

*Full Length Research Paper*

# The opinions of Masters students about the learning program in the field of teaching Turkish to foreigners

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The purpose of this study is to determine the opinions of Master students about the learning program in the field of teaching Turkish to foreigners. In the study, case study design which is one of the qualitative research methods was used. The population of the study consists of students studying in the Master program with thesis of Teaching Turkish to Foreigners at Turkish Education Department of Institute of Social Sciences in Hacı Bektaş Veli Nevsehir University. In analyzing the data, N-VIVO 8 program was used. As a result of the study, it was concluded that the studies of teaching Turkish to foreign students are important and necessary in terms of language diffusion, the increasing of the intercultural interaction, providing the Turkish development and globalization, the introduction of Turkish culture, having the right to comment on something in the world. Moreover, it has been determined that the program has met the expectations of the students but the students see themselves insufficient about the control of the field and to do scientific studies. The students expressed themselves that the samples were not enough in the field in which they will do scientific research; researches were inadequate; the intensity of the course program was surplus; there was lack of practice activities; they feel insufficient in foreign language and they have trouble doing scientific studies.

**Key words:** Teaching Turkish to foreigners, scientific qualities, undergraduate education.

## INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the request to communicate with the members of other nationalities increased in accordance with the necessities of the modern age as a result of factors such as religious, commercial, cultural or some other reasons, and even it has turned into an obligation in some extent. This obligation has brought the need of learning the languages of other nationalities, in other words, need for foreign language. Naturally, this situation has led to the emergence of disciplines that are related to foreign language teaching.

Although it cannot be told when or where the teaching of foreign languages started precisely, it is thought that in the period when the write was not found it has been conducted, in the communities where the language was spoken or as a result of the education by the people who spoke that language (Demircan, 1990: 141).

Although there have been many definitions on language, the meeting point of the descriptions is about how the language is so important. But at this time, beside the importance of language, the power of language also

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comes to the fore. The power of language is parallel with the power of community and affects each other in this direction. Only in our country, moral and material efforts to learn English, from second class at the primary school to the graduate degree, show the power of foreign language today and the enforcement on people. Zeyrek (2001) expressed this situation with giving examples, that the language of the powerful countries has become a kind of material that was sold to poor countries, and the revenues which come from teaching English in the United Kingdom has a significant amount. In recent years, the number of people who shows interest to Turkey and Turkish in various parts of the world is increasing. This situation brings with the desire of learning Turkish.

Although there is no need to learn Turkish as a language of science nowadays, some political and social changes occurred in our region and in the world, led to the emergence of opportunities and obligations to teach and learn Turkish as a foreign language (Avcı, 2002). Bilkan (2002) expressed that Turkish spoken in many parts of the world, has a very old cultural background; has been gaining importance with the new social and political developments and it has been responded with interest in very different geographies and as a natural consequence, the demands for learning Turkish is increasing day by day.

Looking at the history related to the teaching of Turkish as a foreign language, it is seen that the first source is based on the eleventh year. The study, *Divanü Lügati't Türk* by Mahmud of Kasghar is known as the first work in this field. This is true that the interest on Turkish increased in the last thirty years again. That this interest has been noticed and made a state policy is one of the important developments on behalf of the Turkish language teaching. Currently, systematic and programmatic studies have been conducted by many universities in the Turkish teaching centers. These positive developments are important, but it can not be told that Turkish has the value it deserves. Although the studies that are related to Turkish's foreign/ as a second language in the field of science have accelerated in recent times, it is seen that many people from other countries were already affected by various aspects of Turkish and did researches in this field. Hengirmen (1993: 7) specified that "While the foreign writers wrote two hundred twenty-eight books about teaching Turkish and we wrote one hundred fifty-six books in the 20th century".

One of the biggest developments in the field of education in Turkish to foreigners is to open the doctoral and master programs with thesis or without thesis under the name of "Teaching Turkish to Foreigners" and "Teaching Turkish as a Foreign Language" in various universities in Turkey. Because the development and progress in a field can only be achieved with academicians in this field. Academicians of the future will be the students trained by these programs. Even if the

"Foreign Language Education" is not a new field, "Teaching Turkish as a Foreign Language" can be considered as a new field.

Nowadays, it is needed to improve different teaching techniques such as preparation of books and many other studies apart from the techniques developed by the mostly demanded languages such as English and German. Memiş and Erdem (2013: 317) express this situation as follows: "Foreign language techniques have been developed to teach Western languages. Considering the origin of the languages, the languages other than those of Indo-European family should develop unique teaching methods." Bilkan (2002) expresses that Turkish at the moment is among the contemporary languages, domestically and abroad it has become one of the world's language that foreigners tried to learn, and adds that in order to meet these demands under the light of modern education and teaching methods, the preparation of language teaching books in a modern approach has become a necessity.

Certainly the role of academicians in the development of science is important. The basis of this is the postgraduate education. According to Varış (1972: 27), the postgraduate education is an educational process that aims to raise academicians who will respond to knowledge and to evolving needs of a society with their studies. The postgraduate education has an important role to do research on the problems of the country by the universities, to raise qualified academicians, to prepare the future of communities, to adopt the requirements of knowledge society, to develop their high capabilities and to raise the elites for modern society (Özoğlu, 2001).

Teaching Turkish as a foreign language is a field that could be considered new. The students' opinions about the masterprogram that raises academicians in this field are as important as academicians who conducted the program. In the literature many studies that have been carried on the student's opinions on the program who studied in various postgraduate programs, have been come across. However, there were no studies that examined the opinions of the students, about the so-called masterprogram, studying at the masterprogram with thesis to teach Turkish to foreigners. When it is considered that each study in such a new field will be smallest positive step to develop this field and the program, it was observed that such a study is a necessity.

### **Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study is to determine the opinions of the master students about the learning program in the field of teaching Turkish to foreigners and their own competence. With this purpose, replies were sought for the following questions.

For students;

1. What are their opinions on the importance and necessity of teaching Turkish to foreigners?
2. What are their opinions on the reasons to do master in this field?
3. What are their opinions on the level to meet their expectations of the program?
4. What are the opinions on the field control?
5. What are the opinions on which features or equipment students should have who wish to do master in this field?
6. What are the opinions on the sufficiency to do the scientific studies?
7. What are the opinions on the competency for using the scientific methods and techniques?
8. What are the opinions on the problems that they have faced?
9. What are the request and suggestions about the program?

## METHODOLOGY

### The model of research

In this study, the case study design which is one of the qualitative methods was used. Case study is a qualitative study design that a case is investigated in-depth. (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006).

### Study group

The population of the study consists of students who are studying in the Masterprogram with thesis of Teaching Turkish to Foreigners at Turkish Education Department of Institute of Social Sciences at the Haci Bektas Veli Nevsehir University. Because all students in the population are thought to be involved in the study, sample selection has not been needed, additionally. In this study, 25 volunteer students from 30 students doing master in this program have participated.

### Data collection tool

In the study, semi-structured interview form was prepared with intent of getting their opinions about the importance and necessity of teaching Turkish to foreigners, the features and equipment students should have in this program, the student's reason for doing master in this program, the competencies on scientific studies, field control, the future of program, the competence of using the scientific methods and techniques, the problems that they have faced, their request from the program and suggestions regarding the program. Interviews are divided into three groups according to the formation of construction; structured, unstructured and semi-structured. (Merriam, 1998: 73; Ekiz, 2003: 62; Karasar, 2004: 167-168; Lichtman, 2006: 118). The interview that aims to reveal individual's opinions, experiences and feelings is one of the frequently used data collection tools in qualitative research (Yıldırım and Şimşek).

### Validity and reliability of data collection tool

For the scope of validity of the questions used in the study, the two faculty members working in the Department of Educational Sciences and at Turkish Education Department of Education

Faculty at the Haci Bektas Veli Nevsehir University have been consulted. In accordance with the feedback from both, the final shape of the data collection tool has been given. The individuals have been participated as voluntarily in the study and it was stated that the names will be kept confidential. In addition, the opinions of the people who participated in the research have been quoted directly in the results section and thus the reliability and validity of data was tried to be ensured. In qualitative studies, to explain how the results achieved and report the collection of data in a detailed manner is among the most important criteria to provide the validity (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006).

### Data collection and analysis

The datas were collected by a questionnaire form consisting of nine semi-structured questions. Semi-structured and open-ended interview questions were asked to the 25 students by researchers during the face to face interviews. Content analysis was used in this study and in the analysis of the data, the N-VIVO 8 program was used. While doing analysis, datas were encoded, classifications have been made, datas were created and interpreted with the arrangement of code and themes.

The content analysis is carried out in the way of encoding of datas, finding of theme, the arrangement of codes and themes, identification and interpretation of findings (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006). In the study, direct citations were given in the text and they were written as they are without no change within the apostrophes. Also, the explanatory abbreviations were used at the beginning of the citations to indicate where the quotations were taken. For Example:

When the quotations were taken from the interview, an explanatory mark like "S-11 M" was written to the begining of the sentence. The abbreviations stand for like below

"S" = Student (Source Person)

"11" = The frequency of source persons

"M" = Male (the sex of the students /-male, female-)

## FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

The answers were analyzed from the interviews with the teachers who have participated in the study, depending on the questions directed, and the installations made were shown in the following models and evaluated.

### The opinions of students on the importance and necessity of teaching Turkish to foreigners

In order to receive the student's opinions on the importance and necessity of teaching Turkish to foreigners, the question "What do you think about the importance and necessity of teaching Turkish to foreigners?" was asked. In accordance with the student's answers, sub-themes of the themes created for this question and the model that shows the number of installation is given in Figure 1.

As seen in Figure 1, the responses of the students regarding the importance and necessity of teaching Turkish to foreigners vary. When the answers to this question were analyzed, they expressed that the program is important and necessary because it contributes in the

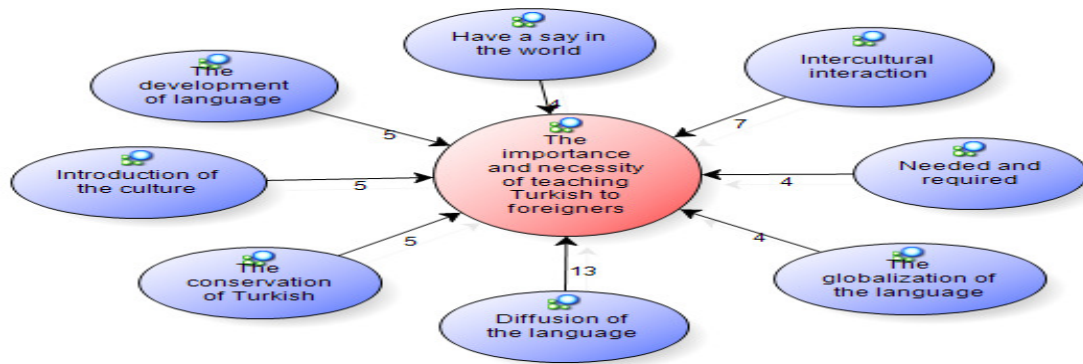


Figure 1. The model of the importance and necessity of teaching Turkish to foreigners.

fields as “diffusion of the language” by 13, “intercultural interaction” by 7, “the development of the language” by 5, “the introduction of the culture” by 5, the conservation of Turkish” by 5, “have a say in the world” by 4, “the globalization of the language” by 4. Some of those responses that the students who participated in the study gave to these questions are as follows:

**S-11 M** He said that “To destroy a nation, it is enough to destroy its language. For continuity of our nation’s existence, Turkish language and culture should be taught and spread much more people. For existence, unity, strength, peace to teach Turkish language is our national service.” He also expressed that teaching Turkish to foreigners is important and necessary for diffusion of Turkish language and culture.

**S-14 M** “It is important...” he said. “Foreigners began to do this job for years ago and became dominant in the world. We woke up a little late.” He expressed that teaching Turkish is important and necessary for having a say in the world.

**S-23 M** “Because of Turkey’s growing role in the world politics and being in the middle of a boiling boiler geographically and due to the heirs of a great state, Turkish language has been important and will continue to do so. To have a say in the world, Turkish language should be widespread in the world...” He expressed that teaching Turkish to foreigners is important on behalf of having a say in the world.

**S-19 M** With saying that “It is important to transport Turkish, which is one of the oldest, strongest and most spoken language of the world, to much more people...”, he expressed that teaching Turkish to foreigners is important on behalf of diffusion of Turkish language.

**S-24 F** “To teach Turkish to foreigners is important and necessary to move our language to a different dimension in the international field and to improve the intercultural interaction.” She expressed her opinion that to teach Turkish to foreigners is important and necessary for globalization of the language and increasing of intercultural interaction.

**S-4 F** With saying that “Each language has its own reasons to learn. Turkish language is an attractive

language in the world now... Apart from that, there is a question of the foreigner’s immigrations or settlements to Turkey. For making these people integrated into our country and society, to teach Turkish to foreigners is a need.” she expressed that to teach Turkish to foreigners has become a need as a result of various causes in our country and in the World.

As a result of these findings in this study, it can be said that to teach Turkish to foreigners is important and necessary for diffusion of Turkish. At the same time, it can be said that to increase the interaction between cultures; to provide language development and universalization, to introduce Turkish culture, to have a say in the world, to conserve Turkish effectively and to have a need to teach Turkish to foreigners became important and necessity.

### Reasons for preferring the Master program with Thesis of Teaching Turkish to Foreigners of Undergraduate Students.

In the study, to determine the reasons to prefer the masterprogram with thesis of teaching Turkish to foreigner for undergraduate students, the question “What are the reasons to do your master studies at Masterprogram with thesis of teaching Turkish to foreigner?” was asked. In accordance with the student’s answers, sub-themes of the themes created for this question and the model that shows the number of installation is given in Figure 2.

As shown in Figure 2; responses regarding the reasons to prefer the masterprogram with thesis of teaching Turkish to foreigners vary. When the students’ answers to this question were analyzed; they expressed the reasons to prefer this program “to show interest to the field” by 12, “it is a new field” by 11, “the request of spread of Turkish language and culture” by 9, “self-realization request” by 7, “environment’s encouragement” by 5, “future promising future” by 4. Some of those responses that the students who participated in the study gave to these questions are as follows:

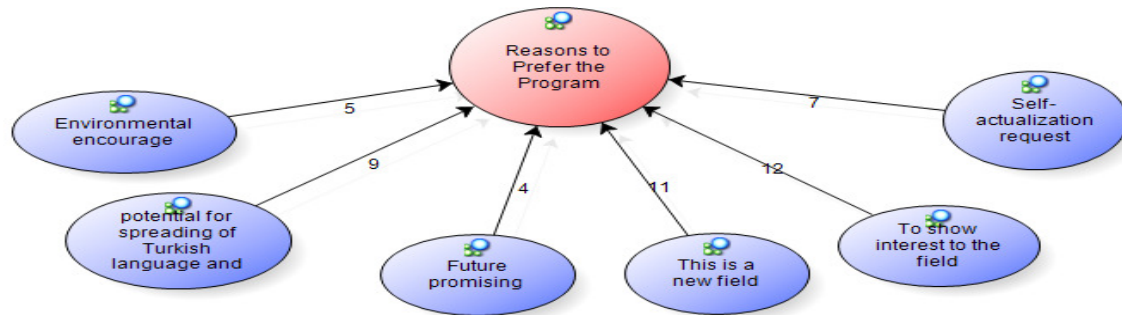


Figure 2. The model of reasons to prefer the program.

**S-9 F** “When I was in undergraduate, what my teacher told, who works in Turkish language teaching centers, increased my interest to this field. Thanks to my teacher who have worked in Turkish teaching centers for nineteen years and is still trying to teach Turkish with love, I am doing my postgraduate in this field.” she expressed that her environment encouraged her and this situation increased her interest to this field.

**S-24 F** “I want to be specialized in this field. I would like to make my works valuable and announce my ideas to large masses. I am interested in and love this field. For this reason, I want to improve myself.” she expressed that she shows interest to this field and has self-actualization request for this field.

**S-13 F** “Since this field is new and the studies in this field are insufficient, I think it would be easier to grow up in this field.” She expressed that because this field is new, this affected her to prefer choose to do postgraduate education in this field.

**S-16 M** “It was effective the encouragement of university professors. Also I think its feature is bright because it is new and not fully studied.” She expressed that her environment encouraged her and she preferred it because this program promises future.

**S-12 F** “to teach Turkish to foreigners is a field that I am interested... I would also like to teach Turkish and Turkish culture to foreigners.” she expressed that she has interest to this field and wanted to teach Turkish and Turkish culture to foreigners.

In this context; they preferred the masterprogram with thesis of teaching Turkish to foreigners since students are interested in this field; it is a new field; they wish to spread of Turkish language and culture; they want to contribute their self-actualization; they are encouraged by the environment and because it promises future.

### Students’ opinion on level of their master programmes’ capacity to meet their expectations

Students were asked whether their master programmes had met their expectations in order to determine the level

of meeting expectations of the programmes. Figure 3 shows the sub-themes of the main theme formed accordingly with the question.

As it is seen from the figure, the answers that students gave to the question are various. When the students’ answers are analysed, it is clear that 14 of them said the programme met the expectations, 6 of them said it did not meet the expectations, and 5 of them partially got what they wanted from the programme. 5 of the students expressed that the programme did not meet the expectations in terms of the intensity, 1 said that content of the programme was not satisfying while 7 of the students were satisfied with the education that they received, 7 of them were contented at the point of meeting the needs and interests, and 4 of them were pleased with the content of the programme. Some of the answers elicited from the students who participated to the research are below;

**S-3 F** “It met my expectations. Moreover, I think that it met my needs and interest more than I expected.” By saying this, the student stated that the programme met the needs and interests apart from the expectations.

**S-4 F** “It partially met my expectations although it is a new programme and field. Because of my field, I did not have difficulties.” By this answer, the student reported that the programme partially met her expectations and she did not have difficulties in the education process.

**S-10 F** “The programme met my expectations in terms of the schedule of the courses and the educators.” By this saying the student expressed that her expectations were met in terms of the education received and the content of the programme.

**S-23 M** “It did not meet my expectations but it does not affect me. I can develop myself on my own.” As it can be clearly understood, the student is not contented with the programme.

**S-12 F** “It mostly met my expectations. Instructors’ interest is more than I expected.” By this sentence, the student stated that the programme met her expectations in terms of the educators.

According to this, it can be concluded that master degree programme with the thesis “Turkish Language

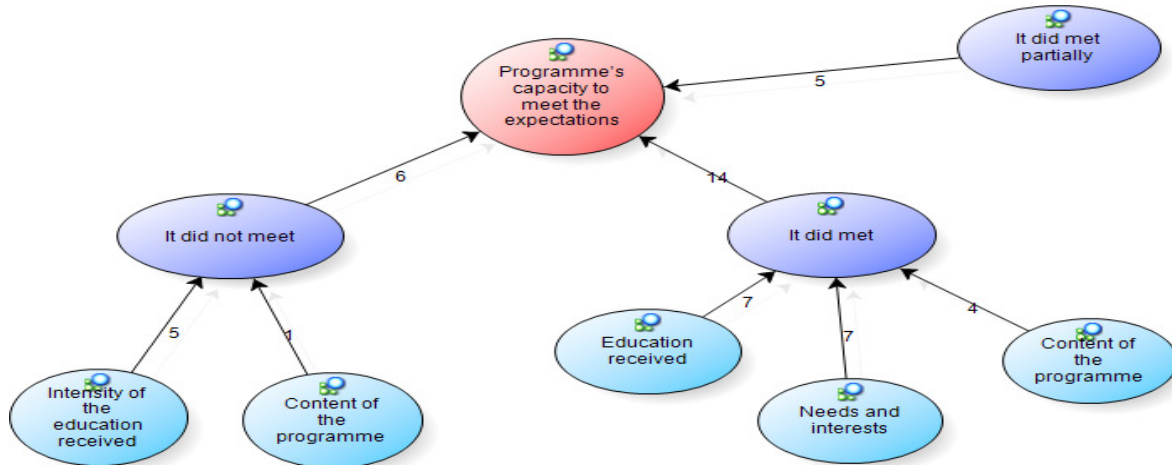


Figure 3. The model related to level of programme's meeting expectations.

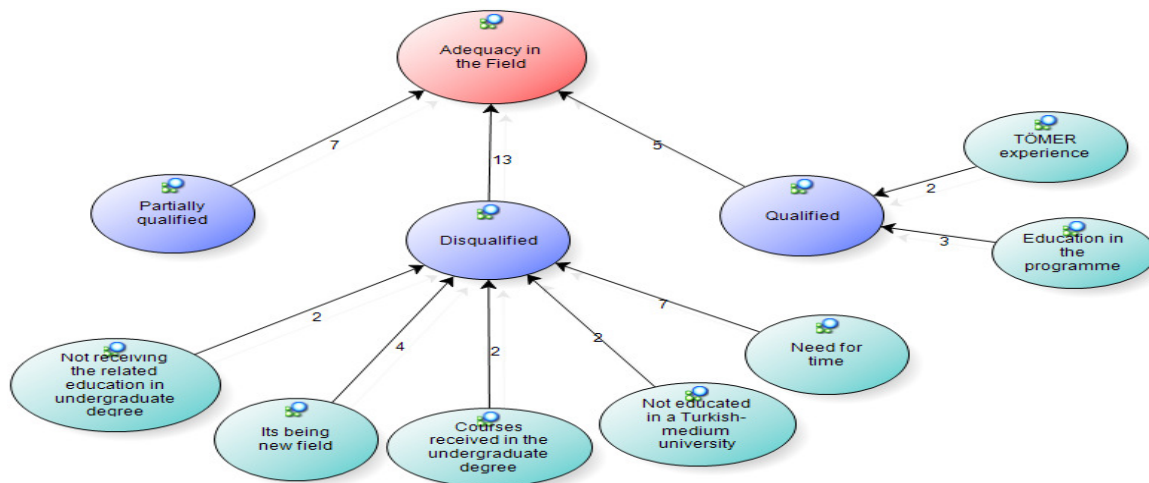


Figure 4. The model related to adequacy in the field.

Teaching to Foreigners” meets the expectations of students, and the education received in the programme, meeting needs and interests and the content of the programme are effective.

**Students’ opinion related to their adequacy in their master programme that they study**

In order to elicit their ideas on their adequacy in the master programme, students were asked the question “How do you evaluate yourself for your adequacy in the master programme that you study?” Figure 4 shows the frequencies and sub-themes of the main theme formed accordingly with the question.

As it is seen in Figure 4, the answers elicited from the students are various. 13 of students stated that they were

inadequate in their field of Master while 7 of them said that they were partially adequate and 5 of them reported that they were fully adequate in their field. 7 of students who say they are inadequate also stated that the reason for their inadequacy is the need for time, 4 of them said it is a new field for them, 2 of them reported the reason as not receiving the related education in undergraduate level, 2 of them stated that their inadequacy is because of the courses that they received in their undergraduate level, and 2 of them said that they are inadequate because they did not receive education in Turkish-medium university. On the other hand, 3 of the students who think them as adequate stated the reason as the experience in TÖMER (Turkish Teaching Center), 2 of them stated that the education in the programme made them adequate. Some of the answers elicited from the students who participated to the research are below;

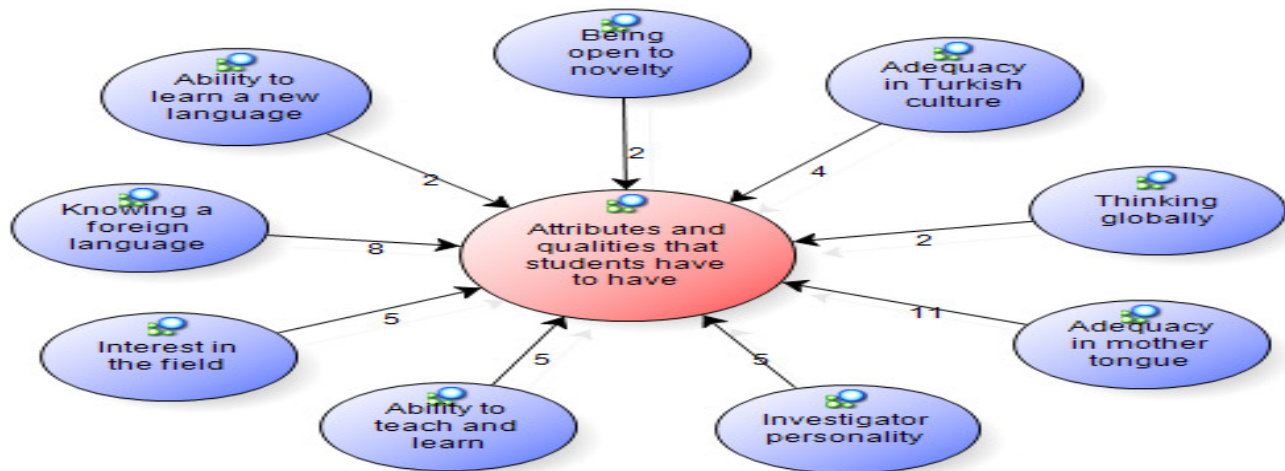


Figure 5. Model related to the attributes and qualities that students have to have.

**S-13 F** “Because I am being educated in a Turkish language teaching centre, I have a chance to evaluate my theoretical information. We are just at the beginning, but I think I have much information.” By this sentence, she stated that she was adequate in the field. This was because she was being educated in a Turkish-medium course.

**S-16 M** “I do not perceive myself as fully adequate. The reason is that I am at the beginning. I think I will be adequate in the future.” By saying this, the student expressed that he was not adequate and he needed time for that.

**S-18 M** “I am inadequate in this area. Because it is a new field and I did not take this course in undergraduate level. It is mostly related to the newness of the field, not me.” By this explanation, the student said that he was inadequate in the area because of the field’s being new and not taking this course in his previous education.

**S-19 M** “I have learned about the field while doing my bachelor degree. I did not have detailed information about its content. I have taken this course for once, but it was not effective. Now, I do not have enough adequacy but it will be better as the time goes by.” Stating this, the student said that he was inadequate and this was because of the ineffectiveness of the course that he took in his bachelor degree.

**S-11 M** “When I applied for the master programme I was not adequate in this field. With the support of my instructors and contribution of my researches, I became adequate. From this point, I think I am good.” In this answer, he reported that he was adequate in the field, and in accomplishing this adequacy his individual work and his instructors were very effective.

In consideration of these findings, it can be said that students perceive themselves as inadequate in the field of this master programme that they registered. The reasons for this perception can be the need for time to

accomplish the adequacy, the field’s being new, not receiving the education in undergraduate level, ineffectiveness of the courses that they took in undergraduate level, and not having graduated from the Turkish Teaching Department.

#### Students’ opinion on the attributes and qualities that a student in the Master Programme with the Thesis “Turkish Language Teaching to Foreigners” has to have

Students were asked “Which attributes and qualities does a student in the Master Programme with Thesis of Turkish Language Teaching to Foreigners have to have?” in order to elicit answers about their opinion on the attributes and qualities that a student in the Master Programme with the Thesis “Turkish Language Teaching to Foreigners” has to have. Figure 5 shows the frequencies and sub-themes of the main theme formed accordingly with the question

As it can be seen in Figure 5, students’ answers to the question various. 11 of the students gave the answer “adequacy in mother tongue”. 8 of them answered the question with “knowing a foreign language” while 5 of them emphasized the importance of “interest in the field”. 5 of them said “ability to teach and learn” is a must and 5 of them said “investigator personality” is significant. 4 of them stated that the attribute should be “adequacy in Turkish culture” while 2 of them stated that it should be “the ability to learn a new language”. 2 of them told that “being open to novelty” is an attribute of a student in the programme and 2 of them told “thinking globally” can be a quality. Some of the answers elicited from the students who participated to the research are below;

**S-11 M** “A student should be able to learn a new language, should have an investigator personality, should think globally, and should know how to teach and learn.”



Figure 6. Model related to students' adequacy in doing scientific studies.

By this state the student expressed that students in this programme should have the attributes of ability to learn a new language and investigator personality apart from the qualities of globally thinking and ability to teach and learn.

**S-16 M** "Students' interests, requests and aims should be parallel to this field because, without any interest, educating in this area will be boring and low-motivated.

This affects the plans and aims negatively." By this state, the student expressed the importance of having interest.

**S-22 M** "They have to know a foreign language. In other words, they should know advanced German, English, Arabic or Russian and they should be able to understand some of the basic structures in other languages. Also, they should be outgoing and their expression skill should be advanced." By saying this, the student emphasized the importance of knowing other languages and advanced expression skills.

**S-25 F** "A student who is in this programme firstly should have the adequacy in Turkish and should love Turkish because only speaking a language is not enough to teach it or make research on it. People who love the language and have the adequacy will make productive studies in this field. Also, people in this field should have different points of opinion and should be creative while applying these points. Because there are not so many studies in this field in Turkey there should be people who are creative and have the capacity to create a new thinking area." This statement emphasized the importance of adequacy in Turkish, globally thinking and being open to novelty.

**S-18 M** "A student in this field should speak and Turkish well and should know the characteristics of the language. The programme should be in connection with the Turkish Teaching department." Here, the student expressed that students in this field should be adequate in Turkish

In consequences of the research, it can be said that students who are studying Master Programme with Thesis of Turkish Language Teaching to Foreigners should have the full adequacy in every aspect of Turkish, should know a foreign language, and should have interest in the field, investigator personality, and adequacy in Turkish culture, ability to learn a language and globally thinking.

### Students' opinions on their adequacy in scientific studies (seminar, thesis, article, report, project, book, and so on) that they think of doing during their education in their master programme

In order to determine students' opinion on their adequacy in scientific studies (seminar, thesis, article, report, project, book, and so on) that they think of doing during their education in their master programme, students were asked "What do you think about your adequacy in scientific studies (seminar, thesis, article, report, project, book, and so on) that you think of doing during your education in your master programme?" Figure 6 shows the frequencies and sub-themes of the main theme formed accordingly with the question.

As it can be seen in Figure 6, when students' answers to the question are analysed, it is clear that 21 of them perceive themselves as inadequate while 4 of them perceive themselves as adequate. Some of the answers elicited from the students who participated to the research are below:

**S-10 F** "I do not think I am adequate but in progress of time I will be improved." By this sentence, the student stated that she was inadequate in doing scientific research.

**S-11 M** "I do not consider myself adequate enough. I need to improve myself by reading more articles, thesis, and communiques. Experience is also necessary after gaining information. Therefore, I need to fully learn both the method and basic principles." By saying this, the student did not consider himself adequate enough.

**S-16 M** "I do not have enough information and qualification yet because I am at the beginning. I believe I will do positive and good studies in future. I think this will be possible through personal efforts and much should not be expected of lessons." By saying this, he stated that he did not consider himself adequate enough and needed time to become fully adequate.

**S-23 M** "I am not ready yet. I need to scan through literature in a serious manner and learn scientific research methods and techniques." By saying this, he stated that he did not feel adequate in this matter.

**S-7 F** "I think I am adequate for beginner levels like seminar and article." By saying this, she stated that she found herself inadequate in terms of doing scientific





**Figure 7.** The model concerning students' adequacy in scientific methods and techniques.

research

In this context, it could be said that students find themselves inadequate in doing scientific research.

#### **Students' opinions related to their adequacy in using scientific methods and techniques concerning the research projects they have done or they will do**

In order to determine students' adequacy in using scientific methods and techniques concerning the research projects they have done or they will do, students were asked the question "What do you think about your adequacy in using scientific methods and techniques concerning the research projects that you have done or will do?". In accordance with answers given by students, Figure 7 shows the frequencies and sub-themes of the main theme formed accordingly with the question.

As it is seen in Figure 7, the answers regarding adequacy in using scientific methods and techniques concerning the research projects that students have done or will do are various. When the answers given by students are examined, it is observed that 19 of them find themselves inadequate in this matter while 6 of them find themselves adequate. Some of the answers elicited from the students who participated to the research are below;

**S-4 F** "What I am the most uncomfortable with in this programme is that I do not have full knowledge of scientific methods and techniques. In other words, I do not know where to start to work, how to start, and which method I should apply." By saying this, she stated that she did not feel adequate for using scientific methods and techniques.

**S-6 F** "I think I do not have full knowledge of scientific methods that I can use in the subject I determine." By saying this, she stated that she did not consider herself adequate for using scientific methods and techniques.

**S-15 F** "I can interpret data in Statistic. I think I can implement the methods and techniques." By saying this, she stated that she felt adequate for using scientific methods and techniques.

**S-19 M** "It is necessary to have full knowledge of computer as our age requires it. I began to improve myself after starting this programme. Thanks to this, I

managed to learn how to use methods and techniques over time." By saying this, he stated that he felt adequate for using scientific methods.

**S-24 F** "I still conduct studies in this field, and attend training courses, seminars and symposiums. I have a considerable amount of adequacy in using scientific methods and techniques." By saying this, she stated that she conducted scientific studies and felt adequate for using scientific methods and techniques.

In this context, it can be stated that students do not find themselves adequate for using scientific methods and techniques.

#### **Students' opinions about the problems that they experience in Master Degree Programme with the thesis "Turkish Language Teaching to Foreigners"**

Students were asked the question "What are the problems that you experience in master degree programme with the thesis "Turkish Language Teaching to Foreigners" in order to determine the problems that they experience in Master Degree Programme with The Thesis "Turkish Language Teaching to Foreigners". In accordance with the answers given by students, Figure 8 shows the frequencies and sub-themes of the main theme formed accordingly with the question. As it is seen in Figure 8, the answers elicited from the students regarding the problems that they experience in master degree programme with the thesis "Turkish Language Teaching to Foreigners" are various. When the answers elicited from the students to this question are examined, it is observed that 15 of them reported that problems stem from themselves, 8 of them reported that problems stem from the programme while 7 of them reported that problems stem from the field. It has been determined that 7 of the students, who experience field related problems, experience due to "lack of sources" while 2 of them experience due to "lack of population and sample"; 5 of the students who experience programme related problems experience these problems due to "intensiveness of lessons" while 4 of them experience due to "lack of practice"; 7 of the students who experience individual related problems experience due to "adequacy in scientific

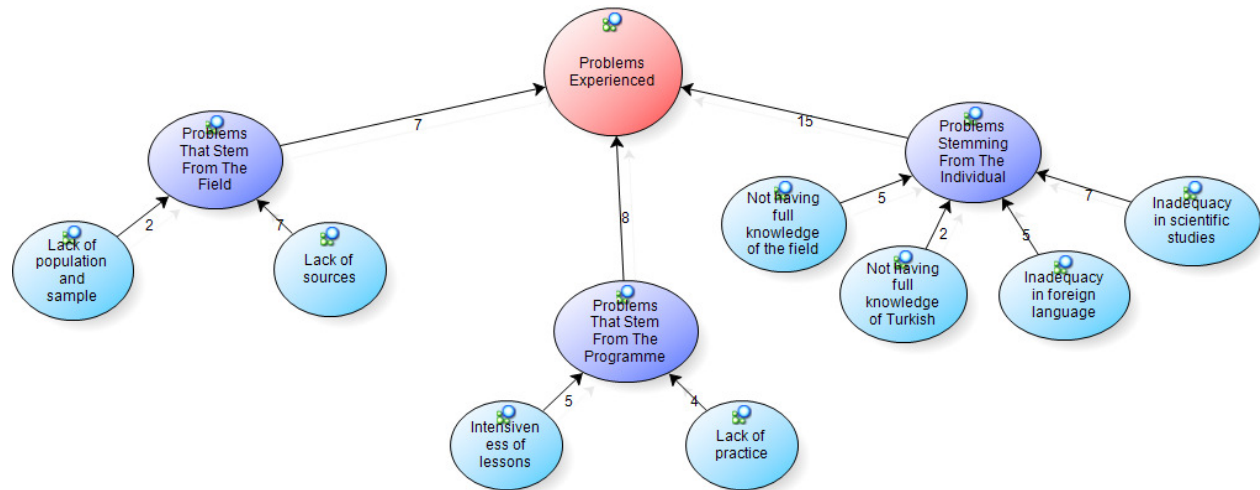


Figure 8. The model related to the problems that students experience in the programme

studies”, 5 of them due to “not having full knowledge of the field”, other 5 due to “inadequacy in foreign language” while 2 experience due to “not having full knowledge of Turkish”. Below are some of the answers given to this question by the students who have participated in the research.

**S-15 F** “Because I do not have full knowledge of the field, I have difficulty in determining the fields in which I can conduct study. Considering what I have gained in Turkish language teaching centre, I have come to realise that practice and theory are considerable different. In the programme, there should be activities intended for practice.” By saying this, she stated that she experienced field related problems and mentions that there should be practices for the purpose of studies in Turkish language teaching centres.

**S-13 F** “Lack of sources, lack of people to be chosen as sample... In addition, problems that I experience because sources are written in a foreign language and I do not know a foreign language...” with this statement, she mentioned that she experienced problems with lack of sources, lack of population and sample and being unable to read sources written in foreign languages.

**S-25 F** “The fact that studies conducted in Turkey in this field are insufficient and those conducted in terms of foreign language are written in foreign languages is the most important problem that I encounter.” By saying this, she stated that there was a lack of sources in the field in question, and the fact that there were more sources written in foreign languages than those in her native language, creates a problem for her.

**S-4 F** “I can say as foreign language teacher that I lack grammatical terms though my native language is Turkish. I need to overcome this with language studies. I feel inadequate for this.” With this statement, she mentioned that she experienced problems with not having full knowledge of Turkish.

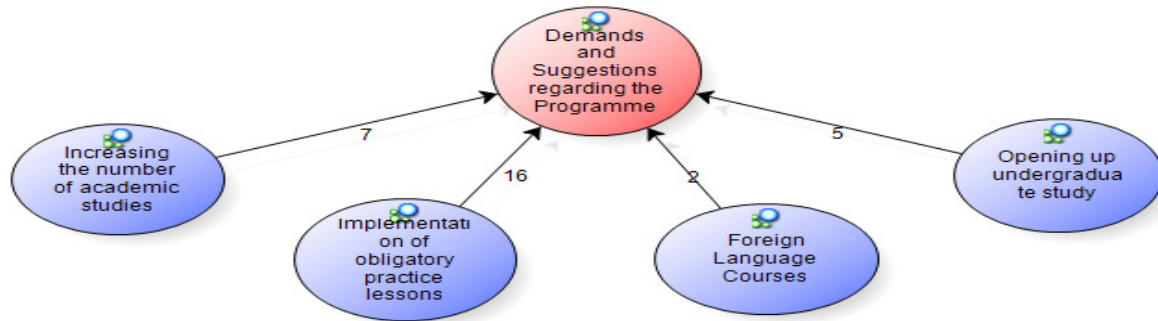
**S-3 F** “Not doing practice in Turkish language teaching centres is a problem in terms of not gaining experience.” By saying this, she stated that she experienced problems with doing practice in Turkish language teaching centres.

Considering the answers given above, the problems that students experience in master degree programme with the thesis “Turkish Language Teaching to Foreigners” can be said to be lack of sample in the field in which they mean to conduct study, lack of sources, lack of practice, students’ not having full knowledge of the field, intensiveness of lessons in the programme, not having full knowledge of Turkish, inadequacy of foreign language knowledge and being inadequate for doing scientific research. In addition to this, it can be said that students experience individual related problems much more.

### Students’ opinions related to their demands and suggestions regarding Master Degree Programme with the thesis “Turkish Language Teaching to Foreigners”

Students were asked the question “What are your demands and suggestions regarding master degree programme with the thesis “Turkish Language Teaching to Foreigners” in order to determine students’ opinions about their demands and suggestions regarding master degree programme with the thesis “Turkish Language Teaching to Foreigners”. In accordance with the answers elicited from the students, Figure 9 shows the frequencies and sub-themes of the main theme formed accordingly with the question.

As it is seen in Figure 9, even though students’ answers concerning their demand and suggestions regarding the programme are various, it is seen that the demands centre on implementation of practice lessons in



**Figure 9.** The model concerning students' demands and suggestions regarding the programme.

Turkish language teaching centres. When the answers elicited from the students to this question are examined, it is observed that 6 of the students support "implementation of obligatory practice lessons", 7 of them "increasing the number of academic studies", while 5 of them advocate "opening up undergraduate study" and 2 support "foreign language courses. Some of the answers given by the students who have participated in the research are as follows:

**S-4 M** "I think we should frequently do practice lessons in Turkish education centres as our department requires it." By saying this, he stated that he thought there should be obligatory practice lessons in Turkish language teaching centres.

**S-17 M** "Undergraduate study should be opened up and the programme should be enhanced with foreign language education." By saying this, the student demanded that this programme provide education at a level of undergraduate study and foreign language education be provided."

**S-9 F** "Undergraduate study should be opened up and the programme should be enhanced with foreign language education" By saying this, the student stated that lessons should be done in a practical way.

In this context, it can be said that to increase the number of academic studies, implementation of obligatory practice and foreign language lessons to be applied in Turkish language teaching centres and efforts to open up undergraduate study could be beneficial.

## DEBATE, RESULT AND SUGGESTIONS

The fact that learning a foreign language is a necessity at some points in our age cannot be denied. This necessity has also become a matter of great importance for Turkish language due to the same or different reasons. Studies of Turkish language teaching which have become an obligation rather than a necessity and need in recent years have become the country's policy. Systematic and planned studies are carried out in many universities by Turkish language teaching centres. The fact that Master

Degree Programmes with thesis or without thesis and doctoral programme have been opened up in some universities with the names of "Turkish Language Teaching as Foreign Language" and "Turkish Language Teaching to Foreigner indicates that this field has become a discipline. Turkish teaching as foreign language needs improving because of its being a new field. Asking opinions of students who study in Master Degree Programme which trains academicians in this field, is as important as asking opinions of academicians who run this programme. This programme has started based on this idea. Accordingly, an effort was made to determine opinions of students involved in the Master Degree Programme with The Thesis "Turkish Language Teaching to Foreigners" about this programme and their adequacy.

When finding about students' opinions about importance and necessity of Turkish language teaching have been examined, it has been found that they find Turkish Language Teaching to Foreigners important due to such reasons as the spread of the language, the increase in cross-cultural interaction, promotion of the improvement and the universalization of the language, promotion of Turkish culture, having a voice in the world, protection of Turkish language and the necessity of Turkish language teaching to foreigners. In the research projects conducted on students who learn Turkish as their foreign language (Koçer, 2013: 165; Çangal, 2012: 89) it has been found that the reasons why students learn Turkish include business, education, livelihood needs, trade, personal interest and needs. "Making your presence felt among other cultures and protecting your own culture from wiping out can be accomplished through protecting your own language and making it one of the most-spoken languages in the world. Societies who have improved their languages and kept it have prolonged their existence" (Göçer, 2009: 1300). In this context, it is necessary that special attention be given to these studies conducted in terms of this need being met due to the desire of foreigners to learn Turkish, the spread of Turkish language across the world, promotion of Turkish culture and cross-cultural interaction.

Another issue scrutinised in the research is the reasons why students do their master degree in post graduate programme with the thesis "Turkish Language Teaching to Foreigners". These reasons are factors like students' interest in this field, its being a new field, the desire to spread Turkish language and culture, desire for self-fulfilment, encouragement of others and its being promising. Gömleksiz and Yıldırım (2013) and Ören et al.(2012) whose research results show parallelism with one another have implemented a research on the students who do master degree and have found that what students expect of master degree most are to have a good career, be master of their field, learn scientific research methods, expertise in their field. In the research conducted by Savaş and Toprak (2005), it has been found that students tend to do master degree in order to benefit from student rights, and have an advantage in academic career and business life.

Another finding that we have achieved through students' answers is that Master Degree Programme with The Thesis "Turkish Language Teaching to Foreigners" has met students' expectations and this is because the education provided by the programme has met students' expectation and the content of the programme is efficient. Similarly, in the research conducted by Gömleksiz and Yıldırım (2013), it has been determined that most of the students stated their opinions that master degree education had met their expectations.

In order to determine students' opinions about having full knowledge of the field in which they study, students were asked about their opinions. As result of interviews, it has been found that they find themselves inadequate for having full knowledge of their field because of the fact that not having studied in a department related to Turkish Language Teaching causes them to find themselves inadequate for having full knowledge of field, and some other reasons that include the need for time to have full knowledge of the field, the field's being new, now receiving its education during undergraduate study, inadequacy of the lessons provided during undergraduate study. In the study conducted by Aslan (2010) on the students who receive Turkish language education in their Master Degree Programmes, it has been found that most of the student feel adequate for having full knowledge of the field and those ,who feel adequate, have full knowledge of Turkish literature, but feel inadequate for having full knowledge of foreign literature.

The questions were asked to students in order to obtain their opinions about the qualifications that students, who study in the Master Degree Programme with The Thesis "Turkish Language Teaching to Foreigners", should have. When the findings have been examined, it has been found that the students who study in the Master Degree Programme with the thesis "Turkish Language Teaching to Foreigners" should have full knowledge of Turkish, know a foreign language, have an interest in the field, the ability to learn and teach, and investigative characteristics

as well as having full knowledge of Turkish culture, the ability to learn foreign language and to think globally.

When students' opinions about their adequacy in scientific studies (seminar, thesis, article, communiques, project, book etc.) have been examined, it has been found that students find themselves inadequate for conducting scientific study. In Aslan (2010)'s study, it has been found that some of the student feel inadequate for writing article while most feel inadequate for writing book. In the research, in order to determine their opinions about using scientific methods and techniques, students were asked questions. It has been found that students do not find themselves adequate for using scientific methods and techniques. In Aslan (2010)'s study, similarly, it has been found that all students feel inadequate for using scientific research methods. In the research conducted by Arabacı and Akıllı (2013), it has been discovered that postgraduates feel inadequate in terms of scientific research methods. This negative situation could stem from the fact that the students, whose opinions were asked, are in first semester of master degree study year and they are at the beginning of the studies that could improve them.

Another matter scrutinised in the research is students' opinions about the problems that they experience in The Master Degree Programme with The Thesis "Turkish Language Teaching to Foreigners". As result of the findings, it has been found that students experience problems in Master Degree Programme with The Thesis "Turkish Language Teaching to Foreigners" due to lack of sample in the field in which they mean to conduct scientific study, lack of sources, intensiveness of lessons in the programme, lack of practice, students' not having full knowledge of the field as well as Turkish, adequacy in foreign language and students experience problems related to themselves more. According to Meydan (1994)'s study, most of the students registered in Ankara University Social Science Institution find themselves inadequate in term of foreign language. When studies are examined, it is observed that students who receive postgraduate education in different fields have adequacy in foreign language. (Gürdal et al., 2008; Kaya, 2007; Aslan, 2010)

Finally, In order to determine students' demands and suggestions regarding master degree programme with the thesis "Turkish Language Teaching to Foreigners", their opinions were asked. When findings have been examined, it has been found that increasing the number of academic studies, implementation of obligatory practice lessons and foreign language courses to be organized in Turkish language teaching centres and opening up undergraduate study could be beneficial. In the research conducted by Gömleksiz and Yıldırım (2013) on postgraduates, students demanded to focus on practices during study period. In the research Demirbolat (2005) conducted, students suggested that the programmes should be for practise and 1-year obligatory

foreign language education should be provided. Within the scope of the findings in this study, possible suggestions are as follows:

1. Considering the importance and necessity of Turkish Language Teaching to Foreigners, special attention should be given to the studies in this field.
2. Students should be provided with efficient foreign language education in the master degree programme "Turkish Language Teaching to Foreigners".
3. In order to increase experience and motivation of the students who receive postgraduate education in this field, obligatory practice lesson(s) should be implemented in Turkish language teaching centres.
4. In order students to specialise and have full knowledge of the field, undergraduate studies in the field of Turkish Language Teaching to Foreigners should be opened up.
5. Special attention should be given to teaching students the scientific methods and techniques, as well as attention to actions enabling students to apply such acquired skills.
6. The focus should be on scientific / academic studies related to this field such as workshop, symposium, congress, conference and thus enabling qualified studies related to this field to be more and literature to grow greater as well as enabling a variety of people to benefit from these studies.

### Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interest.

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