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Elective Course and Flexibility in KTU Interior Architecture Undergraduate Education

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Abstract

The quests for the truest/best method for development of Architectural education continue in parallel with changing conditions of world. The different program trials have been performed for course selection within the period until today. The course selection is one of the important decisions that affect academic careers of students and their specialization in the profession. Therefore, both the chance to select course must be given and the options for course selection must be increased. Especially, A selection-making among the elective courses is considered to be the multi-criteria decision-making problem. Within the scope of study, their flexible structure is revealed in terms of the curriculum for twenty-year period by evaluating the course options in undergraduate education since the establishment of Karadeniz Technical University, Department of Interior Architecture and accordingly the inferences are made for lecturers and students.

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1. Introduction

The universities are institutions where mostly the young aged 18-25 spend their education process and transition-to-adulthood period. Therefore, it has gained importance that the programs which pay regard to the interests, skills and needs of students need to be developed (Gizir, 2005). It is necessary to make the young of today participate in the programs, except their compulsory course, that they are interested in and that include different skills in the education process for their career development and in order for them to keep pace with fast development (Dündar, 2008). This can be achieved, in a sense, through the flexible programs that are suitable to raise multi-directional students in our universities. The reflection of the flexibility to the educational programs can be provided through the elective courses (Özdemir, et al, 2009). Thus, both the elective courses mean diversity to the students and they provide alternative work environment concerning the interest areas for the lecturers.

When we consider in terms of educational process, the architectural education mainly based on studio courses must also be supplied with theoretical and applied courses. The students obtain scientific and technical information in these courses they take during educational process (Özdemir, et al, 2009). In order to be able to find the best method to apply the courses except the studio course, the differentiation has been implemented in the curriculum for

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the last twenty years in Turkey. The mentioned courses that are mainly considered to be compulsory course have started to be opened under the name of elective course. However, in the early times, due to both the desire of lecturers or deficiency in their numbers and university educational system, the elective courses have taken place in the program as compulsory courses without giving chance the students to select. The number of elective courses that offer suitable course options to raise multi-directional students in our universities has been increased in time. Thus, the elective courses that bring flexibility to the curriculum are no longer compulsory elective courses. The elective courses are placed into the program as the courses that are taken optionally according to the interest area of the students and that are conducted by restricting the number of students. The diversity of elective courses revives and revitalizes to the education in that department and directs the students towards the different and private fields. (Özdemir, et al, 2009).

Within the scope of study, the place of elective course application in education in curriculum is set forth concerning the increase in productivity. For this purpose, the digital development of elective courses in undergraduate educational program since the establishment of Karadeniz Technical University Department of Interior Architecture is revealed and the flexibility principle provided through course diversity in the education period is tested.

2. Department of Interior Architecture and Elective Courses

Karadeniz Technical University Department of Interior Architecture started Student Admission in 1993-1994 academic year. Since the selection of elective course starts as of the 3rd class in undergraduate education according to university regulations, the application of elective courses was started in the fall term of 1995-1996 academic year when the students, who entered the university in the first admission year of department, started the 3rd class. In that term, only 1 course was opened under the name of elective course for 3rd classes, it was regarded as the course that was deemed suitable by the department and selected to complete the credits by some students instead of selecting it to improve themselves in their interest fields.

The elective course alternatives could not be offered to the students in the department until the 2000-2001 academic year, due to the problems arising from both the preferences of lecturers and deficiency in the number of lecturers concerning the elective course. Until the fall term of 2000-2001 academic year, total 2 elective courses- 1 for 3rd classes and 1 for 4th classes- were opened per term. After that term, the number of elective courses was increased more per year. As of 2000-2001 academic year, the diversity of elective course started to be offered by the decisions taken within the department and it was tried to increase the number of course with the support of lecturers from different departments and faculties. As the number of elective courses increases, every student is limited to select two elective courses in a term as required by the regulations.

As of the spring term of 2003-2004 academic year, more options were offered to the students with total 7 course- 3 for 3rd classes and 4 for 4th classes- alternatives and it is tried to enable the students to select courses comfortably according to their interest fields.

In 2010-2011 academic year, it was informed to the departments that it was required to decrease the number of compulsory courses and to increase the number of elective courses in the undergraduate education by decision taken by the university within the scope of accreditation process. Pursuant to the regulations, the quota of elective courses is limited to the number determined based upon the total number of class. The Department of Interior Architecture continued developing the process of elective course arrangement which it started previously depending on the mentioned decisions taken.

The distribution of elective courses by terms and classes is given in the table below.

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