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ScienceDirect

Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences 9 (2010) 869–873

Procedia
Social and Behavioral Sciences

WCLTA 2010

Determining reading interests and habits of candidate teachers (TRNC Sample)

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to investigate reading habits and interests of students in the faculties of education. The study is a descriptive undertaking in the scanning model. The sample of the study was chosen from students studying in universities in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Determined by the convenience sampling method, a total of 317 students with 62.80% girls (n=199) and 37.20% boys (n=118) constitute the population of the study. "Reading Interests Scale (RIS)" and "Reading Habit Questionnaire Adults Form (RHQ-A) that were developed by Dökmen (1994) and personal information form were used as a data collecting tool. In the analysis of the data, f-test, t-test, Chi-square test and Scheffe techniques were used. The level of statistical significance was accepted as .05 in the study. As a result of the research, it was determined that reading interests of the students are at medium level ($\bar{x}$ =59.675±8.687) and it was determined that there is a meaningful differentiation according to gender (t=2.876; p<.05) and socio economic level (F=8.173; p<.05). In addition reading habit of the students was determined very low. In this context, requirement of development of reading habits and interest of the students was determined.
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Keywords: Reading interest, reading habits, university student, TRNC;

1. Introduction

Today, rapid development of educational technologies lead to construction of information societies (Alkharusi, H. 2010). Thus "Information" has become the focus of economic development of the modern societies (Tezer, M., & Bicen, H. 2008). Moreover six or seven thousand essays have been published in a day and information is multiplied in five and a half year time (Aşkar, 1992:209). Rapid renovation of information affects education systems directly and it requires training individuals who can adapt to 21st century. Information societies need individuals who can reach information, easily, contribute their production by using information that they reach, who have gained the power of doing analysis and linking, and the habit of evaluation systems have to train individuals who have qualities that are expressed. Reading rate of people who read regularly, between 16 and 21, decreased to 63% in 1983 from 75% when it is compared to 1978. So, analyzing university students' reading habits became necessary. Especially the quality of reading habits and interests of candidate teachers has vital importance in order to be a good example for pupils and teenagers. Thus determining reading habits and interests of university students is seen required in

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1877-0428 © 2010 Published by Elsevier Ltd.
doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.12.251

order to develop the characteristics that are expressed and make suggestions about this subject it is thought that results of this research will give clues in determining characteristics of today's effective teachers. The main aim of this study is to determine factors that affect reading interests and habits of candidate teachers who study in TRNC. In order to reach the goal answers were sought for these sub-questions. "Do reading interest scores of candidate teachers differentiate according to their departments that they study, gender and socio-economic levels? "what are the characteristics about reading habits of candidate teachers.

2. Method

2.1. Universe and Sample

Students of education faculty who study at the universities of TRNC were taken as the universe of the research. Total 317 candidate teachers who were selected with the convenient sampling method among the students of one of the private universities in TRNC construct the sample of the research. 62.8% (n=199) of them are female and 37.2% (n=118) are male. The sample includes students from Turkish (n=70) and special education (n=27). Volunteer students took place in the sample during the classes at the time in research was carried out.

2.2 Data Collecting Tools

"Reading Interests Scale ", "reading Habit Questionnaire" developed by Dökmen (1994) and personal information form that consists of 3 questions were used as a data collecting tool. Attendants' reading interests were measured by "Reading Interests Scale." (RIS). The measurement tool is a five-level Likert type scale that consists of 20 items. Total score that an informant gets from each of the items of the scale is the total scale that the informant gets from RIS. Reliability coefficient of the scale is r =.78. Reading Habits Questionnaire is a tool that consists of 17 items.

2.3 Analysis of the Data

SPSS 12 package was used to analyze the data. In accordance with the aim of the study percentage, x^2, one-way variance analysis (ANOVA), t-test, and Scheffe meaningfulness test were applied. Significance level was taken as .05.

3. Findings and Interpretation

This part includes findings and interpretations that belong to the question of the research and sub-questions. When the results of the research were analyzed it is seen that the highest reading interest score mean belongs to students who study English Language Teaching ($\overline{x}$=61.96) and the lowest reading interest score mean belongs to students who study Guidance and Counseling ($\overline{x}$=57.94). As a result of one –way variance (ANOVA) analysis difference among means was not meaningful. According to this, it can be said that reading habits have similar characteristics according to departments. These findings are supported by the researches carried out with different groups who are graduates and bachelors (La Bonty, 1990, 1991; Jipson and Pavley, 1992; Mokhtari and Sheorey, 1994; Dökmen, 1994; Saracaloğlu, Bozkurt and Serin, 2003).

In the study reading interest score means of females was found as $\overline{x}$=61.216 and males' were found as 58.355. t-test was applied in order to determine whether there is a meaningful differentiation among score means of reading interest according to gender variable. Statistical meaningful differentiation was determined in the scores of reading interest according to gender variable (t=2.876 p>.05). This situation is in favor of female candidate teachers. It can

be said Females have higher reading interest accordingly. The study at hand is parallel to studies of Stone and Wu (1993), Saracaloğlu, Bozkurt and Serin (2003) and their studies support our research.

Attendants who expressed their socio-economic level was low got the highest reading interest score mean and attendants who expressed their socio economic level was high got the lowest score mean. As a result of one way variance analysis it was determined that difference among means was statistically meaningful (F=8.173 p<.001). As a result of Scheffe meaningfulness test that is applied in order to determine groups that cause differentiation, it was determined that differentiation derived from candidate teacher who expressed their socio-economic level as lover intermediate and low. This differentiation is in favor of candidate teachers who expressed their socio economic level as low. As a result reading interests change according to socio-economic level and this result and findings of Dökmen (1994) support each other. But study at hand and results of researches of Decker (1985); Saracaloğlu Bozkurt and Serin (2003) are contradictive.

Students' answers about 7 genres in item "What kind of genres do you read in your spare time except courses?" and their percentages were given in Table 1 (n=317). When it was determined how often candidate teachers read various materials and ordered, it was determined that candidate teachers read "various magazines", "art books", "newspapers", "cultural books", "humor magazine", "scientific books", this finding is similar to many research findings. (Smithies, 1983; Burley et al. 1984; LaBonty, 1990; Blackwood et al. 1991; Andrews, 1992; Russikoff and Pilgreen, 1994; Sheorey and Mokhtari, 1994; Zhimming, 2000)

Table 1. genres that university students read (n=317)

Genre	Never		Partially		Adequate		Very much		Empty	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Newspaper	29	9.1	100	31.5	110	34.7	59	18.6	19	6.0
Humor	51	16.1	119	37.5	91	28.7	51	16.1	5	1.6
Science and technology	62	19.6	120	37.9	82	25.9	41	12.9	12	3.8
Various magazines	41	12.9	78	24.6	110	34.7	88	27.8	-	-
Art books	45	14.2	87	27.4	95	30.0	62	19.6	28	8.8
Cultural books	60	18.9	102	32.2	88	27.8	53	16.7	14	4.4
Scientific books	57	18.0	112	35.3	95	30.0	40	12.6	13	4.1

x^2 test was applied in order to find differentiation of genres that was read by students according to gender. It was determined that reading newspaper (x^2 =4.425 p=.371), humor magazine (x^2=4.770 p=.168), science and technology magazines (x^2=3.346 p=.502) various magazines (x^2=9.060 p=.059), art books (x^2=.884 p=.933), cultural books (x^2=2.111 p=.720) and scientific books do not differentiate according to gender. When students' reading types analyzed according to socio-economic variable, reading humor magazines (x^2=29.527 p=.021*) and cultural books (x^2=29.527 p=.021*) differentiate significantly and this results is in favor of candidate teachers who expressed they in low socio-economic level. Reading habits of deaf students who go on their education after high school was found analyzed and they read 10 books per year, 4,1 magazines per month, 6,4 newspaper per week. (Braden 1986). Also it was determined that Chinese students read 4 books per month (Zhiming. 2000). In the research that was carried out by Nell (1988) on English and South African university students who are called "Ludic Readers", it was determined that they read average 17 books per month and all students read average 5,7 books per mount. (Dökmen, 1994) The average 2,1 per month that students can read in this study is very low when it is compared to the study of Nell whose average book was 5,7 in addition there is no student of our country told he reads 17 books per mount. This reminds; possibility that Nell's (1988) informants could take fast reading course on they could preferred books that took their interest. Maybe it can be thought that candidate teachers have not get fast reading course or they do not spend adequate time for reading.

18.6% (n=59) of the students answered as "I read adequately" and 48.9 (n=155) of them answered as "not enough" to the question "Do you read adequately?" In addition to this 32.5% (n=103) of them answered as "partially". Reasons for not reading adequately can be ordered according to their significance level as follows preferring watching TV, chatting with friends is more attractive, being tired, not having spare time high cost of books. In this study almost half f the students expressed that they could not read adequately. In the study of McNinch and Steelman (1990) candidates describe themselves as individuals who read rarely. In another research students are lack of effective habit and attitude. (Olson and Gillis, 1983) When the candidate teachers who describe

themselves they do not read adequately were asked why they could not read adequately, they indicate that “they prefer watching TV instead of reading” and “They are tired”. Students that analyze the relation between amount of watching TV and reading success show they have a negative correlation. Williams et al. (1982), for example, reached the result that if the amount of watching TV, reading success has sharp decrease and watching TV over 10 hours has a negative relation with reading success. And some other researches show that watching TV effects reading habit in a negative way (Bossing and Burgess, 1984; Decker, 1985; Zehr. 1986; Timbs. 1993; Zhiming, 2000; Saracaloğlu, Bozkurt, and Serin, 2003).

It was concluded in a research that students who watch TV 5000 hours in the first grade will spend more time for TV than the school when he become 18 (Finn, 1980). In some researches (Tipaldi, 1999; Zhiming, 2000) preferences of the students were given in this order: watching TV, and playing computer games; another research (Voorhees, 1993) showed that students prefer doing sports rather than reading books. According to this, teenagers prefer watching TV, using computer, and doing physical activities instead of reading book.

According to the study of Dökmen (1988) the reasons for not reading a book for students are "high cost of books", "not having spare time except lessons and work". this situation is interpreted as students do not see watching TV as an obstacle. In another study, reasons for not reading adequately for the eighth grade students are indicated as "they are too busy and they do not have time" and "they prefer physical activity rather than passive reading" (Tipaldi, 1999). although findings contradict to each other it cannot denied that television is in our lives wholly.

Percentage of books that students read without paying is like this: 34.7% (n=110) of the candidate teachers borrow books from their friends, 25.6% (n=81) of them borrow from the library of the university, 24.3% (n=77) of them borrow from National Library, 4.4 (n=14) of them borrow from mobile library, and 11.0% (n=35) of them borrow from other sources. The way of students from whom they have learnt how to benefit from the library is interesting. 16.1% (n=51) of the students said that they have learnt from a teacher, 9.1% (n=29) of them have learnt from guidance teacher, 27.1% (n=86) of them have learnt from the library officer, and 43.8 (n=139) of them said that they have learnt by themselves. 3.8% (n=12) of the attendants indicated that they haven't been to a library. The result of 43.8% of the candidate teachers have learnt utilizing from the library by themselves and 9.1% of them have learnt from their teachers reminds us the question "How much do we meet our duties?"

4. Results and suggestions

This research that aims to determine candidate teachers reading interests and habits shows that students' reading interests differentiate according to gender and socio-economic level. It showed departments do not differentiate reading interests. In addition candidate teachers read various magazines, art books and newspapers more. Half of the candidate teachers that reads average 1-2 books in a month do not see themselves adequate and a quarter of them see themselves adequate. Candidate teachers showed watching TV, chatting with the friends, being tired as reasons for not reading. Candidate teachers provide a huge amount of the books except buying from their friends. University library and national library follow this. Almost half of the candidate teachers stated that they have learnt utilizing from the library by themselves. As a result, it is determined that a huge number of the candidate teachers' reading interests are "average" and they do not have enough reading habits. Unfortunately, this result is supported by various researches (Hodges and Nash, 1982; Burden et al., 1984; LaBonty, 1990; 1991; McCoy et al., 1991; Andrews, 1992; Meyer, 1993; Timbs, 1993; Saracaloğlu, Bozkurt and Serin, 2003).

Through the findings of the researches suggestions below can be developed:

- In order to develop reading interests and habits of candidate teachers: reading problems should be determined, reading habits should be gained to them with the techniques and strategies that are stated in the literature.
- University and faculty libraries should be enriched and they should be functional.
- In order to increase reading interests of candidate teachers "Reading Days", "Book Festivals" etc. can be held.

- In order to develop all candidate teachers' reading habits and skills, at least two books can be given in the course "Reading Writing Well" and the job of finding analyzing two research essays can be given them.
- In order to encourage reading and research, lecturers can direct students to read at least two essays in each semester.
- University libraries can organize activities to encourage reading. For instance, the name of the teenager who reads book the most in a month or year can be announced on the board (the most book reader of ...month.../2010 is .....); or they can be given free concert, theatre, cinema tickets etc.

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