Evaluation of the Practices of Modular Educational System: A Field Study in Anatolian Hotel and Tourism Vocational High Schools

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Introduction

Modular system is an educational system whose curriculum is made up of modules. The parts of the modules are arranged so that they complete each other. Each module provides knowledge and skills towards proficiency in a field. The existence of a management format for the learning process is effective on school activities and the structure of administration. This situation is the most important element that makes the modular system consistent. The other elements are rules, standards, evaluation, guidance, documentation, the structure of each module and the continuation of the whole system (Altın, 2008, p.144).

The benefits of the modular system are as follows (Yaşar, 2007, p.2);

- The students are able to gain skills in line with their sets of interest and abilities.
- An intensive flow of information related to real world that is outside of the school is provided.
- Individual teaching is possible.
- It becomes easier for the student to use his/her personal out-of-school experience and knowledge related to the subject in class.
- The student can join the teaching program at any time.
- Transition between different programs is possible.

If a student leaves vocational education before beginner level, he/she will have certificates for the modules he/she completed. Education of adults provide proficiency to them on-the-job. Those with these certificates will be able to complete their education when they want (Özdemir, 2007, p.68).

Methodology

The goal of this study is to determine whether the tasks to be done in order to ensure the full functionality of the modular teaching system are completed, and to provide some suggestions as to make the modular system more beneficial for tourism education.

The universe of this study consists of the vocational tourism teachers, who work in Anatolian hospitality and tourism vocational schools affiliated with General
Directorate of Trade and Tourism Education. According to statistics obtained from General Directorate of Trade and Tourism Education in 2008–2009 academic year, the size of the universe of the study is 626.

A survey of 78 subjects was done for pilot study, which was performed either in person or via e-mail. The questionnaire was tested for confidence using Alpha (Cronbach) method, and the Alpha value was found to be 0.89. The study was conducted between March and June 2009. The questionnaire was distributed to school principals for application to vocational tourism teachers. 243 responses were returned in mail and via e-mail, and it was discovered that all of these responses were valid. Frequency analysis, t-test and ANOVA test were applied to the study regarding the teachers. The results of the ANOVA and t-tests were evaluated according to a significance level of 0.05.

Results

The agreement level of the participants to the statement “The fields and branches to be taught in schools should be determined according to the local educational needs and employment opportunities in the sector.” is 3.37. The agreement level to the statement “The fields and branches to be taught in schools should be determined according to the facilities and educational roster of the school.” is 3.62. Majority of the participants think that facilities and educational roster of the schools are taken into consideration when determining the fields to be taught.

The agreement level of the participants to the statement “The fields and branches to be taught in schools should be determined according to the interests, desires and orientation of the students.” is 3.3. Majority of the participants think that the vocational courses and their durations are selected according to the educational frame program, the content of the program, proficiency tables and modul information pages. Thus, the average agreement level to the related statement “Durations of the field courses are determined according to the educational frame program, the content of the program and proficiency tables.” is 3.79. The average agreement level to the statement “Durations of the field courses are determined according to the course information forms and module information pages.”, which is related to the durations, was found to be 3.89.

99.6% of the participants think that course information forms, module information pages and process analysis forms are used when preparing course plans and application of these plans. The agreement level to the statement “Course information forms, module information pages and process analysis forms are used when preparing course plans and application of these plans.” is as high as 3.98.

Regarding the application of the program and the entire questionnaire, the lowest level of agreement is to the statements related to legislation. The agreement level of the participants to the statement “Class Promotion and Examination Regulations is suitable for the program to be applied.” is 2.42, which is below average. The agreement level to another legislation-related statement “Vocational Technical Education Regulations is suitable for the program to be applied.” is 2.86.

Conclusion

The fields and branches to be taught in schools are determined according to the facilities and educational roster of the school, rather than local educational needs and employment opportunities in the sector. Student requests and needs are usually
disregarded when deciding on the fields and branches. The field courses and their durations are determined by examining educational frame program, the content of the program and proficiency tables. Most of the practitioners make use of course information forms, module information pages and process analysis forms when planning their courses. Some problems are encountered due to the incompatibility of current legislation such as Vocational Education Law, Vocational Technical Education Regulations, Class Promotion and Examination Regulations, and Student Transfer Regulations to the modular educational system. It is believed that problems arise especially in the class promotions and student transfers.

Statistical analyses reveal that the level of satisfaction of the administrators and teachers, and the sufficiency of the facilities are significant factors for evaluation of the program. Similarly, analyses that take into account whether the participant has been educated for the modular system show that different groups tend to express significantly different opinions. It can be claimed that these results support the hypothesis of the study.