

EVALUATION OF CLASSROOM TEACHERS' VIEWS ON CHANGES TO TEXTBOOKS

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ABSTRACT

Textbooks are one of the indispensable tools of education today. Change and renewal are also essential in our era. In the information society, to keep up with the times and not fall behind, textbooks must constantly change and develop. Textbooks must also be changed and renewed in this period.

This research sought the opinions of teachers regarding the change in textbooks. 24 volunteer teachers working in Northern Cyprus in 2024-2025 participated in the research. The research was conducted using a semi-structured interview method, one of the qualitative research methods. In addition to their personal information, teachers were asked 3 open-ended questions.

This research found that textbooks need to be renewed due to curriculum changes, that textbooks should be changed every five years and that teachers want to change textbooks due to exercises and activities.

Keywords: Textbook changes, teacher

Change is innovation. The concept of change and transformation encompasses the totality of alterations within a time period and a transition to another form. At the most general level, change is a temporal phenomenon; it is the state of something appearing in a different condition (Ford and Ford, 1995). Today, because technology is developing so rapidly, change is inevitable. Societies that fail to keep up with change stagnate and cannot develop. Keeping up with the times, adapting to the era, is a necessity of change. There are many internal and external factors affecting the field of education. These interact with each other and ultimately shape the field. Therefore, when addressing the problems of the education system, it is necessary to have a close understanding of the effects of these factors on the system. On the other hand, it should also be noted that most problem areas in education show continuity from the past to the present (Baloğlu, 1990). Textbooks should also be revised and continuously updated to suit our times. Although teaching technologies and teaching materials have diversified and improved greatly in our era, textbooks remain indispensable. Textbooks have long been one of the fundamental tools used to ensure success in education (Seguin, 1989). Textbooks are 'critical' tools for both learners and teachers in terms of the curriculum's target behaviors, content, teaching situations, participation in learning, measurement, and evaluation dimensions (Kılıç and Seven, 2002). In a sense, a textbook is a fundamental resource approved by a specific institution and parallel to the curriculum for teaching a subject at a certain level (Gülersoy, 2013).

The aims and functions of textbooks can be listed as: structuring and developing learning, guiding learning, contributing to self-learning, and assisting in measurement and evaluation. Indeed, when examining the content of textbooks, they generally provide general information on the subject through aims and introductions. Accordingly, they develop the unit and structure learning. Finally, they organize information, guide learning, and include measurement and evaluation activities. In summary, the functions of textbooks are to present information in an organized manner, facilitate self-learning, coordinate learning, and contribute to measurement and evaluation (Ceyhan and Yiğit, 2004).

Textbooks must be prepared with high quality in terms of purpose, function, and content, and written meticulously according to specific criteria. The process of preparing, producing, and distributing textbooks is complex, long-term, and requires significant financial investment. The textbook preparation process necessitates effective academics, education experts, and publishing managers, along with functional planning and organization (Seguin, 1989). Furthermore, textbooks must meet specific criteria in terms of content and format. The following points should be considered when preparing an ideal textbook: Firstly, a comprehensive bibliography and content review,

obtaining opinions from relevant institutions, and having textbooks prepared by experts are essential (Gülersoy, 2013). Secondly, evaluation based on variables such as language used, suitability for student level, format, attractiveness, contribution to meaningful learning, and ease of use in teaching is also necessary (Küçükahmet, 2016).

Textbooks can be examined from various perspectives. Generally, books are analyzed in terms of form, scope and content, teaching principles, techniques, methods, and strategies. In addition, the presence of preparation and assessment questions is also considered (Duman, Karakaya, Çakmak, Eray, and Özkan, 2001). Accordingly, it is generally accepted that textbooks are examined in terms of physical characteristics, educational-visual design, and language and expression dimensions. The physical characteristics of a textbook include appearance, color, information that should be included in the textbook, size, and font size. Educational design in a textbook consists of learning outcomes (objectives), content, teaching-learning process, and measurement and evaluation dimensions. In textbook visual design, visual appeal and suitability for the target audience are prioritized. In textbook language and expression, suitability to the target audience level and adherence to writing rules are essential (Küçükahmet, 2011).

When considering textbooks in general, the theoretically clear but practically problematic question is what qualities they should possess. In both domestic and international literature, the general principles for textbooks are based on physical characteristics, meeting the requirements of the curriculum, content organization, and suitability to teaching principles, techniques, and methods. Furthermore, textbooks, as the most critical support for curriculum development through analysis, strategy, and evaluation, should exhibit parallelism and integrity in terms of aims, content, process, and evaluation elements (Smith and Ragan, 2005; Posner and Rudnitsky, 2006). Generally speaking, the qualities a high-quality textbook should have can be listed as follows: meeting the objectives of the course, content-aim alignment, visual aids, inclusion of various educational structures supporting course information such as puzzles, anecdotes, visuals, reading passages about popular figures, and examples of experiments and observations, etc. (Kaptan, 1999; Hayta et al., 2003; Çoruh and Erarslan, 2017). Some conclusions can also be drawn from research on expectations from textbooks and what constitutes a quality textbook (Jones, 2009). He states that the evaluation of textbooks depends on multifaceted variables and that qualities such as language, appropriateness to the level, the level of the student and teacher, and the development of different skills are sought in the textbooks.

Research Objective and Sub-Objectives

The main objective of this research is to determine teachers' opinions about changes in textbooks. To achieve this objective, the following questions were addressed:

- 1- What is the reason behind the changes to the textbooks?
- 2- What are teachers' opinions on how often textbooks should be changed?
- 3- What changes do teachers want to see made to textbooks?

Method

The subjects of this study consisted of teachers working in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus during the 2024-2025 academic year. Schools and teachers were selected through random sampling. Information about the teachers participating in this study is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of participating teachers.

Personal Information	Features	f	%
gender	Woman	13	%54
	Man	11	%46
His/Her Role at School	Class Teacher	12	%50
	Subject Teacher	8	%33
	Preschool Teacher	4	%17
Educational Status	Doctorate	1	%4
	Degree	5	%21
	University	18	%75
Age Distributions	21 – 30 age	5	%21
	31 – 40 age	10	%42
	41 – 50 age	7	%29
	51 – 60 age	2	%8
Service Period	1 – 5 year	5	%21
	6 – 10 year	4	%17
	11 – 15 year	5	%21
	16 – 20 year	6	%24
	21 – 25 year	4	%17

Table 1 shows that among the participating teachers, 13 (54%) are female and 11 (46%) are male. Regarding their roles at school, 12 (50%) are classroom teachers, 8 (33%) are subject teachers, and 4 (17%) are preschool teachers. Educational backgrounds show that 1 (4%) holds a doctorate, 5 (21%) a master's degree, and 18 (75%) a university degree. Regarding age, 5 (21%) are aged 21-30, 10 (42%) are aged 31-40, 7 (29%) are aged 41-50, and 2 (8%) are aged 51-60. Looking at years of service (seniority), it is seen that 5 people (21%) have 1-5 years of service, 4 people (17%) have 6-10 years of service, 5 people (21%) have 11-15 years of service, and 6 people (24%) have 16-20 years of service.

Research Design

This research employed a qualitative research method to gather teachers' opinions on changes to textbooks. In-depth interviews are one of the most frequently used techniques in qualitative research. Generally, information is obtained through in-depth examination using open-ended questions (Tekin, 2006).

Data Collection Tool

The measurement tool used in the research was prepared with open-ended questions after obtaining expert opinions. Then, sample interviews were conducted with three individuals to determine how clear and understandable the questions were. Finally, the questions were revised with further expert assistance. This ensured the validity and reliability of the research. In this context, "Open-ended questions" and a "Personal Information Collection Form" were developed and prepared for use in the research.

Data Collection

To determine teachers' opinions on the changes to textbooks, volunteer participants in the study group answered questions prepared by the researcher face-to-face and with audio recordings. The audio recordings and notes were later reviewed to create themes. Then, to identify any errors in these themes, an expert also created and compared them. Common themes were selected, and agreement was reached on those that did not share the same views, resulting in a finalized set of themes. This ensured the high validity and reliability of the research.

Data Analysis

The findings obtained in the prepared article were first divided into codes and categories. Themes were revealed through these codes. Interview questions prepared to evaluate the reasons for the changes in textbooks based on teachers' opinions will be derived by finding common points in the codes.

The article presents the opinions of teachers working in state primary schools in the TRNC, creating three dimensions in the research. To protect the anonymity of the volunteer participants, their opinions were coded and footnotes were used. The participants' responses are shown in quotation marks in the article. Additionally, each participant was given a code such as K1, K2, K3... An example of the coding is as follows:

Example:

K: Participant Teacher

"....." (K.1)

Findings

Dimension 1: Findings regarding teachers' views on the reasons for the changes made to textbooks.

The first dimension of the research was designed to reveal teachers' opinions on the reasons for the textbook changes. In this context, 24 teachers were asked about their views on the purpose of the textbook changes. The answers to these questions were coded to extract the themes related to the reasons for the changes, and the distributions of these themes are given in Table 2.

Table 2: Themes related to teachers' opinions on the reasons for textbook changes and descriptive statistics on the distribution of these themes.

Themes	f	%
Curriculum change	10	%36
Renewal	6	%21
Subject reduction	5	%18
Localization	4	%14
Profit generation	3	%11
Total	28	%100

* Some participants expressed more than one theme. Therefore, the total frequency was calculated as 28 (Teacher n=24).

As shown in Table 2, most of the participating teachers ($f=10$, $\%=36$) stated that the main reason for the changes in textbooks stemmed from the changes made in the curriculum. In this context, the responses of some of the teachers who supported this view are as follows;

Textbooks have been changed many times. This was done because they were not in line with the curriculum. (K, 17)

It changed because they are constantly changing the curriculum. When the curriculum changes, there has to be a suitable book. (K, 8)

Yes, it changed. The reason for the change is that the book did not meet the needs, was not suitable for the curriculum, and provided profit to another company. (K, 10)

Dimension II: Findings regarding teachers' opinions on how often textbooks should be changed.

The second dimension of the research was designed to reveal teachers' opinions on how frequently textbooks should be changed. In this context, 24 teachers were asked about their opinions on how often textbooks should be changed. The answers to these questions were coded to extract the themes of the reasons for the changes, and the distributions related to these themes are given in Table 3.

Table 3: Themes related to teachers' opinions on how often textbooks should be changed, and descriptive statistics on the distribution of these themes.

Themes	f	%
Every 5 years	8	%32
Every 2-3 years	4	%16
Should change every year	4	%16
Should change if needed	4	%16
Should change every 10 years	3	%12
Should not change	2	%8
Total	25	%100

* Some participants expressed more than one theme. Therefore, the total frequency was calculated as 25 (Teacher $n=24$).

As shown in Table 3, most participating teachers ($f=8$, $\%=32$) answered the question about how often textbooks should be changed by saying they should be changed every 5 years. In this context, the answers given by a few of the teachers who supported this view are as follows;

Textbooks should be updated every 5 years (K, 1).

Textbooks should be updated every 5 years, taking into account the changes in developing technology and changing environmental conditions (K, 23).

A minimum of 5 years should be waited before making changes, and the textbooks should be updated accordingly (K, 17).

III. Dimension: Findings regarding teachers' opinions on what changes should be made to textbooks.

The third dimension of the research was designed to reveal teachers' opinions on what changes should be made to textbooks. In this context, 24 teachers were asked about their opinions on the necessary changes to textbooks. The answers to these questions were coded, and the themes related to the reasons for change were extracted. The distributions related to these themes are given in Table 4.

Table 4: Themes related to teachers' opinions on what changes should be made to textbooks, and descriptive statistics on the distribution of these themes.

Themes	f	%
Exercises and activities	12	%39
Reducing page count and topics	8	%26
Up-to-date information	4	%13
Localization	4	%13
Attractive design and visualization	2	%6
Information that doesn't rely on rote memorization	1	%3
Total	31	%100

* Some participants expressed more than one theme. Therefore, the total frequency was calculated as 31 (Teacher $n=24$).

As shown in Table 4, half of the participating teachers ($f=12$, $\%=39$) expressed the opinion that changes should be made to the exercises and activities in the textbooks. In this context, the responses of some of the teachers who supported this view are as follows;

There should be activities and exercises that will make children more aware of the world and that will not rely on rote memorization in the curriculum (K, 13).

There should be activities and exercises that are compatible with technology and the age (K,8).

I would like the exercises and activities inside to be more attractive for children and to have questions that are easier for them to understand when they read them. Some of the activities in the books are very boring for children (K, 7).

Discussion And Conclusion

I. Dimension: When participating teachers were asked about the reasons for the changes in the textbooks, many reasons were put forward. The most prominent teacher opinion was that the main reason for the changes in the textbooks was the change in the curriculum. It is thought that the main reason for the teachers reaching this conclusion is that the education programs were renewed before the last change in the textbooks, and then the textbooks were also changed in line with the programs. Bayram and Çimen's (2019) research also emphasized that the textbooks were changed after the curriculum change in order to adapt to the curriculum. Kaya and Perihan (2017) also mentioned in their research that the education curriculum and the textbooks used should change simultaneously. These studies also support the findings obtained in this research.

II. Dimension: The second dimension of the research determined teachers' opinions on how often textbooks should be changed. In this context, the vast majority of teachers concluded that textbooks should be changed every 5 years. This may be because strategic planning should be done for at least 5 years. Since decisions in education show results at the earliest in 5 years, teachers may have given this answer. According to Zuckerman (2000), the vision should be at least five years long. Coşkun and Yıldırım (2018) also support the findings obtained in this research by stating that strategic planning should be at least five years long.

III. Dimension: In the third dimension of the research, participants mostly stated that textbooks contained activities that did not attract children's interest, and it was concluded that the books should contain exercises and activities that would attract children's attention. The reason teachers defend this may be because the activities are mostly monotonous and children constantly do the same activities and exercises. Furthermore, Değirmenci (2013) also emphasized the need for engaging activities in textbooks in her research.

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