

## Research Trends in Early Childhood Education Graduate Theses: A Content Analysis

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**Abstract :** The importance of research in early childhood education is growing all around the world. This study aims to investigate research trends in graduate theses written in Turkey in the area of early childhood education. Descriptive, contextual and methodological aspects of graduate theses were analyzed to investigate the trends. A sample of the study consisted of 1000 graduate theses (n= 1000) including both MS theses and Ph.D. dissertations. Theses and dissertations were obtained from the thesis database of Council of Higher Education (CoHE). An investigation form was developed by the researcher to analyze graduate theses. The investigation forms validated by expert opinion from early childhood education department. To enhance the reliability of the investigation form, inter-coder agreement was measured by Cohen's Kappa value (.86). Data were gathered via using the investigation form, and content analysis method was used to analyze the data. Results of the analysis were presented by descriptive statistics and frequency tables. Analysis of the study is on-going and preliminary results of the study show that master theses related to early childhood education have started to be written in 1986, and the number of the theses has increased gradually. In most of the studies, sample group consisted of children especially in between 5-6 age group. Child development, activities (applied in daily curriculum of preschools) and teaching methods are the mostly examined concepts in graduate theses. Qualitative and quantitative research methods were referred equally by researchers in these theses.

**Keywords :** content analysis, early childhood education, graduate thesis, research trends

**Conference Title :** ICECEEDI 2016 : International Conference on Early Childhood Education and Effective Designing Instructions

**Conference Location :** Paris, France

**Conference Dates :** October 24-25, 2016