



## Research Article

# Examination of Postgraduate Dissertations Within the Field of Gifted Education in Turkey: Content Analysis Study<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

This research was carried out in order to examine master and doctoral dissertations made in the field of gifted in terms of methods (research model, universe and sample, used measurement tools, statistical techniques and content). Within the scope of the research, 94 master and doctoral dissertations were collected from YÖK data base, which were about the gifted education between 2010 and 2016. Content analysis method was used in the research because it aims to examine master and doctoral dissertations. The content analysis was applied to each publication with the help of this form and the data for the publications were recorded in a database. The results of the study show that the dissertations made in the field of gifted have increased significantly since 2010, the quantitative researches in master dissertations and the experimental designs in doctoral dissertations are preferred, the sampling group concentrates on primary and secondary school students, the method of sampling selection is not mentioned, teaching and attitude-interest-perception studies were preliminary, and more than one data collection tool was used in the studies and the percentage and frequency tables, t test and non parametric test usage as the data analysis methods.

### Keywords

the gifted, postgraduate dissertations

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## **Introduction**

It is seen that there is no possibility of carrying out education in a world where individual differences are revealed, new practices and methods are investigated with classical and single type program. Individuals with different characteristics in terms of cognitive, emotional, and social development are discussed with experts on whether training with their normal peers is appropriate or not. One of the groups in the focus of this discussion is the gifted. Gifteds are defined as individuals who differ from directions from their peers according to intelligence, talent, creativity, motivation, duty accountability, etc.. With Russia launching the Sputnik spacecraft in the 1950s, many western countries, especially in America, believed that it was from developing superior individuals to develop. Such as the developed countries like America, Israel, Russia, China, England have put in place permanent implementations in this issue have recorded rapid progress. Prior to the republic in Turkey, elite students were trained in the Ottoman Empire. After the Republic, with the aim of raising qualified teachers starting with the village institutes programme, the science high schools was opened to train gifted in the field of science and mathematics; gifted students in the field of arts of The Anatolian high schools and fine arts schools were sent abroad; after science and art centers opened, gifted students have begun to be given education which has applications mainly. Today, there are many different practices, but it is thought that a permanent training program or special legislation related to the training of gifteds similar to the practices in developed countries such as America and South Korea will make it possible to educate gifted individuals in Turkey with better possibilities.

The superior qualities of gifteds who possess one of the forerunner roles of advancement in the world cause the quality of education or suitability, to be one of the reasons for questioning. Experts, administrators, teachers, parents and students may have different opinions about the training and applications of the gifted. It is known that many studies have been carried out on the examination of gifteds, the training of their families, the determination of the qualifications of their teachers and the training of gifted students. While some specialists are in favor of separate training, some teachers believe that problems can be resolved by correcting the applied schedule and providing in-service trainings; and some families believe that they should be given early diagnosis training seminars. These results have emerged in our country with the academic studies of teachers, experts and academicians (Akar, 2015; Alkan, 2012; Bakioğlu & Levent, 2013; Bilgili, 2000; Karakuş, 2010; Kaya, 2013; Levent, 2011; Şahin, 2012; Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi-TBMM Meclis Araştırması Komisyonu Raporu, 2012). In this study; the graduate dissertations and doctoral dissertations prepared for the gifted individuals between 2010-2016 will be examined to see what kinds of studies are conducted and a number

of statistical information which can be a guide to researchers who want to work in this area will be presented and related proposals will be developed.

There are many different definitions in the literature on giftedness (Davis and Rimm, 2004). Gifted students are those who are determined, patient, determined, structured, capable of working hard and doing the important task of doing their own job (Davaslıgil, 2004). Giftedness represents golden individuals like copper, silver and gold those were used to distinguish different individuals in Platon's books (Özsoy, Özyürek and Eripek, 2002).

The understanding of the importance of gifted individuals through the knowledge that the education of gifted talents can return as an important investment is undergoing early identification (Ruban and Reis, 2005). In fact, every country wants to grow up and advance quickly by raising excellent individuals. However, it is important to identify these individuals early and to recognize the appropriate conditions for them for the benefit of society and the country. According to the reports of the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey, 2 percent of the population aged 0-24 years is gifted (Güçin, 2014). Nowadays, it is necessary to find 1.6 million gifted people in the population of 80 million. However, the number of gifted students enrolled in educational institutions in Turkey is around 19,000 by 2016 (National Education Statistics, 2016). Science and Art Centers (BİLSEM) contribute to the education of gifted students in Turkey separately from normal schools (Council of Research Commission Report, 2012). Gifted students spend some of their time in normal school; and for the rest of the day, they are given the opportunity to use their creativity and intelligence with different applications and projects in BİLSEM.

Giftedness is necessary to succeed in science and arts, but the ability of a gifted individual emerges when appropriate conditions to trigger this success are emerging (Long, 2004). Educating gifted students with every field will also be a great gain for the countries and for themselves (Jung, Ryu, Choi and Park, 2016). It has been stated that the application of gifted students to mixed classrooms in which their education coexists with their peers can cause problems with compliance and success (Sullivan and Robhorn, 2002). In today's democratic countries where it is stated that individuals should have equal rights, there is a paradox about the equal opportunity for education and the same education for the gifted. What is meant to be said from everyone is equal opportunities through by education; in fact, the individual must get the training he needs (Levent, 2013).

Özenç and Özenç (2013) examined multi-dimensionally the 38 dissertations of access to open-accessed on gifteds through document analysis in their work. However, as of 2017, the number of dissertations that are open to access has increased by over 90%, and this rate has required that postgraduate dissertations be examined in this study in an up-to-date manner. By acquiring knowledge about

applications, projects and researches about gifted education will enable to reach higher points of education of the gifted in our country, it is possible to make gained a scientific point of view to working staff or teachers working in this field. This research is important in order to raise awareness of gifteds to be determined for what has been done in this field, especially in the last six years.

### **Purpose of the research**

The aim of this study is to gain a different work in the literature and to shed light on other works to be done by studying graduate and doctoral dissertations between the years 2010-2016 about the gifteds that will make a difference in both country and in the world when appropriate education and facilities are offered.

In response to this objective, the answers to the following questions were sought:

- How is the distribution of master and doctoral dissertations in the field of gifteds according to years?
- What are the areas of master and doctoral dissertations in the field of gifteds?
- What are the subjects of master and doctoral dissertations in the field of gifteds?
- Which methods were used in master and doctoral dissertations in the field of gifteds?
- Which methods have been used in the selection of sample groups of master and doctoral dissertations in the field of gifteds?
- What data collection tools were used in master and doctoral dissertations in the field of gifteds?
- What are the sample groups of master and doctoral dissertations in the field of gifteds?
- Which data analysis techniques were used in master and doctoral dissertations in the field of gifteds?

## **Method**

### **Research Model**

In the study, content analysis method was used from qualitative analysis methods. Because content analysis is to combine data that is similar to each other within the framework of certain concepts and themes and to interpret them by organizing that the reader can understand (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006). Content analysis is a systematic, reproducible technique in which some words of a text are summarized with smaller content categories with certain rules based coding (Büyüköztürk, Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz ve Demirel, 2009).

**Scope of the Study**

The scope of the research consists of 63 master dissertations and 31 doctoral dissertations on the giftedness of the different universities. 94 dissertations which were made between the years of 2010-2016 were obtained from YÖK (Council of Higher Education) Dissertation data base.

**Collection of Data**

Within the scope of the research, the dissertations obtained by the key words of gifted and talented intelligence have been downloaded on the national dissertations center page that is included in YÖK's website. Some of the dissertations that have been closed are accessed from the libraries of the universities they are affiliated with, and the summaries of unreachable dissertations have been utilized. The dissertations that cannot be obtained the desired data from the abstracts have been excluded from the scope of the research.

**Analysis of Data**

In order to examine dissertations in terms of content, dissertation analysis form was developed by researchers including type of dissertation, year, field, subject, research methods, sample group and sample selection, data collection tools and data analysis type. In the development of the form, the relevant literature was scanned, data collection tools of similar studies in other fields were examined, and a dissertation analysis form was developed. After the form was developed, 2 measurement evaluation experts, 2 Turkish language specialists and 1 education science experts were asked opinions from the experts and tried to provide scope coverage. Corrections were made in line with the opinions and recommendations of the experts and the form was finalized.

The dissertations obtained were examined in turn, recorded in the dissertation analysis form, and the obtained data were analyzed using the SPSS 20.0 program. The results are presented in graph, frequency and percentage tables.

**Results**

The findings of the study were presented in order of sub-objectives of the research. As a first objective of the research, the distribution of master and doctoral dissertations by years in the field of giftedness has been examined and the findings are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.**

*Number of Master and Ph.D. Dissertations, About Gifted Education in Turkey, Studied Between 2010-2016*

Years	Type of Dissertation	f	%
2010	Master	12	19
	Doctoral	4	13
2011	Master	9	14
	Doctoral	3	10
2012	Master	10	17
	Doctoral	5	16
2013	Master	13	20
	Doctoral	6	19
2014	Master	6	9
	Doctoral	9	29
2015	Master	10	17
	Doctoral	3	10
2016	Master	3	4
	Doctoral	1	3
Total	Master	63	100
	Doctoral	31	100

When Table 1 is examined, it is seen that the maximum number of master dissertations is done in 2013 (20%) and that the maximum number of doctoral dissertations is done in 2014 (29%). In 2016, the number of dissertations has decreased considerably. Table 2 shows the areas of master and doctoral dissertations in the field of gifted students.

**Table 2.**

*Distribution of Dissertations, About Gifted Education in Turkey, According to Their Fields*

Areas	f	%
Education	75	79.7
Psychology	16	17.02
Other	3	3.28
Total	94	100

When the findings are examined, in the table 2 it is seen that the dissertations are made mostly in the area of education (% = 79.7); then psychology (%17), and the least other studies were carried out in other fields.

Table 3 presents the frequency and percentage values of the subject distributions studied in master and doctoral dissertations about gifted.

**Table 3.***Contents According to Subjects Used in Dissertations About Gifted Education in Turkey*

<b>Subject</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Learning	9	9
Teaching	30	30
Attitude-Interest-Perception	52	52
Scale-test development	3	3
Teacher Education	6	6

When Table 3 examined, it was found that the attitude-interest-perception subjects are the highest were studied in the dissertation (52%), followed by teaching (30%), learning (9%), teacher education (6%) and scale test development seems to have been studied.

As the fourth aim of the research, findings related to methods used in master and doctoral dissertations in the field of gifted talent are given in Table 4.

**Table 4.***Methods Used in Dissertations About Gifted Education in Turkey*

<b>Methods</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Experimental</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Experimental	1	3.8
Quasi-Experimental	25	96.2
<b>Not Experimental</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Descriptive	10	21.7
Correlational	7	15.2
Survey	29	63.1
<b>Interactive</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Case study	1	20
Other	4	80
<b>Non-Interactive</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Literature review	5	100
<b>Qualitative studies</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Explanatory	5	55.5
Exploratory	1	11.1
Triangulation	3	33.4

When table 4 is examined, it is seen that most of the methods used in master and doctoral dissertations about gifted are quasi-experimental (96.2%) and survey (63.1%); are the least methods used are case study (20%) and exploratory method (11.1%).

Findings related to methods used in the selection of samples in dissertations made in the field of gifted are given in Table 5.

**Table 5.**

*Methods Used in Sample Selection in Dissertations About Gifted Education in Turkey*

<b>Sample Types</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Simple random sampling	4	4.25
Stratified sampling	1	1.06
Purposive sampling	3	3.20
Convenience sampling	5	5.32
Maximum variation sample	1	1.06
Not mentioned	80	85.11

When the findings were examined, it was seen that most of the dissertations (85%) did not specify the sample selection, while the remaining dissertations used the convenience sampling (5.32%); followed by simple random sampling (4.25%) as the most sample selection methods.

The results of the data collection tools used in the dissertations are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6.**

*Data Collection Tools Used in Dissertations About Gifted Education in Turkey*

<b>Data collection tools</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Survey	20	20
Achievement test	10	10
Attitudes / Ability	46	46
Interview	16	16
Observation	4	4
Alternative Assessment Tools	4	4

When data collection tools used in the dissertations were examined in the field of gifted, it was found that attitude/ability measurement instruments (46%) were used the most, followed by survey (20%), interview (16%) and achievement test (10%). In addition, alternative assessment tools and observation were used 4 times (%4) as a data collection in the dissertations of gifted.

Findings of the sample groups studied in the dissertations are shown in Table 7.



**Table 7.**Sample Groups Studied in Dissertations *About Gifted Education in Turkey*

<b>Sample Groups</b>		
<b>Student</b>	f	%
Primary School	26	29.2
Middle School	47	52.8
High School	16	18.0
<b>Adult</b>	f	%
Academician	2	5.5
Family	4	11.1
Teacher	24	66.6
School manager	6	16.8

When the findings were examined, in the student category, it is seen that it has been worked the most with middle school students in the dissertations about gifted (52.8%), followed by primary school students (29.2%) and high school students (18.0%). In the adult category, it is seen that it has been worked the most with teachers (66.6%), administrators (16.8%), families (11.1%) and at least with academicians (5.5%) in the dissertations.

Findings related to the data analysis techniques used in the dissertations are given in Table 8.

**Table 8.***Data Analysis Techniques Used in Dissertations About Gifted Education in Turkey*

<b>Sample Groups</b>		
<b>Descriptive Analysis</b>	f	%
Frequency / Percent	39	52
Mean / Standard Deviation	30	40
Graphic	6	8
<b>Predictive Analysis</b>	f	%
T test	37	37
Correlation	14	14
Anova	20	20
Manova	2	2
Factor Analysis	4	4
Non parametric	23	23
<b>Qualitative Analysis</b>	F	%
Content Analysis	17	68
Qualitative descriptive analysis	5	20
Other	3	12

When the findings were examined in Table 8, it is seen that the frequency/percentage (52%), then the mean / standard deviation (40%) and graphical representation (8%) were used the most in the descriptive analysis category; independent sample t test (37%), nonparametric tests (23%), Anova (20%), correlation (14%), factor analysis (4%) and at least Manova (2%) were used the most in the predictive analysis category; while the content analysis (68%), followed by qualitative descriptive analysis (20%) and other analyzes (3%) were used the most in the qualitative analysis category, as data analysis in the dissertations about gifted.

## Conclusion and Discussion

The aim of this study is to examine some aspects of dissertations made in the area of gifted education between 2010-2016. When the field was examined in the literature, limited studies related to the subject was encountered. Due to this reason, it is aimed to support working with related literature and interpretations in this section. According to the results obtained from the survey, the largest numbers of dissertations were made in 2014, but in 2016 there was a remarkable decrease in the number of dissertations. This may have been due to a long period of time in the working field of gifted, or a lack of expertise and resources. Similar findings were obtained in the work done by Güçin (2015) about the decrease of dissertations numbers in master and doctoral dissertations about the field of gifted.

When the dissertations made in the field of giftededs are examined according to the study areas, it is seen that the dissertations are done mostly in the field of education. Because the field of gifted is located in education faculties, graduates from this area are continuing their postgraduate education in this direction. In addition, the presence of science and art centers may have facilitated access to sample groups, which may have led to intensification of the field of education in the dissertations. Another factor is the desire to increase access to gifted children, early diagnosis and education services.

Another finding of the study is that studies on determining the attitudes, interests and perceptions in the dissertations are the most studied, followed by teaching, learning, teacher education and scale test development. Because attitude-interest-perception studies are both more economical in terms of accessing the sample group and evaluating and reaching to the measurement tools. When the dissertations are examined, it is seen that attitude/ability measurement tools are used the most, then survey, interview, achievement test, observation and alternative evaluation tools are used respectively and also more than one data collection tools are used in some dissertations. Thus, the data become more consistent with each other and the reliability of the work increases. In this context, findings are mutually supportive.

When the sample groups included in the studies were examined, it was seen that most of the students were working with middle school students and followed by

working with primary school students, while most of the adult categories were working with teachers. The fact that communication with secondary school students and teachers can be established easily and sampling can be easily reached may have caused this situation.

When the methods used in data analysis of dissertations are examined, it is seen that quantitative data analysis methods are mostly used and qualitative data analysis is not used much. It is considered that quantitative data analysis is frequently preferred on the program and quick results are preferred, and qualitative data analysis is less preferred because of the difficulty in data collection and analysis. When examining the sample selection methods of the dissertations examined, it is seen that no information is given about how to select the sample in a large part, but convenient sampling method is used in selecting the sample. The fact that this sampling method is easily accessible is the reason for selection, and the lack of sampling methods may be due to the lack of information of the researchers. From this point of view, it is of utmost importance to overcome these deficiencies in postgraduate dissertations that provide expertise in the field.

## Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, the following suggestions can be presented;

- Students should be given a course on how to write method parts of scientific studies in the dissertations works, firstly.
- It seems that graduate studies in the field of gifted have been declining, and researchers should be directed to this area.
- When the dissertations are examined, it is seen that the studies carried out are mostly in semi-experimental design or survey model. The lack of qualitative and mixed studies is remarkable. Researchers' work on these models will enrich the field text and make it look as a whole to the field.
- It is observed that there is not much room for families in the sampling groups. Gifted children can work with their families to gain information and awareness about what they need to do to protect and intervene.

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