



The Relationship Between Curriculum Literacy of Teachers, Educational Philosophies and Curriculum Design Approach Preferences

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This study investigates the relationships among teachers' curriculum literacy, educational philosophies, and curriculum design approach preferences. Employing a predictive correlational research design, the study aims to identify both associations and predictive relationships among these key variables. The sample consisted of 348 teachers from various educational levels in Erzurum, Türkiye, selected through random sampling within a convenience framework. Data were collected using three validated instruments: the Curriculum Literacy Scale, Educational Beliefs Scale, and Curriculum Design Approach Preference Scale. The data collection process lasted approximately one month and was carried out in accordance with ethical guidelines approved by the relevant institutional review board. Statistical analyses, including Pearson correlation and multiple regression, were conducted using SPSS 25. Assumptions of normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity were checked and met. The findings revealed that teachers' curriculum literacy was positively associated with progressivist and existentialist philosophies, which in turn were linked to learner-centered and problem-centered design preferences. Essentialism emerged as a significant predictor of subject-centered design preferences. These results suggest that curriculum literacy enhances teachers' ability to align their philosophical beliefs with appropriate curriculum design approaches. The study highlights the importance of promoting reflective practice and philosophical awareness through professional development. Enhancing teachers' curriculum literacy may support more coherent and effective instructional planning, ultimately contributing to improved educational quality.

Introduction

Education has a fundamental role in societies' development and individuals' upbringing. Carrying out the educational process effectively and efficiently reveals that teachers' knowledge, skills, attitudes and understanding of curriculums are essential. However, effective management and implementation of the educational process depend on more than just the knowledge and skills of teachers. At the same time, an in-depth understanding of the curricula is also required. Teachers' competencies in understanding,

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implementing and evaluating curriculums directly influence the effectiveness of the education system. To improve the quality of the educational process in this setting, it is essential to comprehend the connections among teachers' conceptions of curricular literacy, their educational philosophies, and their preferences for curriculum design approaches.

In recent years, educational systems around the world have undergone significant transformations, demanding greater curricular flexibility and responsiveness to diverse learner needs (OECD, 2018). These shifts require teachers not only to follow existing curriculum frameworks but also to understand the deeper philosophical and pedagogical foundations that guide curriculum development and implementation (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018). Teachers are increasingly viewed not as passive implementers but as active curriculum agents who are expected to adapt, interpret, and even reshape curricular elements in response to local needs and classroom realities (Priestley et al., 2015). Therefore, examining the underlying factors that influence teachers' curriculum decisions—such as their educational philosophies and curriculum literacy—has become critically important.

Although studies have separately addressed concepts like curriculum knowledge (Shulman, 1987), educational beliefs (Pajares, 1992), or curriculum implementation (Fullan, 2007), there is a growing need to investigate how these constructs interact to shape teachers' curriculum design orientations. Understanding the interrelationship among curriculum literacy, educational philosophies, and design preferences can inform both teacher preparation and in-service professional development. It can also support the development of more responsive and student-centered curricular practices (Beauchamp, 2012). This study aims to contribute to this line of inquiry by examining the relationships and predictive effects among teachers' curriculum literacy, their educational philosophies, and their curriculum design approach preferences.

Conceptual Framework

Curriculum Literacy

The concept of curriculum literacy emerged in the 1980s as a key component in educational sciences, initially focusing on organizing materials within learning environments. This concept was significantly shaped by Shulman (1986, 1987), who played a crucial role in systematically defining teaching knowledge. Shulman (1987, p. 8) categorized teaching knowledge into seven areas: “content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, curriculum knowledge, knowledge of educational context, knowledge of learners and their characteristics, and knowledge of educational goals.”

Pedagogical content knowledge, a term introduced by Shulman (1986), refers to the integration of subject matter expertise and pedagogical skills to enhance understanding in a specific field. In Ariav's (1988) study, both curriculum knowledge (CK) and curriculum literacy (CL) are addressed but they represent different levels of understanding. The term “curriculum knowledge” describes a teacher's understanding of the structure and content of the curriculum. It includes understanding what topics and skills are included in the curriculum and how they are organized (Shulman, 1987). This type of knowledge is crucial for knowing what to teach but does not encompass how to adapt or implement the curriculum effectively. On the other hand, curriculum literacy expands upon CK by incorporating a broader set of competencies related to the curriculum's application and adaptation. According to Ariav (1988), curriculum literacy includes not only the selection and adaptation of materials for

specific subject areas but also an understanding of the curriculum development process and the factors influencing it. Ariav argued that curriculum literacy involves a comprehensive grasp of how curriculum is designed, implemented and evaluated, which allows teachers to adapt curriculum to meet diverse student needs and educational contexts effectively (Ariav, 1988; Johnson & Johnson, 2000).

This distinction highlights that while CK focuses on the content and organization of the curriculum, CL encompasses a deeper understanding of the entire curriculum process, including development, implementation, and adaptation (Johnson & Johnson, 2000). Thus, CL provides teachers with the tools to not only understand what to teach but also how to effectively apply and adjust the curriculum in practice, ensuring that educational goals are met in diverse classroom settings (Ariav, 1988; Johnson & Johnson, 2000).

Curriculum literacy is crucial for teachers as it enables them to grasp the fundamental principles and theoretical foundations of a curriculum. Teachers with strong curriculum literacy can effectively integrate curriculum goals into their teaching practices, apply instructional strategies that support student skill development and evaluate the curriculum's impact on student achievement (Johnson & Johnson, 2000). Curriculum implementation is the process by which written curriculum plans are transformed into practical classroom experiences (Shami, 1993). Initially, a curriculum exists merely as a written plan; however, it must be actualized through effective and contextually responsive teaching practices in order to have a meaningful impact on student learning (March, 2014). Teachers play a decisive role in the successful implementation of curricula, as this process largely depends on their understanding of curricular goals and their ability to apply them effectively in diverse classroom contexts (Darling-Hammond, 2008; Park, 2008; Wang & Cheng, 2009). Without the necessary knowledge and skills, teachers may struggle to implement the curriculum effectively, rendering the curriculum ineffective despite its design quality (March, 2014).

Educational Philosophy

Educational philosophy involves the study of educational practices, values, aims, methodologies, and outcomes. It addresses ethical and social issues within education. Kincal (2009) argues that educational philosophy helps identify guiding concepts, obstacles in education, and underlying principles. Major educational philosophies include:

- Perennialism: Rooted in realism and idealism, it emphasizes teaching enduring truths, classical knowledge, and universal principles (Tuncel, 2020).
- Essentialism: Drawing from idealism and realism, this philosophy focuses on cultivating intellectual discipline and foundational knowledge through structured, fact-based learning (Sönmez, 1998).
- Progressivism: Based on pragmatism, it advocates student-centered education where learners actively engage in problem-solving, collaboration, and critical thinking (Sönmez, 1998).
- Reconstructionism: Influenced by pragmatism and existentialism, it promotes social reform and aims to prepare students to address and transform societal issues (Kabadayı, 2012).
- Existentialism: Emphasizing personal choice and individual meaning-making, it encourages students' self-discovery, emotional growth, and responsibility for their learning journey (Van Deurzen, 2002).



Ornstein and Hunkins (2018) emphasize that educational philosophies shape curriculum design by influencing its goals, content, and methods. A teacher's philosophical orientation directly affects how the curriculum is interpreted and applied in classroom practice.

Curriculum Design Approach Preferences

Education's effectiveness hinges on a well-designed curriculum that addresses both individual and societal needs. Curriculum development is a multifaceted process that begins with determining the philosophical foundation, which establishes the framework for subsequent curriculum design stages (Tucker, 2011). This initial stage shapes how education will be structured and what students will learn. Different societies prioritize individual or societal needs differently, leading to varied curriculum designs (Doğan, 1997). Societies that prioritize societal needs often design curricula to address broader social, economic, and national objectives. The curriculum may focus on instilling shared values, preparing students to contribute to societal development, and meeting the workforce demands of the nation (Kumar, 2005).

Curriculum design typically involves four primary stages: goal setting, content creation, selection of teaching methods, and evaluation (Varış, 1994). Curriculum design plays a crucial role in determining its quality and effectiveness, as it shapes how successfully students acquire and apply knowledge and skills in real-world contexts (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). According to Ornstein and Hunkins (2018), the essential structure of curriculum design includes socialization, Plato's educational ideas, and Rousseau's principles of development. Socialization bridges individual and societal needs, focusing on how these needs are addressed through education. The choice of curriculum design approach—be it subject-centered, learner-centered, or problem-centered—affects the curriculum's content, learning processes, materials, and evaluation techniques (Demeuse & Strauven, 2016). Curriculum design can be categorized into three main approaches: subject-centered, learner-centered, and problem-centered and each has distinct implications for educational practice.

- (1) **Subject-Centered Design:** This traditional approach is rooted in philosophies such as idealism, realism, and essentialism (Çubukçu, 2013). It organizes information linearly, progressing from simple to complex and relies on teacher-directed methods like lectures and discussions (Adıgüzel, 2017). This design emphasizes the transmission of knowledge and is structured by experts according to specific prerequisites.
- (2) **Learner-Centered Design:** Embracing progressive educational philosophies, this approach focuses on the student as an active participant in the learning process. It considers students' interests, past experiences, skills, and learning pace, aiming to transform them from passive recipients into active learners. The teacher's role shifts to that of a guide, facilitating personalized learning experiences (Cornelius-White, 2007; Weimer, 2002). This approach promotes student autonomy and tailors education to individual needs.
- (3) **Problem-Centered Design:** This approach, grounded in reconstructionism, seeks to improve students' problem-solving, critical thinking, and decision-making abilities. Lessons are centered around analyzing specific problems, developing solutions, and evaluating their effectiveness, thus preparing students to tackle real-world challenges (Barron et al., 1998; Savery, 2006).

The Present Study

Understanding how these curriculum design approaches align with teachers' curriculum literacy and educational philosophies is essential for effective curriculum implementation. Teachers' curriculum literacy affects their ability to apply and adapt curriculum materials, while their educational philosophies influence their preferences for curriculum design approaches. Teachers inherently possess educational philosophies, whether they are explicitly aware of them or not. These philosophies significantly influence their instructional decisions and choices, as virtually all aspects of curriculum development and implementation are rooted in philosophical perspectives (Ornstein, 2014). The connection between teachers' educational philosophies and the curriculum is critical, as the curriculum encompasses all learning experiences both inside and outside of the classroom. Teachers' philosophies serve as foundational constructs that shape their perceptions and approaches to the curriculum and highlight the necessity to explore how teachers' curriculum orientations align with their educational philosophies (Erdem, 2021). A misalignment between the official curriculum and teachers' design preferences can indicate gaps in curriculum implementation (Bay et al., 2012), making it essential to understand how these preferences are shaped by both curriculum literacy and educational philosophy.

Assessing the correlation among teachers' curriculum literacy, educational philosophies, and preferences for curriculum design approaches facilitates an understanding of the interdependencies of these variables, allowing for more deliberate actions in education. In the research conducted by Erdem (2021), the relationship between teachers' educational philosophies and curriculum design approaches was examined. However, no research has been found in the international literature examining the relationships between curriculum literacy and educational philosophies or between curriculum literacy and curriculum design approaches. Determining the relationship between teachers' educational philosophies and their curriculum design approach preferences, as well as the predictive effect of these philosophies, can help emphasize the philosophical foundations that guide teachers' curricular decisions. Similarly, identifying how curriculum literacy relates to and predicts design preferences may inform efforts to improve curriculum literacy through targeted training. These insights can support the development of more effective, student-centered curriculum design practices. This study investigates the relationships between teachers' curriculum literacy perceptions, educational philosophies, and preferences for curriculum design approaches. The research problems of this study are given below:

- (1) Is there a significant relationship between teachers' educational philosophies and curriculum literacy perceptions?
- (2) Do teachers' educational philosophies predict curriculum literacy perceptions?
- (3) Is there a significant relationship between teachers' curriculum literacy perceptions and curriculum design approach preferences?
- (4) Do teachers' curriculum literacy perceptions predict curriculum design approach preferences?
- (5) Is there a significant relationship between teachers' educational philosophies and curriculum design approach preferences?
- (6) Do teachers' educational philosophies predict curriculum design approach preferences?

Method

Research Design

This study employed a predictive correlational research design, a quantitative method used to explore relationships between variables and to make predictions based on these relationships. Predictive correlational studies are particularly useful when researchers aim to determine whether one or more variables can predict outcomes in another variable (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). In this study, the focus is on predicting the relationships between teachers' curriculum literacy perceptions, educational philosophies, and curriculum design approach preferences.

Population and Sample

The study population consists of 5,086 teachers working in Erzurum city center across preschool, primary, middle school, and high school levels. To select the study sample, the simple random sampling method was employed. From this population, a sample of 348 teachers was randomly selected using random number generation software. This process ensured that the sample was representative of the larger population, reducing bias in the selection process. Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the sample.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics About the Sample

<i>Groups</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	122	37.7
Female	226	62.3
<i>School Level</i>		
Preschool	90	25.9
Primary	73	21.0
Middle school	88	25.3
High school	97	27.9
<i>Professional Seniority</i>		
0-5 Years	43	12.4
6-10 Years	103	29.6
11-15 Years	77	22.1
16-20 Years	62	17.8
21 Years and above	63	18.1

The sample includes 37.7% male teachers (122 individuals) and 62.3% female teachers (226 individuals), showing a higher representation of women. In terms of school level, teachers are distributed across various school levels: 25.9% work in preschool (90 teachers), 21.0% in primary school (73 teachers), 25.3% in middle school (88 teachers), and 27.9% in high school (97 teachers), with a notable concentration at high school and preschool levels. Regarding professional seniority, 12.4% of teachers have 0-5 years of experience (43 teachers), 29.6% have 6-10 years (103 teachers), 22.1% have 11-15 years (77 teachers), 17.8% have 16-20 years (62 teachers), and 18.1% have 21 years or more (63 teachers).

Data Collection Instruments

The data of the study was collected using three scales. The Curriculum Literacy Scale was used for teachers' curriculum literacy perceptions, the Educational Beliefs Scale was used for their educational philosophies, and the Teachers' Curriculum Design Approach Preference

Scale was used for their curriculum design approach preferences. Information about data collection tools is given below.

Curriculum Literacy Scale

The Curriculum Literacy Scale developed by Akyıldız (2020) was used to assess teachers' curriculum literacy perceptions. This five-point Likert scale used the following response options: (1) Never, (2) Rarely, (3) Sometimes, (4) Mostly, and (5) Always. Exploratory factor analysis was conducted to determine the construct validity of the scale, and according to the analysis results, a four-factor scale consisting of 36 items explaining 60.345% of the total variance emerged. The scale's reliability is high, with Cronbach's alpha (.97), Guttman reliability (.89), and Spearman correlation coefficient (.89). To ensure the scale items effectively differentiated between teachers with high and low curriculum literacy perceptions, an independent t-test was conducted. Scores from the high and low groups were statistically significant ($p < .001$), with values ranging from 27.23 to 55.40. Corrected item-total correlations ranged from .49 to .74, indicating a positive and statistically significant relationship between individual items and the overall scale ($p < .01$). These analyses confirm the validity and reliability of the scale. According to the results obtained from this research, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale was found to be .98. Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the sub-dimensions vary between .88 and .95.

Educational Beliefs Scale

To assess teachers' adopted educational philosophies, the Educational Beliefs Scale developed by Yılmaz et al. (2011) was used. This five-point Likert scale utilized exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses to establish its construct validity. The analyses revealed a five-factor structure representing the philosophies of Perennialism, Essentialism, Progressivism, Reconstructionism, and Existentialism. Factor loadings range from .42 to .74, item-total correlations range from .22 to .90, and reliability coefficients range from .70 to .91. Additionally, confirmatory factor analysis confirmed the five-factor structure. Each item is a five-point Likert scale. According to the results obtained from this research, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale was found to be .89. Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the sub-dimensions vary between .82 and .88.

Teachers' Curriculum Design Approach Preference Scale

To assess teachers' curriculum design approach preferences, the Teachers' Curriculum Design Approach Preference Scale developed by Baş (2013) was used. While most item factor loadings ranged from .81 to .45, five items fell below the 0.40 threshold and were removed for improved scale clarity. To further confirm the scale's structure, it was applied to another group of teachers and analyzed by using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The CFA results ($\chi^2/df = 1.50$; RMSEA = .05; RMR = .077; SRMR = .056; GFI = .83; AGFI = .80; CFI = .90; NFI = .77; NNFI = .89) supported the three-factor structure. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the overall scale is high (.94), with sub-dimension coefficients ranging from .89 to .87. Notably, the sub-dimensions exhibited high and linear relationships. According to the results obtained from this research, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale was found to be .85. Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the sub-dimensions vary between .79 and .84.

Data Collection

To ensure ethical research practices, the researcher first obtained approval from the Educational Sciences Ethics Committee and the Provincial Directorate of National Education. This guarantees the study adheres to ethical guidelines and protects participant privacy. The researcher provided teachers with a detailed explanation of the research project, including its goals, procedures, and participant rights. The data of the study were collected in approximately 30 days.

Data Analysis

The data analysis was conducted by using the SPSS 25 software package. Pearson product-moment correlation analysis and regression analysis were employed to examine the data. Correlation analysis was performed to determine the relationships between variables, and regression analysis was performed to determine the predictive of the variables.

Before proceeding with data analysis, the assumptions of the tests were examined. Skewness-kurtosis coefficients were examined for the assumption of normality and it was determined that the data was normally distributed (-1.5 to +1.5) for each independent variable. For regression analysis, linearity, homoscedasticity and multicollinearity assumptions were also examined. To verify the linearity assumption, scatter plots and adjusted R-squared values were used, showing that the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable was linear. Scatter plots showed that each independent variable showed a linear relationship with the dependent variable. Additionally, adjusted R-squared values showed that most of the variance explained by the variables was explained linearly. To verify the homoscedasticity assumption, Levene's test and graphical inspections were used, showing that the error terms have a constant variance at the level of the independent variables. Levene's test showed that the error terms were homoscedastic ($p > 0.05$). Graphical inspections confirmed that the error terms were not unevenly distributed at the level of the independent variables. To verify the assumption of multicollinearity, VIF (variance inflation factor) values were examined, which showed that there was no high correlation between the independent variables. Since VIF values for all independent variables were below 10, it was determined that there was no multicollinearity problem. These findings confirmed that the basic assumptions of the regression analysis were met and showed that the analysis was clear.

Results

The results of this study are presented in alignment with the research questions outlined above. Each research question is addressed with its corresponding findings, data collection instruments, and analysis methods.

Research Question 1: Is There a Significant Relationship Between Teachers' Educational Philosophies and Curriculum Literacy Perceptions?

To examine the relationship between teachers' educational philosophies and their curriculum literacy perceptions, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted. The educational philosophies were measured using the Educational Beliefs Scale, while curriculum literacy perceptions were assessed with the Curriculum Literacy Scale.

The results indicated positive but weak correlations between curriculum literacy perceptions and four dimensions of educational philosophies. Specifically, the correlation with progressivism was $r = .40$, $p < .01$; existentialism $r = .44$, $p < .01$; reconstructionism $r = .30$, $p < .01$; and perennialism $r = .28$, $p < .01$. Essentialism showed a non-significant correlation (r

= 0.76, $p = .159$). Table 2 presents the correlation analysis results.

Table 1. The Relationship Between Teachers' Educational Philosophies and Curriculum Literacies

		Progressivism	Existentialism	Reconstructionism	Perennialism	Essentialism
Curriculum	<i>r</i>	.396**	.440**	.298**	.275**	-.076
Literacy	<i>p</i>	.000	.000	.000	.000	.159

Note. $N = 348$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Research Question 2: Do Teachers' Educational Philosophies Predict Curriculum Literacy Perceptions?

To assess the prediction of teachers' educational philosophies on curriculum literacy perceptions, a regression analysis was conducted. The predictor variables were progressivism, existentialism, reconstructionism, and perennialism, while the dependent variable was curriculum literacy perceptions.

The model was statistically significant ($F(4, 344) = 23.784, p < .05$), explaining approximately 22% of the variance in curriculum literacy perceptions. Both progressivism ($\beta = .156, p < .05$) and existentialism ($\beta = .288, p < .05$) were significant predictors, while reconstructionism ($\beta = .026, p > .05$) and perennialism ($\beta = .076, p > .05$) did not significantly predict curriculum literacy perceptions. Table 3 presents the details of this regression analysis.

Table 3. The Prediction of Teachers' Educational Philosophies to Curriculum Literacy Perceptions

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>Se</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
(Constant)	68.846	9.033		7.622	.000
Progressivism	5.690	2.471	.156	2.303	.022
Existentialism	11.101	2.640	.288	4.206	.000
Reconstructionism	.695	1.838	.026	.378	.706
Perennialism	2.028	1.750	.076	1.159	.247

$R^2 = .217, R^2_{(adjusted)} = .208, F(4, 343) = 23.784, p < .05$

Research Question 3: Is there a significant relationship between teachers' curriculum literacy perceptions and curriculum design approach preferences?

The relationship between teachers' curriculum literacy perceptions and curriculum design approach preferences were investigated using Pearson correlations. The results showed positive correlations between curriculum literacy perceptions and both learner-centered design ($r = .48; p < .01$) and problem-centered design ($r = .47; p < .01$). The relationship with subject-centered design was non-significant ($r = .066, p = .217$). Table 4 presents the correlation analysis results.

Table 4. The Relationship Between Curriculum Literacy and Teachers' Curriculum Literacy Perceptions and Curriculum Design Approaches Preferences

		Subject-Centered	Learner-Centered	Problem-Centered
Curriculum Literacy	<i>r</i>	.066	.480**	.472**
	<i>p</i>	.217	.000	.000

Note. $N = 348$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.



Research Question 4: Do teachers' curriculum literacy perceptions predict curriculum design approach preferences?

To assess the prediction of curriculum literacy perceptions on teachers' curriculum design approach preferences, a regression analysis was conducted. The predictor variable was teachers' curriculum literacy perceptions while the dependent variable was curriculum design approach preferences. Curriculum literacy perceptions were found to significantly predict both learner-centered ($R^2 = .23$, $p = .01$) and problem-centered ($R^2 = .22$, $p = .01$) design preferences. Table 5 presents the regression analysis results.

Table 5. The Prediction of Teachers' Curriculum Literacy Perceptions to Curriculum Design Approaches Preferences

Model 1	<i>B</i>	<i>Se</i>	β	R^2	<i>p</i>
Constant	2.393	.189		.231	.01
Learner-Centered	.442	.043	.480 ^a		
Constant	2.484	.187		.223	.01
Problem-Centered	.426	.043	.472 ^a		

Research Question 5: Is There a Significant Relationship Between Teachers' Educational Philosophies and Curriculum Design Approach Preferences?

The relationship between teachers' educational philosophies and curriculum design approach preferences was investigated using Pearson correlations. The analysis reveals the relationships between teachers' educational philosophies and their curriculum design approach preferences. Progressivism exhibits positive and moderate correlations with both learner-centered design ($r = .64$; $p < .01$) and problem-centered design ($r = .55$; $p < 0.01$), suggesting a potential alignment between these philosophies and student-centered approaches. Similarly, existentialism demonstrates positive and moderate relationships with both learner-centered design ($r = .61$; $p < .01$) and problem-centered design ($r = .55$; $p < .01$).

Reconstructionism shows a weaker, yet statistically significant, positive correlation with subject-centered design ($r = .24$; $p < .01$). However, it also exhibits moderate positive correlations with learner-centered design ($r = .51$; $p < .01$) and problem-centered design ($r = .51$; $p < 0.01$), indicating a more nuanced relationship. Perennialism has a weak positive association with subject-centered design ($r = .37$; $p < .01$) and weak to moderate positive relationships with both learner-centered design ($r = .43$; $p < 0.01$) and problem-centered design ($r = .53$; $p < .01$).

Finally, essentialism demonstrates a strong positive correlation with subject-centered design ($r = 0.611$; $p < 0.01$), potentially reflecting a focus on transmitting knowledge. Interestingly, essentialism also exhibits a very weak negative correlation with learner-centered design ($r = -0.163$; $p < 0.01$), suggesting a possible tension between these approaches. Table 6 presents the relationship of educational philosophies and curriculum design approach preferences.

Table 6. The Relationship Between Teachers' Educational Philosophies and Curriculum Design Approach Preferences

		Subject-Centered	Learner-Centered	Problem-Centered
Progressivism	<i>r</i>	-.077	.636**	.550**
	<i>p</i>	.153	.000	.000
Existentialism	<i>r</i>	-.086	.607**	.545**
	<i>p</i>	.107	.000	.000
Reconstructionism	<i>r</i>	.241**	.508**	.512**
	<i>p</i>	.000	.000	.000
Perennialism	<i>r</i>	.366**	.426**	.529**
	<i>p</i>	.000	.000	.000
Essentialism	<i>r</i>	.611**	-.163**	-.016
	<i>p</i>	.000	.002	.761

Note. *N* = 348. **p* < .05. ***p* < .01.

Research Question 6: Do Teachers' Educational Philosophies Predict Curriculum Design Approach Preferences?

To assess the prediction of teachers' curriculum literacy perceptions on curriculum design approach preferences, a regression analysis was conducted. The predictor variables were reconstructionism, perennialism, and essentialism while the dependent variable was subject-centered curriculum design approach preferences. The predictor variables were progressivism, existentialism, reconstructionism, perennialism, and essentialism while the dependent variable was learner-centered curriculum design approach preferences. The predictor variables were progressivism, existentialism, reconstructionism, and perennialism while the dependent variable was problem-centered curriculum design approach preferences.

The model is statistically significant ($F(4, 344) = 85.896, p < .05$), and approximately 42.8% of the variance in curriculum design approach preferences is explained by the predictor variables. Among the educational philosophies, essentialism emerges as a significant predictor, showing a positive effect on curriculum design approach preferences ($\beta = .566, p < .001$). Perennialism also exhibits a significant positive effect, though to a lesser extent compared to essentialism ($\beta = .158, p = .007$). On the other hand, reconstructionism, while displaying a positive effect, does not reach statistical significance ($\beta = .100, p = .075$). Table 7 presents the prediction of educational philosophies on subject-centered design preferences.

Table 2. The Prediction of Teachers' Educational Philosophies to Subject-Centered Curriculum Design Approach Preferences

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>Se</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
(Constant)	.790	.232		3.406	.001
Reconstructionism	.121	.068	.100	1.786	.075
Perennialism	.194	.071	.158	2.738	.007
Essentialism	.408	.031	.566	13.298	.000

$R^2 = .428, R^2_{(adjusted)} = .423, F(4, 344) = 85.896, p < .05$

The model is statistically significant ($F(5, 342) = 67.384, p < .05$), and approximately 49.6% of the variance in design approach preference is explained by the predictor variables. Among the educational philosophies, progressivism emerges as a significant positive predictor, showing a positive effect on design approach preference ($\beta = .341, p < .001$). Similarly, existentialism also exhibits a significant positive effect, albeit to a lesser extent compared to Progressivism ($\beta = .231, p < .001$). Reconstructionism demonstrates a positive effect on design approach preference, reaching statistical significance ($\beta = .157, p = .005$). However,



perennialism shows a positive effect that does not reach statistical significance ($\beta = .109, p = .052$). Essentialism, on the other hand, exhibits a negative effect on design approach preferences, though it does not reach statistical significance ($\beta = -.077, p = .073$). Table 8 presents the prediction of educational philosophies on learner-centered design preferences.

Table 3. The Prediction of Teachers' Educational Philosophies to Learner-Centered Design Approach Preferences

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>Se</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
(Constant)	1.196	.203		5.888	.000
Progressivism	.319	.051	.341	6.214	.000
Existentialism	.228	.055	.231	4.118	.000
Reconstructionism	.106	.038	.157	2.803	.005
Perennialism	.074	.038	.109	1.947	.052
Essentialism	-.031	.017	-.077	-1.797	.073

$R^2 = .496, R^2_{(\text{adjusted})} = .489, F(5, 342) = 67.384, p < .05$

The model is statistically significant ($F(4, 343) = 69.775, p < .05$), and approximately 44.9% of the variance in design approach preference is explained by the predictor variables. Among the educational philosophies, progressivism emerges as a significant positive predictor, showing a positive effect on design approach preference ($\beta = .252, p < .05$). Similarly, existentialism also exhibits a significant positive effect, although to a slightly lesser extent compared to progressivism ($\beta = .207, p < .05$). Perennialism demonstrates a significant positive effect on design approach preference ($\beta = .278, p < .05$), indicating its importance in predicting preference for problem-centered design approaches. However, reconstructionism shows a positive effect that does not reach statistical significance ($\beta = .098, p = .095$). Table 9 presents the prediction of educational philosophies on problem-centered design preferences.

Table 4. The Prediction of Teachers' Educational Philosophies to Problem-Centered Design Approach Preferences

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>Se</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
(Constant)	1.136	.190		7.142	.000
Progressivism	.231	.052	.252	4.437	.000
Existentialism	.199	.055	.207	3.595	.000
Reconstructionism	.065	.039	.098	1.675	.095
Perennialism	.186	.037	.278	5.066	.000

$R^2 = .449, R^2_{(\text{adjusted})} = .442, F(4, 343) = 69.775, p < .05$

Discussion and Conclusions

The results indicated positive but weak correlations between teachers' curriculum literacy perceptions and four dimensions of educational philosophies: progressivism, existentialism, reconstructionism, and perennialism. The stronger correlation with existentialism may be attributed to its emphasis on individual autonomy and personal growth, aligning with the reflective and adaptive nature of curriculum literacy. Teachers who prioritize the development of students' self-awareness and critical thinking—core tenets of existentialism—may also be more inclined to engage in dynamic and responsive curriculum development practices. Progressivism, which follows closely in correlation strength, is centered on experiential learning and problem-solving. This approach naturally supports curriculum literacy, as it encourages educators to continuously adapt curriculum content to students' needs and societal changes, fostering a deeper understanding of curriculum design and its implementation. Reconstructionism, while less strongly correlated, still maintains a positive relationship. This may be due to its focus on addressing societal issues through education, which requires a flexible and well-informed approach to curriculum development.

Teachers aligning with reconstructionism might integrate diverse perspectives and content, enhancing their curriculum literacy, albeit to a lesser extent than those who emphasize more student-centered philosophies. Perennialism, with the weakest positive correlation, promotes a more traditional, subject-focused curriculum. While this approach may still involve elements of curriculum literacy, it tends to be more rigid and less adaptable to the changing needs of students and society. This could explain the weaker relationship observed in the study. Essentialism, on the other hand, shows no significant correlation with curriculum literacy. This result suggests that the structured and teacher-centered nature of essentialism may not encourage the flexible and reflective practices required for strong curriculum literacy.

These findings are consistent with previous research. For example, Erdem (2021) found that contemporary educational philosophies such as progressivism and existentialism were positively linked to curriculum literacy among teachers, supporting the idea that more student-centered and flexible philosophies enhance educators' understanding and use of curriculum. Similarly, Schiro (2013) highlighted how progressivism and reconstructionism influence curriculum development and pedagogy, reinforcing the notion that alignment with these philosophies supports teachers' curriculum literacy. Further research is needed to explore the underlying factors that strengthen these relationships and to understand how different educational philosophies might shape teachers' curriculum literacy in practice.

Furthermore, Avar Vayvay (2020) found that preschool teachers' perceptions of curriculum literacy had moderate positive relationships with progressivism, existentialism, reconstructionism, and perennialism, reinforcing the notion that these philosophies contribute to enhancing curriculum literacy. The current study observed that essentialism did not significantly impact curriculum literacy perceptions. This finding is consistent with Smith (2004), who noted that essentialism's focus on core knowledge may not engage deeply with broader curriculum literacy competencies. Ballı (2022) also reported significant positive relationships between prospective teachers' curriculum reading and writing abilities and their educational philosophies, particularly noting that progressivism showed the strongest correlation. This reinforces the idea that teachers who espouse progressivism are particularly adept at engaging with and implementing curriculum content effectively (Dewey, 1938).

Overall, these findings suggest that teachers' educational philosophies significantly shape their curriculum literacy. Philosophies such as progressivism and existentialism, which emphasize adaptability and student-centered approaches, likely enhance teachers' abilities to navigate and apply curriculum content effectively. Conversely, essentialism's focus on a fixed body of knowledge appears to limit the dynamic and reflective practices essential for high levels of curriculum literacy (Eisner, 2002a). Further research is warranted to explore the underlying factors that strengthen these relationships and to gain deeper insights into how different educational philosophies might influence teachers' curriculum literacy in practice.

When examining the relationship between teachers' curriculum literacy perceptions and curriculum design preferences, a positive correlation was found between learner-centered and problem-centered design approaches. This suggests that teachers who perceive themselves as having high curriculum literacy are more likely to adopt these innovative, student-focused design approaches. Research supports this association, indicating that higher levels of curriculum literacy are often linked with the adoption of more effective, student-centered teaching strategies. For example, McCutcheon (2002) highlighted that teachers who engage in curriculum development with a strong grasp of curriculum literacy are more effective in applying learner-centered approaches, enhancing their instructional strategies and student



outcomes. These studies collectively highlight the importance of curriculum literacy in fostering teaching practices that are both student-centered and problem solving-oriented, and they point to the need for ongoing professional development to enhance teachers' curriculum expertise. According to the research results, it was determined that there were various relationships between teachers' educational philosophies and curriculum design approach preferences. Progressivism and existentialism educational philosophies show a positive and moderate relationship between learner-centered and problem-centered design approaches. This suggests that teachers who support progressivism and existentialism philosophies are more inclined to adopt student-centered and problem-solving oriented curriculum designs.

The study found that the relationship between reconstructionism and subject-centered design was positive but very weak. Similarly, the relationships between teachers' perennialism educational philosophies and both subject-centered and learner-centered designs were positive but also weak. Conversely, the relationship between problem-centered design and perennialism was positive and moderate. These findings suggest that while teachers' educational philosophies do influence their design preferences, the strength of these relationships varies. Specifically, the weak positive relationships between perennialism and both subject-centered and learner-centered designs are in line with the findings of Schiro (2013), who noted that perennialism tends to emphasize content mastery but does not strongly favor any particular instructional approach. The moderate positive relationship between perennialism and problem-centered design may reflect its alignment with structured problem-solving processes, although this is less emphasized in perennialist philosophy.

The study also observed a clear positive relationship between essentialism and subject-centered design, with a very weak negative relationship with learner-centered design. This finding is consistent with the work of Smith (2004), who found that essentialism focuses on a core body of knowledge and is often associated with traditional, subject-centered curricula. The limited positive tendency towards learner-centered design among essentialist educators aligns with the literature suggesting that essentialism does not strongly support student-centered pedagogies (Kozikoğlu & Uygun, 2018).

A review of the literature supports these findings. Kozikoğlu and Uygun (2018) found a positive correlation between traditional educational philosophies, such as perennialism and essentialism, and subject-oriented curriculum designs, while progressivism, reconstructionism, and existentialism were associated with student-centered and problem-oriented approaches. Similarly, Erdem (2021) reported that contemporary philosophies, including progressivism and existentialism, were linked with student-centered and problem-solving orientations, whereas traditional philosophies aligned more with subject-centered approaches. These studies corroborate the current research's findings and suggest that educational philosophies significantly shape curriculum design preferences. In the study by Baş and Şentürk (2019), it was concluded that teachers' educational philosophies predicted 39% of their curriculum orientations, underscoring the significant role that philosophical beliefs play in shaping curriculum design choices. This emphasizes the importance of integrating philosophical understanding into teacher education programs to help educators navigate and apply their philosophical orientations effectively.

When examining the results regarding the predictors of the variables in the study, it was found that existentialism and progressivism educational philosophies significantly predict curriculum literacy perceptions, while learner-centered and problem-centered design approaches strongly predict curriculum design approaches. These findings align with research

by Ornstein and Hunkins (2018), who emphasize the critical role of philosophical foundations in shaping curriculum development and instructional decisions. Schiro (2013) similarly highlights that learner-centered and problem-centered approaches foster deeper engagement with curriculum content, enhancing both teacher and student autonomy. Supporting this, Eisner (2002b) argues that teachers' understanding of these philosophical stances enables them to make more informed curricular choices, facilitating their ability to adopt flexible and student-centered instructional methods. Consequently, teacher education programs must prioritize equipping teachers with knowledge and skills related to these philosophies and design approaches. By doing so, teachers will better understand their educational philosophies, make informed design choices, and effectively implement student-centered teaching practices (Kliebard, 2004).

The analysis of teachers' curriculum design preferences reveals a distinct pattern based on their educational philosophies. Essentialism and perennialism emerged as the strongest predictors of a subject-centered design approach, a finding consistent with Ornstein and Hunkins' (2018) assertion that these traditional philosophies emphasize structured, content-driven curricula. Conversely, learner-centered design preferences were primarily influenced by progressivism, existentialism, and reconstructionism, as supported by Schiro (2013), who highlights the focus of these philosophies on student agency and experiential learning. Notably, Kliebard (2004) found that progressivism, existentialism, and perennialism significantly predict problem-centered design preferences, reinforcing the importance of problem-solving and critical thinking in curricular decisions. These results demonstrate that teachers' educational philosophies strongly influence their curriculum design preferences. As Pinar et al. (2008) argue, guiding teachers to understand their own educational philosophy and make appropriate design choices plays a critical role in shaping their pedagogical effectiveness. In this way, teachers can create the most effective learning environments for their students by aligning their theoretical knowledge with their pedagogical approaches.

This study reveals significant relationships between teachers' educational philosophies and their curriculum literacy perceptions, as well as their curriculum design preferences. Specifically, progressivism, existentialism, and reconstructionism philosophies were found to positively influence teachers' curriculum literacy, supporting previous research that highlights the impact of contemporary philosophies on educators' curricular understanding and practices (Erdem, 2021; Schiro, 2013). These findings underline the importance of teachers possessing a broad and adaptable curriculum literacy, enabling them to navigate the complexities of curriculum design and implementation effectively.

Furthermore, the study identifies that teachers with high curriculum literacy perceptions are more likely to adopt learner-centered and problem-centered design approaches, which are associated with more innovative and student-focused educational practices (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Hargreaves, 2003). The alignment of these findings with existing literature reinforces the idea that curriculum literacy plays a pivotal role in shaping how teachers design and deliver curriculum content, making professional development in this area critical for fostering effective teaching strategies.

In contrast, traditional philosophies like essentialism and perennialism were strongly associated with subject-centered design approaches, with a weaker relationship to learner-centered practices (Smith, 2004; Kozikoğlu & Uygun, 2018). These findings suggest that teachers' adherence to traditional educational philosophies may limit their engagement with more dynamic, student-centered approaches, further emphasizing the need for educational



programs to focus on developing teachers' awareness of diverse philosophical frameworks. In conclusion, the study highlights the necessity of integrating philosophical reflection and curriculum literacy into teacher education programs. The findings revealed that teachers' educational philosophies significantly predicted their curriculum design approach preferences, particularly the alignment of progressivism and existentialism with learner-centered and problem-centered designs. Therefore, teacher training programs should help teachers identify and reflect on their philosophical orientations to support more coherent curriculum design decisions.

Additionally, the study found that curriculum literacy had a significant impact on curriculum design preferences. As such, improving teachers' curriculum literacy may lead to more flexible, student-centered instructional practices. These results emphasize the role of both philosophical awareness and curricular knowledge in shaping effective teaching.

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are made:

- Education policymakers should establish flexible curriculum frameworks that allow teachers to adapt and modify curricula in line with their educational philosophies and the needs of their students.
- Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) focusing on curriculum literacy and educational philosophy should be supported to create collaborative spaces for sharing curriculum design practices.
- Pre-service teacher education should include courses on curriculum literacy and philosophical foundations, as teachers who understand these elements make more informed and coherent curriculum design decisions.
- In-service training programs should address how teachers' educational philosophies influence their curriculum design choices, supporting reflective teaching.
- School administrators should encourage curricular autonomy and recognize diverse educational philosophies in practice.

Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations that should be considered. First, the sample was limited to 348 teachers from a single region (Erzurum, Türkiye), which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other geographical or cultural contexts. Second, the study relied on self-reported data, which may be subject to social desirability bias or subjective interpretation.

Future research should explore these relationships in different regions and educational contexts to increase generalizability. Additionally, longitudinal and qualitative studies could provide deeper insights into how teachers' curriculum literacy and educational philosophies influence their instructional practices over time and across settings.

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