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Original article

A Study on Teachers' Perceptions of Curriculum Changes

Alper Aytaç *

Teacher, Ministry of National Education, Cumhuriyet Primary School, İznik/Bursa, Türkiye

Abstract

This study aims to examine teachers' perceptions of curriculum change in terms of various variables. The sample of the study consists of 349 teachers working in a city in Turkey in the fall semester of the 2022-2023 academic year. The convenience sampling method was used in the study sample. The Curriculum Changes Perception Scale was used in the study. In the analysis of the data, arithmetic means, standard deviation, independent t-test, one-way analysis of variance were used. According to the results of the study, the resistance levels of the teachers to the curriculum are high. According to the opinions of the teachers, the changes made in the curriculum are not reflected in the learning-teaching process efficiently. Teachers' perceptions of curriculum change do not differ significantly according to gender and professional seniority variables. Teachers' perceptions of changes in the curriculum differ significantly according to the location of the school where they work. Accordingly, it was determined that teachers working in rural areas showed more resistance to the changes in the curriculum. Teachers' perceptions of curriculum change differ significantly according to the type of school they work in. Accordingly, it was determined that teachers working in primary and secondary schools showed more resistance to the changes in the curriculum. Various suggestions have been presented in the context of the results of this study.

Keywords: Teachers, Currciculum, Change.

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* **Corresponding author:**

Alper Aytaç is a teacher at Cumhuriyet Primary School at Ministry of National Education in İznik/Bursa, Türkiye. He completed his PhD in Curriculum and Instruction. His research interests include the teacher education, philosophy of education and lifelong learning. He has lived, worked, and studied in İznik/Bursa, Türkiye.
Email: alperaytac10@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Learning behavior has been on the agenda of people since the beginning of history. People have engaged in various endeavors to maintain their lives and also to make them easier. During these efforts, they acquired new knowledge. In the process of acquiring new knowledge, the concept of education emerges**.**

Education has been defined in various ways according to the philosophical point of view and psychological foundations (Sönmez, 2001). In other words, the concept of education is used with different meanings (Saylan, 1995). On the other hand, it is difficult to give a single definition of education (Turgut, 1992). The concept of education has often been defined in general terms to express the human mind and will holistically (Durkheim, 2016). In this direction, education, in its most general definition, is the process of bringing about some changes in the behavior of the individual. These changes, on the other hand, should have the qualifications that should be found in individuals who will be raised in accordance with the philosophy of the education system. With its common expression, it should have a *desirable* feature (Ertürk, 2013; Senemoğlu, 2004). When the definition of education is examined, it is understood that this process should proceed in a planned manner. In other words, behavioral changes that should occur in individuals should be carried out within the framework of a plan. At this point, we come across the concept of the curriculum. Demirel's (2007) curriculum refers to learning experiences provided to learners through various activities. These learning experiences can be provided in schools as well as in environments outside of school. The important point here is that these learning experiences are carried out in a planned manner (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2014).

Technological and sociological developments in the world bring about various changes. Undoubtedly, social structure and education systems are also affected by these changes (Karakaya, 2003). Therefore, curriculums are also affected by these changes. According to Demirel (2007), curriculums need to be constantly improved, that is, updated in a way, according to the changing conditions of the age. The development of curriculums represents a dynamic process (Tyler, 2014). There have been various curriculum development studies in the historical process in Turkey, and curriculums have been designed and put into practice in this direction (Çobanoğlu & Yıldırım, 2021; Özdemir, 2009). Among these curriculum changes, perhaps the most one is the settlement of the curriculum, where the exit was in 2005. A radical change was made in the curriculums in the said curriculum arrangement. In this context, traditional philosophy education that is teacher-centered has been abandoned, and instead, educational philosophies that center the learner have been adopted. The central focus of the learner is education, the creation of basic pragmatism, and progressive education (Özden, 2014).

Teachers have important duties in the implementation of curriculums (Klein, 1973). In this respect, teachers need to internalize the basic philosophy of curriculums. The fact that teachers create

the learning-teaching atmosphere as required by the curriculums will increase the efficiency of these curriculums to that extent. In this respect, it is thought that how the curriculum changes are perceived by the teachers is important. In this context, the aim of this study is to examine teachers' perceptions of curriculum change in terms of various variables. When the relevant literature is examined, teachers' curriculum fidelity (Aşçı & Yıldırım, 2020; Aytaç, 2021; Yıldız, 2018), curriculum autonomy (Alemdar & Aytaç, 2022; Hong & Youngs, 2014; Yolcu & Akar-Vural, 2020), curriculum design approaches (Aytaç & Kaygısız, 2021; Baş & Şentürk, 2019; Ünsal & Korkmaz, 2017), curriculum literacy (Aslan & Gürlen, 2019; Çetinkaya & Tabak, 2019; Erdamar & Akpınar, 2021). On the other hand, there are limited studies (Kayır & Toraman, 2021) on teachers' perceptions of curriculum change. In this respect, it is thought that this study will contribute to the related literature. In addition, the results of this study can be a guide for policy makers. The opinions of teachers about the changes in curriculums can give various clues to the authorities directing education policy. As a result, this study, which aims to examine teachers' perceptions of curriculum change in terms of various variables, sought answers to the following questions:

1. What are the teachers' perceptions of curriculum changes?
2. Do teachers' perceptions of curriculum changes differ significantly by gender?
3. Do teachers' perceptions of curriculum changes differ significantly according to the location of the school where they work?
4. Do teachers' perceptions of curriculum changes significantly differ according to professional seniority?
5. Do teachers' perceptions of curriculum changes differ significantly according to the type of school they work in?

METHOD

Model

Survey-type studies are studies that reveal an existing situation as it is (Can, 2014). In this study, teachers' perceptions of curriculum changes were examined according to the variables of gender, subject of the school, professional seniority, and type of school, and the existing situation was tried to be revealed as it is. For this reason, the survey model was preferred in this study.

Sample

The sample of the study consisted of 349 teachers working in a city in Turkey in the fall semester of the 2022-2023 academic year. The convenience sampling method was used in sample selection. Information about the research sample is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Information on the study sample

Variables	Group	f	%
Gender	Female	187	53.6
	Male	162	46.4
Location of the school	Rural	89	25.5
	Town center	260	74.5
Professional seniority	0-.10 years	106	30.4
	11-20 yeasr	111	31.8
	21 years and above	132	37.8
Type of school	Primary school	152	43.6
	Middle school	109	31.2
	High school	88	25.2

Table 1 contains information about the study sample. Accordingly, 187 (53.6%) of the teachers participating in the study were female and 162 (46.4%) were male. Of the teachers participating in study 89 (25.5%) work in rural areas and 206 (74.5%) work in the city center. 106 of the teachers participating in the study have a professional seniority of 0-10 years (30.4%), 111 of them between 11-20 years (31.8%), and 132 of them have a professional seniority of 21 years and above (37.7%). Of the teachers participating in the study, 152 (43.6%) work in primary school, 109 (31.2%) in secondary school, and 88 (25.2%) in high school.

Data Collection Tools

In the study, *Curriculum Changes Perceptions Scale* was used to reveal teachers' perceptions of curriculum change in terms of various variables.

Curriculum Changes Perceptions Scale: The scale was developed by Kayır and Toraman (2021). In the scale development process, first of all, the literature on the subject was scanned and an item pool of 23 items was prepared. To ensure the content validity of the items in the item pool, the opinions of experts who have worked in the relevant field were taken. Scales were developed on two research samples. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and reliability analyzes were conducted with a group of 122 teachers. As a result of the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), a scale consisting of two sub-dimensions and 11 items was revealed. The scale is a 5-point Likert type. The sub-dimension consisting of 5 items is called *Resistance to Implementation of Curricuşum Changes* (RICC), and the sub-dimension consisting of 6 items is named the *Effect of Curriculum Changes on the Teaching-Learning Environment* (ECCTLE). These two sub-dimensions of the scale explain 63.43% of the total variance. As a result of the reliability analyses performed, Cronbach's alpha value was calculated 0.917 for the RICC sub-dimension and 0.767 for the ECCTLE sub-dimension. In the next stage, Confirmatory Factor

Analysis (CFA) was conducted with a group of 162 teachers. As a result of the CFA, fit indices (CMIN/DF: 2.762, RMSEA: 0.079, CFI: 0.923, IFI: 0.925) were determined within acceptable limits.

Within the scope of this study, the reliability and validity analyses of the scale were repeated. Cronbach alpha values were examined within the scope of reliability analysis. As a result of the analyzes carried out, Cronbach's alpha value was calculated as 0.767 for the RICC sub-dimension and 0.890 for the ECCTLE sub-dimension. Secondly, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was applied. As a result of the CFA (Appendix 1), fit indices (CMIN/DF: 2.676, RMSEA: 0.069, RMR: 0.060, SRMR: 0.045, CFI: 0.957, IFI: 0.958, NFI: 0.934, GFI: 0.941) were found within acceptable limits (Hu & Bentler, 1997; Sumer, 2000).

Data Collection and Analysis

During the study process, first of all, necessary permissions were obtained from the researchers who developed the scale. Afterward, the scales were applied to the teachers. Volunteering was taken into account in participating in the study. After the study scales were applied, the data were made ready for analysis. At this stage, firstly, the compliance of the data with the normality assumptions was examined. In this context, kurtosis and skewness values were examined. Information in this direction is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Kurtosis and skewness values

Sub dimensions	N	Kurtosis	Standard error	Skewness	Standard error
RICC	349	-.646	.260	-.164	.131
ECCTLE	349	-.474	.260	.125	.131

In Table 2, the kurtosis and skewness values of the study data are presented. Accordingly, the kurtosis and skewness values in both sub-dimensions were found to be between -1 and +1. According to Büyüköztürk (2013), it is possible to talk about a normal distribution if the kurtosis and skewness values are between -1 and +1. In this context, it can be said that the data of this study have a normal distribution. In this respect, it was decided to use parametric tests in this study. It was decided to use an independent t-test to find out whether there is a significant difference according to the variables of gender and school location. It was decided to use a one-way analysis of variance to reveal whether there is a significant difference according to the variables of professional seniority and type of school. In case of a significant difference in the one-way analysis of variance, it was decided to use the Tukey test if there is a homogeneous distribution, and the Tamhane test if there is no homogeneous distribution. The significance value was accepted as .05.

On the other hand, arithmetic mean and standard deviation will be used in the descriptive analysis of the study data. Various principles were determined in the interpretation of the results. 3.00

was determined as the limit value for the interpretation of the sub-dimensions of the scale. The fact that the average score obtained from the RICC sub-dimension is below the limit value indicates that the teachers show resistance to the changes in the curriculum. If it stays above the limit value, it shows that teachers adapt to the changes in the curriculum, that is, they do not show resistance. The fact that the average score obtained from the ECCTLE sub-dimension is below the limit value indicates that the effect of teachers' curriculum changes on the teaching-learning environment is not at a positive level. The fact that the average score obtained from the ECCTLE sub-dimension is above the limit value indicates that the effect of teachers' curriculum changes on the teaching-learning environment is positive.

RESULTS

In this part of the study, the descriptive analysis of teachers' perceptions of curriculum change and the change of curriculum change perceptions according to the variables of gender, professional seniority, type of school, and location of the school were examined.

Findings related to the first question of the study

In this study question, a descriptive analysis of teachers' perceptions of curriculum change was made. The data in this direction are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Teachers' Level of Perception of Curriculum Change

Sub dimensions	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standart Deviation (SD)
RICC	349	1.40	5.00	3.55	0.81
ECCTLE	349	1.00	5.00	2.75	0.93

In Table 3, descriptive statistics about teachers' perceptions of curriculum change are presented. In this respect, teachers' perceptions of changes in the curriculum are above the average value (Mean: 3.55, SD: 0.81) in the RICC sub-dimension, and below the average value (Mean: 2.75, SD: 0.93) in the ECCTLE sub-dimension.

Findings related to the second question of the study

In this study question, the change of teachers' perceptions of curriculum change according to gender was examined. Data in this direction are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. The Differences in Teachers' Perceptions of Change in Curriculum by Gender

Sub dimensions	Gender	N	Mean	SD	sd	t	p
RICC	Female	187	3.62	0.79	347	1.676	0.095
	Male	162	3.47	0.84			
ECCTLE	Female	187	2.69	0.91	347	-1.364	0.174
	Male	162	2.83	0.96			

In Table 4, independent t-test results regarding the differentiation of teachers' perceptions of curriculum change according to gender are presented. Accordingly, teachers' perceptions of changes in the curriculum do not differ significantly according to gender in the RICC sub-dimension [$t_{(347)}$= 1.676, p>.05] and in the ECCTLE sub-dimension [$t_{(347)}$= -1.364, p>.05].

Findings related to the third question of the study

In this research question, it was examined whether teachers' perceptions of curriculum change differ according to the location of the school. The data in this direction are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Differentiation of Teachers' Perceptions of Curriculum Changes According to the Location of the School

Sub dimensions	Location	N	Mean	SD	sd	t	p*	Cohen's d
RICC	Rural	89	3.74	0.78	347	2.504	0.013	0.31
	Center	260	3.49	0.82				
ECCTLE	Rural	59	2.77	1.01	347	0.235	0.824	-
	Center	260	2.75	0.91				

*p<.05

In Table 5, independent t-test results regarding the differentiation of teachers' perceptions of curriculum change according to school location are presented. Accordingly, teachers' perceptions of curriculum change differ significantly in the RICC sub-dimension [$t_{(347)}$= 2.504, p<.05]. Accordingly, the average scores of teachers working in rural areas (Mean: 3.74, SD: 0.78) are higher than the average of teachers working in the city center (Mean: 3.49, SD: 0.82). On the other hand, teachers' perceptions of changes in the curriculum do not differ significantly in the ECCTLE sub-dimension [$t_{(347)}$= 0.235, p>.05].

Findings related to the fourth question of the study

In this study question, it was examined whether teachers' perceptions of changes in the curriculum differ according to professional seniority. The data in this direction are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Differentiation of Teachers' Perceptions of Curriculum Changes According to Professional Seniority

Sub dimensions	Source of variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	p
RICC	Between groups	.088	2	.044	.066	.937
	Within groups	233.374	346	.674		
	Total	233.463	348			
ECCTLE	Between groups	1.903	4	.952	1.082	.340
	Within groups	304.271	346	.879		
	Total	306.174	348			

In Table 6, the results of one-way analysis of variance regarding the differentiation of teachers' perceptions of curriculum change according to professional seniority are presented. In this respect, teachers' perceptions of changes in the curriculum do not differ significantly in the RICC sub-dimension [$F_{(2-346)}$= .066, p>.050] and in the ECCTLE sub-dimension [$F_{(2-346)}$= 1.082, p>.050].

Findings related to the fifth question of the study

In this study question, it was examined whether the teachers' perceptions of changes in the curriculum differ according to the type of school they work in. The data in this direction are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. The Differentiation of Teachers' Perceptions of Curriculum Change According to the Type of School

Sub dimensions	Source of variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	p	Eta squared
RICC	Between groups	8.381	2	4.191	6.442	.002*	0.035
	Within groups	225.082	346	.651			
	Total	233.463	348				
ECCTLE	Between groups	5.176	4	2.588	2.975	.052	-
	Within groups	300.998	346	.870			
	Total	306.174	348				

*p<.05

In Table 7, the results of one-way analysis of variance regarding the differentiation of teachers' perceptions of curriculum change according to the type of school they work in are presented. Accordingly, teachers' perceptions of curriculum change differ significantly in the RICC sub-dimension [$F_{(2-346)}$= 6.442, p<.050]. Accordingly, the average scores of teachers working in primary school (Mean: 3.65, SD: 0.77) and secondary school (Mean: 3.63, SD: 0.80) are higher than the average scores of teachers working from high school (Mean: 3.28, SD: 0.86). On the other hand, teachers' perceptions of changes in the curriculum do not differ significantly in the ECCTLE sub-dimension [$F_{(2-346)}$= 2.975, p>.050].

CONCLUSION and DISCUSSION

In this study, it was investigated to what extent teachers' perceptions of curriculum change and whether they differ according to gender, location of the school where they work, professional seniority, and type of school they work at. In this context, the findings of the study are presented in the order of the study questions.

In the context of the first question of the study, the level of teachers' perceptions of curriculum change was examined. According to the results of the study, while the scores of teachers regarding the perception of curriculum changes were above the average in the sub-dimension of Resistance to Curriculum Changes in Implementation (RCCI), it was below the average value in the Effect of

Curriculum Changes on the Teaching-Learning Environment (ECCTLE). In other words, it can be said that teachers do not adopt the changes in the curricula and therefore do not look forward to the implementation of these changes. Secondly, it can be said that teachers think that curriculum changes do not have an effect that will increase the efficiency of the teaching-teaching environment. The reason for these results may be that teachers do not adopt the changes made in the curriculum for various reasons. After the comprehensive curriculum change in the 2005-2006 academic year in Turkey, some changes were made in various years (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2018). Although opinions were also received from teachers in these later changes, it is a question mark how much these opinions were taken into account (Susam & Demir, 2020). In this context, the opinion of *our opinions are not taken into account in the final application* may have prevailed among teachers. On the other hand, in the study of Kayır and Toraman (2021), a different result was reached. In the said study, it was determined that the changes made in the curriculum of the teachers had a positive contribution to the teaching-learning environment. On the other hand, in the same study, it was determined that teachers showed resistance to implementing the curriculum. In the study of Dinç and Doğan (2010), it was determined that teachers welcomed the changes made in the curriculums. However, it has been determined that there are some problems in the evaluation of the student in the changing curriculums. Similarly, in the study of Duru and Korkmaz (2010), it was determined that teachers had positive opinions about the changes in the curriculum.

Within the scope of the second question of the study, it was examined whether the teachers' perceptions of program change showed a significant difference according to gender. According to the results of the study, it was determined that teachers' perceptions of curriculum change did not differ significantly according to gender. In this context, it can be said that the gender variable does not effect on teachers' perceptions of curriculum change. Similar results were obtained in the study of Kayır and Toraman (2021).

In the context of the third question of the study, it was examined whether the teachers' perceptions of changes in the curriculum differ significantly according to the location of the school where they work. According to the results of the study, teachers' perceptions of curriculum changes differ significantly in the sub-dimension of Resisting to Curriculum Changes in Implementation (RCCI). Accordingly, the average score of teachers working in rural areas in the RCCI sub-dimension is higher than the average score of teachers working in the city center. Based on these results, it can be said that teachers working in rural areas have higher levels of resistance in implementing curriculum changes compared to teachers working in city centers. In other words, it can be said that teachers working in rural areas are more reluctant to reflect on the changes made in the curriculums to the learning-teaching process. In addition, it is possible to say that the teachers working in the city center are more willing to implement the curriculum changes. The reason for this situation may be due to the difference in the social structure in

the countryside and the city center. In other words, there may be a situation related to the student's parent profile. As a matter of fact, Karsantık and Yağcı (2021) also stated that socioeconomic status may be a factor in teachers' perceptions and behaviors toward the implementation of curriculum changes.

In the context of the fourth question of the study, it was examined whether the teachers' perceptions of changes in the curriculum differ significantly according to professional seniority. According to the results of the study, it was determined that the teachers' perceptions of changes in the curriculum did not differ significantly according to professional seniority. In this respect, it can be said that the variable of professional seniority is not a factor in teachers' perceptions of curriculum change. In the study of Kayır and Toraman (2021), it was determined that teachers' perceptions of curriculum change did not differ significantly according to age group. Considering that professional seniority and age factor are largely parallel, it can be said that this study coincides with the results.

In the context of the fifth question of the study, it was examined whether the teachers' perceptions of changes in the curriculum differ significantly according to the type of school they work in. According to the results of the study, it was determined that teachers' perceptions of curriculum changes differed significantly in the sub-dimension of Resisting the Implementation of Curriculum Changes (RICC) according to the type of school they work in. Accordingly, it was determined that the average scores of teachers working in primary and secondary schools in the RICC sub-dimension were higher than the average scores of teachers working in high schools. Based on this, it can be said that teachers working in primary and secondary schools have higher levels of resistance to implementing curriculum changes compared to teachers working in high schools. In other words, it can be said that teachers working in primary and secondary schools are more reluctant to reflect on the changes made in the curriculums to the learning-teaching process. In addition, it is possible to say that teachers working in high schools are more willing to reflect on the changes made in the curriculums to the learning-teaching process. On the other hand, a different result was obtained in the research of Kayır and Toraman (2021). In the aforementioned study, it was determined that teachers' perceptions of curriculum change did not differ significantly according to the type of school they work in.

Suggestions

In the study, it was determined that the teachers were reluctant to implement the changes made in the curriculums. In addition, teachers think that these changes do not have a positive effect on the learning-teaching environment. These research findings are important for researchers working in the related field. In this direction, qualitative research models can be designed to investigate the cause of the issue in depth. These study results can also provide various information to policymakers, namely ministry officials. Ministry officials can prepare in-service training for teachers about the changing curriculum according to the results of the studies.

In the study, it was determined that the teachers working in rural areas were reluctant to implement the changes made in the curriculums. The reasons for the negative opinions of teachers working in rural schools towards the implementation of the changes in the curriculums can be examined in depth. Researchers working in the relevant field can design research with qualitative research models.

In the study, it was determined that the teachers working in primary and secondary schools were reluctant to implement the changes made in the curriculums. On the other hand, it has been determined that teachers working in high schools are relatively more willing to implement the changes in the curriculums. The reasons for this situation can be examined in depth. In this context, researchers working in the relevant field can design studies with qualitative research models.

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Appendix 1. Diagram of Standardized Confirmatory Factor Analysis Values