

A Critical Examination of My Qualitative Research Efforts in Turkey²

Türkiye’deki Nitel Araştırma Çabalarım İlişkin Eleştirel Bir İnceleme

Yıldız Uzuner³

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Abstract. Today, it is known and widely accepted that researchers must know the research paradigms and develop skills and non-dogmatic attitudes for conducting and evaluating studies in any methodology. Quantitative research methodology is more common while qualitative research is relatively new in Turkey. Researchers who have not developed sufficient knowledge and experiences in qualitative study would create non-evidence based and non-ethical research projects. This creates threats to the research community. In order to improve and be competent in any methodology, it is important to review and critically analyze the completed dissertations, thesis and the journal articles emerged from those research efforts. In this effort self-reflection of one’s own research effort is essential. In this paper as an experienced researcher the author shares her experiences in supervising theses and dissertations and conducting her own research projects in qualitative research methodology in the last 20 years in Turkey. In the light of the literature considering various aspects she discusses advantages and disadvantages conducting qualitative studies in Turkey. Considering the disadvantages, the author came up with the idea of keeping thinking positively, acting modestly, being patient, learning how to deal with the authority, learning how to deal with the exploiters, working hard, never giving up, focusing on the target, being assertive when necessary, and so keeping going in the scientific way.

Key words: Critical examination, qualitative research, self-reflection

Özet. Günümüzde araştırmacılar araştırma paradigmalarını bilmeliler ve herhangi bir yöntemle araştırmalar düzenlemek ve değerlendirmek için dogmatik olmayan tutumlar ve beceriler geliştirmelidirler. Türkiye’de nitel araştırmalara göre nicel araştırmalar daha yaygındır. Nitel araştırmalarda yeterli bilgi ve beceriler geliştirmemiş araştırmacıların bilimsel temelli olmaktan uzak etik olmayan araştırmalar gerçekleştirme olasılıkları yüksektir. Bir araştırma metodolojisinin gerektirdiği bilgi ve becerilerde gelişmek ve yeterli olmak için tamamlanmış doktora ve yüksek lisans tezlerini ve bu tezlerin yayımlanmış makelerini incelemek ve eleştirel olarak analiz etmek önemlidir. Bu gayrette, kişinin kendi araştırmalarını eleştirmesi esastır. Bu makalede deneyimli bir araştırmacı olarak yazar son 20 yılda Türkiye’de nitel araştırma yaklaşımıyla yüksek lisans ve doktora tezleri yönetmedeki ve kendi araştırma projelerini gerçekleştirmedeki deneyimlerini paylaşmaktadır. Yazar, çeşitli yönlerini dikkate alarak alan yazının desteğiyle Türkiye’de nitel araştırma çalışmaları düzenlemenin avantaj ve dezavantajlarını tartışmaktadır. Dezavantajları dikkate alarak yazar; olumlu düşünmeye, alçak gönüllü davranmaya devam etmeye, sabırlı olmaya, otoriteyle ve iyi niyeti sömürenlerle nasıl başa çıkacağını öğrenmeye, çok çalışmaya, hiç

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³ Prof. Dr., Anadolu University, Faculty of Education, 26470, Eskisehir, Turkey, e-mail: yildizuzuner@gmail.com

birzaman vazgeçmemeye, odaklanarak çalışmaya, gerektiğinde atılman olmaya ve böylece bilimsel yoluna devam etmeye yönelmiştir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Eleştirel inceleme, nitel araştırma, öz-değerlendirme

Introduction

As researchers we must know the research paradigms and develop skills and non-dogmatic attitudes for conducting and evaluating studies in any methodology (Brantlinger, Jimenez, Klingner, Pugach, & Richardson, 2005). Quantitative research methodology is more common while qualitative research is relatively new in Turkey. Researchers who have not developed sufficient knowledge and experiences in qualitative study create non-evidence based and non-ethical research projects. This creates threats to the research community. In order to improve and be competent in any methodology, it is important to review and critically analyze the completed dissertations, thesis and the journal articles emerged from those research efforts.

As a professor working at Anadolu University, Turkey, I feel responsible to share my experiences on conducting and guiding qualitative research. In fact my field is education of hearing impaired individuals. I started my carrier as a teacher of hearing impaired students in 1984 and gradually have become teacher/academician. I teach to various ages of hearing impaired students. I also teach language and language evaluation courses at the Special Education Department at Anadolu University.

I completed my doctorate study at the University of Cincinnati, USA in 1993. As I mentioned above my research interest is qualitative approach. I have been teaching graduate level courses mainly in the area of hearing impairment and research methodology since 1995. Along with the courses I have conducted various qualitative study projects with my colleagues and students. I have realized that we have emerged as a "research team".

I will write about our story how we all have improved in the area of qualitative study and how we have established the qualitative study in our university. I am going to write about the obstacles, our endeavors, our successes, our disappointments, current situations and our future plans. I believe that while some of the obstacles, endeavors, successes and disappointments are individually oriented, others are cultural or universal.

The First Attempts

Completing my doctorate study in the area of education of hearing impaired individuals and conducting my dissertation about family literacy as a case study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Yin, 2003), I returned to my country from the USA in 1993. During those days I was literally dealing with various aspects of cultural shock. I have never imagined being one of the pioneers of the qualitative research efforts at the University. Initially, a friend of mine invited me to her course named "The Research Methods" to tell my experiences in conducting qualitative doctorate dissertation. I have started to introduce my dissertation sharing my data to those students. This sharing took several years. Remembering those days, I would say that I was so naive and coward.

In 1995 there was an attempt to review and revise the graduate study programs of the department of the special education at the University. We recognized that there was a strong need for various research method courses such as single subject study, qualitative study since there were shortcomings to conduct experimental studies concerning the nature of the special education populations (Brantlinger,

Jimenez, Klingner, Pugach, & Richardson, 2005; Eisner, & Peshkin, 1990). So we added various research courses to the program. During those days I was the only person who could instruct the qualitative research methodology at our department. So I was obliged to teach the course titled as “Qualitative Research Method in Special Education” in the following semester.

As a faculty member, I was communicating with the other faculty members in various contexts and I realized that there was a strong need for the knowledge about the qualitative research method not only at our department but also at the other departments at the University. I thought that it must become prevalent at the University. This time I was naive enough but brave. I said myself “Why not me!” Was I Don Quixote? During those days I never thought I acted as Don Quixote. But looking back, I have been realizing that some people might have thought me as insane as Don Quixote. Somehow I was full of energy and enthusiasm.

A New Era

My Mission Started

The first attempt was changing the name of the course as “Qualitative Research Method”. Teaching how to collect qualitative data and more importantly the essences of qualitative research paradigm (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2005; Dobert, 1984; Yin, 2003) to not only to special education students but also to the other students from different departments has become my mission. I must say that there were other academicians at the other departments but somehow they were just teaching their courses in isolation. Because of the various reasons collaborating with them was impossible.

The First Barriers

The first barriers occurred regarding the differences of both qualitative and quantitative research paradigms. I had to deal with the issues such as the qualitative research terminology, the parts of the proposal, hypotheses, the language qualitative researchers use, the flexibility of qualitative research process and report and so on (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2005; Dobert, 1984; Yin, 2003, 2011).

Imposing the specific qualitative research terminologies such as “participants” instead of “subjects”; “research questions” instead of “hypothesis” to the scientific community required great efforts. The senior faculty members were the “gate keeper of quantitative research!” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2005; Dobert, 1984; Yin, 2003, 2011).

The parts of the proposal were also different from the quantitative research proposals. First, we did not have to prove any hypotheses. The written forms of the general research questions were different from the hypothesis. Based on the collected data we could modify the questions throughout the whole research process. A quantitative researcher would never understand this (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2005; Dobert, 1984; Yin, 2003, 2011).

The flexibility of qualitative research report was never understood and accepted by some of the researchers surrounding myself. Although gradually our research reports were published by the respected scientific journals, some of them still do not accept the nature of qualitative reports. Once a friend of mine who is open minded and has been working with me for about ten years said, “You are making us write the novels you have never written!” From my perspective it is an irony.

Since quantitative research paradigm is more utilized and known by the research community of the University, for all the issues I have mentioned above, I had to persuade the senior faculty members by creating discussions at the official meetings and finally got permission from them.

The First Thesis and Dissertations

When we completed the course at the special education department, we wanted to conduct qualitative research projects in 1996. Again I was asked to seek permission from the senior faculty whether the qualitative research thesis would have been accepted by the Research Institute at the University. Luckily there was an open minded, famous professor at the Institute and he welcomed us to the scientific community. Actually he, as one of the pioneers in the research methodology in our country, always supported me and my efforts.

Deciding about the Research Questions and The Students' Having Difficulties in English

Because all of the first master students were teachers of hearing impaired children and worked with mothers individually, they all had some inquiries about the interactions of normally hearing mothers and hearing impaired children. And I was full of knowledge about this issue. There was not internet during those days. Although the library at the Campus was not rich, there were plenty of resources in my library. They were all written in English. However, the students did not know English or if so a little. So I felt responsible for helping them. This required great amount of time and effort. I knew that it was not the right way to raise a graduate student. But we had to complete their thesis and prove that we could conduct qualitative research in Turkey. I had to coordinate all of us as “*co-researchers*”. I was the one who completed the readings and writings while they were collecting data. Unfortunately when we presented our results at the international conferences, they did not feel any “*ownership*”. At first I did not understand their reactions and felt very sorry. Later, I thought empathetically and realized that they were just “*a data collector*” not a “*researcher*”. Although they were getting their academic promotion, and presenting at the international conferences, they did not internalize as the qualitative researchers they were the key instrument and responsible for the trustworthy and ethical data and reports (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2005; Dobert, 1984, Yin, 2003).

The First Group of Studies

The studies I have listed (see Table 1) below are our first group of thesis conducted utilizing qualitative research methodology in the area of special education. These studies were examples of case studies and they all were about interactional styles of Turkish hearing mothers and their young hearing impaired children in different contexts. The participants were preschool and primary school age hearing impaired children and their normally hearing mothers. The master students visited the families as participant observers at the families' homes. Our microanalysis focused on the mother strategies during the various interactions. Although we could not generalize our findings to the whole hearing impaired children and mother interaction, there appeared that the mothers played with their children in different contexts. These findings were important for the area of hearing impairment.

Table 1.

Our First Group of Studies Conducted Utilizing Qualitative Research Methodology in the Area of Special Education

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- Uzuner, Y., & Ozyurek, A. (1997). The Effects of Context: Hearing Mother and Hearing Impaired Son of a Turkish Family. 9-13 April, The Council of Exceptional Children -C.E.C., USA: Salt Lake City.
- Uzuner, Y., & Ozyurek, A. (1997). The Effects of Context: Hearing Mother and Hearing Impaired Son of a Turkish Family. 9-13 April, The Council of Exceptional Children -C.E.C., USA: Salt Lake City.
- Uzuner, Y., & Coskun, N. (1998). An Investigation of A Hearing Turkish Mother's Play Strategies During The Group Play With Her Preschool Aged Hearing Impaired Daughter and Normally Hearing Nephew. 15-18 April, The Council of Exceptional Children- C.E.C., USA: Minnesota, Minneapolis.
- Uzuner, Y., Cekirdek, B., & Ozyurek, A. (2001). The Maintenance Strategies of Turkish Mothers and Sons with Hearing Impairments. 18-21 April, The Council of Exceptional Children C.E.C., USA: Kansas City.
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The Second Group of Studies

This group of our study included the examples of semi-structured interview studies that we were examining teacher perspectives in two different issues; integration, the issues of the first year teaching and literacy learning of mentally handicapped children. In terms of the perspectives about literacy, the student interviewed seven teachers of mentally retarded children. The integration perspective study was a doctoral research project. She also interviewed with the teachers who had handicapped children in their classrooms. Our second group of studies conducted utilizing qualitative research methodology in the area of special education are shown in Table 2.

Table 2.

Our Second Group of Studies Conducted Utilizing Qualitative Research Methodology in the Area of Special Education

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- Batu, S., Uzuner, Y., & Kırcaali-Iftar, G. (1999). Teacher Perspectives about Integrating Exceptional Students into a Secondary Vocational School: An Example From Turkey. 3-6 February, &. Annual International Conference, Council for Exceptional Children- Division of Mentally Retardation / Other Developmental Disabilities -CEC-MRDD: USA: Island of Maui.
- Colak, A. & Uzuner, Y. (2004). Special Education Teachers and Literacy Acquisition in Children with Mental Retardation: A Semistructured Interview. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice*, 4(2), 241-270.
- Ergenekon, Y., Uzuner Y., & Kırcaali-Iftar, G. (2004). First Year Teachers of Children with Mental Retardation in Turkey: Training, Recruitment and Support. 2004 Hawaii International Conference on Education, USA: Hawaii.
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The other study, a doctoral dissertation, named as “An Examination of the Strategies a Teacher Used in Teaching Descriptive Text Based on the Whole Language: A Case Study” was about the strategies a teacher used in teaching writing to a learning disabled student in classroom context. It was a single participant case study so the researcher participated to the classroom community for a whole school year. Gradually she focused on a learning disabled child and descriptive writing lessons. She analyzed the strategies the teacher used while teaching the children how to write human description.

Publication Problem

We completed all the studies and prove that qualitative research could be conducted in our country. However, some of the members of the scientific community at our University were still skeptical for the scientific value of our research efforts. Moreover, I knew that being published at the respected journals is one of the requirements of evidenced based research (Jonhnsn, 2012). So the problems continued until we published our data in respected international journals. However, being published by the respected scientific journals took several years. Most of the students were not proficient in English. I could not manage to write journal articles working so hard and not finding time to write down the articles. My energy was spent to conduct research, teach the data collection techniques, write most parts of the thesis and be responsible for some of the other academic and administrative duties. Once we submitted our manuscripts, it took some time to get published.

Time was passing. Some of the senior members, internalized quantitative paradigm as the only scientific way, of the scientific community of the University were suspicious about the scientific quality of the qualitative research paradigm and most importantly our qualifications until our manuscripts were published by the respected academic journals. The number of those suspicious faculty members has gradually decreased but we still have to deal with them since the administration of the University mostly represents those quantitatively oriented researchers. Some of our publications in the international national scientific journals are placed in Table 3 and 4.

Table 3.

Some of Our Publications in the International Scientific Journals

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- Akay, E., Uzuner, Y., & Girgin, Ü. (2014). The Problems and Solution Efforts of the Resource Room Application Designed for the Mainstreamed Primary School Aged Hearing Impaired Students *Journal of Qualitative Research in Education*, 2(2), 43-68. [Online] <http://www.enadonline.com>, 10.14689/issn.2148-2624.1.3s3m.
- Colak, A. & Uzuner, Y. (2004). Special Education Teachers and Literacy Acquisition in Children with Mental Retardation: A Semistructured Interview. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice*, 4(2), 241-270.
- Uzuner Y., Iceden, G., Girgin, U., Beral, A. & Kircaali-Iftar, G. (2005) An Examination of Impacts of Text Related Questions on Story Grammar Acquisition of Three Turkish Youths With Hearing Loss. *International Journal of Special Education*, 20(2), 111-121.
- Uzuner, Y., Kircaali-Iftar, G., & Karasu, H. P. (2005). Comparing the Effects of Various Procedures on Reconstruction of Narratives According to Story Grammar of a Youth with Hearing Loss. *The Reading Matrix*, September, 5(2), 15-27.
- Uzuner, Y. (2006). The Impact of Strategies Used in the Balanced Literacy Approach on Story Grammar Acquisition of Three Turkish Youths with Hearing Loss: An Action Research Study. *Deafness and Education International*, 9(1), 24-44.
- Uzuner, Y. (2008). Metacognitive strategies applied during correcting text-related answers of three students with hearing loss. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*. 8 (1), 47-54.
- Gurgur, H. & Uzuner, Y. (2010). A Phenomological Analysis of the Teacher Perspectives about their Co-teaching Applications. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice*, 10(1), 275-333.
- Unluer, S., Kabakcı, I., Uzuner, Y., & Odabası, H. F. (2010). Educational needs of faculty members regarding ICT use at the school for the handicapped. *Journal of Theoretical and Applied Information Technology*. 6(13), 1, 41-51.
- Gurgur, H. & Uzuner, Y. (2011). Examining the implementation of two co-teaching models: Team teaching and station teaching. *International Journal of Inclusive Education* (1) 1-22
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Table 4.

Some of Our Publications in the National Scientific Journals

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- Colak, A., Vuran, S. & Uzuner, Y. (2013). An examination of the description and improvement Efforts of Social Efficiencies in an Inclusion Classroom. Ankara Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Fakültesi, *Özel Eğitim Dergisi*, 14(2) 33-49.
- Gulec Aslan, Y., Kircaali Iftar, G. & Uzuner, Y. (2010) The Implementation and outcomes of an Intensive Behavioral Home Intervention Program (OCIDEP) for Children with ASD *Özel Eğitim Dergisi* 10(1), 1-25.
- Uzuner, Y. (2007). Action Research: Examples about special Education. *Özel Eğitim Dergisi* 6 (2), 1-12.
- Batu, S., Kircaali-Iftar, G. & Uzuner, Y. (2004). Teacher Perspectives about Integrating Exceptional Students into a Secondary Vocational School. *Özel Eğitim Dergisi*, 5 (2) 33-50.
- Uzuner, Y. (1999). Characteristics of Qualitative Research Methodology (IV. National Educational Sciences Congress, Anadolu University Publications No: 1076, Educational Faculty Publications: No: 51 428- 439.
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Being Anonymous, Being Co-Advisor, Mentoring The Advisors

The course titled as “Qualitative Research Method” has become popular at the University. I was teaching not only to the students of special education but also to the students from other colleges. The students learned about qualitative research; however, there was a dilemma. That is their advisors were lag behind them concerning the qualitative research. Yet they were willing to conduct qualitative research paradigm. As we all know that the novice researchers, especially the qualitative novice researchers, need many help while doing their first research. As I mentioned above as an experienced researcher and their advisor I read many of their data as they compiled them. I worked as much as they did. Acting like this to my own students was not difficult to me because I knew the importance of that effort and did not consider that as time consuming activation. However, many of the faculty tried to conduct qualitative research without knowing anything about qualitative research. I helped some of my friends as they guided their students. So the concept, “Mentoring to the Advisors” has emerged. This situation sometimes created various awkward problems. Some of the senior faculty members felt inferior learning in the presence of their students. They pretended as the advisor of me and the students. So they did attend only one meeting and did not show up to the following meetings. Some never showed up to the follow up meetings. Some pretended to be involved in the project. Some resisted learning anything etc.

I had to deal with these problems. We needed proficient, ethical researchers in our country. My patriotic, scientific and humanistic feelings and thoughts were the guidance for me. I kept helping the students for the sake of my mission of improving our scientific knowledge, for the sake of the students, university, our country and scientific community in the world. In many studies I forced myself to stand being anonymous if I sensed honesty that satisfied my patriotic feelings and thought. When I felt that the person was trying to exploit my positive intents and devotions, I had to fight. I don't know if I am a good fighter but I still continue fighting with those so called academicians to prevalent the essences of qualitative study. Table 5 contains some of our completed research projects.

Table 5.**Some of Our Completed Research Projects**

- Uzuner, Y., Girgin, U. & Tanridiler, A. (2010). An examination of the Balanced Mathematics Instruction to Hearing Impaired Students: An Action Research Anadolu University Scientific Research Project, Project No: 1001E07. Director.
- Kabakçı, I., Uzuner, Y., Unluer, S. (2010). An Examination of Information and Communication Integration at the School for the Handicapped. Anadolu University, Scientific Research Project, Project No: 070538, Vice director.
- Uzuner, Y., Girgin, U., Girgin, C., Erdiken, B., Icden, G., Cavkaytar, S., Tanridiler, A. & Kaya, N. (2009). An Examination of the Application of the Balanced Literacy Instruction at the School for the Handicapped. Anadolu University, Scientific Research Project, Project No: 062201 Director 2009.
- Odabası, Y. Uzuner, Y. & Uygun, M. (2009). A photographic narrative of the consumer experiences at a Mall. Anadolu University Scientific Research Project, Project No: No: 073522 Vice Director.
- Girgin, U., Kaya, Z. & Uzuner Y. (2009) An Examination of Instruction of A computer Program to Hearing Impaired Youths: An Action Research. Anadolu University Scientific Research Project, Project No: 090533 Vice Director.
- Saglam, M., Uzuner, Y., & Atik Kara, D. (2008). An Evaluation of Teacher Training Programs concerning the Efficiency of Teaching and measurement and evaluation processes Anadolu University Scientific Research Project, Project No: 080545 Vice Director.
- Colak, A., Vuran, S. & Uzuner, Y. (2007). An examination of the description and improvement Efforts of Social Efficiencies in an Inclusion Classroom. Anadolu University Scientific Research Project, Project Vice Director.
- Uzuner, Y. (2000). Comparison of two normally hearing mothers' strategies for repairing communication breakdowns while interacting with their hearing impaired children in various contexts. Scientific Research Project, Project No: 980504. Director.

Another Era**Learning and Teaching Action Research**

I have become curious about the essence of action research. I wanted to conduct research in my own classroom and school and solve some of the problems systematically and reflectively (Ferrance, 2000; Hensen, 1996; Hitchcock, & Hughes, 1995; Johnson, 2012; Maxwell, 2005; McNiff & Whitehead, 1996; Mills, 2003; Schumuck, 1997). However, I did not know how to conduct a research in my classroom while working there. I had not been educated as an action researcher while I was a doctoral student. A new era was starting for me and gradually for my colleagues. I visited the USA for about two months in 2001. During this visit I consulted with some of the action researchers at the University of Cincinnati and discussed about my interests and actions happening in my classroom. They encouraged me conducting action research. Returning home, I kept reading about the action research and wrote my first action research project.

In 2004 I started my own action research project with three hearing impaired students who had difficulties in having story grammar schema. A long with this research, I started to guide some doctoral dissertations acting as co-advisor. As the reader presume that it is a great responsibility to be a pioneer. You have to be knowledgeable, flexible in learning, volunteer in teaching and spending time with the beginners. We conducted several action research projects. I worked in any position so that we could get trustworthy and ethical data. Some of our completed action research projects are placed in Table 6.

Table 6.**Some of Our Completed Action Research Projects**

- Gurgur, H., Akcamete, G., Uzuner, Y., & Kıs, A. (2005). An Examination of Co-teaching Approach in an Inclusion Classroom. Action Research, Co-advisor, Doctoral Dissertation.
- Akturel, H. & Uzuner, Y. (2005) An Examination of the instruction of Life Science to hearing Impaired Students utilizing Interdisciplinary Instructional Approach: Action Research, Advisor, Thesis .
- Kıs A., Akcamete, G., Uzuner, Y., & Gurgur, H. (2007) The Impacts of Instructor Group on the professional development of the teachers of the Inclusion classrooms. Action Research Co-advisor, Doctoral Dissertation.
- Colak, A., Vuran, S., & Uzuner Y. (2007). Description and Implementation of Social Efficiency in a primary school classroom. Action Research –Co-advisor, Doctoral Dissertation.
- Uzuner, Y., Girgin, U., Girgin, C., Erdiken, B., Icden, G., Cavkaytar, S., Tanridiler, A. Kaya, N. (2009). An Examination of the Application of the Balanced Literacy Instruction at the School for the Handicapped. Anadolu University, Scientific Research Project, Project No: 062201, Director.

Problems about Action Research Efforts at the University

Creating the change was difficult but maintaining the change was more difficult in our country. The nature of Mediterranean culture and the realities of developing countries have negative impacts on maintaining the improvements. Things change but it takes lots of efforts and time. So one must act patiently and never lose his/her hope.

Similar to developing universities, faculty members are generally assigned to administrative statue. This statue has enormous power to create changes than the regular faculty members. Even though regular faculty members conduct research projects supported by the respected research institutes, he/she has to deal with the administrative barriers. However, being administrator takes away your scientific soul dealing with many everyday problems. Instead of conducting research you must attend or hold administrative meetings. This creates dilemmas among the faculty members and the administrators.

Ethical Issues

Acting honestly, emphatically, respectfully, flexibly and demonstrating confidential attitudes and behaviors we have never been got rid of the research sites (Dobert, 1984). We always informed the participants verbally and provided written consent letters. Based on the cultural and personal differences, the time of informing the participants changed accordingly. Fortunately, we have never been got rid of the research sites. Although we had some minor problems throughout the research efforts we could solve them and we took our lesson from every problem situation. Although we had some minor problems throughout the research efforts, we could solve them and we have learned from every problem situation. Unfortunately, not all the students or colleagues I taught how to conduct qualitative research applied all the rules for trustworthy and ethical qualitative studies. Although there are few, they misrepresent us. When this happens I feel so sad and desperate for not stopping them as they were working with me and learning from me.

The Lesson I Must Learn!

I think that I am just a human being that I cannot solve all the problems. And I am not responsible for their unethical attitudes and behaviors. People cannot be changed unless they want to do so. And I have to realize that I am working with adults. It is hard to alter adults' attitudes and behaviors.

The Current Situation

Recently there are various ethical activations happening at our University. The first attempt was established for the animal rights. Each Research Institute offers courses titled as “Research Ethic” as an obligatory course. A human subject Committee was established about a year ago. It seems that it is a good progress but its members are the senior faculty members who have not been conducting any research recently. They are there because they are the close friends of the Counselor of the University. In addition, no qualitative researcher was assigned to that Committee!

On the other hand, our number of Qualitative Task Force is getting larger at the University. We do work collaboratively writing books, teaching courses, conducting research, arranging workshops and seminars. I have a young, strong team behind me.

And I observe many faculty members conducting scientifically valid qualitative studies at the University. We have been keeping in touch with the other universities. I think the efforts are not in vain at all. We keep attending the qualitative research conferences and improving. In order to spread the qualitative research paradigm, a team work is necessary. Gradually we have been a group of people who have become close friends.

Trying to Establish a Qualitative Unite and the Great Disappointment

Our attempts are so enthusiastic but they are not organized. Recognizing this amount of proficient qualitative researchers at the university, we thought that the University was ready to have a Unit working more systematically and more institutionally. However; the administrators of the University did not accept, recognize and acknowledge the force we have developed in years.

Another New Era

Our Future Plans

Sometimes, I feel that I am getting tired of fighting with the authorities and exploiters. But this feeling must not stay with me for the sake of new learners, our established scientific community and, the scientific communities in the world and so on. Actually I would accept that it is a two way station. I have learned a lot, improved in many skills such as conducting and teaching research during past 20 years. As I was teaching I was learning as well. I force myself to realize that I am working at a developing university and country. So as you know it is a great responsibility to be a pioneer. You have to be knowledgeable and yet modest, flexible in learning, volunteer in teaching and spending time with the beginners.

Conclusion

Lessons I have taught to myself and my Colleagues: Considering all the barriers, I would say that we created accomplishments not only in our university but also in my country and the scientific community in and out of the country. We keep thinking positively, act modestly, be patient, learn how to deal with the authority, learn how to deal with the exploiters, work hard, never give up, focus on the target, be assertive when necessary, and so keep going in our scientific way. This is a never ending story at all. And we are not Don Quixote, Are we?!

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Author

Dr. Yildiz Uzuner is a professor of special education, in the area of education of hearing impaired individuals. Qualitative and mixed methodology are her research interests.

Contact

Prof. Dr. Anadolu University, Faculty of Education, 26470, Eskisehir, Turkey, e-mail: yildizuzuner@gmail.com