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Does Curriculum Autonomy Support Student Autonomy? An R-Based Analysis[1]

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the correlation between curriculum autonomy among middle school teachers and their support for learner autonomy. The study employed a correlational survey design. Data were gathered utilizing the Curriculum Autonomy Scale and the Supporting Learner Autonomy Scale. The sample comprised 420 teachers employed in middle schools situated in the central districts of a province in the Aegean region. Spearman's rho correlation tests and Quantile Regression analysis were employed to examine the sub-problems of the study. The research data indicate a positive relationship between middle school teachers' curriculum autonomy and their perceptions of the necessity and performation of supporting learner autonomy. The regression analysis's findings indicate that middle school teachers' attitudes on the necessity for and performation of promoting learner autonomy are significantly predicted by their degree of curricular autonomy. Consequently, the teachers' autonomy behavior in the curriculum has a favorable impact on the learner's autonomy behavior. This research may have generalizability limitations when it is conducted with middle school teachers working in one province.

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[1] This study originates from the first author's master's thesis, with some findings presented as an oral presentation at the10th International Curriculum and Instruction Congress.

Introduction

Education systems should develop curricula to specify the knowledge, skills and attitudes that students should acquire, ensure standardization, provide guidance to teachers and a framework for assessment and evaluation. Curricula can be developed at both the school and national levels. In Türkiye, all curricula are developed by the Board of Education under the Ministry of National Education (MoNE). However, this approach might also hinder the revision of curricula according to regional needs and conditions, restrict teachers' freedom of decision-making, and necessitate lengthy bureaucratic processes. Voogt et al. (2018) emphasize that such national approaches to curriculum development may restrict the freedom of schools and teachers in adapting the curricula at school and classroom levels. This freedom points to the concept of teacher autonomy in related literature. According to Çolak (2016), teacher autonomy necessitates that educators make and carry out decisions consistent with their professional expertise, in collaboration with peers, and guided by scientific, ethical, and pedagogical principles.

In the late 20th century, autonomy, which has been intensively discussed in educational research, has become an alternative to the classical understanding of education (Yolcu, 2019). According to Friedman (2003), autonomy is a philosophical term that refers to a set of concepts familiar to ordinary people, such as being true to oneself, doing things one's own way, defending what one believes in, thinking for oneself, and having one's own personality in the reformulation of gender equality. Especially with the reforms in education systems, more emphasis is being placed on teacher autonomy. Since 1985, Spain and France have implemented reforms to support autonomy. The United Kingdom followed suit in 1988, followed by Austria in 1993, Italy in 1997, and Lithuania, Luxembourg, and Romania in 2003 (Eurydice, 2007). It is argued that empowering teachers and giving them autonomy is an appropriate place to start solving school problems. In general, teacher autonomy is defined as teachers' feelings about whether they can control themselves and their work environment (Wu, 2015).

In educational studies literature, teacher autonomy is addressed in different dimensions. According to Öztürk (2011a), teacher autonomy can be categorized into three groups: teachers' involvement in school management and decisions related to education and training, planning and implementing instruction, and professional development. According to Frostenson (2012), teacher autonomy can be considered in three dimensions: professional, colleague and individual. Pearson and Hall (1993) consider teacher autonomy in two different dimensions: curriculum autonomy and general instructional autonomy. Çolak and Altınkurt (2017) also discussed teacher autonomy in four different dimensions as "professional development autonomy, teaching procedural autonomy, curriculum autonomy and professional communication autonomy" (p. 40). It is seen that the teaching process and curriculum autonomy have a wider place in determining autonomy dimensions in terms of the education and training process.

Curriculum autonomy encompasses freedom and authority teachers have in making decisions regarding planning lessons, selecting instructional materials, and sequencing topics. This dimension of autonomy gives teachers control over the content and structure of what is taught in the classroom. It also includes decisions about the choice of learning activities, teaching resources and the overall organization of the curriculum to effectively meet the needs

of learners (Janhonen-Abruquah et al., 2020; Nguyen & Walkinshaw, 2018; Vangrieken, et al., 2017). The concept of curriculum autonomy is crucial to enable teachers to adapt their teaching practices to best suit the learning needs of their students. By having autonomy over the curriculum, teachers can make informed decisions about the content and methods used in teaching and thus may improve the quality and relevance of the educational experience for students. Curriculum autonomy also plays an important role in shaping the overall teaching and learning process, allowing teachers to adapt and customize their approach to meet the different needs of students (Özdemir et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2021). In short, teachers who have autonomy over the curriculum can create engaging and effective learning experiences that respond to the needs of their students and ultimately contribute to improved learning outcomes and student achievement.

Curriculum autonomy is a state of being rather than an asset status (Erss et al., 2016) and falls within the scope of pedagogical aspects of teacher autonomy such as curriculum development, curriculum design, and curriculum testing (Friedman, 1999). During the implementation of the curriculum, autonomous teachers create curriculum with children and help children to be autonomous by following the issues and questions that concern children (Castle, 2004).

Teacher curriculum autonomy depends on developing a curriculum that is flexible enough to ensure teacher autonomy and give teachers more decision-making responsibility and authority (Şentürken & Oğuz, 2020). In the process of curriculum implementation, it is an important requirement to ensure compliance with individual habits, behavioral patterns, the focus of the curriculum, students' learning performance, and the existing curriculum and syllabi (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2016). However, it is often overlooked in the curriculum development process how the quality of the curriculum affects the teachers who implement the curriculum (Hewitt, 2018). Teachers' autonomy can be restricted, sometimes through centrally determined curricula and textbooks (Wermke & Höstfält, 2014) and sometimes through general evaluations (Amrein-Beardsley, 2009). Cheng (2021) argues that when control of the curriculum is taken away from teachers, it undermines their professional identity and autonomy and further complicates the dynamics of test-driven education.

In Turkey, all practices related to curriculum development are carried out centrally by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) Board of Education. Which subjects will be taught, how they will be taught, curricula and textbooks are determined by decisions taken by the MoNE (Bümen, 2019). Through curricula that are limited at this level, teachers' expert decisions to determine the learning and teaching process activities that may be needed in the context of the classroom, school, region and society are largely limited (Güven, 2010). Due to the central exams being implemented and the focus on exam success (Bümen, 2019), teachers are expected to implement the curricula completely, and this prevents teachers from being autonomous in determining the content of the curricula (Öztürk, 2011b). In environments where learning is systematically measured and reported, teachers are granted relative autonomy (Gómes, 2023). According to Dorji (2023), by freeing schools and teachers from the constraints of centralized curriculum development, stronger schools, more satisfied teachers and better prepared students can be achieved.

Teacher autonomy can significantly influence the development of learner autonomy in the classroom. Teachers equipped with autonomous skills are more likely to promote learner

autonomy (Asmari, 2013). The role of the teacher is crucial in introducing students to autonomous learning and implementing strategies to foster learner autonomy (Yuzulia, 2020). Teachers need to guide and supervise students to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the autonomous learning process (Zhao, 2018). Teachers' autonomy support is an effective approach to motivate students to learn (Fu et al., 2023), and it also has a positive impact on students' learning (Mammadov & Schroder, 2023).

Studies are looking at teachers' autonomy and control over curriculum, according to a review of the literature. While Cotterall (2000) discussed curriculum design principles that promote autonomy in language teaching, Morgado and Sousa (2010) and De Almeida and Viana (2022) examined the relationship between teachers' curriculum autonomy and their professional development. Hong and Youngs (2014) examined the effects of the national curriculum in Korea on teacher autonomy. Similarly, Yolcu (2019) focused on the relationship between teacher autonomy and curriculum. In literature, studies focus on teaching methods, curriculum designs and approaches that support students' autonomy. Studies are addressing the relationship between teachers' autonomy support and students' autonomous motivation (Black & Deci, 2000), evaluating teachers' approaches to supporting student autonomy (Çaylı, 2019), examining the effects of flipped classrooms on learner autonomy (Çibik, 2017), and examining the effect of autonomy support on academic achievement and learning outcomes (Ergin, 2016; Fu et al., 2023; Mammadov & Schroder, 2023). Teachers' views on supporting learner autonomy have also been addressed (Oğuz, 2013b; Sabancı, 2007; Swatevacharkul, 2022). It is thought that this study will contribute to the literature by examining the relationship between teachers' behaviors of supporting learner autonomy and curriculum autonomy. During the implementation of curricula developed with a national approach in schools, it is of great importance for teachers to be able to reflect their own autonomy in the process of curriculum implementation in line with the needs, in other words, to exhibit curriculum autonomy to achieve the goals of the curricula. However, during the implementation of curricula, the autonomy opportunities that teachers will give to their students are as valuable as their own autonomy. Supporting students' autonomous behaviors by teachers can help students develop their free will, self-confidence and motivation, and reveal their different talents. This study aims to investigate the correlation between curriculum autonomy among middle school teachers and their support for learner autonomy. Separate discussion was held regarding the relationship between curriculum autonomy and the dimensions of "necessity of supporting learner autonomy" and "performation of supporting learner autonomy." At the same time, it will be tried to determine whether teachers' curriculum autonomy predicts learner autonomy.

In this direction, the research aims to answer the following questions;

1. Is there a relationship between secondary school teachers' curriculum autonomy and their supportting of learner autonomy (necessity-performation)?

2. Do middle school teachers' curriculum autonomy significantly predict their supportting for learner autonomy (necessity-performation)?

Method

Research Design

This study examined the relationship between middle school teachers' curriculum autonomy and their support for learner autonomy, it was designed as correlational research. The correlational research investigates the possibility of a relationship between two or more variables and also sometimes describes an existing relationship between variables (Büyüköztürk et al., 2017; Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Frankel & Wallen, 2005). In studies organized according to correlational research, the variables between which a relationship will be sought are symbolized separately in a way that allows a relational analysis between them. Accordingly, the study examined whether there is a relationship between middle school teachers' curriculum autonomy and their support for learner autonomy and whether curriculum autonomy predicts their support for learner autonomy.

Population and Sample

2355 middle school teachers employed in the central districts of an Aegean province during the 2020–2021 school year make up the study population. The Provincial Directorate of National Education provided data on the number of branch teachers employed by the study population in middle schools. Using the sample size table compiled by Büyüköztürk et al. (2017) as a guide, the sample size representing the population was calculated to be between 322-500 values for the whole population of 2355 middle school teachers. Convenience sampling was used at this point. When convenience sampling is used, participants fill out the scales once the researcher notifies them of the study (Stratton, 2021). Although the convenience sampling approach has drawbacks like exclusion and self-selection bias (Golzar et al., 2022), the scales used in the study were only shared directly within the messaging group of teachers employed in the schools addressed by the scope, and the appropriate safety measures were implemented. Therefore, the study's sample consisted of 420 secondary school teachers who were informed about the study and whose results were reliable.

In the process of reaching the required sample number, firstly, the proportions of the teachers working in the middle schools in the two central districts of the province where the study was conducted were examined according to the districts where they work. It was determined that the number of teachers working in the first district was 1143 and their proportion of the population was 49%; the number of teachers working in the second district was 1212 and their proportion of the population was 51%. It was ensured that all branch teachers working in middle schools could be represented in the sample by considering their proportion in the population. Male instructors made up 41.9% of the study's participants, while female teachers made up 58.1%. 3.1% of teachers are 1–5 years senior, 16.7% are 6–10 years senior, 27.1% are 11–15 years senior, 26.2% are 16–20 years senior, and 26.9% are more than 20 years senior.

Data Collection Instruments

The personal information form developed by the researchers, the Curriculum autonomy Scale (Yolcu & Akar-Vural, 2020) and the Scale for Supporting Learner Autonomy (Oğuz, 2013a) were used to collect data.

Curriculum Autonomy Scale

In the study, the "Curriculum Autonomy Scale (CAS)" developed by Yolcu & Akar-Vural (2020) was used to collect data on curriculum autonomy. The scale has four theoretical dimensions and 13 items, based on the findings of exploratory factor analysis. These dimensions include "Evaluation Autonomy" (Items 11, 12, 13), "Autonomy in Professional Development" (Items 4, 5, 6, 7), "Procedural Autonomy" (Items 8, 9, 10), and "Planning Autonomy" (Items 1, 2, 3). A 5-point Likert-type scale is used to rate the items: 1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Very Often and 5=Always. The scale's four-factor structure was shown to account for 67.44% of the overall variance. There was also confirmation of the scale's four-factor structure (χ2/sd=1.47; SRMR=.06, RMR=.05; AGFI=.89; GFI=.93; RMSEA=.052, CFI=.98) by the findings of the confirmatory factor analysis performed on the collected data. According to the results of the reliability analysis, Cronbach's alpha value for the whole scale was .82, and Cronbach's alpha values for the scale dimensions were .73 for the autonomy in professional development dimension, .81 for the procedural autonomy dimension, .75 for the evaluation autonomy dimension and .75 for the planning autonomy dimension (Yolcu & Akar-Vural, 2020). The reliability coefficients of the measurement were recalculated for the scope of this investigation. Accordingly, it was found to be .68 for the autonomy in professional development, .77 for procedural autonomy, .63 for evaluation autonomy, .85 for planning autonomy and .83 for the whole scale. Confirmatory factor analysis can be performed by approximating the data to the normal distribution in data that do not fit the normal distribution (Çapık, 2014). Confirmatory factor analysis was not conducted for this study since the Curriculum autonomy scale data did not fit the normal distribution and could not be approximated to fit the normal distribution.

Supporting Learner Autonomy Scale

The data related to supporting learner autonomy as another variable addressed in the study were collected with the "Supporting Learner Autonomy Scale (SLAS)" developed by Oğuz (2013a). Permission to use the scale was obtained from the researcher via e-mail.

There are three factors and sixteen items on the scale. "Support for Feelings and Thoughts (Item 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7)," "Support for Learning Process (Item 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 12)," and "Support for Assessment (Item 13, 14, 15, 16, 16)" are the factors that make up the scale. A 5-point Likert-type rating scale is used to measure opinions on the requirement and display of the conduct listed in each of the scale's items independently (1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Very Often, and 5 = Always). The scale's item-total correlation coefficients fell between.43 and.65. For necessity and performation, the three-factor structure of the scale accounts for 56.25% and 62.07% of the total variance, respectively. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis conducted on the collected data confirmed the three-factor structure of the scale for necessity (χ2/sd = 2.33; AGFI= .89; GFI= .92; RMSEA= .064; CFI=.97) and for performation (χ2/sd = 2.93; SRMR= .05; AGFI= .86; GFI= .90; RMSEA= .077; CFI=.97) (Oğuz, 2013a). The necessity for autonomy-supportive behaviors had a Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient of.89, with sub-factors showing that it was .85 for the support for feelings and thinking, .76 for the support for learning process, and 0.81 for the support for assessment. The scale's performation of autonomy-supportive behaviors had a Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient of.92; the sub-factors for the support for feelings and thinking, the support for learning process, and the support for assessment were .88, .80, and .86, respectively.

The measurement's reliability coefficients were recalculated for the current investigation. The reliability coefficients for the necessity of supporting learner autonomy were, therefore,.87 for the support for feelings and thought, .85 for support for learning process, .85 for the support for assessment, and.93 for the entire scale; for the performation of supporting learner autonomy, the reliability coefficients were.87 for the support for feelings and thought ,.86 for the support for learning process ,.87 for the support for assessment, and.93 for the entire scale. In the context of the study, the Supporting Learner Autonomy scale data did not fit the normal distribution. Confirmatory factor analysis was not done since the data could not be approximated to a normal distribution.

Data Collection Process

The research was conducted with approval from the Pamukkale University Social and Human Sciences Research and Publication Ethics Committee. Official permissions to gather data were secured after submitting an application to the Provincial Directorate of National Education. In response to the Ministry of National Education's decision to suspend in-person instruction because to the COVID-19 pandemic, data collecting instruments and the Participation Consent Form were digitized in online formats with these permissions. Contact information and information about the study were sent to teachers in the two central districts where it was carried out. The procedure was carried out until the required sample size was obtained, and participation was entirely optional.

Data Analysis

The data of the study were analyzed using IBM SPSS 20.0 (Statistical Package For Social Science) provided by Pamukkale University and open source R 4.1.2 (The R Project for Statistical Computing) package programs. The data from 420 participants' online forms containing their responses to the CAS and SLAS were coded and transferred to the SPSS program. Similarly, the total score data obtained from the participant's responses to the CAS and SLAS were also transferred to the "R" program.

Prior to examining the research's problems, Harman's Single Factor Test was used to determine whether a common method bias would arise from administering the scales to participants in the same setting and at the same time. This test assumes that if there is a common method bias, it will manifest itself as the presence of a single factor, and if the single factor variance calculated as a result of the calculation is not more than 50%, it is accepted that there is no common method bias (Kock, 2021; Podsakoff et. al. 2024). The single-factor test results calculated within the scope of the research show that there is no common method bias (31.54%).

Table 1 displays the findings of the Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests used to assess whether the scale data has a normal distribution.

Table 1

Normality Test Results for Curriculum Autonomy and Supporting Learner Autonomy Scales and Subscales

		Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
Scale	Sub Dimensions	Value	*df*	*p*	Value	*df*	*p*
CAS	Autonomy in Professional Development	.158	420	.00	.911	420	.00
	Procedural Autonomy	.131	420	.00	.915	420	.00
	Evaluation Autonomy	.130	420	.00	.949	420	.00
	Planning Autonomy	.107	420	.00	.958	420	.00
	Whole Scale	.054	420	.01	.985	420	.00
SLAS (Necessity)	Support for Feelings and Thoughts	.197	420	.00	.846	420	.00
	Support for Learning Process	.173	420	.00	.859	420	.00
	Support for Assessment	.156	420	.00	.885	420	.00
	Whole Scale	.139	420	.00	.904	420	.00
SLAS (Performation)	Support for Feelings and Thoughts	.126	420	.00	.921	420	.00
	Support for Learning Process	.117	420	.00	.927	420	.00
	Support for Assessment	.121	420	.00	.924	420	.00
	Whole Scale	.090	420	.00	.953	420	.00

In analyzing data for normal distribution, the Shapiro-Wilk test results are considered when the sample size is below 50, while the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results are used for sample sizes above 50 (Büyüköztürk, 2019). A p-value below .05 in the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test indicates a rejection of the normality assumption, signifying statistically significant results (Pallant, 2020). As a result, Table 1 shows that, at the.05 significant level ($p<.05$), neither the CAS nor SLAS sub-dimensions nor the scale as a whole have a normal distribution.

Non-parametric analytic techniques were employed to examine the data that were not distributed normally in accordance with the results of normality tests. Since the data were not normally distributed, the correlation between CAS and SLAS and its sub-dimensions was ascertained using the Spearman-rho correlation coefficient. Quantile Regression analysis, one of the non-parametric regression analysis methods used for non-normally distributed data, was used to determine the prediction of middle school teachers' perceptions of the necessity of supporting learner autonomy and the performation of supporting learner autonomy. While the conditional mean of the dependent variable is modeled in the parametric regression method, the conditional median of the dependent variable (Q2-tau=0.50) or other quantiles such as Q1 (tau=0.25), Q3 (tau=0.75) are modeled in quantile regression (Cebeci, 2019). In this study, the quantile Q2 (tau=0.5) was modeled as the dependent variable for quantile regression analysis, while the necessity of supporting learner autonomy and its performation were considered separately. Although quantile regression technique has limitations such as the difficulty of parameter estimations (Waldmann, 2018), some aspects of it are developing, and the calculation procedures are time-consuming (Olsen et al., 2012), it was preferred in this

study due to its advantages such as being quite flexible, not having any assumptions for the dependent variable, and being resistant to extreme values (Cebeci, 2019). Cebeci (2019) states that quantile regression is a very flexible regression, does not make any assumptions for the dependent variable, and is a method resistant to outliers.

Results

Relationship between curriculum autonomy and support for learner autonomy

In the study, the relationship between middle school teachers' curriculum autonomy and their support for learner autonomy (necessity and performation) was analyzed. The findings regarding the relationship between teachers' curriculum autonomy and their perceptions of the necessity of supporting learner autonomy and their perceptions of performation support for learner autonomy are given in Table 2. Table 2 shows that teachers' curriculum autonomy scores and supporting learner autonomy (necessity) scores, as well as curriculum autonomy scores and supporting learner autonomy (performation) scores, have a moderately positive relationship (rho1=0,434; rho2=0,434; p<.05).

Table 2

Spearman-Brown Coefficients for the Relationship between Curriculum autonomy and Supporting Learner Autonomy

Spearman Correlation		Curriculum autonomy
Supporting Learner Autonomy (Necessity)	*Spearmanrho1*	.430*
	p	.000
	N	420
Supporting Learner Autonomy (Performation)	*Spearmanrho2*	.484*
	p	.000
	N	420

**p<.05*

Table 3 presents the results of the Spearman-Brown correlation coefficients pertaining to the association between the curricular autonomy scale and the supporting learner autonomy (necessity) and supporting learner autonomy (performation) sub-dimensions. The sub-dimensions of the curriculum autonomy scale and all sub-dimensions of the supporting learner autonomy (necessity) scale, as well as the sub-dimensions of the curriculum autonomy scale and all sub-dimensions of the supporting learner autonomy (performation) scale, have a significant relationship, according to Table 3.

Table 3

Spearman-Brown Coefficients for the Relationship between Curriculum Autonomy and Supporting Learner Autonomy Subdimensions

Supporting Learner Autonomy Scale		Curriculum Autonomy Scale / Scale	Autonomy in Professional Development	Procedural Autonomy	Evaluation Autonomy	Planning Autonomy	Scale Total
Supporting Learner Autonomy (Necessity)	Support for Feelings and Thoughts	*rho*	.439	.364	.187	.251	.397
		P	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000*
		N	420	420	420	420	420
	Support for Learning Process	*rho*	.392	.307	.116	.193	.331
		p	.000*	.000*	.017*	.000*	.000*
		N	420	420	420	420	420
	Support for Assessment	*rho*	.409	.302	.244	.236	.400
		p	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000*
		N	420	420	420	420	420
	Scale Total	*rho*	.472	.376	.212	.263	.434
		p	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000*
		N	420	420	420	420	420
Supporting Learner Autonomy (Performation)	Support for Feelings and Thoughts	*rho*	.454	.406	.217	.263	.416
		P	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000*
		N	420	420	420	420	420
	Support for Learning Process	*rho*	.429	.359	.226	.240	.414
		p	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000*
		N	420	420	420	420	420
	Support for Assessment	*rho*	.443	.366	.356	.240	.480
		p	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000*
		N	420	420	420	420	420
	Scale Total	*rho*	.492	.418	.294	.270	.484
		p	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000*
		N	420	420	420	420	420

**p<.05*

The autonomy in professional development sub-dimension of the curriculum autonomy scale has a moderately positive relationship with the support for feelings and thoughts sub-dimension (*rho*=0,439; *p*<.05), the support for learning process sub-dimension (*rho*=0,392; *p*<.05), the support for assessment sub-dimension (*rho*=0,409; *p*<.05), and the entire scale (*rho*=0,472; *p*<.05) of the support for learner autonomy (necessity) scale. The Procedural autonomy sub-dimension of the curriculum autonomy scale is found to have a moderately positive relationship with the support for feelings and thoughts sub-dimension (*rho*=0,364; *p*<.05), the support for learning process sub-dimension (*rho*=0,307; *p*<.05), the support for assessment sub-dimension (*rho*=0,302; *p*<.05), and the entire scale (*rho*=0,376; *p*<.05) of the support for learner autonomy (necessity) scale.

There is a weak positive correlation between the evaluation autonomy sub-dimension of the curriculum autonomy scale and the support for learner autonomy (necessity) scale's the support for feelings and thoughts sub-dimension (*rho*=0,187; *p*<.05), the support for learning process sub-dimension (*rho*=0,116; *p*<.05), the support for assessment sub-dimension (*rho*=0,244; *p*<.05) and the whole scale (*rho*=0,212; *p*<.05). There is a weak positive correlation between the planning autonomy sub-dimension of the curriculum autonomy scale and the support for learner autonomy (necessity) scale's the support for feelings and thoughts sub-dimension (*rho*=0,251; *p*<.05), the support for learning process sub- dimension (*rho*=0,193; *p*<.05), the support for assessment sub-dimension (*rho*=0,236; *p*<.05) and the whole scale (*rho*=0,263; *p*<.05).

It's observed that there is a moderate positive relationship between the autonomy in professional development sub-dimension of the curriculum autonomy scale and the support for feelings and thoughts sub-dimension (*rho*=0,454; *p*<.05), the support for learning process sub-dimension (*rho*=0,429; *p*<.05), the support for assessment sub-dimension (*rho*=0,443; *p*<.05) and the whole scale (*rho*=0,492; *p*<.05). It is seen that there is a moderate positive relationship between the Procedural autonomy sub-dimension of the curriculum autonomy scale and the support for feelings and thoughts sub-dimension (*rho*=0,406; *p*<.05), the support for learning process sub-dimension (*rho*=0,359; *p*<.05), the support for assessment sub-dimension (*rho*=0,366; *p*<.05) and the whole scale (*rho*=0,418; *p*<.05).

A weak positive correlation has been observed between the curriculum autonomy scale's evaluation autonomy sub-dimension and the support for feelings and thoughts sub-dimension (*rho*=0,217; *p*<.05), the support for learning process sub-dimension (*rho*=0,226; *p*<.05) and the learner autonomy support (performation) scale's whole scale (*rho*=0,294; *p*<.05), and a moderately positive correlation between the support for assessment sub-dimension (*rho*=0,356; *p*<.05). The support of learner autonomy (performation) scale's the support for feelings and thoughts sub-dimension (*rho*=0,263; *p*<.05), the support for learning process sub-dimension (*rho*=0,240; *p*<.05), the support for assessment sub-dimension (*rho*=0,240; *p*<.05), and the entire scale (*rho*=0,270; *p*<.05) are found to have a weakly positive relationship with the curriculum autonomy scale's planning autonomy sub-dimension. Teachers' curriculum autonomy and all of its sub-dimensions, as well as supporting learner autonomy and all of its sub-dimensions at the necessity and performation levels, were determined to be positively correlated based on these data.

In summary, Table 3 shows that there are statistically significant and positive relationships between all sub-dimensions of teachers' curriculum autonomy and all sub-dimensions related to the necessity and display of behaviors to support learner autonomy.

Prediction of curriculum autonomy on their support learner autonomy

In the study, the prediction of teachers' curriculum autonomy on their support for learner autonomy was examined. Since the data were not normally distributed, quantile regression analysis was conducted. Quantile regression analysis data on the prediction of secondary school teachers' curriculum autonomy levels on their perceptions of the need and performation to support learner autonomy are given in Table 4.

Table 4

Quantile Regression Analysis Results of Supporting Learner Autonomy Predicted by Curriculum Autonomy

Predicted variable	τ (Quantil-Median)		β coef.	Lower bd	Upperbd
Model-1	0.5	Intercept Curriculum Autonomy(CA)	41.000 0.600	38.012 0.429	49.292 0.635
The Necessity to Support Learner Autonomy (NSLA)		Pseudo R^2= 0.035 (Mc Fadden) 0.220 (Cox and Snell) 0.220 (Nagelkerke)	*Pr (>F)* = 2.2e-16*** *F = 80*.010		
		$NSLA_{0.5}$ =41.000+0.600CA+Error			
Model-2	0.5	Intercept Curriculum Autonomy(CA)	30.389 0.722	21.907 0.560	41.764 0.887
The Performation to Support Learner Autonomy (PSLA)		Pseudo R^2 = 0.046 (Mc Fadden) 0.0290 (Cox and Snell) 0.0291 (Nagelkerke)	*Pr (>F)* = 2.22e-16*** *F = 74*.065		
		$DPLA_{0.5}$ =30.389+0.722CA+Error			

Note: i) τ denotes the quantile.
ii) β is the standardized regression coefficient.
*iii) *** denotes 0.01, ** denotes 0.05, * denotes 0.10 significance levels.*

Table 4 shows the regression coefficient and the statistical lower and upper confidence limits for the cut-off heights in Model-1 regarding the prediction of teachers' perceptions of the necessity of supporting learner autonomy by curriculum autonomy. Since the confidence intervals for both the regression coefficient and the curriculum autonomy variable did not contain 0 (zero) in terms of the cut-off height, they were determined to have statistical significance. ANOVA results regarding the significance of Model-1 compared to the null model show that Model-1 differs statistically significantly compared to the null model (F=80.010, p<.01). The Mc Fadden, Cox and Snell and Nagelkerke pseudo R^2 values for Model-1 are between zero and one, indicating that the model works. However, it can be said that Model-1 is not very strong in line with Mc Fadden, Cox and Snell and Nagelkerke values. For the relationship in the model to be very strong, Mc Fadden R^2 values should be between 0.20 and 0.40, Cox and Snell and Nagelkerke R^2 values should be 0.50 and above (Alpar, 2013). Considering the pseudo R^2 values, curriculum autonomy explains approximately 22% of the variance of the perceptions of the necessity of supporting learner autonomy. It can be expected that an increase of 1 standard deviation in terms of scores related to curriculum autonomy will cause an increase of 0.6 standard deviations in perception scores related to the necessity of supporting learner autonomy.

Upon examining Table 4, it is evident that the confidence intervals for both the regression coefficient and the curriculum autonomy variable in terms of the cut-off height in Model-2 regarding the prediction of teachers' perceptions of curriculum autonomy on the performation of supporting learner autonomy were found to be statistically significant since they did not contain zero. ANOVA results regarding the significance of Model-2 compared to the null model

showed that Model-2 differed statistically significantly compared to the null model (F=74.065, p<.01). Mc Fadden, Cox and Snell and Nagelkerke pseudo R^2 values for Model-2 are between zero and one, indicating that the model works. Again, in line with Mc Fadden, Cox and Snell and Nagelkerke values, it can be said that Model-2 is not very strong (Alpar, 2013). When the pseudo R^2 values are taken into consideration, curriculum autonomy explains approximately 29% of the variance of the perceptions about the performation of supporting learner autonomy. It can be expected that an increase of one standard deviation in terms of scores related to curriculum autonomy will cause an increase of 0.722 standard deviations in perception scores related to performation of support for learner autonomy.

According to the study's findings, instructors' opinions on curricular autonomy and their support for student autonomy (both necessary and displaying) are positively and moderate correlated. Additionally, it was shown that instructors' perceptions of support for learner autonomy are significantly predicted by their curricular autonomy.

In summary, according to the quantile regression analysis in Table 4, teachers' level of curriculum autonomy is a significant predictor of their perceptions of the need to support and display learner autonomy.

Discussion, Conclusion and Implications

This study investigated if teachers' support for learner autonomy and curricular autonomy are related. At the same time, it was also examined whether teachers' curriculum autonomy significantly predicted their perceptions of necessity and performation of supporting learner autonomy. According to the research findings, teachers' beliefs of the need to support learner autonomy and their perceptions of performation of support for learner autonomy are positively and moderately correlated with their curricular autonomy. It was concluded that teachers' curriculum autonomy positively affected their perceptions of supporting learner autonomy. No studies specifically addressing the relationship between teachers' curricular autonomy and support for learner autonomy were found in the literature review. The fact that curriculum autonomy is a relatively new idea to be examined independently of teacher autonomy may explain the lack of studies investigating the link between these two variables. However, similar to the findings in the current study, Yazıcı (2016) found a low and positive relationship between teacher autonomy and perceptions of the necessity of supporting learner autonomy, and a moderate and positive relationship between teacher autonomy and perceptions of exhibiting support for learner autonomy. Wu & Wu (2018) observed that there is a link between curricular autonomy as a sub-dimension of teacher autonomy. Teachers' taking the initiative and displaying autonomous behaviors while implementing the curriculum will also increase the possibility of supporting their students to direct their own behaviors. It can be said that teachers who exhibit autonomy behaviors also support their students' autonomous behaviors. Similarly, O'Reilly (2014) and Fu et al. (2023) concluded that teachers' support for learner autonomy predicted students' grade point average variable. Basri (2020) states that there is a dynamic interaction between the constructs of learner autonomy, teacher support and teacher autonomy.

The study revealed that teachers' curricular autonomy was a significant predictor of both teachers' perceptions of the importance of supporting learner autonomy and their perceptions of how to demonstrate it. As a result, curricular autonomy accounted for roughly 22% of the

variance in the necessity to support learner autonomy and 29% of the variance in the performation of learner autonomy. In the literature, curriculum autonomy was only examined as a sub-dimension in Yazıcı's (2016) study in which teacher autonomy and supporting teachers' learner autonomy were examined together. The study also found a positive relationship between teachers' curricular autonomy and their opinions of the necessity and performation of support for learner autonomy. Simultaneously, curricular autonomy is a major predictor of views of both the necessity for and performation of support for learner autonomy. In this regard, to raise more autonomous persons, applicable in-service education might be structured to promote instructors' curricular autonomy.

The literature study revealed that teachers' curriculum autonomy was largely treated as a sub-dimension of teacher autonomy, with nearly no research addressing curriculum autonomy as a teacher characteristic alone, particularly in the national literature. New studies can be conducted by considering curriculum autonomy as a phenomenon independent of teacher autonomy with different variables.

This research was conducted using quantitative methodology. In order to obtain in-depth results about teachers' curriculum autonomy and support for learner autonomy, qualitative methodology or mixed methods research using both quantitative and qualitative methodology can be utilized.

The study focused solely on two central districts of an Aegean province. In order to reduce the limitation regarding the generalizability of the research results, research with larger sample groups can be conducted. Only middle school teachers were included in the study. Research can be conducted in which preschool, primary and high school teachers are considered separately, preschool, primary and middle school teachers are included together as basic education teachers, or teachers at all levels from preschool to high school can be included.

Policy adjustments can be made to balance a centralized curriculum approach with teacher autonomy. Regulations that support teachers' authority to adapt the curriculum according to classroom needs can also indirectly encourage student autonomy.

This study has generalizability limitations due to geographical, institutional, and sample representativeness as it only covers middle school teachers in one province. In addition, collecting data based on teachers' perceptions may limit the transferability of results to different contexts due to individual biases and conditions that may change over time.

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TÜRKÇE GENİŞ ÖZET

Program Özerkliği Öğrenci Özerkliğini Destekliyor mu? R Tabanlı Bir Analiz

Giriş

Eğitim sistemleri; öğrencilerin hangi bilgi, beceri ve tutumları kazanmasını istediğini belirlemek, standartlaşmayı sağlamak, öğretmenlere rehberlik etmek ve ölçme ve değerlendirme için bir çerçeve oluşturmak amacıyla program geliştirmeye ihtiyaç duyarlar. Programlar ulusal düzeyde geliştirilebileceği gibi okul düzeyinde de geliştirilebilir. Türkiye'de ulusal program geliştirme anlayışı ile Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı tarafından tüm okullarda uygulanacak öğretim programları geliştirilmektedir. Ulusal program geliştirme yoluyla tüm öğrencilere ortak programın uygulanması ve böylece eğitimde eşitliğin sağlanması, tüm ülke imkânları dikkate alınarak planlama ve uygulamanın yapılması yoluyla kaynakların daha verimli kullanılması, denetleme mekanizmaları yoluyla kalitenin kontrol edilmesi ve öğrencilerde millî birlik ve beraberliğin oluşturulmasına olanak sağlaması mümkün olmaktadır. Ancak ulusal program geliştirme anlayışı programların bölgesel ihtiyaçlar ve koşullara göre düzenlenmesi, öğretmenin karar verme özgürlüğünün kısıtlanması ve uzun bürokratik yazışmaların yapılmasına da neden olabilir. Voogt ve diğ. (2018) ulusal düzeydeki program anlayışının okulların ve öğretmenlerin okul ve sınıf düzeyinde programları düzenleme özgürlüğünü kısıtladığına vurgu yapmaktadır. Bu özgürlük "öğretmen özerkliği" kavramı ile alanyazında kendine yer bulmaktadır. Çolak'a (2016) göre öğretmen özerkliği, eğitimcilerin mesleki uzmanlıklarıyla uyumlu, meslektaşlarıyla iş birliği içinde ve bilimsel, etik ve pedagojik ilkeler rehberliğinde kararlar almalarını ve uygulamalarını gerektirir.

Program özerkliği ise öğretmen özerkliği içerisinde ele alınan bir boyut olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Program özerkliği; öğretmenlerin dersleri planlaması, öğretim materyalleri seçimi ve konuların sıralaması ile ilgili kararlar alma konusunda sahip oldukları özgürlük ve yetkiyi

kapsar. Özerkliğin bu boyutu, öğretmenlerin sınıfta öğretilenlerin içeriği ve yapısı üzerinde kontrol sahibi olmalarını sağlar. Aynı zamanda öğrenme etkinliklerinin, öğretim kaynaklarının seçimi ve öğrencilerin ihtiyaçlarını etkin bir şekilde karşılamak üzere programın genel organizasyonuna ilişkin kararları içerir (Nguyen & Walkinshaw, 2018; Janhonen-Abruquah ve diğ., 2020; Vangrieken ve diğ., 2017). Ancak kimi zaman merkezi olarak belirlenen program ve ders kitapları aracılığıyla (Wermke & Höstfält, 2014) kimi zaman da genel değerlendirmeler yoluyla (Amrein-Beardsley, 2009) öğretmenin özerkliği kısıtlanabilmektedir.

Öğretmenin sahip olduğu özerklik sınıfta öğrenen özerkliğinin gelişimini önemli ölçüde etkileyebilir. Özerk becerilerle donatılmış öğretmenlerin öğrenen özerkliğini teşvik etme olasılığı daha yüksektir (Asmari, 2013). Öğrencilerin kendi öğrenme sorumluluklarını üstlenecek şekilde özerk olmalarını sağlamak için öğrenci ihtiyaçlarının, beklentilerinin ve ilgilerinin dikkate alındığı, öğrenme-öğretme sürecinin öğrencinin katkılarıyla zenginleştirildiği bir ortamın oluşturulması gereklidir ve böyle bir ortam ancak kendisi de özerk olan, tüm donanımını öğrencilere aktarabilecek nitelikte öğretmenlerin varlığıyla gerçekleştirilebilir (Ergür, 2010, s.354).

Merkeziyetçi bir anlayışla geliştirilen öğretim programlarının okullarda uygulanması sırasında öğretmenlerin ihtiyaçlar doğrultusunda kendi öz iradelerini programların uygulanması sürecine yansıtabilmeleri, başka bir ifadeyle program özerkliği sergileyebilmeleri, öğretim programlarında ulaşılmaya çalışılan hedeflere ulaşılması bakımından büyük önem arz etmektedir. Bununla birlikte öğretim programlarının uygulanması sırasında öğretmenlerin kendi özerklikleri kadar, öğrencilerine tanıyacakları özerklik fırsatları da değerlidir. Öğrencilerin özerk davranışlar göstermesinin öğretmenler tarafından desteklenmesi, öğrencilerin özgür iradelerinin, öz güvenlerinin ve motivasyonlarının geliştirilmesini ve farklı yeteneklerinin ortaya çıkmasını sağlayabilir. Tüm bunlardan hareketle bu araştırmada ortaokul öğretmenlerinin program özerklikleri ile öğrenen özerkliğini desteklemeleri arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. 'Öğrenen özerkliğini destekleme gerekliliği' ve 'öğrenen özerkliğini desteklemeyi sergileme' boyutlarının program özerkliği ile ilişkisi ayrı ayrı ele alınmıştır. Aynı zamanda öğretmenlerin program özerkliğinin öğrenen özerkliğini yordayıp yordamadığı da belirlenmeye çalışılmıştır.

Yöntem

Araştırmada ortaokul öğretmenlerinin program özerklikleri ile öğrenen özerkliğini desteklemeleri arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesi amacıyla ilişkisel tarama deseni kullanılmıştır.

Araştırmanın çalışma evrenini 2020-2021 eğitim öğretim yılında Ege bölgesinde bulunan bir ilin merkez ilçelerinde görev yapmakta olan 2355 ortaokul öğretmeni oluşturmaktadır. Çalışmaya katılan ve verileri geçerli toplam 420 ortaokul öğretmeni, araştırmanın örneklemini oluşturmaktadır. Örneklem sayısına ulaşma sürecinde ise önce çalışmanın yapıldığı ilin iki merkez ilçesindeki ortaokullarda görev yapmakta olan öğretmenlerin görev yaptıkları ilçelere göre evrendeki oranlarına bakılmıştır. Ortaokullarda görev yapmakta olan tüm branş öğretmenlerinin evrende bulundukları oran da dikkate alınarak örneklemde de temsil edilebilmeleri sağlanmıştır.

Veriler araştırmacı tarafından geliştirilen kişisel bilgi formu, Program Özerklik Ölçeği (Yolcu ve Akar-Vural, 2020) ve Öğrenen Özerkliğini Destekleme Ölçeği (Oğuz, 2013a) ile toplanmıştır. Araştırmanın verileri IBM SPSS 20.0 (Statistical Package For Social Science) ve R 4.1.2 (The R

Project for Statistical Computing) paket programları kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Araştırmanın alt problemlerine ilişkin analizler yapılmadan önce ölçeklerden elde edilen veriler doğrultusunda örneklemin normal dağılıma sahip olma durumu test edilmiştir. Buna göre Program Özerklik Ölçeği ve Öğrenen Özerkliğini Destekleme Ölçeğini'nin hem gereklilik hem de sergileme için hem tüm alt boyutları hem de ölçeğin tümünün .05 anlamlılık düzeyinde normal dağılıma sahip olmadığı belirlenmiştir ($p < .05$). Bu sebeple normal dağılmayan verilerin analizlerinde non-parametrik (parametrik olmayan) analiz yöntemleri kullanılmıştır. Program Özerklik Ölçeği ve Öğrenen Özerkliğini Destekleme Ölçeği ve alt boyutları arasındaki ilişki durumunu belirlemek için de Spearman-rho Korelasyon Katsayısı kullanılmıştır. Ortaokul öğretmenlerinin program özerkliklerinin öğrenen özerkliğinin desteklenmesinin gerekliliği ve sergilenmesine yönelik algılarını yordama durumunu belirlemek için de normal dağılmayan veriler için kullanılan non-parametrik regresyon analiz yöntemlerinden Kantil Regresyonu analizi kullanılmıştır.

Bulgular

Ortaokul öğretmenlerinin program özerklikleri ile öğrenen özerkliğini desteklemeleri arasındaki ilişkinin belirlenmesine yönelik bulgular öğretmenlerin hem program özerkliği puanları ile öğrenen özerkliğinin desteklenmesi (gereklilik) puanları arasında hem de program özerkliği puanları ile öğrenen özerkliğinin desteklenmesi (sergileme) puanları arasında orta düzeyde pozitif yönde bir ilişki bulunduğunu göstermektedir. Bununla birlikte genel olarak program özerkliği ölçeğinin alt boyutları ile öğrenen özerkliğini destekleme (gereklilik) ölçeğinin tüm alt boyutları arasında ve yine program özerkliği ölçeğinin alt boyutları ile öğrenen özerkliğini destekleme (sergileme) ölçeğinin tüm alt boyutları arasında anlamlı bir ilişki bulunduğu görülmektedir.

Ortaokul öğretmenlerinin program özerkliklerinin, öğrenen özerkliğinin desteklenmesinin gerekliliği ve sergilenmesine ilişkin algılarını yordama düzeyine ilişkin Kantil Regresyonu bulguları incelendiğinde de program özerkliğinin, öğrenen özerkliğinin desteklenmesinin gerekliliğine ilişkin algıları anlamlı bir şekilde yordadığı görülmektedir. Buna göre program özerkliği, öğrenen özerkliğinin desteklenmesinin gerekliliğine ilişkin algılara ait varyansın yaklaşık olarak %22'sini açıklamaktadır. Aynı şekilde program özerkliği, öğrenen özerkliğinin desteklenmesinin sergilenmesine ilişkin algıları anlamlı bir şekilde yordamakta ve öğrenen özerkliğinin desteklenmesinin sergilenmesine ilişkin algılara ait varyansın yaklaşık olarak %29'unu açıklamaktadır.

Tartışma, Sonuç ve Öneriler

Araştırma bulguları, öğretmenlerin program özerklikleri ile hem öğrenen özerkliğinin desteklenmesinin gerekliliği algıları hem de öğrenen özerkliğini desteklemeyi sergileme algıları arasında pozitif yönlü ve orta düzeyde bir ilişki olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu bulgular doğrultusunda öğretmenlerin program özerklikleri, öğrenen özerkliğinin desteklenmesine yönelik algılarını olumlu yönde etkilemektedir. Hem genel olarak öğretmen özerkliğinin hem de özel olarak program özerkliğinin öğrencilerin kendilerini özerk bireyler olarak hissetmeleri açısından büyük önem taşıdığı söylenebilir.

Araştırmada, öğretmenlerin program özerklikleri, öğrenen özerkliğinin desteklenmesinin hem gerekliliğine ilişkin öğretmen algılarının hem de sergilenmesine ilişkin öğretmen algılarının anlamlı bir yordayıcısı olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Öğretmenlerin hem program özerklikleri hem de öğrenen özerkliğini desteklemeleri, öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişimi ve öğrencilerde geliştirilmek istenen başarı, beceri, derse katılım ve motivasyon gibi durumlar bakımından sahip oldukları önemli nitelikler arasındadır. Alanyazındaki çalışmalar ve mevcut araştırmanın verileri doğrultusunda program özerkliği sergileyen öğretmenlerin aynı zamanda öğrenen özerkliğini desteklemeyi gerekli görecekleri ve sergileyecekleri söylenebilir.

Araştırma sonuçları değerlendirildiğinde daha özerk bireyler yetiştirmek adına öğretmenlerin program özerkliğinin geliştirilmesine yönelik uygulamalı hizmet içi eğitimler düzenlenmesi önem arz etmektedir. Program özerkliğinin tek başına bir öğretmen özelliği olarak ele alınan çalışmaların ulusal alanyazında yok denecek kadar az olması dikkate alındığında, program özerkliğinin öğretmen özerkliğinden bağımsız bir olgu olarak farklı değişkenlerle ele alındığı yeni çalışmalar yapılabilir. Bu araştırma nicel metodolojinin kullanıldığı bir araştırmadır. Öğretmenlerin program özerklikleri ve öğrenen özerkliğini desteklemeleri hakkında derinlemesine sonuçlar elde etmek amacıyla nitel metodolojinin ya da nicel ve nitel metodolojinin birlikte kullanıldığı karma yöntemlerle de araştırmalar yapılabilir.