

## Prospective Elementary School Teachers' Attitudes towards Cursive Handwriting

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### Abstract

*In this research, it was aimed to determine attitudes of prospective elementary school teachers who will teach writing with the cursive handwriting towards cursive handwriting. This research was carried out by using quantitative research method and causal-comparative model. To determine attitudes of prospective elementary school teachers towards cursive handwriting "Cursive Handwriting Attitude Scale" (CHAS) was developed by researchers. The scale developed was applied to 236 prospective elementary school teachers who study in Firat and İnönü Universities. Mann Whitney U-test and Kruskal Wallis H-test which are the non-parametric tests were used to analyze the data obtained from the study. Based on the results of this study, attitude towards reading the texts which are written in cursive handwriting points of prospective elementary teachers are higher than their attitude towards writing in cursive handwriting points and beliefs about the function of cursive handwriting points. The attitude points towards cursive handwriting don't differ statistically in terms of the variables which are gender, grade, duration of using cursive handwriting, and overall grade point average.*

**Keywords:** *Cursive handwriting, elementary school teacher, writing instruction*

### SUMMARY

The mother tongue language development implies a process which starts with listening, continues with speaking and facilitates to be aware of acquired language's grammar. At the end of this process which develops informally individuals take a step that they will be rewarded with reading and writing skills. The writing skills which are very important for individuals to express themselves effectively and communicate with others efficiently is a tool that help us to explain our feelings, thoughts, plans and what we saw and lived by lettering. For using this tool more effectively cursive handwriting has been used since the changes in 2005. When we examine the results of the papers about cursive handwriting which carried out with teachers, students and prospective teachers, we see that there are either positive or negative aspects or perceptions about this writing style. It can be said that prospective teachers' attitudes towards cursive handwriting can be shaped by all of this positive and negative aspects.

### *Purpose*

In this research, it was aimed to determine attitudes of prospective elementary school teachers who will teach the cursive handwriting towards cursive handwriting.

### METHOD

This research was carried out by using quantitative research method and causal-comparative model. To determine attitudes of prospective elementary school teachers towards cursive handwriting “Cursive Handwriting Attitude Scale” (CHAS) was developed by researchers. To develop CHAS a pre-implementation of the scale was done with 195 prospective elementary school teachers who study at Firat and Inonu Universities Education Faculties Primary Education Departments. In accordance with pre-implementation and to provide construct validity, exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were done. According to results of these analyses there are three sub-scales in CHAS. These sub-scales are the “Attitude towards Reading the Texts which are written in Cursive Handwriting (ARTWCH)”, “Attitude towards Writing in Cursive Handwriting (AWCH)” and “Beliefs about the Function of Cursive Handwriting (BFCH)”. After providing construct validity of the CHAS, the actual implementation was carried out by participating 236 prospective elementary school teachers who study Firat and Inonu Universities Education Faculties Primary Education Departments.

According to data obtained from the actual implementation, the Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficient of CHAS is 0,941. This reliability coefficient is 0,81 for ARTWCH; 0,89 for AWCH and 0,90 for BFCH. All of these values are the signs of reliable measurements by CHAS and the sub-scales of CHAS. To decide which tests should be used to analyze the data of this study Kolmogorov Smirnov Z-test results were handled. With respect to results of this test, it can be said that CHAS and the sub-scales of CHAS points do not scatter normally ( $p < 0,05$ ). Because of these results, Mann Whitney U-test and Kruskal Wallis H-test which are the non-parametric tests were used to analyze the data obtained from the actual implementation of the scale.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of this study, attitude towards reading the texts which are written in cursive handwriting points of prospective elementary teachers are higher than their attitude towards writing in cursive handwriting points and beliefs about the function of cursive handwriting points. Prospective elementary school teachers’ points of attitude towards writing in cursive handwriting and their points of beliefs about the function of cursive handwriting points are comparable. Participants of this study stated that cursive handwriting causes hand pain. They endorse the opinions that this kind of writing is tiring, boring and irksome, moderately. As well as, there are prospective elementary teachers who love and interested in cursive handwriting on an equal footing.

Prospective elementary school teachers’ attitudes points of all sub-scales don’t vary by gender, cursive handwriting experience, and general academic grade point average. In terms of grade variable, there isn’t a significant difference between the

points of the general attitude towards cursive handwriting and between the points of attitudes towards writing in cursive handwriting; but there is a significant difference between the points of attitudes towards reading the texts which are written in cursive handwriting in favor of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade prospective teachers, and there is also a significant difference between the points of the beliefs of the cursive handwriting function in favor of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade.

Based on these results, we can advise that, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade prospective elementary school teachers should be more informed about the functions of cursive handwriting when they take the lesson of "Reading-Writing Instruction". In addition to this suggestion, 4<sup>th</sup> grade students should be presented with some child literature texts written in cursive handwriting in the lesson of "Republican Period Child Literature" to heighten their points of attitude towards the reading of the texts which are written in cursive handwriting.

In future, researchers can study the effect of using cursive handwriting in written environment on the attitudes towards cursive handwriting, if there is a relationship between aesthetic care and attitude towards cursive handwriting, and elementary school teachers', elementary school students' and secondary school students' attitudes toward cursive handwriting.

