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International Journal of Psychology and Educational Studies

ISSN: 2148-9378



# The Predictive Role Of The Primary School Teachers' Educational Beliefs On Their Curriculum Design Orientation Preferences

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## ARTICLE INFO

### Article History

Received 27.12.2021

Received in revised form

14.04.2022

Accepted 30.05.2022

Article Type: Research

Article

## ABSTRACT

Educational beliefs influence teachers' designing teaching environment, teaching methods and techniques they apply in the classroom, the strategies they use in classroom management and the measurement-evaluation tools they prefer. In this regard, teachers' educational beliefs can be said to affect their curriculum design orientations. Curricula play a significant role in raising individuals within a country. Hence, teachers' educational beliefs also have an impact on raising students. This study sheds light on whether there is a relationship between primary school teachers' educational beliefs and their curriculum design orientation preferences and whether their education beliefs predict curriculum design orientation preferences. One of the survey models used in this study was the correlational survey model. The stratified sampling approach was used to select 515 primary school teachers for the study. The "Educational Beliefs Scale" and the "Curriculum Design Orientation Preference Scale" were used to collect data for the study. Correlation analysis and multiple linear regression analysis were used during data analysis. The findings revealed a medium and low level relationship between the primary school teachers' education beliefs and their curriculum design orientation preferences. Also, the results showed that the modern education philosophies that primary school teachers adopted, such as progressivism, reconstructionism, and existentialism, could be used to predict their preferences for designing curricula around students and problems. In contrast, traditional education philosophies, perennialism and essentialism, were identified to predict the subject-centered curriculum design orientation preferences. Based on the research findings, various recommendations were provided. Click or tap here to enter text.

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Keywords:

Educational belief, curriculum, curriculum design, curriculum design orientations.

## 1. Introduction

"How should the teaching environment be arranged? Should digital technologies be included in the teaching-learning process? Should Web 2.0 tools be used in measurement-evaluation?" Today, these questions are debated among educators. However, there is no clear answer to these questions. Teachers' design of the teaching environment, what behaviors they will transfer to students, which teaching materials they will employ in the teaching-learning process, and which tools they will prefer in measurement-evaluation are in close relation to their educational beliefs.

Teachers' educational beliefs are shaped along with their educational philosophies (Can, 2020). Philosophy of education is defined as "a way of thinking that queries education, educational science, educational objectives, content, the relationship between the theories guiding education and practice, the limits as well as the obstacles of education, and methods" (Köse, 2019). Philosophy of education addresses countries' education policies. On this wise, the countries' education systems are shaped within the framework of the adopted philosophy of education. In

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**Citation:** Aslan, S. (2022). The predictive role of the primary school teachers' educational beliefs on their curriculum design orientation preferences. *International Journal of Psychology and Educational Studies*, 9(3), 765-781. <https://dx.doi.org/10.52380/ijpes.2022.9.3.776>

addition, the curricula at all levels of education in the countries are prepared within the framework of the adopted educational philosophy.

Curriculum is expressed as desired goals and a set of values that can be active through a development process culminating in students' experiences (Wiles & Bondi, 2007). Oliva (2009) indicated that curriculum consists of "teaching content and learning experiences to transfer cultural heritage and develop reflective thinking". The curriculum refers to a series of educational activities covering all the behaviors students must exhibit inside and outside school. In this regard, curricula can be regarded as one of the significant elements of education. The organization of the curriculum must start with how the curriculum will be designed. In this context, we encounter the concept of curriculum design. Curriculum design is displayed as the process of identifying which elements the curriculum will inherit (Duman & Kocatürk-Kapucu, 2020). Various approaches are taken into account while preparing the curriculum design. These approaches have been grounded on what should be at the center of the curriculum design. When individuals are the focus of the curriculum, it is called student-centred design; when social problems are considered, it is called problem-centred; and when content and units are considered, it implies subject-centred curriculum design orientation (Oliva, 2009; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009; Soenmez, 2015). Teachers are the implementers of curricula. They design their curricula according to the curriculum as mentioned above design orientations. They organize the learning environment, apply teaching methods, techniques and models, choose measurement-evaluation tools, and design teaching materials within the framework of the educational philosophies they adopt (Aslan, 2017; Doğanay & Sarı, 2003). Thus, it may be wise to mention that the educational philosophies are effective on the curriculum design orientations. In fact, Ornstein and Hunkins (2009) noted that learner-centered and problem-centered curriculum design orientations are based on the philosophies of progressivism, essentialism and reconstructionism, while the subject-centered curriculum design is on perennialism, essentialism and progressivism.

Upon analyzing the relevant national and international literature, studies were conducted to examine teachers' educational philosophies and their curriculum design orientations (Aslan, 2017; Burul, 2018; Cheung & Wong, 2002; Davranmaz, 2021; Doğanay & Sarı, 2003; Erdem, 2021; Livingston, McClain & DeSpain, 1995; Pehlivan, 2019). Considering the related literature in Turkey, a study conducted by Kozikoğlu and Uyan (2018) shed light on the consistency between teachers' educational beliefs and their preferences for curriculum design orientations. A few studies were carried out to analyze teachers' educational beliefs and their curriculum design orientation preferences, which is considered a shortcoming in the literature. The study conducted by Kozikoğlu and Uyan (2018) pinpointed the relationship between the educational beliefs of teachers at different education levels and their preferences for curriculum designs. The present study attempts to identify the primary school teachers' educational beliefs and their curriculum design orientation preferences. This can be a difference between these two studies. In addition, this study was conducted with teachers working in a different city.

Designing a curriculum in line with the educational philosophy by the teachers may contribute to their implementation of the curricula more effectively and efficiently. Likewise, teachers can implement the curriculum more functionally if they adopt the educational philosophy for developing the curriculum in their classrooms. Hence, the results of this study are expected to contribute to the relevant literature. Identifying the relationship between the educational philosophies adopted by the teachers and their curriculum design orientation preferences will guide them in preparing and implementing the curricula since curricula are designed by considering what knowledge, skills and competencies the individuals must have. In this respect, the educational philosophies teachers adopt also impact how students are raised. Primary school teachers teach children aged 5-11, and they play a significant role in raising them. Therefore, this study examines the relationship between primary school teachers' educational beliefs and their curriculum design orientation preferences. Although the literature indicates that the theoretical curriculum design approaches are built on educational philosophies, the presence of a limited number of studies has called for this study. In this vein, the present study is paramount in terms of revealing this theoretical basis. Based on all these reasons, this study aims to reveal whether there is a correlation between the primary school teachers' educational beliefs and their curriculum design orientation preferences and whether their educational beliefs predict their preferences for curriculum design orientation. In service of this aim, answers to the following questions were sought:

- Is there a relationship between primary school teachers' educational beliefs and their preferences for curriculum design orientation?
- Do primary school teachers' educational beliefs predict their curriculum design orientation preferences?

## 2. Conceptual Framework

### 2.1. Educational Beliefs

Educational belief refers to what educators adopt regarding the way of learning-teaching based on their educational philosophies (Haney, Lumpe & Czerniak, 2003). Brauner and Büyükdüvenci (1982) implied that the most general feature of the educational philosophy is to organize the educational beliefs through evaluating many different possibilities and gathering them under one roof. Based on these statements, the philosophy of education is acknowledged as the factor determining teachers' educational beliefs. Philosophy of education is announced as a sub-field of philosophy which is essentially a field that handles, analyzes, synthesizes and conceptualizes all concepts, understandings, problems, and practices related to education (Yıldırım, 2021: 25). The literature points out that the philosophies of education are mainly divided into five categories: Perennialism, Essentialism, Progressivism, Reconstructionism, and Existentialism (Günay, 2018; Köse, 2019; Küçükali, 2021; Wiles & Bondi, 2007).

Classical realism is the basis of the philosophy of perennialism. Many of those who defend the philosophy of idealism advocate this educational philosophy (Güçlü, 2018). Perennialism makes reference to the existence of unchanging ethical principles and human nature everywhere and at all times. It emphasizes principles that are absolute immutable, namely, universal. Individuals must be raised according to these principles. Perennials promote the development of the human mind and argue that disciplined, intellectual and responsible aristocratic people should be raised (Acar-Erdol, 2018; Ergün, 2021; Sönmez, 2020). The purpose of education in perennialism is to prepare individuals for the eternal and real afterlife (Ergün, 2021). Perennialism requires that the teacher must be only authority in the classroom, and strict discipline should be applied (Erdener & Sezer, 2019). The advocates of perennialism underline that school is not real life but an artificial environment designed for preparation for real-life (Arslan, 2012). Perennialism is the most conservative and traditionalist philosophy compared to other educational philosophies (Wiles & Bondi, 2007). This philosophy defends that individuals read great classical works (Cevizci, 2016). In perennialism, measurement and evaluation are carried out to determine how much is learned (Erkiliç, 2013).

The essentialism, an educational philosophy, is grounded on realism. Essentialism, known as the most widespread and consistent educational philosophy in the world, takes the real world as a starting point in comparison with the ideal universe represented by perennialism (Daşçı, 2021). Education in essentialism aims to preserve social values and culture and to transfer them to new generations (Sönmez, 2020). In essentialism, it is of great significance for students to memorize knowledge. In this respect, a teacher-centered and strict discipline approach has been adopted in essentialism, just as in perennialism (Noddings, 2016). Essentialism does not consider the interests and needs of the student during the teaching-learning process. This is regarded as a waste of time (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009). Since the learning process requires hard work and discipline, the student can only develop his/her skills and mind by fulfilling what is written in the books and what the teacher teaches (Sönmez, 2020: 93). Essentialism recommends using traditional measurement and evaluation tools to determine what and how much individuals have learned (Daşçı, 2021).

Progressivism is identified with the thoughts of John Dewey, an American philosopher and educator. The philosophy of pragmatism lies at the heart of this educational philosophy (Uludağ, 2019). This philosophy requires that education teach the ever-changing life rather than the traditionally continuing standards and invariance in society (Ergün, 2021: 53). Learning is based on interest unlike passive assimilation, which is a process by which experience is developed using scientific methods. This process is initiated and directed by the student under the teacher's guidance (Akpınar, 2019; Kazu, 2007). In the philosophy of progressive education, the students does not directly memorize knowledge, but construct it in his/her mind. Progressivism aims to urge the student to establish a link between the knowledge s/he has learned and to ask questions and seek their answers (Aktan, 2019: 108). In this philosophy, the teaching-learning process is organized by considering the interests and needs of the students (Aslan, 2017; Alanoğlu, Aslan & Karabatak, 2021).

Activities are organized for students to learn by doing (Sönmez, 2020). Progressivism attaches importance to the evaluation of formative and personal development. Evaluation is usually ushered, monitored, and completed by the student (Daşçı, 2021: 89). The teacher is not the only authority; on the contrary, s/he is the person who guides the students in the teaching-learning process and who designs this process together. This educational philosophy suggests a more democratic classroom environment (Cevizci, 2016).

Reconstructionism is a remarkable educational philosophy that regards schools as the center of the solution to social problems (Daşçı, 2021). The idea of recreating the cultural and social structures of societies is at the heart of reconstructionism (Erkılıç, 2013), which argues that there is a constant change in life, therefore individuals should reshape every moment of their lives (Ergün, 2021). The main purpose of education in reconstructionism is to change and reshape the society and to bring democratic values to the society (Sönmez, 2020). Besides, the main objectives of education in this educational philosophy are making peace and love prevail worldwide, activating social change through practice, ensuring cooperation between individuals, and improving individuals' critical thinking skills (Daşçı, 2021). High-level methods such as travel, observation, experimentation and research must be employed in teaching-learning. Reconstructionism requires process-based and formative evaluation in terms of measurement and evaluation. The questions posed to the students in the teaching-learning process should be able to determine whether they use the critical thinking skills and scientific method (Sönmez, 2020).

The philosophy of existentialism is built on the uniqueness and freedom of human beings, and it argues that the individual should bear the responsibility of existence and self-definition (Guttek, 2014). According to this idea, which emerged as a result of social traumas, an individual should educate himself/herself not for society or humanity, but for himself/herself (Ergün, 2021; Kazu, 2018). Existential education aims to teach students that their freedom is superior to everything else and to offer them an opportunity to develop their individuality and personality (Kasapoğlu, 2021: 51). Existentialism advocates the development of individuals' self-awareness (Epçaçan, 2018). An educational approach adopting existentialism shows that the learner is at the center and active, unlike traditional educational approaches. In addition, there is an educational environment in which individual differences are considered. Rather than an authoritarian and oppressive behavior style on students, it offers students freedom and a rich learning environment (Guttek, 2014). The teacher is the guiding person who allows students to create their truths with the questions they ask (Sönmez, 2020). Since freedom is at the forefront, this philosophy argues that an individual should be aware of all kinds of factors that limit their freedom and neutralize them (Tozlu, 2003). Thus, the individual discovers himself/herself and learns to take responsibility through education. One should evaluate how much s/he can realize themselves (Sönmez, 2020; Uludağ, 2019). Therefore, humans realize that they are conscious beings and have a life based on what they have learned from their experiences (Biçer, 2014). Existentialism supports student-centered understanding that will enable students to think and research rather than the teacher-centered, rote system in education and disciplining the student (Günay, 2018).

## 2.2. Curriculum Design Orientations

Humanity has thought about a significant issue since ancient times related to how education and training should be carried out. Discussions on conducting instruction in a planned and programmed way have brought the concept of the education program to the agenda. The book "Curriculum", written by John Franklin Bobbitt in 1818, is the first book to deal with all phases of curriculum development in education (Wiles & Bondi, 2007). This book underlines that education and training activities should be carried out within the framework of a plan and program (Bobbitt, 2017). The concept of curriculum has been scientifically handled thanks to this book.

Curriculum can be defined as *"the mechanism of learning experiences provided to the learner through planned activities in school and outside the school"* (Demirel, 2017: 4). Curricula are developed in line with the countries' education policies. They clue about what kind of people countries aim at raising. In this regard, curricula have a significant role in countries' education systems. Curriculum design is one of the most decisive elements of the curriculum development process in education (Türkan, 2021). According to Wiles and Bondi (2007), curriculum design ensures that the curriculum cycle is implemented sequentially to successfully complete the curriculum. Petrina (2004) pinpointed that curriculum design involves the forming of educational content and the contents of educational forms with the responses to the questions "What should be learned?" and "How

should it be organized for teaching?" Ornstein and Hunkins (2009) highlighted that curriculum design involves interpretation and selection of objectives, organization of content, decisions about how to teach the content, and judgments about how to evaluate the success of the developed curriculum. The relevant literature suggests that curriculum design approaches in education are divided into three as subject-centered designs, learner-centered designs and problem-centered designs (Adıgüzel, 2017; Alcı, 2019; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009).

The subject-centered curriculum design is the oldest known design. It is required to transfer the subjects to the learner. Subject-centered curriculum design is grounded on the relationships between concepts, subjects and courses (Türkan, 2021). In subject-centered curriculum designs, there is a logical connection between the subjects of each course and learning the subjects is considered as both a tool and a goal (Çubukçu, 2011). Knowledge and concepts are at the center of the subjects in this curriculum design, and it is of great importance to transfer knowledge and concepts to students. In contrast, the curriculum is being designed (Saylor, Alexander & Lewis, 1981). The subjects in the subject-centered curriculum design are arranged linearly from simple to complex (Demeuse & Strauven, 2013). Teachers are regarded as experts on the subject, conveying information directly, while students are passive receivers deprived of content choice (Vasuthavan & Kunaratnam, 2017). Subject-centered curriculum designs are based on perennialism and essentialism as the reflection of realist and idealist educational philosophies (Henson, 2006; Sönmez, 2020). The subject-centered curriculum design is teacher-centered and textbooks are indispensable teaching materials of the teaching-learning process (Akpınar, 2014; Tucker, 2011). This approach is known as the most used curriculum design orientation. Subject-centered curriculum design is built on perennial and essentialist educational philosophies; moreover, this design has seven classifications: discipline design, broad fields design, subject design, correlation design, conceptual design, descriptive curriculum design and process design (Akpınar, 2014; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009).

The student-centered curriculum design gained prominence in response to the weaknesses of the subject-centered curriculum design (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009). This design advocates that learners' interests and needs should be considered as well as their cognitive development characteristics (Türkan, 2021). In the student-centered curriculum design, it is of important to design activities that center the student. In this approach, Rodrigo (2017) argued that teachers' are to provide students with more opportunities for active and deep learning by allowing them to realize their own learning. Hence, teachers are only facilitators of learning, and students take responsibility for their learning. In other words, this approach should include activities that allow students to learn by doing and experience and to account for their learning (Duman & Kocatürk-Kapucu, 2020). In the student-centered curriculum design, students' individual differences are also taken into account. Thus, curriculum is not prepared in advance. It is organized in the process by considering individual differences and determining students' interests (Adıgüzel, 2017). In this approach, the teacher does not convey information directly but guides the student in the teaching-learning process (Gökalp, 2020). In a learner-centered curriculum, teachers not only welcome the students' self-actualization goal but should also offer them a flexible environment with opportunities in this direction (Ellis, 2014). Student-centered curriculum design is based on progressivism, reconstructivism and existentialism, and it is divided into child-centered design, experience-centered design, romantic(radical) design and humanistic design (Mc Neil, 2006; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009; Karacaoğlu, 2018).

Problem-centred curriculum design is an approach that "advocates that students learn about their future thoughts, the causes and consequences of events, and social relationships, work constructively and cooperatively for the development of society, and acquire skills related to development strategies and techniques" (Adıgüzel, 2017: 195). Demirel (2017) stated that problem-centered design is organized to reveal the existing needs of the society by increasing the cultural and traditional values. Accordingly, this design focuses on students' interests, abilities, needs and social problems. Çubukçu (2011) pointed out that this design focuses on continuity in social life, social problems, social values and living spaces, and aims to raise capable individuals with knowledge, skills and ideas in solving problems for the society. Similarly, Rodrigo (2017) claimed that students identify the causes of the problems, look for solutions and decide which solution is the most workable one. Problem-centered design is tackled within the context of developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills related to current social issues in education (Karacaoğlu, 2018; Tucker, 2011). This approach emphasizes that teachers should provide opportunities for students to try and make mistakes and

that they should also create uncertain situations for students and guide them in resolving these situations (Alcı, 2019). In the problem-centered curriculum design, students focus on how to look at a problem and develop a solution, which is expected to improve students' ability to solve problems that they may encounter in real life (Duman & Kocatürk-Kapucu, 2020). According to Aykaç (2014), this curriculum design aims to solve individual and social problems. In a general sense, it focuses on both social and individual problems. In this respect, problem-solving method is related to the problem-centered curriculum design, and curriculum design should be developed with this method (Odabaşı, 2014). Based on progressivism and reconstructionism, this approach includes three different types of design, namely life situation design, core design, and reconstructive design with social problems (Henson, 2006; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009; Soenmez Sönmez, 2020).

### 3. Method

#### 3.1. Research Design

This study employed the correlational survey model, one of the survey models. The correlational research model is defined as "a quantitative research model in which various statistics are used to measure and define the relationship between two or more variable/score groups in non-experimental studies" (Creswell, 2014). The correlational survey model examines the relationships between two or more variables (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2014). This study used the correlational survey model since the relationship between the primary school teachers' educational beliefs and their preferences for the curriculum design orientations was analyzed using various statistical techniques.

#### 3.2. Population and Sample

The study's target population consisted of primary school teachers working in a province in the Mediterranean Region. The sample was chosen by the stratified sampling method. In stratified sampling, the population is divided into strata based on some specific characteristics and a sample is selected from each stratum (Creswell & Guetterman, 2018: 140). As stated by Büyüköztürk, Kılıç-Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz, and Demirel (2017: 89), the purpose of using the stratified sampling method is to ensure that each of the subgroups in the population is represented in the sample in accordance with their proportions in the population. The schools (public and private) were taken as a stratum within the scope of the study. The target population of the study is composed of 1603 primary school teachers. According to the information from the Provincial Directorate of National Education, 64 primary school teachers work in private schools and 1539 in public schools. Accordingly, 4% of the target population works in private schools and 96% in public schools. Johnson and Christensen (2017) implied that if the target population is 1600, the sample must be 310 at the 95% confidence level. Gürbüz and Şahin (2018) pointed out that the sample identified with the stratified sampling method should be selected according to the ratios of the strata in the target population. Based on this reference, of the 310 identified participants, 12 (4%) should be chosen from teachers working at private schools and 298 (96%) from those working at public schools. 514 primary school teachers were contacted for the study. Of all the teachers, 64 work at private schools and 450 work at public schools. These values suggest that the number of participants is satisfactory for reflecting the target population. The study participants comprised 263 (51%) female teachers and 252 (49%) male teachers.

#### 3.3. Data Collection Tools

This study deployed two data collection tools. These are as following:

*Educational Belief Scale:* The "Educational Belief Scale" developed by Yılmaz, Altınkurt and Çokluk (2011) was used in the present study. The researchers used an exploratory factor analysis. The tool was conducted with 305 pre-service teachers and 154 teachers. The scale was determined to have five factors, including "Progressivism," "Reconstructionism," "Existentialism," "Perennialism," and "Essentialism," with a total of 40 items, as a result of the researchers' exploratory factor analysis. The progressive item of the scale accounted for 16.45% of the overall variation, existentialism 11.42 percent, reconstructionism 8.42 percent, perennialism 7.03 percent, and essentialism 6.25 percent (Yılmaz, Altınkurt, & Multitude, 2011). Item factor loadings in the related scale varied between .42 and .73, and the item-total correlations ranged between .22 and .57 (Yılmaz, Altınkurt & Çokluk, 2011). Yılmaz, Altınkurt and Çokluk (2011) confirmed the scale's five-factor construct through exploratory factor analysis. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis affirmed that the fit indices were at an acceptable level (AGFI=0.83, GFI=0.85, RMSR≤0.05, RMSEA≤0.05, RMR and SRMR≤0.08, CFI≥0.95,

NFI and NNFI $\geq$ 0.95, PGFI=0.75) (Yılmaz, Altinkurt & Çokluk, 2011). The total score of the scale is not obtainable. Therefore, the items in the scale cannot be interpreted over the total score. The scores are calculated according to each educational philosophy in the scale. Based on the scores obtained from the scale factors, the participation level in that factor can be interpreted. The researchers also examined the internal consistency coefficients of the scale. The analysis results revealed that the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of the factors varied between .70 and .91. The items were arranged for response on a five-point Likert type scale (Yılmaz, Altinkurt & Çokluk, 2011).

The researcher obtained the necessary permission from the researchers who developed the scale and used the instrument in the study. In the present study, the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of the factors was examined. Accordingly, the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients for the factors progressivism, reconstructivism, existentialism, and perennialism were found to be .72, .80, .80, .70, and .75, respectively. These results indicate an acceptable level of internal reliability coefficients (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2014).

*Curriculum Design Orientations Preference Scale (CDOPS)*: This study employed the "Curriculum Design Orientations Preference Scale" developed by Baş (2013). An exploratory factor analysis was used during scale development process. The tool was conducted with 300 teachers. As a result of the exploratory factor analysis performed by the researcher, the scale was found to include three factors and 30 items. The factors were identified as "student-centered", "problem-centered" and "subject-centered". The student-centered factor of the scale explained 19.98% of the total variance, the problem-centered for 18.32% and the subject-centered for 13.71% (Baş, 2013). Item factor loadings of each factor were examined and presented as following. The student-centred factor ranged from .76 to .53, the factor loading on the problem-centred factor ranged from .82 to .46, and the subject-centred factor ranged from .73 to .57 (Baş, 2013). Baş (2013) also performed confirmatory factor analysis and determined that the fit indices were at an acceptable level (AGFI=0.80, GFI=0.83, RMSR $\leq$ 0.05, RMSEA $\leq$ 0.05, RMR and SRMR $\leq$ 0.08, CFI $\geq$ 0.95, NFI and NNFI $\geq$ 0.95) (Baş, 2013). The scale's total score is not calculated; therefore, the items in the scale cannot be interpreted over the total score. Scores are calculated according to each curriculum design orientation in the scale. Participants' preference levels in this factor can be interpreted based on the scores obtained from the factors in the scale. The researcher also examined the internal consistency coefficients of the scale. In this regard, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of the factors varied between .87 and .89. The items were arranged for response on a five-point Likert type scale (Baş, 2013).

The researcher obtained the necessary permission from the researchers who developed the scale and used the instrument in the study. In the present study, the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of the factors was examined. Accordingly, the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients for the factors student-centred, problem-centred, and subject-centred were found to be .73, .73, and .67, respectively. These results indicate an acceptable level of internal reliability coefficients (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2014).

### 3.4. Data Collection

The data were collected online between 20/03-15/06/2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the researcher prepared the data collection tool on Google Form. The researcher shared the online form with the primary school principals with the support of the Provincial Directorate of National Education. The principals were requested to share the online form with their primary school teachers. Official permission was obtained from the Provincial Directorate of National Education for the implementation of the study. Ethics committee decision was also taken (Date: 13/02/202, No: 874329561050.991/87-4). All ethical principles were complied by the researcher during the data collection process. An article indicating that the participants voluntarily participated in the study was added to the online form.

### 3.5. Data Analysis

The research data were analyzed through use of the statistical package program. The normality assumption was tested before analyzing the obtained data. Kolmogorov Smirnov test was used to determine whether the data demonstrated a normal distribution. The analysis results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test show that the factors of the scale such as progressivism (K- SW =.108, p <.05), reconstructivism (K- SW =.124, p <.05), existentialism (K- SW =.252, p <.05), perennialism (K- SW =.105, p <.05), and essentialism (K- SW =.073, p <.05) were not normally distributed. Likewise, the factors of curriculum design orientation preferences scale such as

the student-centered (K-SW=.105,  $p<.05$ ), problem-centered (K-SW=.116,  $p<.05$ ) and subject-centered (K-SW=.090,  $p<.05$ ) did not show normal distribution. Can (2020) recommended that skewness and kurtosis coefficients be examined to determine normality. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), skewness and kurtosis values must be between +1.5 and -1.5 to accept the normal distribution. On the other hand, George and Mallery (2010) noted that the skewness and kurtosis coefficients must be between +2 and -2 for normality. Within the study, the skewness coefficient of the progressivism factor in the educational beliefs scale was -.53, the standard error .11, the kurtosis coefficient -.53, and the standard error .22; the skewness coefficient of the reconstructionism factor was -.41, the standard error .11, the kurtosis coefficient -.77, and the standard error .22; the skewness coefficient of the existentialism factor was found to be -1.27, the standard error .11, the kurtosis coefficient .56, and the standard error .22; the skewness coefficient of the perennialism factor was -.47, the standard error .11, the kurtosis coefficient .60, and the standard error .22; the skewness coefficient of the essentialism factor was determined to be .43, the standard error .11, the kurtosis coefficient .06, and the standard error .22. Similarly, the skewness coefficient of the "student-centeredness" factor in the "curriculum design preferences" scale was determined to be -.54, the standard error was .11, the kurtosis coefficient was -.37, and the standard error was .22; the skewness coefficient of the "problem-centeredness" factor was -.38, the standard error was .11, the kurtosis coefficient was -.80, and the standard error was .22; the skewness coefficient of the subject-centered factor was .34, the standard error was .11, the kurtosis coefficient was -.19, and the standard error was .22. The values indicated that the data demonstrated a normal distribution. Besides, Field (2005) claimed that the Q-Q graph should be examined to determine normality. According to Field (2005), the data in the Q-Q graph must be collected on a slope of 45 degrees. As seen in Annex 1, the data were collected on a 45 degree slope, meaning that the data showed a normal distribution. Pearson Product Moments Correlation and Multiple Linear Regression (MLRA) analyzes were used during data analysis. To perform the Pearson Product Moments Correlation analysis, univariate normality must first be provided. As mentioned above, this assumption is met. The other assumptions for making this analysis are that the related variables are continuous variables and covariance is provided between the variables (Green & Salkind, 2013). Thus, Pearson Product Moments Correlation analysis was used as these assumptions were met in the study. Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient ranges between -1 and +1 (Kilmen, 2020). The Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient between the variables is low between .00-.29; medium between .30-.70; high between .71-1.00 (Büyüköztürk, 2013: 32). MLRA was used in the current study. Some assumptions are to be met to use MLRA. It is necessary to reach a sufficient number of samples for making MLRA. Pallant (2016) noted that at least 90 participants are needed in case of five independent variables. This assumption was met since 515 participants were included in the study. The assumption of multiple co-collinearity must also be met for MLRA (Shavelson, 1996). According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), the fact that the relationship between independent variables is above .90 leads to the violation of the multiple co-linearity assumption. They recommend examining the relationships between independent variables, tolerance and VIF values. The analysis results signified that the relationship between the independent variables was below .90, the tolerance values were not lower than .10 (Field, 2009: 297), and that the VIF value was below 10 (Pallant, 2016). Based on these results, it can be said that this assumption is met. The absence of extreme scores and the assumption of multivariate normality must also be met to perform MLRA. Hence, it is recommended to examine the Mahalahobis and Cook's distances. Seğer (2015) underpinned that the Mahalahobis distance must be below 20.52 if there are five predictor variables. Pallant (2016) suggested the Cook's distance be close to zero. In this way, extreme values were identified and these extreme values were excluded from the study before MLRA. MLRA was performed on 453 data, with the extreme values removed. Standardized Beta ( $\beta$ ) coefficients were taken as the basis for the interpretation of the multiple linear regression analysis, and t-test results regarding the significance of these coefficients were taken into account. The significance level of .05 was taken into account during data analysis.

### **3.6. Ethical**

In this study, all rules stated to be followed within the scope of "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive" were followed. Ethical Review Board Name: Suleyman Demirel University Ethics Committee. Date of Ethics Evaluation Decision: 13.02.2020 Ethics Assessment Document Issue Number: 87/4



#### 4. Findings

This section covers whether there is a significant relationship between the primary school teachers' educational beliefs and their curriculum design orientation preferences and whether their education beliefs predict curriculum design orientation preferences.

Table 1 depicts the findings regarding the relationship between primary school teachers' educational beliefs and their curriculum design orientation preferences.

**Table 1.** *The Relationship Between Primary School Teachers' Educational Beliefs and Their Curriculum Design Orientation Preferences*

Variables	Student-centered	Problem-centered	Subject-centered
Progressivism	.67**	.57**	.00
Existentialism	.55**	.57**	-.10**
Reconstructionism	.45**	.54**	.18**
Perennialism	.35**	.35**	.30**
Essentialism	-.19**	-.08	.49**

N=453, \*\*p<.01

While there was a positive, medium-level, and significant relationship between primary school teachers' progressivism philosophy of education and their preferences for student-centered ( $r=.67$ ,  $p<.01$ ) and problem-centered ( $r=.57$ ,  $p<.01$ ) curriculum design orientations, there was no significant relationship between their preferences for subject-centered ( $r=.00$ ,  $p>.05$ ) curriculum design. The instructors' existentialism education philosophy and their preferences for student-centered ( $r=.55$ ,  $p<.01$ ) and problem-centered ( $r=.57$ ,  $p<.01$ ) curriculum design had a positive, medium-level, and significant relationship. Subject-centered ( $r=-.10$ ,  $p<.01$ ) curriculum design, on the other hand, had a negative, low-level, and significant association. A positive, medium level and significant relationship were found between the reconstructionism education philosophy adopted by the teachers and their student-centered ( $r=.45$ ,  $p<.01$ ) and problem-centered ( $r=.54$ ,  $p<.01$ ) curriculum design preferences, while a positive and low-level significant relationship in terms of the subject-centered ( $r=.18$ ,  $p<.01$ ) curriculum design preference. The findings also revealed a positive, medium level, and significant relationship between the primary school teachers' perennialism education philosophy and their preferences of student-centered ( $r=.35$ ,  $p<.01$ ), problem-centered ( $r=.35$ ,  $p<.01$ ) and subject-centered ( $r=.30$ ,  $p<.01$ ) curriculum designs. A low and negative correlation was found between elementary teachers' essentialist educational philosophy and their preference for student-centred curriculum design ( $r=-.19$ ,  $p<.01$ ), while a positive, medium and significant correlation was found between preference for subject-centred curriculum design ( $r=.49$ ,  $p<.01$ ) and preference for subject-centred curriculum design ( $r=.49$ ,  $p<.01$ ). Besides, there was a negative, low level, and insignificant correlation between their essentialist philosophy of education and problem-centered ( $r=-.08$ ,  $p>.05$ ) curriculum design preference.

Table 2 displays whether the educational philosophies adopted by the primary school teachers predicted the student-centered curriculum design orientation preference.

**Table 2.** *Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Results Regarding the Prediction of the Adopted Educational Philosophies on Student-Centered Curriculum Design Orientation Preference*

Predicted Variable	Predicting Variable	B	Standard Error	$\beta$	t	p	Binary r	Partial r
Student-centered	Stable	1.17	.20		5.64	.00		
	Progressivism	.39	.04	.38	8.11	.00	.62	.35
	Existentialism	.22	.05	.20	4.39	.00	.55	.20
	Reconstructionism	.07	.02	.10	2.41	.01	.45	.11
	Perennialism	.06	.03	.09	2.21	.02	.35	.10
	Essentialism	-.04	.01	-.11	-3.00	.00	-.19	-.14
R= .679		R <sup>2</sup> = .461	F(6-452)= 76.547	p=.00				

The results of the multiple linear regression analysis conducted to show how elementary teachers' educational philosophies predicted their preference for student-centred curriculum design indicated that the variables progressivism, existentialism, reconstructionism, perennialism, and essentialism had a significant relationship

( $R=.676$ ,  $R^2=.461$ ) with preference for student-centred curriculum design ( $F(5-452)=76.547$ ,  $p < .01$ ). These variables mentioned above were determined to explain 46% of teachers' student-centered curriculum design orientation preference. Considering the binary and partial correlations between the predicting variables (progressivism, existentialism, reconstructionism, perennialism and essentialism) and the predicted variable (student-centered), a medium-level positive correlation was identified with progressivism ( $r=.62$ ) [when the effects of other predictor variables are controlled ( $r=.35$ )], existentialism ( $r=.55$ ) [when other predictive variables are controlled ( $r=.20$ )], with reconstructionism ( $r=.45$ ) [when other predictive variables are controlled ( $r=.11$ )] and perennialism ( $r=.35$ ) [when the effect of other predictive variables is controlled ( $r=.10$ )]. At the same time, a negative and low-level correlation was found with essentialism ( $r=-.19$ ) [when the effect of other predictor variables is controlled ( $r=-.14$ )]. The standardized regression coefficients showed the order of importance of the predictor variables on the preference of student-centered curriculum design as progressivism ( $\beta=.39$ ), existentialism ( $\beta=.22$ ), reconstructionism ( $\beta=.07$ ), perennialism ( $\beta=.07$ ), and essentialism ( $\beta=-.04$ ). In the analysis of the significance tests of the regression coefficients, it was found that the variables progressivism, existentialism, reconstructivism, perennialism, and essentialism were the significant predictors of the preference of student-centered curriculum design. According to the results of the multiple linear regression analysis, the regression equation predicting the student-centered curriculum design orientation is as follows:

$$\text{Student-Centered} = (.39 \times \text{progressivism}) + (.22 \times \text{existentialism}) + (.07 \times \text{reconstructionism}) + (.06 \times \text{perennialism}) + (-.04 \times \text{essentialism}) + (1.17 \times \text{stable})$$

This study shed light on whether the educational philosophies adopted by the primary school teachers predicted their problem-centered curriculum design orientation. The results are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Results Regarding the Prediction of the Adopted Educational Philosophies on Problem-Centered Curriculum Design Orientation Preference

Predicted Variable	Predicting Variable	B	Standard Error	$\beta$	t	p	Binary r	Partial r
Problem-centered	Stable	1.25	.20		6.20	.00		
	Progressivism	.23	.04	.24	5.10	.00	.57	.17
	Existentialism	.29	.04	.28	6.03	.00	.57	.21
	Reconstructionism	.16	.02	.26	5.07	.00	.54	.19
	Perennialism	.02	.02	.03	.74	.05	.35	.02
	Essentialism	-.00	.01	-.00	-.23	.81	-.08	-.00
R= .675    R <sup>2</sup> = .455		F <sub>(5-452)</sub> = 74.644		p=.00				

As a result of the multiple linear regression analysis conducted to determine how elementary teachers' educational philosophies predicted their preference for problem-centred curriculum design, a significant relationship ( $R=.675$ ,  $R^2=.455$ ) was found between the variables progressivism, existentialism, reconstructionism, perennialism, and essentialism and preference for problem-centered curriculum design ( $F(5-452)=74.644$ ,  $p < .01$ ). These variables as mentioned above were found to explain 45% of teachers' problem-centered curriculum design orientation preference. Considering the binary and partial correlations between the predicting variables (progressivism, existentialism, reconstructionism, perennialism and essentialism) and the predicted variable (problem-centered), a medium level positive correlation was identified with progressivism ( $r=.57$ ) [when the effects of other predictor variables are controlled ( $r=.17$ )], existentialism ( $r=.57$ ) [when other predictive variables are controlled ( $r=.21$ )], with reconstructionism ( $r=.54$ ) [when other predictive variables are controlled ( $r=.19$ )] and perennialism ( $r=.35$ ) [when the effect of other predictive variables is controlled ( $r=.02$ )], while a negative and low level correlation was found with essentialism ( $r=-.08$ ) [when the effect of other predictor variables is controlled ( $r=-.00$ )]. The standardized regression coefficients revealed that existentialism ( $\beta=.28$ ), reconstructionism ( $\beta=.26$ ), progressivism ( $\beta=.24$ ), perennialism ( $\beta=.03$ ), and essentialism ( $\beta=-.00$ ) were the most important predictor variables on the preference for problem-centered curriculum design. The variables progressivism, existentialism, and reconstructivism were found to be significant predictors of preference for problem-centered curriculum design after testing the significance tests of the regression coefficients. However, the predicting variables of perennialism and essentialism were not the significant predictors of the problem-centered curriculum design orientation preference. According to the results of the

multiple linear regression analysis, the regression equation predicting the problem-centered curriculum design orientation is as follows:

$$\text{Problem-Centered} = (.23 \times \text{progressivism}) + (.29 \times \text{existentialism}) + (.16 \times \text{reconstructionism}) + (.02 \times \text{perennialism}) + (-.00 \times \text{essentialism}) + (1.25 \times \text{stable})$$

Table 4 displays findings related to whether the educational philosophies adopted by the primary school teachers predicted their subject-centered curriculum design orientation.

**Table 4.** Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Results Regarding the Prediction of the Adopted Educational Philosophies on Subject-Centered Curriculum Design Orientation Preference

Predicted Variable	Predicting Variable	B	Standard Error	$\beta$	t	p	Binary r	Partial r
Subject-centered	Stable	1.91	.34		5.54	.00		
	Progressivism	.00	.08	.00	.10	.91	.00	.00
	Existentialism	-.22	.08	-.13	-2.62	.00	-.10	-.12
	Reconstructionism	.10	.04	.11	2.22	.02	.18	.10
	Perennialism	.21	.05	.20	4.33	.00	.29	.20
	Essentialism	.25	.02	.42	9.91	.00	.49	.42
R= .550    R <sup>2</sup> = .302    F <sub>(5-452)</sub> = 38.740    p=.00								

A significant relationship (R=.550 R<sup>2</sup>=.302) was found between the variables progressivism, existentialism, reconstructionism, perennialism, and essentialism and preference for subject-specific curriculum design (F(5-452)=38.740, p.01) in a multiple linear regression analysis conducted to determine how elementary teachers' educational philosophies predict their preference for subject-specific curriculum design. These five variables explained 30% of teachers' subject-centered curriculum design orientation preference. As is seen in binary and partial correlations between the predicting variables (progressivism, existentialism, reconstructionism, perennialism and essentialism) and the predicted variable (subject-centered), a low-level positive correlation was determined with progressivism (r=.00) [when the effects of other predictor variables are controlled (r=.00)], with reconstructionism (r=.18) [when other predictive variables are controlled (r=.10)] and perennialism (r=.29) [when the effect of other predictive variables is controlled (r=.20)], while a positive and medium level correlation was found with essentialism (r=.49) [when the effect of other predictor variables is controlled (r=.42)]. Furthermore, a negative and low-level relation was identified with existentialism (r=-.10) [when other predictive variables are controlled (r=-.12)]. The standardized regression coefficients revealed that essentialism (=42), perennialism (=20), reconstructionism (=11), progressivism (=00), and existentialism (=13) were the most important predictor variables for subject-based curriculum design choice. Perennialism, essentialism, existentialism, and reconstructivism were revealed to be significant predictors of the preference for subject-centered curriculum design when the regression coefficients were tested for significance. However, the predicting variable of progressivism was not the significant predictor of the subject-centered curriculum design orientation preference. According to the results of the multiple linear regression analysis, the regression equation predicting the subject-centered curriculum design orientation is as follows:

$$\text{Subject-Centered} = (.00 \times \text{progressivism}) + (-.22 \times \text{existentialism}) + (.10 \times \text{reconstructionism}) + (.21 \times \text{perennialism}) + (.25 \times \text{essentialism}) + (1.91 \times \text{stable})$$

## 5. Discussion

The design of the classroom environment, the approaches teachers use to maintain classroom discipline, the teaching methods, techniques, and models they use to change student behavior, and the measurement and assessment tools they use to determine how much students are learning are all influenced by teachers' pedagogical beliefs (Aslan, 2017). Their beliefs also play a significant role in an effective and efficient implementation of curricula. They design the curriculum in accordance with their educational beliefs and put this design into practice (Can, 2020; Kozikoğlu & Uyan, 2018). Curricula include educational goals that are provided for students (Hewitt, 2016). In this respect, the educational philosophies adopted by teachers also affect students' training. Thus, the present study attempts to examine the relationship between primary school teachers' educational beliefs and their curriculum design orientation preferences as they will design and

implement the curricula within the framework of the educational philosophies. This will affect the training of students within the framework of the knowledge, skills, and competencies the students acquire.

The first sub-problem of the study investigated the relationship between the primary school teachers' educational beliefs and their preferences for curriculum design orientation. The findings revealed a positive, medium level and significant relationship between the teachers' progressivism, existentialism and reconstructionism educational philosophies and their student-centered and problem-centered curriculum design orientation preferences. A positive, medium level, and significant relationship were identified between the essentialist educational philosophy adopted by the primary school teachers and their choice of subject-centered curriculum design orientation. These results are congruent with the relevant literature. Ornstein and Hunkins (2009) emphasised that student-centred and problem-centred curriculum design are based on the educational philosophies of progressivism and reconstructionism. Similarly, (2015) emphasised that student-centred curriculum refers to progressive and existential educational philosophies. Akpınar (2014) also stated that the subject-oriented curriculum depends on perennialism and essentialism, while the student-oriented and problem-oriented curriculum is based on progressivism, reconstructivism, and existentialism. Based on this evidence, this study clearly established a relationship between the contemporary educational philosophies of progressivism, reconstructionism, and existentialism and student- and problem-based curricula. A similar result emerged between essentialism and the subject-oriented curriculum design. This paved the way for the idea that if primary school teachers' scores on adopted contemporary educational philosophies increase, their scores on student-oriented and problem-oriented curriculum design preferences will also increase. Similarly, if the primary school teachers' scores towards adopting essentialism increase, their subject-centered curriculum design preference scores will also increase. This study also identified a positive, medium level and significant relationship between the perennialism educational philosophy adopted by the teachers and their preferences for student-centered, problem-centered and subject-centered curriculum design orientations, which emerges as an important result. Literature shows that student-centered and problem-centered curriculum design are based on progressivism, reconstructionism, and existentialism, while subject-centered curriculum design is based on perennialism and essentialism (Goekalp, 2020; Oliva, 2009; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009). Unlike this theoretical basis, the current study obtained a different result. In the study conducted by Kozikoğlu and Uyan (2018), no significant relationship was found between the perennialism adopted by teachers and their preferences for student-centered and problem-centered curriculum design orientations. This may be because the data were collected via an online form. Teachers mostly answer online questionnaires over their mobile phones. In this case, they likely do not read the items in the scale carefully and express their reactions correctly.

This study also highlighted whether the primary school teachers' educational beliefs predicted their curriculum design orientation preferences. The results illuminated that the teachers' progressivism, reconstructivism and existentialism significantly predicted their student-centered and problem-centered curriculum design orientation preferences. The teaching-learning process is organized according to the interests and needs of the students in the progressive education philosophy. It is ensured that students learn through experience in the teaching environment, namely, by doing (Henson, 2006). Reconstructionism necessitates to prepare students for change in life and creating a fair society by changing the society (Hewitt, 2016). Existentialism advocates that students be able to think freely and be allowed to realize themselves (Başarer, 2018). In the student-centered curriculum design orientation, students' interests and needs are considered while preparing the curriculum design, and learning opportunities are provided for students to realize themselves (Demirel, 2017). Likewise, curricula are designed to solve the problems of the society in the problem-centered curriculum design orientation, and in this way, it is advocated to change and transform the society (Adıgüzel, 2017). The results of the study overlap with the related literature. When elementary school teachers adopt modern educational philosophies like progressivism, reconstructivism, and existentialism, they can be said to consider students' interests and needs when planning the teaching-learning process, organizing activities that allow students to realize themselves, solve societal problems, and developing democratic curriculum designs. Kozikoğlu and Uyan (2018) concluded that the contemporary educational philosophies adopted by teachers predicted student-centered and problem-centered curriculum design orientations. This result is parallel to that of the present study.

The results also suggested that perennialism and essentialism adopted by the primary school teachers significantly predicted their choice of subject-centered curriculum design orientation. Perennialism is a

teacher-centered education philosophy. In the perennialism education philosophy, real unchanging knowledge must be transferred from generation to generation. A strict understanding of discipline must be applied in the classroom environment (Erdener & Sezer, 2019). Essentialism is also a teacher-centred educational philosophy. Learning requires hard work. The teacher can punish students when necessary. Students should memorize the subjects (Köse, 2019; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009; Sönmez, 2020). The subject-centered curriculum design orientation also makes students memorize the subjects. The most important tool used by the teacher in the classroom is the textbook (Alcı, 2012; Karacaoğlu, 2018). In this regard, it can be stated that the study results are in line with the literature. Namely, suppose the primary school teachers adopt perennialism and essentialism. In that case, they will not consider the interests and needs of the students while organizing the teaching-learning process, and they will design the curriculum concerning the memorization of the subjects. Kozikoğlu and Uyan (2018) noted that the traditional educational philosophies adopted by the teachers predicted the subject-centered curriculum design orientation, which is similar to that of the current study.

## 6. Conclusion

The results of the study revealed a moderately strong and significant relationship between the educational philosophies of progressivism, reconstructivism, and existentialism, known as the contemporary educational philosophies adopted by elementary teachers, and their preferences in student-centred and problem-centred curriculum design. Similarly, a significant relationship was determined between perennialism and essentialism, which are the traditional education philosophies, and the subject-centered curriculum design orientation preferences. The results also demonstrated that the contemporary education philosophies adopted by the primary school teachers predicted the student-centered and problem-centered curriculum design orientation preferences. In contrast, the traditional education philosophies predicted the subject-oriented curriculum design. This is considered as a significant result of the present study. Thus, primary school teachers may be expected to design and implement student-centered and problem-centered curriculum designs if they adopt contemporary educational philosophies. Likewise, they will design and implement a subject-centered curriculum design when they adopt traditional educational philosophies.

## 7. Recommendations

Based on the research findings, various recommendations were provided:

- Primary school teachers can be instructed on preparing curricula following contemporary educational philosophies within the scope of in-service training. Therefore, student-centered curricula can be prepared, and students are provided multiple opportunities to have self-realization; moreover, students can be trained following the requirements of the age.
- The study findings revealed a medium-level and significant relationship between teachers' education philosophies and their student-centered and problem-centered curriculum design orientation preferences. It is recommended to conduct studies to determine how this relationship has emerged.
- Studies may be carried out to examine the educational beliefs of teachers from different branches and their preferences for curriculum design orientations.
- It is also recommended to conduct qualitative studies that examine teachers' educational philosophies and curriculum design orientation in depth.

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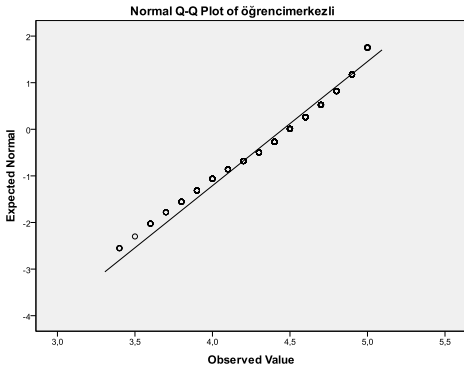
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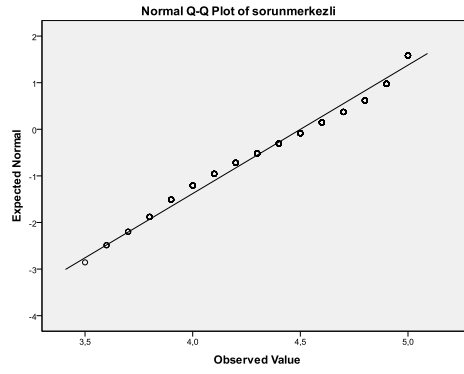
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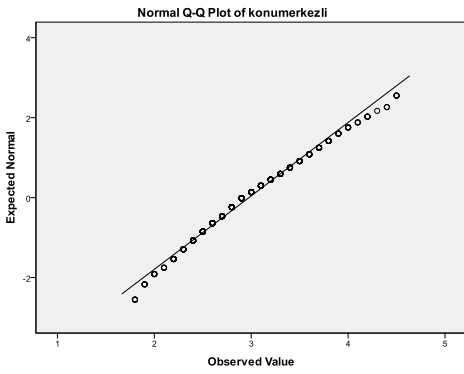
**Annex 1. Q-Q Charts of the Factors of the Scales**



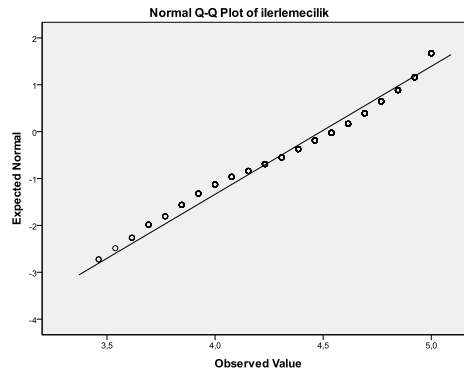
**Figure 1. Student-centered**



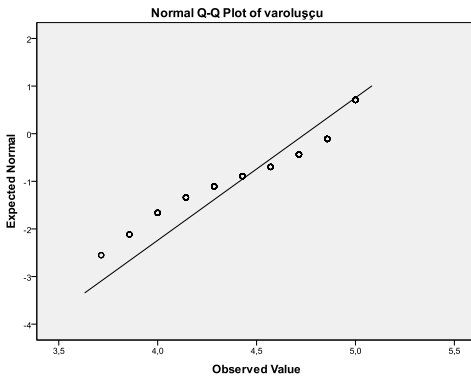
**Figure 2. Poblemler-centered**



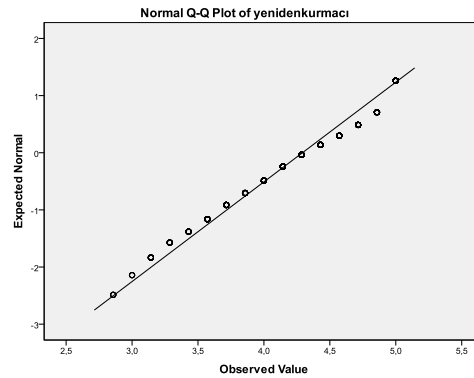
**Figure 3. Subject-centered**



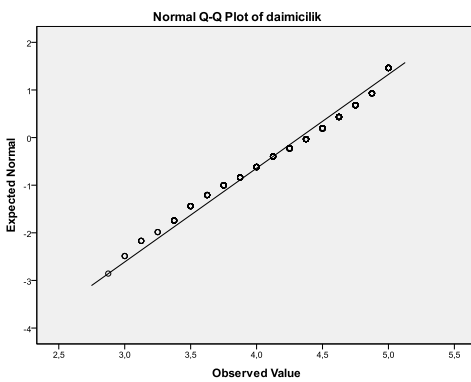
**Figure 4. Progressivism**



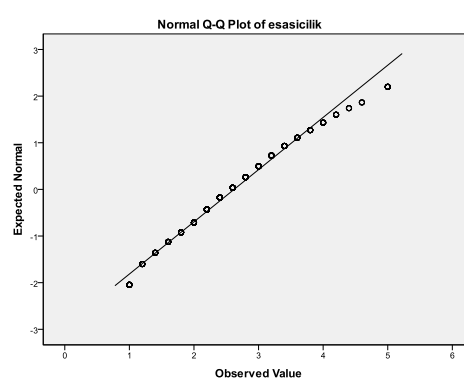
**Figure 5. Existentialism**



**Figure 6. Reconstructionism**



**Figure 7. Perennialism**



**Figure 8. Essentialism**