

ANALYZING THE APPROPRIATE REALIZATION LEVEL OF COMENIUS PROJECTS IN TERMS OF SOME VARIABLES BASED ON TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS

Mevlüt AYDOĞMUŞ, Prof. Dr. Ali Murat SÜNBÜL

Necmettin Erbakan University

Yenişehir Mah, Dr. Hulusi Baykal Cad. No: 12 Kat:25, Karatay, 42060 Konya Turkey
mevlutaydogmusq@hotmail.com, a_sunbul@hotmail.com

ABSTRACT- Note: This is an abstract of Mevlüt AYDOĞMUŞ master's thesis, which was done under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Ali Murat SÜNBÜL at Necmettin Erbakan University, Institute of Educational Sciences. The aim of this research is to analyse the appropriate realization level of Comenius Projects in terms of some variables based on teachers' perceptions. In this research some questions about Comenius program asked to the teachers who carried out Comenius projects in Konya Province and the results have been analysed in terms of some variables. Also, literature research has been carried out about EU and Comenius Program which is part of EU Education Program and previous researches have been investigated. A survey has been used as a tool in order to collect data. Online survey has been used because the number of the participant is very high and geographically distributed. In order to receive the views of the teachers on Comenius program the survey was sent to the participants and totally 176 feedbacks received. At the end of the research continuous increase on the number of the application to the program has been observed. The teachers who have already taken part in Comenius Project thinks that Comenius Projects develops the teamwork among the students, Comenius Projects are effective on developing language skills of the students and skills of using ICT, Comenius projects makes positive contribution on views of the foreigners on our country. They think that by means of the project had opportunity to know different cultures.

Key Words: European Union, Lifelong Learning, Comenius

I. INTRODUCTION

European Union Education and Youth Programs aim to increase level of education; to combat against social exclusion, xenophobia, racism and prejudice; to improve the understanding among European People; to environment of working together and to strengthening European Dimension by means of partnerships and activities based intercultural dialogue and working together

The components of Lifelong Learning Program are Comenius in which from preschool to the faculties of education the institutions and individuals can benefit, Erasmus which covers the higher education, Grundtvig which is for adult education and Leonardo da Vinci which is for vocational education.

Comenius Programme, in the general sense, covers school education up to higher education. In this phase of education it aims the cooperation of the institutions, teachers and students in the field of education by means of cultural exchanges; it aims to encourage foreign language learning and to acquire the basic skills necessary for personal development.

Additionally, Comenius Programme contributes to promote development of awareness of different cultures, to develop intercultural education initiatives in the sector school education, to support the of fight against xenophobia, racism.

Comenius school partnerships give opportunity of working together to teachers and students from different countries on one or more topics in the common interest. Some of the partnerships focus

Some partnerships focus on the students' active participation; others are focused on training and mainly pedagogical or school issues and require the participation of teachers and administrative staff. Some of the Comenius school partnerships focus on language learning and gives opportunity to the participants to use their foreign languages and to develop them. These partnerships also increase the participants motivation to learn languages.

II. RELATED RESEARCHES

Gülsen (2008) in her study named as "The views of school administrators on the effectiveness of European Union Comenius programme school partnership projects" presents the views of school administrators and teachers on the effectiveness of European Union Comenius Programme School Partnership projects. The representative model of the research consists of 168 participants who are administrators, coadministrators and teachers working in projects and schools that carried out School Partnership projects between 2004-2006 school years. In this study it has been confirmed that views concerning the effectiveness of Comenius Programme School partnership projects do not differ according to position, gender, school level or former project experience. However, it has been set out that views on the effectiveness of the projects vary in relation to school type (state, private) and to the number of project partner countries.

Dilekli (2008) analysed the effects of the implemented Comenius Projects on education staff, students and courses, which is one of group of the general education program applied in the frame of the EU adaptation process. He used qualitative research technique in order to measure the effects of the projects on participants and found that projects contributed to participants' planned working abilities, foreign language competencies, helped the participants' ability to use Internet Communication Technology (ICT), to learn new approaches and techniques in education and activities of the

projects strengthen the relationship between students and teachers; and also managers and the teachers.

Bahadır (2007) in his study named as “The opinions of the school administrators and teachers on what level they can benefit from comenius projects” reached that the primary and secondary school teachers and administrators think that their personal and professional development progress in case they are involved in a Comenius Project and think that Comenius projects increase the intercultural development of education and support the development of the education system.

European Commission, DG Education and Culture (2007) in the report named as “Impact of the Comenius School Partnerships on the participant schools” Comenius schools partnerships’s impact on teaching quality of the school and the contribution fo the participating school into European Dimension was investigated. In this study it was observed that the school coordinators thinks that Comanius program is quite useful tool and it makes a positive impact on the participating teachers and students. But, the institutional impact is limited only with life of the project and it dissapperan with leave of the participating teachers and students.

III. THE AIM OF THE STUDY

Hundereds of schools from in Turkey have taken part in Comenius projects as coordinator or partner. Every year thousands of teachers or stdents go abroad, in the same way thousands of teachers and students from European countries come to Turkey. This research has been realized in order to

analyse the appropriate realization level of Comenius Projects in terms of some variables based on teachers’ perceptions.

IV. PROBLEM STATEMENT

According to the teacher’s perception to what extent Comenius Projects are realized for its purposes.

A. Sub-Problems

1. What are the views of the teachers for Comenius projects?
2. According to the teachers’ view to what extent Comenius projects realized for its aim?
3. According to the school types what are the teachers’ views?
4. According to the residential area what are the teachers’ views about Comenius projects?
5. According to the level of the schools what are the teachers’ views about Comenius projects?

B. Method Of The Research

In this study relational comparative screening model has been used. Screening model is a research approach which aims to describe as it is a situation existed in the past or still existing (Karasar, 2005). In this research appropriate realization level Comenius projects based on teachers’ perception has been analyzed.

C. Subjects

The subjects of the research are 176 teachers who carried out Comenius projects or already running projects. Teachers from state schools and private schools have taken part in the research.

Table-1: The participants

		Frequency	%
Residential area	City Center	114	64,8
	District	34	19,3
	Town	20	11,4
	Village	8	4,5
The Kind of schools	Kindergarten	19	10,8
	Primary	95	54
	Secondary	48	27,3
	Vocational secondary	10	5,7
	Other	4	2,3
Type of schools	Private	19	10,8
	Public	157	89,2
Project Status	Still On-going	65	36,9
	Finished	111	63,1
Role in the project	Coordinator	47	26,7
	Partner	129	73,3
Educational Status	Undergraduate Degree	148	84,1
	Master Degree	25	14,2
	PhD	3	1,7
Years of Experience	1-5	7	4
	6-10	47	26,7
	11-15	51	29
	16-20	32	18,2
	More than 20	39	22,2
Age	20-29	27	15,3
	30-39	81	46
	40-49	55	31,3
	50-59	13	7,4
	60 or more	-	-

V. TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION

The data collected under two sections. In the first section the participants are asked 31 demographic questions like the type of the school, the status of the project etc. In the second section in order to identify their perception a questionnaire has been implemented. This questionnaire has two sections. The first section is about project preparation period and the second one is about project implementation period. The first section includes 20 items and the second section includes 45 items. The views of the participants has been received by means of a likert type which includes "I Totally Agree", "I agree", "I have no idea", "I disagree", "I totally disagree"

VI. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

In order to describe the views of the participants arithmetic averages and standart deviations of the points of the items related to "Comenius Project Preparation Period" and "Comenius Project Implementation Period". In order to decide if there is differences in the views of the participants in terms of school types independent t test has been used and in terms of residential area and the kind of the school variance analyses has been used.

VII. RESULT

The participant teachers give very highly positive views about Comenius Project implementation. A raise on the number of the projects is observed in the years. High portion of the projects (64,8 %) are implemented in the city center. 54 % of the projects are implemented in primary schools. 89,2 % of the projects implemented by the public schools. 73,3 % of the schools take part as partner in the projects.

The participant teachers think that the project increases teamwork among the students, has positive impact on developing language skills, on the skills of using ICT tools. The projects make positive contribution to the foreign partners' ideas about Turkey. They think that through the project they have chance to explore new cultures. They advise their colleagues to take place in the similar projects. They think that by means of Comenius Projects they have chance to observe different implementation related to their work and the projects make positive contribution their vocational life. Also, they think that the projects increases their entrepreneurship for developing new projects.

The participant teacher has negative perceptions related to the participation of the parents into the projects, other neighbouring schools' awareness for the projects, procedures related to passport, visa and other formalities.

VIII. DISCUSSION

This study has been carried out in the Province of Konya in Turkey. The views of the teachers who carried out Comenius projects or who has taken part in the project team of the schools has been collected. This research has been realized in order to analyse the appropriate realization level of Comenius Projects in terms of some variables based on teachers' perceptions. In this connection the participant teachers give very highly positive views about the implementation of such projects. In different studies related to

the EU project similar findings have been reached. The study by the Center for European Union Education and Youth Programmes (2008 ve 2009) shows that the participants increase their experiences. The study by Haspolat ve Kılıç (2007) mention that the projects make contributions to the personal development of the teachers and personal development of the students. Aydoğan ve Şahin (2006) mentions that the project increases the language learning motivation and eliminates the bias for different cultures.

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To ensure geographic diversity required activities should be carried out. Local awareness raising activities and educational programs in the villages and districts should be carried out.
2. The schools should be encouraged to do projects in order to ensure the school type diversity in the projects. The priorities which are given by the Center for European Union Education and Youth Programmes should be removed
3. The schools should be encouraged to be coordinator in the projects and educational programs should be organized about project drafting, project cycle management.
4. Active participation of the students, parents and other local community will enriched the project preparation period.
5. The teachers' motivation for the project preparation should be increased and the teachers who prepare project should be financially supported.
6. Internet based educational materials and systems should be developed in order to reach the disadvantaged geographical areas.

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