Trends in Values and Character Education Researches in Turkey*

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to reveal the current status of studies on character and values education, which have been published in Turkey between 2000-2016. Within the context of this study, 272 articles that have been indexed in both The Turkish Academic Network and Information Center (ULAKBIM) and Academia Social Science Index databases and 122 dissertations which have been listed in Council of Higher Education were reviewed using content analysis by using "Article/Dissertation Classification Form" based on the following grouping criteria; i.e., publication year, author number, research design, research topic, research aim, data collection tools and data analysis program. The results indicate that the number of master's thesis are predominantly higher than the number of PhD dissertations and the researches done in the department of Elementary Education ranks first. The majority of papers were published at international peer-reviewed journals and most of them were written by either one or two authors. It is seen that studies conducted on character and values education in Turkey date back to nearly ten years, and have been increasing in number. It can be said that according to their aims; measuring perceptions, attitudes and opinions which have the highest percentage and the most frequently studied research topic is character and values education. Regarding the research methods; more than half of the research studies employed qualitative approach, whereas the most favored research design has been the document analysis. Thus, the most frequently used data collection tools are documents and regarding the sample groups studied the most common subjects are course books and literary texts. The results of the analysis, in fact, convey the message of suggestion for the researchers and academicians working in this field.

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Introduction

Character development is both a lifelong task and an exciting challenge which we need since the beginning of civilization (Murphy, 2009). Children and adolescents' moral-character formation is a big challenge for parents and educators (Lapsley and Yeager , 2013) and Berkowitz and Bier point out that character education is a subdivision in children's development that target the child's propensity and capacity to be responsible, moral and self-managed (Lapsley and Yeager, 2013).

Character education, addressing basic human values, is a broad tent under which moral, civic, well-mannered, behaved, non-bullying, healthy, successful, and socially acceptable people are taught. Sergiovanni (1992) considers school as a learning society and at the same time a center to educate character. What should be taught and how would they be taught are affected by the countries' social structure. Through the studies that would be conducted at schools, we can teach children to be sensitive and unprejudiced to others and their opinions besides being forgiving, respectful and helpful (Çıbıkçı, 1992).

It can be proclaimed that morals are not subjective preferences rather they are objective and good qualifications that meet certain ethical criteria. Virtues both lead to personal happiness and serve the common good of community (Lickona, 2004). Character education is inescapable since teachers, as role models, both intentionally and unintentionally, shape the students' characters in positive or negative ways. Also the recent findings indicate that efficient moral education complements and increases the academic education (Berkowitz and Bier, 2005). Huitt (2004) claims that there are many approaches for conveying moral and character education in the schools. First of all, we can ignore the value education and see it outside the frames of proper curriculum. Secondly, we can provide students opportunities to defend their own values without interrupting their beliefs and ideas. Thirdly, students are taught a process that they should follow while deciding and practicing, so that rational decisions are made. Fourthly, students are allowed to discuss on some moral issues and are let to benefit from each other's opinions and beliefs. Fifthly, students are given a set of values and accompanying suitable behaviors that are constant and agreed on by society. The final approach is the usage of the convenient approaches in appropriate situations.

It is possible to say that throughout the history, forming character education and raising a good citizen have been the aims of all general education. These aims are often considered to exist instead of being clearly formulated. Character education and moral education have deep connections to citizenship education and is a contemporary movement which is growing (Arthur, 2010). Thus, there has been an increase in the number of studies carried out on character and moral education. Values education has been implemented consciously and in different intensities in National Education system of Turkey since 2003. These implementations have gained new momentum from 2010 onwards. However, on the other hand the intellectual dimension of the application and the values education whether among the school's objectives or not continues to be debated (Meydan, 2014).

Making a general evaluation of the literature on education not only gives information on the qualities of the researches done in that period but also helps the future researches (Erdem 2011). The aim of this study is to analyze the dissertations and articles about character and moral education in Turkey between 2000-2016 and to determine the research tendencies in this realm, through analyzing 272 articles and 122 dissertations with content analysis by using "Article/Dissertation Classification Form", based on the following grouping criteria; i.e., publication year, author number, research design, research topic, research aim, data collection instruments and data analysis program.

Method

Research Design

This is a qualitative study which is contributed by document analysis. In this study, papers; either journals or dissertations which are written about character education and which are published in Turkish journals and databases were examined in terms of different variables. Document analysis includes analyzing of written materials which have information on researched events and phenomenon (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2016). It is limited to papers on character education published from 2000 to 2016. This study provides descriptive analysis of 122 dissertations which are listed in Council of Higher Education and 272 articles which are indexed in The Turkish Academic Network and Information Centre (ULAKBIM) and Academia Social Science Index databases from 2000 to 2016. Firstly, 340 articles were found in the database but 68 articles were omitted because of their unrelated subjects. Therefore, the sample is composed of totally 394 researches.

Data Collection Tool

Each of the 394 studies was analyzed using the form entitled '*Educational Research Papers Classification Form* (ERPCF)' that was originally developed by Sözbilir and Kutu (2008) and later revised and modified by Ozan and Köse (2014). Expert opinion has been sought to establish the validity and reliability of the ERPCF. There are eight parts in the form; these are descriptions of the papers, types of paper, discipline to which the paper belongs, the research method employed (quantitative, qualitative, mixed, or review), data collection tools, sampling (sampling, sampling procedure, number of sample), data analysis methods (quantitative or qualitative), and a final section that includes information about references.

Data Analysis

Data which were collected by the form was analyzed by descriptive analysis. While analyzing data, the information which was given by the author was accepted to classify the type of study, sampling and analyzing method. Each of the articles was examined carefully and was classified under the categories which are field of discipline, date, subject, method, sampling, data collection tools, analyzing methods and references. Recorded data was transferred to excel program. The results were presented in a descriptive manner as frequencies, percentage tables, and charts. The researchers followed the following steps:

1. Identifying the journals / theses to cover.
2. Conducting the descriptive analysis according to the form.
3. Re-designing the data collection tool according to the educational research papers especially the part that focuses on the methods parts.
4. Organizing the collected data and write the results.

To provide validity and reliability of the study, analyzing was done with consensus of researchers. During the descriptive analysis process, one supervisor and four doctoral students worked together. In order to achieve a reliable classification of the papers, initially the authors worked together. Sets of the selected papers were classified. Disagreements were discussed and resolved, and then the rest of the papers were classified by collaborative work between the authors. Finally, frequency and percentages of categories were counted and interpreted. Firstly information about authors, journals, reference numbers were entered, then subject and method of it identified. It was seen that there wasn't enough information about the method in some researches while identifying method; design of research, sampling and method of analyzing data. In this situation, the appropriate category was given by the researchers' consensus.

Findings

In findings and interpretation part of the study, 122 dissertations and 272 articles on character and values education in Turkey between the years 2000-2016 are analyzed and interpreted in terms of their distributions based on their publishers, author number, year of publication, types, purposes, topics, design and methods, data collection tools, their types, samples and their sizes, sample types, data analysis methods and the number of resources. The distribution of dissertations written on values and character education between 2000 and 2016 in terms of Universities are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of dissertations in terms of universities

Name of the University	Master	PhD	Total
Abant İzzet Baysal University	2	0	2
Adıyaman University	1	0	1
Afyon Kocatepe University	1	0	1
Akdeniz University	3	0	3
Anadolu University	0	1	1
Ankara University	1	1	2
Atatürk University	3	4	7
Bartın University	1	0	1
Celal Bayar University	1	0	1
Cumhuriyet University	2	0	2
Çanakkale On sekiz Mart University	4	0	4
Çukurova University	1	0	1
Dicle University	2	0	2
Dokuz Eylül University	2	0	2
Dumlupınar University	2	1	3
Erciyes University	2	0	2
Eskişehir Osmangazi University	2	0	2
Fatih University	1	0	1
Fırat University	2	1	3
Gazi University	4	5	9

Table 1: Continues

Gaziosmanpaşa University	3	0	3
Giresun University	1	0	1
Hacettepe University	2	2	4
Hitit University	1	0	1
İnönü University	5	1	6
İstanbul University	1	0	1
Karadeniz Technical University	4	0	4
Marmara University	12	6	18
Mehmet Akif Ersoy University	1	0	1
Mersin University	0	1	1
Mevlana University	2	0	2
Mustafa Kemal University	1	0	1
Necmettin Erbakan University	5	1	6
Niğde University	1	0	1
Ondokuz Mayıs University	2	0	2
Pamukkale University	1	0	1
Sakarya University	3	1	4
Selçuk University	0	3	3
Uludağ University	2	0	2
Uşak University	2	0	2
Yeditepe University	6	0	6
Yüzüncü Yıl University	1	1	2
Total	**93(76,2%)**	**29(23,8%)**	**122**

According to the table above, there have been more dissertations at Marmara, Gazi, Atatürk, İnönü, Necmettin Erbakan and Yeditepe Universities on values education. Additionally, 93 dissertations (76%) of these are post graduate dissertations and 29 (24%) of them are doctoral (PhD) dissertations. The distribution of the dissertations published on values and character education between 2000 and 2016 in terms of their types were examined and the findings in Table 2 were obtained.

Table 2. Distribution of dissertations in terms of their types

Type of Theses	f	%
Master	93	76,23
PhD	29	23,77
Total	122	100,00

Table 2 shows the distribution of dissertations in terms of their types. According to the table, 93 (76,23%) of the dissertations are master's dissertation whereas 29 (23,77%) of them are doctoral dissertations. The distribution of dissertations in terms of departments is given in Table 3.

Table 3. Distribution of dissertations in terms of departments

	Department	f	%
	Department of Child Development and Home Management Education	2	1,64
	Department of Turkish Language Education	8	6,56
	Department of Educational Sciences	8	6,56
	Department of Educational Administration and Supervision	10	8,20
Graduate School of Social Sciences	Department of Theology/ Department of Religious Sciences	4	3,28
	Department of Education of Religion and Ethics and Primary Education	4	3,28
	Department of Secondary Social Sciences Education	1	0,82
	Department of Primary Education	5	4,10
	Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies	9	7,38
	Department of Music	1	0,82
	Department of Turkish Studies	1	0,82
	Department of Turkish Language Education	1	0,82
	Department of Educational Administration and Supervision	2	1,64
	Department of Primary Education (Science – Social Sciences – Preschool and Primary Years Studies)	27	22,13
Graduate School of Educational Sciences	Department of Educational Sciences	16	13,11
	Department of Secondary Social Sciences Studies	3	2,46
	Department of Turkish Studies	15	12,30
	Department of Physical Education and Sports Teacher Education	2	1,64
	Department of Foreign Language Education	2	1,64
	Department of Computer and Instructional Technology Education	1	0,82

Table 3 indicates the distribution of studies on character and values education in terms of departments and institutes. According to Table 3, most of the dissertations written on character and value education are in Department of Primary Education with 27 dissertations (22,13%). Educational Sciences Department is the second with 16 dissertations (13,11%) and the Department of Turkish Studies is the third with 15 (12,30%) dissertations. According to Table 3, it was seen that the distribution of the aforementioned theses indicated that slightly more than half (56,56%) of the dissertation were submitted to Graduate School of Educational Science while the rest (43,44%) was submitted to the Graduate School of Social Sciences. Findings on the type of the journals in which the articles are published are given in Table 4.

Table 4. Type of the journals in which the articles are published

Journal Types	f	%
International Journals	3	1,10
International Refereed Journals	148	54,41
National Refereed Journals	113	41,54
National Journals	8	2,94
TOTAL	**272**	**100,00**

As shown in Table 4, most of the articles (54,41%) were published in International Refereed Journals. National Refereed Journals is the second with 113 articles (41,54%). Findings on the number of authors are given in table 5.

Table 5. The number of authors in articles

The Number of Authors	f	%
1 author	110	40,44
2 authors	114	41,91
3 authors	36	13,24
4 or more authors	12	4,41
Total	**272**	**100,00**

Table 5 shows the distribution of the studies on value and character education in terms of the number of authors. According to Table 5, 114 of the articles (41,91%) have had two authors whereas 110 (40,44%) articles were written by a single author and 36 (13,24%) were written by three. Table 6 indicates the years when these studies were published.

Table 6. Distribution of articles and dissertations in terms of publication year

Years	f	%
2000-2003	7	1,78
2004-2007	14	3,55
2008-2010	58	14,72
2011-2014	203	51,52
2015-2016	112	28,43
Total	**394**	**100,00**

It can be seen that the fewest number of studies were carried out between 2000 and 2003. There are only 7 (1,78%) publications between these years. In the following years between 2004 and 2007 the number of studies doubled and 14 (3,55%) studies were published. From 2008 to 2010 there is a rise and 58 (14,72%) researches were done. It is observed that there is a significant increase between the 2011–2014; 203 (51,52%) publications were printed. Also, 112 (28,43%) dissertations and articles were published in 2015 and 2016. Hence it can be concluded that the number of the researches held on value and character education has been going up recently. Distribution of the dissertations and articles in terms of their type have been given in Table 7.

Table 7: Type of articles and dissertations

Type of Article	f	%
Research	312	79,19
Review	82	20,81
Total	**394**	**100**

According to Table 7, 312 (79,19%) of the publications examined are Research/Empirical while 82 (20,81%) of them are Review. The findings on the purposes of the article and dissertations are given in Table 8.

Table 8. Distribution of articles and dissertations by their purposes

Purpose	f	%
Opinion/perception/attitude review	181	44,80
Application	17	4,21
Review and evaluation of the Curriculum	39	9,65
Literature/Document review	140	34,65
Model Proposal	9	2,23
Comparative description	13	3,22
Other	5	1,24
Total	**404**	**100,00**

Table 8 shows that purpose of 181 (44,80%) of the publications is to review opinion, perception and attitudes about value and character education while 140 (34,65%) researches' purpose is doing a literature and document review. In 39 (9,65%) studies the aim is either reviewing or evaluating the curriculum whereas 17 (4,21%) of the studies aim application. The number of studies that made a comparative description is 13 (3,22%), on the other hand 9 (2,23%) of them come up with new model proposals. It can be inferred from Table 8 that, researchers mainly studied the opinions, perceptions and attitudes of the study groups on value and character education. Findings on the distribution of articles and dissertations in terms of their topics are given in Table 9.

Table 9. Distribution of articles and thesis in terms of their topics

Subject	f	%
Curriculum Development	51	12,72
Religion and Ethics Education	19	4,74
Social Sciences Education	61	15,21
History Education	3	0,75
Citizenship & Democracy & Human Rights Education	20	4,99
Education of Turkish	16	3,99
Social Studies Education	12	2,99
Education of Character and Values	144	35,91
Values in language and literary texts	60	14,96
Other	15	3,74
Total	**401**	**100,00**

According to Table 9, findings on the distribution of articles and dissertations in terms of their topics show that 144 (35,91%) of the articles and thesis are about Character and Value Education while 61 (15,21%) are about Social Sciences Education and 60 (14,96%) are about Values in Language and Literary Texts. Findings also show that 51 (12,72%) of the publications are about Curriculum Development whereas 20 (4,99%) are on Citizenship, Democracy and Human Rights Education, 19 (4,74%) are on Religion and Ethics Education and 16 (3,99%) are on Education of Turkish. Table 10 indicates findings on the distribution of the studies in terms of their research design and methods.

The studies which were examined included 144 (31,44%) quantitative, 273 (59,6%) qualitative and 41 (8,95%) mixed methods. 29 (6,33%) of the empirical studies are quasi experimental and 8 (1,75%) of them are true experimental. 76 of (16,59%) non experimental articles are descriptive surveys, 16 (3,49%) of them are correlational surveys, 8 (1,75%) of them are comparative surveys and 5 (1,09%) of them are scale development studies. While in interactive approach, 70 (15,28%) of qualitative articles are descriptive surveys, 30 (6,55%) of them are case studies, 14 (3,06%) of them are phenomenological studies, 6 (1,31%) of them are culture analysis, the other 5 (1,09%) studies are critical studies and the other 6 are action researches, 4 (0,87%) of them are grounded theory researches. In non-interactive design, 124 (27,07%) of qualitative articles are document analysis, 6 (1,31%) of them are concept analysis, 2 (0,44%) of them are historical analysis and 1 (0,22%) of them is a meta-analysis. When we look at the studies in mixed design, 24 (5,24%) of them are explanatory designs, 13 (2,84%) of them are diversity designs and 4 (%0,87) of them are exploratory

designs. There isn't a study which has a single subject, weak experimental or structural equation modeling design. The frequencies and percentages of data collection tools of the research articles are given in Table 11.

Table 10. Distribution of articles and dissertations in terms of their designs and methods

Design		Method	f
Quantitative	Experimental	True Experimental	8
		Quasi Experimental	29
		Weak Experimental	1
		Single Subject	0
		Subtotal	38
	Non empirical	Descriptive Survey	76
		Correlational Survey	16
		Comparative	8
		Structural Equation Modeling	1
		Scale development	5
		Subtotal	106
Qualitative	Interactive	Cultural Analysis	6
		Phenomenology	14
		Grounded Theory	4
		Case (Case Study)	30
		Critical Study	5
		Action Research	6
		Descriptive Survey Model	70
		Other	2
		Subtotal	137
	Non-interactive	Concept Analysis	6
		Historical Analysis	2
		Meta-Analysis	1
		Document Analysis	124
		Other	3
		Subtotal	136
Mixed	Mixed	Explanatory (Quantitative/Qualitative)	24
		Exploratory (Quantitative/Qualitative)	4
		Diversity (Quantitative/Qualitative)	13
		Subtotal	41
		TOTAL	**458**

Table 11. Data collection tools in articles and dissertations

Design	Method		f	%
Observation	Participant		9	1,97
	Nonparticipant		7	1,54
		Subtotal	16	3,51
Interview	Structured		4	0,88
	Semi Structured		91	19,96
	Unstructured		1	0,22
	Focus Group		5	1,10
		Subtotal	101	22,15
Achievement Tests	Open ended		2	0,44
	Multiple Choice		1	0,22
		Subtotal	3	0,66
Personality / Ability Tests	Open ended		4	0,88
	Multiple Choice		4	0,88
	Other		2	0,44
		Subtotal	10	2,19
Attitude/Perception-Survey/Scale	Open ended		40	8,77
	Likert		98	21,49
	Other		9	1,97
		Subtotal	147	32,24
Documents	Documents		169	37,06
Alternative	Alternative (Portfolio etc.)		7	1,54
Other	Other		3	0,66
		TOTAL	456	100,00

When articles based on research and investigation were analyzed in terms of data collection tools, it was found out that documents (f=169), scales and questionnaires (f=147) were used mostly. The most widely used scale is the Likert Scale (f=98). Also, interviews were done by using semi-structured forms (f=91). The frequencies of the sampling groups are given in Table 12.

Table 12. Study groups in articles and dissertations

Sample/Study Group	f	%
Preschool	10	2,29
Primary 1-5	50	11,44
Primary 6-8	53	12,13
Secondary	14	3,20
Undergraduate	38	8,70
Master	1	0,23
Teachers	93	21,28
Administrators	14	3,20
Parents	11	2,52
Instructors	4	0,92
Text Book-Literary Text	120	27,46
Other	29	6,64
Total	**437**	**100,00**

When sampling groups were examined, mostly textbooks and literary texts (f=120) were seen as the study group of articles and dissertations. Teachers (f=93), 1-5 grade primary school students (f=50), 6-8 grade primary school students (f=53), undergraduate students (f=38), secondary school students and administrators (f=14) follow this sampling group. Frequencies and percentages of sampling size in articles and dissertations are given in Table 13.

Table 13. Sample sizes of the articles and dissertations

Sample Size	f	%
between 1-10	37	12,63
between 11-30	55	18,77
between 31-100	76	25,94
between 101-300	50	17,06
between 301-1000	55	18,77
more than 1000	20	6,83
TOTAL	**293**	**100**

Sample sizes show that, 76 (25,94%) of the articles and dissertations have a sample size between 31-100, 55 (18,77%) of them have a sample size from 301 to 1000, 55 (18,77%) of them have a sample size between 11-30, 50 (17,06%) of them have a sample size from 101 to 300 sample size, 20 (6,83%) of them have a sample bigger than 1000 and 37 (12,63%) of them have a sample size between 1-10 in articles and dissertations of the study. Frequencies and percentages of sample types in articles and dissertations are given in Table 14.

Table 14. Types of samples in articles and dissertations

Type of Sample	f	%
Random	101	30,79
Easily Accessible	56	17,07
Purposeful	120	36,59
Whole population	20	6,10
Not mentioned	17	5,18
Other	14	4,27
TOTAL	**328**	**100**

According to Table 14, in 120 (36,59%) studies purposeful, in 101 (30,79%) studies random and in 56 (17,07%) studies easily accessible sampling types were used. Table 15 shows frequency and percentages of types of data collection tools.

Table 15. Types of data collection tools in articles and dissertations

Types of Data Collection Tool	f	%
Classic	342	92,43
Online	2	0,54
Mixed	26	7,03
TOTAL	370	100,00

In articles and dissertations in this study, 342 (92,43%) classic, 2 (0,54%) online and 26 (7,03%) mixed data collection tools were preferred. Although there has been an intense usage of social media and internet today, researchers prefer to use online data collecting tools less. Table 16 indicates frequency and percentages of data analysis methods examined in articles and dissertations.

Table 16. Data analysis methods in articles and dissertations

Method		Analysis	f
Quantitative	Descriptive	Frequency/Percent	128
		Average/Standard Deviation	71
		Graphic	10
	Predictive	Correlation	15
		t-test	65
		ANOVA	47
		ANCOVA	6
		MANOVA	1
		Factor Analysis	14
		Regression	10
		Nonparametric Test	46
		Other	2
Qualitative	Qualitative Analysis	Content Analysis	145
		Descriptive Analysis	141
		Frequency Analysis	50
		Not mentioned/Do not make sense	11
		Other	4
		TOTAL	766

As data analyzing methods are examined, it is seen that 209 descriptive, 206 predictive and 351 qualitative analysis techniques were used. In descriptive studies, 128 frequency and percent, 71 mean and standard deviation and 10 graphic analysis technique and calculation techniques were found out. In predictive studies, mostly t-test (f=65), ANOVA (f=47), non-parametric tests (f=46), factor analysis (f=14) and correlation (f=15) techniques were used. When the qualitative methods were examined, it was found out that there were 145 content analysis, 141 descriptive analyses and 50 frequency analyses. Moreover, in some qualitative studies, data analyzing method wasn't mentioned (f=11) or it wasn't clear which method was used. Table 17 indicates number of resources in articles and dissertations.

Table 17. Number of resources in articles and dissertations

Type	Number	F	%
Dissertation	10-30	2	0,51
	31-50	16	4,06
	51-70	20	5,08
	More than 71	84	21,32
	Subtotal	122	30,96
Article	5-15	32	8,12
	16-25	75	19,04
	26-35	63	15,99
	More than 36	102	25,89
	Subtotal	272	69,04
	TOTAL	394	100,00

When we look at the table 17, 84 (21,32%) dissertations have more than 71 resources, in 20 (5,08%) studies the number of resources used is between 51 and 70, 16 (4,06%) of them have 31-50 references and only 2 (0,51%) of them have between 10 and 30 references. Additionally, in 102 (25,89%) of the articles more than 36 resources were used, 75 (19,04%) articles have resources between 16-25, 63 (15,99%) of them have resources between 26-35 and 32 (8,12%) of them had 5 to 15 resources.

Results, Discussion and Suggestions

In this study, 122 dissertations and 272 articles written about character and values education in Turkey between the years 2000-2016 were analyzed in order to determine research tendencies and current situation of the field through content analysis by using "Article/Dissertation Classification Form". Using content analysis enables readers to comprehend large amounts of organized data published in particular subject fields easily and quickly (Stemler, 2001). The scope of the study is limited to selected dissertations that are gathered from Higher Education Council's official website and articles that are published in journals in Turkey which are indexed by ULAKBIM and ASOS index databases about character and values education.

The results of the content analysis show that the dissertations written about character and values education are mostly (42,62%) from developed universities such as Marmara, Gazi, Atatürk, İnönü, Necmettin Erbakan and Yeditepe Universities. Findings indicate that the number of master's thesis are predominantly higher than number of PhD dissertations (76,2%-23,8%) which might be due to the labor-intensive and time consuming structure of PhD dissertations. These results are parallel with Elbir and Bağcı's (2013) meta-analysis of 21 dissertations about values education, in which Gazi, Hacettepe, and Marmara universities ranked first, second and third, and master theses outnumbered PhD dissertations (76%-24%).

The distribution of dissertations according to departments represents that department of Primary Education ranks first (27%), it is followed by Educational Sciences department (16%), Department of Turkish Studies (15%) and Educational Administration and Supervision (10%). According to the literature, schools play an important role for providing an effective character education (Lickona, 1999, Berkowitz, 2002, Berkowitz and Bier,2005). As the elementary education is the first step where students socialize and internalize social rules; it is not surprising that there are more researchers from elementary education dealing with character education. Aforementioned departments were structured under either Institute of Educational Sciences (57%) or Institute of Social Sciences (43%) and the number of dissertations was similarly represented.

The majority of the papers were published at international peer-reviewed journals (56%) whereas only 44% at national peer-reviewed journals. Findings revealed that 82% of the papers were written by either one or two authors. Instead of team work or collaboration, researchers tend to work alone or utmost in groups of two for publishing their papers. This result is supported by Ozan and Köse's (2014) study investigating the research trends in curriculum and instruction field and Saracaloğlu et. al. (2013)'s study exploring the articles on creative thinking in Turkey.

The growth rate in the number of publications about character education per year can be seen obviously when the table on distribution of articles and dissertations according to publication years was investigated. Only 2% of the publications were issued during 2000-2003 period whereas this percentage has rapidly increased after 2008 and became 80% during 2011-2016 period. The findings are in compliance with Merey et.al. (2012) which compares the social studies curriculum of Turkey and the USA, underlying the increase in the number of studies focusing on the values education over the last decades.

The content analysis indicates that 79% of the publications are either research or investigation papers, on the other hand theoretical or compilation papers are only 21%. The reason behind why research and investigation papers were largely preferred might be their straightforward and concrete structure opposed to the complex and abstract structure of theoretical papers as character education is quite related with psychology and philosophy.

In the light of the findings, the distribution of the documents according to their aims points out that measuring perceptions, attitudes and opinions have the highest percentage (45%) followed by literature reviews and documentary analyses (35%), curriculum investigation and evaluation (10%). Researchers tend to focus on investigating or measuring the perceptions, attitudes and opinions of their samples through employing survey method and performing documentary analysis by using qualitative and quantitative techniques. This finding is similar to the studies summarizing researches (Farhoomand and Drury, 1999; Ok, 2009; Fazlıoğulları and Kurul, 2012; Orlikowski and Baroudi, 1991; Ozan and Köse, 2014) done mostly by employing survey model.

The results of the content analysis illustrate that most frequently studied research topic is character and values education. Secondly secondary social studies education and curriculum development topics have been studied similarly. Other topics selected in the articles and dissertations are as follows; values in language and literary texts, citizenship, democracy and human rights education, Turkish language education, ethics and religious education, and first level elementary social studies education. These results are not surprising as the expansion in the field of character education seems to be accelerating after Ministry of National Education's (MoNE) efforts to underline the urgent need of character education. MoNE has adopted a resolution with the educational innovation movement beginning from 2003 by defining values overtly and systematically in curricula of different courses instead of using hidden curriculum (Kaymakcan and Meydan, 2012). In this respect values were integrated into the curriculum of courses like social studies for first (grades 1-3) and second level (4-5,6-7) of elementary education, Turkish language (grades1-5,6-8), science and technology, and media literacy and also connected with goals, objectives, and activities of these courses(MEB, 2004a, MEB, 2004b, MEB, 2006, MEB, 2007, MEB, 2009, MEB, 2009a). In addition to that for music course, only some values were mentioned without connecting with goals and objectives (MEB, 2006a). As a result, in addition to the ethics and religious education, citizenship and democracy education, and counseling courses the aforementioned courses were also given priority in order to implement character education effectively. Findings express that researchers tend to select and study elementary social studies course for both levels after character education related research topics. On the other hand, involving a broader range of age groups and grade levels, it is noteworthy that the number of studies on Turkish language course is fewer. It is also interesting that there are no studies at all about science and technology, media literacy, and music courses even though values were integrated into their curriculum.

Regarding the research methods; 60% of the research studies employed qualitative approach, whereas 31% quantitative approach, and 9% mixed-methods. Findings are contradictory with most of the studies in the field of educational sciences in Turkey, where the frequency of studies employing quantitative approach are higher than qualitative and mixed methods approaches (see 2009, Arık and Türkmen,. 2012; Göktaş et. Al.; Kaleli Yılmaz , 2015; Karadağ, 2010; Selçuk et. al., 2014; Şimşek et.al. 2009). However, results are parallel with Hsu's (2005) content analysis study investigating the research methodologies of articles published at selected educational research journals (AERJ, JEE, JER) from 1971 to 1998, indicating the increase in employing case studies and qualitative research methods.

It is found that descriptive studies (15%) and case studies (7%) have been the most frequently selected research designs under qualitative interactive designs, on the other hand phenomenology, ethnography, action research, critical studies, and grounded theory were less preferred. The most favored research design has been document analysis (27%) under qualitative non-interactive designs, followed by concept and historical analysis. For the quantitative studies, descriptive studies (17%) have been most favored research design under non-experimental designs and relatively small number of researchers preferred quasi-experimental or true-experimental studies. Studies employing mixed methods approach, are mostly utilizing explanatory-confirmatory and triangulation designs rather than exploratory design. It is noteworthy that less theoretical qualitative research designs as descriptive and document analysis studies have outnumbered other qualitative approach based research designs. This result might be interpreted as character education researchers tend to deal with straight descriptions of critical phenomena by descriptive studies and decision making and strategic planning by using document analysis studies.

Analyzing research and investigation articles according to data collection tools indicates that most favored tools are documents (37%), questionnaires (32%) and interviews (22%). More than half of the questionnaires are likert type and the majority of the interviews are semi-structured interviews. Consistent

with the results of the research designs, Turkish character education researchers tend to use qualitative data collection tools as well as questionnaires. The selection of the use of documents and questionnaires enables researchers to be more advantageous about time and efforts than employing other tools, as they are easily accessible, and cost efficient (Baş, 2005).

The results of the content analysis regarding the sample groups show that most frequently studied subjects are course books and literary texts, teachers, primary school students, undergraduate students, secondary school students, managers and lastly parents. Findings are consistent with the data collection tools as documents and research topics as the elementary social studies education are the most favored tools and topics. The least selected sample groups are parents, managers and university instructors that are in compliance with the results of Göktaş et. al. (2012), Selçuk et. al. (2014) and Kurt and Erdoğan's (2015) content analysis on curriculum evaluation research studies.

Regarding the sample sizes, researchers preferred to use sample sizes between 31-100, 301-1000 and 101-300. Thus researchers tend to use moderate number of samples instead of using too small or too big sample sizes. These results are in compliance with Günay and Aydın's (2015) content analysis study on multicultural education in Turkey. The distribution of sampling procedures employed by the researchers demonstrates that purposeful, random and convenient sampling procedures have the highest frequencies. In addition to that classical data collection way was vastly preferred for reaching the targeted sample rather than online and hybrid ways. It is quite interesting that in an information era where Internet, smart phones, and social networks are excessively used, there are very limited number of studies utilizing online data collection. Regarding the number of references utilized in the studies, majority of the dissertations used more 71 references. On the other hand the distribution of the number of references for articles are balanced between 36 and more, 16-25 range, and 25-36 range. Similar results were represented with Selçuk et. al. (2014) about the sample sizes, data collection ways for reaching the sample, sampling procedures, and frequency of references.

The results of the content analysis illustrates that most frequently used data analysis methods are qualitative data analysis methods, followed by quantitative inferential and quantitative descriptive data analysis methods. In quantitative descriptive studies mostly frequency, percentage values and mean and standard deviation values are reported. In articles and dissertations utilizing inferential analyses, often t-tests, ANOVA, and non-parametric tests are applied. On the other hand, regarding qualitative data analysis methods; results reveals that descriptive analysis, content analysis and frequency analysis methods are highly used methods. It is noteworthy that in some qualitative studies data analysis methods were either not mentioned or could not be inferred from the given explanations. A similar finding can be found in Karadağ's (2010) study on methodology parts of dissertations in educational sciences declaring that research designs are not appropriate for objectives, research designs named incorrectly and even designs are not defined at all in some studies that were explained as researchers' inadequacy in research methodology.

To sum up briefly, according to the findings of the research, the dissertations carried out about character and values education are mostly from developed universities like Marmara, Gazi, Atatürk, İnönü, Necmettin Erbakan and Yeditepe Universities. There are more dissertations from elementary education and educational sciences departments dealing with character education. The growth rate in the number of publications about character education per year can be seen obviously especially after the year 2008.

Researchers tend to focus on investigating or measuring the perceptions, attitudes and opinions of their samples and performing documentary analysis by using qualitative and quantitative techniques. And also they tend to select and study elementary social studies course for both levels after character education related research topics. As qualitative studies outnumber quantitative and mixed-methods studies, findings of this study on research methodologies are contradictory with the literature in the field of educational sciences in Turkey, where the frequency of studies employing quantitative approach are higher than qualitative and mixed methods approaches.

Character education researchers tend to deal with straight descriptions of critical phenomena by descriptive studies and decision making and strategic planning by using document analysis studies. Most favored tools are documents, questionnaires, and interviews and most frequently studied subjects are course books and literary texts, teachers, primary school students. The distribution of sampling procedures

employed by the researchers demonstrates that purposeful, random and convenient sampling procedures have the highest frequencies.

Lastly although there were no similar studies that fitted into the scope of the current study abroad, it may be claimed that Turkish and foreign researchers observed similar issues while searching methodological parts of the studies within different fields.

In the light of to the aforementioned findings, some suggestions for researchers in the field of character and values education might be listed as;

• to focus on developing some solutions for the problems and issues related with the field by using various qualitative research designs or mixed methods

• to try to catch the global and national trends and movements by employing meta-analysis and content analysis studies

• to select different sample groups involving parents, school managers, teacher educators, and policy makers

• to employ random sampling for highly representative and more diverse subject populations

• to focus on different strategies of character education implementations in and out of the class and curriculum investigation and evaluation studies

• to search for techniques of integrating values into different subject matters

This study might be extended to include papers published in international research journals and dissertations from all over the world to make more valid comparisons.

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