An Evaluation of Local and Oral History of Cyprus Teaching on the Basis of Postmodern Education: Student and Teacher Opinions

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ABSTRACT

In postmodern education philosophy, the areas of interest of students, student-oriented teaching and regulating learning-teaching environments according to the student are essential. Based on this viewpoint, the purpose of this research is to evaluate the student-related factors in terms of Cyprus history. The aim is to determine the attitudes of students towards Cyprus history (in the case of local-oral history) and to explore the student-related problems from the perspective of teachers in particular. In the study, the attitude levels of students are determined and the problems experienced in Cyprus history are described; furthermore, this is followed by a discussion on postmodern education and local-oral history education. Postmodern education in the case of Cyprus history is evaluated. In this context, the problem sentence of the research is as follows: "What are the student and teacher opinions in regard to local and oral Cyprus history education on the basis of postmodern education?" The model of this study is a mixed research method, which is based on both quantitative and qualitative data. Stratified random sampling was used in this study and a total of 800 secondary and high school students from five different districts of Cyprus were reached.

Keywords: postmodernism, postmodern education, local history, oral history, Cyprus history

INTRODUCTION

This is an era of information when an innovative understanding is adopted in every aspect of life. New approaches and new directions in education and educational programs are also products of the progress experienced in the modern era. Within the framework of this modernization and progress, it is necessary to add a new dimension to education programmes and to follow new trends. In this context, the postmodern approach assumes prominences, postmodernism is a contemporary approach with a wholly liberal character.

As having an attitude against modernism, postmodernism appears as a higher dimension of modernism and questions, criticizes, debates and re-discusses the fundamental assumptions of modernism (Lyotard, 2000; Hollinger, 2005; Sarup, 2004; Doltaş, 2003).

Postmodernists see the world as a changeable and diverse pattern. As it is movable and changing, they prefer to use verbs instead of subjects (Aydın, 2006; Nicholls, 2006; Carda, 2013; Lixin, 2004; McCrum, 2010; Hughson, 2013).

In a postmodern education program, students are allowed the freedom to move inside and outside the programme. Students are free to explore alternatives, ask questions and make their own interpretations. In such a program, the educational targets are not determined in advance as they are inside the learning process. Learning is constructed by the teacher and the student in collaboration. According to postmodernist philosophy, history is a discourse created by interpreting the past, which is particularly influenced by language. Postmodernists argue that history is not objective but subjective (Iggers, 2000; Jenkins, 1997; Yılmaz, 2013).

Postmodernism criticizes the behavouralist approach and the application the of classroom methods based on this approach. It is widely acknowledged that history classes are perceived as being based on the memorizing of

Contribution of this paper to the literature

- Give a good model for student centered history education and discuss postmodern history education.
- Understand the attitudes of students in history education and organize teaching-learning activities.
- Solve problems in Cyprus history education for both teachers and also students.

the names of persons, places and dates by students. For this reason, while planning history teaching, the teacher-centred and course-book oriented teaching approach must be abandoned. Instead, dialogue-based learning through Socratic dialogue and exploration, and problem-based learning approaches must be applied in classrooms in order to ensure that students develop their own knowledge and perception of history (Jenkins, 1997; Boboc, 2012; Coleman, 2002).

History must be taught in a manner through which students can gain a different perspective and interpretation of history. History teaching must not be based on memorizing but on changing the students' perception of the past and the manner in which they approach historical events, as well as improving their understanding; in short, by creating a personal transformation process in history learning (Yılmaz, 2013 ; Boboc, 2012; Coleman, 2002; Hart, 2007).

On the contrary to traditional history, postmodern history understanding it does not think that history writing should be only based on written sources and archival documents. As it assigns importance to popular culture, postmodernism argues that local and oral history methods should be utilized in history writing. The people and groups that are not included in history books must be researched, the events deemed to be important by the local community must be examined, and daily life must be discussed. Postmodernism values locality and local culture. In this context, postmodernism sees oral history as the most suitable approach for examining local history (Caunce, 2001; Tosh, 2005; Thomson, 1999; Özer, 2012).

In postmodern education understanding, the interest status of students, student-oriented teaching and organizing learning-teaching according to students is essential. Based on this viewpoint, the purpose of this research is to evaluate the element of student in Cyprus history. The aim is to determine the attitude level of students towards Cyprus history (in the case of local-oral history) and to especially explore the student-related problems from the eyes of teachers. In the study, attitude levels of students are determined and the problems experienced in Cyprus history are described, and a discussion is planned on postmodern education and local-oral history education. Thus, the existing situation is displayed (especially on the basis of student attitudes and behaviours) and its place vis-à-vis postmodern education in the case of Cyprus history is evaluated. In this context, the problem sentence of the research is as follows: "What are the student and teacher opinions in regard to local and oral Cyprus history education on the basis of postmodern education?" Sub-problems are identified as follows:

1. What are the attitude levels of students towards Cyprus history and which variables influence these attitudes?
2. What are the problems students experience in terms of Cyprus history according to teachers?

METHOD

Based on the problem of the research, information will be given on the research problem, its participants, as well as the collection and analysis of data.

Research Model

An evaluation on local and oral Cyprus history education on the basis of postmodern education: the model of this research aimed at testing the opinions of students and teachers is a mixed research model, which is based on both quantitative and qualitative data. In recent years, particularly in education and social field studies, the "mixed method approach" has been gaining popularity due to the fact that it enables researchers to collect multiple data using different approaches, methods and techniques and that these data complete and support each other (Johnson & Turner, 2003).

Sample

Stratified random sampling was used in the study to reach 800 secondary and high school students in five different districts of Cyprus. The distribution of the personal characteristics of the students shows that 50.0 percent of students were females and 50.0 percent were males. Furthermore, 8.50% of students were below 12 years of age, whereas 17.13% were 13, 16.63% were 14, 24.25% were 15, 21.50% is were 16 and 12.0% were 17 or over.

An examination of the students according to their education status shows that 43.63% of the covered students were attending secondary school and 56.37% were at the high school level. Additionally, 88.0% of the participant students were at public schools, whereas 12.0% were at private schools. A total of 15.37% of the students had received a report grade of 4 or below in the previous year, whereas 28.0% had scores of 5 and 6, 29.63% had scores of 7 and 8, and 27.0% had scores of 9 and 10.

Daily Internet usage, hours spent watching TV and the time students spent reading newspapers were also questioned. The findings reveal that 24.50% of students used the Internet for 1 hour or less, 23.0% used the Internet for 1-2 hours, 14.88% used it for 2-3 hours and 37.63% used the Internet for 3 hours or more. The daily TV watching figures of students show that 41.0% watched TV for 1 hour or less, 26.13% watched TV for 1-2 hours and 32.88% watched TV for more than 2 hours. Finally, 37.38% of students declared that they read newspapers, 25.0% stated that they sometimes read newspapers and 37.63% stated that they did not read newspapers.

Additionally, 22 history teachers delivering Cyprus history classes in these schools were chosen based on purposive sampling.

Data Collection Tools

Quantitative data collection tools

Questionnaires completed by the students in the sample were used in collecting the research data. The questionnaire used as data collection tool consists of two sections, namely Personal Information and the Cyprus History Attitude Scale.

Personal information

In the personal information section prepared by the researcher, which is in the first part of the questionnaire, questions for identifying the introductory information of students, such as gender and age, data on their school achievements and the class they are in, newspaper reading habits, television watching and Internet usage data, as well as their level of information on Cyprus history based on their own quotations, are included.

Cyprus History Attitude Scale

In order to identify the attitude of students on Cyprus History, the Cyprus History Attitude Scale developed by Mustafa Safran's (1993), as adapted to the students studying, in Cyprus was used.

The scale consists of 10 negative and 10 positive propositions prepared in a 5-point Likert format. The answers given to the positive propositions in the scale given by students were scored as "totally disagree - 1 point", "disagree - 2 points", "neutral - 3 points", "agree - 4 points", and "totally agree - 5 points". Negative propositions in the scale are reversely scored from 5 to 1. The lowest and highest scores that can be obtained from the scale are 20 and 100, respectively. Factor analysis was utilised in this case in order to ensure the structural validity of the scale. Exploratory factor analysis can be used in order to identify the factor structure of the scale, and confirmatory factor analysis can be used in order to verify the structure of the pre-set factors (Büyüköztürk et al., 2008). Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used to ensure the structural validity of the Cyprus history attitude scale. CFA is used in identifying whether the findings obtained from the answers of the participants correspond with the theoretical structure (Çapık, 2014).

Qualitative data collection tools of the study

In the data collection process, the opinions of history teachers were consulted through a semi-structured interview form, which was prepared in advance after consulting expert opinion in regard to the collection of qualitative data of the study while applying the attitude scale in all schools in the TRNC. Semi-structured interview forms enable respondents to answer based on fixed options and allows the researcher to obtaining detail data in the relevant area (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013).

In this context, semi-structured interview forms were prepared based on expert views in order to gather the teachers' opinions. The interview form, which was prepared as the Teacher Opinions on Problems and Solutions in Cyprus History Classes, consists of two sections, namely problems and solutions. In the problems section, seven questions were asked, whereas in the solutions section, four questions were asked to collect the teacher opinions. Interviews were conducted with a total of 21 teachers.

Collection of Data

For the purposes of the needs analysis in the research, permission was obtained from the TRNC Ministry of Education for the attitude scale, which was designed to be applied in schools reporting to the ministry. After obtaining the necessary permission from the ministry on 20.04.2016, the researcher visited all secondary schools throughout the TRNC between 25.04.2016 and 30.05.2016 in order to collect the relevant data.

Analysis of Data

Analysis of quantitative data

When evaluating the research data, SPSS 21 and AMOS 21, which are software packages for statistical data analysis, were used.

Frequency analysis was used in determining the social-demographic characteristics of the students covered in the research and the results are shown in frequency tables. Distribution of the answers given by the students to the Cyprus History Attitude Scale was identified with frequency distribution and average scores for each proposition were provided.

Kolmogorov-Smirnov, Shapiro-Wilk test, Q-Q plot and skewness-kurtosis values were examined to determine the conformity of the dataset to normal distribution in order to identify the hypothesis tests which would be used in comparing the scale scores, based on certain characteristics of the students covered in the study. As a result of the conducted evaluation, it was identified that the scale scores of students confirmed to normal distribution for some of the characteristics, while they did not conform for others. Accordingly, both parametric and non-parametric hypothesis tests were used in the study.

Parametric hypothesis tests were used in comparing the Cyprus History Attitude Scale scores of the students based on their introductory characteristics, school characteristics, Internet usage, TV watching period and newspaper reading habits. In comparisons where the independent variable consists of two categories, the independent sampling t test was conducted, whereas when the independent variable consisted of more than two categories, variance analysis was employed. If differences were observed between the categories of the independent variable as a result of variance analysis, Tukey's test was conducted to determine the category in which the difference occurred.

In comparing the Cyprus History Attitude Scale scores of students in terms of their level of knowledge on Cyprus history, opinions on the course books, and their interests in reading and researching, the Kruskal-Wallis test was used as the data set did not coincide with normal distribution and the independent variables had more than two categories. The Mann-Whitney U test was used to determine the category in which the difference occurred (if there was any difference) between the categories of the independent variable.

Additionally, the dependent t-test was used to analyse the data obtained from the achievement tests of the activity research application group students, both before and after the activity, to investigate whether the scores after the activity were different from the scores before the activity.

Analysis of qualitative data

The semi-structured interview form applied to teachers was analysed through a content analysis form in order to obtain data. Content analysis ensures that concepts, judgements and relations that explain the data can be reached. In content analysis, the aim is to subject the obtained data to in-depth examination and to reach conclusions that cannot be easily reached by performing in-depth examination (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). For this reason, the content analysis method was applied in analysing the qualitative data.

FINDINGS

In the study, quantitative findings are presented first, followed by the qualitative findings. Quantitative findings are presented in **Tables 1** to **5**, whereas **Tables 6** and **7** provide the qualitative findings.

Quantitative Findings

When **Table 1** is examined, it can be seen that students generally answered "agree" to the propositions in the scale, such as item 6, 18 and 20, whereas they answered "disagree" to such propositions as item 5, 7, 8 and 14. Some students said they agreed and others said they disagreed on other propositions in the scale; it was found out that the students were mostly neutral on such propositions.

Table 1. Distribution of answers given by students to the Cyprus History Attitude Scale

	Totally disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Totally agree		$\bar{x}$
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Positive propositions											
1. History of Cyprus is an interesting subject.	122	15.25	164	20.50	190	23.75	229	28.63	95	11.88	3.01
2. History of Cyprus is a subject that I really like	89	11.13	110	13.75	175	21.88	264	33.00	162	20.25	3.38
4. History of Cyprus is easy for me.	83	10.38	97	12.13	249	31.13	230	28.75	141	17.63	3.31
6. I am trying to do my best in the History of Cyprus class.	63	7.88	64	8.00	111	13.88	265	33.13	297	37.13	3.84
9. History of Cyprus is necessary to understand world events.	102	12.75	135	16.88	226	28.25	197	24.63	140	17.50	3.17
13. One benefit of History of Cyprus is that it is used to solve daily problems.	145	18.13	147	18.38	271	33.88	127	15.88	110	13.75	2.89
15. I like studying History of Cyprus.	106	13.25	125	15.63	193	24.13	205	25.63	171	21.38	3.26
17. When learning about the History of Cyprus, I always read a publication that is suitable for my level (magazine, book, newspaper)	171	21.38	204	25.50	195	24.38	148	18.50	82	10.25	2.71
18. I am proud of my studies in the History of Cyprus class and achievements in the related tests	84	10.50	90	11.25	225	28.13	227	28.38	174	21.75	3.40
20. History of Cyprus has a special place in modern society.	91	11.38	84	10.50	200	25.00	217	27.13	208	26.00	3.46
Negative propositions											
3. There is no creativity in History of Cyprus. It is only about memorizing names and dates etc.	145	18.13	202	25.25	171	21.38	165	20.63	117	14.63	2.88
5. History of Cyprus is not useful as it focuses mostly on the past	228	28.50	248	31.00	164	20.50	96	12.00	64	8.00	2.40
7. I do not like History of Cyprus.	287	35.88	227	28.38	120	15.00	82	10.25	84	10.50	2.31
8. History of Cyprus has no relevance to daily life.	233	29.13	245	30.63	178	22.25	84	10.50	60	7.50	2.37
10. History of Cyprus is a boring and monotonous subject.	226	28.25	234	29.25	170	21.25	94	11.75	76	9.50	2.45
11. I do not read History of Cyprus books other than the course book.	147	18.38	167	20.88	163	20.38	182	22.75	141	17.63	3.00
12. I would not study History of Cyprus if I was not forced to.	204	25.50	167	20.88	144	18.00	148	18.50	137	17.13	2.81
14. One does not have to know History of Cyprus to be a cultured person.	270	33.75	218	27.25	136	17.00	108	13.50	68	8.50	2.36
16. I am not interested in History of Cyprus, except or the purposes of doing homework.	166	20.75	233	29.13	178	22.25	138	17.25	85	10.63	2.68
19. I do not like being asked to talk about "important issues" in the History of Cyprus class.	187	23.38	168	21.00	222	27.75	108	13.50	115	14.38	2.75

Table 2. Definitive statistics on the scores obtained from Cyprus History Attitude Scale by students

	N	$\bar{x}$	S	Lower	Top
Total score	800	66.42	14.55	20	100
Item score	800	3.32	0.73	1	5

Table 3. Comparison of the Cyprus History Attitude Scale scores of students according to their personal characteristics

Introductory characteristics	n	$\bar{x}$	s	t/F	p	Tukey
Gender						
Female	400	67.59	14.97	2.28	0.02*	
Male	400	65.25	14.04			
Age group						
12 and below	68	74.97	12.55	10.46	0.00*	1-2. 1-3
13 years of age	137	65.96	14.55			1-4. 1-6
14 years of age	133	66.30	15.39			4-5. 5-6
15 years of age	194	63.51	13.96			
16 years of age	172	69.45	13.85			
17 and above	96	61.60	13.64			

*p<0.05, ** Not included in the analysis.

When the definitive statistics on the scores obtained by students from the Cyprus History Attitude Scale given in **Table 2** are examined, it is seen that the average score obtained by the students from the entire scale is 66.42±14.55 and the lowest and highest cores obtained from the scale were 20 and 100, respectively. It was determined that the item score mean obtained by students from the scale was 3.32±0.73.

Table 3 presents the independent sample t test and variance analysis results for the comparison of the Cyprus History Attitude Scale according to the personal characteristics of students. When **Table 3** is examined, it can be seen that the female and male students included in the research received 67.59±14.97 points and 65.25±14.04 points from the Cyprus History Attitude Scale, respectively. It was determined that this difference between the scale scores of students according to their genders is statistically significant (p<0.05). Female students received statistically significantly higher scores from the scale than male students.

Table 4. C Comparison of the Cyprus History Attitude Scale scores of students according to their education-related characteristics

School characteristics	n	$\bar{x}$	s	t/F	p	Tukey
Grade						
Secondary	349	67.55	14.90	1.94	0.05*	
High school	451	65.54	14.23			
Type of school						
Public school	704	66.49	14.55	0.41	0.68	
Private school	96	65.84	14.64			
Report grade						
4 and below	123	60.86	11.85	21.80	0.00*	1-3. 1-4
5-6	224	63.32	13.55			2-3. 2-4
7-8	237	67.11	14.85			3-4
9-10	216	72.02	14.66			

*p<0.05

Students below 12 years of age who participated in the study received 74.97±12.55 points on average, students at 13 years of age received 65.96±14.55 points on average, students at 14 years of age received 66.30±15.39 points on average, students at 15 years of age received 63.51±13.96 points on average, students at 16 years of age received 69.45±13.85 points on average, and students aged 17 and over received 61.60±13.64 points on average. It was determined that there is a statistically significant difference between the scale scores of students depending on their age (p<0.05). The students who were 12 years or under received higher scores than students at 13, 14, 15 and 17 years of age and above. Additionally, students at 16 years of age received higher scores compared to students who were 14 or 17 and over.

Table 4 gives the independent sample t test and variance analysis results for the Cyprus History Attitude Scale comparison of students included in the study according to their education-related characteristics. Secondary school students included in the study received 67.55±14.90 points from the Cyprus History Attitude Scale on average, whereas the high school students received 65.54±14.23 points. It was determined that the difference between the scores obtained by students from Cyprus History Attitude Scale according to their grades was statistically significant and that the scores obtained by secondary school students from the scale were higher compared to high school students (p<0.05).

It was found that the difference between the scores obtained by students from the Cyprus History Attitude Scale according to the type of their school was not statistically significant (p>0.05). Although the scores obtained by the students at public schools was higher compared to students at private school, this difference was not statistically significant.

When the Cyprus History Attitude Scale scores of students are examined according to the report grades they had received the previous year, it can be seen that students with a grade of 4 or below for the previous year received 60.86±11.85 points on average, students with a 5-6 report grade for the previous year received 63.32±13.55 points on average, students with a 7-8 report grade for the previous year received 67.11±14.85 points on average, and students with a 9-10 report grade for the previous year received 72.02±14.66 points on average. It was determined that the difference between the scale scores according to the report grades for the previous year was statistically significant (p<0.05). Students with a report grade of 4 or below received lower scores than students with 7-8 and 9-10 report grades. The scale scores of students with report grade of 5-6 were lower than students with 7-8 and 9-10 scale scores. Additionally, the scale scores of students with report grades of 7-8 were found to be lower than students with report grades of 9-10.

Table 5 presents the variance analysis results for the comparison of the Cyprus History Attitude Scale scores of students included in the study based on their daily Internet usage, TV watching hours and newspaper reader habits. According to these results, students whose daily Internet usage totalled 1 hour received 70.44±14.57 points from the Cyprus History Attitude Scale, students whose daily internet usage was 1-2 hours received 66.71±13.49 points, students whose daily Internet usage was 2-3 hours received 67.89±15.03 points from the Cyprus History Attitude Scale, and students whose daily Internet usage was 3 hours and above received 63.03±14.25 points. It was found that the difference between scale scores according to daily Internet usage was statistically significant (p<0.05). Students with daily Internet usage of 3 hours and above received lower scores from the Cyprus History Attitude Scale compared to other students.

It was determined that the difference between the scale scores obtained by students from Cyprus History Attitude Scale according to the hours spent watching TV was not statistically significant (p>0.05). Although the scale scores of students who watch television every day for 2 hours or more were lower compared to other students, this difference was not statistically significant.

Table 5. Comparison of Cyprus History Attitude Scale scores of students according to their daily Internet usage, TV watching hours and newspaper reading habits

	n	x	s	F	p	Tukey
Daily Internet usage hours						
1 hour and below	196	70.44	14.57	11.29	0.00*	1-4. 2-4
1-2 hours	184	66.71	13.49			3-4
2-3 hours	119	67.89	15.03			
3 hours and above	301	63.03	14.25			
Daily TV watching hours						
1 hour and below	328	66.74	14.28	1.62	0.20	
1-2 hours	209	67.48	14.83			
2 hours	263	65.16	14.63			
Newspaper reading habits						
Readers	299	71.07	14.56	33.78	0.00*	1-2. 1-3
Non-readers	301	61.68	13.85			2-3
Occasional readers	200	66.59	13.32			

*p<0.05

Table 6. Teacher opinions on the student-related problems of Cyprus History Teaching

Problem	f
Problems caused by personal characteristics of students	18
Students being insufficiently prepared	4
Problems caused by learning abilities of students	4
There are no student-related problems	1

Examination of the scores obtained by the students from Cyprus History Attitude Scale according to their newspaper reader habits revealed that students who read newspapers received 71.07±14.56 points on average from the scale, students who did not read newspapers received 61.68±13.85 points on average from the scale, and students who occasionally read newspapers received 71.07±14.56 points on average from the scale. It was determined that the difference between the scale scores according to their newspaper reader habits was statistically significant (p<0.05). The scale scores of students who read newspapers were found to be higher compared to students who are non-readers and occasional-readers. Additionally, the scores obtained by students who occasionally read newspapers were higher compared to students who are non-readers.

Qualitative Findings

When **Table 6** is examined, it can be seen that 27 different opinions were provided by teachers interviewed on the problems related to students in the Cyprus history class. Eighteen of these opinions are related to personal characteristics of the students, four are related to the level of preparedness of the students and four others are related to the learning abilities of students. One teacher argued that there were no student-related problems. Among the problems related to the personal characteristics of students, "low motivation", "lack of interest", "addiction to virtual world", "behaviours which disrupt class management", "problems of migrant children", "students being too comfortable", "were cited as problematic issues. Some of the teacher opinions are given below:

> *"Students are usually disinterested in all classes, which reduces their motivation" S8*

> *"In regard to my school, almost 80% of students come from migrant families; thus, they do not have any preliminary knowledge about Cyprus and its history. This, in turn, prevents them from comprehending the subjects" S11*

In relation to the problems related to the preparedness of students, it was found that student had problems with "negative effects created by previous learning", "inadequacy of previous learning" and "literacy issues". Some of the teacher opinions are given below:

> *"Previous learning of the students has an impact on the flow of the class. When history knowledge is not complete, this create problems in learning about the History of Cyprus in some cases." S2*

> *"The fact that the education level of students is low, especially literacy problems in secondary schools, as well as some students finding Cyprus history class to be unnecessary are the problems that I face." S5*

Table 7. Teacher opinions on the most important problem in Cyprus History Teaching

The most important problem	f
Course books with low quality	11
Using history teaching as a political tool	4
Insufficient time allocated for history classes	4
Lack of environment and material that would enrich teaching of history class	3
Problems caused by history teacher	1
Problems related to students	1

In regard to problems related to learning abilities, it was found that problems were experienced in areas such as "desire for rote-learning" and "insufficient cognitive development". Some of the teacher opinions are given below:

"The basic problem is that students are educated through a rote-learning system" S10

"Students come from elementary school with an incomplete understanding and it is too late to learn something. We are having difficulty in doing what we desire. After 20 years, I think this job cannot be done." S17

When **Table 7** is examined, it can be seen that the problems considered least important by the teachers in Cyprus history are student-related problems. Other problems are course books, using history as a political tool, lack of time, lack of materials and teacher-related problems, in this order. The problems related to course book are discussed as follows: "insufficient information", "repetitive information", "too many visuals", "lack of course book". In terms of politics-related problems, "changing of history teaching policies caused by the frequent changes in government" and the "the lack of trust between Cypriot Turkish and Greek communities constantly affecting history teaching" were mentioned. Other problem headings appeared as "insufficient class hours", "lack of facilities/budget to deliver the class in a practical manner", "lack of sufficient documentaries", "some teachers emphasising their personal ideologies while discussing Cyprus History", and "lack of interest in students". Some of the teacher opinions are given below:

"Some teachers do not believe some of the covered topics are real." S9

"The contents of course books, which are full of repetitive and monotonous information, are insufficient and void. Some of the information is conflicting." S13

"There is no budget for research and practical field studies" S12

"The most important problem is that there are very few documentaries on Cyprus history (which also cover the topics)". S20

"Class hours are limited" S4

"The most important problem is the lack of trust between Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities." S19

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

In this study, which is based on the attitudes of students in Cyprus history teaching on the basis of postmodern education, when the descriptive statistics of the scale are examined, it can be observed that students particularly have reduced interest in such topics as "using Cyprus History in solving daily problems" and "reaching and reading documentaries, diaries, magazines, newspapers etc. sources on Cyprus History". However, Aytekin (2009) argued that relating history education with daily incidents is very important in terms of obtaining a global perspective and for broadening life experience. Problems experienced in this area indicate that Cyprus history classes are not given at the desired quality. On the other hand, among the positive items, the most preferred, meaning the item with the highest attitude of students, was "I am trying to do my best in the History of Cyprus class". This shows that students have self-esteem and self-confidence. Self-esteem is a very critical topic in education (Morgül et al., 2016).

An examination of the scale items in terms of the negative items shows that students do not read any source books other than the course book. This is problematic and it could be due to several reasons; for example, the failure of teachers to direct students, lack of knowledge of teachers on other sources, failure to allocate time for other

activities due to high workload, or students not having access to other sources due to socio-economic reasons etc. In that case, the quality of Cyprus History course books becomes even more important, as they are the only sources used for the class. When the overall attitudes of students are evaluated based on the scale results, it can be seen that their attitudes are at a medium level. This result is promising, as the attitude is not below average level; however, in order for education to be successful, all learning must be conducted in an effective manner (Şimşek, 2010). In this context, improving the Cyprus history attitude level of students from medium to good or very good levels is critical.

An examination of the Cyprus history attitude scores of students based on their personal characteristics shows that there is a significant difference in gender and age variables. The attitude level of female students is higher than male students; furthermore, the attitude levels of students who had just started secondary school was found to be higher and it was evident that, as the years passed, this attitude level was not maintained but decreased (İskender, 2007; Akbaba et al., 2014; Şimşek, 2010). It is particularly meaningful that as the students become older, their attitude levels decrease. As students have more history knowledge and spend more time focusing on history, it is expected that their attitude level would increase; however, the opposite result was observed as their attitudes decreased. It is necessary to determine the reasons for this and to conduct more in-depth qualitative research into this problem.

An examination of the Cyprus history attitude scores of students based on their education-related characteristics showed that there is no significant difference between public schools and private schools. However, considering the equipment, tools and materials that private schools can offer, it was expected that the difference would be observed in favour of private schools. This result shows that teachers do not deliver student-centred education adequately and private schools are not an alternative for public schools. Another important result is that academic success and attitude towards class are moving in the same direction. In the literature, there are studies that demonstrate that academic success and attitude levels develop together in history education (Ulusoy, 2009; Ulusoy& Gülüm, 2009; Gül & Yılmazer, 2016; Turan, 2015; Kamer & Şimşek, 2016; Akbaba et al., 2014).

When the Cyprus history attitude scores of students are related to technology-focused subjects, it can be seen that the attitude level of the students who used the Internet less was higher; however, no significant difference was detected in terms of hours spent watching television. In modern society, television is a less significant factor in people's lives compared to the past and the Internet has overtaken television as the preferred medium (Yaman & Erdoğan, 2007; Çelen, 2011). Finally, when the Cyprus history attitude scores and newspaper reading habits are examined, the attitude level of newspaper readers was revealed to be higher compared to non-readers. Naturally, it is obvious that people who love reading and read habitually will like the history class more. The literature provides examples of similar conclusions (Yıldırım & Şimşek 2017, Turan 2015, Elban 2015, Şimşek 2010, Şam 2007) and this research confirms this reality.

The study also examines the opinions of history teachers based on Cyprus history teaching on the basis of postmodern education in regard to Cyprus history classes and shows that teachers assign importance to Cyprus history teaching. It has been found that teachers are focused on developing and improving history teaching by reducing the reliance on rote learning methods. Studies conducted by Mutluer (2015) and Şam (2007) support this finding.

According to the referred teacher opinions, the student-related problems encountered in Cyprus history teaching are predominantly related to the personal characteristics of the students. One of the most important reasons for this is that students coming from Turkey and students with Cypriot origins are taking Cyprus history lectures in mixed classrooms. The Cyprus history class does not attract the attention of students from Turkey. This is essentially due to the fact that history is a matter of curiosity. In particular, the curiosity about one's own ethnic roots increases the interest in this history classes (Öksüz et al., 2016; Türkan, 2016).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The fact that "I am trying to do my best in the History of Cyprus class" was given high value in this research demonstrates that the level of knowledge and skill of students can be increased easily if teachers deliver high quality education.

An examination of the literature indicates that there are serious problems related to the history course books that are used in classrooms today (Bal, 2011; Gül &Yılmazer, 2016; Akbaba et al., 2016; Latif, 2010; Papadakis, 2008). This problem should be addressed immediately. Additionally, as emphasised in postmodern education, teaching must not only be based on course books; the search for high quality audio-visual and linguistic sources must continue (Bal, 2011; Gül &Yılmazer, 2016; Korkmaz & Güneyli, 2017; Yang, Yu, Gong & Chen, 2017).

As the study indicated that academic success and attitude towards class are moving in the same direction, it is essential that the attitude level of students and their academic success should be addressed and developed together.

The teachers whose opinions were sought in the study displayed their positive and negative opinions on the execution of the Cyprus history class, which indicates that teachers are knowledgeable in this area attempt to find

solutions to the problems. This result is promising in terms of solving the problems encountered in teaching of Cyprus history.

The teachers whose opinions were sought expressed that the most important problem experienced in Cyprus history classes was related to the Cyprus history course books. In particular, the fact that course books are of low quality, are insufficient or full of unnecessary excessive knowledge, and are written in accordance with governmental policies are the problems that teachers experience. This view is supported by Yıldırım and Şimşek (2017), Turan (2015), Vural and Özuyanık (2008), Papadakis (2008) and Latif (2010). It can be said that the attitudes of students in regard to Cyprus history course books correspond to the teacher opinions. For this reason, regulation is needed in terms of the Cyprus history course books, which must be designed according to the new approaches in education.

Teachers whose opinions were sought mentioned that they experienced problems in terms of insufficient class hours, the classroom environment and a lack of materials, which consequently had a negative impact on Cyprus history teaching.

Previous studies support the view that a lack of tools-equipment and an unfavourable classroom environment in education and teaching influence student learning (Gül & Yılmazer, 2016; Öztürk, 2009; Akbaba, 2003, Demircioğlu, 2007; Safran & Ata, 1998; Şimşek, 2003; Latif, 2010). The relevant ministry must give support to organizing teaching environments and removing deficiencies in particular and efforts must be made to rectify the deficiencies.

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