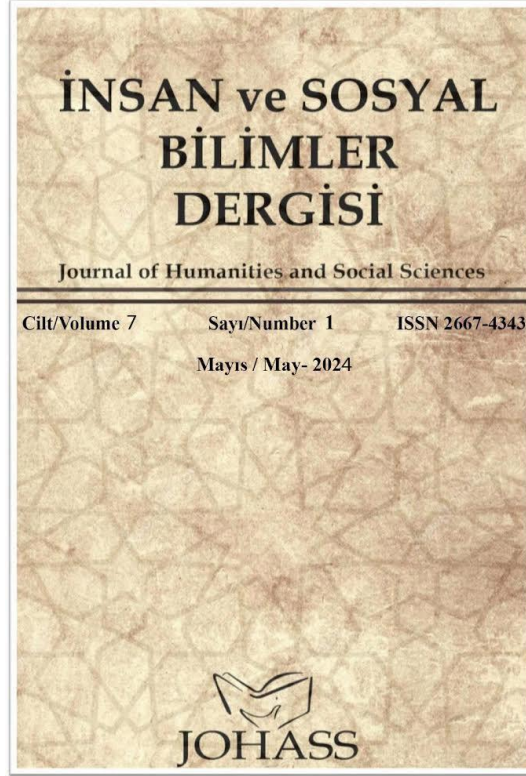


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An Analysis of Postgraduate Studies on Reading Culture*

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Abstract

Reading culture is the love of reading, the ability to read continuously, and the ability to read effectively and critically. The reading culture of the individuals who make up a society is a strong foundation for the future. The objective of this study was to examine postgraduate theses on reading culture according to a range of variables. A total of 23 approved postgraduate theses, 10 doctoral theses and 13 master's theses on reading culture between 2014 and 2024 registered at the YÖK National Thesis Centre were identified. The data analysis of the theses under examination was conducted using the content analysis method, which is a qualitative research method. The research revealed that the inaugural study on reading culture at the graduate level was conducted in 2014. The majority of studies were conducted in 2023, with the highest number of studies conducted at Ankara University. Of the studies, 13 were at the master's level and 10 were at the doctoral level. The majority of studies were conducted by supervisors holding the title of professor. All studies were conducted in Turkish, and the qualitative research model was employed. The population and sample of the studies were predominantly teachers. Upon examination of the studies, it becomes evident that the significance of the concept of reading culture has been elucidated through the examination of reading culture in Turkey from various vantages. In accordance with the findings of the study, a series of recommendations were put forth.

Keywords: Reading, reading culture, postgraduate studies, education, society

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Introduction

Reading is one of the most basic skills a person can use throughout life. Reading is a meaning-making process that goes beyond simply combining letters into words and words into sentences. It enables us to understand the age and environment in which we live, to interact with people and nature, and to express our feelings and thoughts accurately and effectively.

Reading is about assimilating the meaning of written texts by pronouncing written letters, words and texts at a certain speed and applying what has been assimilated to everyday life (Trudell, 2019). People use reading skills as a means of communication to adapt to rapid changes, express themselves comfortably, gain knowledge and increase their cultural level.

In order to facilitate the development of reading skills, which are an essential component of individual, social, cultural and economic growth and change, it is imperative that individuals are provided with an appropriate early childhood education. Moreover, it is of great importance to foster a reading culture at all ages, including early childhood.

According to Yılmaz (2009), the term 'reading culture' refers to both the level and quality of an individual's, social group's or society's relationship with the activity of reading and the individual and social way of life related to the reading process. The concept of 'reading culture' can be described as the level of reading achieved through the transformation of reading into a habit and the development of critical reading skills. Furthermore, it encompasses the capacity to perceive all aspects of one's life, including those that are known and those that are unknown, from the perspective of a proficient reader, as well as the concept of universal literacy.

The fact that reading is a skill depends on the individual making it a part of his/her life by incorporating it into the life process. For the individual who integrates reading into his/her life, reading will be an action that adds meaning to his/her life rather than a necessity or a need, and will also ensure the acquisition of reading culture (Yalçıntaş, Kartal & Turhan, 2023).

The future of a society depends on its individuals. The development of societies is directly proportional to the number of individuals who have acquired a reading culture. The formation of reading culture in society is of great importance in the development and development of that society. For this reason, it is important to raise individuals who have acquired a reading culture. According to Magara and Batambuze (2005), reading culture is not only an element developed to achieve school goals, but also a reading that takes place in all

areas of life and is respected and highly valued in society. A person who has acquired a reading culture is a person who activates thinking and critical processes.

The process of developing reading habits can be defined as the individual's early exposure to visual and written cultural products, the development of basic reading skills, and the behaviours that lead to the formation of a critical reading lifestyle. The term "reading culture" can be defined as an individual's capacity to perceive and process information in a manner consistent with that of a proficient reader, their efforts to become universally literate, and the reading level achieved through the integration of reading as a habit and the development of critical reading skills (Reading Culture Dissemination Platform [OKUYAY], 2020).

Examining the studies on reading culture, the factors that influence the process of acquiring reading culture are family, socio-economic level, environment, school, teacher, friend, text, library, library, skilled work, book selection, mass media and media (Bağcı Ayrancı, 2021; Baki & Gökçe, 2020; Bulut, 2018; Çıldır & Ergün, 2021; Karaosmanoğlu, 2019; Kasımoğlu, 2014; Özkan, 2021; Sever, Karagül & Doğan Güldenoğlu, 2017; Ülper, 2011). Raising individuals who can think, feel, question and produce in society is only possible if individuals have a reading culture. Raising individuals who can transform reading skills into a culture and increasing the number of these individuals will also bring about the internalisation of a reading culture in the social context (Öztürk, 2020).

The aim of this study is to examine postgraduate studies on reading culture with the intention of helping researchers to determine the topics and orientations of their studies in order to improve reading culture in society. The study examines postgraduate studies on reading culture according to a number of variables, including years, universities, types, supervisors' titles, languages, research models, populations and samples. The study is intended to serve as a guide for researchers.

Method

Research Design

This study used document analysis, a qualitative research method, to examine postgraduate dissertations on reading culture in Turkey. Qualitative research provides a deep understanding of events by looking at them in a realistic way (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). Document analysis is a research method that involves collecting, reviewing, questioning and analysing documents for research data. It is a crucial aspect of research reliability, enabling

researchers to exert greater control over the source materials. The stages of document analysis are as follows: firstly, identifying the appropriate documents; secondly, verifying the authenticity of the documents; thirdly, establishing a system for coding and cataloguing; and finally, analysing the data (Merriam, 2009).

Population and Sample

The study population comprised postgraduate research on reading culture, encompassing approved master's and doctoral theses from the relevant institutes and departments of universities in the database of the National Thesis Centre of the Council for Higher Education (<https://tez.yok.gov.tr/>). These theses were written between 2014 and 2024. As all theses are accessible, no sample was selected.

Data Collection and Analysis

A search of the National Dissertation Centre of the Council for Higher Education database search engine (<https://tez.yok.gov.tr/>) for the term "reading culture" on 10 April 2024 yielded 23 approved dissertations. These were subjected to examination. The dissertations that were subjected to analysis in this study are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Information on the Postgraduate Programmes Studied

Author Name Surname	Year	Name of Thesis	Type of Thesis
Özge Aksoy Serdaroğlu	2024	Reading culture in the 19th century Turkish novel	PhD
Arzu Tören Gül	2023	Examination of primary-secondary school textbooks and workbooks in the context of reading cultures	PhD
Berna Kaya	2023	Examination of reading activities in secondary school Turkish textbooks in the context of reading culture	Master's degree
Esra Yalçıntaş	2023	Determining the effect of the 'Reading culture-digital reading awareness program' on the reading culture and digital reading awareness levels of special education and primary teacher trainees	PhD
Fatma Düzenli Gür	2023	The relationship between students' reading culture levels and their reading comprehension and written expression skills	PhD
Hamza Can Kılıç	2023	Using novella in developing reading culture	Master's degree
Nur Sofuoğlu	2023	Self competency perceptions of Turkish teachers towards cultivating a reading culture	Master's degree
Büşra Aksoy	2022	Determining the reading culture levels of secondary school students	Master's degree

Gülcan Uyar	2022	Investigation of the relationship between family reading culture competence and cognitive emotion regulation skills in terms of different variables	Master's degree
Hande Nur Yaşar	2022	Reading culture perspectives of pre-service Turkish language teachers	Master's degree
Merve Ercan	2022	Views of reading culture in the digital age: A review on Youtube book channels	Master's degree
Özcan Öksüz	2022	Visualization of book reading culture in the digital age and the effect of book cover design on book purchase behavior	Master's degree
Ayşe Telli	2021	A research on the relationship between secondary school students' reading motivation and their parents' educational level and reading profile	Master's degree
Emine Akyüz	2021	Examination children's and youth literature centers structured at universities in terms of acquisition of reading culture (An international comparison)	PhD
İbrahim Şamil Köroğlu	2021	The transformation of reading culture in the new media age: Contemporary approaches and new trends of book publishing professionals in Turkey	PhD
Mehmet Soyuçok	2021	The role of the school in acquiring reading culture	PhD
Ahmet Polat	2019	Determination of in-service training needs of Turkish teachers on reading culture (Recommendation of in-service training program)	Master's degree
Saadet Ünlü	2019	The effect of Turkish teachers on the process of inculcating 'Reading culture' (The case of Muğla city)	Master's degree
Duygu Ak Başoğlu	2018	Understanding of reading culture in the context of the discourses of the Turkish teachers and the books they recommend: A case study	PhD
Sevilay Bulut	2018	Analyzing practices with children's books in preschool settings within the context of creating a reading culture	PhD
Tülay Erduran	2016	Reading culture in Bartın city in the scope of life-long learning: A case study	Master's degree
Ayşe Özgül İnce Samur	2014	The schedule of acquiring reading culture to individuals	PhD
Serhat Adem Körkuyu	2014	Investigation of the fundamental variables of the process of reading culture	Master's degree

A content analysis was used to analyse the data from the postgraduate studies listed in Table 1. In the content analysis technique, data are coded and categorised and data are defined and interpreted by finding themes (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). In qualitative research methods, content analysis is a technique that presents certain features of a text, book, or document through digitisation (Karasar, 2011).

The research data were sorted according to the years of publication using Microsoft Excel program and coded as T1, T2, T3, ...T23 according to this order. In order to conduct data analysis and prevent data loss, the postgraduate theses on reading culture were carefully read and a "Thesis Review Form" was prepared in the Excel program showing the findings related to years, universities, types, supervisor titles, languages, research models, population

and samples. In order to prevent data loss, the information in the form and the information in the tables and diagrams were checked. Each coded thesis was analyzed according to the form.

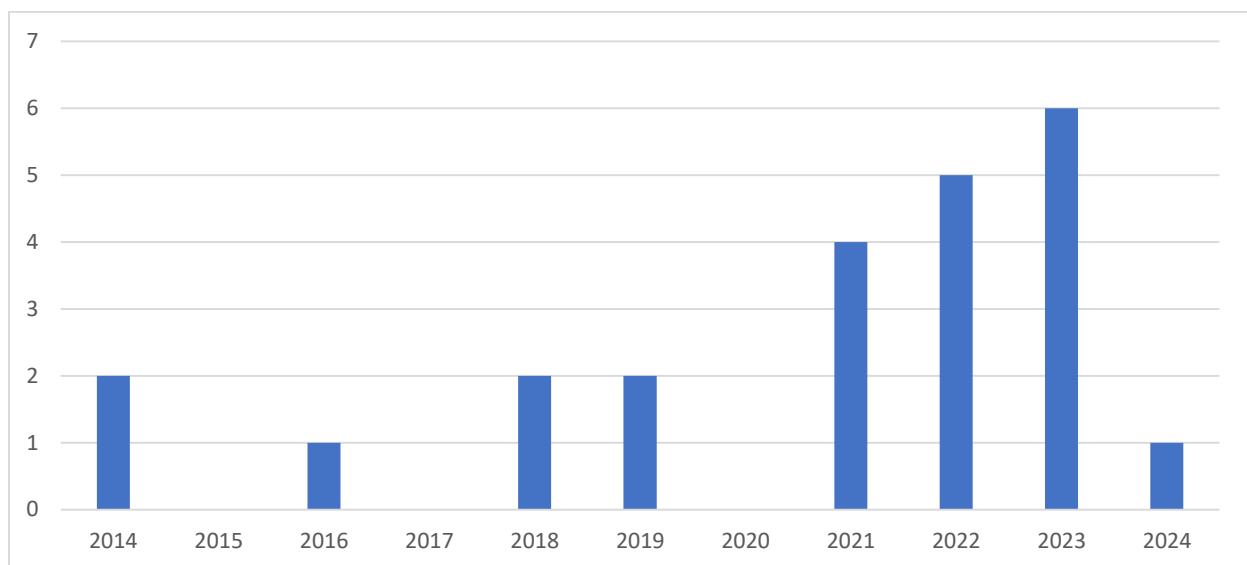
Findings

In the findings section, the data obtained from the analysis of graduate theses on reading culture were interpreted in the hope that they might be transformed into tables and supported by figures.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of the dissertations analysed in the study by year.

Figure 1

Number of Dissertations by Year

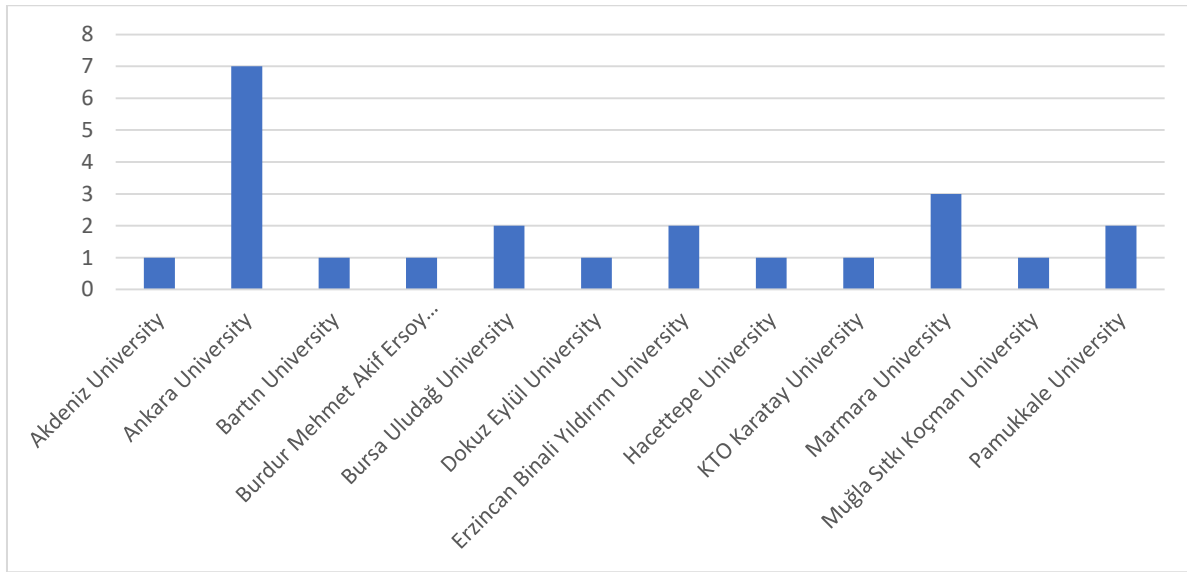


Looking at Figure 1, the first postgraduate study on reading culture was conducted in 2014; two studies were conducted in 2014, 2018 and 2023; one study was conducted in 2016, four in 2021, five in 2022, six in 2023 and one in 2024. There were no studies on reading culture in 2015, 2017 and 2020. Looking at the distribution of theses according to years, it was determined that the studies on reading culture were concentrated between 2021-2023.

Figure 2 shows the number of dissertations analysed by university.

Figure 2

Number of Dissertations by University



Looking at Figure 2, we can see that postgraduate studies on reading culture were carried out in 12 different universities. The largest number of studies was carried out at Ankara University, with seven dissertations. Three theses were written at Marmara University, two at Pamukkale University, Erzincan Binali Yıldırım University and Bursa Uludağ University, and one at other universities.

Figure 3 shows the number of theses analysed by type.

Figure 3

The Number of Theses Analysed By Type is Presented in The Following Table

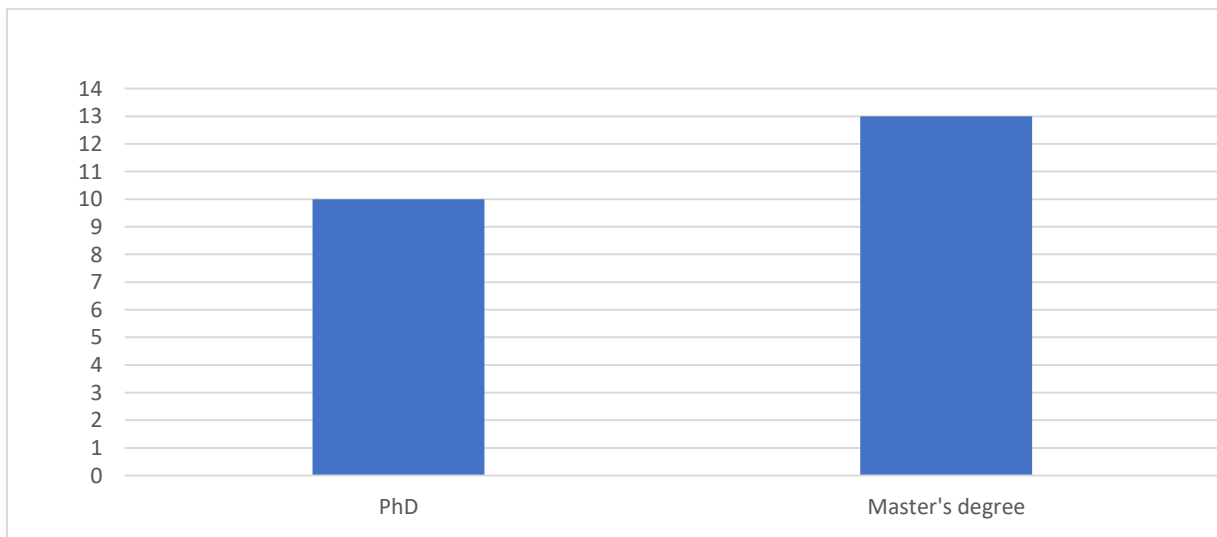


Figure 3 shows that 10 of the postgraduate studies on reading culture are at the doctoral level, while 13 are at the master's level. It is understood that master's theses on reading culture are concentrated.

Figure 4 shows the number of theses examined by thesis advisor.

Figure 4

The Number of Theses Examined According to The Titles of Thesis Advisors is As Follows

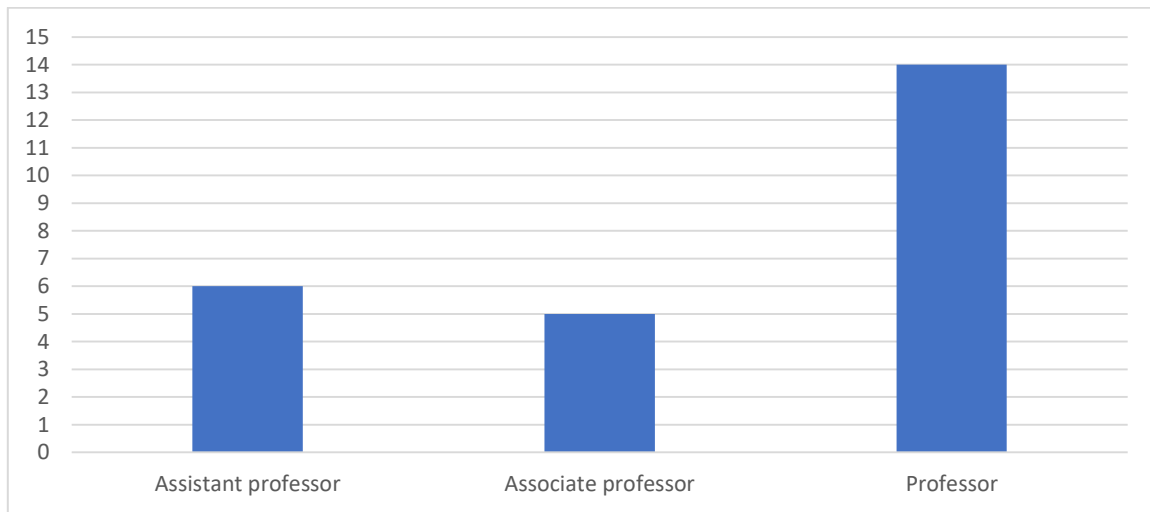
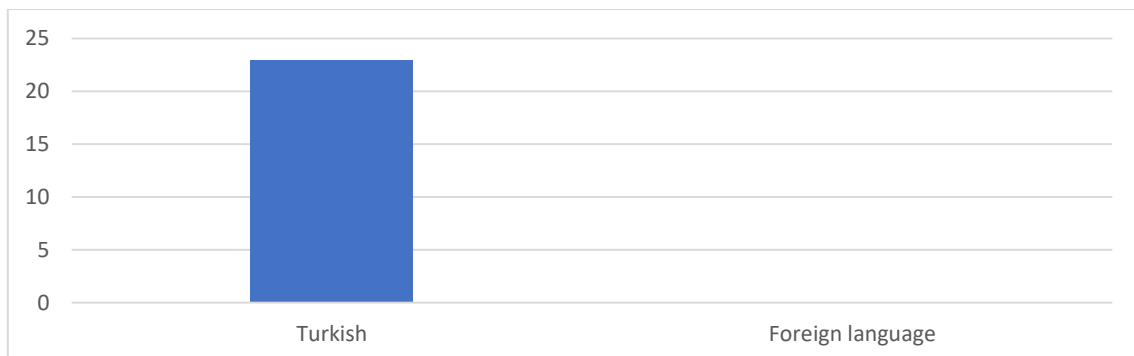


Figure 4 shows that 14 theses were advised by professors, five by associate professors, and six by assistant professors. One study was done with one professor and two associate professors. It is seen that the subject of reading culture is mostly studied by advisors with the title of professor.

Figure 5 shows the number of theses analysed in the study by language.

Figure 5

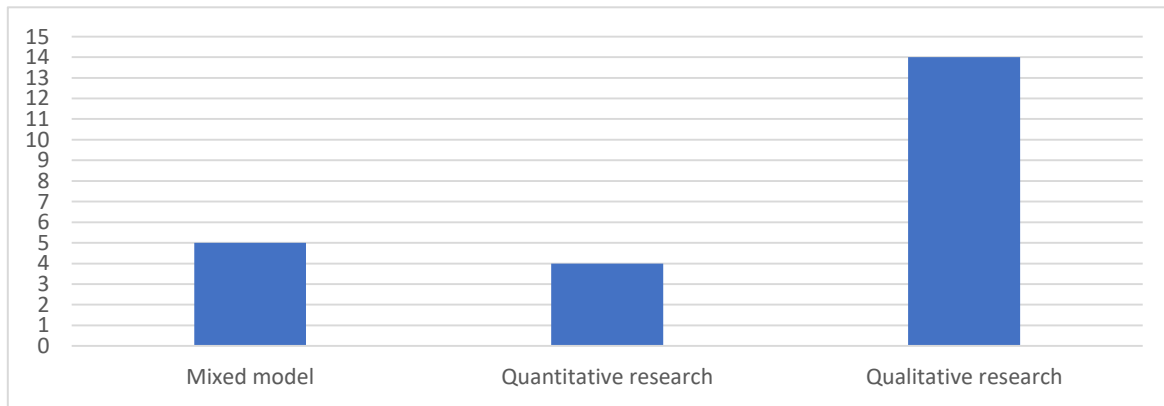
A Statistical Analysis of The Number of Theses Written in Different Languages



Upon examination of Figure 5, it becomes evident that all 23 postgraduate studies on reading culture were written in Turkish, with no studies conducted in a foreign language.

Figure 6

Presents The Number of Theses According to The Various Research Models



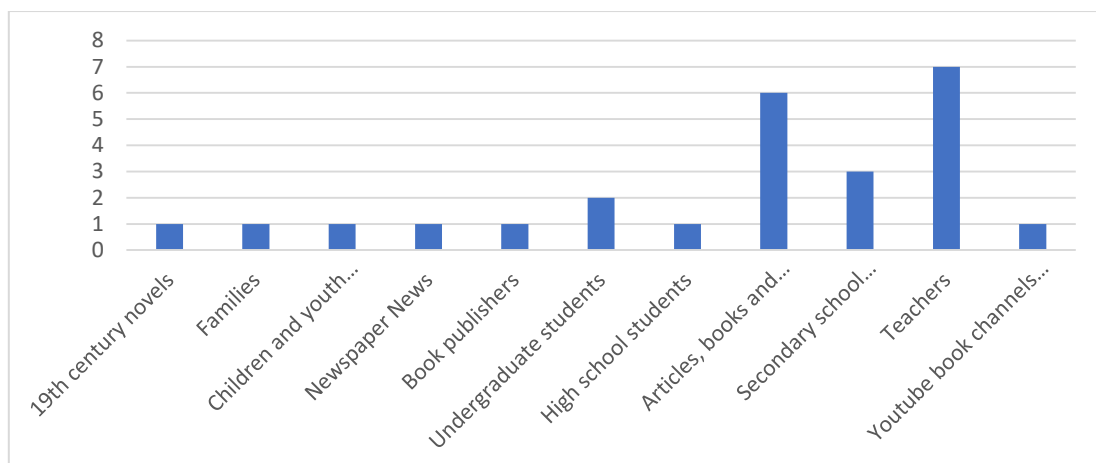
Upon examination of Figure 6, it becomes evident that a mixed model was employed in five of the 23 postgraduate studies on reading culture. Four studies used a quantitative method, while 14 used a qualitative method. It is understood that qualitative methods are preferred as the research method in the majority of theses.

Figure 7 shows how many theses were analysed in the study, by population and sample.

Figure 7

The Number of Theses Produced According to Population And Sample Size is Presented in

The Following Table



Upon examination of Figure 7, it becomes evident that in 23 postgraduate studies on reading culture, teachers were identified as the population and sample in 7 studies, articles, books and magazines in 6 studies, secondary school students in 3 studies, and undergraduate students in 2 studies. In each of the other studies, it is evident that different populations and samples were employed. These included 19th-century novels, families, children and youth literature centres, newspaper news, book publishers, high school students, YouTube book channels and children who own channels. It was determined that most of the theses on reading culture were conducted with teachers.

Results and Discussion

In the study examining the postgraduate theses on reading culture, 7 main findings were reached and the situation related to the findings was presented in tables and figures. A total of 23 authorised postgraduate theses, 10 doctoral and 13 master's theses, on the subject of "reading culture" between 2014 and 2024, were examined in the YÖK database at <https://tez.yok.gov.tr/>. The results of the theses examined according to the years, universities, types, supervisor titles, languages, research models, population and samples of the postgraduate theses on reading culture are presented below.

A review of the number of theses conducted according to the years of postgraduate studies on reading culture reveals that the first such study was conducted in 2014, with the highest number of studies conducted in 2023. One study was conducted in 2024. In 2015, 2017 and 2020, no postgraduate studies on reading culture were conducted. As a result of the research, when the distribution of theses according to years is examined, it was determined that the theses written on reading culture between 2021-2023 were concentrated. The fact that there are theses written on reading culture at both doctoral and master's level in these years shows that the importance of the subject has been recognized.

If we look at the number of dissertations according to the universities where they were carried out, we can see that postgraduate studies on reading culture were carried out in 12 different universities. The largest number of studies was carried out at Ankara University, with seven dissertations. Upon examination of the number of theses according to their respective levels of study, it becomes evident that 10 of the postgraduate theses on reading culture are at the doctoral level, while 13 are at the master's level. It was determined that the majority of graduate theses on reading culture were at the master's level. The reason for the high number of master's theses may be that the number of students enrolled in doctoral

programs is lower than the number of students enrolled in master's programs and the number of universities with doctoral programs is lower.

Examining the theses by the title of the supervisor, 14 theses were supervised by professors. Postgraduate academic studies are conducted under the guidance of faculty members who act as advisors. In Turkey, the titles of faculty members in universities are as follows: professor, associate professor, assistant professor and doctoral faculty member (Resmî Gazete, 2018).

Upon examination of the number of theses according to the languages in which they were written, it was determined that all 23 graduate studies on reading culture were written in Turkish. Given that the intended readership of the theses includes academics, teachers, students and families, it is encouraging that they are written in Turkish (Orhan, 2022). It was observed that the majority of the theses analyzed were written in Turkish and according to the status of the universities, all of them were written in state universities.

A review of the theses according to research models reveals that the qualitative research method is employed in the greatest number of graduate theses on reading culture. The reliability and validity of the research are contingent upon the models that are preferred (Karasar, 2011). It is thought that in-depth studies on reading culture, which is a social issue, are not very suitable for quantitative research, and qualitative methods and document analysis are preferred during the research of the subject. It is thought that the main reason for the diversity seen in the methods, data collection and data analysis techniques of the theses examined is the difference and diversity of the methodological knowledge required by the fields of study.

Upon analysis of the number of theses according to population and sample, it was found that the majority of studies were conducted with teachers. As proposed by Altunkaya and Doğar (2018), future teachers should be encouraged to adopt a reading culture, as they are role models for their students in terms of developing reading skills.

Recommendations

In order to promote a culture of reading in Turkey, it is essential to conduct studies on the development of reading skills in children growing up in digital environments, their love of reading and the role of the family as a model for the child. When the results of the research are evaluated, it is thought that it would be beneficial to write more theses on reading culture. It is thought that the study group should be diversified in theses on reading culture. It is

thought that addressing the theses written in terms of child, family, teacher, environment and age will reveal different aspects of the subject. It is thought that including mixed methods in the theses written on reading culture and sharing the results of the theses in academic and local environments will contribute to raising awareness on the subject. Furthermore, it is proposed that cross-sectional and longitudinal studies be conducted to support social development and transformations in the process of introducing reading culture to society. A critical examination of graduate theses on reading culture can be conducted according to their subjects and purposes. It would be beneficial to conduct studies with classroom teachers and preschool teachers who are effective in the process of gaining reading culture. It is possible to conduct studies on the acquisition of reading culture from early childhood. Longitudinal studies can be conducted in collaboration with other stakeholders to foster a reading culture within society.

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