

Evaluation of Elective Courses in High Schools by Teachers¹

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Abstract

In this study, which is aimed at analyzing the opinions of teachers about the selection of elective courses in high schools, the case study design of qualitative research methods is used. The data obtained from the interviews with the teachers will be evaluated using descriptive data analysis, which is one of the qualitative data analysis techniques. It is seen that the Ministry of National Education, school administrations and students are effective in determining the elective courses. It is seen that the school administrations have chosen the elective courses of the teachers. The majority of teachers state that elective courses are compulsory elective courses. The reasons for not opening different elective courses are the lack of space. Although the majority of teachers do not find elective courses useful, there are also teachers who find it useful or think it is useful for the university exam. It has been concluded that the elective courses do not contribute to the academic development of the student and that the student selects the elective courses as a compulsory one.

Key words: Academic development, high school, elective courses, teacher

Introduction

Text one of the most important elements of the development of a country in every direction is the individual. It is the most strategic function of the education system to find the skills and abilities of the individual, to educate them according to their interests and abilities, thus contributing to the development of both the individual and society. In schools, there are two types of courses, compulsory and elective. These are courses such as mathematics and Turkish, which are determined by the state and which the student does not have the right to choose. The electives are the courses where the student has the right to choose with his / her parents. The state will determine which of these courses will be taught, but the student has the right to choose one or more of the courses without having to be forced. In order to provide the citizens with the knowledge, skills and skills they seek, the state makes it compulsory for them to take courses. The elective courses are to offer students the opportunity to develop their interests and abilities in accordance with their preferences.

It is possible to collect elective courses in two titles; research-centered elective courses for identifying students' interests and abilities; and elective courses to concentrate in an area (Frank, 1976). The application of elective courses in European countries is mostly given in some socially problematic areas. These courses are generally religion, history and language courses (Tas, 2004). Considering the application in Turkey it is seen as able to choose elective courses in both species. In this context, it can be said that individual, social and cultural requirements are taken into consideration in determining the type of elective courses. In the first steps of the education process, it is more appropriate to choose the first type of elective courses and the second type of elective courses in the vocational education process. According to the findings of the studies, university students determine their preferences according to their contribution to work life, their credit filling status and most importantly their opinions about the faculty member. The opinions of the students about the faculty member affect the elective course preference in the first degree. On the other hand, elective course preference is the last choice for academic expectation (Tezcan, 2008).

With the amendment made in the Turkish education system, the 4 + 4 + 4 intermittent compulsory education system, which has been implemented since the 2012-2013 academic year, brought about the regulations related to the elective courses. In the decision of Board of Directors dated 25.06.2012 and numbered 69, the elective courses were determined in advance by TTKB and the variety of elective courses Was Increased.

The aim of this study is to evaluate the application of elective courses in high schools according to teachers' opinions. In the research, teachers' opinions will be applied on who and how elective courses are chosen. In addition, the application of elective courses in high schools and the contribution of the students to the multi-faceted development will be discussed.

Method

Research Approach

In this study, which aims to analyze the elective course applications in high schools within the framework of teacher opinions, a case study design is used as one of the qualitative research methods. The basic idea in a case study is to select a case (or several cases, more than one case study) and explain how the case illustrates a problem or issue. This leads to an in-depth analysis of the situation (Cresswell, 2017). The most important feature of this method is that the situation discussed in the study is chosen because of the specific characteristics of the individual or group and it is handled within its own context (Ersoy, 2016). The case study includes in-depth and longitudinal analysis of data obtained and analyzed through participant observations, in-depth interviews and document collection (Glesne, 2015). Stake (2010) divided the case study into three. These; real, instrumental and cooperative case studies. A real case study contributes to a better understanding of a particular situation. Instrumental case study is a study to provide insight into a particular situation, a particular subject, or to rearrange a generalization. The cooperative case study is to look at several cases of several events. What constitutes a situation or analysis unit is usually determined during the design process (Patton, 2014).

Study Group

The study group consisted of twenty-one teachers of different seniority and gender working in various high schools in Ankara. In the study group, in-depth interview technique was used by using maximum diversity sampling method. The maximum diversity is the identification and selection of different situations involving a wide range for sampling data collection and analysis (Christensen, et al., 2015). In order to ensure maximum diversity, teachers from different high schools with different seniority were chosen.

Data Collection

The study was conducted with a semi-structured interview form. Semi-structured interviews involve both specific and open-ended questions and emerge as a mixture of structured and unstructured species (Merriam, 2013). When developing a semi-structured interview form, the relevant literature was first reviewed. A semi-structured interview form was then prepared and three field experts were interviewed and interviewed, two from the Department of Education Management and one from the Department of Education Programs, to ensure the content of the interview form. Questions were terminated. This is in line with expert opinions.

Data Collection Method

The interview data were collected in detail to obtain detailed information on the subject of the interview and the information obtained was reported within the framework of qualitative research principles. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) stated that the interview was a careful questioning and listening process, as opposed to the daily dialogues in which ideas were exchanged. In-depth interviews are interdisciplinary interactions, where a researcher tries to learn about a subject from another person and records that person's experiences, thoughts, feelings, and the importance that the subject may have (Arthur, et al., 2012). Each interview lasted approximately 40 minutes.

Data Analysis

Since the case study approach in qualitative analysis represents an analysis process, it creates a special method for collecting, organizing and analyzing data. The aim is to collect comprehensive, systematic and in-depth information about each situation of interest (Patton, 2014). The interview records of the research were analyzed by the researcher and converted into interview texts on the computer. To ensure reliability in interview questions, conversations recorded on the audio device during the interview were reported and consistency was achieved. After the analysis of the speeches, consistency was ensured in the process of coding the data according to certain criteria. The data obtained from the interviews with teachers were evaluated with content analysis, which is one of the qualitative data analysis techniques. Content analysis often refers to text (interview transcripts, diaries, and documents) rather than observation-based field notes, and the basic meanings found in content analysis are often called patterns or themes (Patton, 2014). In this context, content analysis and themes were created and analyzed. Thematic codes were given to the participants (P1, P2,...).

Findings

Table 1. Who or who determines the elective courses in high schools?

| Theme | Code | Participant |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Who determines the elective course | Student | P1,P2,P10,P11 |
| | School management | P3,P4,P5,P6,P7,P8,P9,P10,P12 |
| | MoNE | P13,P14,P15,P16,P17,P18,P19,P20,P21 |

It is seen that MoNE is effective in determining elective courses in schools. The second effect is school administrations. In fact, the students who should be the most effective in the course selection are in the third place. The opinion of a teacher participating in the research is as follows.

The school administration determines the teacher according to the norm status. The elective courses in which the teachers in the branch are out of the norm are chosen. The student's interests, desires and abilities are not taken into consideration (P21).

Table 2. Do the teachers themselves determine the elective courses they will take?

| Theme | Code | Participant |
|---|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Who determines the teacher to give elective courses | Compliance with branch | P1,P3,P4,P16 |
| | Do not enter | P2,P5,P6,P12,P15 |
| | School management | P7,P8,P9,P10,P13,P15,P16,P18,P21 |
| | Not suitable for branch | P11,P14,P17,P19,P20 |

It is seen that the school administrations have chosen the elective courses of the teachers. It is seen that some of the teachers take elective courses that are suitable for the branch and some of them take elective courses that are not suitable for the branch. Some teachers do not attend elective courses because they are not suitable for their own branch. A teacher's opinion about this situation is as follows.

Administration determines, but each branch has a sub-branch, those sub-branches are sometimes taken into consideration. (P9).

Table 3. What problems do teachers experience with elective courses?

| Theme | Code | Participant |
|----------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Problems | No problem | P1,P4,P5 |
| | Does not know | P2 |
| | Compulsory Elective | P3,P6,P9,P10,P14,P16,P17,P19 |
| | Course acquisition is the same | P7 |
| | Student doesn't interest | P8,P12,P13,P15,P18,P20,P21 |
| | I don't know the subject | P11 |

When the research findings related to the problems experienced by the teachers who are interested in elective courses are examined, the majority of the teachers say that elective courses are compulsory elective courses. Some of the teachers who participated in the research stated that the students did not care about the elective courses. Some teachers also state that they do not know the subject, do not have mastery, portrayal of the curriculum, or that the problems are the same as that of the compulsory courses. The views of one of the teachers participating in the research are as follows.

It does not interest the student because he has no questions in the university exam. Students can create problems because they consider elective courses as drudgery and useless. (P7)

Table 4. Reasons for not opening different elective courses.

| Theme | Code | Participant |
|--|--|--------------------------|
| Why can't you open a different course? | Insufficient staffing | P1,P5,P6, P4,P11,P18 |
| | Space shortage | P2,P3,P9,P13,P15,P16,P17 |
| | Teacher competence | P7,P19 |
| | Rescue teacher from being out of staff | P8,P9,P10 |
| | Limited course | P9 |
| | University entrance exam | P12,P13 |
| | MoNE effect | P14,P15,P16,P17 |
| | Applicability of lessons | P18,P19 |
| | Lack of selection skills | P20,P21 |

According to the findings of the research, the reasons for not opening different elective courses are mostly the lack of space. Other reasons are MEB effect, inadequate number of teachers, lack of teaching competence, applicability of courses, lack of selection skills, university exam and limited course. The opinions of one of the teachers participating in the research are as follows.

I think both the administration and the authorities are aware that elective courses do not serve their purpose. The administration is defending duty. They said they will be put in a way that will cause them the least distress, at the same time a few teachers out of the norm to save the lessons to select, select, and put. All application steps related to elective courses (such as determining the number of elective courses by the relevant units, determining the number, selecting by the school administration, compulsory selection to the student, etc.), what service serves, how to choose, where the student can answer questions like this choice never a choice and practice. (P11)

Table 5. Are the elective courses really useful?

| Theme | Code | Participant |
|---------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Is it useful? | Useful for university exam | P1,P6,P12,P17 |
| | Not useful | P2,P5,P7,P11,P13,P19,P20 |
| | Not interested | P3,P16,P21 |
| | Useful | P4,P8,P9,P10,P14,P15 |
| | No contribution to development | P18 |

According to the findings of the research, it is about whether teachers find the elective courses really useful. Diversity of teachers does not find elective courses useful, but there are also teachers who find it they are useful for the university exam. Others say that the elective courses are of interest to the student or that the student cannot. The location of one of the teachers who went to research.

I taught psychology and logic. Since psychology was related to daily life, it attracted students' attention and questioned themselves. But logic seemed very unnecessary to the 12th Grade and could not benefit. I also took part in the project course but was out of the field. I don't think students benefit. (P6)

Table 6. Academic contribution of elective courses to students.

| Theme | Code | Participant |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Academic contribution | Not contribution | P1,P9,P10,P12,P13,P14,P15,P16 |
| | Offers different information | P2 |
| | Not interested | P3 |
| | Support for development | P4 |
| | Compulsory Elective | P5,P6,P7,P11,P12,P18 |
| | Grade Point Average | P8,P17,P19 |
| | Imposition | P19,P20,P21 |

According to the findings about the contribution of elective courses to the academic development of the students, the majority of the teachers think that elective courses have no contribution to the academic development of the students. They state that the students choose elective courses as compulsory, use them as a tool to increase their grade point average, choose these courses with imposition and do not interest the students. The views of a teacher participating in the research are as follows.

The student has a special talent for painting, music, or sport, and it is helpful if the teacher discovers and directs it. Other than that, it is seen as chore. (P5).

Results, Conclusions and Recommendations

In this study, it was seen that the Ministry of National Education and school administrations and students were effective in determining the elective courses in order to put forward the views of teachers about the selection of elective courses. Here, the student has to choose the appropriate course for his / her own personal development and interest, while the Ministry of National Education and the school administrations choose courses instead of the student. This eliminates the effectiveness and efficiency of elective courses.

It is seen that the school administrations have chosen the elective courses of the teachers. It is seen that some of the teachers take elective courses that are suitable for the branch and some of them take elective courses that are not suitable for the branch. For example, literature teacher is given a physical education course that is not suitable for his / her branch. It was concluded that teachers themselves did not determine elective courses like the students themselves.

The majority of teachers state that elective courses are compulsory elective courses. Some of the teachers state that the students do not care about the elective courses, and some teachers do not know the subject, do not have mastery, do the curriculum portrayal, or the problems are the same as the compulsory courses. The existence of courses determined by the Ministry of National Education and school administrations causes the elective courses to lose their purpose. In this case, the name of the courses is expressed as compulsory elective courses.

The reasons for not opening different elective courses are the lack of space. Other reasons are MEB effect, inadequate number of teachers, lack of teaching competence, applicability of courses, lack of selection skills, university exam and limited course. In support of the findings of the study, Kaya (2013) aimed at evaluating the application of elective courses according to the opinions of school administrators in his study. It was concluded that the decision should be made by the school administration.

Although the majority of teachers do not find elective courses useful, there are also teachers who find it useful or think it is useful for the university exam. The other results indicate that the elective courses do not attract the interest of the student or the interest of the student. It can be said that the elective courses do not attract the student's interest or are not useful because the student does not choose the elective courses.

It has been concluded that the elective courses do not contribute to the academic development of the student, that the student selects the elective courses as a compulsory, uses them as a tool to increase the grade point average, chooses these courses with imposition and does not attract the attention of the students. The attractiveness of the elective courses opened in line with the interests, wishes and abilities of the students will increase. In addition, it is of great importance that teachers who are experts in the field give these courses and prepare the necessary materials and infrastructure for the implementation of the courses.

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