languages Written**

Within the scope of the research, the master’s and doctoral theses taken from the National Thesis Center of the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) were classified according to the languages in which they were written (Table 4).

**Table 4.** *Distribution of theses by languages*

Years	Master				Doctor				Sum
	English	Percentile rate	Turkish	Percentile rate	English	Percentile rate	Turkish	Percentile rate	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
2017	15	17	12	7	4	21	2	8	33
2018	14	16	24	15	4	21	5	21	47
2019	19	21	45	28	5	26	5	21	74
2020	7	8	28	17	1	5	4	17	40
2021	26	29	27	17	3	16	4	17	60
2022	8	9	26	16	2	11	4	17	40
<b>SUM</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>294</b>

According to the information given in Table 5, 89 of the master’s theses were written in English, constituting 36% of all master’s theses. Similarly, 19 of the doctoral dissertations were written in English. Therefore, 43% of the doctoral theses written in this field were written in English. Most graduate theses written in English have been published in universities where the medium of instruction is English.

**Distribution of Theses by Rank of Advisors**

Within the scope of the research, the advisors who took part in the master’s and doctoral theses taken from the National Thesis Center of the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) were classified according to rank of their advisors (Table 5).

**Table 5.** *Distribution of theses by the rank of advisors*

Rank of Advisors	Years												Sum
	2017		2018		2019		2020		2021		2022		
	Master	Doctoral	Master	Doctoral	Master	Doctoral	Master	Doctoral	Master	Doctoral	Master	Doctoral	
Professor Doctor	3	3	6	4	20	5	19	5	8	4	4	4	85
Associate Professor	11	2	15	2	22	3	9	-	23	2	19	1	109
Assistant Professor	13	1	17	3	22	2	7	-	22	1	11	1	100
<b>Sum</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>294</b>

Although academicians with the title of Professor manage both master’s and doctoral theses at the same rate, Associate Professor and Assistant Professor mostly supervised master’s theses. Considering that doctoral theses require more expertise and are the last step of education the results are consistent (Table 6).

### Distribution of Graduate Theses by the Subjects

The distribution of graduate theses by the subjects was presented in groups at Table 6.

**Table 6.** *Distribution of graduate theses by the subjects*

Subjects	Years						Sum	Percentage Rate
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022		
	f	f	f	f	F	f	n	%
Teaching-Learning Approaches	4	7	14	10	0	4	39	10,77
Teachers	2	6	5	5	2	12	32	8,84
Program Development	2	0	1	0	2	4	9	2,49
Program Assessment and Evaluation	3	4	3	2	5	4	21	5,80
Student	1	1	4	0	0	10	16	4,42
Values Education	2	3	5	6	1	6	23	6,35
Education and Information Technologies	4	3	5	4	4	4	24	6,63
Curriculum	1	2	17	7	7	3	37	10,22
Curriculum	8	12	15	3	3	2	43	11,88
Multicultural Education	2	2	1	1	2	3	11	3,04
Internationalization	4	3	2	2	1	3	15	4,14
Strategy Teaching	3	4	4	4	2	1	18	4,97
Comparative Education	2	2	3	1	1	3	12	3,31
Cinema in Education	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	0,55
Foreign Language Education	3	6	17	6	0	2	34	9,39
Natural Disaster Training	1	1	0	1	0	0	3	0,83
Guidance Training	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0,55
Distance Education	0	1	0	6	7	5	19	5,25
Academics	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	0,55
<b>Sum</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>100</b>

Although 294 graduate theses were examined, 19 different topics were investigated 362 times. Therefore, it turns out that in some graduate theses more than one subject was studied in one thesis. It is observed that the most researched subject is “Curriculum” with a rate of 12%, and the least researched subjects are “*Curriculum Development*”, “*Comparative Education*”, “*Multicultural Education*”, “*Natural Disaster Education*”, “*Cinema in Education*”, “*Guidance Education*”, “*Academicians*” with a rate of less than 3% (Table 7). These data can give an idea to those who will do new research in the field of education.

### Distribution of Graduate Theses by the Sample Size

The sample size is important in solving the investigated problem. The larger the sample size, the more sensitive a study can be performed. The sample sizes obtained from the researched theses are given in Table 7.

**Table 7.** *Distribution of graduate theses by the sample size*

Sample Size	Years						Sum	Percentage
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022		
	f	f	f	f	f	f	N	%
1-50	7	7	23	8	10	7	62	24,41
51-100	5	9	10	5	4	7	40	15,75
101-500	11	15	16	14	21	15	92	36,22
501-1000	1	4	8	8	8	6	35	13,78
1001 and above	1	6	10	1	5	2	25	9,84
<b>Sum</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>100</b>

101-500 sample studies were used among the sample groups, and it was the most preferred group with a rate of approximately 36.22% (Table 8). This is followed by 1-50 samples used with a rate of approximately 24%. The sample study with 1001 or more units was the least preferred group with 9.84%. In the selection of the size of the sample, the most important criterion is to collect sufficient data on the

subject investigated and to represent the study universe in the best way. Therefore, it is quite natural that the sample size varies according to the research topics in the theses.

**Distribution of Graduate Theses by Research Methods**

The distribution of graduate theses by research methods was presented at Table 9. The research methods are divided into 4 groups as “Qualitative”, “Quantitative Descriptive”, “Quantitative Experimental” and “Mixed”. The obtained data are given in Table 8.

**Table 8.** *Distribution of graduate theses by research methods*

Research Methods	Years						Sum n	Percentage Rates %
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022		
	f	f	f	f	f	f		
Qualitative	10	9	23	8	11	11	72	25,26
Quantitative Descriptive	12	13	24	19	10	32	110	38,60
Quantitative Experimental	4	5	10	2	2	4	27	9,47
Mixed Research	8	17	16	10	6	18	75	26,67
<b>Sum</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>100</b>

While the “Quantitative Descriptive” research method is used at a rate of approximately 40%, the “Quantitative Experimental” research method is used at a much lower rate of 10%. “Qualitative” and “Mixed” methods were used equally at a rate of 25%.

**Distribution of Graduate Theses by the Means of Data Collection**

The means of data collection are divided into 6 main groups: “Questionnaire”, “Interview and Interview”, “Observation”, “Achievement Test”, “Documents” and “Other”, each group was detailed by dividing it into subheadings (Table 9).

**Table 9.** *Theses by the means of data collection*

Means of Data Collection		Years						Sum n	Percentage %
		2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022		
		f	f	f	f	F	f		
Survey	Likert	19	27	41	18	16	22	143	22,45
	Open-ended	-	10	60	25	14	4	113	17,74
	Closed-Ended	1	1	-	-	-	-	2	0,31
	Semi-Structured	13	12	24	10	5	13	77	12,09
Interview	Interview								
	Focus Interview	3	10	10	2	2	2	29	4,55
	Structured Interview	1	2	4	2	-	1	10	1,57
	Unstructured	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	0,16
Observation	Interview								
	Participant	14	5	19	10	4	5	57	8,95
	Observation								
Achievement Test	Non-Participatory	1	-	2	-	1	1	5	0,78
	Observation								
	Multiple Choice	2	3	1	-	-	3	9	1,41
	Test								
Documents	Open-Ended Testing	2	1	5	2	1	1	12	1,88
	Open-Ended	-	3	-	-	-	-	3	0,47
	Written Question								
Other	Docs	10	11	13	4	6	3	47	7,38
	Logs	3	3	3	6	-	4	19	2,98
	Rubric	18	-	18	3	3	4	46	7,22
	Evaluation Form	2	1	8	2	4	2	19	2,98
Other	Scenario	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	0,16
	Student Products	3	1	-	-	-	1	5	0,78
	Video Recordings/ Audio Recording	5	5	13	3	1	3	30	4,71

Photos	1	-	2	-	-	1	4	0,63
Interview	-	-	4	-	-	-	4	0,63
Biography	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	0,16
<b>Sum</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>637</b>	

When Table 9 is examined, it is understood that the most used means of data collection is the “questionnaire”. While questionnaires were used in approximately 40% of the graduate theses examined in the study, on the contrary, the least used means of data collection was the “Achievement Test” with a rate of 4%.

**Distribution of Graduate Theses by the Data Analysis**

When the data analysis methods used in 294 graduate theses it can be interpreted that these methods are grouped under 3 main headings: “Descriptive”, “Predictive” and “Qualitative”. The data obtained are given in Table 10.

**Table 9.** *Distribution of graduate theses by the data analysis*

Data Analysis	Years						Sum	Percentage		
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022				
	f	f	f	f	F	f	n	%		
Descriptive	Frequency / Percentage	6	14	16	12	11	6	65	7,98	
	Tables	2	1	3	1	0	3	10	1,23	
	Mean/Standard Deviation	10	15	21	17	13	24	100	12,27	
Predictive	Parametric Test	T-Tests	14	18	24	19	15	5	95	11,66
		Pearson Correlation	7	4	7	15	6	6	45	5,52
		Anavo (Varying Analysis)	9	15	19	17	15	7	82	10,06
	Non-Parametric Test	Ancova (Covariance analysis)	1	1	3	2	0	0	7	0,86
		Manova (Multivariate)	5	5	8	4	0	1	23	2,82
		Regre. Analysis	5	4	3	8	4	5	29	3,56
		Path Analysis	-	1	3	1	0	0	5	0,61
		Mancova	4	5	3	3	0	1	16	1,96
		Chi-square	1	2	4	0	2	0	9	1,10
Qualitative	Non-Parametric Test	Spearman Correlation	2	3	9	8	0	0	21	2,58
		Mann Whitney U	10	14	30	20	22	11	107	13,13
		Wilcoxon	1	0	1	0	1	1	4	0,49
		Kruskal Wallis Analysis	1	6	14	7	3	3	34	4,17
		Content Analysis	12	15	25	8	8	7	75	9,20
		Descriptive Analysis	9	15	21	11	18	3	77	9,45
		MAXQDA	2	0	2	0	1	1	6	0,74
		Thematic Analysis	1	0	3	1	0	0	5	0,61
		<b>Sum</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>815</b>	<b>100</b>

According to Table 10 approximately 60% of the “Predictive” data analysis method was used, while 20% of the “Descriptive” and “Qualitative” analysis methods were used at the same portion.

**DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS**

Examining the graduate theses by type, most of the theses consist of master’s theses. It coincides with the work of Özenç et al., (2013), Erdoğan, (2009) and Çiltaş, (2021). When the distribution of theses by years is examined, it is observed that there is an increase in the number of theses until 2019. Like all countries in the world, Türkiye has been adversely affected by the COVID-19 epidemic that occurred at the end of 2019. As a result of the epidemic, researchers have not been able to focus sufficiently on their research. During this process, academic studies were postponed because students were given the right to suspend registration by universities (Ak, Şahin, Çiçekler, & Ertürk, 2020; Yükseköğretim Kurulu (YOK), 2020). After the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic began to decrease,

the number of graduate theses increased again. However, Türkiye has developed and proven itself in the field of distance education during the COVID-19 period, both in terms of educators and technological infrastructure. Thanks to the technological infrastructure used today, researchers can share information with each other in a virtual course environment and share their research more quickly.

When the cities where the graduate theses completed are examined, it seems that master's and doctoral theses should be examined separately. When the universities where master's theses are published is investigated, no significant connection has been established between the region where they are located and the number of master's theses. When the cities where doctoral theses are published investigated, it is seen that big cities such as Ankara, Eskişehir and Konya are mostly preferred (Erdoğan, 2009; Töngel et al., 2020). The advantage of these cities is that written materials are easier to access and the universities in these cities have a more established history and therefore more experienced academic staff.

When the languages are examined in which graduate theses are written, it is determined that 37% of them are written in English, this rate is 35% in master's theses and 44% in doctoral theses. It has been determined that most graduate theses written in English are written in universities where the language of instruction is English. It is understood that the authors of the English theses written in universities where the medium of instruction is Turkish are either foreign researchers or English language teaching graduates. When the doctoral theses are examined, it is understood that 58% of the titles of the academicians who provide consultancy are professors, 24% are associate professors and 19% are assistant professors. 24% of the titles of academicians who supervise master's theses are professors, 40% are associate professors, and 36% are assistant professors. It is obvious that professional knowledge and experience are much more important in the execution of the doctoral thesis. The findings reveal that language preferences and the academic titles of the advisors play an important role in the graduate theses completed in the field of Curriculum and Instruction. These findings can be a guide in terms of planning future thesis studies and organizing academic advising processes.

Since the theses were written in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, as expected, the subject of "Curriculum" was mostly examined. On the contrary "Curriculum Development" is the least investigated subject in graduate theses.

When the samples used in the theses are examined, "Students" and "Educators", which are among the most accessible sample groups in the field of education, were the most frequently used samples (Ahi et al., 2013; Çiltaş, 2021; Erdoğan, 2009; Özenç ve et al., 2013; Selçuk et al., 2014; Töngel ve et al., 2020). This sample was preferred in approximately 76% of all theses. Other sample groups were used less frequently due to both the limitations of the subjects studied and the difficulty of accessing the samples. When the selected sample size was examined, it was understood that the range of 101-500 was preferred with a rate of approximately 40%.

When the research methods used in graduate theses are grouped under 4 main headings: "Qualitative", "Quantitative Descriptive", "Quantitative Experimental" and "Mixed". It is understood that the quantitative descriptive research method was used in 39% of the theses, while the quantitative experimental research method was used in approximately 9% of the theses. Although experimental research methods are mostly used in the field of science, it is understood that they are also used in social sciences. According to the findings 61% of the studies conducted in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction used a case study from qualitative research methods. Other qualitative research methods were included in graduate theses at a rate of 16% which can be listed as "Phenomenology".

The means of data collection were selected with the highest number of questionnaires in the graduate theses examined (Ahi et al., 2013; Erdoğan, 2009; Uzunbaz, 2019). The reason for this is that with the developing technology, survey studies can now be done face-to-face as well as remotely online. In this way, more people can be reached in a short time.

In the examined graduate theses, the authors tended to work with samples that they could access

more easily. Educators and students were mostly selected as samples. It may be useful to include more samples such as administrators, administrative staff, parents, course materials and books, etc., which are parts of education and training, in terms of bringing a different perspective to the subjects to be examined. Therefore, it may be recommended to select different samples instead of working with the same samples. In graduate theses, the maximum range of 101-500 was preferred as the sample size. The larger the sample range, the closer it gets to the population it represents. Therefore, it may be recommended to increase the selected sample size. The research methods selected in the studies were classified as “Qualitative, Quantitative Descriptive, Quantitative Experimental and Mixed” research methods. While methods other than the Quantitative Experimental research method are given enough space, the Quantitative Experimental research method is not used much. Although the creation and maintenance of the experimental environment causes various difficulties, the use of different methods in terms of diversity in research can be recommended in terms of giving a different perspective to the subject and guiding the future studies of the researchers. In the qualitative research methods used in graduate theses, “Case Study” was predominantly preferred, while “Phenomenology” method was not used sufficiently. Researchers may be advised to use these methods in their new studies. The authors predominantly preferred the use of “Questionnaire” as a data collection tool in graduate theses. In addition, “Observation, Document Analysis, Achievement Test” has been included very little in theses for the data collection. It is recommended that researchers include them for the data collection to ensure data diversity. Finally, it is surprising that graduate theses written in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction rarely focus on “Curriculum Development”. It is strongly recommended for future graduate studies to accommodate curriculum development as a subject.

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