

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY ON CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT  
PROCESS IN TURKEY: CRITICAL PERIODS AND ISSUES

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PROCESS IN TURKEY: CRITICAL PERIODS AND ISSUES**

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**I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.**

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY ON CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PROCESS IN TURKEY: CRITICAL PERIODS AND ISSUES**

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The aim of this study was to explore curriculum development practices in Turkey through experiences and perceptions of prominent curriculum academics who were involved in curriculum studies during the Republican Period. These experiences are invaluable as they shed light on the history of curriculum development studies in Turkey as well as providing future prospects for the field. Phenomenological design was utilized in order to explore curriculum development concept with an in-depth analysis. Data consisted of both primary education curriculum documents and online semi-structured interviews. The interviews and the curriculum documents were analyzed through content analysis.

The results suggested that Turkey has issues in the curriculum development field in relation to the program development process such as competency and transparency. The findings revealed lack of a program development model, centralized program development, teacher inclusion, isolated reforms, and the gap between the programs and the real life as the issues and problems in program development process in Turkish Education in the Republican Period.

Moreover, fluctuations in the history of program theory, effects of political and socio-economic factors were expressed as other issues.

**Keywords:** Curriculum Development, Program Development, curriculum issues, Turkey

## ÖZ

### TÜRKİYE’DE PROGRAM GELİŞTİRME ÇALIŞMALARI: KRİTİK DÖNEMLER VE SORUNLAR

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Bu çalışma Türkiye’de Cumhuriyet Dönemi program geliştirme çalışmalarının detaylı incelenmesini amaçlamaktadır. Çalışmada Cumhuriyetin ilanından günümüze kadar Türkiye’deki program geliştirme çalışmaları, program geliştirme çalışmalarında yer almış akademisyenlerin görüş ve deneyimlerinden yola çıkarak tarihsel bir çerçeve içerisinde analiz edilmiştir. Program geliştirme olgusunun detaylı incelenmesine olanak sağladığı için Olgubilim araştırma deseni kullanılmıştır. Veriler, ilköğretim program dokümanları ve online yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşmelerden oluşmaktadır. Görüşmeler ve program dokümanları içerik analizi yöntemiyle incelenmiştir.

Araştırmanın sonuçları Türkiye’de program geliştirme süreciyle ilgili özellikle yeterlik ve şeffaflık alanlarında problemlere işaret etmektedir. Geçerli bir program geliştirme modeli kullanılmaması, merkezi program geliştirme, öğretmenlerin program geliştirme sürecine katılmaması, birbirinden bağımsız program reformları ve programlarla gerçek hayat arasındaki boşluk da program geliştirmenin sorunları olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Tarihsel bir analiz içerisinde program felsefe ve yaklaşımları, politik

ve sosyo-ekonomik deęişimlerin programlar üzerindeki etkileri de ortaya konulmuştur.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Program Geliştirme, Program Geliştirme Sorunları

*To My Parents and My Beloved Husband*

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| <b>EARGED</b>  | Department of Educational Research and Development          |
| <b>EU</b>      | European Union  |
| <b>HEC</b>     | Higher Education Council                                    |
| <b>MONE</b>    | Ministry of National Education                              |
| <b>NCLB</b>    | No Child Left Behind  |
| <b>NEC</b>     | National Educational Council                                |
| <b>TÜBİTAK</b> | The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey |



## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1. Background of the Study**

The word ‘curriculum’ means ‘course of a race’ in Latin suggesting the process of running. In today’s sense curriculum is referred mainly as a set of an educational plan in very basic terms. Various scholars attribute different meanings to ‘curriculum’ differentiating between curriculum as a field of study, curriculum as a system, and/or subject matter. As a field of study, curriculum has philosophical, historical, psychological, social foundations, and principles. As Schubert (1987) describes it curriculum is mostly a product of society and its main aim is to transform the very same society. As a field, it utilizes research to investigate, enhance, diversify, and to interpret educational thoughts and practices. Curriculum can also be considered as a system that deals with the organization of personnel and procedures to run an educational system. Moreover, it can serve as a subject matter as Physics or Math which has a syllabus, content, and other subject areas. Having these meanings of curriculum in mind, it is mostly used as a plan or a written document that prescribes desired goals or ends (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018). Within the influence of humanistic thoughts, scholars such as Caswell and Campbell (1935) describe curriculum as ‘all of the experiences that children have under the guidance of the teacher’ considering the learner as a whole person. One thing that is obvious about the curriculum is that it is a very complex phenomenon to describe. That is why, curriculum is often described by explaining what it does, what it should do, or include, and how to develop it rather than what it is. When curriculum is regarded as a plan to arrange educational processes, there are three main approaches to its development as subject-centered, learner-centered, and problem-centered. The curriculum development styles, key elements and steps change slightly in each approach by giving weight to different elements. For

example, the focus is mostly on the students and their needs in learner-centered approaches, and the curriculum is designed around those needs. There may be different curriculum development models under each approach.

Many models for curriculum development have been developed since the beginning of the field in early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Being the first, Ralph W. Tyler's curriculum development model is considered as the most influential in the field's history. His model inspired many curriculum thinkers to develop other models, which led to the growth of the field. Curriculum models can be classified under technical/scientific and non-technical/non-scientific approaches. The same classification can be made as modern/positivist and post-modern/post-positivist approach to curriculum development (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018). In technical/positivist approach, curriculum is designed systematically, generally step by step. It is believed that the more detailed one can design a curriculum, the more likely to achieve curricular aims. Logic, reason and objectivity are valued the most in designing the curriculum. In these types of curriculum, knowledge is considered as an entity to be transmitted to students and traditionally curriculum is shaped around the subject matter. Behaviorism and cognitivism are the major learning theories adopted in such curriculum thinking. Conversely, non-technical/post-positivist approaches promote subjectivity and emergentism which claims that education is a fluid matter, and it is not possible to know or prescribe every outcome in advance in educational issues. These models are learner-centered, and they value the process of learning rather than the end product (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018). Thus, humanism can be regarded as the leading theory of learning in post-positivist approach to curriculum development.

It is clear that curriculum development started with a positivist approach as assessment of outcomes constituted high importance in understanding how much the purposes were realized. Therefore, in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century behavioristic theories were influential in curriculum making with a focus on objectives and step by step prescriptive planning of curricula. However, there were few progressivist principles such as Bobbit and Tyler's focus on student needs. Especially, Bobbitt (1924) specified hundreds of objectives that correspond to learner needs. Within the prevailing positivist approach there were also Managerial and System approach to the

curriculum development. In managerial approach which has become prevalent in 1950s, curriculum is developed in terms of programs, schedules, resources, equipment and personnel (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018). The school is regarded as a social system and the focus is on the administration and supervising the curriculum development process by organizing human relations, methods, and decision-making mechanisms. In systems approach, curriculum is viewed as a whole system having several subsystems such as teaching, instruction, equipment, etc.

After the domination of positivist approaches, humanism started to take the field over by 1950s. Scholars such as John Dewey, William Kilpatrick and William Pinar became prominent figures of the field and they opposed technical/scientific methods for curriculum development defending learner-centeredness and pressing identity and social issues. However, Sputnik incident interrupted progressivist thoughts in the curriculum field and led to a more discipline-centered curriculum development that became prevalent in 1960s (Tanner & Tanner 1990).

When the developments in curriculum field are examined, it can be seen that the field has had controversy throughout its history owing to its complex nature. It can be said that curriculum studies in Turkey show parallelism with the worldwide trends (Orakçı, Durnalı & Özkan, 2018). It is not possible to say that curriculum development in Turkey present a steady process of evolution as the course of its development has been interrupted many times due to turbulent history of the country. The emergence of curriculum as a field coincides with the declaration of the Republic of Turkey. Thus, it is difficult to talk about sophisticated curriculum development processes in the early years of the republic until curricular studies in Turkey accelerated in the 1950s. Till then, curriculum development was considered as listing courses and topics and curriculum renewals were made by adding or omitting certain courses. The curricula developed at the beginning of Republican Era do not possess the principles of curriculum development. However, curriculums in today's sense started to be developed after 1950s. Especially 1968 curriculum is considered as a scientific one developed by utilizing curriculum development principles. After 1980, curriculum development was carried out by designing separate curricula for courses. In 1984, the Ministry of Turkish Education decided to develop a curriculum development model

and came up with a model consisting of *aim, behavior, application, and evaluation* elements (Gözütok, 2003). However, curriculum development committees continued to utilize various models as there were controversies among the committees of different courses. Thus, standardization was not achieved for curriculum development in 1990s. As Demirel (1992) points out there has not been any viable curriculum development model for Turkish Education System since then. When the latest developments are examined in Turkish education system, it is difficult to say that curriculum development studies have been conducted in a consistent and systematic manner in Turkey.

## **1.2. Purpose of the Study**

The present study aims to understand primary education curriculum development processes in Turkey during the Republican Era (1923-2012). More in particular, issues and critical periods of the curriculum development studies constitute the focus of this study. In order to achieve this, the research questions are formulated as follows:

1. What phases has curriculum development gone through in Turkey in the Republican Period?
2. How do academics in the field of curriculum and instruction perceive critical periods of curriculum development in the Republican Period in Turkey?
3. How do academics in the field of curriculum and instruction perceive the influence of educational theories and approaches in curriculum development process in the Republican Period in Turkey?

## **1.3. Significance of the Study**

The power of curriculum to reform societies is acknowledged by all. In the context of Turkey, this reformative power of education was experienced at its best after the declaration of Turkish Republic as education was seen a tool to transform Turkish society to a modern and democratic one. In 21<sup>st</sup> century, curricula are changing quite swiftly due to globalization and the technological advancements (Young, 2003). Rapid shifts in the curriculum field also cause controversies leaving the field in an ambiguity. The field of curriculum had already been considered to be in crisis by many

(Macdonald, 2003; Priestley, 2011; Schwab, 1960; Webster, 1976; Wraga & Hlebowitsh, 2003; Young; 2013). Therefore, it is very significant to clear this ambiguity of the field in order to advance curriculum studies and recover the field from its problems. Clarifying requires examining the field in a detailed historical manner. Investigating the historical progress of curriculum studies will help to identify the problems experienced in the past as well as the solutions employed. Kliebard (1995) claims that learning about one's past problems and their solutions would not prevent us from doing the same mistakes, or it does not guarantee it necessarily. That is, it is never certain that we may face with similar problems in education. However, studying the history of education can show us the status of our education in its most unbiased state so that we can comprehend the reason-result relationships not only for avoiding the same mistakes but also for acquiring new perspectives. New perspectives towards curriculum may help us to abandon our prejudices about the problems and their possible solutions. Moreover, Hazlett (1979, as cited in Pinar, 2008, p.493) claims if we do not study the curriculum field in a historical manner, we cannot comprehend its evolution, which will lead us to a rushed problematic curriculum thinking. Lastly, as Schwab (1969) marks a sign of curriculum crisis, reforms which lack the analysis of curriculum history will cause controversies leading to reinventing the old.

Therefore, it is crucial to portray our curricular evolution to interpret the past and present state of our education together with the rationale for curricular changes. History of curriculum must be studied in order to describe historical shifts and global patterns (Baker, 2015). Past and current theories for curriculum making should be analyzed to have an overview of education. The historical analysis and implications can serve a basis material for future curriculum development studies in Turkey.

When we examine the historical developments of curriculum studies, it may not yield a steady course of evolution. Therefore, the meticulous descriptions of prominent academicians will help uncover the details of curriculum development processes. Their experiences and thoughts on curriculum studies in Turkey may reveal personal experiences and thoughts that cannot be found in the literature.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **2.1. Foundations of Curriculum Development**

##### **2.1.1. Philosophical Foundations of Curriculum**

Philosophy provides a wide perspective to organize life and thoughts. In terms of curriculum philosophy, it asks questions related to why we have schools, what knowledge is worthwhile, and how students learn. Goodlad (1979) remarks that philosophy is the major starting point in curriculum decisions. That is, philosophy of a curriculum directs all other decisions to be taken in the curriculum development process. It establishes a framework for the goals, aims, content and organization, and teaching and learning processes. Philosophy of a curriculum serves as a criterion when determining the curriculum components in the form of beliefs, principles, and choices. Ornstein and Hunkins (2018) classifies philosophies in two levels as major philosophies and educational philosophies. Idealism, realism, pragmatism, and existentialism are the major philosophies that influence educational theories in a broader sense. Idealism considers spiritual and moral truth as the meaning of the world. Within this thought, certain ideas and values are regarded as eternal, undeniable, and global. It is crucial to transfer the knowledge and cultural heritage from one generation to another. Therefore, subjects such as history, mathematics, and language are important in discipline-based curriculum style. Generic and abstract topics are provided prior to more concrete ones in the curriculum. Teacher is the strongest figure in providing the education in the perfect order. Thus, lecture and discussion are approved methods in class (Golen, 1982). Contrarily, realism sees the world through senses and reason, so things that exist in the nature are regarded as real. This philosophy advocates that people understand the world objectively by observing the

nature and learning the cultural heritage. Regarding the curriculum perspective, experiments, presentations, and lecture are adopted as teaching methods. Teacher role is authoritarian, and his or her duty is to inspire rational thinking. Students are expected to master the 3 Rs (reading, writing, and arithmetic) essentially and then add to this knowledge having a willingness to learn more. The third philosophy, pragmatism, has appeared as an American philosophy derived from empiricism. It is based on the dynamic world notion rejecting dogmatic truths. Since life is constantly changing, knowledge or reality is acquired through learner's interaction with this dynamic environment. The school serves as an environment for the experimentation of life where ideas are tested and validated. Pragmatic curriculum is learner-centered adjusting to the different learner needs. Teacher's role is to encourage scientific process as well as promoting critical thinking. John Dewey, an American philosopher, psychologist and educator, is an important figure in Pragmatism as he contributed generously to the advancement of this philosophy. As he suggests, curriculum should be designed involving student's experiences and interests in order to equip learners with the necessary and useful knowledge for their future life (Dewey, 1938). Last major philosophy is existentialism which favors learner choice in all educational decisions. The truth as well as the criteria of it should be determined by the learner in order to create the self (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018). Existential curriculum includes emotional and personal topics that yield philosophical discussion. Teacher encourages freedom of choice for students to express themselves.

While these four major philosophies offer insights into curricular thinking, four educational philosophies which were derived from these major philosophies have had greater influence on educational decisions. Therefore, it would be useful to briefly explain these philosophies, namely, perennialism, essentialism, progressivism, and reconstructivism.

### *Perennialism*

Based on the realist philosophy, perennialism is the most traditional school of thought. It advocates that the truth is eternal, and the purpose of education is to discipline the mind (Oliva, 2009). Perennialism favors that the truths are constant and valid forever, therefore the curriculum does not need to be flexible and dynamic (Belbase,

2011). Curriculum is subject centered and shaped around the classical subjects such as Latin, grammar, logic as well as 3Rs. Interests of the learners are overlooked since the students are considered premature individuals whose minds need to be trained. The same curriculum is implemented for all learners, and elective courses are very few. Socratic Method in which learners are required to examine questions or situations analytically is utilized in this philosophy (Hawkins-Leon, 1998). Teacher's role is to transfer traditional values emphasizing rational thinking.

### *Essentialism*

Essentialism is based on realist and idealist philosophies and it was emerged as a reaction to progressivist philosophy. Economic crisis in America and the Sputnik incident led to questioning of education, especially progressivist approaches that were prevalent at the time. Progressivism was criticized for being weak and not leading to necessary skills. Therefore, it was thought that a decent education should have a curriculum consisting of traditional subjects such as languages, science, mathematics, history, literature, reading, and writing (Şahin, 2018). This movement is also called 'back to basics' as it emphasized the mastery of basics (3Rs). In essentialist curriculum, teachers have a traditional authoritarian role, and they should be respected for the knowledge they possess (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018). The curriculum is subject-centered, and the teacher is the master of his or her subject. Behaviorist principles such as memorization, drills and standardized testing are adopted (Oliva, 2009). Learners need to work hard to excel in their studies and they are not supposed to contribute much to classroom activities because of their passive recipient role.

### *Progressivism*

Progressivism was originated from pragmatic philosophy as a challenge to perennialist thinking. The aim of progressive philosophy, which is also called experimentalism, is to reform the traditional education putting an emphasis on the experimental science. According to Radu (2011) progressivism started a new era in the education as it introduced active learning and practice-based education. Individualized experiences have utmost value as learner differences such as emotional, cultural, physical, etc. are emphasized. Students are supposed to undergo educational experiences in order to simulate the life and learn by doing (Oliva, 2009). Teacher uses problem-solving and

discovery methods combining them through active learner-involvement (Mosier, 1952). Moreover, John Dewey is one of the pioneers in progressivism since his ideas related to education and democracy have characterized this philosophy. In a democratic class environment, teacher's role is to guide students in problem solving and scientific processes to help them reach their own conclusions. Instead of competition, cooperation is encouraged in the schools. In progressivism humanistic and relevant curriculums are favored. Designed in the light of humanism, curriculum gives importance to learners' affective outcomes more than cognitive ones (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018). Additionally, instead of traditional subject centered curriculums, contemporary subjects and teaching-learning methods are adopted in the progressivist curriculum as they are more relatable to the real life of both learners and teachers.

### *Reconstructionism*

Derived from pragmatism, reconstructionism emphasizes the idea of reconstructing the society through education. The focus of reconstructionism is on the social problems and the mission is to reduce society's ill aspects. As Belbase (2011) asserted it is significant that the students are aware of social, economic and political issues in the school. Teacher has a role of reform agent as he or she promotes experiments in classroom in order to defy the problematic social structures (Ornstein and Hunkins, 2018). Teacher and the learner decide the curriculum regarding democratic practices and mutual understanding (Martin & Loomis, 2006). Topics in the curriculum may include inequality, hunger, terrorism, etc. Mosier (1951) argues that reconstructionism has been considered as a utopian philosophy, yet it gives a purpose regarding future prospects of a society by asking the question of 'Where do we as people want to go?' (p.87).

### **2.1.2. Historical Foundations of Curriculum**

Franklin Bobbitt is considered as the founder of the curriculum field with his book 'The Curriculum' that came out in 1918. Having a behaviorist approach to curriculum development he specified objectives and activities for learners to develop abilities. Together with him, Werrett Charters was one of the first people to deal with the curriculum as a science and he had similar thoughts with Bobbitt. Charters used

'scientific approach' to curriculum, and he recognized curriculum as 'objectives' which learners should achieve. The field was then affected by John Dewey's progressivist ideas on education. Having similar ideas with him, William Kilpatrick proposed the 'Project Method' for curriculum development. In his project model curriculum was formed in four steps as *purposing, planning, executing, and judging* (Kilpatrick, 1918). One of the milestones in the field's history is 'Eight-Year Study' which was carried out between the years 1932 and 1940 in the US in order to align high school education with university entrance requirements. The Progressive Education Association initiated the Eight-Year Study to prove that new progressivist curriculum would be as successful as the traditional ones. The study proved to be right, and the results directed Tyler's ideas leading to his book 'Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction', which is considered as the bible of the curriculum field (Ornstein and Hunkins, 2018). In his book, Tyler asks these four major questions that constitutes the core of curriculum making: 1. What educational purposes should school seek to attain? 2. What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes? 3. How can these educational experiences be effectively organized? 4. How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained? (Tyler, 1949). Nevertheless, there were some curricularists who considered Tyler's model as modest and oversimplistic for curriculum development processes (Kliebard, 1970; Sears & Marshall, 1990). However, Tyler's model was appreciated and utilized by the majority as it is quite practical, rational and easy to understand; therefore, aforementioned four questions constitute the basis of most of the curriculum development model and processes.

Pinar (2008) states that history of curriculum field in America can be examined by three periods: the first one is the commencement of the field and its stabilization between 1918-1969; the second one is reconceptualization of the field between 1969-1980, which led to a paradigm shift from developing curriculum to understanding curriculum that is still ongoing today; and the last period is the internationalism of curriculum field starting from 1980s but especially after 2000 to present time. The analysis of these stages is crucial as the curriculum development in America has influenced curricular reforms all around the world.

The field of curriculum was claimed to undergo a reconceptualization process in the 1970s, which Pinar et al. (2004) referred as ‘paradigm shift’. One of the most remarkable curriculum scholars, Schwab marked the curriculum field as ‘moribund’ in 1969 and stated that the field was in crisis with these words: “the field of curriculum is moribund, unable by its present methods and principles to continue its work and desperately in search of new and more effective principles and methods.” (Schwab, 1969, p.1). He also criticized field’s too much reliance on theory and expressed the need for a renaissance in curriculum field. The textbooks in 1970s signaled this renaissance emphasizing reform, change and innovation in curriculum development (Pinar et al., 2004). Although humanistic principles started to be effective in curriculum studies, behaviorism was still dominant in the field; therefore, the aim of reconceptualism was to abandon traditional curriculum development methods that was mainly the Tyler’s approach. With reconceptualization, curriculum scholars tried to understand curriculum issues instead of developing curricula. This shift in the field caused problems related to both the role of curriculum scholars and new the responsible agents for curriculum development. The controversial arguments and the inconsistency in the field has not ended (Lundgren, 2015; Macdonald, 2003; Priestley, 2011; Wraga & Hlebowitsh, 2003;) and globalization and technological improvements has brought about novel arguments to deal with (Young, 2003). Therefore, it can be said that the confusion in the curriculum field seem to persist.

### **2.1.3. Psychological Foundations of Curriculum**

Educational psychology deals with the question of how humans learn offering a basis for interpreting the educational processes. It constitutes a central concern for curriculum development since the intention of a curriculum is to attain student learning. Educational psychology as a field attempts to explain student learning submitting some theories and approaches. However, it should be noted that any consensus on how people learn and think has not been achieved yet, therefore, these theories may contradict with one another (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018). There are three major learning theories as behaviorism, cognitivism, and humanism although different classifications with additional theories exist.

### *Behaviorism*

Behaviorist psychology considers learning process as conditioning and it is controlled by modifying the environment to obtain intended learner response. As Skinner (1954) suggested learner behaviors can be manipulated through positive and negative reinforcements. It is also believed that learning is reflected through observable and measurable behavior, thus, the focus is on such behaviors (Weegar & Pacis, 2012). Within the behaviorist theory, Thorndike (1932) proposed three laws for learning: Law of Effect, Law of Readiness, and Law of Exercise. Law of Effect suggests that behaviors that are followed by rewards will likely happen again, and when followed by a punishment, their likelihood to happen will decrease. Moreover, learners should be mentally ready for learning to occur, and exercises such as drills and repetition will increase learning. The behavioristic curriculum is totally prescriptive providing step by step systematic methods for learning (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018). Subjects are to be mastered by the learners in a structured way. Teacher has a role of arranging the learning process to elicit desired behaviors with an emphasis on increasing positive experiences.

### *Cognitivism*

Cognitivism views learning as a cognitive process and it aims to explore the ways of generating, storing, and retrieving data in the mind. One of the renowned advocates of cognitivism, Jean Piaget proposed four cognitive developmental stages for learning process as sensory-motor, preoperational, concrete operations, and formal operations stages. Starting from birth to adulthood these mental stages occur in a consecutive order. In learning process, people assimilate new experiences integrating them into the old ones. Accommodation refers to the process when learner's existent structures in the mind are altered and adapted based on the environmental stimuli. Finally, equilibrium is reached when assimilation and accommodation is balanced. Such ideas of Piaget influenced curriculum scholars like Tyler, Taba, and Bruner (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018). For instance, the aforementioned processing of knowledge can be traced in Tyler's organization of learning experiences as continuity, sequence, integration (Tyler, 1949). Similarly, Taba (1962) stresses the importance of recognizing the sequential and hierarchical cognitive developmental stages when building a curriculum. Contrary to Piaget's ideas, Lev Vygotsy, another prominent

figure in cognitivism, proposed that children learn with their relations to their social environment (Moll, 2003). He believed by means of the social interactions, people can achieve specific cognitive operations before they reach certain developmental stages.

Constructivism can be examined within the cognitive psychology since its main aim is for learners to constructing knowledge making their own meaning. Learning is considered an interpretative, recurrent process and learners play an active role in relating with their physical and social environment (Fosnot, 1996). Curriculum includes problem-solving, experiments, and cooperative learning methods. Teacher has a role of a guide as he or she assists learners in their knowledge-constructing processes. Besides, teacher needs to design and arrange experiences for the students in order that authentic and relevant contexts could be experienced (Ertmer & Newby, 1993).

In cognitivism, curriculum organization includes recognition of various learning styles. Multiple Intelligence Theory which advocates learners have different intelligences and learn in many ways is influential. Therefore, subjects such as music and arts are considered important unlike behaviorist curriculums (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018). Teacher role is to arrange instructional strategies to help students build new information relating them to the existing knowledge in memory. To do that teacher is expected to understand learner differences and their individual experiences (Ertmer & Newby, 1993). Active student participation is required in order for learners to discover laws and patterns in their mind. They are expected to be willing to learn and free to ask questions.

### *Humanism*

Humanistic psychology and phenomenology assert that human behavior depends on people's concept of themselves. In other words, how people see themselves have an influence on their behavior and learning. Therefore, personal experience plays a crucial role in understanding learning. Learning is considered as an abstract and complex process since the environment is constantly changing, so people's perception and learning change accordingly (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018). Abraham Maslow who is the principal advocate of humanist psychology proposed a hierarchy of human

needs. According to this hierarchy, human's *survival* and *safety needs* should be secured. Then, *love and belonging* and *esteem needs* should be met to attain feelings of acceptance and recognition. Next, *knowing and understanding* appear as needs to be achieved since humans want to enhance their knowledge at this point. Lastly, *self-actualization* needs can be met when a person achieves his or her best potential (Maslow, 1968). Maslow's needs imply principles for teaching-learning processes. As Ornstein and Hunkins (2018) suggest a child will not be ready to learn unless their basic needs such as love and belonging are met first.

Humanistic curriculum promotes learner motivation and freedom, and it aims to satisfy students' physical, psychological, and cognitive needs. Learner differences are paid considerable attention. Teacher-student relationship is crucial and should be based on mutual trust and openness. Teacher's role as mentor is to help students build self-confidence and determine their own learning process as active independent learners (Syomwene, Kitiainge, & Mwaka, 2013). The ultimate goal of teacher is to assist students in achieving their self-actualization state.

#### **2.1.4. Social Foundations of Curriculum**

The relationship between schools and the society is reciprocal as culture of the society influences the school while the school curriculum affects and shapes the society. Ornstein and Hunkins (2018) assume that schools and the society are both dynamic systems which are changing continuously. Therefore, it is crucial to examine the history of education to understand social events and transformations. While planning a curriculum social structures should be taken into consideration (Saylor & Alexander, 1966). In order to improve the society, teachers and curricularists have a duty to select and organize educational activities and the content. Zais (1976) stated schools were established for the sustainment of society or culture; however, today's sense of education has added school's transformation function into the transmission of cultural heritage. Therefore, it would be pragmatic to examine the social changes together with curricular transformations.

Curriculum reforms in America were accelerated after Soviet Union launched Sputnik in 1957 (Park, 2006). Americans were frustrated that they failed to send the first satellite to the space, and it led to questioning their curriculums especially in Science and Mathematics. Then, curricular decisions have started to be taken by politicians as the Sputnik defeat made educational success a political issue (Pinar, 2008; Rickover, 1959). It was decided that algebra and geometry curriculums were reorganized with added topics and new teaching methods. New topics consisted of abstract ideas and they were supposed to be taught before concrete ideas. There were some controversies between educators and mathematicians in relation to what to teach and how to teach the topics. However, the new reforms were not successful as they were rushed into classes, and the teachers were not ready for these changes and there was not adequate piloting (Kanbir, 2016). When the new Math initiation between 1950s and 1970s did not bring success, American educators decided to go ‘Back to the Basics’ in the 1970s, which brought back ‘memorization’ and ‘mastery learning’. Thus, the curriculum studies became influenced by positivist and structuralist thoughts (Cherryholmes, 1988). In the 1980s, there was a distress as behaviorism was on the rise and it led to emergence of problem-solving methods especially in mathematics curriculum. Eventually, the controversies in curriculum field forced educators to study the curriculum by trying to understand instead of developing it. Tyler’s famous style was changed to understanding curriculum historically, politically, racially, institutionally, and internationally; also, by gender, postmodernism and poststructuralism (Pinar, 2008).

With globalization, most of the countries aimed at producing national standards as students should perform successfully in the competitive global market. Therefore, America focused on establishing national educational standards in 1980s as earlier educational reforms were not a total success. The report *A Nation at Risk* that was published in 1983 pointed out a lowering quality in education and it led to development of the first national curriculum standards in America as well as fueling the reforms in curriculum development (Savage & O’Connor, 2015). Among the six national goals, one was becoming ‘the first in the world’ in mathematics and science. In the 1990s, new government did not support this initiation and there were no further improvements. Clinton government adopted a standard-based reform, and it was

states' responsibility to develop educational standards and planning student assessment. As each state determined their own educational standards and testing procedures, the gap between the students of different states grew substantially. Therefore, the attempts to align curriculum standards between the states gained importance and national curriculum standards were produced in 2009 with the participation of all states except Texas and Alaska. Non-profit education organizations such as ACT, Achieve, the College Board, and experts in instruction and cognition participated in the development of new state-led national standards (Savage& O'Connor, 2015). However, it is important to acknowledge that the US education is highly decentralized despite this national standards initiation since the national standards are carefully examined by each state and the states have the main power in determining the educational practices. Another important reform can be 'No Child Left Behind' Act (NCLB) which was in force between 2002 and 2015 for K-12. The act had a standard-based approach as well as having constructivist principles (Kanbir, 2016). The aim of this NCLB Act was to provide equal opportunities for the disadvantaged children and to test students at certain intervals. Besides, NLCB required teachers to be highly qualified especially in their area and schools should adopt research-based educational practices. However, the act was criticized as it focused too much on standardized testing and it also had harsh penalties for low-performing schools and staff. This act was replaced with 'Every Student Succeeds' in 2015. According to this act, just like the previous one, states can determine their own goals, but these goals must focus on proficiency on tests, English language proficiency, and graduation rates (Klein, 2016). Within the lights of these developments, Au (2011) claimed that due to globalization, curriculum studies in the US have been experiencing 'the New Taylorism' because high-stake testing has gained an utmost importance, and scientific management of the 20<sup>th</sup> century emerged again one century later with standardized testing, production-focused education, and raised control over teachers. Curriculum reforms in Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> century focused on increasing the compulsory education and adopting student-centered learning and testing approaches in education. Countries that aimed to improve the quality of education have made reforms primarily on teacher education. Finland is a proper example as comprehensive reforms were enacted in 1970s as the country evolved into a new welfare state. Curriculum, textbooks, teacher salary, and administration were examined in detail and

'comprehensive school reforms' focused on school and teacher autonomy (Garrouste, 2010). In England, mass schooling at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century intended to unify various schooling applications of different cultural backgrounds such as Scottish, Irish and Welsh (Hamilton & Weiner, 2003). Educational reforms aimed at reducing the gap between elites and the common public in the early years of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Topics of democracy and child-centered education became prominent with the Dewey effect by 1940s. However, as England is quite a conservative nation and favors tradition over theory, the education kept its traditional doctrines as it aimed to equip minds with "mental discipline" (Ulich, 1962, p.119). In England, Local Educational Authorities (LEAs) had more power than the Ministry of Education in planning and controlling the education between years of 1918-1960. In 1988, the first national curriculum was announced by Education Reform Act and it provided an overview of the essential knowledge that students should possess. This curriculum was updated in 1994-95 by reducing the content and in 1997 reforms in national curriculum were made in order to increase the time spend in Math, Science and English subjects. As Hamilton and Weiner (2003) suggest after 1990s, curricula have changed to fit market-based economy and neo-liberalism.

## **2.2.Crisis in the Field of Curriculum**

The crisis in curriculum theory became official with Schwab's announcement of the field as 'moribund' in 1969 by stating six signs of this crisis. The first sign was that curricular decisions were made by people outside of the field. The second one is a shift from the 'use' of curriculum principles and methods to 'talk' about those methods. Schwab (1969) also describes this change 'from theory to metatheory, or even metametatheory'. For the third sign, he provides going back to subject matter without giving credit to earlier works in the history of the field. It shows that so-called reforms of the reconceptualization reinvent the same concepts without analyzing the field's history. Fourthly, the role of curriculum specialists changed to observer, historian, commentator, and critic of other contributors in the field. As he claims it creates a distance for specialists from the field as they become occupied with commenting instead of developing or theorizing. As the fifth sign, Schwab indicates a repetition of old works with new expressions without adding tangible value. The last sign is stated

as a rise in ‘eristic, contentious, and ad hominem debate’ (Schwab, 1969, p.4). This irrational controversial arguments in the field can be considered as one the best indicators of the crisis.

Wraga and Hlebowitsh (2003) claim that the crisis proposed by Schwab is still ongoing in the USA curriculum field of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and they provide examples proving that the signs of the crisis are still visible. For instance, national standards movement in the US was mostly led by politicians and business leaders instead of curriculum professors. Michael Young (2003), a prominent curriculum scholar from England, shares similar ideas related to curriculum studies in England, and he stated that the field has marginalized providing three contributors to it. The first one is that curricular decisions have been made by people in power, so the education reflects their interests and thoughts. Second contributor is a change in the philosophy of education. Young (2003) states that the new curriculum thought is based on everyday lives, and the curriculum knowledge is not distinguished from the procedures of our everyday life social practices. The last one is postmodernist ideas which criticizes the subject-based curriculums. Young thinks that while rejecting subject-based curriculum development, we degrade the significance of knowledge. He also claims that curriculum studies have lost its object – which should be ‘what knowledge students should know and/or learn. As a solution, Young (2013) proposes a ‘knowledge-based curriculum’ approach. Baker (2015) validates Young’s ideas that the crisis still exists, and Young’s knowledge-based approach is a viable one. He states that we need to bring back the empirical study of curriculum, and while doing that it is crucial to review historical shifts in the field of curriculum and sociology. Therefore, Baker (2015) suggests that a curriculum theory must demonstrate historical and international patterns including changing themes and theories. Priestley (2011) presses upon the same issue stating that the emergence of new models of national curriculum raise concerns in the field as they omit knowledge from curriculums. Also, he asserts a visible decline in the curricular studies in the UK as well as around the world. He is concerned about the use of generic skills and outcomes in curriculums triggered by the National Qualification Frame movement. Another scholar Deng (2015) states that the increasing focus on academic standards and outcomes has caused a decline in the significance of knowledge in the curriculums as well as changing the aim of the school

to sole economic goals because curriculum is currently considered ‘the product of internationalizing or global forces’(Young, 2008, as cited in Deng, 2015 p.729). In addition, he shares Baker’s ideas on that curricular shifts and trends must be analyzed in a historical manner (Deng, 2015). Another scholar from Australia, Macdonald (2003) also recognizes the crisis that is named by many scholars as ‘disarray’ or ‘failure’ in curriculum field. The author states that curriculum crisis can only be overcome if we focus on learning about students’ identity, and how they learn instead of concentrating anachronistic curricular or school-based reforms. Moreover, Snaza (2014) claims that the crisis in curriculum field is not about methodology, it is rather political and ontological. According to the author, as the field is dead, the ghost of it is lurking around by preventing the field from liberating. He also recommends avoiding this haunting of the crisis and to act upon it to overcome.

In Turkey, crisis in the curriculum development thoughts has been reported by many academicians. Akşit (2007) analyzed curriculum reforms together with structural changes in Turkey. It was criticized that education faculties were not included in curriculum development process of 2004 curriculums. Also, piloting and feedback procedures were criticized as they lack transparency. Another sign of crisis is that curriculum studies could not be liberated from political and ideological struggles of Turkey.

While curriculum development is considered as a standard and periodical process of education in Europe, it is generally referred as ‘curricular reform’ in the USA. The case in Turkey is often similar to the one of the USA, where every educational development is introduced as a reform. Curriculum development has not been considered as a natural procedure of education; therefore, a sound curriculum development philosophy has not been achieved (ERG, 2017). Education is highly centralized in Turkey, so curriculum studies also present a centralized feature. Gözütok (2003) states that centralized curriculum development causes problems, and curriculums cannot satisfy the needs of both students and society. The effectiveness of the recent curricular reforms in Turkey has started to be criticized in the last two decades. Curriculum development studies were isolated from each other, which prevents accumulation of knowledge on the issue. These isolated curriculum reforms

served as a patch for curricula, and it led to incoherence (Gelen & Beyazıt, 2007). The inconsistency and controversies within each curricular reform are the proof of a crisis in Turkey's education. Demirel (1992) claims that although the US and some European countries also experience fluctuations in curriculum development approaches and procedures, they managed to come up with a solid description of curriculum. In Turkey, it has not been clear to name curriculum development as MONE alternate back and forth between 'müfredat' and 'curriculum'. As a result, it can be said that the signs of a disarray also present in Turkey's curriculum studies.

### **2.3. Curriculum Development in Turkey**

#### *Process and Models*

Curriculums are developed centrally by the Ministry of National Education in Turkey. Board of Education is a department working under the Ministry of Turkish Education and it is the main responsible unit for developing national educational policies and curricula. The department was established in 1923 when the new Ministry of National Education was founded (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2010). Duties of the Board of Education can be summarized as follows:

- improving Turkish National Education based on national and universal goals and principles of education,
- developing policies and strategies to adjust curricula to national, universal, scientific, and social standards and values by considering equality of opportunity, equity, productivity, quality principles,
- collaborating with higher education institutions, non-governmental organizations, other governmental and private institutions when developing curricula, textbooks, and teacher's guidebooks,
- evaluating the curricula, textbooks, and teaching materials to check whether they fulfill their aims,
- evaluating the national and international education based on national and universal developments,
- conducting research on curricular studies and educational materials (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2012)

In Turkey, the board of education forms committees to plan and develop curricula when necessary. The need for curriculum renewal or other educational reforms is mostly determined through National Educational Councils (NEC) which is the highest rank advisory council in the ministry. National Educational Council assembles every four years to discuss educational developments and problems in the system. In NEC teachers, scientists, government officials, and people from educational associations and organizations have a one-week meeting in order to improve the quality of Turkish educational system and to discuss the problems and find solutions to them. When curriculum development or renewal is decided, specialized committees are formed by the Board of Education. A reporter and a head of the committee are appointed or chosen at the beginning of the process (MEB, 2012).

Being a former version of NECs, Science Committees – *Heyet-i İlmiye* were scholarly meetings where educational policies and decisions were made by prominent scholars of the era (Öz, 2014). There were three of these committees and in the last one which was in 1925, the Board of Education, whose main aim is to arrange educational decisions and curricula, was decided to be founded. After that Board of Education became the responsible organization for curriculum development and they were replaced by National Educational Councils.

There are various models for curriculum development including the ones that famous American curriculum scholars developed and the ones that were developed by Turkish scholars. Some of these models are Tyler model, Taba model, SAL model, EARGED, and MEB model. It is possible to utilize more than one model for a curriculum and different models can be combined for developing the curricula for different subjects. Erişen (1998) analyzed 13 different curriculum development models and found out that it is possible to say that many of the models adopted Tyler's four questions as the basis of their model. Aims, content, sequence, and evaluation stages exist in almost all models with some variations. Demirel (1992) specified main requirements of a curriculum development model for Turkey in his paper. He stated that the model should have a philosophical base that is consistent with the country's philosophy of education. In addition, the model should include aims, content, learning experiences, and evaluation steps. Also, it was emphasized that the aims should be translated into

behavioral objectives complying with Bloom’s taxonomy. Moreover, the model should adopt a learning theory, or it can be designed as eclectic having more than one theory if necessary. By judging his suggestions, it can be concluded that Demirel proposed a model similar to Taba-Tyler Model. His model has been mostly considered for developing teacher education curricula. Demirel (2004) reports criticisms related to the absence of curriculum specialists in curriculum development committees in Turkey. He also suggests that in the early years of 21<sup>st</sup> century, subject-centered curriculum development has become prevalent as needs analysis are carried out for the content of subjects such as Turkish Language and Literature course and English courses.

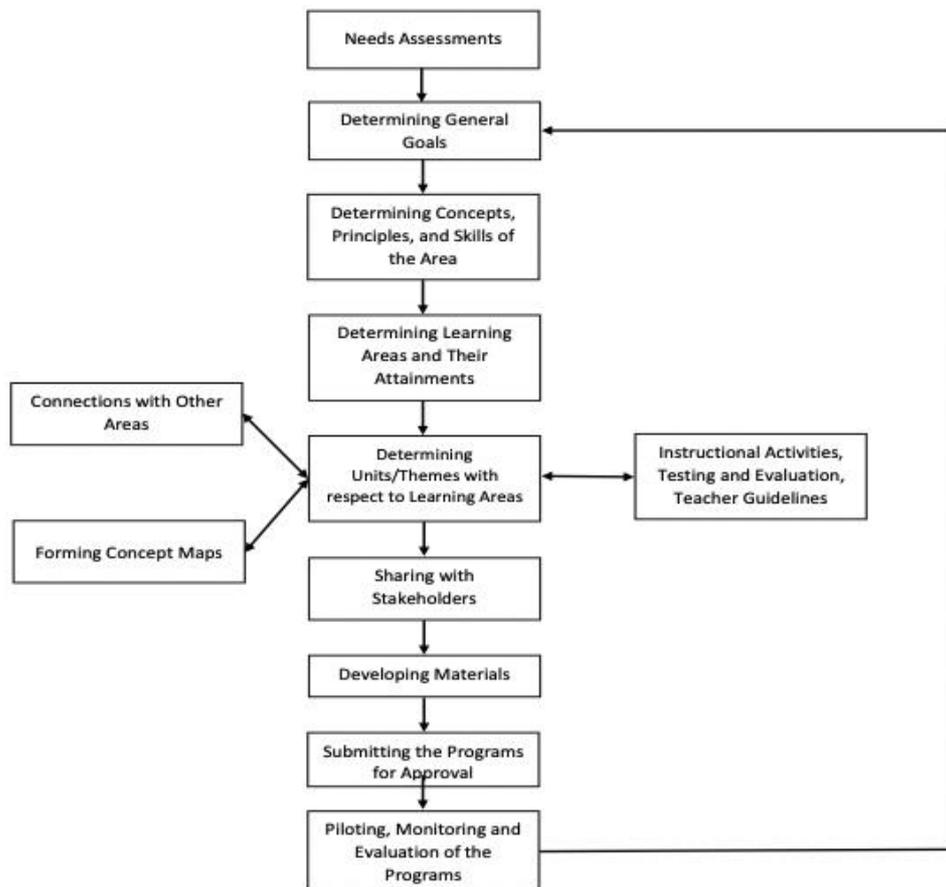


Figure 1. 2005-2006 Curriculum Development Model (2563 Tebliğler Dergisi 2004, s.736)

Furthermore, Turkish Ministry of Education has presented a curriculum development model in 2004 (see Fig. 1). In this model, curriculum development process starts as the concerned parties request a curriculum development. The next step is to decide the framework of the study. In the third step the name of the curriculum, general aims, duration, schedule, the committee members and their methods to proceed are specified. The next step is to conduct a needs analysis and then main topics of the course are determined. In the seventh step, the aims are defined by grade level. Next, instructional strategies and materials are specified, and unit plans are developed. Then instructional materials such as course books are developed or chosen among existing ones. The next step is piloting, and necessary changes are made if needed. Then the curriculum is utilized all over the country and later it is evaluated. It is suggested that the curriculum should be systematically renewed to improve it. (Milli Eğitim ve Kültür Bakanlığı, 2007).

With the emphasis of constructivism, some modifications have been added to MEB 2004 model, and common learning areas, themes, and attainments were included in curriculum development process in 2007 (see Figure 2.) The details in relation to the models will be discussed in the results section.

Curriculum studies in Turkey date back to a very recent history. There was not a comprehensive curriculum development for schools until 1950s in Turkey. Curricula were developed by choosing and listing course names and topics, and there was no consensus on content and method. After the Turkish Republic was declared in 1923, developments in education field accelerated. Arı (2002) indicates that the Law of Unification is a major and very much needed reform in the country's history. Before this law, each type of school used to be ruled by different agents. For example, Sıbyan mektepleri was ruled by *Evkaf Nezareti* – a department for charitable institutions while foreign schools such as French, American or English ones were responsible for their own educational planning and management with no interference from the Ottoman Empire. With the Law of Unification, all educational institutes were merged under the Ministry of Education in 1924, and the ministry became responsible party for the control of all educational processes and institutions (Gök, 2007).

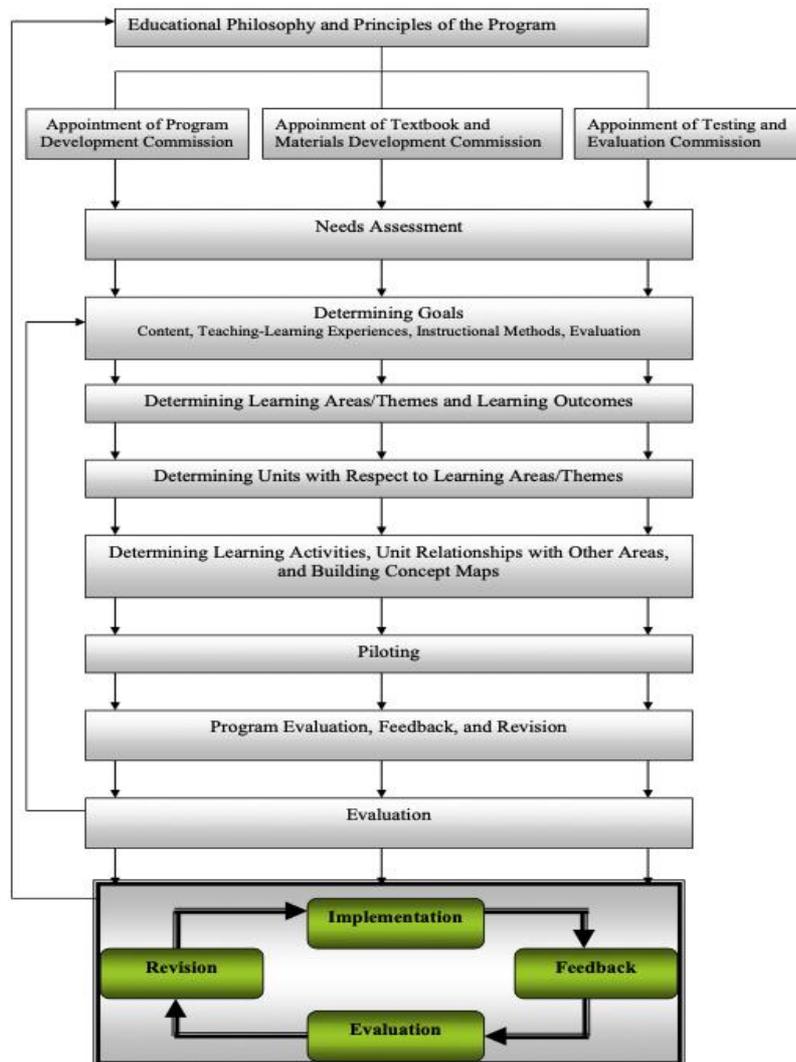


Figure 2. 2007-2008 Curriculum Development Model of Board of Education

In the second Science Committee held in 1924, curriculum development for primary education, writing coursebooks, and reducing primary education from 5 to 4 years were some of the decisions taken (Maarif Vekilliği, 1926). In terms of curricula, 1924 curriculum can be considered as a transition curriculum before a more comprehensive 1926 curriculum was prepared (Orakçı, Durnalı & Özkan, 2018). 1924 curriculum reflects the mindset of Ottoman educational style while it has some new improvements. In this curriculum, one aim is to connect the topics in each course creating consistency throughout the curriculum. The curriculum that was developed in 1926 proposed many novelties in terms of educational goals and instruction. The main goal of education was to help students embrace the new regime ‘Turkish Republic’

and to raise good citizens who were responsive and sensitive to others (T.C. Maarif Vekaleti, 1926). Another improvement was that the aims of each lesson were determined separately for the first time although they were rather general aims (Özalp & Ataünal, 1977). One major reform was ‘toplu tedris’ which was a system for unifying several courses into one in order to create wholeness and connection among courses. Also, the curriculum aimed at encouraging student autonomy, and appealing topics from their immediate surroundings were chosen for students to relate topics to their own life. In 1936, a new curriculum was needed based on the requirements of the era. Principles such as republicanism, etatism, secularism and reformism were highlighted in educational goals in order to protect and sustain the new regime. Moreover, new pedagogical developments and secondary school requirements were considered in the curriculum making process. Besides, another curriculum was prepared for rural schools in 1939. In the first National Educational Council held in 1939, aims of Republican education and all curricula were examined. Among the decisions taken were increasement of the year of education in rural schools from 3 to 5 years and acceptance of a single source (government) for textbooks (MEB, 1939). In 1940, Village Institutes were founded to raise teachers for village schools (Akyüz, 2018). These schools had a unique curriculum which includes both academic and practical courses designed to meet the special needs of each village. The teachers trained in these institutes were supposed to teach villagers to read and write as well as agricultural methods. The curriculum of village institutes promoted student-centeredness with each course having an application phase (T.C. Maarif Vekilliği, 1943). Unfortunately, these schools, which could be used to transform Turkish society into a modern one, were closed due to political reasons. In the second National Educational Council held in 1943 the topic of national history was stressed, and the curriculum and the textbooks of history course were examined carefully. (MEB, 1943). Moreover, in 1948, curriculum for urban and rural schools was merged and the new curriculum was prepared after a survey was sent to teachers about curriculum needs. The issue of ‘democracy’ was stressed in this curriculum and the goals of education was categorized under four headings as follows: individual, social, economics, and human relations. The main aim was to raise good citizens in terms of these four headings. In the fourth National Educational Council, primary and secondary school curricula of 1948-1949 was analyzed and single book practice was abandoned due to

democracy concerns (MEB, 1949). In the next National Educational Council held in 1953, issues such as curricula for preschools, hygiene in primary schools, teacher education, and draft law for primary education were discussed. It was decided that the coherence and unity between the curriculum aims and the curriculum content must be ensured, and the curriculum should be piloted before it was put into action. Also, unified teaching that was applied in the first half of primary schools should be implemented in the second half (MEB, 1953). 1950s were the years that curriculum studies in Turkey started as a serious task since in those years curriculum development has gained importance as the field started to grow especially in America. Therefore, the agenda of 7<sup>th</sup> National Educational Council included many topics such as primary, secondary, and higher education, teacher education, private schools, technical school, libraries, testing and evaluation, etc. Rules and regulations regarding many educational institutions were developed and analyzed by the Board of Education. Besides, “Basic Principles of National Education” and “Aims of Turkish National Education” were determined. In addition, it was planned that compulsory primary education should become prevalent and developed around the country until 1972; however, it could not be implemented. (MEB, 1962). Then, the curricula for all grade levels were analyzed based on recently accepted documents such as Basic Principles of National Education. 1968 curriculum is considered as the most scientific one since the principles of curriculum development was followed effectively, and it was the result of a 6-years of work together with piloting (Bilasa, 2012; Gözütok, 2003; Mala, 2011). First, a report related to the needs of a new curriculum was prepared by a committee of primary and secondary school teachers and specialists, and it was sent to all public and private institutions as well as teacher associations in all cities of the country to get feedback. With this feedback, a draft of the new curriculum was formed by another committee. This committee was formed by primary and secondary school teachers, specialists, parents, school heads and inspectors, a group of 108 (Arslan, 2007). They prepared the new curriculum, and it was evaluated again by some other teachers and heads of schools. Lastly, the curriculum was piloted for 5 years in 250 schools before it was put into effect in 1968. The curriculum can be considered as student-centered and progressivist. However, the curriculum failed since the teachers could not perform it properly, and they continued the traditional style of teaching. In 1973, primary and secondary schools were merged with Basic Law of National Education. Compulsory

education was increased to eight uninterrupted years in 1997 (Gözütok, 2003). Curriculum development studies were improved as new curricula have started to be prepared complying with curriculum development rules and principles. However, a successful curriculum that fits the needs of Turkish Republic has not achieved. In the seventeenth National Educational Council, Turkish Education was examined in terms of transitions between educational levels and examination system within the light of globalization and EU requirements (MEB, 2006). Consequently, the reform of 2005-2006 curricula have introduced drastic changes in terms of content and philosophy (Bıkmaz, 2006). New primary and high school curricula are utterly student-centered, and they are based on constructivist theory of education. Although constructivism is in the core, eclectic method was used in the curriculum development process. Multiple Intelligence Theory, Brain-based Learning, Project-based Learning, Critical thinking, life-long learning, and Cooperative Learning principles were harmonized with constructivism (Akınoğlu, 2005). Memorization and uninteresting topics were to be eliminated from the curriculum. The aims for the curriculum renewal were to improve the quality of education, help students achieve better results in international platforms such as PISA, and raise individuals who are creative, co-operative, entrepreneur, problem-solver, and critical thinker (MEB, 2005). Therefore, common skills such as problem-solving and critical thinking, and attainments for lessons were specified in the primary and secondary education curriculums. The teacher's role is asserted as a guide and a facilitator of learning. Since this curriculum has brought radical changes into the primary and secondary education curricula, the role of teachers in the implementation process was quite critical. Koç, Isiksal, & Bulut (2007) consider this curriculum as a 'paradigm shift' since it emphasizes individuality rather than a long socialist tradition of Turkish Education. However, there are criticisms in relation to inadequate in-service trainings, and curriculum development procedures were claimed to be performed ineffectively. In the eighteenth National Educational Council held in 2010, it was discussed that teachers' in-service training should be school based in order to increase realization of curriculum changes. Also, parent-student involvement in the decision-making processes in schools was emphasized (MEB, 2010). Another change in the Turkish history of education is the 4+4+4 system of education. In 2012-2013 academic year, compulsory education was changed from 8 to 12 years. It was divided as a 4-year of primary school, 4 year of middle school, and 4 year of secondary/high

school (ERG, 2013). Furthermore, in the nineteenth National Educational Council it was advised that primary education schools should be transitioned from double-shift to full day schooling (MEB, 2014). Lastly, a recent curriculum change was made in 2018. Values Education was added to all primary and secondary education curricula and it included the integration of 10 values and 9 basic competences into the curricula. Moreover, curriculum content was reduced, and the curriculum goals were simplified.

#### **2.4.Related Studies**

Gözütok (2003) conducted a comprehensive study of curriculum development in Turkey starting from the Seljuk Empire. She investigated primary and secondary curricula but focused mostly on Republican Era as actual curriculum studies started then. She summarized the educational developments in terms of curricula and laws regarding education and concluded that Pragmatism and Progressivism were the dominant philosophies at the early stages of Turkish Republic. However, the implementation of these curricula did not match these philosophies. She claims that Essentialism and Perennialism were the dominant philosophies in the execution of early curricula. Curricula were teacher and subject centered although the curriculum documents suggest otherwise.

Yüksel (2004) investigated curriculum development concept at central and local levels comparing Turkey with different countries. He suggested that curricula should be developed both centrally and locally in order to meet the needs and the expectations of country, region and the schools. As he asserted when curriculums were developed at one level (either central or local), it would not be possible to meet both these regional and nationwide requirements. Thus, he recommended that the Ministry of Turkish Education should share its powers with local authorities.

Akinoğlu (2005) investigated psychological foundations of curricula in Turkey and tried to find out how contemporary educational teaching-learning approaches have been incorporated into 2004-2005 Turkish curriculums. He focused his study on primary school Turkish, Mathematics, Life Sciences, Social Sciences, and Science and Technology curricula. He stated that while Constructivism constitutes the core of the

curricula; Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory, Vygotsky's Social Constructivism, Caine's Brain-based Learning Theory, Paul's Critical Thinking and Learning Strategies were influential in the curricula together with creative thinking, project-based learning, cooperative learning, and life-long learning models. The new curricula were eclectic in nature combining different educational theories and approaches. He also concluded that compared to old behaviorist curricula, 2004-2005 curriculums were more student-centered and constructivist.

In her study, Gülbahar (2006) explored philosophical foundations of Turkish Educational System in the Republican Period (1920-1950) which is a controversial period for country's history. She claims that ideological and scientific perspectives interfere with each other, which led to along educational problems in the country. She concluded that Kemalism was the leading philosophy in the beginning of the Republican Period and it coincides with Positivism since Kemalism values advancement in every aspect with the principles of Republicanism, Populism, Secularism, Reformism, Nationalism, and Statism. Pragmatism was also an influential philosophy to help modernize the society and solve problems with the proper use of information. Turkish Education was under the influence of German Elitist Idealist philosophy in 1940s but after the Second World War, America affected the education of the country. In those years, the Village Institutes played an important role in transforming and modernizing the society with democratic and pragmatic educational practices. She stated that educational philosophy after 1950s included 'conservative nationalist' and 'conservative liberal' characteristics. Therefore, Idealism and Essentialism became prominent philosophies.

Akınoğlu (2008) examined primary education curriculum reforms in Turkey after the Republican Era. According to his qualitative study, curricula of 1924, 1926, 1936, 1948, 1968, 1981, and 2004 have distinctive features based on political and social changes in those years. Education had the function to modernize the society and establish the new regime and its desired citizens. He stated that systematic curriculum studies were not present until 1950s and curriculum development meant listing courses and topics until then. He also emphasizes the importance of 1968 primary curriculum as it had the most systematic curriculum development process and it remained in

practice the longest. Moreover, 2004 curricula portrayed an extensive transformation based on global developments and European Union's specifications.

Gökmenoğlu and Eret (2011) explored curriculum development studies in Turkey through the eyes of research assistants from Curriculum and Instruction Departments. They examined the strengths and weaknesses of the field and found out that academicians in the field were of good quality. For the weaknesses experienced in curriculum development in Turkey, their study revealed that needs assessment practices were inadequate and there was poor communication among the stakeholders of curriculum development.

Mala (2011) conducted a research to evaluate primary education curricula in the Republican Era and their educational philosophy. In this doctoral dissertation, she explored the philosophy of primary school curricula in order to validate if they include elements of Progressivism and Pragmatism which were stated to be the prevailing educational philosophies. To do that the author examined the curricula of 1924, 1926, 1936, 1948, 1968, and 2005 in terms of curriculum elements and educational philosophy. Along with a detailed document analysis, she interviewed 60 teachers from different primary school about 2005 curriculum reforms. She found out that curricula starting from the Declaration of Turkish Republic up to then (2011) were formed according to Pragmatic and Progressivist philosophies in theory. However, there are mismatches in the implementation process of those curricula. She notes that at the beginning of the republic the aim was to modernize and nationalize the education. Then, American influence was felt in education field and curricula were criticized for having too much American influence. The author concluded that curricula from 1968 to 2005 seem to have pragmatic elements but the effects of idealism and essentialism were observed in the implementation process. Therefore, behaviorism was the leading educational philosophy. After 2000s, a shift from behaviorism to constructivism has started and more progressivist and student-centered curricula have been designed.

Bilasa (2012) investigated historical developments of primary education in Turkey (1970-2010) in her doctoral dissertation. Her study explored primary education in

terms of policies, curriculums, textbooks, teacher education, in-service education, 8-year uninterrupted basic education, legal regulations, geographical access, digital developments, finance, and the physical structure. She conducted a detailed document analysis in order to explain the mentioned themes. In terms of primary education curricula, she underlined 1968 curriculum is considered as the most contemporary and well-planned curriculum up to 2010. Moreover, describing primary education goals and instructional principles of primary education apart from general Principles of Turkish Education is another significant reform of the time. The author pointed out that standardization and sustainability issues were in discussion in 1980s, and there were studies to form a curriculum development model for Turkish Education. This model consisted of aim-behavior-application-evaluation components. Later in the 1990s, a comprehensive curriculum development model called EARGED was developed by the Department of Educational Research and Development (EARGED). However, the proposed model did not find its use by curriculum developers and multiple models continued to be used by curriculum development committees. Finally, she mentioned 2005 curriculum reforms such as student-centeredness, Multiple Intelligence Theory, Brain-based Learning.

In their work, Şimşek, Küçük & Topkaya (2012) aimed to explore the ideologies behind the educational policies of the Republican Era. They used descriptive method to explain the Republican Period ideologies and checked whether these ideologies were contemporary or not. The authors claim that the developments during this period should be examined within the context of that time. Therefore, the political, social, cultural, and economic situation of the country should be examined carefully, and they stated that new Turkish Republic adopted contemporary ideologies. Education was considered a tool to establish the new regime as well as concepts such as democracy, secularism, nationalism, etc. Thus, pragmatism and positivism led educational reforms. Furthermore, the authors claim that Turkish education resembles French educational model as they both adopt ‘one-goal, one- curriculum, one-language approach’. In Turkish context, it was reported that the goal was secularism; the curricula had the same content for all Turkish students and designed centrally; and the one language was Turkish.

Kenan (2014) explored the Turkish educational thought and experience analyzing the turning points in the history starting from the 10<sup>th</sup> century. In relation to Republican Era, he reported that unifying the educational institutions in order to eliminate the medrese-mektep dichotomy was the biggest step form a democratic and harmonious educational system. Other important events were mixed-sex education, the Alphabet Reform, Village Institutes, the Basic Law of National Education (1973), 2005 secondary school regulations, and lastly 2005-2006 curriculum changes based on Constructivism.

Gökmenoğlu (2014) investigated curriculum evaluation models and approaches used in the last decade and examined 18 published papers and 34 doctoral dissertations on curriculum evaluation. She came up with four themes as curriculum evaluation models and approaches, the extend of studies, disciplines and stakeholder participation. She found that only five out of 52 evaluation studies utilized a model for curriculum evaluation. Moreover, these studies were not carried out by the departments of Curriculum and Instruction. The author also concluded that the aim of carrying out such studies is mostly to publish research rather than analyzing the curriculum development processes.

Bümen and Aktan (2014) analyzed Turkish Curriculum and Instruction field considering reconceptualism movement which criticizes traditional curriculum development conceptions. Reconceptualists argue that it is crucial for curriculums to understand and examine issues such as gender, race, phenomenology, politics, autobiography, esthetic, and theological. The authors claim that reconceptualism did not get attention in Turkey, and they propose possible explanation for that. They assert that Curriculum and Instruction graduate programs choose to stand distant from politics, sociology, and philosophy. Besides, worldwide debates related to curriculum field is not followed other than teaching-learning approaches and methods since mostly practical studies have been promoted by universities and it has led decrease in the number of theoretical studies.

Kanbolat (2015) investigated primary education in terms of education policies, laws and regulations, developments related to quality and quantity in primary education,

and personnel policies. He limited his research to years of 1928 and 1940, from the Latin Alphabet Reform to the Village Institutes. He stated the Law of Unification centralized the education, which paved the way for reforms. Moreover, economic crisis of 1929 resulted in budget cuts in education and teacher employment. The author reports that the intended schooling rate could not be achieved, and schooling was lower in villages compared urban areas. This gap between the cities and villages led to the birth of Village Institutes which is considered as the brilliant reform of the Republican Era.

Orakçı, Durnalı and Özkan (2018) studied curriculum reforms in Turkey starting from the declaration of Turkish Republic. They focused on 2004-2005 primary education curriculum as it included radical changes in country's educational history. However, the authors also examined 1924, 1926, 1936, 1948, 1962, 1968, and 1998 curricula. After reviewing these curricula and their reforms, the authors compared 2004-2005 curriculum with the old one. Some of the major changes of the new curriculum were reported as follows: education was not for knowing but understanding, instruction became learner-centered and the teacher's role was guide and facilitator, process was valued over product, parents were required to be included in education, assessment methods were varied and based on criterion instead of norms, the units were organized thematically. Moreover, the authors state that the aforementioned changes were made based on policies of European Union and current global trends in education.

Şimşek and Kartal (2019) explored the philosophical thoughts in the Principles of Turkish Education System. Their research focused on primary education curriculum formed under the Constitution of 1982 since this curriculum constitutes the base of contemporary Turkish Education System. The authors concluded that Realism, Naturalism, and Pragmatism influenced this curriculum since scientific knowledge and research were emphasized considerably. Moreover, courses related to religion and morality were put into the curriculum and such education must be provided under the government's control, which indicates the influence of Realism and Idealism. Other significant decisions of the curriculum were compulsory education under government control, no allowance for languages other than the mother tongue in education, equal

opportunities, raising citizens who would be beneficial for the country and its needs. Therefore, the authors claimed that Turkish Education was under the influence of both Idealism and Pragmatism in 1982.

## **2.5. Summary of Literature Review**

In this chapter, the literature on the phenomenon of curriculum development was reviewed with respect to foundations of curriculum development, crisis in the curriculum field, and historical analysis of Turkish curriculum studies. In addition, studies similar to the present one were reported to allow for an analysis of the phenomenon.

To start with, foundations of curriculum development were presented to provide a framework for the curriculum phenomenon. Major philosophies such as idealism, realism, pragmatism, and existentialism were explored together with educational philosophies as they serve as a point of departure in the curriculum thinking (Goodlad, 1979). In addition, historical evolution of the curriculum field was presented highlighting the commencement and the reconceptualization of curriculum studies (Pinar, 2008). Moreover, within the psychological foundations, educational theories were examined to help establish the required knowledge for interpreting the results of the present study. Also, impact of social changes on curriculums were considered as substantial (Saylor & Alexander, 1966); therefore, curricular reforms were analyzed in terms of social global reforms.

Furthermore, crisis in the curriculum field was explored as it constituted the underlying reason for the aim of this study. Schwab's (1969) declaration and the signs of the crisis were examined supported by other scholars who advocate the crisis is still visible in the 21<sup>st</sup> century curriculum studies (Baker, 2015; Macdonald, 2003; Priestley, 2011; Snaza, 2014; Wraga & Hlebowitsh, 2003; Young, 2003, 2013). Additionally, examples which advocate similar problems in the curriculum studies were provided for the Turkish context (Akşit, 2007; Demirel, 1992; ERG, 2017; Gelen & Beyazıt, 2007; Gözütok, 2003). Moreover, a brief history of the curriculum development reforms and changes were summarized to establish a framework for Turkish

curriculum development studies in the Republican period. Significant reforms, curriculum development process and the adopted models were also explained.

Lastly, when the literature is reviewed for the related studies, it can be seen that there were studies that investigated the curriculum studies in the historical manner (Bilasa, 2012; Gözütok, 2003; Kanbolat, 2015; Mala, 2011; Orakçı, Durnalı & Özkan, 2018) but they seem to differ from the present study as they employ only document analysis method. Additionally, some studies focused either philosophical-ideological or psychological foundations of Turkish curriculum development in the Republican era (Akınoğlu, 2005; Bümen & Aktan, 2014; Gülbahar, 2006; Kenan, 2014; Şimşek, Küçük & Topkaya, 2012; Şimşek & Kartal, 2019). In conclusion, it can be opined that the reviewed studies can shed light to the topic of curriculum development in Turkey with various points of views. However, the present study can be unique as it combines document analysis with the thoughts of prominent curriculum scholars. Thus, a comparison can be made between the present and the previous research.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHOD**

This chapter presents information about the overall design of the study, research questions, data sources, data collection instruments, procedures, and analysis. In addition, issues of trustworthiness, limitations and the role of the researcher are provided.

#### **3.1. Overall Design of the Study**

The aim of this study is to explore curriculum development studies in Turkey in the Republican Era, and to identify the curriculum development thoughts of prominent scholars who participated in curriculum development practices. Therefore, the design of the study is a qualitative research design. The essence of qualitative studies is to develop a comprehensive understanding of a significant phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). More specifically, phenomenological research design was adopted in order to examine the development of curriculum studies in Turkey. The aim of phenomenological studies is to explore experiential meanings through in-depth analysis of interpretations and narrations of a phenomenon (Adams & van Manen, 2008). In such studies, the objective is to investigate topics that we are familiar, and we want an in-depth understanding of perceptions, experiences, events, and concepts (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). The participants, if there is any, are chosen among the ones who experienced the topic of investigation. Curriculum development is a familiar phenomenon in Turkey; however, the concept of curriculum studies does not yield a clear understanding, and it needs more exploration.

Thus, phenomenological approach offered much convenience to investigate curriculum studies in Turkey through experiences of curriculum scholars. Also, an analysis of related documents with an historical manner helped establish the basis of investigation.

### **3.2. Research Questions**

This research aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What phases has curriculum development gone through in Turkey in the Republican Period?
2. How do academics in the field of Curriculum and Instruction perceive critical periods of curriculum development in the Republican Period in Turkey?
3. How do academics in the field of Curriculum and Instruction perceive the influence of educational theories and approaches in curriculum development process in the Republican Period in Turkey?

In order to answer the first research question, a data-analysis of curriculum documents will be conducted. Moreover, the researcher will try to answer the second and the third questions through the interviews with curriculum scholars which can reveal an in-depth understanding of curriculum development practices in Turkey.

### **3.3. Data Sources**

Two types of data source were consulted for the present study. The first data source was documents related to curriculum development since the beginning of Turkish Republic. These documents included curricula of 1924, 1926, 1936, 1948, 1968, 1995, 2005 and 2018. These curricula were chosen since they include more striking changes, and they were regarded as noteworthy in the literature by many other studies.

The second and more dominant source of data for this study consisted of academicians of Educational Science Departments, mostly the department of Curriculum and Instruction. Purposeful sampling method was utilized to choose participants who possess the most relevant and useful information. 7 participants were chosen among the professors who participated in curriculum studies either actively or indirectly by

studying curricular phenomena. As Patton (1990) states the aim of purposeful sampling is to gather data from individuals who are ‘information-rich’ (p.169). Specifically, maximum variation sampling was applied in order to develop many perspectives (Creswell, 2011). Therefore, participants were chosen among different cities and universities. Maximum variation technique is useful to provide variation in a small sample and to identify commonalities among this variation.

As Table 3.1. shows that two of the participants graduated from teaching departments while the rest were graduates of Educational Sciences Departments. All of the participants currently work in the Department of Educational Sciences. While most of them are professors of Curriculum and Instruction Departments, only one of the participants work under the Department of the Philosophical, Social, and Historical Foundations of Education. The participants’ experiences range between 21 and 56 years.

Table 3.1  
*Demographic Profile of the Participants*

| Participant | Graduated Department | Current Department | Gender | Experience | Title        |
|-------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------|------------|--------------|
| 1           | EDS                  | ELT+EDS            | M      | 56         | Prof.        |
| 2           | EDS                  | EDS                | M      | 32         | Prof.        |
| 3           | Teaching             | EDS-CI             | F      | 25         | Prof.        |
| 4           | EDS                  | EDS-CI             | F      | 25         | Prof.        |
| 5           | Teaching             | EDS-CI             | M      | 40         | Prof.        |
| 6           | EDS                  | EDS                | M      | 21         | Assoc. Prof. |
| 7           | EDS                  | EDS-CI             | F      | 22         | Prof.        |

More specifically, *Participant 1* being a graduate of teaching department has his theses on “evaluation of the secondary education English language curricula” and “qualifications of English language teachers”. He is the writer of many books some of which are Curriculum Development in Education, Introduction to Educational Sciences, General Instructional Methods, Instructional Principles and Methods, Comparative Education, New Approaches in Education, etc. Also, he participated 21 curriculum development projects as either being a committee member/head or consultant. To give an example, he was a committee member in the curriculum development project for primary school teaching curriculum led jointly by MONE and

HEC in 1995-1996. He also participated in HEC-the World Bank curriculum development project between the years of 1992-1997 and MONE-the World Bank curriculum development project in 1997. He has taught various courses related to curriculum development in bachelor, master, and doctorate levels. Some of the courses he has taught are Curriculum Development, Introduction to Education, Comparative Education, Curriculum Evaluation, Curriculum Development for Language Teaching, Curriculum Development for In-service Education, Educational Technology, etc. Moreover, he represented Turkey in international platforms such as EU, and he visited various countries for research and education purposes. *Participant 2* graduated from Educational Sciences department and completed his master and doctorate degree in America. He is the co-writer of two books. Being a member and consultant, he participated in many curriculum development projects such as the World Bank financed projects with MONE and HEC. He also participated in the development of Primary School Teaching Certificate Program and non-thesis master's degree in Human Resources Education. He has served in many committees such as MONE Teacher Competences Commission and MONE University-School Partnership Commission. He has offered many courses in undergraduate, M.Sc., and Ph.D. levels such as Introduction to Teaching Profession, Introduction to Curriculum and Instruction, Instructional Designs, School Improvement, Teaching in Higher Education, etc. *Participant 3* graduated from Primary School Teaching department and completed her master's and doctorate degree in Educational Sciences department. Her theses focused on learning difficulties of bilingual students and hidden curriculum within the attainment of democratic values. She also had a post-doctoral degree in America. Within the undergraduate and graduate level courses, she teaches Introduction to Teaching, Philosophical and Ideological Approaches in Education, New Approaches in Instruction, Hidden Curriculum in Education. Moreover, she directed projects such as Professional Values of Teachers and Character Education. She worked on topics such as student resistance behaviors, teacher quality and self-efficacy, determining educational goals and content selection, gender studies, multiculturalism, etc. *Participant 4* is a graduate of Educational Sciences department and completed her master's and doctorate degree in the same field. Her theses were on Multiple Intelligences Theory supported by reviewing strategies and effects of students' learning strategies on academic achievement. She is the author of one book

and has written chapters in various books on multiple intelligences theory, curriculum issues and teacher education. Her research interests include issues in teacher education, instructional applications, curriculum development, curriculum-teacher relationship, curriculum fidelity, curriculum evaluation, etc. She has participated in 4 HEC-financed projects and 3 TÜBİTAK-financed projects. Some of these projects were the Development of International Teacher Observation and Feedback System, the Evaluation of Secondary Education Teaching Master's Program without thesis, and efficiency of curriculum development units in private schools and their problems. She teaches undergraduate and graduate courses such as Curriculum Development in Education, Foundations of Curriculum, and Current Issues in Curriculum. *Participant 5* is a graduate of Mathematics and Science Education Department and has his master and doctorate degree in the Department of Educational Sciences. He offers undergraduate and graduate courses such as Introduction to Education, Classroom Management, Foundations of Curriculum Development, Curriculum Evaluation, Testing and Evaluation, Advanced Research in Education, Comparative Teacher Education, etc. His research interests are teacher education, accreditation and evaluation, learning environments, and curriculum evaluation. He participated in MONE-HEC curriculum studies, accreditation studies within the EARGED projects in 1990s, and HEC-financed Curriculum Development of Education Departments in 2012. *Participant 6* is a graduate of Educational Sciences department. He received his master's degree in Social and Historical Foundations of Education Department and completed Ph.D. in Educational Sciences Department in America. He has written chapters and translated many books such as Introduction to Education, the Limits and Possibilities of Schooling: An Introduction to the Sociology of Education, Philosophy of Education, etc. He teaches graduate and master courses such as Social Theory and Education, Social Anthropology, Critical Pedagogy, Philosophy of Social Sciences and Educational Research, Introduction to Behavioral Sciences, Research Methods and Techniques, etc. Besides being a professor in the department of Philosophical, Social, and Historical Foundations of Education, he is currently the advisor to the Minister of National Education. *Participant 7* completed her bachelor and master's degree in Educational Sciences department and received her Ph.D. in faculty of education in England. She participated in the World Bank-HEC and MONE-HEC curriculum studies. Her research interests are instructional design, comparative teacher

education, curriculum development and evaluation. She has written books and chapters, namely, Definition of Curriculum and Instruction, Teachers' Thoughts on Research and the Concept of Teacher Research, Development and Application of Rules in Classroom, Problem Solving, Turkish Academicians, An Overview of Integrating Globalization and Internationalization in Teacher Education Context.

### **3.4. Data Collection Instruments and Procedures**

This study was conducted in two phases. In the first one, a historical document analysis took place to portray the historical progress of curriculum studies in Turkey. Curriculum documents were analyzed in order to establish a framework for the second phase of the study. In the second phase, interviews were conducted to explore experiences and perceptions of curriculum scholars.

The document analysis began by determining the curriculum documents to be analyzed. Next, the locations of the documents were determined through online screening. The documents were gathered from the library of METU, library of Ankara University, and the National Library of Turkey.

For the second phase of the data analysis process, interview was chosen as the tool for data collection. The optimum method for data collection in phenomenological studies is long interactive interviews to evoke participant's comprehensive experience on the research topic (Moustakas, 1994). A semi-structured interview form was used to gather maximum amount of data from each participant. As this form provides flexibility, the researcher could probe, rephrase or omit some questions during the interview. The interview form (Appendix C) included 2 demographic and 8 content and opinion questions. Expert review of the interview form was done by a professor of Educational Science department at METU. The questions in the interview were designed to explore participants' experiences within curriculum studies. The researcher used probing to gather deeper knowledge when she saw the need. Besides, a two-page summary of curriculum development in Turkey (Appendix D) was provided for participants before the interview in order to awaken participants' memory about the past curriculum changes. This summary was prepared by the researcher and reviewed by the supervisor.

Since pandemic-related lockdowns and travelling restrictions hindered face-to-face meetings, the interviews were conducted through online communication tools such as Zoom and Skype depending on the participant's preference. The overall interview process lasted for 9 weeks starting from April 24, 2020, ending on June 11, 2020. The interviews were arranged according to participants' availability. The participants were notified that the interview would last about an hour and they were supplied with the two-page summary prior to the interview date. The duration of the interviews ranged between 45 and 90 minutes.

### 3.5. Data Analysis

In qualitative studies, data analysis is carried out through document analysis, content analysis, and/or descriptive analysis. It is possible to use two or more data analysis methods together. Firstly, for the present study, a document analysis was utilized in order to examine primary school curricula. Original curriculum documents were analyzed in terms of process, approach, models used, and decisions taken in the curriculum.



*Figure 3.* Data analysis process. Reprinted from *A Step-by-Step Guide to Qualitative Data Coding*, by P. Adu, 2019, Routledge, Copyright by Philip Adu.

Next, content analysis method was adopted for interpreting the interviews. As Yıldırım and Şimşek (2018) state the aim of content analysis is to conduct an in-depth analysis to reveal themes and aspects that were not apparent before. Strauss and Corbin (1990) claim that we need to name concepts in order to reach themes so that we can build better relationships. These relationships help us to comprehend phenomena more meaningfully. Therefore, content analysis seems like a useful method for understanding curriculum development studies in Turkey as it uncovers in-depth

participant perceptions. Firstly, all audio data from the interviews were transcribed. For the analysis, MAXQDA 20.2.0 was utilized for its practicality. Codes were formed using the conceptual framework and research questions. The categories were established reviewing the determined codes. Then, emergent themes were identified, and new codes were added to the existing ones. The process continued as a cycle: reviewing data repeatedly and arranging codes, categories, and the themes. Once the themes were confirmed, relationships were identified between the themes.

### **3.6. Trustworthiness**

In qualitative studies, trustworthiness holds a special significance when validating the research. The term ‘trustworthiness’ was proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985, as cited in Elo, Kääriäinen, Kanste, Pölkki, Utriainen, and Kyngäs, 2014) and it is used by qualitative researchers to ensure that the results in the study are ‘worth paying attention to’. In this study, thick description of the phenomenon was utilized to increase trustworthiness. In-depth descriptions of the participants were reported in narration to conceptualize the phenomenon in question. Moreover, in order to support the data gathered in the interviews, data triangulation was conducted through document analysis. Thus, participant perceptions were balanced with the help of curriculum development documents. In addition, the transcribed interview files were e-mailed to the participants to confirm the information that they provided.

### **3.7. Limitations**

This study aimed at collecting an in-depth data on the curriculum development phenomenon through data analysis and interview procedures. Since the amount of data would be massive to examine all curriculum changes, this study is restricted to primary education curricula and the process of primary education curriculum development. Therefore, data that include both primary and secondary education curricula and their curriculum development processes could have provided more comprehensive results. Another constraint of the study stems from an extraordinary situation experienced globally. Covid-19 pandemic has brought about serious restrictions such as suspension of educational activities and curfews. Therefore, reaching the participants to conduct

the interviews in its normal nature was problematic. To overcome this obstacle, the semi-structured interviews were conducted through online communication tools such as Skype and Zoom.

Lastly, as the interview process heavily depends on the researcher, interview questions were standardized through expert opinion to overcome data collector bias.

### **3.8. Role of the Researcher**

In qualitative research, the researcher should define his or her role in an explicit manner in order to both relate his background to the study and explain his stand within the research process. To understand the role of the researcher better, it is critical to start with the background of the researcher. The researcher is a graduate of Foreign Language Education department with a three-year of teaching experience at two different private universities in Ankara. Her teaching background has enabled her to experience the micro systems of curriculums in the preparatory schools of universities. Experiencing the highs and lows of English curriculums, she aspired to pursue a graduate study in curriculum and instruction major. Instead of a master's degree in English Language Teaching which is a common path for English teachers, she preferred Curriculum and Instruction major in order to understand and analyze curriculum studies with a wider perspective. After taking graduate courses her curiosity in curriculum development has increased leading her to the topic of this study.

Moreover, commonly referred ineffectiveness in Turkish education system urged the researcher to analyze curriculum development processes. Latest successive curriculum reforms and Turkey's low success rate in global rankings were among the reasons for choosing the topic of this research. Thus, it is possible that these issues of Turkish education may constitute a bias in the researcher's mind when formulating the research questions by assuming that curriculum development practices are malfunctioning. However, being aware of this risk can prevent the researcher from carrying this bias (if it exists) through data collection and analysis processes.

Furthermore, the researcher is responsible for the quality of the collected data and he/she should carry out the whole process in a perfect harmony with each interviewee without manipulating their perceptions. According to Holstein and Gubrium (2002), it is better to have an active perspective instead of following a routine or classical interview approach as asking and answering of predefined questions in an interview process. In order to maximize the amount of information-rich data, the researcher tried to keep the main focus of the interview by rephrasing and probing when participants lose the primary intent of the questions.

Finally, it is worth to mention that carrying out such a research has brought the researcher invaluable experience. Nonetheless, it is crucial to verbalize that the findings of the research are analyzed without distortion or manipulation of the data. Besides, the present study does not have an intention to judge any institution, individual, and organization. The main purpose of this study is achieving a better understanding of the Turkey's curriculum studies by investigating this phenomenon in a historical way.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

Purpose of this study was to investigate the progress of curriculum development studies in Turkish Educational System and perceptions of participants on the curriculum development process. In this chapter, two different analysis were provided as document analysis and participant interviews. In the first section, documents were analyzed historically to reveal curriculum development studies starting from the declaration of Turkish Republic. In the second section, analyzed interviews led to three main themes as a result of coding and categorization processes. These themes and categories were shown in a table (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1  
*Themes and categories*

| Theme   | Category  |
|---|---|
| Perceptions related to the process of curriculum development          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- process and participants</li><li>- teacher participation</li><li>- centralized curriculum development</li><li>- priorities of consideration</li></ul> |
| Perceptions related to the developed curricula                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- participants' curriculum development approach</li><li>- developed curricula and models</li><li>- shortcomings</li></ul>                               |
| Perception related to the historical development of curriculum making | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- theories and approaches</li><li>- turning points</li><li>- comparisons with other countries curriculum development studies</li></ul>                  |

## **4.1. Curriculum Development Studies in Turkey since 1923**

In this part, curriculum development studies since the Declaration of Turkish Republic will be explored. Curriculum documents were examined in terms of model approaches, processes and decisions taken.

### **4.1.1. Early Years of the Republic**

#### *1924 Curriculum for Primary Schools - İlk Mekteplerin Müfredatı Programı*

This curriculum was prepared by the Department of Elementary School. Not being very comprehensive, it utilized the pedagogy of 1913 and 1915 curriculums. The decisions for this curriculum were taken by the II. Science Committee - *Heyet-i İlmiye*. The members of the Science Committee were sent a questionnaire related to educational needs of the era. It can be said that the curriculum was produced through a simple form of participatory approach as teachers, inspectors, and other officers from the ministry of education attended the process.

There is no apparent model for curriculum development for this curriculum. The goals were not provided clearly in the curriculum. It is intended that the curriculum should meet the local needs of different parts of the country. The students were to be included in some of educational decisions. With Dewey's report on Turkish education, 'active learning' and 'learning by doing' principles were valued. It was suggested in the curriculum that students need to practice the topics until they understand the concepts fully. Also, teachers should adapt the topics according to students' age and comprehension level. Moreover, a guide was published to inform teachers about how to use this curriculum on schools that had one, two, three, or four teachers. Timetables and schedules were provided for different situations. There is no information in relation to evaluation in the curriculum. However, the information related to student evaluation is provided through 'explanations' parts within the curriculum.

Table 4.2  
1924 Primary School Timetable (Boys)

| Courses        |   | Grade<br>1 | Grade<br>2 | Grade<br>3 | Grade<br>4 | Grade<br>5 |
|----------------|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|                | Alphabet  | 12         | -          | -          | -          | -          |
|                | Reading   | -          | 4          | 3          | 2          | 2          |
|                | Dictation                                       | -          | 2          | 2          | 1          | 1          |
| <b>Turkish</b> | Writing   | -          | 1          | -          | 2          | 2          |
|                | Grammar   | -          | -          | -          | 1          | 1          |
|                | Calligraphy                                     | -          | 2          | 1          | 1          | 1          |
|                | <b>Koran and Religion</b>                       | -          | 2          | 2          | 2          | 2          |
|                | <b>Arithmetic</b>                               | 2          | 3          | 3          | 3          | 2          |
|                | <b>Geometry</b>                                 | -          | -          | -          | 1          | 2          |
|                | <b>History</b>                                  | -          | -          | 1          | 2          | 2          |
|                | <b>Geography</b>                                | -          | -          | 1          | 2          | 2          |
|                | <b>Natural Sciences,<br/>Husbandry, Hygiene</b> | 3          | 3          | 2          | 2          | 2          |
|                | <b>Morality and<br/>Citizenship</b>             | 1          | 1          | 1          | 1          | 1          |
|                | <b>Painting</b>                                 | 2          | 2          | 2          | 2          | 2          |
|                | <b>Handcrafts</b>                               | 2          | 2          | 2          | 2          | -          |
|                | <b>Music</b>                                    | 2          | 2          | 2          | 1          | 1          |
|                | <b>Physical Education</b>                       | 2          | 2          | 2          | 1          | 1          |
|                | <b>Total</b>                                    | 26         | 26         | 26         | 26         | 26         |

(Tazebay, et. al., 2000:35)

With this curriculum, the duration of primary education was lowered to 5 years. The relationships of the lessons and topics in the curriculum were strengthened as they were isolated before. Reading and writing lessons were combined for first grades and they started learning to read and write simultaneously. Also, the curriculum suggested teachers to choose topics that were related to students' real life. There were some courses exclusive to girls and boys and they were indicated in the weekly schedules (Table 4.2). For example, Housekeeping and Sewing courses were exclusive to girls, and boys took Handwork courses in the first four years of primary school while girls took it in only the first 2 years (Maarif Vekaleti, 1924).

#### *1926 Primary School Curriculum*

The general aim of the primary school was to raise young generations who are fruitful for their country and local environment (T.C. Maarif Vekaleti, 1926). General aims of education had updated. The aim was not only gaining good habits and learning information for this curriculum. The students needed to

embrace the reforms of the new republic and they should be able to adapt themselves to their surroundings. In terms of content of the curriculum, topics related to the new republic were emphasized in all courses.

For this curriculum, it is not possible to mention about a curriculum development model since it was not an elaborative curriculum development process. However, compared to 1924 curriculum, 1926 curriculum can be considered more comprehensive in terms of methods and techniques. The aims of each lesson were determined separately for the first time although they were rather general goals. One important aspect of this curriculum was that it gave priority to student interest. Learning by doing approach was highlighted.

A major reform of the curriculum was the new lesson form named as ‘unified teaching-*toplu tedris*’. Certain courses were unified into one and all courses were centered around the themes of Life Science- *Hayat Bilgisi* course. Therefore, it was aimed that students should profit from a more holistic way of learning by finding a closer link between their life and the school. This also helped to increase the link between other primary school courses. Moreover, primary school was divided into two halves; the first three years as the first halve and the last two years as the second halve. In the first halve, all courses were linked to Life Science course and there was one common course book. However, there were multiple course books in the second halve since the courses were separated.

After 1926 curriculum, the Alphabet Reform came into practice in 1928, and Turkish people have started to use 28-letter Latin alphabet. Therefore, the courses especially the Turkish course was adjusted to the new alphabet. Besides, names of the courses were simplified. Textbooks in Latin alphabet gained importance, so studies for writing textbooks began.

As seen below in Table 4.3, Life Science course (an example of unified teaching approach) covers the first three grades substituting natural sciences, history and geography courses. Course of Goods was added to the curriculum

to provide students with the knowledge of machines, tools and goods. Moreover, Alphabet course hours were lowered to 10 for the first graders.

Table 4.3  
*1926 Primary School Timetable*

| Courses                         |             | Grade<br>1 | Grade<br>2 | Grade<br>3 | Grade<br>4 | Grade<br>5 |
|---------------------------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| <b>Turkish</b>                  | Alphabet    | 10         | -          | -          | -          | -          |
|                                 | Reading     | -          | 4          | 4          | 3          | 3          |
|                                 | Dictation   | -          | 2          | 2          | 1          | 1          |
|                                 | Writing     | -          | 2          | 2          | 2          | 2          |
|                                 | Grammar     | -          | -          | -          | 1          | 1          |
|                                 | Calligraphy | -          | 2          | 2          | 1          | 1          |
| <b>Religion</b>                 |             | -          | 3          | 2          | 1          | 1          |
| <b>Life Science</b>             |             | 4          | 4          | 4          | -          | -          |
| <b>Arithmetic-<br/>Geometry</b> |             | 4          | 4          | 5          | 5          | 5          |
| <b>History</b>                  |             | -          | -          | -          | 2          | 2          |
| <b>Geography</b>                |             | -          | -          | -          | 2          | 2          |
| <b>Natural Sciences</b>         |             | -          | -          | -          | 2          | 2          |
| <b>Course of Goods</b>          |             | -          | -          | -          | -          | 2          |
| <b>Citizenship</b>              |             | -          | -          | -          | 2          | 1          |
| <b>Painting-Handcrafts</b>      |             | 4          | 4          | 4          | 2          | 2          |
| <b>Music</b>                    |             | 2          | 2          | 1          | 1          | 1          |
| <b>Physical Education</b>       |             | 2          | 2          | 2          | 2          | 2          |
| <b>Total</b>                    |             | 26         | 26         | 26         | 26         | 26         |

This curriculum favors student-centeredness and immediate surrounding principle which states that student learn things better if knowledge is related to their immediate surroundings and their reality. The curriculum has pragmatic principles such as favoring student interests and immediate surrounding principle. These principals of the curriculum suggest progressivist and pragmatic approaches. However, the dominating aim was to make students adopt the new regime and its principles. Therefore, the curriculum can also be regarded as idealist.

### *1936 Primary School Curriculum*

Different from previous curricula, Ministry of National Education asked ideas of people from other ministries, teachers, and primary education inspectors in relation to what to teach students. When the answers were collected, a committee was formed for the curriculum development. Still, there is not an obvious curriculum development model or procedure to follow in the process. However, it is possible to say that participatory approach was used in the curriculum development process. When the committee collected the ideas related to the content of the curriculum, they produced an outline. Then it was evaluated and reached the final form.

Table 4.4  
*1936 Primary School Timetable*

| <b>Courses</b>                  | <b>Grade<br/>1</b> | <b>Grade<br/>2</b> | <b>Grade<br/>3</b> | <b>Grade<br/>4</b> | <b>Grade<br/>5</b> |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Life Science</b>             | 5                  | 6                  | 7                  | -                  | -                  |
| <b>Turkish</b>                  | 10                 | 7                  | 7                  | 6                  | 6                  |
| <b>Citizenship</b>              | -                  | -                  | -                  | 2                  | 1                  |
| <b>History</b>                  | -                  | -                  | -                  | 2                  | 2                  |
| <b>Geography</b>                | -                  | -                  | -                  | 2                  | 2                  |
| <b>Natural Sciences</b>         | -                  | -                  | -                  | 3                  | 3                  |
| <b>Arithmetic-<br/>Geometry</b> | 4                  | 4                  | 4                  | 4                  | 5                  |
| <b>Family Matters</b>           | -                  | -                  | -                  | 2                  | 2                  |
| <b>Handwriting</b>              | -                  | 2                  | 1                  | 1                  | 1                  |
| <b>Painting-<br/>Handcrafts</b> | 4                  | 4                  | 4                  | 2                  | 2                  |
| <b>Music</b>                    | 1                  | 1                  | 1                  | 1                  | 1                  |
| <b>Physical<br/>Education</b>   | 2                  | 2                  | 2                  | 1                  | 1                  |
| <b>Total</b>                    | 26                 | 26                 | 26                 | 26                 | 26                 |

In the curriculum there was a section for instructional principles, and there were suggestions for teachers. In this part, it was said that school is a small-scale representative of the society, and teachers should encourage a lively society atmosphere. Teachers should vary the activities, and the topics should match students' level and interest:

*2-Primary school is an example of society. Thus, a vivid social atmosphere should be experienced in schools.*

*5-Teachers should arouse student interest for the activities. If people have an intrinsic interest on something, they devote themselves, so they get better results.*

*7-Teachers should vary the activities and avoid monotone ones. Children get bored easily with monotonous activities, and their interest decreases eventually. (T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı,1936)*

Also, immediate surrounding and recency principles (Arslan, 2007) were in effect. The aim of these principles was to help students learn effectively by choosing topics from students' immediate environment and from recent time. This would also help students learn and adopt the new regime since history topics were mainly about republic and latest developments in the history. In the curriculum, it is suggested that practical knowledge and skills should be promoted while theoretical topics and memorization should be avoided (T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı, 1936). Moreover, there was another separate section in the curriculum for instructional materials and equipment. This section describes which tools to use for specific courses and explains how to use them efficiently.

Although there are pragmatic elements, this curriculum can be considered as essentialist as it primarily reflects the idea of cultivating students who adopt the new regime and new style of citizenship. Just as the previous curriculum, the main aim was to make students adopt nationalistic principles, the republican regime and to create a new type of society that adopts Western and democratic perspectives. It is possible to say that there was a parallelism between the principles of Turkish Republic and the aims of the curriculum. Thus, it can be said that the curriculum favors idealistic and realist principles to inspire students with nationalistic and republican doctrines:

*“In each education level, it is a duty to raise strong Republican, nationalist, statist, secular, and revolutionist citizens. Respecting and making others respect the Turkish Government and Nation will be indoctrinated to all citizens as an important task.” (T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı, 1936, p.6)*

### *Village Institutes (1940-1954)*

One of the most significant reform in Turkish history of education is Village Institutes. As most of the population was living in the rural areas back then, the education of these students had an utmost importance. The main aim of these institutes was to raise students to be teachers in their villages. The students would learn new methods to increase agricultural productivity as well as improving their intellect with various courses. When these students went back to their villages, they were supposed to teach reading and writing besides efficient agricultural techniques to villagers.

Some of the goals of village institutes were forming new social values, building and enhancing a new national culture, specializing in economy, and increasing production and efficiency in agriculture. Therefore, improving agricultural efficiency was not the sole goal, and raising modern citizens was a significant objective of the new republic.

Village Institutes were founded in 1940 with Act 3803 and the first official curriculum for them was produced in 1943. The students had common cultural lessons (22 hours per week), agricultural lessons and studies (11 hours per week), and technical lessons and studies (11 hours per week) (T.C. Maarif Vekilliği, 1943). ‘Studies’ part of lessons was the application component where students experiment. As a model these schools adopt vocational training, and they aim to teach students using ‘learning by doing’ principle and problem-based learning. Memorization was prohibited, and real-life experiences were promoted. The curriculum was designed to encourage autonomism. The following excerpt mentions this argument:

*...When raising students in the Village Institutes, it is crucial to adopt the principle of real-life associations. The following practices must be avoided as they were forbidden: mumbling ideas that are not related to real experiences in Village works, writing by reproducing an example that is or is not related to Village life in free writing courses, and making students memorize the formulas without comprehending its use in courses such as Arithmetic, Physics, or Chemistry. (Köy Okulları ve Enstitüleri Teşkilat Kanunu ve İzahname, 1943, s.96-97)*

Moreover, educational decisions were made collaboratively by administrators, teachers, and students, which is a noticeably modern practice for the time. Within the light of this knowledge, it is possible to say that the curriculum of Village Institutes can be an example of social reconstructivist curriculum.

The duration of education in these schools was 5 years. The curriculum was designed as student-centered where learners experience topics and materials firsthand especially in agricultural and technical lessons. The courses aimed at making students autonomous learners in the light of positive sciences as well as adapting learning to their local needs. Some of the aims in Agricultural Courses were:

- 1-Raising students on livestock raising and husbandry through practicing. To teach them how to use the most suitable agricultural strategies and equipment as well as making students plan all of these conforming to the positive sciences.*
- 2-After students accomplish the first step, making them gain the ability to continuously follow the changes in the agriculture field on their own.*
- 4-Making students apply the agricultural principles that are the most suitable for the environment that they will teach in, and make sure that they serve as a model to the villagers on doing this. (TC. Maarif Vekilliği, 1943, s.147)*

In spite of their success, village institutes started to receive criticism. In II. National Education Council, some educators complained about the hard work that student endure both during the construction of the institutes and in the course of education. It was claimed that students were made to work in extreme conditions for construction, cleaning, and maintenance, and the education style was associated with the style of Soviet communism. It was claimed that the administrative personnel of the institutes consisted of only Leftists and Marxists. Another criticism was that mixed-gender education in these boarding schools did not conform to the society's moral codes. It was also said that village institutes led to discrimination by increasing the gap between villager and urban youth as these institutes accept only village students. After the republic switched to multi-party system, village institutes were abolished and transferred into primary schools in 1954.

#### **4.1.2. Multi-Party Era**

With the multi-party era, there had been controversial ideas related to educational policies of Turkish Republic. Democracy, secularism and moral education were among the debated issues. Politicians and educators mentioned that they could not cultivate students that the society needs, so they needed to adopt the Anglo-Saxon and American style in education. In 1947, Turkey and the USA entered into an agreement in education, and many Turkish students were sent to the USA for graduate studies. This led to the adoption of American behaviorism as educational philosophy.

##### *1948 Primary School Curriculum*

In 1948 curriculum, the aims of National Education were grouped under four title, namely, *social, individual, human relations, and economics*. Each title had 5 or 9 aims that described the desired behaviors for Turkish youth (MEB, 1948).

Before forming the curriculum, a survey was sent to teachers. The survey collected teacher ideas related to urban and village schools and their curriculum needs and shortcomings. The results were analyzed by the committee of Board of Education that is responsible for the curriculum development. After the draft was completed, specialists consisting of primary school inspectors and directors of national education reviewed the draft and finalized it. With this curriculum, urban and rural curricula were unified into one. Also, the curriculum includes a section related to testing of students and materials to be used in evaluation.

The curriculum provides aims for each course separately, and these general aims include cognitive, affective, and psycho-motor levels. Turkish and Math courses had more specific aims including detailed explanations for teachers (MEB, 1948). Principles of education were provided in order to guide a way to reach educational goals. Moreover, methods and techniques to be used were provided for each course in the curriculum in the form of suggestions for

teachers. There was not a separate part in the curriculum for ‘evaluation’, and there was limited information related to student evaluations.

Secularism and democracy were the matter of contention. Religion lesson was removed from the curriculum, but later it was added as an elective course in 1948. There is not much difference in terms of course hours compared to 1936 curriculum (see Table 4.5).

Table 4.5  
*1948 Primary School Timetable*

| <b>Courses</b>                  | <b>Grade 1</b> | <b>Grade 2</b> | <b>Grade 3</b> | <b>Grade 4</b> | <b>Grade 5</b> |
|---------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Life Science</b>             | 5              | 6              | 7              | -              | -              |
| <b>Turkish</b>                  | 10             | 7              | 7              | 6*             | 6*             |
| <b>Citizenship</b>              | -              | -              | -              | 2              | 1              |
| <b>History</b>                  | -              | -              | -              | 2              | 2              |
| <b>Geography</b>                | -              | -              | -              | 2              | 2              |
| <b>Natural Sciences</b>         | -              | -              | -              | 3              | 3              |
| <b>Mathematics</b>              | 4              | 4              | 4              | 4              | 5              |
| <b>Family Matters</b>           | -              | -              | -              | 2              | 2              |
| <b>Handwriting</b>              | -              | 2              | 1              | 1              | 1              |
| <b>Painting-<br/>Handcrafts</b> | 4              | 4              | 4              | 2              | 2              |
| <b>Music</b>                    | 1              | 1              | 1              | 1              | 1              |
| <b>Physical<br/>Education</b>   | 2              | 2              | 2              | 1              | 1              |
| <b>Total</b>                    | 26             | 26             | 26             | 26             | 26             |

The curriculum includes many progressivist principles such as experiencing and experimenting while learning and immediate surrounding and time. Withing the Basic Principles of Primary Education section, practical knowledge is emphasized:

*4-Practical knowledge and skills must be placed emphasis on in the schools. Instructing students with the theoretical information that they cannot comprehend and that is not practical for them must be avoided. Teachers should help students gain the practical knowledge that is required by the real life. (MEB, 1948, s.7)*

*8-Children’s characteristics must be acknowledged in primary school. ...Teachers should observe each student trying to understand the age requirements and maturity level. Also, teachers should arrange in-class activities in a manner to meet student needs and interests. ...Teachers should consider each student as a whole being. (MEB, 1948, s.10-11)*

*16-The principles of immediate surrounding and immediate time must be adopted in primary school. It is crucial that the knowledge to be*

*taught must be based on students' own manners and experiences.  
(MEB, 1948, s.19)*

Therefore, it seems like a progressivist curriculum when we examine the curriculum components. However, the curriculum was not flexible for both students and the teachers as it did not offer choices for their needs and preferences.

#### *1968 Primary School Curriculum*

After the criticisms to 1948 curriculum, curriculum studies accelerate in Turkey. Scholars from the USA was asked to examine our educational system and curriculum. Reports of such scholars such as Kate V. Wofford were used to make amendments in Turkish curricula. Wofford suggested 'Dalton Plan' in which students work at their own pace according to their interests and learn by doing. Freedom, cooperation, and a sense of community are key principles of this educational plan (Parkhurst, 1922, p.19). Dalton Plan and Project Method were discussed among Turkish educators and policy makers. In the V. National Educational Council held in 1953, problems related to 1948 curricula were reviewed and a need for a curriculum renewal was decided. This new curriculum must remove the incompatibility between the aims and the content of 1948 curriculum. Also, it should be a framework curriculum that can work for all schools around the country, and piloting would be crucial. Between the years of 1953 and 1962, 'Project Method' was piloted in project schools of cities Bolu and İstanbul. The information collected from these schools were utilized to form a curriculum outline.

This curriculum outline was formed by a committee of 16 comprising of rural and urban primary and middle school teachers, and this draft was sent to all cities, towns, teacher organizations, and to press to collect ideas about the curriculum. Then another committee of 108 including teachers, school principals, inspectors, parents, specialists and National Education directors worked on the draft by analyzing the collected ideas and local needs. In order to design the new curriculum, 9 sub-committees were formed. These were the Committee of Aims and Principles, Turkish Language and Writing, Social

Sciences, Natural Sciences, Multi-grade Classes, Mathematics, Art lessons, Religion lessons, and Music Lessons. After two months of work, the curriculum draft was finalized in April 1962. The final product was to be piloted for five years in 250 schools and improved. Teachers, inspectors and National Education directors of the piloting cities attended seminars in Ankara, and they were required to conduct seminars in their cities to other teachers.

This curriculum is considered as the most systematic one up to then as it had a 7-8 years of preparation and piloting time. There were separate sections for 'methods and techniques' and 'planning and application' in the curriculum (MEB, 1968). Also, methods supported a student-centered learning such as question-answer, research, experimenting, project, problem-solving, and they were explained in detail in the curriculum. Different working strategies such as individual, pair, and group work were advised to be used in lessons. The curriculum centers students in the learning process and provides flexibility through elective courses for students to choose.

*Taking students psychological characteristics into consideration, topics were modified, redundant topics were omitted, and some topics were shortened especially in the second halve. In return, 'free topics' were added to the curriculum for overachiever students. However, teachers should not oblige students who have not achieved the specified level to present these topics. (MEB, 1968, s.18-19)*

There were 30 goals under the titles of 'Social Goals', 'Individual Goals', and 'Economic Goals'. These goals included cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimension regardless of a taxonomy. Moreover, objectives and explanations for each course were provided in the curriculum. Turkish and Mathematics courses had more detailed objectives specific to each grade level. There was a section for 'Instructional Principles of Primary School Education' which includes 23 items. Some of the items were 'Each student is different' and 'Primary school is a constitution that meets student needs.' Furthermore, schedules for regular, dual/multiple-shift system and multi-grade classes were given in the curriculum by providing examples. The importance of planning is emphasized in the curriculum, and teachers were expected to create 'Yearly Plans', 'Unit Plans', and 'Daily Lesson Plans'. Although this curriculum was

the most comprehensive one up to then, there was not a separate part for ‘evaluation’. Similar to the previous ones, student evaluations were mentioned as explanations in ‘planning and application’ sections. At the end of the curriculum, there was a part as ‘Explanations related to Child Development’. In this part, developmental stages and what children can do at each stage were explained. Besides, children’s mental, emotional, and social developments in different ages were explained in detailed for teachers.

Table 4.6  
*1968 Primary School Timetable*

| <b>Courses</b>               | <b>Grade 1</b> | <b>Grade 2</b> | <b>Grade 3</b> | <b>Grade 4</b> | <b>Grade 5</b> |
|------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Life Science</b>          | 5              | 5              | 5              | -              | -              |
| <b>Turkish</b>               | 10             | 10             | 10             | 6              | 6              |
| <b>Religion and Morality</b> | -              | -              | -              | 2              | 2              |
| <b>Social Sciences</b>       | -              | -              | -              | 3              | 3              |
| <b>Natural Sciences</b>      | -              | -              | -              | 4              | 4              |
| <b>Mathematics</b>           | 5              | 5              | 5              | 4              | 4              |
| <b>Painting-Handcrafts</b>   | 1              | 1              | 1              | 2              | 2              |
| <b>Music</b>                 | 1              | 1              | 1              | 1              | 1              |
| <b>Physical Education</b>    | 3              | 3              | 3              | 3              | 3              |
| <b>Total</b>                 | 25             | 25             | 25             | 25             | 25             |

One reform of this curriculum is that the unified teaching, which was utilized in the first three grades, was implemented for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades in this curriculum. To illustrate; Geography, History, and Citizenship lessons were unified into ‘Social Sciences’ course while Nature and Agriculture lessons were unified into ‘Science’ lesson.

As shown in Table 4.6, course hours of Mathematics, Turkish, Natural Sciences, Physical Education were increased. Some courses such as Citizenship, Handwriting, Family Matters, were abolished while course hours of Painting-Handcrafts and Life Science were decreased.

1968 curriculum adopted progressivist philosophy involving pragmatic principles to help individuals direct their own life and be good citizens. Teachers were presented as guides, and the teaching-learning process was flexible. Memorization was avoided and problem-solving skills were enhanced. Unified teaching and immediate surrounding principles were adopted as previous curricula did.

*It is a necessity for all students to get used to study on their own. It is a must for the students of multi-graded class. Especially skills are gained and improved through self-studying. (MEB,1968, p.22)*

*A course is comprised of learning units, and it works as a collection of activities to solve problems that students cannot solve on their own. Based on this philosophy, teacher is a guide in this process. ...The best plan (lesson,unit,yearly) is the one that each teacher prepares with his/her students. Plans should not be too formalist and strict. Rather, they should include less detail and more quality. They should not hinder teacher studies, and they ought to provide flexibility and reliability. (MEB,1968, p.27)*

Nevertheless, the curriculum could not be used as it was designed, and the teachers continued their old habit of teaching. Therefore, the pragmatic principles were not applied successfully. However, the curriculum had been examined and improved regularly until the comprehensive reform of 2005 curriculum change.

#### **4.1.3. 1980s and 1990s**

When National Education Act- *Milli Eđitim Temel Kanunu* put into action in 1973, primary and middle schools were merged as 8 years of primary education- *ilköđretim*. After 1980s, curriculum development was carried out by developing curricula by course-level. In these years, Ministry of Education tried to form a curriculum development model to standardize curriculum development process. The model consisted of elements such as aims, objectives, implementation and evaluation (Gözütok, 2003). However, curriculum development committees did not follow this curriculum development model, and there were variations among the curricula of different lessons.

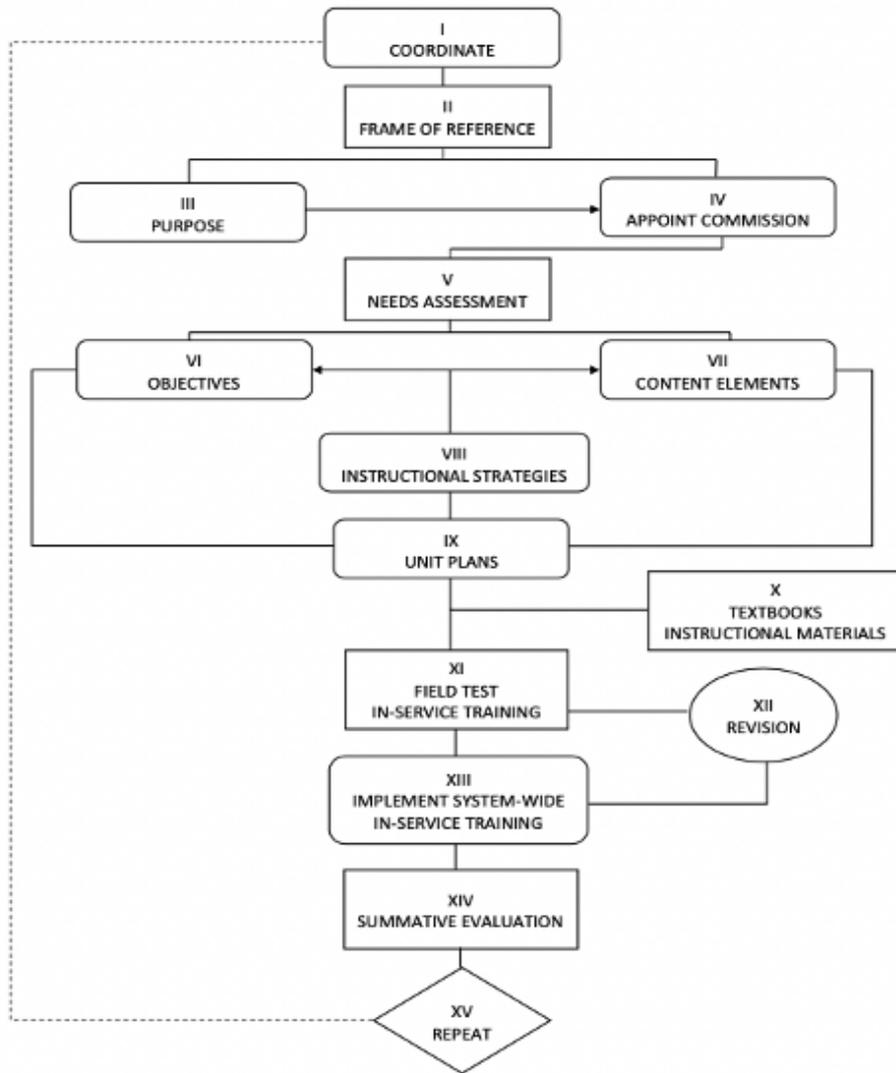


Figure 4. EARGED Curriculum Development Model.

In 1990, curriculum development studies revived with the World Bank Projects. A new curriculum development model was produced by the Department of National Educational Research and Development (EARGED), and their model was therefore named as EARGED model of curriculum development (see Fig.4). In the model, curriculum development is carried out by the Board of Education, and the aims are decided based on the developments in the subject area; the needs of society and individuals; social, political, economic, technological, political, local and international developments (Gözütok, 2003). Curriculum development commission includes teachers, scholars, sociologists, curriculum development experts, school administrators,

education psychologists, representatives of Educational Ministry, and economists.

### *1995 Primary School Curriculum*

Before this one, curricula for each course used to be printed separately, which led difficulties in analyzing and understanding curriculums. Therefore, 1995 curriculum summary was printed as one book including curriculums for all courses together with general aims, classroom objectives, and units and topics. These printed curriculum books were sent to all primary schools (MEB, 1995).

Similar to previous ones, 1995 curriculum included General aims for Primary School, Instructional Principles of Primary Education, and Methods and Techniques. Then, each course curriculum was provided including general aims of that course and explanations part. Topics were also transcribed for different grade levels. Besides, there were tables and explanations for multi-grade classes and their teachers.

In the curriculum, the importance of student and curriculum evaluation was emphasized. At the end of each course curriculum, there were separate sections for evaluations as ‘Testing and Evaluations for Grades I to III’ and ‘Testing and Evaluation for Grades IV and V’. It was recommended that students should be evaluated constantly during the year using different methods. Immediate surrounding and unified teaching principles were again in effect. Memorization was discredited in this curriculum. Group works according to student abilities were advised.

The only change in the weekly program is that the course hours of Painting and Physical Education courses were lowered, so that a new course, Environment-Health- Traffic and Reading, was added. This course was a combination different courses, and each week one dimension of the course was provided to students respectively.

Table4.7  
1995 Primary School Timetable

| <b>Courses</b>                                      | <b>Grade<br/>1</b> | <b>Grade<br/>2</b> | <b>Grade<br/>3</b> | <b>Grade<br/>4</b> | <b>Grade<br/>5</b> |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Life Science</b>                                 | 5                  | 5                  | 5                  | -                  | -                  |
| <b>Turkish</b>                                      | 10                 | 10                 | 10                 | 6                  | 6                  |
| <b>Religion and<br/>Morality</b>                    | -                  | -                  | -                  | 2                  | 2                  |
| <b>Social<br/>Sciences</b>                          | -                  | -                  | -                  | 3                  | 3                  |
| <b>Natural<br/>Sciences</b>                         | -                  | -                  | -                  | 4                  | 4                  |
| <b>Mathematics</b>                                  | 5                  | 5                  | 5                  | 4                  | 4                  |
| <b>Painting-<br/>Handcrafts</b>                     | 1                  | 1                  | 1                  | 1                  | 1                  |
| <b>Music</b>  | 1                  | 1                  | 1                  | 1                  | 1                  |
| <b>Physical<br/>Education</b>                       | 2                  | 2                  | 2                  | 2                  | 2                  |
| <b>Env., Health,<br/>Traffic, &amp;<br/>Reading</b> | 1                  | 1                  | 1                  | 2                  | 2                  |
| <b>Total</b>  | 25                 | 25                 | 25                 | 25                 | 25                 |

1995 curriculum can be considered as progressivist since it values student interest and autonomy. Also, in the curriculum, teacher role was referred as a guide to lead student towards achieving the educational aims.

In the same year, a directive was issued concerning local curriculum development studies. With this issue, Provincial Directorates of National Education (*İl ve İlçe Milli Eğitim Müdürlükleri*) could develop curricula in city and district level. Piloting commissions were founded in the districts of Ankara, but they could not achieve the expected success.

Moreover, in 1997, compulsory education became 8 years. Repetitions in courses were reduced and the topics were simplified. Other than these changes, there was not any significant reforms in terms of curriculum development.

#### **4.1.4. After 2000s**

##### *2005-2006 Curricula*

Primary and secondary education curricula were reviewed in order to improve the quality of education. The new curriculums were designed based on four fundamentals namely *Social, Individual, Economical, and Historical and Cultural*. Eclectic method was adopted in the curriculum development process. 2005-2006 curricula were the first ones to state learning theories explicitly. Constructivism constituted the core of the curriculum accompanied by Multiple Intelligences Theory, Brain-based Learning, and Project-based Learning. It can be considered as the most progressivist and student-centered curriculum. The term ‘attainments’ was utilized instead of ‘behavioral objectives’ in this curriculum, and the elements of Behaviorism were tried to be eliminated. Subjects were organized in spiral manner, and evaluation methods were diversified. Teacher’s role was set as the facilitator and guide.

When designing the curriculum, participatory approach was adopted. Non-governmental organizations, scholars, students, parents, teachers, and inspectors participated in the curriculum development process. Also, curriculums of various countries were analyzed, and the EU visions were taken into consideration in the curriculum development process. Curriculum development model for 2005-2006 curriculums was summarized in Figure 1. As shown in the figure, the first step of curriculum development is needs assessment. First, general aims, then concepts, principles and attainments were determined. Next, learning areas and attainments of these areas were decided. Themes and unites were selected according to these learning areas. At the same time, relationships with other learning areas were determined, and concept maps were created. Along with these steps, instructional activities, testing and evaluation, and teacher guidelines were produced. Next step was sharing these products with stakeholders and developing materials. Then, the curriculum was submitted for approval. Lastly, the curriculum was piloted, monitored and evaluated.

Table 4.8  
2005-2006 Primary Education Timetable

| <b>Courses</b>  | <b>Grade<br/>1</b> | <b>Grade<br/>2</b> | <b>Grade<br/>3</b> | <b>Grade<br/>4</b> | <b>Grade<br/>5</b> |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Life Science</b>                                   | 5                  | 5                  | 5                  | -                  | -                  |
| <b>Turkish</b>  | 8                  | 8                  | 8                  | 6                  | 6                  |
| <b>Religion and<br/>Morality</b>                      | -                  | -                  | -                  | 1                  | 1                  |
| <b>Social Sciences</b>                                | -                  | -                  | -                  | 2                  | 2                  |
| <b>Natural<br/>Sciences</b>                           | -                  | -                  | -                  | 3                  | 3                  |
| <b>Mathematics</b>                                    | 8                  | 8                  | 7                  | 6                  | 6                  |
| <b>English</b>  | -                  | -                  | 3                  | 5                  | 5                  |
| <b>Painting</b>                                       | 2                  | 2                  | 2                  | 2                  | 2                  |
| <b>Music</b>  | 2                  | 2                  | 2                  | 2                  | 2                  |
| <b>Physical<br/>Education</b>                         | 2                  | 2                  | 2                  | 2                  | 2                  |
| <b>Character Dev.<br/>&amp; Social Skills<br/>Ed.</b> | 1                  | 1                  | 1                  | 1                  | 1                  |
| <b>Ed. Activity<br/>(Technology)</b>                  | 2                  | 2                  | 3                  | 3                  | 3                  |
| <b>Total</b>  | 30                 | 30                 | 33                 | 33                 | 33                 |

In the curriculum, General Aims for Turkish Education were provided as usual. Different from previous curricula, Vision of the Curriculum, Approach of the Curriculum, and Key Elements of the Curriculum were provided as different sections. Within the key elements, general aims of that course, explanations related to the implementation of the curriculum, learning areas and purposes, attainments, affective characteristics, self-management competences, and psycho-motor development titles were explained shortly. Moreover, learning areas of the course and activity examples were provided for each lesson. Testing and evaluation part in the curricula suggested variety for evaluation methods. Portfolio and performance evaluation were highly recommended for formative evaluation. Furthermore, unit contents were provided for each grade level in table format. Attainments, activity examples and explanations were described in each table for grades 1 to 5. (For some courses such as Life Science, it is 1 to 3).

As seen in the Table 4.8, Mathematics, Painting, and Music course hours increased compared to 1995 curriculum. Also, English course became compulsory starting from 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Religion course hours were reduced to 1. Two new courses were added: Character Development and Social Skills

Education Course and Educational Activity Course. It was stated that Educational Activity course should include technology and computer skills education if the school is equipped with sufficient hardware, i.e. computers.

#### *2007-2008 Curriculum Development Model*

In 2007, new model for curriculum development was developed by the Board of Education, Curriculum Development-Testing and Evaluation Unit. Figure 2. shows the steps of the model. Different from 2004 model, this one does not begin with needs assessment. Instead, educational philosophy and principles are determined as the first step. Commissions for curriculum development, material and textbook, and testing and evaluations are formed. Then, needs assessment is carried out. Goals, learning areas, themes, learning outcomes were decided. Next, units and learning activities were designed with respect to learning areas and themes. The curriculum is piloted, evaluated and revised. Lastly, curriculum development process is evaluated.

In this model, student evaluation is considered as an inseparable part of learning. Not only the product but also learning process is evaluated constantly. Therefore, variety and appropriateness are important elements in evaluation strategies. Moreover, active learning strategies are used in the curriculum. Strategies such as creative drama, role playing, problem solving, educational games, individualized teaching, group works, and discussions are suggested. Besides, depth of the curriculum is mentioned for the first time in curriculum planning. It is suggested that the depth of the topics should be considered when designing the curriculums.

Furthermore, the committees for curriculum development, materials and textbook development, and testing and evaluation are formed by teachers and academicians of the field. Also, a sociologist, a psychologist, educational technologist and a proofreader are determined as a consultant group.

#### *4+4+4 System of Education (2012-2013)*

Elementary school which was 8 years, and 4 year of high school was changed to 4 year of primary school, 4 year of middle school and 4 year of secondary education. Compulsory education became 12 years as 4+4+4. Course contents were organized according to the new system.

Constructivism is still the core of the curricula and spiral curriculum is adopted. In the 12 years of compulsory education there are common abilities for students to attain and improve. Curricula aim to cultivate active-learners, active-citizens adopting a student-centered approach and project-based learning.

#### *2017-2018 Curricula*

In order to keep up with the needs and requirements of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, 51 curricula were reviewed and updated in the light of new learning theories and approaches. It was stated that at the beginning of the curriculum development process, both qualitative and quantitative research were conducted to gather information about the previous curricula (MEB, 2017). Research committees that consist of specialists from the ministry, academicians, and teachers were formed to conduct research on curricular studies. These committees examined similar curriculum renewals of various countries. They also reviewed the literature, related laws and regulations, reports of non-governmental research institutions, decisions taken in National Education Councils, government plans and the plans of political parties. Moreover, online surveys about the previous curricula were sent to teachers and school administrators. Then, curriculum development committees were formed, and they designed the first draft of curricula through one and a half year of work. The drafts of the curricula were released online for evaluation by all parties concerned (educators, parents, students, politicians, etc.). The Ministry of National Education (2017) stated that the draft curricula received great loads of comment and suggestions, and these comments were analyzed by a study group consisting of 360 members including teachers and academicians. After necessary revisions were completed, the final versions of curricula were approved by the Board of Education in May 2017.

One major reform of this curriculum change is the Values Education that is added to each curriculum. National and universal values were clearly stated and linked to attainments. Within each curriculum, common 10 values and 9 basic competence and skills were determined based on many frameworks such as the European Qualifications Framework, the National Education Quality Framework, and the Turkish Qualifications Framework. These values were fairness, companionship, honesty, fidelity, patience, respect, love, responsibility, hard-work, and helpfulness. Besides, the determined competences and skills were communication in mother tongue, communication in foreign languages, math competence, science and technology competence, digital competence, learning to learn, taking initiative and entrepreneurship, social and public competences, and cultural awareness and expression. Furthermore, content of the curricula was reduced together with reductions in the attainments. It was also highlighted in the programs that abstract concepts and events were tried to be linked learner's everyday life emphasizing practice.

Table 4.9  
2017-2018 Primary Education Timetable

| <b>Must Courses</b>                                    | <b>Grade<br/>1</b> | <b>Grade<br/>2</b> | <b>Grade<br/>3</b> | <b>Grade<br/>4</b> |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Life Science</b>                                    | 4                  | 4                  | 3                  | -                  |
| <b>Turkish</b>   | 10                 | 10                 | 8                  | 8                  |
| <b>Religion and<br/>Morality</b>                       | -                  | -                  | -                  | 2                  |
| <b>Social Sciences</b>                                 | -                  | -                  | -                  | 3                  |
| <b>Natural Sciences</b>                                | -                  | -                  | 3                  | 3                  |
| <b>Mathematics</b>                                     | 5                  | 5                  | 5                  | 5                  |
| <b>English</b>   | -                  | 2                  | 2                  | 2                  |
| <b>Visual Arts</b>                                     | 1                  | 1                  | 1                  | 1                  |
| <b>Music</b>   | 1                  | 1                  | 1                  | 1                  |
| <b>Physical Education</b>                              | 5                  | 5                  | 5                  | 2                  |
| <b>Safety at Traffic</b>                               | -                  | -                  | -                  | 1                  |
| <b>Human Rights,<br/>Citizenship and<br/>Democracy</b> | -                  | -                  | -                  | 2                  |
| <b>Free Activities</b>                                 | 4                  | 2                  | 2                  | -                  |
| <b>Total</b>   | 30                 | 30                 | 30                 | 30                 |

Compared to the previous program, the number of hours for Turkish, Religion, Social Sciences, and Physical Education courses were increased while course hours of Life Science, Mathematics, English, Visual Arts and Music were decreased. Also, as shown in Table 4.8, two new courses were added as Safety at Traffic and Human Rights, Citizenship and Democracy whereas the course of Character Development and Social Skills were removed from the curriculum. Within this curriculum change, content of the curricula was reduced including the removal of the topic of “evolution” and the principles of Kemal Atatürk.

Each curriculum for the courses included curriculum goals, curriculum perspective, testing and evaluation approach, and learner’s individual development and curriculum relationship. Within the curriculum perspective title, values and qualifications were listed and explained shortly. Moreover, more specific objectives and the competences of each course, areas of consideration for that course were provided together with the general structure of the curriculum. Lastly, attainments for each grade level of the subject were listed and each attainment was explained in generally one or two sentences.

At the beginning of each curriculum, a short explanation that was the same for all curricula was provided to introduce the nature of the curricula. It was emphasized that the new curricula were developed in a more holistic and plain way. The curricula were aimed at “rather than transmitting information, caring for individual differences, gaining values and competences” (MEB, 2018, p.4). Also, it was highlighted that the curricula were designed spirally to allow learners to relate the new knowledge to both everyday life and their existing knowledge. Although constructivism was not mentioned explicitly, the curricula were defined as “stimulating higher order cognitive skills, ensuring meaningful and permanent learning, relating to powerful and previous learning, combining with other disciplines and everyday life within the framework of values, skills and competences” (MEB, 2018, p.4).

This curriculum change has got negative reactions as the philosophy of the curriculum is not mentioned in any of the curricula. Besides, the curriculum

change was regarded as a top-down process since the introduced changes could not be rationalized by the Ministry of National Education.

## **4.2. Results Concerning the Perceptions of the Curriculum Scholars**

In this section, results that were gathered from the interviews were presented. The data collected from 7 participants was gathered under three themes (see Table 4.1). The results collected from interviews aimed to explore the curriculum development phenomenon in Turkey.

### **4.2.1. Curriculum Development Process in Turkey**

In this part, participants' opinions and evaluations related to the process of curriculum development were revealed. Under this theme, curriculum development process in Turkey, the people who participate in this process, and the issue of centralized curriculum development were analyzed and presented.

#### **4.2.1.1. Curriculum Development Process and Participants**

Participants expressed that curriculum development process in Turkey is conducted faster than it should be. They criticized overnight curriculum changes that lack necessary preparation time and effort. They also emphasized that curriculum development requires a meticulous process to work on.

*...This is a matter of process, so you cannot develop a curriculum in two or three months. It does not work that way because it is a continuing process. You need to be able to manage that curriculum development process.... (P1).*

*...we decide on new curriculum changes, apply them, and then we deal with aggrievement of the sufferers. Why do you create unjust suffering in the first place? We are so hasty in curriculum development or renewal process. We want to design curricula in three or six months. Curriculum development has its own procedures and processes. If we do not complete these procedures in sufficient time, we experience the same problems that have haunted us since 1980s...(P5).*

Similarly, another participant claimed that Turkey does not have a vision for curriculum change process. S/he asserted that we cannot be sure if this curriculum change work or not as we do not track it properly.

*...we do not have a vision for how to manage a curriculum change. We change a curriculum and announce it and that is all. The rest is up to the teachers! This is not the right way. Research shows that teachers could stick to the previous curriculum for about 10 years after a curriculum change. Even after many years, teachers may have concerns about the curriculum, and they still question it. Although you change a curriculum, it is possible that nothing is changed in the classroom. We experienced this in 2005 curriculum change. Most teachers could not apply curriculum changes in their classes. Then, we criticized the curriculum as if it lacked some aspects. The problem was not the curriculum, but it was the management of change which was missing. We do not invest enough time and money on the planning of a curriculum change. We assume that curriculum development is just publishing new curricula and printing new textbooks. We need to abandon this thought...(P4).*

Participant 6 claimed that curriculum literacy in Turkey is quite low, and this makes curricula ineffective as teachers cannot comprehend curricula fully.

*...As far as I know, curriculum literacy in Turkey is between 9 and 11%. So, we can say that curricula do not have any correspondence. Teachers cannot relate to the changes in the curriculum. Even if they understand these changes, they fail to apply them in their practices...(P6).*

The same participant also asserted that we our curriculum development technique is impractical and not interdisciplinary. Also, we, as he suggested, fail to determine our needs. Therefore, he offers we should try different methods for our curriculum development and needs analysis techniques.

*...we cannot analyze our true needs because we consider needs analysis as a 'technical process'. Maybe, we need to change our techniques when determining what we truly need. Curriculum development is an interdisciplinary process. However, it is not the case in Turkey. Our system is well-developed. We have specified attainments and needs analyses. Technically, we are good; but we have problems in terms of content. Content is not relatable. So, educational psychologists, educational administrators, teachers, etc. should participate in needs analysis cooperatively. I think that is what we need to do...(P6).*

In terms of participants of the curriculum development process and the members of Board of Education, different ideas were discussed by the participants. Participant 1 stated that the director of the Curriculum Development Department in the Board of Education was not a graduate of a relevant field. Also, the head of Board of Education was a graduate of Educational Administration and Planning rather than Curriculum and Instruction.

*...the man who was responsible for curricula in the Board of Education was nothing to do with curriculum development field. Back then, I told the head of the Board of Education to appoint someone who was more appropriate, so he did. Now, the head of the Board of Education is a graduate of Educational Administration and Planning. They appointed him claiming that expertise in curriculum development is not a requirement for this job...(P1).*

Participant 5 pointed out that the process of founding curriculum development committees is also problematic. The qualification of these committee members was claimed to be questionable. Also, committee members are claimed to be chosen from particular universities. Participant 4 supported this thought asserting that there is no guideline related to who can participate in these committees. Lack of meritocracy and transparency is common in Turkey's curriculum development processes.

*...One of the criticisms for curriculum development practices in our country is the process of establishing committees. Actually, we are well aware of the requirements and rules of these processes. For instance, we know which team should supervise which members; however, we don't apply those roles. Diversity is not handled well since MONE tends to choose members with whom they can work easily. So, you can question whether the competence is overlooked. The answer is provided by deputy head of the Board of Education. He once said that we choose curriculum development committee members according to their CVs. If someone has any kind of study related to the topic, we invite him/her to the committee. For example, if there is project related to 'inclusive education' and you have just one article about that topic, then you're eligible for this job. I told them that this is not enough. People have their own areas of expertise and doctorate degrees, and you should consider these parameters. For example, I also wrote a paper related to 'inclusive education' but it does not mean that I am an expert on that topic. So, if they invite me, I won't go! But you know this is not the case for everyone... Thus, qualification is important. Most people have qualification, but it does not always bring quality. Your qualifications and skills make you qualified. It means you are equipped with the necessary skills but there is no guarantee that it translates into quality. There is a possibility but no guarantee. If you can put curriculum development specialists in these committees just for the sake of formality, it doesn't work!...(P5).*

*...You can see that members for curriculum development committees are chosen from specific universities. These universities do not have at least 6-7 academician of curriculum development. For example, METU has 7-8 people in Curriculum and Instruction department, and half of them are professors. However, none of them participates in these committees. You do the math. We need to make these choices free from ideological and political concerns. If we don't, we will keep asking the same questions like who is and should participate in the committees...( P5).*

*...Who is eligible to be a member of the Board of Education? Which qualification is needed? These questions are off the table for us. Just like a taboo. Some people appoint them, and they become members. What if they are not qualified? This is actually related to democracy, transparency, and meritocracy. Meritocracy means that the job is given to someone who is the most eligible and the most qualified for this job. It is a merit-based system. We have issues with honesty, justice, democracy, human rights, and freedom of speech. When these come together, it is normal to have problems in these processes...(P4).*

Participant 6 who is a professor of Philosophical, Social, and Historical Foundations of Education had a different point of view on meritocracy. He suggested that if people emphasize meritocracy, there will be indoctrination. Because they tend to use 'meritocracy' term for their favor.

*...People force their philosophy with the illusion of 'education is impartial'. They say that no one should interfere with education and it should be merit-based. If they say this, you know that there will be serious indoctrination. Every once in a while, they talk about meritocracy. But who has these merits and how? They didn't give an answer to this before and we still don't know the answer...(P6).*

The participants 1, 4 and 6 expressed similar ideas in relation to the qualifications of the Board of Education members. They emphasized the importance of field experience as it will reduce the gap between theory and practice. Participant 1 suggested that the members of the Board of Education should be sustained, and frequent changes must be avoided. Moreover, doctoral degree was highlighted as a requirement.

*...The people who will be selected as a member for the Board of Education shouldn't be changed frequently. They need to have a 5-10 years of teaching experience as well as having a doctoral degree in their field. I suggested this to the Ministry of Education once. Like staff officer in army, they should be trained from the cradle. Being a professor is not compulsory but having a doctoral degree should be a must...(P1).*

*...we have many doctoral degree graduates, but I don't think that we benefit from them. When we consider European countries, we can see that almost all of their school principals have doctoral degree. People who have a doctoral degree in Educational Sciences are invaluable. They have more power and authority in administrative decisions. Our graduates continue teaching. I don't think it's right because it is a human capital. We should make use of these people more in our educational system...(P4).*

*...I have worked with almost 20-30 thousand of teachers within the past 5 years, and they all have a common complaint: there is a big gap between theory and practice in the developed curricula. So, how can we narrow this gap? Academicians and curriculum developers should go into the field and see*

*what's going is really going on in classes. Curriculum cannot be developed without knowing the reality of schools...(P6)*

Overall, the results revealed that the time allocated for curriculum development process is short. It was stated that a lack of vision for curriculum change led to unsystematic execution of curriculum transitions. Besides, participants reported a lack of transparency in curriculum development processes, and they expressed doubts about the qualifications of curriculum development committee members.

#### **4.2.1.2. Teacher Participation in Curriculum Development**

Almost all of the participants emphasized teacher participation in curriculum development process is crucial. Participant 2 linked the success of the curricula to the participation of teachers in curriculum development process. Since teachers are in the frontline when executing the curriculum, it is natural that they anticipate many things beforehand, which can provide enormous benefits in the curriculum development processes. Also, teachers are the ones who will utilize this curriculum, so they must have a say in the design processes. Otherwise, their role is degraded to an executer or a technician.

*...Curriculum development which does not put teacher in the center cannot be successful. Teachers cannot actualize the curriculum when they are in the role of an executer. They need to take students, environment, and their knowledge into consideration. If you do not give teachers a role in the curriculum development process, they cannot be effective by only following what is given to them...(P2).*

Participant 3 pointed out the importance of teachers by drawing an analogy between curriculum development and cooking.

*...Curriculum can't be developed without teachers. So, you cook a meal and people who don't know how to cook go shopping for ingredients. Whoever is cooking must prepare the recipe. Teachers must have a leading role in curriculum development. We ignore this most of the time...(P3).*

Moreover, in curriculum development process exclusion of teachers lead to idleness among them as some of participants pointed out. Teachers' reluctance to get in-service training also supports this argument according to Participant 2 and 4:

*...As Board of Education does not include teachers in the curriculum development process, teachers only role is to execute the curriculum. It may serve as an ease to some teachers, but it does not necessarily yield an effective teaching. In time, teachers get used to live on prepared content and they lose their ability to make their own decisions. Eventually, teachers become less and less interested in curriculum development...(P2).*

*...Teachers don't want in-service training and they don't demand any kind of training. When you give everything readymade to them, they don't need to improve themselves. They think that they don't need to do anything rather than following a very detailed prescribed curriculum...(P4).*

Participant 2 also stressed that curriculum development has been glorified superfluously. The gap between the teachers and curriculum developers is unnecessary.

*...There is a gap between curriculum development specialists and teachers. This should not be the case. We exaggerate curriculum development so much that no one can attain this concept. We make it look like rocket science which only specific people can perform or know about. Teachers must be curriculum developers. In my curriculum development approach, teachers must be at the center of curriculum development studies because they are the ones to execute that curriculum. Even if we hand in a very detailed curriculum to teachers, it is not possible each teacher to execute it the way we want. It is against the nature of teaching as instruction is not a mere technical process. Therefore, teachers must be at the center of curriculum development...(P2).*

Participant 7 stated that teachers have an important role in instruction; thus, they should contribute to curriculum development process by conducting research on instructional processes. The results of such research can be quite beneficial when developing a curriculum. Furthermore, Participant 1 supported teacher inclusion in order to avoid teachers' complaints about the curriculum. He suggested that teachers should be in curriculum development committees along with educational inspectors. This way, they can know about the curriculum development procedures and content, so they will not feel casted out from the process.

Overall findings suggested that teacher participation was reported to be vital in curriculum development process as teachers can anticipate issues in teaching-learning processes as well as learner needs. Participants also mentioned that excluding teachers from this process had serious consequences such as leading to teacher idleness as teachers would get used to ready-made materials and processes.

#### 4.2.1.3. Centralized Curriculum Development

Participants expressed their thoughts on the centralized curriculum development practices in Turkey. Almost all of the participants were opposed to too much centralization. Only Participant 1 had a disposition toward a more centralized curriculum development as it could promote a sense of unity among the citizens:

*...of course when you think of Turkey's ethnical diversity, it's important to prepare curricula centrally in order to raise people who say 'I'm Turkish'. The design of the teaching process can be more localized, but the general aims of the curriculum must have an integrity. At the end, all students who finish these curricula must acquire the same educational objectives since all students are admitted to universities centrally in Turkey. It is more logical to develop them centrally, and we should have a sense of unity in curricula. It is important both to ensure national unity and to raise citizens who share the same ideals and interests...(P1).*

Participants 3, 5, and 6 opted for a more decentralized curriculum development because of the diverse needs of Turkish people. They claimed the real needs of society cannot be determined accurately since they are analyzed too centrally. It was reported unless the curricula match the real needs, they cannot be effective. Therefore, decentralization was proposed as the solution to deal with low success rate of the curricula. Moreover, there was a common claim asserted by the participants that decentralization can harm the national unity of Turkey. However, Participant 5 claimed that the fear of not having a national unity is groundless as centralized curriculum development cannot be the only factor to ensure that.

*...What are the needs of individuals in terms of economy, politics, or culture? What are the ethnical foundations of Turkey which has a complete mosaic structure? And what are the needs of these ethnical entities? I believe that curriculum development must be handled multidimensionally, and we should never implement the same central curriculum to everyone. We can form a general framework centrally, but it must be a total democratic and scientific scheme. Then, curriculum development can be carried out locally in a very flexible way...(P3).*

*...As we have a very centralized education system, The Board of Education uses a generic data when developing the curricula. This was one of the reasons why 2005 curricula were unsuccessful: because conditions were not the same for different parts of the country. We should be able to ensure minimum requirements to open a school. Then we can say that we designed these curricula based on these minimum requirements, but we can't say that! Therefore, we need a more decentralized curriculum development...(P5).*

*...Every country has its own ideologies and politics such as national unity, integrity, etc. It is natural to have these elements in a curriculum but if you emphasize them too much in the curriculums, it interferes with other things, and you can't localize the curricula to meet the local needs...(P5).*

*...we had Village Institutes as unique decentralized educational institutions. Was the country divided because of Village Institutes? When we go over their graduates, can you see any one of them who is a traitor to their country? All of them are working, producing, and loving their country. Maybe they are loyal to their country more than any of us. So, it is a weak theory to have a centralized education just to ensure national unity So, what's the problem? I think the problem is some underlying factors that are unspoken. Capitalism is one of them. ...(P5).*

*...It is not right to use our population as a reason when defending centralization. We have examples of America, Germany, France, and Spain. Do they have less population than us? They all manage decentralization. Of course, some countries such as England tend to go for more centralization, but we don't know how it will work out for them...(P5).*

*...General principles can be determined centrally but teaching-learning processes/pedagogical methods, and details in relation to real-life representations should be designed locally. Everything other than the general goals should be localized. Centralization does not work, and we see this...(P6).*

Participant 4 indicated she is not totally against centralization, but she criticized too much centralization claiming that Turkey would pay for its mistakes in the future. She asserted that we do not evaluate the consequences of centralization. She advised careful assessments in relation to the effects and consequences of it.

*...When I criticize the central curriculum development, I do not mean that centralization is completely evil because it has advantages in many aspects. However, we are too much centralized, and it should be reduced. Ankara should not be consulted for every decision to be taken. Doing this is passivizing our people. It is also demoralizing, so people become exhausted and desensitized. We haven't evaluated its consequences. If we did, we would think more about this issue...(P4).*

Furthermore, participants conveyed their ideas on the advantages and disadvantages of centralized curriculum development. Among the advantages, ensuring national unity, standardization, and convenience of process management were proposed (P1, P2, and P4). Inability to meet local needs, leading to indolence in teachers, and unsuccessful curricula and students were referred as some of the disadvantages (P4, P5, P6).

*...central curriculum development is important both to ensure national unity and to raise citizens who share the same ideals and interests...(P1)*

*...Standardization is an important advantage regarding equality among students' knowledge. However, equality and equity cannot be accomplished by developing curricula centrally. Actually, the most significant advantage could be to provide a common framework for curricula in order to ensure unity across the country. Then, you can use this centralization to create a communication system between teachers because they should design the rest on the basis of the common framework. So, it depends how you make use of this centralization. If Board of Education only forms a common framework for curricula, their job gets easier. When they go into too much detail in the design process, managing it becomes a more difficult job...(P2)*

*...The administrators are happy with this centralization because no one objects to any idea. Teachers are also happy because they don't need to worry about anything in terms of design or anything else. This is easy to manage: I say we will do that this way, and everybody does it. Then I change my mind and they accept it without questioning. The problems of management reduce in centralization. But when you grant autonomy to regions, cities or schools, everything gets complicated in Turkey. The problems increase and the job of the people in power becomes harder. We are a big country having nearly 100 cities which has different social and economic backgrounds. I think that's why we insist on centralization in education. Even though we haven't realized it yet, the consequences of this can be our downfall. ...For example, teachers don't feel any need for in-service training; they don't demand it. When you say, 'I give you everything, you will teach like I say', teachers don't need to improve themselves. They just follow what is said...(P4)*

*...As we have a very centralized education system, The Board of Education uses a generic data when developing the curricula. This was one of the reasons why 2005 curricula were unsuccessful: because conditions were not the same for different parts of the country... ... but if you emphasize national unity too much in the curriculums, it interferes with other things, and you can't localize the curriculum to meet the local needs...(P5).*

The overall results revealed that most of the participants preferred decentralized curriculum development in order to analyze and meet student needs effectively. Only one of the participants favored centralization as it would contribute to the sense of Turkish national unity. Moreover, participants described advantages and disadvantages of centralized curriculum development. Among the advantages, contribution to national of unity, standardized education, and convenience of curriculum development process were reported. Inability to meet the local needs, leading to ineffective curricula and low student success, and leading to teacher reluctance for self-improvement were pointed out as disadvantages.

#### 4.2.1.4. Priorities of Consideration in Turkey's Curriculum Development

In this section, participants shared their ideas on the points that were crucial to curriculum development in Turkey. Besides curriculum development principles, factors that had an influence in curriculum development were discussed. These factors were significant to discuss as they could pose solutions unique to Turkey's curriculum development issues. Participants proposed prioritized area of consideration to be mentioned below.

As an important task to accomplish, Participants 1 and 3 stated hidden curriculum should be revealed before developing new curricula. The political agenda together with the real-life curriculum practices should be examined to face with what actually happens in classes. Participants mentioned hidden agenda as a significant factor to consider carefully in the curriculum development processes.

*...we need to unveil the hidden curriculum because we should make our official curriculum applicable. We have to make hidden curriculum more open. I suggest that the curriculum that is prepared by the Board of Education should be utilized in the schools. And it should be more contemporary...(P1).*

*...When a curriculum is developed, you cannot separate it from the current political structure, so this political atmosphere should be analyzed carefully. What is the hidden curriculum? I mean what is below and above the iceberg? The hidden curriculum must be disclosed...(P3).*

Participants 3 and 6 also reported that there is a gap between the curricula and the reality of Turkey. Participant 6 argued that the gap exists because the curricula are prepared regarding the middle class. However, he reported middle class is not the majority of population, and the student profile is not homogeneous. Moreover, Participant 3 that this gap is caused as teachers are not included in the curriculum development process. Along with teacher participation, sophisticated analyses were proposed by P3 and P4 to analyze our past and current state in terms of curricula and their applications. Thus, Participant 4 stated the necessary confrontation to face our faults could be possible.

*...The biggest gap between the school and the society is in our country because everything is designed according to language, culture, and perception of the middle class. And no one sees that. Therefore, a gap originates between the school and society since the size of middle class is small in Turkey. ...Also,*

*there is an assumption that the student group is homogenous in our country. But it is not the case. Then they say: "consider the individual characteristics". How can you consider them in this system? (P6)*

*...You develop a curriculum, but it doesn't match Turkey's and teachers' reality. Thus, teachers must be in the very heart of this job. Teachers are the ones who can know the best what is missing or problematic in the curricula...(P3).*

*...we need to face our mistakes. Rights and wrongs should be identified in order to perform some analyses. Of course, we will plan and work for the future, but we cannot find our route without understanding our past faults. Otherwise, we may keep making the same mistakes...(P4).*

For significant things to consider in curriculum development Participant 5 claimed that curriculum development principles should be put to use. He suggested that not many things would be necessary if we could apply those principles correctly. Furthermore, he mentioned the need for research on curriculum development rather than implementation phase of curricula.

*...Curriculum development procedures tells you everything that you need and there will be nothing extra to be considered. However, it may not be the case since there is different pressure groups in Turkey. ...We need more research on curricula rather than its application. All research carried out in Turkey is on curriculum implementation instead of the curriculum itself. We investigate practices that make students more successful. I believe that the curricula are successful. The problem is that the people who implement the curriculum cannot perform it as designed or carry it out accurately.(P5)*

Similar to ideas of Participant 5, Participant 4 claimed that some of the curriculum development principles were not handled properly. Almost all of the design dimensions, namely; scope, sequence, continuity, and articulation were problematic in curriculum development studies. She believed that the absence of a merit-based performance requirement led to these problems.

*I don't think that the basic principles of curriculum development are considered carefully when designing the curricula. We have serious problems about them. For example, we can see signs signaling that the curricula have elements that are not appropriate to students' level. Me and my doctorate students have conducted many studies regarding the curricula lately, and we have seen that none of the curricula fully satisfied the practicality principle. Similarly, we have detected problems in relation to articulation, integration, and continuity. ...We haven't decided the level of specificity. How much detail will a curriculum have? How much specific information will it provide to the teacher? Should it be too detailed or more generic? We have zigzagged on such*

*issues. ...I mean we try to do good. No one wants to harm the system when designing these curricula. Everyone tries to contribute but I believe there is a serious merit problem. (P4)*

Overall, participants claimed that some topics required careful consideration when developing curriculums in Turkey. Hidden curriculum, the gap between the designed curriculum and the real life, and inadequate attention given to curriculum development principles were reported as problematic and they required more attention.

#### **4.2.2. Perceptions in Relation to the Developed Curricula**

In this part, participant opinions related to the curricula developed in Turkey were presented. Within the theme, participants' own curriculum development approach was explored along with their ideas and comments on the developed curricula. Also, participants reported what they consider as shortcomings of the developed curriculums.

##### **4.2.2.1. Curriculum Development Approach**

Participant 1 reported that he adopted Gestalt Theory in curriculum thought. According to this thought, the students are whole in their body and mind as well as their environment. Horizontal and vertical articulation was stressed as an important principle to consider when developing a curriculum. Furthermore, he pointed out that whole-to-part and generic-to-specific approaches should be utilized especially in lower grade curricula.

*...Primary school requires a more holistic approach ...because you present the real life to children, so Gestalt's wholeness is an important concept. Children see the life as a whole in those ages. ...Primary school is where basic skills are gained, so we need to adopt whole-to-part approach. (P1)*

Regarding Constructivism, he claimed that it is not practical to adopt in primary schools as students are not mature enough. So, university is the most suitable level for adopting constructivism in the curricula as he believed:

*If we place Constructivism into the core of the curriculum, will we design the curriculum for each individual or will we design one that is for all students? If we design for everyone, we drift away from the principles of Constructivism.*

*The truth is you can't sculpt people like that. So, Constructivism is more appropriate to the high school and university curricula because in those years you can sculpt them more easily.(P1)*

Participants 2 and 3 had common thoughts about the curriculum development process. They both defended only a general framework should be produced centrally, and the rest should be designed by more local authorities, especially by teachers:

*...For primary school, a general framework should be drawn for the development of curricula. Such a guide document is necessary for standardization and unity in education. MONE or Board of Education can do this since this can be considered as the National Curriculum. It is crucial that the general framework should not contain too much detail. It can have general goals, concepts, and learning areas but not more. The part that is related to the implementation of the curriculum should be left for teachers to design. Because teachers know their field, students, and the environment better, they can execute this general framework in the most effective way. (P2)*

*...A general framework is produced but it should be absolutely scientific and democratic. Then within this framework a very flexible curriculum development should take place. It can be designed by regions. ...But the key for curricula to be effective is teachers. Therefore, the curricula must definitely be developed with them. (P3)*

Moreover, Participant 3 stressed that she is totally against the idea of central curriculum development as Turkey has a mosaic structure in every way. Therefore, she offered that a multidimensional needs analysis should be carried out to meet the diverse needs of our citizens:

*...I would start curriculum development with needs analysis, naturally. But it is not just the individual needs. Our constant fault is contemplating education from just one perspective. ...What are individual, cultural, political, and economic needs? These should be dealt with care multidimensionally, and I don't think that a central curriculum should be administered to everyone in the same way. (P3)*

Both Participant 5 and 7 told that the principles of curriculum development must be followed closely. They also stated that the approach should have flexibility to adjust to student age and characteristics. Participant 5 mentioned three elements as vital in a curriculum development process, which are teamwork, being dynamic, and having its own methodology. Additionally, Participant 7 reported that curriculum development approach should be based on the results of intensive research.

*...Principles of curriculum development are definite, but they differentiate on some points. Age level is a determining factor. For instance, it is easier to adopt*

*a more social, interactive, activity-based approach because younger students may have difficulty in succeeding subject based curricula. However, you should develop subject-based curricula in high schools considering our country. You should pay attention to these principles: 1-curriculum should be a product of teamwork, 2-it should have a dynamic design process, and 3-it should have its own methodology. These factors make a curriculum special and authentic. (P5)*

*...Curriculum development is a field that has its definite principles and characteristics. Therefore, it can only be differentiated by the grade levels to be developed. Apart from this I believe that a curriculum development will be effective if it is based on research. In order to improve our curriculum development processes, we need to make use of research results. (P7)*

Participant 5 stated that he had an experiential approach to curriculum development. That is, it is more experience-based which also includes students in the curriculum development process:

*...I can describe my curriculum development approach as experiential. I don't think I have a total humanistic approach, but I think some of its attributes can be utilized in curriculum development process. However, I believe that the approach proposed by the reconstructionists hasn't evolved yet. So, I adopt a more experience-based approach. Here, you can include the students in the curriculum development process, but it cannot go sideways too radically. (P5)*

The results within this theme suggested that participants had a decentralized curriculum development approach. They favored to have a national general framework of curriculum, and the rest should be designed in a more local level. Besides, the participants stated that curriculum development should be based on empirical research results.

#### **4.2.2.2. Comments on the Developed Curricula and Models**

Participant 2 stated that the curricula developed in 1980s were under the influence of Behaviorism. The students who went to America for graduate studies in Educational Sciences made this influence. Behavioristic curriculum had too many details which was reported as a burden for teachers. However, Participant 2 claimed that the curricula started to be more learner-centered with the studies of EARGED – a special department for educational research and development. The participant also stated that he regretted EARGED was abolished. Then, Constructivism become an emergent approach in 2000s. Nevertheless, Participant 2 claimed that it cannot be considered as

a true constructivist curriculum since it still had too much detail like in behavioristic ones.

*...In 1980s curriculum development studies had behavioristic emphasis because of the influence of curriculum and instruction professors who had gone abroad for graduate studies. It was too much work for teachers since the goals and objectives were to be designed to specifically. The objectives alone used to take too many pages, let alone content, materials, and evaluation parts. In 1990s, EARGED had a different approach to curriculum development as a more learner-centered approach was adopted reducing the behavioristic influences. Studies of EARGED was quite successful, and we got good results from schools. ...However, EARGED was abolished since Board of Education wasn't willing to give its job to another constitution. It was a scientific research and development unit which was founded at huge expenses.... Constructivism appeared as the leading concept in 2000s as you know. The objectives were more holistic and general, so they called them 'attainments'. However, it is not right to consider those curricula as Constructivist since there is too much detail in the curricula. Also, teachers were in the practitioner role. In Constructivism, teacher should be in the spotlight, and the curriculum should be given in a more generic way. (P2)*

Participant 3 claimed that curriculum development in Turkey has never have an integrity and determination. She drew a modernity level graph of Turkey's having fluctuations. At the beginning of the Republic, she stated we had a rather repressive curricula to impose the new regime, which was a necessary action at the time as she told. Therefore, progressivist principles such as learning by doing remained in the background as the main aim was to form a sense of common history. She stated that the graph showed a climbing tendency in 1960s as 1968 curriculum was quite contemporary. Then, she marked 1980 coup as a breaking point as the level of modernity has been decreasing since then. Similar to Participant 2, Participant 3 thought that American curriculum development approach influenced our system in 1990s.

*...I don't think that curricula have been developed in a determined way throughout our history. These studies were always fragmentary. ...The main aim was to develop a sense of common history in the curricula. Thus, progressivist thoughts influenced by Dewey was remained in the background. Learning by doing, project learning, and vocational training followed a low profile as ensuring the regime was the dominant goal of curriculum. ...If the circumstances were different, we could say that this was a fascistic approach. We can even call it a brainwash. However, I am aware that the atmosphere required this because there were many who were opposed to the Republican Regime and secularism. So, we could get worse results if we didn't put great emphasis on the Republican principles. Still, it was a perfect example of using*

*education as a tool. ...1968 curriculum has a special place in our curriculum development history as it has a very systematic development process. Before that curriculum development was done by adding and omitting courses. But '68 curriculum had a participatory approach and a 5-year piloting process. ...If I draw a graph for contemporaneity of curricula; I told the beginning of the republic. '60s had contemporary constitution and modern curricula starting from multi-part era. ...1980 coup can be considered as a breaking point. We can see that a more conservative education has started to take place, and religious courses were begun to be added to the curricula more intensively. Therefore, the graph curve has started to decrease. ...In fact, we were already influenced by America with Dewey's ideas at the beginning of the republican era. Teachers who went to America for graduate studies intensified Americanization in Turkey's education. (P3)*

Participant 3 stated that religious motives became more apparent in the curricula after 1990s. Participant 5 shared the same idea saying that religious intentions were added more into the curricula in 1980 and 2000s.

*...After 1990s conservatism has been on the rise. Everything remains in the background with conservatism. Even constructivism is in its shadow. Progressive movement is the same... I hope we start to place the necessary emphasis on scientific curriculum development. (P3)*

*...Why did more religious motives go into the curriculum after 2000s? It means that the people who govern this country did not pursue a national education policy, but they wanted to enforce their own ideologies., and they did it to secure their positions. We have specific timelines. For instance, after 1980 coup, we took up a more religious viewpoint in curricula. This brings other things with it. Important memorial dates of this country have started to go by the wayside. (P5)*

Participant 4 asserted that the first curricula that resembled the Western design was the ones in 1980s. The curricula have become more detailed having necessary information about different perspectives such as philosophy, teaching-learning approach, evaluation, etc. Although the participant criticized curricula's having too much detail, she claimed that this meant the curriculum development have started to be conceptualized as a concept especially with 2005 curricula. However, she criticized curricula designed after 2013 as they had insufficient information on teaching-learning process, testing and evaluation, ideal class size, and special needs classes. Therefore, she describes these curricula as syllabus (*müfredat*) rather than a curriculum.

*...After 1980s, curricula have become documents that we can call a real curriculum. Especially in 1990s, they have started to include more details, but I think 2005 curricula are the ones that resembles the Western type of curricula*

*because they include aims, philosophy, theoretical foundations, learning areas, teaching-learning approaches and models, and testing and evaluation together with examples. Although we criticize the detailed guidelines, I think that curriculum development has been conceptualizing after 2005 curricula, but it has followed a fluctuating trend since then. In 2013 the minister told that they simplified the curricula. They said that they decreased the number of attainments and details. When we examine them, there's only one paragraph on teaching-learning process and testing and evaluation part. And they are all the same to each sentence in all curricula as copy-paste. I doubt that we can call them 'curriculum'. I feel like they are syllabus(müfredat) because they lack some basic elements of a curriculum such as ideal size of classes, or the classes that have special needs. (P4)*

Participant 5 reported similar ideas to Participant 4. He stated that first academic curriculum development studies appeared in 1950s. Also, 1980-90s curricula were reported as significant as MONE designed a curriculum development model on its own. He stated that curriculum development principles were applied in 2005 and 2013 curricula reminding that we should check how much they were utilized.

*...Curriculum studies that are more academic or abiding curriculum development principles have started in 1950 and 1956 especially in primary school. In 1980s and 1990s, curriculum development principles were followed, and MONE developed a curriculum development model. EARGED was an important department of MONE (later it was shut down) named the model itself, and curricula were developed within its framework. However, the question is do these models and principles match Turkey's truth and to what degree? In 2005 and 2013 curricula, it is possible to say that curriculum development principles were followed but not to a desirable degree. (P5)*

Participants reported that Turkey does not have its own curriculum development model or philosophy. It was asserted that Turkey's curriculum development philosophy has mostly relied on other countries especially America's.

*...I think Turkey doesn't have its own curriculum development theory, model or approach. We picked some of America's models and some from European countries. For the last 50-60 years we are following America's style closely. Americanization is a serious issue for us, and I find it quite wrong because it means benefiting from only one source. There is a big wave of Asia (including Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, and India) but how much are we open to their ideas? That is a question. We need to follow the literature for all the quality applications rather than sticking to one country. ...We have the Curriculum and Instruction departments in our universities since 1965 but we don't have our own curriculum theory. This is our fault. Why don't we have our theory or model? Do we have an educational philosophy? That's another question! ...I don't see any article pointing out our educational philosophy problem. Only one or two articles exist in 1980s and 1990s. Then, I guess we quitted thinking*

*about this problem. We teach Perennialism, Essentialism, Progressivism, and Reconstructionism, but there are many other philosophies prevailing In Turkey. For example, Sufism has an educational philosophy. Also, we have the influences of Indian philosophy. We may not notice them or name them, but they exist. These do not find any place in curriculum development books. ...The models in Anglo-Sakson literature resemble each other. Their mechanisms were specified, but we cannot even apply them correctly. For example, for the first time last year, the curricula were brought into view before announced so that public opinion could be gathered. For the first time in 2018! (P4)*

*...I do not know if our curricula have had a curriculum development model after 2000s. ...Models are based on specific philosophies, and no model is based on only one philosophy. (P5)*

Overall results suggested that participants thought the first real curricula were designed after 1950s and especially in 1980s since before them, curriculum development principles were not conceptualized. It was claimed that curriculum development studies in Turkey did not have a consistent evolution as it had fluctuations especially in the level of modernness. Related to this, participants criticized that there has not been any curriculum development model or philosophy unique to Turkey's education system. Lastly, American influence in 1990s on Turkey's curriculum development was reported as a noteworthy episode.

#### **4.2.2.3. Shortcomings of Curriculum Development**

Participants 1, 4, and 6 emphasized the gap between the curriculum documents and real life in schools. Participant 1 argued that teachers and ÖSYM (Student Selection and Placement Center) did not use the objectives from the curriculum document in their operations. Also, he criticized that there was not a unit for checking whether the objectives were fulfilled or not.

*...I asked the members of the Board of Education: How many teachers are there who prepare the exam questions based on the curriculum objectives that you designed? They told none. After I repeated this issue for many times, later they told that now teachers become more careful about the objectives. Then I said OK, but do you check how many objectives are fulfilled? Do you have a mechanism? You have 500 objectives, but you ask only 4-5 questions among them in the ÖSYM exams. So, does this validate whether that course is learned or not? Of course, no!(P1)*

Similarly, Participant 4 questioned whether there is control mechanisms to check curriculum changes are in order. As she claimed teachers might not apply the changes as they may choose to teach in their old way.

*...We do not know whether a change really happens when a curriculum renewal occurs because we don't evaluate the curriculum development process properly. ... We change a curriculum and announce it and that is all. The rest is up to the teachers! This is not the right way. Research shows that teachers could stick to the previous curriculum for about 10 years after a curriculum change. Even after many years, teachers may have concerns about the curriculum, and they still question it. Although you change a curriculum, it is possible that nothing is changed in the classroom. (P4)*

Participant 6 claimed that there was not enough detailed information in relation to how students learned and what differences our students had. When such knowledge is not at hand, the curriculum may not work regardless of how well-designed. Moreover, the participant claimed that teachers were reluctant to provide feedback on curricula because they wanted to avoid consequences.

*...We need to understand how students learn things, but we don't have enough knowledge in relation to that. We don't know how different people and social groups learn. Why poor students can't learn? There's no answer for that. So, it doesn't matter how you design your curricula. ...Feedback is a problematic issue because we seek for a standardized feedback system. Standardized feedback leads to standardized data. We call it retributory data. You provide a feedback from school and soon you get a punishment. They question whether you or your school principal is incompetent. When the feedback punishes people, they refrain from providing true data. It is called 'fanatic ideology'. So, when MONE sends questionnaires, the results show no problem. (P6)*

Participants 2, 4 and 5 stated that they were skeptical about the competence of curriculum developers. It is claimed curriculum development committees were not founded based on quality of the members. They also reported the process of curriculum development did not have enough transparency.

*...The problem is that there aren't many competent people in the committees...(P2)*

*...I am doubtful of the competence of these people. Sometimes we don't see the ones who prepare the curriculum. Who designed it? Who wrote the objectives? There's no information. I expect that such information should be shared by virtue of transparency. Which experts from which fields contributed to curriculum development? This knowledge should be disclosed, and they should be more transparent. Also, there are problems on piloting issue. How do they conduct piloting? How do they evaluate the piloting results? Again, the problem is transparency. (P4)*

*... Diversity is not handled well since MONE tends to choose members with whom they can work easily. So, you can question whether the competence is overlooked. ...People have their own areas of expertise and doctorate degrees, and you should consider these parameters. ...Thus, qualification is important. ...If you can put curriculum development specialists in these committees just for the sake of formality, it doesn't work! (P5).*

As another fault that was reported by most of the participants was that the lack of curriculum evaluation. Participants 1, 2, 4, and 5 stated that curricula were developed without evaluating the previous ones, which was not acceptable in terms of curriculum development principles. It was also claimed that the reason behind curriculum renewals were not made clear.

*...I believe that curriculum evaluation is more important than curriculum development. ...You can't develop curricula without evaluating them! Improving a curriculum different from developing a new curriculum. We destroy everything and build a new one from the scratch. (P1)*

*...When you don't evaluate the curriculum practices in terms of advantages and disadvantages, the connection between the curricula gets disrupted. I see that it is not easy to evaluate an existing practice and improve it. Unfortunately, people find it easier to develop a new approach as if the old one doesn't exist. (P2)*

*... Curriculum evaluation is our weak point. We have this problem: we change curricula without evaluating. We put a new curriculum into practice, and after 5 months we start to prepare a new one. I mean we haven't applied the previous one properly. We haven't seen the results of it. Why? ...I haven't come across a curriculum evaluation document of MONE at least for the last 5 years. Curriculum evaluation is carried out only in master and doctorate theses. However, evaluation is a crucial issue. When we develop curricula without evaluation, what we do is not an improvement for our education because not every change is enhancement. (P4)*

*...Renewal is in the nature of curriculum development because it is a dynamic process. Therefore, we need to improve them constantly. The problem in our country is that we tend to develop curricula all over again each time. We did this mistake in 1980s- 90s and then again in 2005, and later on. ...'there was a need for a change, so we changed the curricula. I mean, the changes must be rationalized. OK, change them but bring a new perspective. They decrease the hours of lessons and add a bunch of new courses. What is the logic behind that? (P5)*

Overall, participants proposed shortcomings of curriculum development process such as the gap between the curricula and the real life, lack of mechanisms to check curriculum changes. Besides, it was stated that curricula in Turkey have been

developed without evaluating the previous curricula. Furthermore, participants reported that there is not sufficient information related to student differences and learning styles, which leads to malfunctioning curricula. Finally, incompetence of curriculum development committee members and transparency issues of the process were mentioned as serious shortcomings.

### **4.2.3. Historical Development of the Field**

In this part, results in relation to the historical evolution of curriculum development were presented. Theories and approaches of the curriculum development process and turning points of curriculum development and comparisons with other countries curriculum studies were the emergent themes.

#### **4.2.3.1. Theories and Approaches**

Participants 4 and 5 both claimed that Turkey's curriculum development approach has been influenced by some factors rather than the educational theories. These factors were economic, social, scientific, and political changes.

*...Our theoretical foundations are quite weak, almost non-existent. I think in Turkey socio-political and economic factors are more determining not theoretical. Therefore, theoretical changes cannot be enough to explain the situation in Turkey. (P4)*

*...these are all social movements. You know, for the last 5-10 years we try to adjust our curricula in order to meet the needs of Syrian immigrants. This is an example of a need for a change due to social movements. ...Therefore, curriculum changes occur based on historical, social, scientific, and technological changes. (P5)*

Participants 2 characterized early years of the Turkish Republic as pragmatic. He stated that curricula were tailored to the needs of society in 1920s and 1930s. He described these curricula as student, need and location oriented. Moreover, he asserted that curricula had behavioristic influence in 1980s while learner-centeredness was on the rise in 1990s.

*...I think it was 1926 curriculum, I am not sure. It was a solution-oriented curriculum which cared for the country needs. They contemplated on the kind of curriculum model and teacher. It was useful model unique to that time, therefore, we can say it was pragmatist. Matching the needs, practical, meeting local needs, matching student characteristics... a model valuing teacher role*

*(as teachers were highly respected) ...we can characterize 1920s and 1930s like that. Behavioristic approach is influential in 1980s. In 1990s, some curriculum models led by child-centeredness were developed. (P2)*

Participant 5 thought that until 1990s, traditional educational theories dominated Turkish education system. He also stated that primary school curricula had progressivist principles until that time. Later, learner-centeredness was influential in the 1990s. However, the participant questioned whether these student-centered theories were implemented in schools properly claiming that practices were still traditional.

*...Actually, we carried out our education based on traditional philosophies until 1990s. Maybe, in primary school we can see more progressivist ideas until 1990s because of the nature of primary school curricula. However, after 1990s the curricula become more student-centered as learner-centeredness is now popular, but this question is important: how much could we implement these theoretical ideas into practice? Feedback coming from schools and people and papers from conferences indicate that some things have still been conducted with traditional methods. Maybe, this is not so bad. (P5)*

Participant 6 had ideas similar to that of Participant 5. He stated that positivist ideas influenced the early years of the Republic as idealistic principles were crucial to teach students. Moreover, he expressed that pragmatism and functionalism were the two-leading ideology throughout Republican history. Positivism was working in the background to align our system with science.

*...In every era, Functionalism is the leading approach, I think. Functionalism and Pragmatism are the two backbones of curriculum development and our system. For what will we raise our citizens? The answer is in Pragmatism. What is the function of this? What will it correspond to in society? The answers to this one lead us to Functionalism. Here, there is a positivist perceptive in the background in order to match or align our system with science. Positivism is dominant as the aim is to avoid religious dogmas. (P6)*

Both Participant 5 and 6 thought that it is not possible to have just one educational theory in the curriculum. They suggested that we need to have a more holistic perspective of understand the influences of different philosophies and approaches.

*...There is no single philosophy of a curriculum. I mean, a curriculum can have a main philosophy but there is more than one. If a curriculum has only one philosophy, it means that there's a problem with that curriculum. (P5)*

*...It is not possible to talk about a single philosophy in an education system.  
...Other nations do not have a single established philosophy as well. We can't*

*name the philosophy clearly. ...It is not wise to expect a monolith and consistent educational philosophy in education. (P6)*

Furthermore, both Participant 2 and 6 claimed that Constructivist approach which is the leading philosophy of 2005 curricula were not implemented properly in the curricula. Therefore, the participants defined this approach as false-Constructivism.

*...In 2000s, Constructivism was discussed in education, but it was like a fake Constructivism. Unfortunately, we have been suffering for it since then. Concepts were correct but the implementation was wrong. (P2)*

*...In 2000s, Constructivism got into our educational system with the Chaos theory. However, it didn't get any correspondence and education became a mess like a battlefield. Actually, the problem was not Constructivism itself. A war started between the theory behind Constructivism and Positivism. This background theory can be Chaos theory as I said earlier. (P6)*

Overall results revealed that both pragmatist and idealist philosophies were influential until 1980s in Turkey's education. It was reported that behaviorism was effective in curricula especially in 1980s. Later, cognitivist approach and learner-centeredness gained importance in 1990s. It was stated that the influence of constructivist theory in the curricula was obvious after 2000. However, it was also reported that constructivist principles were not utilized properly in the curricula. Furthermore, it was claimed that rather than educational theories and approaches, political, socio-cultural, and economic changes had more influence on Turkey's curriculum development processes.

#### **4.2.3.2. Turning Points**

Participant 1 marked 1968 and 2005 curricula as a turning point in Turkish curriculum development history. He stated that the curriculum of 1968 was important as it was based on Turkey's reality. 2005 curriculum was pointed by the participant as it included a comprehensive change for curriculum development history.

*...1962-1968 curricula are very important. All educators and senior members of the Board of Education always speak of it. It took 8 years to develop the curriculum. After all that hard work, a curriculum based on the reality of the country was designed. It was implemented after piloted in many schools. Thus, this curriculum has always been cited as an ideal example. ...Curriculum studies which started in 2004 created a huge impact. Both the World Bank*

*project and the efforts to join the European Union had a key role in this process. (P1)*

Participant 2 stated that establishment of education faculties in 1965 had significant influence in the development of the field. Also, Selahattin Ertürk and Fatma Varış were regarded as very significant as they had crucial influence in curriculum development studies in Turkey.

*...The establishment of education faculties in 1965 had a significant contribution to the field's development. Also, Hacettepe University's Faculty of Education has considerable contribution to the field. I mean, there are two very important names: Selahattin Ertürk from Hacettepe University and Fatma Varış from Ankara University. They've both created an ecole. ...We can say that curriculum development has entered our literature thanks to their studies. Moreover, the curriculum thought that was influential in 1980s were the product of Selahattin Ertürk's students and their thoughts and approach. (P2)*

Participant 3 asserted the Law of Unification and the 1980's coup as a turning point in Turkey's educational history. She stated that the Law of Unification has secularized the education, so it was a milestone. Moreover, the participant argued that the coup of 1980 is another turning point because the education has started to be more conservative since then.

Participant 4 claimed that a curriculum is the products of a country's political, social, economic, cultural, and international interactions. Therefore, the developments in those areas had a direct effect on curricula. The participant stated that socio-political and economic (crisis) effects should be analyzed in detailed.

*...Curricula are the products of countries. They are a reflection of that country's social, political, economic, cultural, or international transactions. Whatever happens in such areas is reflected in the curriculum. So, we need to look from a wider perspective. For example, coups have affected curricula quite intensely in Turkey. ...Critical points of Turkish political history have serious effects on educational programs. You need to see the ground on which the curriculum stands. ...Moreover, economic crisis had significant effects on curricula, and this wasn't investigated enough. 2001 crisis, 1999 earthquake... These are our transitions. Since we don't have our own curriculum development model or theory, we don't have turning points in theoretically. (P4)*

Similarly, Participant 5 stated that historical, social, scientific advancements in the world affect the curriculum. As an example, the participant gave the Space Race in 1950s, which led to curriculum renewals all around the world as well as in our country.

Additionally, he reported 2005 curriculum renewals had a similar concern as curricula were adjusted to keep up with the world.

*...After World War II and the start of the Space Race, the need for curriculum renewal emerged. You cannot separate yourself from the world, so the developments affected our education as well. In 1997 curriculum studies, the concern was to have more quality teachers and it was more skill-based just like in the USA. Seven cardinal principles, they say, health, manpower, etc. Curricula based these principles. Similarly, 2005 curricula aimed at raising students who think more critically and who learn by doing. As Behaviorism has lost its popularity, some other theories have started to be dominant. These are all social movements. For the last 5-10 years, we are trying to figure out what to do with the curricula in order to meet the needs of Syrian immigrants. ...In 1980-90s technology advanced, so technology and computer courses had to get into our curricula. (P5)*

Participant 6 shared the thoughts on America's effect on our education providing the same Space Race example. He also added that education was political; thus, it was affected by ideological and political development around the world.

*After 1950s, we took part in the cold war as well. We opened our Science High Schools in 1960s, which was similar to America's movement. The aim was to raise individuals who were self-governing and technologically superior. ...They opened science high schools after Russians sent Sputnik. Why? They think they were behind the Russians and wanted to progress. ...Therefore, educational programs feed on ideology, which is not a bad thing as people think. There is no other choice because there is no such a thing as 'neutral education'. Education is always political.*

Additionally, Participant 6 stated that there were no super turning points in education, but there were changes and transformations. He claimed that the declaration of the Republic and Alphabet Reform, maybe even 80s coup could be regarded as milestones. Other changes should be considered as the normal course of education-ideology-politics cycle.

*...80s is a milestone. With the 'neutralization' motto, education was politicized. Education has evolved into something else in terms of conjuncture policy from 1980s to 2000s. ...I also don't think that there are super turning points. I mean, Declaration of Republic was a super milestone. Alphabet Revolution is another. The others are just minor changes and transitions. 80s coup is important turning point even though it can't be considered as a super milestone. (P6)*

Overall, the findings revealed that turning points for curriculum development in Turkey were the Law of Unification, Space Races in 1950s, establishment of education faculties, 1968 and 2005 comprehensive curriculum changes, coups and economic crisis.

#### **4.2.3.3. Comparisons**

In terms of curriculum development strategies, participants compared Turkey's curriculum development style with that of America and the European countries. Participant 2 placed Turkey at one edge as having the most centralized education while he placed America on the other end.

*America is one of the countries with the most decentralized education. Curriculum serves as a suggestion there. ...They have guidelines within the states, but these are too general in the form of standards. ...determining the content is up to the schools. Therefore, curriculum development is activated the most there. ...We, on the other hand, having a centralized education system, define everything, and so that the teachers should be only the implementer. The school, the state and the city are eliminated from the process. Only the ministry and the teacher could take part in the process. European countries can be considered as in the middle of these two edges. They have more detailed framework, but the design of the curriculum is still left to schools. (P2)*

Participant 4 claimed that being good at curriculum development and curriculum change was closely linked to being good at other areas such as economy. She added that Turkey has always had a rough path in terms of its politics and geopolitical position. Therefore, this country would benefit from solutions original to itself other than solutions borrowed from other countries. Moreover, Participant 4 claimed that European countries such as Finland and Sweden have sophisticated strategies to manage a curriculum or paradigm change. She suggested that Turkey should analyze the advantages of disadvantages that the countries having centralized and decentralized education go through.

*...Pasi Sahlberg, a Finnish educator and writer, explains the situation like that: we are good at all areas such as women rights and economy. He says we don't have unemployment and discrimination problem. When you progress on these areas and you get the freedom of speech, then your education system gets better automatically. Actually, there is chicken-egg relationship between education and other areas. ...Turkey has a long rough path, full of bumps. It has always been, and I think it will always be like that because we live in a difficult region having troubled neighbors. We have our unique conditions, so*

*solutions of other countries do not work on our education. Thus, following America or England doesn't remediate us. ...In Sweden, they switched to decentralization. It is a painful process, not a quick one. It's a serious change which requires a strategy of transition. This change has started in 80s, but centralization has not been over completely. It's utopic, it cannot disappear completely. There should be a balance in centralization and decentralization. ...In Sweden, municipalities pay the schools. In Finland, the case is the same. Finland has announced a curriculum change in 2015-2016. They're trying to make this curriculum change in 3-4 years. I think my Turkish colleagues should examine their studies; they have many papers on this issue. ...However, in Turkey this is not the case. We change a curriculum and announce it and that is all. The rest is up to the teachers! This is not the right way. (P4)*

Participants 5 negated the idea that Turkey is not a suitable country to have decentralized curriculum development providing their reasons and comparisons with other nations. The participant opposed to the common belief that Turkey could not have a decentralized education as it owned a crowded population and as it may harm its national integrity.

*Isn't America bigger than us? Is Germany smaller than us? Or France and Spain? No! So, it is not rational to link this issue to the size of the population. So, our population is big; we are a large country, etc. These cannot be a reason for having a centralized education. ...For the national integrity issue... Was our country divided because of Village Institutes? I see that our population was not that big back then but basing this issue on such weak justifications is weak, I think. (P5)*

Participant 6 compared Turkey with other nations in terms of the gap between school and the society's reality. He claimed that Turkey had the biggest gap because the curricula did not conform with the truth of the majority of the population.

*...The biggest gap between the school and the society is in our country because everything is designed according to language, culture, and perception of the middle class. And no one sees that. Therefore, a gap originates between the school and society since the size of middle class is small in Turkey. Let's take Finland as an example: the things students experience in school and outside the school are the same. The schools tell you what to do in different situations, and when you do it in the real life, it works. In Finland, their goals inside and outside the school are quite the same. In Turkey, this is not the case. Actually, Anglo-Saxon countries experience the same thing with us. For instance, America and England. They have similar difficulties. (P6)*

Overall results indicated that curriculum development in Turkey has the most centralized process compared to American and European style of curriculum development. It was also stated that Turkey did not have any strategy or vision for

curriculum change unlike some European countries such as Finland and Sweden which have a very systematic curriculum development process. Also, the gap between the curricula and the real life was reported as the biggest compared to European countries. Lastly, the participants suggested that reforms of other countries should be examined but borrowing such reforms should be avoided as Turkey needs unique reforms and solutions in its education.

### **4.3. Summary of Findings**

Most of the participants think the process of curriculum development does not handled effectively. The curricula are developed in a very short time period, which effects curriculum quality considerably. Also, the management of change is missing as there is no mechanisms to check whether and/or how curriculum change occurs in reality. Furthermore, most of the participants are very skeptical about the competence of the members of Board of Education and the curriculum development committee members. It was implied that members are chosen among people who are easy to work with. Besides, lack of transparency of the curriculum development process was stressed as an alarming issue.

Moreover, participants criticize teacher exclusion in curriculum development process. Most of the participants think a curriculum is not likely to succeed if teachers are not placed at the center of curriculum development. They demand for a real teacher inclusion that is not only for show. Moreover, participants are worried that teachers are becoming idle day by day as they get used to ready-made and very detailed curricula. Furthermore, it can be concluded that almost all of the participants complain about the centralized education system of Turkey. Although they admit centralization can be useful at a point, too much centralization harms our education at unknown rates. Because of central curriculum development, local needs are not determined well, so the curricula fail to fulfill its purpose.

It is also observed that when developing curriculum in Turkey, two main issue were referred by the participants. The first one is the gap between the curriculum and Turkey's reality. Participants stated that developed curricula do not match the society's

reality. That is why they are generally ineffective. To overcome this problem, participants suggest that the curriculum should be tailored to the real needs of people. Secondly, curriculum development principles should be employed after careful examinations. It was implied that we employ these principles such as scope, sequence, etc. without much contemplation, so we need to deal with them in a more scientific way.

In relation to the participants' curriculum development approach, one of the participants had some traditional ideas compared to other participants as he used the word 'sculpt' for providing student guidance. Traditional curriculum thinking which includes perennialist and behaviorist philosophies suggests that student learning is controlled and shaped by the teacher. To the contrary, most of the participants defended a more progressive approach advocating local and flexible curriculum development approach. They claimed that since progressive curriculum values individual, cultural, and physical differences, localized and flexible curriculum would be more effective to meet the diverse learner needs.

Most of the participants agree that actual curriculum development studies in Turkey were started after 1950s and accelerated in 1980s. The fluctuations and conflicting ideologies have led to ineffective curricula. Making students adopt the new regime and meeting the needs of the society were the two conflicting goals of curricula. Besides, participants showed dissatisfaction that Turkey has been under the influence of other country's especially America, which has refrained us having our own educational system and meeting our own needs. In addition, the religious intrusion into the curriculum has criticized harshly by the participants.

Furthermore, participants were not satisfied with the curriculum development process as it lacked transparency and developers' competency. Another issue was the lack of control and feedback mechanisms. The curricula were not checked whether they work properly or not. Besides, they criticized that curricula have not been evaluated before a renewal. The leading political parties were blamed for introducing a new curriculum package from the scratch without letting data accumulation.

When educational theories and approaches were examined, participants believe educational theories have minor influence on our curricula since politics, economy, and socio-cultural effects have directed our education more dominantly. Moreover, participants agree that Constructivism did not work for our education as we did not conceptualize it properly. Also, our infrastructure and teacher education were insufficient to handle this new change. The common belief among the participants imply that Turkey's curricula have had traditional-behavioristic elements since the 1980s no matter what the curriculum documents say.

As for the turning points, political and economic crisis were determining factors in curriculum changes. 80s coup was highlighted as an important turning point. Also, Space Race between America and Russia had influence on Turkey's curriculum development studies. As mentioned earlier, America's impact on our education becomes more obvious.

When participants made comparisons, they considered Turkey as having too much centralization compared to other nations. It was implied that it would be wiser to give up some of this centralization in order to have effective curriculum that meets learner needs. The reasons why we cannot have a decentralized education was considered as groundless 'excuses'. Finally, Turkey's curriculum change process was claimed to be unsystematic compared to European countries.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

#### 5.1. Discussion and Conclusions

This section includes a discussion of the results in relation to the relevant literature as well as offering analyses and implications for the issues reported in the results section.

##### 5.1.1 Curriculum Development Process in Turkey

The overview of the results gathered from the curriculum document and participant interviews indicated that the process of curriculum development can be discussed under the themes of process and participants, centralized curriculum development, and specific considerations.

The process of curriculum development was reported as problematic by the participants. The duration of curriculum development process and the vision for curriculum change were mentioned as the main issues. It was mentioned as a concerning issue that curricula have been prepared in a very short period of time such as three-to-six months especially in the last two decades, which can lead to incompetent and low-quality curricula. The studies of Akşit (2007) and Bıkmaz (2006) support this argument as they reported that curriculum reform in 2005-2006 was rushed and the new curriculum was not reviewed in a sufficient time. Similarly, in their evaluation report Gömleksiz et al. (2005) found out that the 2005 curriculum were developed in such a short time that teachers did not get required training on the changes. When the curriculum development durations are examined, 1968 curriculum becomes prominent as mentioned by the participants and other researchers who investigate the topic of curriculum history. The significance of 1968 curriculum is

linked to its long preparation and piloting period (Arslan, 2007; Bilasa, 2012; Gelen & Beyazıt, 2007; Orakçı, Durnalı & Özkan, 2018). However, this instance is the one and only example in the history of Turkish Republic. Interestingly, although the merits of comprehensive preparation period are highly praised by many, there has been little attempt to conduct a similar curriculum development process since 1968. In addition, the management of process is another issue which requires careful handling. curriculum development process needs constant feedback and collaboration of different stakeholders. Since the education is a huge sophisticated system, measuring the outputs of the curricula requires analyzing a vast amount of data. Thus, it takes a sufficient time and effort to evaluate curriculum effectiveness. However, as the present study revealed that the ‘management of change’ is not planned and evaluated, and it led to low-recognition of the effects of curriculum changes. As he investigated Turkish educational reforms, Akşit (2007) validates this thought stating that curriculum development should be a careful systematic process which requires cooperation as comprehensive curriculum changes would take decades to accomplish. Therefore, it could be useful to establish a vision for curriculum change formally and set a minimum curriculum execution and evaluation time in order to manage the curriculum change process effectively.

Moreover, the interviews data indicated that there were concerns about the qualifications of the curriculum development committee members. They mentioned the issue of diversity in these committees as the members tend to be chosen from particular universities. Political and ideological concerns were asserted to have importance when appointing committee members as they were chosen based on whether they are easy to work with or not. However, the competence of these members is claimed to be overlooked as there is not any solid criteria for member qualifications and the selection process. Such topics were mentioned as taboos since no one has been willing to negotiate these issues for a long time. Document analysis supports this thought since any detailed information related to committee members and the curriculum development process cannot be found in curriculum documents. In addition, the transparency was mentioned as another issue as the establishing the committees and the process has not been conducted in full disclosure. Transparency and qualification issues were also reported in ERG Educational Programs Background

Report (2017) stating that it is a serious problem that the people who prepared the curricula and their qualifications have not been disclosed. It should be noted that lack of transparency can increase mistrust to the qualifications of committee members and the curriculum development process. In his study, Erdoğan (2011) explored the function of the Board of Education and he stated that choosing members for this prestigious institution have an utmost significance. In line with the results of this study he suggested that in order to ensure diversity and quality, some of the members should be determined by other institutions such as TÜBİTAK or HEC instead of MONE appointments.

As having criteria to be in the curriculum development committees has such significance, the interview data offered some qualifications required for these members. Among these qualifications, having field experience and a doctoral degree was emphasized. Field experience is reported as crucial in order to reduce the gap between the designed curricula and the reality. It was claimed that having a teaching experience could give committee members insights into real life curriculum practices. It was also criticized that doctorate graduates of Educational Science Departments were not benefited enough in the curriculum development process. This can also be related to the diversity issue since the participants were chosen from similar backgrounds.

The findings of this study suggested that teacher participation was another problematic issue in the curriculum development process. In the document analysis it was revealed that teachers had more curriculum development role especially at the early stages of the republic. Since only the course and the topics were listed as curriculum, most of the planning and design was teacher's job. In 1968 curriculum, it was highlighted that the best plan is the one that teachers develop with his/her students according to student needs and interests (MEB, 1968). However, when curriculum development was considerably influenced by American curriculum development studies after 1960s, very detailed curriculum documents were produced leaving little room for teacher contribution. Ertürk (1986) validates this argument stating that a fundamental problem in Turkey's education system is that teachers cannot participate in the curriculum development process. Öztürk (2009) states teacher's job is strictly prescribed in

Turkish education, and teachers are not allowed to go beyond framework determined by the curriculum and textbooks. Therefore, teacher's role remains as the implementer of the curriculum developed by others.

Moreover, the interview data suggested, considering teacher role as a technician was also a related concern of the participants. It was asserted that being a technician or an executer of a curriculum not only degrades the importance of teacher's role in education but also it may lead to teacher idleness since teachers might become less interested in curriculum development issues in time. This is supported by the study of Öztürk (2011) as he stated the power granted to teachers in curriculum development process is too limited, therefore, teacher's individual or group initiations for curriculum development is discouraged. Thus, teachers eventually accept this notion becoming reluctant on curriculum development studies. Can (2009) supported this idea as the found out in his study that teachers think that curriculum development is the responsibility of MONE rather than teachers.

In addition, the issue of "teachers' sticking to the old curricula" was referred as one of the most significant issues in education system. The interview data highlighted that this problem has occurred many times in our history, even recently in 2005 curriculum changes and the reason behind that can be low curriculum literacy. Many studies that validate low level of curriculum literacy of teachers and insufficient in-service training (Çelikkaya & Kürümlüoğlu, 2018; Dinç & Doğan, 2010; Duru & Korkmaz, 2010; Kırmızı & Akkaya, 2009). When teachers do not understand the changes in the curriculum and the logic behind them, it will be difficult for them to adopt and the implement the curriculum effectively (Bıkmaz, 2006). Supporting this argument Ünver & Erdamar (2015) assert that reforms are made one after another in Turkey and teachers cannot fully comprehend curriculum changes, which leads to chaos in education. In their study, they also found out that while some teachers were informed only after the curriculum changes without participating in curriculum development processes, some of them did not heard about the changes at all and continued to implement the old curriculum for 1 or 2 years.

### **5.1.2 Centralized Curriculum Development**

The present study revealed that Turkey's education system does not have a balance between centralization and decentralization. Education can be thought as two systems intertwined into one another, the bigger one is the central part of education including the Ministry of Education and the Board of Education. At the other extreme, there is the teacher interacting with its students within the specific school of a region. Both systems require inputs and outputs in terms of educational programs. The concern of the bigger centralized system is the improvement of the general education level in the country while the small system concerns with sustainment of the educational plans regarding the regional, socio-economic, etc. differences. These two systems cannot substitute for one another as either one of them cannot perform the other one's duty. In this case, the expected outputs of the central system are not achieved since it is not possible for the curricula to include the dynamics of each smaller system which consists of countless of different fractions. Similar to this argument Doll (1996) states that teachers can determine the most appropriate knowledge, skills, and learning experiences for the students better than the central curriculum regardless of how well a curriculum is developed. Therefore, to solve this issue teachers must be provided with enough flexibility to compensate local differences in order to achieve the educational goals and attainments. In addition, interview data suggested that decentralization is a requirement for Turkish education since local needs cannot be determined and met, which leads to low student success. When developing the curricula, generic student data are used, thus, they may not answer needs of specific student groups. Mosaic structure of Turkish nation should be taken into consideration since it plays an important role in the diverse needs of the country. This idea was also reported by Gözütok (2003) as she asserted that Turkey has experienced some problems resulting from its highly central educational system. Ministry of Education initiated decentralized curriculum development studies in Ankara in 1995 in order to meet local needs and student interests better. However, this initiative could not go beyond some piloting studies in a few districts of Ankara. In his study, Yüksel (2004) stated that curriculum development experts and school principals preferred curriculums should be developed locally granting more power to provinces in 1990s. His study also revealed that there were opposing ideas which raise concerns for local

curriculum development practices. Similarly, there is only one participant who adopts centralized curriculum development approach in the present study. Therefore, it can be concluded that there are still concerns about decentralization even though moving towards a more decentralized education is the dominant viewpoint. After 2000s it was reported by interview data that centralization in education is increased in the ministry with very detailed curriculum documents. Kaya, Çetin and Yıldırım (2012) investigated centralized curriculum practices by analyzing teacher experiences. In line with the present study, they stated that “centralized curriculum is not highly sensitive to students’ characteristics” (p.110) and teachers need to differentiate instruction based on student level and needs. Former director of the Board of Education, Erdoğan (2014) shares similar ideas as he criticizes that the Ministry of Education is gradually becoming more centralized whereas it should adopt the principle of ‘separation of powers.’ In 2014 government introduced new regulations which transform the Board of Education into an advisory organ depriving its legislative powers. It can be said that this is against the founding purpose of the Board of Education since the aim was to establish independent organs in education system similar to separation of powers for legislative, executive and judicial matters. He suggested that stripping the Board of Education from its powers is a concerning issue as it may harm the independency of this institution. As mentioned in the literature review, America desisted from centralized curriculum development after 1980s for the sake of both fidelity of reforms and democratization of curriculum development realizing that achieving the goals is very difficult in centralized curriculum development (Clune, 1993; Macdonald, 2003). When America realized this fact in 1980s with the help of many research studies, it is strange that Turkey insists on centralization in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. At last, participants were not totally against the idea of centralization. However, the degree of centralization was reported as excessive in Turkey. Thus, the issue of decentralization should be contemplated well while preserving the advantageous of centralized education. In his study, Leung (2004) points out that decentralization is not a remedy for enhancing the quality of educational programs. Therefore, analyses to attain the balance between centralization and decentralization should be conducted in order to achieve the optimal curriculum development approach. These analyses should be done by independent institutions and experts of the field. As suggested by the participants,

forming a general framework for education and localizing the rest of the curriculum development process can be a useful strategy for Turkey.

Another issue is curriculum development principles. Among other principles, level of specificity or scope is reported as problematic. As participants stated the level of specificity for the curricula has not been paid too much consideration since in each reform the scope has presented a fluctuating trend either being generic or too much detailed. This may be because there is no clear vision for the design elements of a curriculum, and since curriculum changes happen too often in Turkey without comprehensive research and evaluation processes before introducing a new reform. Therefore, it is not possible to mention consistency, which deter the curriculum development process in general in the long run.

### **5.1.3. Some Remarks on Curricula**

The results of the data analysis suggested that political effects on curricula have appeared as an issue of curriculum development in Turkey. Document analysis and the interviews revealed that curricula did not have an integrity and determination in Turkish history due to different factors such as political, social and economic ones. In most cases, political changes and struggles resulted in curriculum reforms. Declaration of the Republic, military coups, global incidents such as Sputnik etc. led to changes in the curricula. This thought coincides with the ideas provided by different scholars in the literature review. Wraga and Hlebowitsh (2003) and Young (2003) confirm this argument reporting that educational reforms made by politicians and their abrupt decisions yields crisis in curriculum development field. Although it is natural that politics influence curriculum reforms in a country, it may not be normal that the first party to be affected from a political change is education, which leads to the idea that the success of a curriculum change is subjected to its doer. In their study Grossman, Onkol, and Sands (2007) found out that teachers believe that education in Turkey is 'too political' (p.7). In another study Gökmenoğlu and Eret (2011) found out that political influences on curriculum development studies were reported as harmful for the field. Moreover, in line with the present study, Usta (2015) reported that curricula are utilized as a tool to impose the policies of ruling parties in Turkey. Similarly, Topal

(2020) stated that after 1980 coup, ruling parties changed frequently together with curricula since each ruling party aimed at raising citizens in line with its own philosophy. To prevent this, education should have predetermined policies for a consistent progress, and it should allow for the accumulation of knowledge. Supporting this finding Babadoğan (1992) stated that educational policy should be a national policy independent from the policies of ruling parties.

Another issue is that Turkey does not have its unique curriculum development philosophy and model. Document analysis and interview data revealed that there is not a consistent curriculum development approach or model used in the designed curricula. Demirel (1992) validates this claim as he indicated that there has not been any consistent and viable curriculum development model until the 1990s. In addition, it was criticized that Turkey has mostly relied on other countries models copying some of European and American models. This is supported by the literature since Erişen (1998) indicated Turkish scholars were influenced by Taba-Tyler model of curriculum development. As suggested by the document analysis and the interview data, a model named EARGED was developed by the Department of National Educational Research and Development for curriculum development in 1993 and it was praised by the participant as it was a unique and useful model produced as a result of a comprehensive study. However, this model has not been utilized widely by the curriculum development committees (Bilasa, 2012). Results of the present study also revealed that there are some models provided in 2005-2006 and 2007-2008 curriculum changes. However, document analysis could not provide explanatory information on how these models were designed. In line with the present study, ERG (2018) report states that it is not specified that the curricula are designed based on a specific model; thus, evaluation of curriculum effectiveness would be complicated and open-to-interpretation in such curricula. Therefore, it is possible to say that the inconsistency of curriculum development models that was mentioned in 1990s persists even today. Moreover, curriculum philosophy was reported as a missing component of curriculum development studies. Both document analysis and interview data suggested that curriculum studies were weak in terms of manifesting the educational philosophy of the country. The reason for this is explained in ERG (2017) as the report suggested that curriculum development have not been regarded as a regular procedure of Turkish

education; therefore, a consistent curriculum development philosophy has not been achieved. In addition, Mala (2014) indicated that a coherent educational philosophy could not be employed in the Republican era and it led to long-lasting problems in Turkish education. Similar to the argument for curriculum development models, philosophy of education was also claimed to be adopted from other countries as revealed by the interview data. This is in line with the study of Gülbahar's (2006) who explored philosophical foundations of Turkish education. She stated that Turkish education was influenced by German educational philosophies in 1940s and later American philosophy of curriculum development after 1950s. Similarly, Yılmaz (2017) reported that Turkey is far from formulating its own philosophy for teacher education as some philosophies and practices in education are praised only because they belong to Western culture.

Lastly, data analysis suggested that curriculum evaluation studies take place mostly in master and doctorate thesis, and they do not lead to any educational action or enforcement. Additionally, the number of comprehensive curriculum evaluation studies were reported to be limited. It was emphasized that developing curricula without evaluating the previous ones is not an effective strategy as the possibility to make the same mistakes increases in the next curriculum reform. Without evaluation it cannot be possible to recognize whether a curriculum work efficiently or not. In line with the present study, Gökmenoğlu (2014) found out that the scope of curriculum development studies in Turkey is too narrow and these studies are limited to single course evaluations. He also stated that curriculum evaluations are conducted by graduate students who do not have any authority to make related curriculum changes.

#### **5.1.4 Theory, Approaches, and Milestones of Curriculum Development**

Document analysis and the interview data suggested that Turkey's education was influenced by social, economic, and political changes more than the effects of educational theories in the Republican Period. As discussed in the previous section, particularly political effects on curricula are quite visible. For example, changes in the curricula occurred after economic crises and social changes such as Syrian immigrants. Therefore, when curriculum development studies are examined, the present study

suggested that various factors should be analyzed in a wide angle. Akşit (2007) and Baker (2015) advocate this idea claiming that analyzing political and ideological structures is crucial when studying the history of curriculum development in a country. It is emphasized that national and global patterns must be disclosed to comprehend the curriculum changes, and analyses in the historical manner is essential to interpret the curriculum development thought.

In terms of educational theory and approaches Gözütok (2003) and Mala (2014) indicated that while pragmatism and progressivism were the dominant theories at the early years of the Turkish Republic, the execution of the curricula suggested essentialist and perennialist practices. Similarly, Gülbahar (2006) found out in his study idealist and positivist philosophies created conflicting ideas at the early ages of republic, which led to long-lasting problems in the history of Turkish education. However, scientific and pragmatic principles were also influential to improve educational level of the citizens. Similarly, Şimşek, Küçük, and Topkaya (2012) claimed that education was utilized as tool to infuse the new regime into the minds of citizens implying idealistic philosophy, and pragmatism and positivism were also reported as effective in the educational thought. They also added that French and Turkish education had similarities as they both advocate one-goal, one-curriculum, and one-language principle. Similar to these studies of the literature, the present study also indicated that early years of the Turkish Republic was characterized by both progressivist and idealist approaches. Since the aim was to meet needs of the country such as increasing schooling and literacy rate at the beginning of the republic, pragmatic principles were involved in the curricula. However, idealistic principles were reported as more dominant leaving pragmatic side in the background as the grand design was to make Turkish people adopt the republican regime until the 1950s.

From the Second World War to 2000s, Gülbahar (2006), Mala (2011), and Şimşek and Kartal (2019) asserted in their studies that essentialism and idealism were the leading theories in Turkish education. Therefore, behaviorist influences were dominant while some pragmatic elements were also included in the curricula. There is little difference between the literature and the document analysis as curriculum documents suggested that pragmatist and progressivist principles were prevalent in the curriculums of the

Republican period. However, this also contradicts with the interview data since the participant stated that traditional approaches such as essentialist and behaviorist practices were influential until 2000s. This may yield the existence of a gap between the curriculums and their implementation. Additionally, the most cited opinion was that especially after 1960s and mostly in 1980s behaviorism was very dominant in Turkish education. As Pinar (2008) stated Positivism and Structuralism were influential in America after the Sputnik incident, it is possible to say that Turkey has experienced the effects of this incident in curriculum development field. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a parallelism between the trends in the world and Turkey on educational theory and approaches. Although learner-centeredness gained importance in 1990s, curricula were reported as traditional. Moreover, the data analysis suggested that constructivism, which constituted the core of the 2005 curricula, was referred as 'false' since the true nature of this approach has not been reflected in the curricula. This finding was supported with many studies that claim such comprehensive changes were not discussed with the stakeholders given sufficient time and teacher training procedure were not adequate for them to adapt to the new changes (Akşit, 2007; Kırmızı & Akkaya, 2009).

In relation to the milestones of curriculum development in Turkey, interview data revealed that the Declaration of Republic, Alphabet Reform, Law of Unification, establishment of education faculties, Space Race and America's effect, 1968 curriculum and lastly 2005 curriculum change can be marked as significant turning points. New regime, alphabet reform and the Law of Unification were important steps in Turkish history to democratize the education. Furthermore, the establishment of education faculties in 1960s can be regarded as a major breakthrough especially in curriculum development field. It was followed by sending graduates of education faculties to pursue graduate studies in America. Space Races also has substantial influence in our education leading to many changes such as opening Science High Schools and having behavioristic and essentialist effects on curricula. 2005-2006 curriculum change may be reported as significant in history since it has brought substantial changes in terms of curriculum theory and approach. Similar to the present study Kenan (2013) reported the turning points of education as the Law of Unification,

the Alphabet Reform, Village Institutes, 2005 curriculum reforms and secondary school reorganization.

## **5.2. Implications for Practice**

Curriculum development is a controversial yet reserved issue that is not scrutinized carefully. The results of this study suggested that curriculum development in Turkey has an irregular progress throughout the history. In order to have consistent curriculum development practices, the history of the field and the past practices should be examined thoroughly. This study may indicate that having a curriculum development philosophy is very crucial for the cohesion of curriculum studies. Therefore, documents can be produced in the form of codes and guidelines that specifies the exact rules on curriculum development process. This may help to increase transparency in curriculum development process specifying by whom, when, and how curricula should be developed.

Moreover, this study revealed that the educational reforms are often made isolated not being in a successive nature. This leads to unawareness in relation to the success of curricula. To overcome this problem, effective feedback mechanisms should be employed. Also, curriculum evaluation studies carried out by the authorities (not only by graduate students) should be made a routine part of curriculum development with detailed documentation. This will help accumulation of knowledge, so that the progress of curriculum development can be tracked easily.

In addition, the concerning issue of the qualifications of the curriculum development committee members can be addressed by setting clear requirements to be a committee member.

Lastly, the results of this study indicated that decentralization of curriculum development studies is vital to increase the success of the curricula. Improving the curriculum success can only be achieved by teacher participant in the curriculum development process. Thus, the Board of Education can delegate some of its powers to local authorities, i.e., local committees mostly made of teachers. An initiative similar to the one in 1995 directive can be started to localize curriculum development

studies. This time elaborate planning and sufficient piloting time should be provided to gather comprehensible data for this work.

### **5.3. Implications for Further Research**

In this study, curriculum development practices were examined through curriculum documents and academicians' perspectives. Issues of curriculum development process, curriculum approach and theories, and turning points of curriculum development were studied in a historical manner. However, this study reflects only the viewpoints of curriculum development academicians; thus, it would be better if a further study can be conducted including teacher perspective and thoughts of the Board of Education members. Therefore, the results of this study can be extended allowing comparisons among those participants, which yields a more comprehensive data on curriculum development in Turkey.

Instead of carrying out studies on the instructional part of curricula, more research should be carried out on the theoretical, philosophical, and historical foundations of curriculum development with a broader perspective. In order to interpret and solve long-lasting problems of the field, it is recommended to conduct more detailed comparative historical analyses of curriculum development.

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## APPENDICES

### A. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ  
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20 Şubat 2020

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Cennet Engin DEMİR

Danışmanlığını yaptığınız İrem KÜRKCÜ'nün "Cumhuriyetin Kuruluş Yılları ve Sonrasında Türkiye'de Program Geliştirme Çalışmaları: Bir Olgubilim Çalışması" başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülmüş ve 082-ODTU-2020 protokol numarası ile onaylanmıştır.

Saygılarımızla bilgilerinize sunarız.

  
Prof. Dr. Mine MISIRLISOY  
Başkan

  
Prof. Dr. Tolga CAN  
Üye

Doç. Dr. Pinar KAYGAN  
Üye

  
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Ali Emre TURGUT  
Üye

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Şerife SEVİNÇ  
Üye

  
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Müge GÜNDÜZ  
Üye

  
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Süreyya Özcan KABASAKAL  
Üye

## B. INFORMED CONSENT FORM

### Gönüllü Katılım Formu

Bu çalışma, ODTÜ Eğitim Programları ve Öğretim Bölümü Yüksek Lisans öğrencisi İrem Kürkçü tarafından Prof. Dr. Cennet Engin-Demir danışmanlığında yüksek lisans tezi kapsamında yürütülmektedir. Araştırmanın amacı, Türkiye’de Cumhuriyetin kuruluş yılları ve sonrasında oluşturulan eğitim programlarını ve program geliştirme sürecini araştırmaktır. Araştırmaya katılmayı kabul etmeniz halinde sizden yaklaşık 1 saat sürecek bir görüşme yapmanız beklenmektedir. Görüşmede açık uçlu sorularla konu hakkında bilgi ve fikirlerin elde edilmesi amaçlanmaktadır. Veri kaybı olmaması ve daha sonra içerik analizi ile değerlendirilmek üzere cevaplarınızın ses kaydı alınacaktır. Araştırmaya katılımınız tamamen gönüllülük temelinde olmalıdır. Cevaplarınız tamamıyla gizli tutulacak ve sadece araştırmacılar tarafından değerlendirilecektir. Görüşme kişisel rahatsızlık verecek sorular içermemektedir. Ancak, katılım sırasında sorulardan herhangi bir nedenden ötürü kendinizi rahatsız hissederseniz görüşmeyi yarıda bırakmayı talep edebilirsiniz. Bu çalışmaya katıldığınız için şimdiden teşekkür ederiz. Çalışma hakkında daha fazla bilgi almak için Eğitim Programları ve Öğretim Bölümü Anabilim Başkanı Prof. Dr. Cennet Engin-Demir (E-posta: [cennet@metu.edu.tr](mailto:cennet@metu.edu.tr) ) ya da yüksek lisans öğrencisi İrem Kürkçü (E-posta: [irem.bicer@metu.edu.tr](mailto:irem.bicer@metu.edu.tr) ) ile iletişim kurabilirsiniz.

**Yukarıdaki bilgileri okudum ve bu araştırmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılıyorum.**

İsim Soyad

Tarih

İmza

\_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

## C. INTERVIEW FORM

### GÖRÜŞME FORMU

Merhaba,

Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Eğitim Programları ve Öğretim Anabilim Dalı'nda yüksek lisans öğrencisiyim. Türkiye'de Cumhuriyet'in kuruluş yılları ve devamında yapılan eğitim programları üzerine bir araştırma yapmaktayım. Oluşturulan eğitim programlarının geliştirilme aşamalarını ve bunları etkileyen teori ve yaklaşımları ortaya çıkarmada sizlerin görüşlerinizin önemli olduğunu düşünüyorum. Bu çalışmanın amacı ülkemizde oluşturulan eğitim programlarının tarihsel bir analizini yapmak ve bu konuda uzman görüşlerine başvurarak eğitim programları çalışmalarını hakkında sizin algı ve düşüncelerinizi ortaya çıkarmaktır. Görüşme soruları ilk ikisi demografik olmak üzere toplam on adet açık uçlu sorudan oluşmaktadır. Sorular eğitim programları konusunda detaylı yorumları ortaya çıkarma amacı ile oluşturulmuştur. Görüşmemizin yaklaşık bir saat süreceğini tahmin ediyorum. İstedığınız zaman görüşmeden çekilebileceğinizi de hatırlatmak isterim. Eğer izin verirseniz veri kaybı olmaması için görüşmede ses kaydı yapmak istiyorum.

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Tez Danışmanı: Prof. Dr. Cennet Engin-Demir

### Görüşme Soruları

#### Giriş Soruları

1. Eğitim ve meslek hayatınızla ilgili bilgi verebilir misiniz?
  - a. Mezun olduğunuz bölüm?
  - b. Yüksek lisans/doktora bölümünüz, tezinizin konusu?
  - c. Şu ana kadar çalıştığınız kurum ve alanlar?
  - d. Tecrübe yılınız?
  - e. Verdiğiniz dersler?
2. Şimdiye kadar herhangi bir program geliştirme çalışmasına dahil oldunuz mu?

- a. Kaç kere?
- b. Hangi program, kaç yılında?
- c. Göreviniz neydi?

#### İçerik ile İlgili Sorular

1. Kendi ilköğretim programı geliştirme yaklaşımınızı nasıl tanımlarsınız?
2. Ülkemizde şu ana kadar kullanılan ilköğretim program geliştirme modelleri hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz?
  - a. Program geliştirme ilkelerine uygunluğu,
  - b. Türkiye'ye uygunluğu,
  - c. Günün şartlarına uygunluğu (kullanılan program geliştirme modellerinin çoğu 1950ler ve sonrasında oluşturulduğu düşünülürse),
  - d. Güçlü ve zayıf yanları bakımından?
3. Merkezi program geliştirme hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz? (esneklik, bağlam, öğretmen rolü)
4. Ülkemizdeki çalışmaları diğer ulusların program geliştirme çalışmalarıyla karşılaştırsanız neler söylersiniz?
5. Ülkemizde tarihsel olarak hangi eğitim felsefeleri ve yaklaşımları etkili olmuştur? Şu an hangisi veya hangilerinin etkisinin daha baskın olduğunu düşünüyorsunuz?
6. Size verdiğim program geliştirme dönüm noktalarını özetleyen yazıya baktığınızda hangi tarihsel olayların program geliştirmeyi nasıl etkilediğini düşünüyorsunuz?
7. Sizce Türkiye'de program geliştirme çalışmaları yapılırken program geliştirme ilkeleri dışında nelerin özellikle dikkate alınması gerekir? Neden?
8. Bu konuda başka eklemek istedikleriniz nelerdir?

## D. TWO-PAGE SUMMARY

### Program Geliştirilmenin Dönüm Noktaları

**1924 İlk Mektepler Müfredatı-** 3 Mart 1924'te Tevhidi Tedrisat kanununun ilanıyla birlikte tüm eğitim kurumları Millî Eğitim Bakanlığına (Maarif Vekaleti) bağlanmış ve ilköğretim beş yıla indirilmiştir. Hali hazırda kullanılan müfredat II. Heyet-iş İlmiye tarafından Cumhuriyet yönetimine uyarlanmıştır. Bu program bir geçiş niteliğindedir ve programın genel amaçları ve derslerin tek tek amaçları belirtilmemiş, yalnızca programdaki dersler ve derslere göre konu dağılımı verilmiştir. Öğretim yöntemi olarak 1912 ve 1915 talimatnamelerindeki yöntemler geçerlidir.

**1926 İlkokul Programı-** Bu program Cumhuriyet Döneminin ilk kapsamlı programıdır. İlkokulun genel amaçlarının belirlenmesinin yanında her dersin amacı da ayrı ayrı belirlenmiştir. Ayrıca bu amaçları gerçekleştirmeye yardımcı olacak öğretim yöntem ve teknikleriyle ilgili açıklamalar da verilmiştir. Programın amaçlarından biri öğrencilerin yeni rejimi benimsemeleri olduğundan yakın çevre ve hayat ilkesine önem verilmiştir. Buna göre öğrencilerin yakın çevrelerinden ve yakın tarihten yararlanarak öğrenmeyi hayatları ile daha kolay ilişkilendirmeleri amaçlanmıştır. Bu programın bir diğer önemli reformu ise 'toplu tedris/öğretim'dir. Dersler arasındaki ilişkiler kuvvetlendirilmiş ve belli dersler birleştirilmiştir. Örneğin Hayat Bilgisi dersi Tabiat Tetkiti, Mahasabat, Tarih ve Coğrafya derslerinin birleştirilmesi ile oluşmuştur. Ayrıca, yaparak öğrenmeye ve dolayısıyla el işi ve resim derslerine verilen önem vurgulanmıştır. 1928'de yeni Türk alfabesinin kabulünden sonra programda ufak değişiklikler yapılarak Türkçe ve okuma-yazma dersleri yeniden düzenlenmiştir.

**1936 İlkokul Programı-** Bu programda vurgu milli bir eğitim oluşturma çabası ve yeni rejimi güçlendirmededir. Dönemin tek partisi olan Cumhuriyet Halk Partisinin ilkeleri eğitimin ilkeleri haline gelmiştir. Buna göre eğitimde amaç cumhuriyetçi, halkçı, devletçi, laik ve devrimci yurttaş yetiştirmektir. Türk tarihine ve Türk diline verilen önem eğitimin amaçlarında önemle vurgulanmıştır. Program oluşturulurken Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı tarafından oluşturulan komite diğer bakanlıklara, öğretmenlere ve ilköğretim müfettişlerine öğrencilere ne öğretilmesi gerektiğini sormuş ve alınan fikirlerle bir program taslağı oluşturmuştur. Bu taslak tekrar değerlendirilerek final formuna ulaşmıştır. Bu programda bilgi öğrencilerin hayatta başarı elde etmek için kullanacakları araç olarak nitelendirilip eğitimin milli hayatla aradaki bağı kuvvetlendirmesi gerektiği savunulmuştur. Öğretmenlere derslerde konuların çeşitlendirilmesi ve öğrencilerin düzeyine uygun konular seçilmesi, öğrencilerin ders sırasında etkin olması ve grup çalışmaları yapılması önerilmiştir. Kuramsal bilgilerden uzak durulması ve pratik bilgilere yer verilmesi programda özellikle belirtilmiştir. Fakat yeni rejimin ilkelerinin programın temelini oluşturması ve amacın öğrencilere bunları benimsetmek olması, faydacı yaklaşımın pek uygulanamayıp daimici yaklaşımın öne çıktığını gösterir.

Ayrıca yine bu yıl, köy okulları için de ayrı bir program hazırlanmıştır. Normal programdaki derslere ek köy okulları programında ziraat işleri dersi vardır ve diğer derslerin konuları köy ve köy hayatına göre düzenlenmiştir.

**Köy Enstitüleri** – Bu dönemde halkın çoğunluğu köylerde yaşadığından bu öğrencilerin eğitimi oldukça önemliydi. Köy enstitülerinin amacı köy okullarına öğretmen yetiştirmektir. Enstitüdeki öğrenciler tarımda verimi artırmak için yeni yöntemler öğrenmenin yanında birçok kültürel ders ile kendilerini geliştirme imkanına sahiptiler. Bu okullar iş okulu stilini benimseyen yaparak öğrenme metodunu kullanıyordu.

**1948 İlköğretim Programı-** Eğitimci ve politikacılar toplumun gerektirdiği vatandaş tipini yetiştiremediklerinden yakınlıkla eğitimde Anglo-Sakson ve Amerikan stilini benimsemek gerektiğini ileri sürmüşlerdir. Millî Eğitimin amaçları 'Toplumsal, Kişisel, İnsanlık Münasebetleri ve Ekonomik Hayat' başlıkları altında yeniden düzenlenmiştir. Programda her dersin amacı o dersin

okutulduğu tüm sınıflar için genel amaçlar olarak verilmiştir. Sınıf düzeyinde sadece konular belirtilmiştir. Ancak Türkçe ve Aritmetik öğretim programlarının amaçlarında genelin yanı sıra daha detaylı hedefler belirtilmiştir. Kullanılacak yöntem ve teknikler ‘açıklamalar’ şeklinde öğretmenlere klavuz niteliğinde yazılmıştır. Programda, program değerlendirmesiyle ilgili bir bölüm olmasa da öğrencilerin değerlendirilmesine ilişkin öğretmenlere açıklamalar yapılmıştır.

Programı oluşturmadan önce öğretmenlere bir anket gönderilmiş ve sonuçlar program oluşturma komitesi tarafından incelenmiştir. Oluşturulan taslak ilköğretim müdürleri ve ilkokul müfettişlerinden oluşan uzmanlar tarafından final haline getirilmiştir. Bu programla şehir ve köy okulu programları birleştirilmiştir. Program kâğıt üzerinde ilerlemeci düşünceyi yansıtsa da uygulamada yaşanan sıkıntılardan dolayı birçok eleştiri almıştır. Bunlardan bazıları, konuların çok fazla olması ve öğretmenlere esneklik sağlanmadığından verilen konuları hızlı bir şekilde öğretme telaşına düşen öğretmenlerin programın amaç ve ilkelerinden uzaklaştığıdır.

**1968 İlköğretim Programı-** Bu tarihe kadar yapılmış en sistematik program olarak nitelendirilebilir çünkü 7-8 yıllık bir araştırma ve geliştirme sürecinden geçerek yapılmıştır. Programda ‘yöntem ve teknikler’ ve ‘planlama ve uygulama’ bölümleri ayrı olarak verilmiştir. Programda soru-cevap, araştırma, deney, proje ve problem çözme gibi öğrenci merkezli öğretim yöntemleri yer almakla birlikte bu yöntemlerin nasıl kullanılacağına dair detaylı açıklamalar verilmiştir.

1968 programından önce 1962 yılında taslak bir program oluşturulmuştur. Bu taslak 16 köy ve şehir ilk ve orta okul öğretmeninden oluşan bir komite tarafından oluşturulup tüm yurttaki köy ve şehir okullarına, öğretmen derneklerine ve basına gönderilip görüşleri alınmıştır. Katılımcı program geliştirme yaklaşımı kullanılarak daha sonra 108 kişiden oluşan ve içinde öğretmen, okul müdürü, müfettiş, veli, alan uzmanları ve Milli Eğitim Müdürlerinin bulunduğu başka bir komisyon tarafından üzerinde çalışılan taslakta gerekli düzenlemeler yapılmıştır. Oluşturulan final taslak programın 250 okulda beş yıl boyunca denenmesi ve geliştirilmesi kararlaştırılmıştır.

Bu program ilerlemeci teoriye uygun yapılmıştır. Öğrenci merkezlidir ve seçmeli derslerle öğrenciye kendi öğrenimi için esneklik sağlamaktadır.

1973 yılında yayınlanan Milli Eğitim Temel Kanunu ile ilkokul ve ortaokul birleştirilerek ‘ilköğretim’ adını almıştır. 1997’de zorunlu eğitim 8 yıl olmuştur. Programlardaki tekrarlar azaltılarak konularda sadeleşmeye gidilmiştir. 1980’den sonra programlar ders bazında ayrı ayrı geliştirilmeye başlanmış ve program geliştirme ilkelerine daha uygun programlar geliştirilmiştir.

**2005-2006 Programları-** İlk ve ortaöğretim programları eğitimde kaliteyi artırma ve uluslararası platformlarda daha iyi rekabet edebilmek amacıyla yenilenmiştir. Katılımcı program geliştirme yaklaşımı benimsenmiştir. Bu programların en belirgin özelliği ‘yapılandırıcılık’ öğretim yaklaşımının benimsenmesidir. Şimdiye kadar ki en ilerlemeci ve öğrenci merkezli reformdur. Yeterince hizmet içi eğitim olmadığı ve çok kısa sürede hazırlanarak denenmeye vakit olmadığı için birçok eleştiri almıştır.

Orta Öğretim (Lise) Okul türlerindeki çeşitlilik azaltılmış. Her ders için ortak beceri ve kazanımlar belirlenmiştir. Ortaöğretimin süresi 3ten 4 yıla çıkartılmıştır.

**4+4+4 Eğitim Sistemi (2012-2013)** – 8 yıl olan ilköğretim ve 4 yıl olan orta öğretim (lise) yeniden düzenlenerek 4 yıl ilkokul 4 yıl ortaokul ve 4 yıl lise olarak 12 yıllık kesintili zorunlu eğitim halini almıştır. ‘Yapılandırıcılık’ yine programların temelini oluşturur ve sarmal yaklaşım kullanılmıştır. 12 yıllık zorunlu eğitimde öğrenciye kazandırılması ve geliştirilmesi planlanan ortak beceriler programa eklenmiştir. Yeniden düzenlenen programlarda öğrenci merkezli yaklaşım ve proje-temelli öğrenme ile aktif öğrenciler ve vatandaşlar yetiştirilmesi planlanmıştır.



## F. TURKISH SUMMARY/ TÜRKÇE ÖZET

### 1. Giriş ve Alanyazın

Eğitim programı, tanımlanması karmaşık bir olgudur ve bilimsel çalışma alanı, bir sistem ya da bir ders olarak farklı kategorilerde karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Tarih boyunca birçok farklı eğitimci tarafından değişik şekillerde tanımlansa da en yalın anlamıyla eğitim programı, belirlenen amaçlara ulaşmak için izlenen plan olarak adlandırılabilir. (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018). Alanın başlangıcı olan 20. yüzyıldan itibaren birçok program geliştirme modeli ortaya konulmuştur. Ralph W. Tyler'in program geliştirme modeli, alanın tarihindeki ilklerden olup en etkili model olarak anılır. Onun modeli, birçok program geliştirme düşünürüne, alanın büyümesine yol açan başka modeller geliştirmeleri için ilham vermiştir.

Dünyadaki program geliştirme alanındaki gelişmeler incelendiğinde, alanın karmaşık yapısı nedeniyle tarihi boyunca tartışmalar olduğu gözlemlenmektedir. Bu tartışmaların Türkiye'deki program geliştirme çalışmalarına da yansıdığı söylenebilir (Orakçı, Durnalı ve Özkan, 2018). Türkiye'de program geliştirme, ülkenin çalkantılı tarihi nedeniyle defalarca kesintiye uğradığından, istikrarlı bir evrim süreci sunmamaktadır. Dünyada program geliştirmenin bir alan olarak ortaya çıkışı Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin ilanı ile aynı zamana denk düşmektedir. Bu nedenle, cumhuriyetin ilk yıllarındaki müfredatlar incelendiğinde bugünkü anlamda program geliştirme süreçlerinden bahsetmek zordur, ancak Türkiye'deki program çalışmaları 1950'lerde hızlanmıştır. O zamana kadar program geliştirme, derslerin ve konuların listelenmesi ve belirli derslerin eklenmesi/çıkarılması şeklinde yapılmıştır. Bu yüzden cumhuriyet döneminin başlarında geliştirilen programların, program geliştirme ilkelerine uyduğu söylenemez. Ancak, 1968 programı bilimsel bir yöntem izlemesi ve uzun bir pilot çalışma sürecine sahip olması bakımından program geliştirme tarihinde önemli bir yere sahiptir (Bilasa, 2012; Gözütok, 2003; Mala, 2011). 1980'lerde Türkiye'ye özgü program geliştirme modelleri hazırlanmaya çalışılmışsa da herhangi bir tutarlı ve uygulanabilir model üzerinde anlaşmaya varılamamıştır (Demirel, 1992).

İlgili alanyazını incelendiğinde birçok çalışmanın program geliştirme alanında yaşanan krize işaret ettiği görülmektedir. Özellikle Amerika'da 1969 yılında Schwab'ın program geliştirme alanının "ölüm döşeginde" olduğunu ilan etmesinden sonra farklı ülkelerden birçok eğitimci alanda yaşanan bu krizin hala geçerli olduğunu belirtmişlerdir (Baker, 2015; Macdonald, 2003; Priestley, 2011; Snaza, 2014; Wraga & Hlebowitsh, 2003; Young, 2003;). Program geliştirme alanında dünyayla benzer sorunların ülkemizde de görüldüğü yönünde düşünceler de mevcuttur (Demirel, 1992; Gözütok, 2003; Akşit, 2007; Gelen & Beyazıt, 2007; ERG, 2017).

Türkiye'de yapılan benzer çalışmalara bakıldığında program geliştirme çalışmalarını tarihsel bir çerçeve içinde inceleyen araştırmalara rastlanmaktadır (Bilasa, 2012; Mala, 2011; Gözütok, 2003; Kanbolat, 2015; Orakçı, Durnalı ve Özkan, 2018). Ayrıca, programların felsefi, ideolojik ve psikolojik temellerini inceleyen çalışmalar da mevcuttur (Akınoğlu, 2005; Bümen & Aktan, 2014; Gülbahar, 2006; Kenan, 2014; Şimşek, Küçük ve Topkaya, 2012; Şimşek & Kartal, 2019). Bu çalışmanın yukarıda bahsedilen diğer çalışmalardan farkı program geliştirmeyi doküman analizi yoluyla incelemenin yanı sıra program geliştirme alanındaki deneyimli eğitimcilerin görüşlerini yansıtıyor olmasıdır.

Eğitim programının toplumları değiştirme gücü yadsınamaz bir gerçektir. Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin ilanıyla eğitim, Türk toplumunu geliştirmek ve onu modern ve demokratik bir toplum haline getirmek için bir araç olarak görülmüştür (Akınoğlu, 2008). Bugün ise 21. yüzyılda eğitim programları, küreselleşme ve teknolojik gelişmeler nedeniyle hızla değişmektedir. Program geliştirme alanındaki hızlı değişimler zaten yapı olarak karmaşık olan bu alanı daha da belirsizlik içinde bırakan tartışmalara neden olmaktadır. Program geliştirme çalışmalarının ilerlemesi ve sorunlarının çözülmesi için alandaki belirsizliği gidermek çok önemlidir. Bunu yapmak da alanı tarihsel bir şekilde ayrıntılı olarak incelemeyi gerektirir. Program geliştirme çalışmalarının tarihsel gelişimini incelemek, geçmişteki sorunları ve bunlara kullanılan çözümleri anlamamıza yardımcı olacaktır. Ancak Kliebard (1995), geçmişteki problemlerimizi ve onların çözümlerini öğrenmenin aynı hataları yapmamızı engellemeyebileceğini iddia eder. Eğitimde benzer sorunlarla karşılaşabileceğimiz kesin değildir. Buna rağmen, eğitim tarihini çalışmak bize

eğitimimizin durumunu en tarafsız haliyle gösterebilir. Bu da sadece aynı hatalardan kaçınmak için değil, aynı zamanda yeni bakış açıları kazanmak için sebep-sonuç ilişkilerini kavramaya yardımcı olacaktır. Eğitim programlarına yönelik yeni bakış açıları kazanmak, problemler ve olası çözümleri hakkındaki önyargılarımızdan vazgeçmemize yardımcı olabilir. Ayrıca, Hazlett (1979, aktaran Pınar, 2008), program geliştirme alanını tarihsel bir şekilde çalışmazsak evrimini anlayamayacağımızı ve bunun da bizi aceleci ve sorunlu bir program geliştirme düşüncesine götüreceğini düşünmektedir. Son olarak, Schwab (1969) program geliştirme alanında yaşanan krizin işaretlerinden birinin, alanın tarihsel analizinden yoksun reformlar yapılması olduğunu söylemiştir. Bu nedenle, eğitimimizin geçmiş ve şimdiki durumunu yorumlayabilmek için bu alandaki gelişimimizi program değişikliklerinin gerekçeleri ile birlikte tasvir etmek çok önemlidir. Eğitim programlarını oluşturmaya yönelik geçmiş ve güncel teoriler, eğitime genel bir bakış sağlamak için analiz edilmelidir. Tarihsel analiz ve çıkarımlar, Türkiye'de gelecekteki program geliştirme çalışmaları için bir altyapı görevi de muhakkak görecektir.

Türkiye'deki program geliştirme çalışmalarının tarihsel olarak incelediğimizde, istikrarlı bir gelişim süreci ortaya çıkmamaktadır. Bu nedenle, yakın tarihin paydaşı olan önde gelen akademisyenlerin detaylı betimlemeleri, program geliştirme süreçlerinin ayrıntılarının ortaya çıkarılmasına yardımcı olacaktır. Bu kişilerin Türkiye'deki program geliştirme çalışmaları hakkındaki deneyimleri ve düşünceleri, daha önce yazıya aktarılmamış kişisel deneyimleri ve farklı bakış açılarını ortaya çıkarabilir.

Bu bilgiler ışığında, bu çalışma Türkiye'de Cumhuriyet Dönemi'ndeki program geliştirme çalışmalarını araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Program geliştirme çalışmalarının kritik anları ve uygulamaları, dönemin ilgili dokümanları incelenerek ve önde gelen akademisyenlerinin düşünceleri yorumlanarak analiz edilecektir. Araştırma soruları ise şöyledir:

1. Cumhuriyet Dönemi'nde Türkiye'de program geliştirme hangi aşamalardan geçti?
2. Türkiye'de Eğitim Programları ve Öğretim alanındaki akademisyenler, Cumhuriyet Dönemindeki program geliştirme alanının kritik dönemlerini nasıl algılamaktadır?

3. Türkiye'de Eğitim Programları ve Öğretim alanındaki akademisyenler, eğitim teorileri ve yaklaşımlarının program geliştirme sürecine etkisini nasıl algılamaktadır?

## 2. Yöntem

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Cumhuriyet döneminde Türkiye'deki program gelişiminin tarihsel bir analizini ortaya koymak ve program geliştirme uygulamalarına katılan önde gelen akademisyenlerin program geliştirme düşüncelerini betimlemektir. Bu nedenle nitel araştırma deseni uygun görülmüştür. Nitel araştırmaların özü, önemli bir olgu hakkında kapsamlı bir anlayış geliştirmektir (Creswell, 2012). Müfredat geliştirme Türkiye'de tanıdık bir olgu olsa da program geliştirme çalışmaları yeterince netlik kazanmamış olup daha derin araştırmalara ihtiyaç duymaktadır. Bu derin araştırmaya olanak sağlayacağı düşünüldüğünden Olgubilim deseni kullanılmıştır. Olgubilim çalışmalarında amaç daha önce aşına olunan fakat daha derinlemesine anlaşılması istenilen konuları, deneyimleri, olay ve algıları araştırmaktır (Yıldırım ve Şimşek, 2018). Varsa katılımcılar araştırma konusunu deneyimleyenler arasından seçilir. Bu nedenle Olgubilim deseninin Türkiye'deki program geliştirme çalışmalarını akademisyenlerin deneyimleri yoluyla incelemesi için uygun olduğu düşünülmüştür. Ayrıca, program dokümanlarının tarihsel bir şekilde incelenmesi, araştırmanın çerçevesini oluşturmaya yardımcı olmuştur.

Görüldüğü üzere araştırmada iki farklı veri seti vardır: program dokümanları ve katılımcı görüşmeleri. Dokümanlar 1924, 1926, 1936, 1948, 1968, 1995, 2005 ve 2018 programlarından oluşmaktadır. İkinci veri setinde ise çeşitli üniversitelerin Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümlerindeki 7 akademisyen yer almıştır. Bu akademisyenler program geliştirme çalışmalarında aktif ya da dolaylı olarak yer almış veya program geliştirme çalışmalarını yakında takip ederek bu konuda araştırmalar yapmış kişiler arasından seçilmiştir. Katılımcıların belirlenmesinde incelenen konu hakkında en zengin bilgiye sahip olan akademisyenleri seçmek için amaçlı örnekleme yöntemlerinden maksimum çeşitleme örnekleme kullanılmıştır. Bu yüzden katılımcıların farklı şehir ve üniversitelerden seçilmesine özen gösterilmiştir. Bu örneklem çeşidiyle amaç, küçük bir grupta detaylı incelemelere ve farklılıklar içerisinden ortak temalara ulaşabilmeyi sağlamaktır. Seçilen 7 katılımcıdan 3'ü öğretmenlik lisans bölümlerinden mezunken

geri kalan katılımcılar Eğitim Bilimleri lisans bölümünden mezun olmuştur. Katılımcıların hepsi Eğitim Bilimleri bölümlerinde görev yapmaktadır. Katılımcıların tecrübeleri 21 ile 56 yıl arasında değişmektedir.

İki aşamada toplanan verilerden ilki program dokümanlarının incelenerek analiz edilmesi yoluyla yapıldı. Doküman analizi aynı zamanda çalışmanın ikinci kısımdaki katılımcı görüşmeleri için bir altyapı oluşturarak program geliştirme sürecini daha iyi anlamlandırmaya yardımcı olmuştur. Bu çalışmada doküman analizinden sonra yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşme formu kullanılarak veri toplanmıştır. Bu amaçla bir yarı yapılandırılmış bir görüşme formu hazırlanmıştır. Yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşme formları esneklik sağlayarak araştırmacıya görüşme sırasında bazı soruları sondalama, yeniden ifade etme veya atlayabilme imkânı vermektedir. Görüşme formu 2 demografik, 8 içerik sorusundan oluşmaktadır.

Pandemiye bağlı sokağa çıkma yasakları ve seyahat kısıtlamaları yüz yüze görüşmeleri engellediği için görüşmeler katılımcı tercihi göre Zoom ve Skype gibi çevrimiçi iletişim araçlarıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir.

### **3. Bulgular ve Tartışma**

Görüşme sonuçlarının gösterdiği üzere katılımcıların çoğunluğu Türkiye’de program geliştirme sürecinin etkili bir şekilde işlemediğini konusunda hemfikirdir. Akşit (2007) ve Gömleksiz vd. (2005) çalışmalarında belirttiği gibi, özellikle programların çok kısa bir süre içinde geliştirildiği ve dolayısıyla programların kalitesinin de bu hızlı geliştirmeden olumsuz etkilendiği belirtilmektedir. Akşit (2007)’nin vurguladığı bir diğer önemli konu ise “değişimin yönetimi”dir. Günümüzde halen programların hangi doğrultuda ve nasıl değiştiğini irdeleyen bir mekanizmanın eksikliği değişim yönetimi bakımından bir sorun olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Bu sebeplerden ötürü eğitim programı değişimini gereken zaman ve uygulama biçimi bakımından etkin bir şekilde yürütecek bir vizyon ortaya konulması faydalı olacaktır.

Röportajlarda vurgulanan bir diğer başlık ise Talim Terbiye Kurulu ve program geliştirme komite üyelerinin yetkinliğidir. İlk olarak, kurul üyelerinin belirli bazı

üniversitelerden seçilmesinden dolayı, komitelerdeki çeşitliliğinin sınırlı olduğu belirtilmiştir. Diğer bir nokta ise, kurul üyeliği seçiminde yetkinlikten ziyade, üyelerin birbiri ile kolay çalışabilmesinin bir etken olduğu görüşüdür. Yapılan döküman analizi ise komite üye seçimi ile detaylı bir bilgi ve prosedürün eksikliğini göstererek bu görüşleri desteklemektedir. Katılımcılar arasında, üye seçimi ve yapısına benzer şekilde, program geliştirme sürecinin de şeffaflıktan uzak olduğu görüşü hakimdir. Bu problem ERG (2017) raporu ile de ayrıca belirtilmiştir. Erdoğan (2011) gibi yukarıda bahsedilen problemlere çözüm öneren çeşitli çalışmalar mevcuttur. Çalışmanın sonucunda çıkan en etkili önerilerden birisi ise teori ve pratik arasındaki boşluğun azaltılmasıdır. Bunun için ise öğretmenlik tecrübesi olan ve doktoralı bilim insanlarının komite üyesi olarak seçilmesi önerilmektedir.

Ayrıca, katılımcılar öğretmenlerin program geliştirme sürecine yeterince dahil edilmemesini eleştirmektedir. Birçok katılımcı, öğretmenlerin merkezde olmadığı program geliştirmenin başarıya ulaşamayacağı görüşündedir. 1968 programında olduğu gibi, sürece öğretmenlerin etkin katılımı tavsiye edilmektedir. Ertürk (1986) ve Öztürk'ün (2009) çalışmaları da bu bulguları desteklemektedir. Öğretmenlerin geliştirilmesine katılmadığı programlar, öğretmenlerin önemini azaltıp onları tembelleştireceği endişesini de doğurmuştur. Bu sonuç ise Can (2009) ve Öztürk'ün (2011) görüşleri ile uyumaktadır. Ayrıca, katılımcılar öğretmenlerin program okur-yazarlığının önemine de dikkat çekmiştir. Maalesef Türkiye'de öğretmenlerin uygulama, adaptasyon ve program okur-yazarlığı bakımından yetersiz kaldığı birçok katılımcı tarafından dile getirilmiştir. Ünver&Erdamar (2015) arka arkaya yapılan program reformları yüzünden öğretmenlerin program detaylarını anlamada sıkıntı çektiğini ortaya koymuştur.

Hemen hemen tüm katılımcılar, Türkiye'nin merkezi eğitim sistemi ile ilgili olumsuz görüş belirtmiştir. Katılımcıların bakış açısından, Türkiye'de merkezîyetçilik ve ademi-merkezîyetçilik arasında bir denge olmadığı anlaşılmaktadır. Görüşme verilerinden anlaşılacağı üzere, Türkiye'de yerel ihtiyaçların karşılanamadığı, bu yüzden de merkezîyetçilikten vazgeçilmesi gerektiğinin eninde sonunda yüzleşilmesi gereken bir gerçek olduğu belirtilmiştir. Problemin farkına varan Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı 1995'te yerel ihtiyaçları karşılayacak bir eğitim programı çalışmasına

başlamış olsa da, bu çalışma birkaç pilot uygulamanın ötesine geçememiştir (Gözütok, 2003). Bu çalışmada, Leung (2004)'un dediğine benzer şekilde ademi-merkeziyetçiliğin her şeye çözüm olmadığı fakat merkeziyetçiliğin aşırı baskın olmasından dolayı problemler yaşanıldığı sonucu çıkmıştır. Bu yüzden merkezi eğitimin avantajlarının korunduğu bir ademi-merkeziyetçi yaklaşımın düşünülmesi gerektiği önerilmiştir. Burada katılımcılar, merkezi olarak eğitim için genel bir çatı program tasarlanmasını ve kalan eğitim programı geliştirme sürecinin yerleştirilmesini tavsiye etmişlerdir. Katılımcıların kendilerine özgü program geliştirme yaklaşımları sorulduğunda, çoğu katılımcının yerel ve esnek program geliştirme yaklaşımını savunan ve görece ilerici bir program geliştirme yaklaşımını savunduğu gözlenmektedir. Katılımcılar, ilerleyici eğitim programının bireysel, kültürel ve fiziksel farklılıklara değer vermesinden dolayı, yerleştirilmiş ve esnek programların farklı öğrenci profillerinin ihtiyaçlarının karşılanması bakımından daha etkin olduğunu iddia etmektedir.

Bu konuyla bağlantılı olarak, çalışmanın bulguları Türkiye’de program geliştirilirken karşılaşılan iki ana problemi işaret etmektedir. Bunlardan ilki, geliştirilen programlar ile Türkiye’nin sahip olduğu gerçeklik arasındaki uçurumdur. Geliştirilen programların etkisizliğini programların toplum gerçekleri ile uyumsuzluğu ile açıklamaktadırlar. Çözüm olarak ise programlar geliştirilirken insanların gerçek hayatlarına ilişkin ihtiyaçlarını karşılayacak bir yaklaşımın gerektiğini belirtmektedirler. İkincisi ise, program geliştirme ilkelerinin, yapılacak titiz ve yetkin bir incelemenin ardından uygulanması gerekliliğidir. Katılımcılara göre bilimsel bir yol ile irdelenmesi gereken kapsam, aşama, ardışıklık gibi program geliştirme ilkeler üzerinde yeteri kadar düşünülmeden kullanılmaktadır. Bunun ise Türkiye’deki program değişimlerinin veya eğitim reformlarının çok sıklıkla yapılmasından kaynaklandığını düşünmektedirler.

Katılımcıların birçoğunun hemfikir olduğu noktalardan biri ise Türkiye’de güncel program geliştirme çalışmalarının başladığı tarihtir. Güncel çalışmaların 1950’lerden sonra başladığını ve özellikle 1980’lerde hız kazandığını belirtmektedirler. Ancak Gökmenoğlu and Eret (2011)’in de belirttiği gibi programlarda meydana gelen dalgalanmaların ve çatışan ideolojilerin etkisiz programlara yol açtığı

gözlemlenmiştir. Ayrıca katılımcılar, başta Amerika olmak üzere diğer ülkelerin Türkiye üzerindeki etkilerinin, kendi ihtiyaçlarını karşılayan eğitim sistemi ihtiyacımıza bir engel olmasına memnuniyetsizliklerini dile getirmektedirler. Dini eğilimlerden etkilenen eğitim programları da katılımcılar tarafından eleştirilmiştir. Siyasi ve ekonomik krizler de program değişikliklerinde belirleyici unsurlardandır. Özellikle 80 darbesi eğitim programları açısından çok önemli bir dönüm noktası olarak görülmüştür. Topal (2020) darbe ve siyasi hareketlerin etkilerini açıkça göstermiştir. Ek olarak, önde gelen siyasi partiler yeterli bilgi birikiminin oluşmasına izin vermeden yeni eğitim programı sundukları için katılımcılar tarafından eleştirilmektedirler. ERG (2018) raporu bu sonucu desteklemektedir. Sonuç olarak, 1990'larda gözlemlenen program geliştirme modellerindeki tutarsızlıklar günümüzde de gözlemlenmektedir. Türkiye'ye özgü bir eğitim felsefesi ve modeli, program geliştirme kavramının önemli bir parçasıdır. Ancak doküman analizleri Türkiye'nin özgün program felsefesine sahip olma noktasında sıkıntıları ve eksikleri olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Demirel (1992) bu değerlendirmeyi doğrulamaktadır. Ayrıca her ne kadar 2005-2006 ve 2007-2008 yıllarında bazı program modellerinin geliştirildiği doküman analizinde ortaya çıktıysa da analizler sonucunda bu modellerin nasıl geliştirildiği ile ilgili detaylı bilgilere de ulaşamamıştır.

Türk eğitimde etkili olmuş felsefe ve teoriler incelendiğinde görüşme ve doküman analizleri Cumhuriyetin ilk dönemlerinde pragmatizm ve ilerlemecilik akımlarının baskın gelen teoriler olduğu sonucunu vermiştir. Gözütok (2003) ve Mala'nın (2014) çalışmaları da bu düşünceyi desteklemektedir. Ancak ülkemizde uygulanan eğitim teorileri ve yaklaşımları incelendiğinde katılımcılar, siyasi, ekonomik ve sosyo-kültürel etkilerin, eğitim politikamızı teorilere kıyasla daha etkin olarak yönlendirdiğine inanmaktadır. Şimşek, Küçük ve Topkaya (2012)'nin çalışması bu görüşü destekler niteliktedir. Bununla birlikte katılımcılar, ülkemizde yapılandırmacılığın doğru şekilde kavramsallaştırılmadığından dolayı eğitim sistemimizde doğru çalışmadığı konusunda hemfikirdir. Kırmızı ve Akkaya (2009) çalışmasını bu durumu göstermektedir. Altyapı eksikliğimiz ve öğretmen eğitimi konusundaki problemlerimiz ile birlikte bu kavramsal yeniliklerin hayata geçirilmesi aşamasında çeşitli sıkıntılar meydana getirmektedir. Benzer şekilde katılımcıların ortak görüşü, hazırlanan eğitim program dokümanlarında ne yazarsa yazsın,

1980'lerden itibaren geleneksel-davranışçı unsurlara sahip programların Türkiye'de uygulamada olduđu şeklindedir.

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