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## Research topic selection of academics in Turkish music state conservatory

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the opinions of academics in Turkish music state conservatory about selection of topics to research. Phenomenological design was used while investigating opinions of academics about selection of topics to research. Study was conducted with 6 academics in conservatory in Ankara. "Research Topic Selection Interview Form" was used in order to investigate opinions of academics about selection of topics to research. Data was analyzed with content analysis. According to the findings; 3 categories were found for problems that can be encountered while selecting research topic. 5 categories were found for obstacles that can be encountered while selecting research topic. 9 categories were found for the factors of study that are effective while selecting research topic. 8 categories were for the individual factors that are effective while selecting research topic. 4 categories were found for the environmental factors that are effective while selecting research topic. 5 categories were found for the factors that are helpful while selecting research topic.

Keywords: Conservatory; research topic; selection, academics.

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## **1. Introduction**

Universities are one of the organizations that pioneer for social change and they are influencing the society with their research. This effect is achieved by using existing information and producing new information. Thus, universities maintain the importance of being a science center (Kurgun, 2006).

Scientific information does not arise indiscriminately. Relationships between events and concepts can be obtained through systematic knowledge acquisition process. The other name of the process of obtaining systematic information is research. The research is also to collect, group, analyze, interpret, evaluate and report the data in a planned and systematic manner in order to produce solutions to the problems encountered (Buyukozturk, 1994).

In general, academicians are expected to make researches and present findings outside the teaching profession (Kitapci, 2002). It is known that publications in our country are generally made by academicians. Academicians are expected to pay attention to the progress of the scientific method when conducting research. The steps of the scientific method can be explained as follows:

- The problem is that the researcher sees a problem that exists and is disturbing him about a certain topic.
- The definition of the problem is the description of the nature of the multidimensional relationships observed by other problems or events.
- Estimating solution proposals involves developing recommendations for solution of the problem and determining appropriate solution proposals for testing.
- The development of the research methodology is to determine how the solution proposals will be tested.
- The collection and analysis of the data is the next step. Using the tools described in the method, the collected data are analyzed using appropriate techniques.
- Deciding on the solution proposal according to the results of the analysis and interpreting the results are the last stage of the scientific method (Buyukozturk, Cakmak, Akgun, Karadeniz & Demirel, 2012).

As mentioned above, before starting a research, various factors should be considered together with regard to the topic to be investigated, like the environmental, and the individual factors. These are all factors that need to be considered in determining the research topic. These can be considered as two main groups under the general and special factors. When considering the level, necessity and novelty of research under the general factors heading, individual and environmental factors are considered under the heading of special factors (Tuncel, 2001). So the purpose of this study is to investigate the opinions of academics in Turkish music state conservatory about selection of topics to research.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1. Research Model**

Phenomenological design was used while investigating opinions of academics about selection of topics to research. These type of designs aims to investigate phenomenologies that we don't realize well in our mind (Yildirim & Simsek, 2011).

### **2.2. Population and sample**

The sample of the study was determined by convenience sampling method. This method gives researchers speed and practicality, and researchers select the state which close and easy to access (Yildirim & Simsek, 2011). Study was conducted with 6 academics in conservatory in Ankara.

**Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the participants**

Variable	Groups	n
Seniority	1-5 years	2
	6-10 years	2
	16 years and over	2
Title	Lecturer	2
	Assistant professor	3
	Associate professor	1

### 2.3. Instruments

“Research Topic Selection Interview Form” prepared by researchers was used in order to investigate opinions of academics about selection of topics to research. Two academicians reviewed interview form and in accordance with their recommendations, logical and language, errors were corrected.

Following questions were asked to the participants:

- What are the problems that you encounter while selecting research topic?
- What are the obstacles that you encounter while selecting research topic?
- What are the factors of study that are effective while selecting research topic?
- What are the individual factors that are effective while selecting research topic?
- What are the environmental factors that are effective while selecting research topic?
- What are the factors that are helpful while selecting research topic?

### 3. Analyses

Data was analyzed with content analysis. Content analysis reveals codes and categories from the raw data (Patton, 2002). For validity and reliability, data analysis process was explained in detail; interpretation of the data involved the participants’ own direct statements (Ratcliff, 1995).

### 4. Findings

Data obtained with semi-structured interview form was analyzed and findings are as follows:

**Table 2. Problems that can be encountered while selecting research topic**

		Participants					
		P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6
Categories	Time	✓	✓	✓	✓		
	Insufficient funding	✓	✓	✓			
	Workload			✓	✓		

3 categories were found in content analysis. «time» was repeated four times and «workload» was repeated twice. Fifth and sixth participants said nothing about this question. The statements of participants were as follows:

*P2: "The problem that I encounter most is the time while selecting the research topic. I am working in a conservatory and So I don't have time to research. Insufficient funding is an important issue in the choice of research topic."*

*P4: "I think the most important problem is time. We have a lot of workload and it is not possible to carry out researches, during working hours. This brings the obligation to work at home and negatively affects social life."*

**Table 3. Obstacles that can be encountered while selecting research topic**

		Participants					
		P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6
Categories	The cultural structure of society		✓		✓		
	Ideological obstacles		✓				
	Lack of sources	✓		✓	✓		
	Instutional obstacles			✓	✓		
	Limitation process of study						✓

5 categories were found in content analysis. «lack of sources» was repeated three times and «ideological obstacles and limitation process of study» were repeated once. Fifth participant said nothing about this question. The statements of participants were as follows:

*P1: "Lack of sources is an obstacle to the select of research topic. "*

*P4: "Institution management can be effective in selecting subjects in some cases. This negativity usually occurs about relationship between management and staff. "*

**Table 4. The factors of study that are effective while selecting research topic**

	Participants					
	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6
Necessity of study		✓		✓		
Being scientific	✓					
Being a pattern	✓					
Content of study	✓			✓		
Significance of study			✓			
Feasibility of study				✓		
Importance of study			✓			
Generalizability of study			✓			
Originality of study			✓	✓		✓

9 categories were found in content analysis. «originality of study» was repeated three times and «necessity and content of study» were repeated twice. Other categories were repeated once. Fifth participant said nothing about this question. The statements of participants were as follows:

*P3: "Significance, originality, generalizability, importance of study affect the selection of research topic."*

*P6: "The originality of the study may be influential in the selection of the research topic."*

**Table 5. The individual factors that are effective while selecting research topic**

		Participants					
		P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6
Categories	Scientific competence		✓	✓	✓		✓
	Economic competence		✓				
	Readiness of researcher	✓	✓	✓		✓	
	Interest			✓		✓	
	Sufficiency of time			✓			
	Working discipline				✓	✓	
	Individual effort					✓	
	Cultural background						✓

8 categories were found in content analysis. «scientific competence and readiness of researcher» was repeated four times. The statements of participants were as follows:

*P2: "The most effective factor in the selection of research is the scientific competence or the readiness of the researcher. Economic competence is also important for the process of the study or the result."*

*P6: "The researcher's scientific background and cultural background may be influential in selecting the research topic. "*

*P5: "In order to be able to make the selection of the research topic, it is necessary to have some experience in the area. The individual effort and working discipline of the researcher is very important for the selection of research topic. "*

**Table 6. The environmental factors that are effective while selecting research topic**

		Participants					
		P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6
Categories	Equipment		✓				
	Literature about study	✓		✓	✓		✓
	Tools that can be used to analyse data			✓			
	Possibilities to reach literature about study				✓		

4 categories were found in content analysis. «literature about study» was repeated four times and others were repeated once. Fifth participant said nothing about this question. The statements of participants were as follows:

*P4: "The most important environmental factors are the literature about study and the possibilities to reach them "*

*P6: "The ease and difficulty of accessing sources related to the research topic can be effective in selecting the research topic "*

**Table 7. The factors that are helpful while selecting research topic**

		Participants					
		P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6
Categories	Theories		✓	✓	✓		
	Previous researches	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
	Daily life	✓		✓			✓
	Applications			✓	✓		
	Interviews with experts			✓			

5 categories were found in content analysis. «previous researches» was repeated five times and «interviews with experts» was repeated once. The statements of participants were as follows:

*P2: "The most important factors in selecting research topic is theories and previous researches. "*

*P5: "Researching is a curiosity. You need to look at every previous source that can connect to the new research. "*

*P6: "In the selection of research topic, the accumulation of life and science is important. "*

## **5. Results, Conclusions and Recommendations**

According to findings; 3 categories were found for problems that can be encountered while selecting research topic «Time» was repeated four times and «workload» was repeated twice. Academics are required to attend classes and workloads are increasing and they cannot find time to do research.

5 categories were found for obstacles that can be encountered while selecting research topic «lack of sources» was repeated three times and «ideological obstacles and limitation process of study» were repeated once. Academics may express the lack of human and material resources and the difficulty in limiting the subject and the ideological obstacles that they cannot even do research. They must have financial resources that can cover transport, accommodation, laboratory analysis and stationery expenses.

9 categories were found for the factors of study that are effective while selecting research topic.«originality of study» was repeated three times and «necessity and content of study» were repeated twice. Other categories were repeated once. Academics may says it should be new as research, method, subject or work place. It is often expected in scientific studies to try a new approach, a different method, during the research.

8 categories were for the individual factors that are effective while selecting research topic.«scientific competence and readiness of researcher» was repeated four times. Academics may consider that individual should primarily have a general scientific approach and scientific method knowledge and there is also a need for a thorough knowledge of the research that has already been done in this area.

4 categories were found for the environmental factors that are effective while selecting research topic. «literature about study» was repeated four times and others were repeated once. 5 categories were found for the factors that are helpful while selecting research topic. «previous researches» was repeated five times and «interviews with experts» was repeated once. Academics may think there is also a need for a thorough knowledge of the researches that has already been done in this area. This research can be investigated with different methods and samples and reasons of findings can searched. Other variables that affect selection of research topic may be investigated.



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