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Teacher Survey on Reading Competence and Reading Competence Promotion in Turkish Primary Schools

Orhan Hanbay
Deputy Manager
Adiyaman University
Turkey

Yakup Tekin
Primary School Teacher
Primary School in Mersin
Turkey

An Introduction to
ATINER's Conference Paper Series

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Dr. Gregory T. Papanikos
President
Athens Institute for Education and Research

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Orhan Hanbay
Deputy Manager
Adiyaman University
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Abstract

The aim of this study is to present the estimates of primary school teachers in Turkey for reading competence and reading competence promotion in Turkish primary schools. This empirical study on the illustrated aim includes both quantitative and qualitative research. The sample of the study includes a total of 160 primary school teachers (female 68 and male 92) from 15 different cities of Turkey. The data were collected using an online survey. Outside of classification issues such as age, gender, etc. consisted of the questionnaire 3 scaled questions with Likert scale 10, 4 closed and 2 open, a total of 9 questions. In the data analysis, both statistical (t-test for the 3 scaled responses) and qualitative (responses from 2 open questions) analytical techniques were used. The analysis was performed by gender. The results showed that there was a effort for reading competence promotion (X = 5.29). The mean values for the female participants is lower (X = 4.54) than male participants (X = 5.84). And this differentiation is statistically significant (p = 0.002). Even with the answers to the second question, the result was similar (female X = 3.88, male X = 5.06). And finally, 93% of the participating teachers believe that an education-program for teacher is necessary in this context.

Keywords: Globalization, autonomous learning, reading literacy

Introduction

The lifelong learning, which is understood as non-stop learning in our lives, is essential in satisfying the rapidly changing societal needs (Wang 2008) and following information and technology (Bryce 2004). The concept of lifelong learning has expanded the perception of reading competence (literacy) (OECD 2013, 60). In other words, reading literacy is a prerequisite for independent learning, which has an important meaning for education policy discourse. Therefore, many countries are trying to make progress in schools on this issue.

Reading literacy is reflected by the culture of the reader, the context of reading and the purposes of reading (Bruner 1996; Linnakylä 2000, 114). The PISA concept of reading literacy emphasises the ability to use written information in situations that students may encounter in their life at and beyond school. Reading literacy is defined in PISA 2012 as "understanding, using, reflecting on and engaging with written texts, in order to achieve one's goals, develop one's knowledge and potential, and participate in society (OECD 2013, 61).

So the definition is broader than simply decoding information and literal comprehension. It also recognises the awareness of and the ability to use a variety of appropriate strategies when processing texts (Thomson 2013, 7; Jerald 2009, 37).

In OECD's PISA survey, reading literacy is seen as an expanding set of knowledge, skills and strategies which individuals build on throughout their lives in various situations, through interactions with their peers and with the larger communities in which they participate. The emphasis is on reflective thinking and critical evaluation of texts. (Linnakylä 2000, 112; Leino 2014, 41)

To further understand the PISA definition of reading literacy, each part of the definition is explained further:

- Understanding refers to the ability to gain meaning from what is read.
- Using relates to the notions of application and function.
- Reflecting on emphasises the notion that reading is interactive, where readers make connections with their own thoughts and experiences when engaging with a text.
- Engaging with involves the reader's motivation to read and is comprised of constructs including interest in and enjoyment of reading, a sense of control over what one reads, and reading practices.
- Written texts includes texts from a variety of media – hand-written, printed and digital (Thomson 2013, 8).

Given the above information, the aim of this study is to present the estimates of primary school teachers in Turkey for reading competence and reading competence promotion in Turkish primary schools.

Method

This empirical study on the illustrated aim includes both quantitative and qualitative research.

Study Group

The study group consists of 160 primary school teachers (women 68 and men 92) from 15 different cities of Turkey. The profiles of the participants are illustrated in table 1.

Table 1. *The Profile of the Participants*

	f	%
Service- length		
1-15 years	48	30
15-20 years	65	41
Over 20 years	47	29
Total	160	100
Gender		
Women	68	42,5
Men	92	57,5
Total	160	100

Data Collection

The data were collected using an online survey. Outside of classification issues such as age, gender, etc. consisted of the questionnaire 3 scaled questions with Likert scale 10, 4 closed and 2 open, a total of 9 questions.

Data Analysis

In the data analysis, both statistical (t-test for the 3 scaled responses) and qualitative (responses from 2 open questions) analytical techniques were used. The analysis was performed by gender.

Findings

In this part of the study the findings after the data analysis are given.

Question 1: How high is the effort of reading competence promotion in primary schools area?

The results of the independent groups t-test are as fallow.

Table 2. *T-test of the Effort of Reading Competence Results*

Group	N	Mean	Std.Dev.	t	p
Women	68	4,54	2,58	-3,138	0,002
Men	92	5,84	5,60		
Df=145,175					

The results show that the teachers think there is an effort in primary schools area for reading competence promotion (X = 5.29). But the level is not high. The mean values for the women participants is lower (X = 4.54) than men (X = 5.84). And this differentiation is statistically significant (p = 0.002).

Question 2: How high is the reading competence-level of students in primary schools and other stages?

Table 3. *T-test for the Results of Reading Competence-level*

Group	N	Mean	Std.Dev.	t	p
Women	68	3,88	2,34	-3,264	0,001
Men	92	5,06	2,15		
Df=137,168					

Even with the answers to the second question, the result was similar (women X = 3.88, men X = 5.06). The mean values for the female participants is lower (X = 3,88) than male participants (X = 5.06). And this differentiation is statistically significant (p = 0.001).

Question 3: How high is the awareness-level of the teachers about the importance of students' reading competence?

Table 4. *T-test for Awareness-level of the Teachers about the Importance of Students' Reading Competence*

Group	N	Mean	Std.Dev.	t	p
Women	68	5,63	2,63	-1,726	0,087
Men	92	6,33	2,44		
Df=138,215					

The mean values of this question are not high (women X = 5.63 and men X = 6.33) like the others. But there is also no significant difference (p = 0.087) between two two groups.

Question 4 and 5: Which stakeholders have the most roles to improve students' reading competence? Why?

Table 5. *Stakeholders, who have the most Roles*

	Women	Men	Becouse
Teachers	28	58	They are face-to-face to the children.
Parents	22	21	Their contribution is very important.
Competent official from ministerial level	9	10	There must be good education policy.
School administrators	3	3	They should coordinate it.
Competent official from provincial directorate for education	6	-	They should coordinate it in province.
Total	68	92	

Table 5 shows that the most of the teachers think, that the teachers (women 28 and men 58) have the most responsibility to improve students' reading competence. And in second place are the parents (women 22 and men 21) who have to contribute for their children's reading competence. Why these two stakeholders in the front row, is because of their being near the children.

Question 6: Can in-service training activities for teachers make a significant contribution in the field of reading competence?

Table 6. *Teachers View about the In-service Training Activities*

	Women	Men
Yes	65	84
No	3	8
Total	68	92

95% of the women and 91% of the men are thinking, that there must be in-service training activities for teachers.

Question 7. In case if your answer is "yes", which topics should include this training? The answers can be more than one.

Table 7. *The Topics for the Training*

	Women	Men
Creating interest for reading	48	65
Reading techniques	46	58
Reading forms	20	27
Reading strategy	34	45

Table 7 shows, that the topic "creating interest for reading" is in the first (women 48 and men 65) place, and after it "reading techniques" is in the second.

Question 8 and 9: Who should instruct this in-service training? Why?

Table 8. *Instructor-choice of the Teachers*

	Women	Men	Becouse
Educated teachers from each school	7	12	They know the environment.
Turkish teachers	11	8	They are specialist.
Experts from ministry of education	8	6	They are responsible.
Experts from universities	42	66	They know the problems and solutions.
Total	68	92	

The experts from universities are the highest choice (women 42 and men 66) of the teachers to instruct the trainings for the reading cpmpetence.

Result

The results showed that the teachers think there is an intermediate effort in primary schools area for reading competence promotion. The mean values of women are lower. Even the reading competence-level of students in primary schools and other stages are not high acording the mean values. Also the teachers think that the awareness-level of the teachers about the importance of students' reading competence are intermediate.

These informations show that there must be some efforts to make provision against improving reading competence.

The majority of the teachers think, that the teachers have the most responsibility to improve students' reading competence. And in second place are the parents who have to contribute for their children's reading competence. Why these two stakeholders are in the front row, is because of their being near the children according to the teachers.

In this case 95% of the women and 91 of the men are thinking, that there must be in-service training activities for teachers. The topic "creating interest for reading" is in the first place, and after it "reading techniques" is in the second.

Most of the teachers think that the experts from universities should instruct instruct the trainings for the reading cpmpetence.

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