

RATERS' VIEWS ABOUT HOMEWORK/PROJECT PRACTICE IN THE OPEN EDUCATION SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to evaluate raters' views on homework / project practice in the Open Education System. The research is designed in scanning model, quantitative and singular design. The reliability coefficient of the data collection tool is 0.70. According to the result of the factor analysis performed to test the construct validity, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) = 0.74 and Bartlett test $\chi^2 = 305,253$; $p = 0.000$; It was found with $p = 0.000$. Raters' views were analyzed in terms of gender, academic title and the course variables they scored. The findings showed that the views of the raters differed significantly according to the academic title and the course variables they scored. Most of the raters who answered open-ended in the measurement tool in the study had negative opinions about the homework project implementation.

Keywords: Open education system, homework/project, assesment, raters.

INTRODUCTION

Because traditional assessment tools measure learner success in limited times, isolated from the real world, learners face problems in solving real-world problems (Belet&Girmen, 2007). With educational programs based on constructivism and multiple intelligences theory, the understanding of loading information on the individual was abandoned, an education approach in which knowledge was structured and learner-centered was adopted, and a number of innovations were introduced, including assessment and evaluation practices. Instead of approaches that rely solely on grade-based assessment practices, paradigms that allow learner and instructor to evaluate themselves have been adopted (Gömlüksiz, Sinan & Demir, 2010; Güneş, 2007). As a result of this understanding, not only the learning product but also the learning processes of the learners are monitored and the methods and techniques used in the learning and assessment activities are changed when necessary (Aydın Yılmaz, 2007; Karadüz, 2009). According to this approach, assessment is a process that determines what learners know, not what they do not know.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The understanding of measurement and evaluation required by the age focuses on guiding the process in order to guide and create the most appropriate learning-teaching environment, rather than grading students. Observations, worksheets, self-assessment, short answer questions, multiple choice tests, matching questions, open-ended questions, student product files, concept maps, attitude scales, as well as performance and project assignments for measurement and evaluation in order to overcome the inadequacies of learners and to plan further learning (Göçer, 2007).

Assignments, which are an important tool in process evaluation, are written or oral studies given to learners by instructors and usually performed outside the classroom in order to ensure learner development. These are in the form of activities, projects, research and performance assignments (Chouinard et al 2006).

The aim of the assignments is to prepare learners for new subjects, to facilitate learning, to review what has been learned, to reinforce it, to transfer it to daily life, to provide active learning, to contribute to the development of learners' language, mental, social and physical skills (Corno, 2000). Homework is an important tool for developing responsibility in learners. In addition to developing skills such as goal setting, planning, decision making, using existing resources, independent work, self-confidence, communication skills, using resources, accessing and using information are also developed when doing homework. In this process, the habit of performing the task with care and delivering it on time also contributes to the feeling of success (Güneş, 2014).

Assignments are considered a mandatory assessment tool in the distance learning process. Students attend classes for a semester and prepare assignments for each course. In this way, distance learning is managed and made possible by the mandatory component of assignment work (Ali, Mehmood & Mahmood, 2011).

Assignments are an indispensable activity of the teaching and learning process, as most distance learning takes place with assignments and is a mandatory component of the formative evaluation process in the distance education system. It is stated that the assessment tool that has the most impact on the overall success of distance learners is assignments (Cabı, 2016). As a formative assessment tool, it is stated that the feedback provided to learners through homework has an important contribution to motivation and learning. Feedback on written assignments that include timely, realistic and forward-looking recommendations for improvement and help students prepare for the end-of-term or final exams is extremely important (Kofou, 2019). It is stated that the number of assignments and feedback received in distance education is much higher than the assignments and feedback received in traditional education (Gibbs & Simpson, 2005).

Assignments that measure a wide range of abilities allow learners to better regulate their work. On the other hand, homework can give fairer results than exams. This may require instructors to rethink grading assignments. It seems that designing, writing, and evaluating assignments in distance education are valuable skills for planners, organizers, tutorials, or learners. The competence and active of the staff involved in the homework preparation and evaluation process and the objective evaluation of the learners' assignments are important to provide learners with a quality education.

Assignment/project course practice in Anadolu University Open education system has started to be carried out within the scope of four courses (Literary Text Studies, Philosophical Research and Writing, Research and Applications in Sociology, and History Studies) since the 2017-2018 academic year. In this study, it is aimed to get the opinions

of the raters about the homework-project practices, considering that it will contribute to the studies for the development of the learner assessment system in the open education system.

Anadolu University Open Education System Instructure of Homework/Project System

Within the scope of Anadolu University Open Education System, a term paper system is applied in four different departments at the undergraduate level. In this context, applications have been developed by the Computer Research and Application Center (CRAC) Web Group for loading and evaluating learners' assignments. During the homework loading phase, the homework subjects and necessary explanations are shown on the system according to the lessons learned. Learners are asked to upload a task consisting of a maximum of 1200 words that they have prepared within the reported time period to the system. The homework can be prepared either online on the system or on a word document and uploaded to the system. In order to prevent data loss on the system, data is automatically recorded every two minutes. In addition, the transactions made by the student are versioned and stored in the system.

After completing the task loading process, rubrics for each course are prepared at the evaluation stage. Through these rubrics, assignments are evaluated by different field experts. In the evaluation process, first of all, the number of field experts is determined according to the number of students who take the course. Each field specialist is assigned random assignments related to their field. Each assignment is evaluated by two field experts. If there is a conflict between field experts, the opinion of a third field expert is appealed. The chart shows a screen of the assignment evaluation process (Figure 1).

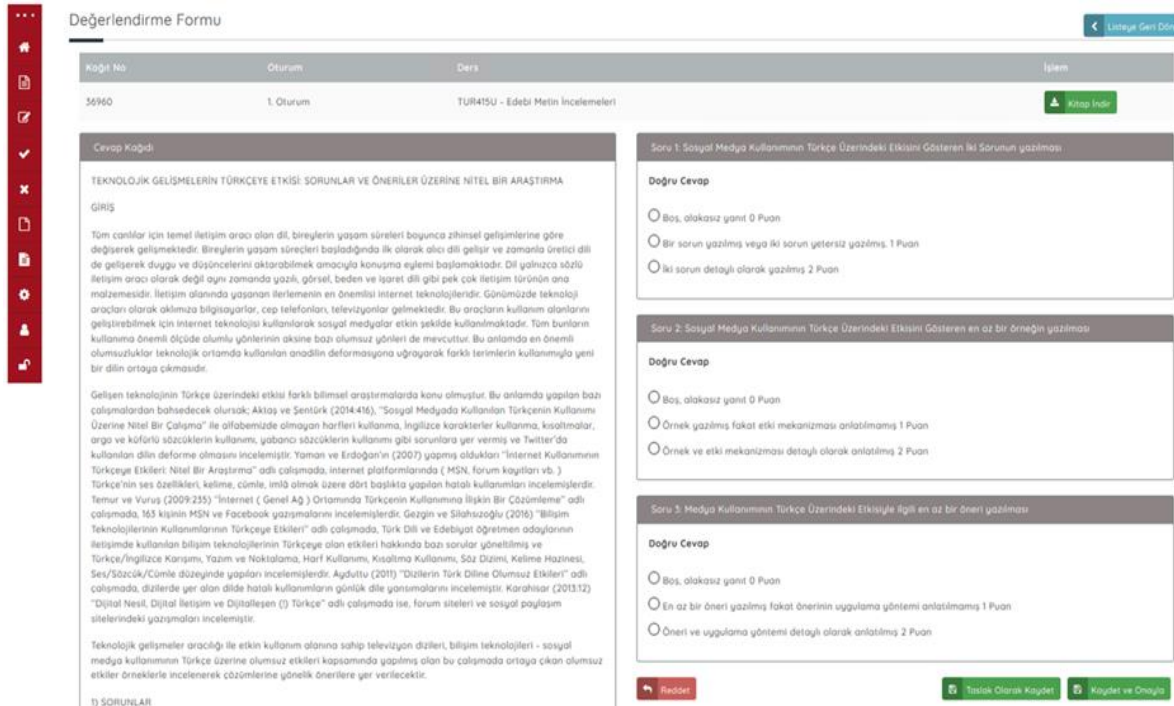


Figure 1:
Homework Evaluation Process in Open Education System

METHOD

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the opinions of the raters who are involved in the homework-project practice in the Open Education System. The following questions were sought in the study:

1. Do raters' views on homework / project practice differ by gender?
2. Do the views of the raters about the assignment / project practice differ according to their academic titles?
3. Do the opinions of the raters about the homework / project practice differ according to the courses they scored?

Research Pattern

The research is designed in scanning model, quantitative and singular design. The scanning model aims to describe the existing situation as it is. In the scanning model, the event, individual or objects subject to research are tried to be defined as they are in their own conditions (Karasar, 2013). Event, substance, individual, group, institution, subject, etc. variables belonging to the unit and state are tried to be described separately. In other words, what is the situation in each unit? answer is sought (Büyüköztürk, 2016).

Participant Group

Participants in the study consisted of a total of 150 raters who worked in the courses of Literary Text Reviews; Philosophical Research and Writing; Research and Applications in Sociology; and History Studies at Anadolu University Open Education System. The distribution of the raters who participated in the study regarding the gender, academic title and the courses they scored are given in Table 1.

Table 1:
Gender, Academic Title and Scored Course Status of the Raters

Course Title	N	%	Academic Title	N	%	Gender	N	%
Literary Text Reviews	34	22.7	Prof. Dr.	15	10.0	Female	75	50.0
Philosophical Research and Writing	7	4.7	Assoc.Prof.Dr.	15	10.0	Male	75	50.0
Research and Applications in Sociology	91	60.7	Assist.Prof.Dr.	19	12.7			
History Studies	18	12.0	Lecturer Dr.	5	3.3			
Total	150	100	Lecturer	38	25.3			
			Res. Assist. Dr.	7	4.7			
			Res.Assist.	51	34.0			

According to Table 1, the participants in the research are equal in terms of gender. The gender distribution of the participants of the study is 50% female and 50% male. 34% of those participating in the research are research assistants, 25.3% are lecturers; 12.7% of them are Assist.Prof.Dr., 4.7% Res. Assist. Dr. and 3.3% Lecturer Dr.

"Research and Applications in Sociology" course was mostly evaluated in the Homework/Project (60.7%). "Literary Text Reviews "(22.7%)," Historical Reviews "(12%) and" Philosophical Research and Writing " (4.7%) are the courses evaluated respectively.

Data Collection Tool

The measurement tool developed to collect data was presented to the raters' application via Google Form. In the assessment tool prepared to get the opinions of the raters in the Homework / Project practice, there are 3 questions (1st, 2nd, 3rd) questioning the demographic information, 9 Likert-type questions where the opinions are collected and 4 short answer (Yes/No) questions. In addition, other opinions about the practice were collected with 1 open-ended question. According to the results of factor analysis conducted to test the structure validity of the measurement tool, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)= 0.74 and Bartlett test $\chi^2= 305,253$; $p= 0.000$ were found. This result shows that the structure of the measurement tool is formed with questions towards the goals. The reliability of the measurement tool was tested with Cronbach Alpha and its value of 0.70 was found to be reliable.

Questionnaire participation link and information letter were sent to 213 raters who participated in the 2020-2021 academic year Fall semester Homework / Project practice. In the information letter, the contributions of the study to improve the system were mentioned and it has been reported that participation is on a voluntary basis. 150 raters answered the measurement tool applied between 1-15 February 2021.

Data Analysis

SPSS 20.0 was used in the analysis of the data collected in the study. Percentage-frequency tables and graphs were used for descriptive analysis, and F and t tests were used to find the differences between the means of variables for interpretive statistics.

FINDINGS

In this section, the answers of 150 raters who answered the measurement tool were interpreted within the scope of the research questions.

Findings regarding the first research question

Do raters' views on homework / project practice differ by gender?

The findings regarding whether there is a significant difference in the answers given to the questions in the measurement tool according to the gender variable are given in Table 2.

Table 2:
Average Scores of Raters for Homework/Project Practice by Gender

Score	Groups	N	Mean	Std Deviation	t test		Sig.
					t	df	
Before I started to score in the Homework / Project course, I had enough information about the scoring process.	Female	75	3,99	1,097	0,876	148	0,383
	Male	75	4,13	0,949			
I could easily access the papers assigned in the scoring software.	Female	75	4,81	0,562	0,404	148	0,687
	Male	75	4,77	0,649			
I think the rubric given for the evaluation of homework is understandable.	Female	75	4,07	0,972	0,797	148	0,427
	Male	75	3,93	1,07			
I think that saving as a draft in scoring contributed positively to the scoring process.	Female	75	4,27	0,704	0,845	148	0,4
	Male	75	4,15	1,009			

Table 2: Continued

I think that in homework/project courses, students' knowledge is better measured than in multiple choice questions	Female	75	3,67	1,097	1.703	148	0,091
	Male	75	3,36	1,301			
I think that students get more points than they deserve in the homework/project course.	Female	75	3,01	1,033	1.191	148	0,236
	Male	75	3,23	1,158			
I found the Homework/Project scoring software useful.	Female	75	1,56	0,858	1.627	148	0,106
	Male	75	1,35	0,744			
I find it necessary to apply a homework/project course.	Female	75	1,52	0,875	.692	148	0,49
	Male	75	1,43	0,744			
I was able to follow the system instantly via informative SMS/e-mail in the process with homework/project scoring software.	Female	75	1,27	0,664	1.386	148	0,168
	Male	75	1,13	0,502			
The time given for homework/project scoring was sufficient.	Female	75	1,12	0,327	-.244	148	0,808
	Male	75	1,13	0,342			
Did you feel the need to communicate with other raters while scoring the Homework/Project?	Female	75	1,69	0,464	1.105	146,6	0,271
	Male	75	1,77	0,421			
Did you feel the need to communicate with the referee while scoring the Homework/Project?	Female	75	1,69	0,464	1.302	146	0,195
	Male	75	1,79	0,412			
Did you feel the need to communicate with the coordinator while scoring the Homework/Project?	Female	75	1,79	0,412	-.617	148	0,538
	Male	75	1,83	0,381			

According to the t test given in Table 2, the difference between the mean scores obtained from female and male participants is not statistically significant. In other words, the views of both females and males on each statement are similar.

Findings regarding the second research question

Do the views of the raters about the assignment / project practice differ according to their academic titles?

Table 3:
One-Way Variance Analysis Table According to Academic Titles

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Before I started to score in the Homework / Project course, I had enough information about the scoring process.	Between Groups	7,919	6	7,919	1,271	0,275
	Within Groups	148,541	143	148,541		
	Total	156,46	149			
I could easily access the papers assigned in the scoring software.	Between Groups	1,973	6	0,329	0,894	0,501
	Within Groups	52,62	143	0,368		
	Total	54,593	149			
I think the rubric given for the evaluation of homework is understandable.	Between Groups	13,397	6	2,233	2,239	0,043
	Within Groups	142,603	143	0,997		
	Total	156	149			
I think that saving as a draft in scoring contributed positively to the scoring process.	Between Groups	4,946	6	0,824	1,095	0,368
	Within Groups	107,647	143	0,753		
	Total	112,593	149			
I think that in homework/project courses, students' knowledge is better measured than in multiple choice questions.	Between Groups	8,184	6	1,364	1,113	0,358
	Within Groups	175,289	143	1,226		
	Total	183,473	149			
I think that students get more points than they deserve in the homework/project course.	Between Groups	7,465	6	1,244	1,032	0,407
	Within Groups	172,375	143	1,205		
	Total	179,84	149			
I found the Homework / Project scoring software useful.	Between Groups	5,134	6	0,856	1,329	0,248
	Within Groups	92,039	143	0,644		
	Total	97,173	149			
I find it necessary to apply a homework/project course.	Between Groups	1,747	6	0,291	0,418	0,866
	Within Groups	99,646	143	0,697		
	Total	101,393	149			
I was able to follow the system instantly via informative SMS/e-mail in the process with homework/project scoring software.	Between Groups	2,886	6	0,481	1,401	0,218
	Within Groups	49,114	143	0,343		
	Total	52	149			
The time given for homework/project scoring was sufficient.	Between Groups	0,527	6	0,088	0,782	0,585
	Within Groups	16,066	143	0,112		
	Total	16,593	149			
Did you feel the need to communicate with other raters while scoring the Homework/Project?	Between Groups	1,796	6	0,299	1,554	0,165
	Within Groups	27,538	143	0,193		
	Total	29,333	149			
Did you feel the need to communicate with the referee while scoring the Homework/Project?	Between Groups	0,784	6	0,131	0,665	0,678
	Within Groups	28,076	143	0,196		
	Total	28,86	149			
Did you feel the need to communicate with the coordinator while scoring the Homework/Project?	Between Groups	0,564	6	0,094	0,589	0,739
	Within Groups	22,829	143	0,16		
	Total	23,393	149			

According to Table 3, "I think the rubric given for the evaluation of homework is understandable." A statistically significant difference was found between the averages of the answers given to the statement according to the academic title variable. This difference is due to the responses of "Assist.Prof.Dr." and "Lecturer" raters. While the raters with the

title of "Assist.Prof.Dr." were distributed with a standard deviation of 0.607 within the whole group, the standard deviation of the raters with the title of "Lecturer" remained behind the group average. According to this result, while the "Assist.Prof.Dr." group is located around the average with all titles, the average of opinion of the raters in the title of "Lecturer" on this statement is lower than the other titles of the group and farther from the average. On the other hand, raters' other opinions about the second research question about homework / project practice do not show a statistically significant difference according to their academic titles.

Findings regarding the third research question

Do the opinions of the raters about the homework / project practice differ according to the courses they scored?

Table 4:
One-Way Variance Analysis Table According to Scored Courses

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Before I started to score in the Homework / Project course, I had enough information about the scoring process.	Between Groups	3,162	3	1,054	1,004	0,393
	Within Groups	153,298	146	1,05		
	Total	156,46	149			
I could easily access the papers assigned in the scoring software.	Between Groups	0,308	3	0,103	0,276	0,843
	Within Groups	54,286	146	0,372		
	Total	54,593	149			
I think the rubric given for the evaluation of homework is understandable.	Between Groups	1,581	3	0,527	0,498	0,684
	Within Groups	154,419	146	1,058		
	Total	156	149			
I think that saving as a draft in scoring contributed positively to the scoring process	Between Groups	4,743	3	1,581	2,14	0,098
	Within Groups	107,851	146	0,739		
	Total	112,593	149			
I think that in homework/project courses, students' knowledge is better measured than in multiple choice questions.	Between Groups	3,859	3	1,286	1,046	0,374
	Within Groups	179,615	146	1,23		
	Total	183,473	149			
I think that students get more points than they deserve in the homework/project course.	Between Groups	1,95	3	0,65	0,533	0,66
	Within Groups	177,89	146	1,218		
	Total	179,84	149			
I found the Homework / Project scoring software useful.	Between Groups	2,889	6	0,963	1,491	0,219
	Within Groups	94,284	143	0,646		
	Total	97,173	149			
I find it necessary to apply a homework/project course.	Between Groups	4,622	3	1,541	2,324	0,077
	Within Groups	96,771	146	0,663		
	Total	101,393	149			

Table 4: Continued

I was able to follow the system instantly via informative SMS/e-mail in the process with homework/project scoring software.	Between Groups	4,856	3	1,619	5,013	0,002
	Within Groups	47,144	146	0,323		
	Total	52	149			
The time given for homework/project scoring was sufficient.	Between Groups	0,234	3	0,078	0,697	0,555
	Within Groups	16,359	146	0,112		
	Total	16,593	149			
Did you feel the need to communicate with other raters while scoring the Homework/Project?	Between Groups	1,572	3	0,524	2,755	0,045
	Within Groups	27,762	146	0,19		
	Total	29,333	149			
Did you feel the need to communicate with the referee while scoring the Homework / Project?	Between Groups	1,54	3	0,513	2,743	0,045
	Within Groups	27,32	146	0,187		
	Total	28,86	149			
Did you feel the need to communicate with the coordinator while scoring the Homework / Project?	Between Groups	0,429	3	0,143	0,908	0,439
	Within Groups	22,965	146	0,157		
	Total	23,393	149			

According to Table 4, "I was able to monitor the system instantly through informative SMS/e-mail with the Homework / Project scoring software." a statistically significant difference was found between the averages of the answers given to the statement according to the scored courses variable ($F= 5,013$; $p<0,05$). It has been observed that this difference is between the "Research and Applications in Sociology" and "Literary Text Studies" courses. In favor of "Literary Text Studies", it is seen that this course has a higher average than all other courses, especially the "Research and Applications in Sociology" course. In summary, it was observed that the scorers were able to follow the system instantly via informative SMS / e-mail mostly in the scoring of the "Literary Text Studies" course, and at least in the "Research and Applications in Sociology" course.

Findings about answers to the open-ended question

The rate of raters who answered the open-ended question in the measurement tool is 31.3%. Approximately 32% of this rate found the application useful and stated that it should continue. 68% of them stated that they did not find the homework / project practice useful. The views of some raters who found the application positive are given below:

"I think this practice should continue."

"It is a very nice and necessary application, I support it. The scoring key could be improved a little more. I wish conveniences. Thank you."

"I think that the application of "Homework / Project" in exams is important in terms of evaluating students' written expression skills."

Some of the views of the raters who have a negative opinion about the practice are as follows:

"I did not find the homework-project successful. Although it was aimed to increase the research knowledge of the learners, the learners got points with the copy and paste method."

"Homework / Project practice has never functioned properly. The only original and real homework I have ever seen was that of a student who introduced his mother's

local food. All of the others copy / paste and repeat Internet assignments. In my opinion, this lesson should be removed immediately. I always get seriously uncomfortable when grading. "

Some of the raters who answered the open-ended question expressed their difficulties regarding the homework-project system and made suggestions. These suggestions were analyzed and grouped under the following headings:

- Formation of homework title by learners
- Clearer emphasis on expectations from learners
- Using different strategies in topic selection
- Using the plagiarism program
- Extension of the time given for evaluation

Formation of homework title by learners

"In terms of scoring, it may be useful to emphasize more clearly that the title of the homework should be created by the students (the title should not be written in the same way), because this was the case with many assignments."

Clearer emphasis on expectations from learners

"In scoring, especially the subject of footnotes should be clarified. Bibliography and footnote responses indicate that learners do not understand this issue sufficiently. "

"I think a clearer scoring guideline should be prepared in order to enable the raters to make a similar assessment in the assignment / project reading task."

"The criteria given for scoring should be very clear and should be stated there. The learner also uses the synonyms of these words, then the rater hesitates in scoring. Also, the words given are too many. it should be reduced if there is a possibility."

Using different strategies in topic selection

"Similar texts have been loaded. This shows that cut and paste are made from certain sources. Therefore, different strategies should be developed in the choice of subject "

Using the plagiarism program

"When we identify plagiarists, there is no button to report it or a part to write a description. This is a significant shortcoming. If this is done, both referees understand why some papers are given low points, and objections from students can be answered quickly."

"I think most of the homework has been copied from the internet. However, it is difficult for the rater to determine this one by one and create evidence. Can homework be automatically checked for plagiarism during uploading to the system by notifying the student in advance? "

Extension of the time given for evaluation

"I think it would be better if the time given for evaluation could be extended a little bit."

System recommendations

"I had difficulty when I decided to reject after the enrollment process. Reject button disappears after saving. There should be an opportunity to refuse recorded questions."

"The book of the course that was evaluated was not in the system. Assessment becomes difficult in courses where there is no subject matter expert"

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

In this study, it was aimed to evaluate the views of the raters about the homework/project practice in the Open Education System. Within the scope of the study, the views of the raters about the assignment/project practice were examined according to gender, academic title and the course variables they scored. There were no significant differences between the views of the raters regarding the homework/project according to gender.

According to the academic title, a significant difference was found between the "Assist. Prof. Dr." and the "Lecturers" regarding the homework / project practice. The views of the "Assist. Prof. Dr." about the homework-project are more positive than the "Lecturers".

It was revealed that the views of the raters about the homework/project in terms of the course they scored differ only in receiving informative SMS/e-mails in the process. This difference emerged between the "Lecturers" who scored the "Literary Text Studies" and "Research and Applications in Sociology" course. The raters of the "Literary Text Reviews" course stated that they were able to follow the system more instantaneously via SMS/e-mail in the process.

In this study, most of the raters who answered the open-ended question in the measurement tool had negative opinions about the homework/project practice. The reasons for this negativity include the fact that learners have prepared their homework by copying and pasting from internet sources and the absence of a plagiarism program to detect this situation. In studies conducted at different levels of education, there are also some similar results that the assignments were not originally prepared (Arı, 2010; Kurak, 2009; Metin & Demiryürek, 2009).

In contrast to this result obtained in the study, the results of studies conducted at different levels of education in the literature show that assignments have a positive effect on the achievements of learners (Bal, 2013). On the other hand, increasing the interest of learners, strengthening the subjects, ensuring the permanence of the subject, gaining self-confidence, giving researcher identity are mentioned as the benefits of assignments (Çepni & Şenel-Çoruhlu, 2010; Çetin & Çakan, 2010; Yılmaz & Benli, 2011; Erdal, 2007).

It will be useful to conduct development studies by examining also the opinions of learners of homework/project practice.

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