

**Yök Tez Merkezi ve Proquest Veri Tabanında Yer Alan Tarih  
Eğitimi Tezlerinin Değerlendirilmesi\***

**Evaluation of History Education Dissertations Submitted to Council of  
Higher Education (Yok) Thesis Center and Proquest Database**

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**Extended Summary**

**Purpose**

Reviewing dissertations on one field would be quite beneficial to identify overall framework, trend and focus of research in that field. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to evaluate history education dissertations submitted to council of higher education (YOK) thesis center and PROQUEST database in order to make comparison between national and international dissertations in term of their topics and research methods. This comparison is expected to help identify strength and weakness of Turkish history education compared to international studies in the field.

Within this scope this study aims to clarify following research questions;

1. What is the focus of research on those master's and doctoral dissertations in the field of history education conducted in the USA, Canada and Turkey?
2. What research methods and data collection tools they use?
3. Which educational level they target?

**Method**

This study was designed as a qualitative descriptive study. Required data was gathered from Council of Higher Education (YOK), "National Dissertation Center" and PROQUEST databases through computer-aided screening method by using various search terms such as; "History Education, History Teaching, History Instruction, History Teacher, History Textbook, History and Technology". Computer-aided screening method brought up hundreds of dissertations. During preliminary assessment the ones that not related with history education/teaching nor published in full text have been removed from the list. The final assessment

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conducted on 98 dissertations from Turkish Universities and 151 dissertations from US and Canadian universities. Here it should be noted that some of these dissertations from US and Canadian universities were conducted by international students on a population from various countries. These countries include Turkey, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Germany, Romania, Poland, Serbia, Russia, Singapore, Israel, Kazakhstan, Japan, South Korea, China, Bhutan, Trinidad - Tobago and Brazil.

Compiled dissertations were evaluated using content analysis method according to country, date, university, level (masters or doctorate), topic, research method and data collection instruments.

### **Results**

The oldest dissertation on history education in Turkey that can be reached during this study was a master's thesis prepared by M. Fatih Kesler in 1984, entitled; "History teaching at Dar Al-funun (Istanbul University), Faculty of Art and the last era faculty members". Within 151 master's and doctoral dissertation found in the PROQUEST database the oldest one was dated 1936, written by Simon B. Spradlin and entitled; "Studies on the history of history education".

Research topics: According to this study, the most studied research topic observed in Turkey is "teaching methods and techniques" (25%), and "teachers' and students' attitudes" toward various issues in history teaching (20%). On the other hand, the most studied topics observed in the US and Canada is "instructional technology and materials" (16%), "curriculum and textbooks" (12%), and attitudes toward various issues (12%). "Assessment and evaluation (0), teacher training / qualifications (1), history education approaches (2), and values education (3)" are the least studied topics in Turkish universities whereas "assessment and evaluation (2), history of history education (2)" are the least studies topics in the US and Canadian universities.

Methods: The majority of dissertations in the field of history education in Turkey was used quantitative research methods (53%), whereas the vast majority of dissertations in the US and Canada employ qualitative methods (79%). Unlike the situation in Turkey, the rate of international dissertations employed quantitative research methods is only 8 percent.

Data collection tools: Questionnaire (28%), literature review (24%), interview (15%), and achievement tests (12% are the most common data collection tools used in Turkey whereas interview (60%), (40%), questionnaire (26%), and document, textbooks, program review (25%) are more common in US and Canada. Also it has been observed that international dissertations use some data collection methods which are never used in Turkish dissertations such as "think aloud, portfolio, visual analysis, video analysis, and small group discussion".

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

Study shows that the number of dissertation on history education in Turkey has been increasing in the last 30 years. Teaching methods and attitudes are the two

mostly studied subject in Turkish dissertations on the other hand educational technology, curriculum and textbooks are the mostly studies subject in international dissertations. This show majority of the dissertations in Turkey aiming to try new teaching methods and materials in history classrooms in order to reduce or resolve common issues and problems in history teaching.

Study also shows Turkish researchers are more often relied on quantitative research methods and data collection tools, by contrast qualitative research methods and related data collection instruments are mostly used by international researchers. 92% of the international dissertations that analyzed in this study adopted qualitative or mixed research methods. It has been observed that Turkish researchers are also following this international trend in recent years hence number of dissertations employed qualitative methods has been increasing rapidly since 2008.

Along with research methods 62% of the dissertations used quantitative data collection instruments such as survey, scale, achievement test, multiple choice questions in Turkey. That means most of the Turkish researchers decided to examine issues in history teaching from a distance and played non-participant observer role. On the other hand most of the international researchers preferred to play participant observer role in their research and used those data collection instruments that can only be used in classroom, on-to-one with students such as interview (60%), observation (40%), evaluation of student work, think-aloud protocol, and group discussion.