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An examination of graduate theses related with guitar in terms of methodology and content: A case of Turkey

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The aim of this study is to examine post-graduate thesis completed on guitar in Turkey. For this purpose, a total of 89 theses were investigated in terms of selected research topics, study participants, and methods for analysis. For the selection of the thesis included in this study three criteria were used; first, theses from 1990 (beginning time for first completed theses on guitar topic) to 2013 period, second, reaching the full text of theses, and third permission of author. The number of thesis investigated in this study represents about 93% (105 at total) of whole completed theses from different institutions in Turkey. Descriptive survey and content analysis method were used for examination of theses. The results of study showed that while selected theses topics reflect more diversity and school related issues at Faculty of Educations (using guitar at school music, teaching methods, etc.), the piece analysis from different compositors was mostly selected study topic at Conservatories and the Fine Art Faculties which parallel to institutions mission. As a conclusion, there are some summarized results and recommendations for upcoming researches on this guitar or guitar education in the light of completed theses and related research literature.

Key words: Graduate theses, guitar, music, guitar education, descriptive content analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Graduate education is an important stage of education that enables profundity in science. At this stage, graduate students can learn the scientific language, make independent research and specialize at some topics in order to meet the demand of related institutions. In this context, graduate education is among the most important mission of universities especially in terms of generating scientific knowledge as Demirel (2007) stated. The important functions of universities such as doing research and producing new technologies are mostly accomplished during the graduate studies. According to Tebis and Okay (2013), graduate education helps

researchers to accurately identify what they want to study, select the most appropriate method, and report their study findings.

Historically, after the foundation of Turkish Republic in 1923, universities and graduate programs were restructured and major scientific advances have been reported in the social and physical science areas in Turkey. However, graduate programs and scientific research culture began much later in the areas of music and art. In 1982, all higher education institutions of Turkey including conservatories, fine arts and related departments were gathered under a single roof with the

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Table 1. The distribution of guitar theses scanned in the thesis data center between the years of 1990-2013 according to universities.

Universities	N	%
Gazi	18	17.1
Mimar Sinan	18	17.1
Marmara	14	13.3
İstanbul	11	10.5
A.İ.B.Ü.	7	6.7
Selçuk	4	3.8
Haliç	3	2.9
İnönü	3	2.9
Kocaeli	3	2.9
Atatürk	2	1.9
Dokuz Eylül	2	1.9
Hacettepe	2	1.9
İTÜ	2	1.9
Kafkas	2	1.9
Mersin	2	1.9
Niğde	2	1.9
Uludağ	2	1.9
Other universities	5	5.2
Total	105	100

Table 2. The distribution of theses scanned in the thesis data center between the years 1990-2013 according to their levels.

Theses	N	%
Master	81	77.14
Doctorate	17	16.19
Proficiency in arts	7	6.66
Total	105	100

establishment of Council of Higher Education. This process began working and graduate theses and dissertations were produced in the fields of music and fine arts. Namely, lots of studies were carried out regarding music, music education and musical instruments.

Scientific researches seem to be rapidly increasing day by day in the field of music despite the field-related difficulties and long term research process (Schmidt and Zdzinski, 1993) The analysis of scientific thesis on a certain field may give information about the profundity and extensity of that subject and reveal the general appearance of the investigated field (Karadağ, 2009). The field of music education like other educational fields needs to constantly renew itself through peer review and assessment processes. Therefore, the studies conducted in the field of music education should be examined and reviewed at regular intervals to determine the research

tendencies in this field. The results may be directive to many scientists who conduct or want to conduct studies in this field (Cohen et al., 2007). Criticizing the quality of the graduate research also helps to improve the quality of papers which will be published.

Many review studies were performed in the fields of fine arts, music and music education in Turkey. For example, Altınkurt (2007) focused on the examination of theses written about art education. Sağer and Ayhan (2005), and Karkın (2011) summarized the theses written about music. Similarly, Ece (2007) tried to make a bibliography of papers about music published in scientific journals. Some researchers focused on the examination of theses on string instruments (Tebiş and Okay, 2013; Orhan, 2012; Varış, 2012; Demirbatır, 2008) in terms of different variables such as institutions, subjects and method of analysis used in those studies. Ataman (2009), reviewed the theses written about flute and flute education in Turkey. On the other hand, there is only one limited study about the analysis of guitar theses (Yalçın, 2010) which focused on mostly cited journals, books and different theses used in the reference parts of those theses. There is still a need for a comprehensive review of guitar theses produced in Turkey.

The aim of this study is to examine post-graduate thesis on guitar in Turkey according to subject and methodology to determine general trends in this research area. In this context, sub questions are following.   In this context, the sub questions are; 1) Which topics are frequently studied? 2) Which types of research are used? 3) What kinds of research designs are selected? 4) What kind of sampling methods is used? 5) What kind of research participants is selected? 6) Which tools were used for data collection? 7) What kind of analysis methods was used frequently in these graduate theses?

METHOD

The present study is a descriptive survey, content analysis method and descriptive statistics used for examination of related theses (Göktaş et al. 2012). Descriptive survey model determines the relationships between observations, recording, events in the science and makes generalization through controlled, unchangeable principles (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006). This survey study aims to examine graduate theses on guitar in Turkey. The dissertations included in this study were downloaded from the database of Council of Higher Education (CHE) which is the mostly used database by review studies (Kurtoğlu and Seferoğlu, 2012; Şimşek et al. 2009; Bertan et al. 2009) by searching the keywords "guitar" and "guitar education". 107 theses indexed in this field. Table 1 presents the distribution of number of completed theses according to universities (with the range of 1 minimum to 18 maximum), two of them were excluded from the study as they were not related to the guitar (one of them was about novel analysis and the other one was about tuner). Out of 105 theses, master theses are leading with a number of 81 (%77), and followed by doctorate theses with a number of 17 (%16), and 7 (7%) proficiency in art theses (Table 2). Finally, a total of 89 theses were investigated in terms of selected
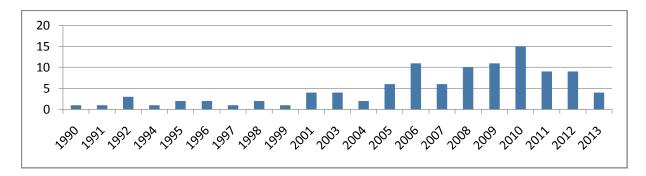
Figure 1. The distribution of thesis according to year.

Table 3. The distribution of the theses according to the types of schools and institutions

Schools	Education Faculties Ff	Conservatoires	Fine Arts Faculties		Total
n	54	26	9		89
%	60.7	29.2	10.1		100
Institutions	Social Sciences	Physical Sciences	Educational Sciences	Fine Arts	Total
n	55	12	20	2	89
%	61.8	13.5	22.5	2.2	100

research topics, study participants, research design, sampling methods, methods for analysis and responsible institutions. The theses included in this study are selected based on the following three criteria; dissertations from the time 1990 (beginning time for first completed of dissertation on guitar topic) to 2013 period, reaching the full text of dissertation, and permission of authors. The number of dissertations were investigated in this study represents about % 93 (105 at total) of whole completed dissertations from different institutions in Turkey.

The distribution of the 89 investigated theses in this study according to years is seen in Figure 1. It is seen that the number of theses were increased moderately after the year 2005 while before this time only one thesis was prepared per year.

As seen in Table 3, 60.67% of theses were prepared in Music Education Programs which included in Faculty of Education, 29.21% of them in Conservatories and 10.12% of them in Music Schools of the Faculty of Fine Arts. The numbers of theses in Table 3 show that more than half of the theses prepared in Education Faculties. One of the reasons of this high number of theses in Education Faculties may be the earlier incorporation of music education programs in academic settings. The other reason may be explained by interactions with other fields of academicians may increase motivations of music education program researchers. The distribution of theses according to the institutions in which they were done is seen in Table 3. It is seen that a majority of the theses were done in "social sciences institutions" (61.79%). This is followed by the "educational sciences institutions" (20.48%). "Social sciences institutions" and "physical sciences institutions" had undertaken the conducting of master studies of universities in the years when thesis writing first began. The need to categorize art fields more in social sciences field caused more theses to be done in "social sciences institutions". The theses of the last couple of years have been conducted by this institution as the master studies of the departments cultivating teachers began to be conducted by

the "educational sciences institutions" following years. In this regard, the theses written by the "educational sciences institution" have increased gradually in recent years.

Data collection tools and data collection

A "Theses Evaluation Form" with similar forms used by previous studies (Kurtoğlu and Seferoğlu, 2012) is prepared by the researcher. The form was also reviewed by two different experts for content validity with doctorate degree in assessment and evaluation field. The prepared form consists of eight sections; 1) the identity of the theses (topic of theses, author, publication year, responsible university and institute), 2) main subject, 3) type of research method (quantitative, qualitative, mixed), 4) research design (descriptive, experimental, case study, action research, survey, other), 5) data collection tools, 6) study participants-sample, 7) methods for sample selection, 8) data analysis methods. For the classification and evaluation of theses according to Theses Evaluation Form, due to the high numbers, only 5 of all included theses which selected randomly assessed by researcher and two experts with doctorate degree in assessment and evaluation field. In the assessment of 5 sample theses, it was seen that there is a significant assessment conformity (about 85%) between three different experts. And also conflicts between experts opinion were discussed until reaching a more conformity.

Data analysis

The collected data from theses which were examined via content analysis, were analyzed by using descriptive statistics (frequency and percentages). Content analysis is a coding system of written, told, or visual materials as meaningful codes and provides to

Table 4. The distribution of the topics studied in the theses examined.

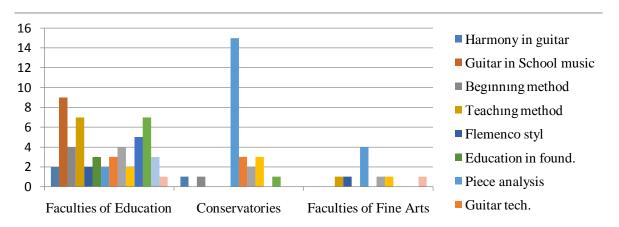| Topics	N	%
1-Harmony Implementations in Guitar	3	3.37
2-Use of Guitar in School Music	9	10.11
3-Examination of Guitar Beginning Methods	5	5.61
4-Teaching methods (Examination and new methods, using technology)	8	8.99
5-Guitar in Flamenco Style	3	3.37
6-Guitar education in different institutions	3	3.37
7-Piece Analysis	21	23.60
8-Guitar technique, studying methods, concert program	6	6.75
9-Turkish Music adaptations to guitar	7	7.87
10-Guitar History, life of the composer	6	6.75
11-Guitar Performance, Interpretivism, Evaluation of student success	5	5.61
12-Other (Comparing with other instruments, Developing Scales, Professional Competency perception, Musician sicknesses, Guitar in hearing education, Holding)	8	8.99
13-Teaching schedule (development, preparation, implementation, evaluation)	3	3.37
14-Early age guitar education	2	2.25
Total	89	100

Figure 2. The distribution of the topics according to the theses done in institutions.

determine, summarize and specify fundamental content of observations. It can also be expressed as to reach concepts and relationships which will explain the obtained data (Çalık et al., 2014; Krippendorff, 1984). In this study, content analysis was used to classify the theses in terms of main subjects, type of research method, research design, data collection tools, study participants, methods for sample selection, data analysis methods.

FINDINGS

A total of 89 theses for all of which permissions were obtained from the authors and whose full texts were accessed were included in the framework of the research. These theses were studied in line with the determined research problems. The data in the theses were drawn

into the Theses Examination Form and categorized. The following sub-problem questions were tried to be answered for solving the determined problem situation.

Frequency of studied research topics

As seen in Table 4 and Figure 2, the most used topic is seen to be "piece analysis" (23.60%) followed by "using guitar in school music" (10.11%), "teaching methods" (8.99%) and "others" (8.99%). The topics "guitar technique", "guitar history", "guitar performance" and "beginning methods in guitar" took place by a fewer percentage. It is observed that the topic "piece analysis" which is the topic with highest percentage was selected
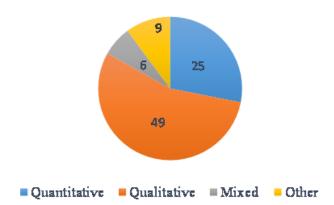
The distribution of the research methods

Figure 3. The research methods used in theses.

Table 5. The distribution of the research designs used in theses.

Research design	N	%
Descriptive	37	41.57
Experimental Design	13	14.60
Case Study	7	7.88
Survey	25	28.08
Action Research	4	4.50
Combined (Descriptive, Survey)	2	2.25
Other (Dialoguing Literature)	1	1.12
Total	89	100

Table 6. Methods to determine sampling

Type of sampling methods	N	%
Purposeful Sampling	27	30.35
Convenience Sampling	3	3.37
Random Sampling	5	5.61
Cluster Sampling	3	3.37
Whole Nature of the Research	10	11.24
Not Specified	41	46.06
Total	89	100

more in departments based on performance such as conservatories. It can be said that the reasons why researchers chose these topics more often are that these institutions have programs based on performance and based on this, their curiosity to acquire more information about the pieces they play and the habit brought by the fact that previously written theses are in this way. Topics related to schools and teaching such as "guitar in school music", "teaching methods", "guitar history" and "guitar technique" were more preferred in institutions such as faculties of education. The fact that the topic of piece analysis was most preferred in conservatories as the thesis topic although most of the guitar theses were done in faculties of education shows that the faculties of education are richer in terms of topic diversity. It is seen that the focus is on piece analysis in "Conservatories" and "Faculties of Fine Arts".

Types of research method

When Figure 3 is examined, it is observed that qualitative research method is mostly preferred in theses. The percentage of using qualitative research methods is 55.05%; quantitative techniques, 28.08%; others, 10.12% and mixed, 6.75%. The fact that the topic "piece analysis" which requires document review was mostly chosen as it is seen in the previous table can be seen as the reason for the excessive using of qualitative analysis technique.

Kind of research designs

As seen in Table 5, descriptive design (41.57%), survey design (28.08%), experimental design (14.60%) were used in theses as the research design. These were followed by case study, action research and combined

design respectively. The facts that the topics are usually chosen as appropriate for description and that preferring the studies which do not necessitate advanced statistics can be seen as the main reasons why descriptive design is more used.

Types of sampling method

According to Table 6, when we examine the methods of determining working groups we see that this topic is 46.06% not specified in the theses. Purposeful sampling at a rate of 30.35%, random sampling at a rate of 5.61% and whole nature of the research at a rate of 11.24% was taken. Convenience sampling and cluster sampling have fewer rates. The fact that the methods of choosing working groups are mostly not specified shows that working groups are not included in theses. This stems from the selection of the topics and the techniques to determine a working group to be used.

Selected research participants

When Table 7 is examined, it stands out that the document at a rate of 52.81%, university students at a rate of 17.97% and instructors at a rate of 16.85% as the

Table 7. The distribution of research participants

Type of research participants	N	%
Instructor	15	16.85
Teacher	2	2.25
Primary School Students	6	6.75
Secondary School and High School Students	3	3.37
University Students	16	17.97
Document-transcript	47	52.81
Total	89	100

Table 8. The distribution of data collection tools.

Data collection tool	N	%
Questionnaire	16	17.98
Scale	2	2.25
Test	9	10.11
Document (Notes, Website, Encyclopedia)	41	46.06
Interview	7	7.88
Observation	4	4.50
Multiple (Interview-document-questionnaire)	5	5.61
Other (Personal Information Form, Websites)	5	5.61
Total	89	100

most studied groups as working groups. It is seen that working groups were selected from sources close to the working environment and that the researchers preferred document scan more.

Data collection tools

As it is illustrated in Table 8, document reviewing is the most used tool at a rate of 46.06% as a data collection tool. Questionnaire at a rate of 17.48%, test at a rate of 10.11% and interview technique at a rate of 7.88% were used. While the multiple techniques in which many techniques are used together were used at a rate of 5.61%, the observation technique was used the least at a rate of 4.50%. The fact that document reviewing technique is the most used technique in collecting data for theses on guitars show that it stems from the fact that theses on guitars focus on piece analysis.

Frequency of data analysis methods

According to Table 9, it is seen that descriptive statistics were used mostly as data analysis method at a rate of 79.78%. This is followed by Anova, t-test, nonparametric and other methods respectively. It can be said that

comparative topics, experimental topics and techniques with multiple variables were not used in thesis on guitars, thus beginner level techniques were used to make analyses.

DISCUSSION and SUGGESTION

This study, which analyzes 89 postgraduate theses studies made in the field of guitar between 1990-2013 years in Turkey, includes important descriptive findings about theses subject orientations, methods, and research techniques.

In the practiced analysis, it is found out that with regard to subject orientation, most studied subject is "composition analysis" and it is respectively followed by "use of guitar in school music", "teaching methods", and "other" subjects (comparison of guitar with other instruments, scale development). In lower rates, there are "guitar techniques", "guitar history", "guitar performance", and "beginning methods of guitar". It is observed that "composition analysis" is chosen as research subject mostly in performance-based departments such as conservatory. In also Tebiş and Okay (2013)'s recent study, composition analysis subject attracts attention as the most studied subject. Possible reasons for composition analysis to be mainly chosen as the subject can be listed as follows: performance-based programs are run especially in conservatories; students are curious about the composition pieces they have been playing and they need to identify it; or, students take previous thesis subjects as model for their thesis depending upon the lack of original subject. Such situation increases the repetition of the same subject under different names, and limits the subject variety in the field. In faculties of education, compared to conservatories, subjects related to school and education such as "guitar in school music", "teaching methods", "guitar history", and "guitar techniques" are studied more; and also variety in thesis subjects is more. In a sense, such difference between conservatory and faculties of education reflects that both institutions' functions and missions are important factors in subject choice.

In the analyzed theses, it is observed that mostly qualitative research method is preferred as the method. Further use of qualitative method results from the fact that "composition analysis" subject is studied in theses. Again as research pattern, mostly descriptive pattern is used which is parallel with one of the recent study results (Yalçın, 2010), and later respectively raster pattern and experimental pattern are used. These are respectively followed by case study, action research, and composite pattern. However, other experimental and comparative studies, in which different guitar teaching methods are used or different methods are compared, are also needed.

As another finding of the research, it is observed that in

Table 9. The Distribution of data analysis methods.

Data analysis method	N	%
Descriptive Statistics (Arithmetic Mean, Standard Deviation, Frequency, Percentage)	71	79.78
T-Test	5	5.62
Anova/Ancova	6	6.73
Nonparametric	5	5.62
Other (Reasoning, Document Analysis, Regression)	2	2.25
Total	89	100

almost half of the analyzed theses (46%), especially in document-transcript review studies, study groups that form the sample are not concretely specified. It is seen that documents or works analyzed in work analysis studies are not taken into consideration as target population and sample. Apart from that most studied sample groups continue as "university students" and "instructors". Selçuk et al. (2013) indicate that researchers mostly choose groups such as postgraduate students since they are easy to access; and, it shows similarity with this study's finding that university students are preferred more as sample. The fact that researchers do not much tend to sample groups that are hard to access, such as performers who perform in the field of guitar, music teachers who work in schools, or trainee students, limits the variety and function of the studies in this field.

In the conducted studies, it is observed that document tools such as music notes, books, and websites are most used as data collection tools; and, they are followed by techniques such as surveys, tests, and meetings. It takes attention that multi data collection tools, which use several observations and techniques together, are used in limited numbers. Kılıç (2010) states in her analysis on general music education that "survey" technique is used more. Such findings lead us to think about the fact that both in general music education and in instrument training fields including guitar, researchers are limited with regard to use and develop a set of tests and techniques that are structured as data collection tools. In a similar way, it is observed that among descriptive statistical techniques used in data analysis, one-way analysis of variance, t-test, and non-parametric analysis are used. This finding shows similarity with Tebiş and Okay (2013)'s finding that descriptive statistical techniques are used more in theses about violin and viola. It is observed that studies with experimental methods are represented in far less numbers. It is clear that in guitar theses, comparative subjects, experimental subjects, and multivariate techniques are not used; therefore, analyses are made with preliminary techniques. To overcome such problems: (i) Literature review, which has significantly made progress throughout the world, should be effectively used and by keeping up with this progress, subject orientation

should be varied. (ii) Researchers should tend to studies that allow composite methods and experimental methods in theses. (iii) Study groups should be varied; and, sample should be chosen with regard to the research pattern. (iv) In more advanced levels, getting into research that require statistical analysis will help the field to gain depth. (v) Such kind of quality research should be conducted at regular intervals to periodically keep track of the developments observed in the field.

Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflicts of interest.

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