

## A Comparative Study of Selection, Training and Advisory Practices for Doctoral Education

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### Abstract

*Problem Statement:* The “right selection” of doctoral candidates is of great importance for the effectiveness of doctoral programs. There are programs in which one can directly begin with the dissertation, as well as programs that require the completion of credits through mandatory and elective courses. It is widely accepted that academic thesis supervisors play an important role at every stage in PhD programs.

*Purpose of Study:* The purpose of this study is to compare the selection and training of PhD students of the education faculties of the University of Bremen and Ege University, as well as the role of the supervisor by investigating the views of PhD students, graduates and thesis supervisors.

*Methods:* In this study, integrated multi-case design was used. The study group was determined with a criterion sampling method. The data was collected by interviews and analyzed by a content analysis technique.

*Findings and Results:* The competencies required of doctoral candidates vary under themes such as “awareness of the process”, “academic qualifications and personal characteristics”, “professional experience”, and “the originality of the doctoral dissertation”. In Germany, there is failure to make PhD programs sufficiently attractive to attract students, while in Turkey, the selection of students through central exams that do not measure suitability for doctoral qualifications are criticized. It was deemed more appropriate to train PhD candidates by practicing in colloquiums and academic environments addressing networks and needs rather than by programs in which candidates begin their dissertation after completing a certain number of credits. Being “directive, preparative and motivational” stood out as the preferred roles of an academic thesis supervisor.

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*Conclusions and Recommendations:* Systems that can attract “suitable” individuals who complete their studies successfully, can develop creative ideas, and are interdisciplinary in nature may be developed. Institutions may manage activities like informing and preparing students for PhD programs beginning from the undergraduate stage and continuing through the doctoral dissertation stage.

*Keywords:* PhD selection criteria, learning experiences, role of the supervisor

It is generally accepted that universities have an important role in social development and the production of knowledge (Sutz, 2005; Zovko, 2013). Different disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and biology contribute to this recognition, as does the discipline of educational science, which benefits from the findings of these disciplines and produces knowledge for the solution of educational problems. A qualified work force that will produce knowledge through scientific research is mainly developed through PhD programs in universities. Another program, the Doctorate of Education (Ed.D.), is a more practice-oriented doctorate degree and is out of the scope of this research.

The “right selection of candidates” is crucial for the effectiveness of PhD programs. Studies have recommended that candidates selected for PhD programs should be chosen from people who are successful and creative and have higher academic goals, competency in literature and willingness to deal with challenges (Wissenschaftsrat, 2002; Denicolo, 2004). More than one approach is employed in student selection for PhD programs in different countries, even within the same country. Regional and central exams or exams that are made by the unit of a related program are required, as are undergraduate academic success, letters of recommendation, or the dissertation topics. Research results have revealed that central exams such as ALES\* that measure general skills are not a meaningful precursor of future student success in postgraduate education (Baysal, Ada & Şahin, 2005). In Germany, application procedures partially differ from state to state, but generally, they follow the approach used in the University of Bremen: the candidate presents a dissertation proposal to a professor, and the thesis committee accepts the proposal, which is also approved by the professor (Hochschulkonferenz, 2013; Voraussetzung für die Zulassung zu promotion, 2013). As for Ege University, the candidates apply to the university with their central exam scores and are accepted after a competency-based interview.

However, in terms of completing the PhD stage with the necessary competencies, development practices and the nature of training programs are also important. Development- and maturation-oriented programs at the PhD stage are expected to provide students with the opportunities of discovery, interpretation and implementation. These programs are of great importance since they provide students with multi-dimensional learning environments and professional socialization by academic relations. Malfroy (2005) emphasized that the new agenda, generations and

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opportunities to reach information do not allow postgraduate education to continue traditionally. Particularly, developments in information technologies, interdisciplinary studies, and accordingly, teamwork are becoming prominent. The international mobility of students and academics and the intention of creating a common European education area (EHEA, 2014) are among the main reasons of this change. Anon (2002) stated that governments, supporting institutions and institutions of higher education have started to question PhD programs more, while Sadlak (2004) and Kupfer & Moes (2003) revealed that the European continent fell behind the Anglo-American tradition in terms of raising qualified postdoctoral researchers. These circumstances require rethinking of the quality of the PhD programs in Europe.

In terms of the efficiency and effectiveness of a PhD program, a student should have enough background to handle all factors that affect the program. From examination of the literature (Bentley, 2013) along with reports on the regulations of European higher education (EHEA, 2014; HEC, 2011) and the web pages of universities (PhD Qualifying Examination and Admission to Candidacy, 2013; Universitaet Bremen, Junge Talente, 2013), it can be understood that doctoral graduates should be provided with qualifications and competencies such as depth of knowledge of interdisciplinary literature and a particular area, the ability to effectively use research techniques and critical thinking skills, as well as to resolve problems that arise in the area, develop solution proposals, and create new models, approaches and theories in the educational area.

Studies show that applying to a PhD program with central exam results and directly through a supervisor both have their problems. Berning and Falk (2004) emphasized that with the increasing specialization as a result of separation of branches of science, the training curriculum for new researchers should be restructured. Wissenschaftsrat's report (2002) states the importance of equipping researchers with information and skills required in their field and making them interact with other disciplines. Sezgin, Kavgacı & Kılınç (2012) indicate a lack of diversity in graduate education electives and that the program cannot be diversified through lessons from different departments and disciplines. According to Demirbolat (2005), there is a weak relationship between theory and practice in PhD courses. At the University of Bremen, they prioritize PhDs not given programs with standard courses. According their needs, PhD students can take part in colloquiums and take courses (statistic programs, reporting techniques, literature reviews, science philosophy), which are periodically conducted at the institute (Wissenschaftsrat, 2002). At Ege University, the program consists of mandatory and elective courses. All courses have to be approved by the Higher Education Council. The courses differ from department to department. The common courses are research oriented and include scientific methods and techniques, statistics, computer applied statistics, and qualitative research. As the program output, research skill, the ability to develop original solutions to educational problems, knowledge of the discipline, and interdisciplinary thinking skills stand out (Doctoral programs, 2014). Some courses in some departments are obligatory, while in other departments, they are elective.

There is a lack of courses like time management, literature review, or courses on interdisciplinary areas.

Given the difficulties encountered in the PhD process (Katz, 1997), candidates should also be provided with knowledge and skills such as time, stress and communication management in order for them to complete this process more efficiently. Studies show that supervisors should contribute to the process by providing opportunities and redirections (for students lectures, seminars, colloquiums, symposia, congress, short-term studies, etc.) (Katz, 1997; Lee, 2008). Research results reveal that besides sharing information or developing skills and attitudes, supervisors should also prepare candidates for the future or support them with career planning (Vilkinas, 2005). They also show that the power of the supervisor's expertise plays a key role in lifting the thesis student's study skills and attitudes to acceptable standards (Li and Seale, 2007). The students, who have an intimate relationship with their supervisors, emphasize positive contributions of the supervisors (Çelik, 2014).

Research on PhD training has focused on the quality of the relationship between thesis supervisors and candidates (Çelik, 2013; Denicolo, 2004), and has mainly been aimed at describing factors that are effective in completing the dissertation (Katz, 1997; Sinclair, 2005). However, criteria for developing scientists through PhD programs cannot be explained by local standards, and taking this into consideration, the creation of compromise in the international arena may contribute to the creation of a common higher education area. It is therefore expected that a comparative study that deals with the selection and development of PhD students and the role of the supervisor according to the views of PhD candidates and supervisors will contribute to the literature.

#### *Problem Statement*

What are the views of supervisors and doctoral students on criteria to be considered for applying to doctoral programs, the effectiveness of the training process, and the role of the supervisor in this process?

#### *Sub Problems*

1. What qualifications should PhD applicants carry, and are current selection practices in selecting individuals with these qualifications effective?
2. What are the views on the suitability of learning experiences during the doctorate process?
3. What is the role of supervisors during the doctorate process, and what qualifications should they carry?

### **Method**

#### *Research Design*

Integrated multi-case design was used in this study. In this design, there are multiple cases that could be perceived as integrated on their own: 2 different institutions: University of Bremen and Ege University; diversity of participants:

thesis supervisors and doctoral students; departments: departments of education faculties (Yin, 1994).

#### *Study Group*

The study group was determined by criterion sampling (Cresswell, 2007), which is aimed at increasing the reliability of the findings by selecting samples suitable for some pre-determined criteria (for supervisors: having directed a PhD dissertation before, being from different departments; for PhD students: being at the verge of graduation, being from a different department). The study group consisted of 32 participants (16 supervisors and 16 PhD students). All academic thesis supervisors were working in the related faculties. 9 PhD students were employed according to different regulations. All supervisors from the University of Bremen were professors. The study group from Ege University consisted of 5 professors, 2 associates and 1 assistant. The study group was limited to branches of education faculties with doctoral programs. Seven of the supervisors and 11 of the PhD students were females, while nine supervisors and 5 PhD students were males.

#### *Research Instrument and Procedure*

A semi-structured interview form was used in data collection. In the process of creating interview form questions, the results and reports of scientific studies that examined doctoral programs were examined (Bell-Ellison and Dedrick, 2008; Gatfield, 2005; Kritsonis, 2008), and students of post-graduate education and academic thesis supervisors in the social sciences were interviewed. At the end of the literature review and preliminary discussions, interview questions and probes suitable for the purpose of the study were determined. Questions were submitted to expert opinion in terms of content validity and clarity. Taking the recommendations into account, two different interview forms for thesis supervisors and doctorates were prepared and applied to participants with face-to-face interviews.

The internal *validity* of the study (credibility) was increased by sharing the results with the participants in informational meetings and obtaining their confirmations about the findings. For descriptive validity, the study group and process were reported in detail. In order to increase external validity, raw data was stored in case it is demanded or intended to be used in future studies. The diversification of the study group was provided in a way that allows transferability by selecting doctoral candidates who are at the stage of completing different programs in education faculties and their thesis supervisors. Responses to interview questions were categorized and themes were created. For re-encoding, these themes were given to two academicians with experiences with qualitative research. The intercoder reliability is .88. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), an inter-rater reliability of .70 and above is considered to be adequate for internal reliability. Participants' views were supported by direct quotations so as to find out the source of the responses. Data was collected from multiple resources (academic supervisors and PhD students) and multiple study groups (University of Bremen and Ege University). It is emphasized in the literature that the validity and reliability of research can be increased by taking expert opinions, giving direct quotations, making diversifications, sharing results with participants, and confirming the coding with the help of expert researchers in their field (Shenton, 2004).

For the confidentiality of participants in the study, abbreviations for supervisors were made, such as "Sup.Brm.1" and "Sup.Ege.3". For PhD students, examples of abbreviations are "Dr. Brm.4" and "Dr.Ege.6".

#### Data analysis

Interviews were transcribed from a voice recorder and subjected to content analysis. The data was analyzed with NVIVO 8, a qualitative data analysis program. At this stage, the significant segments of data were named after single words (e.g. "awareness", "competence") or sentences (e.g. "different factors other than academic criteria do not interfere with selection"), thus completing the coding. At this stage, the aim is to conceptualize significant segments of data with an inductive analysis: competencies in research (e.g. academic literacy, the ability to use analysis programs); effective raising practices (e.g. colloquium, participation in academic environments) or effective counseling (e.g. orientation, modeling, facilitation). Concepts reached by taking into consideration their relationship with each other were limited under a certain category, and themes were created. The findings were described and presented in detail and interpreted by the researcher, and some deductions were made. It is accepted that content analysis consists of stages of coding, conceptualization and creating categories (Krippendorff, 2004).

## Results

### Criteria for PhD candidate selection and the problems

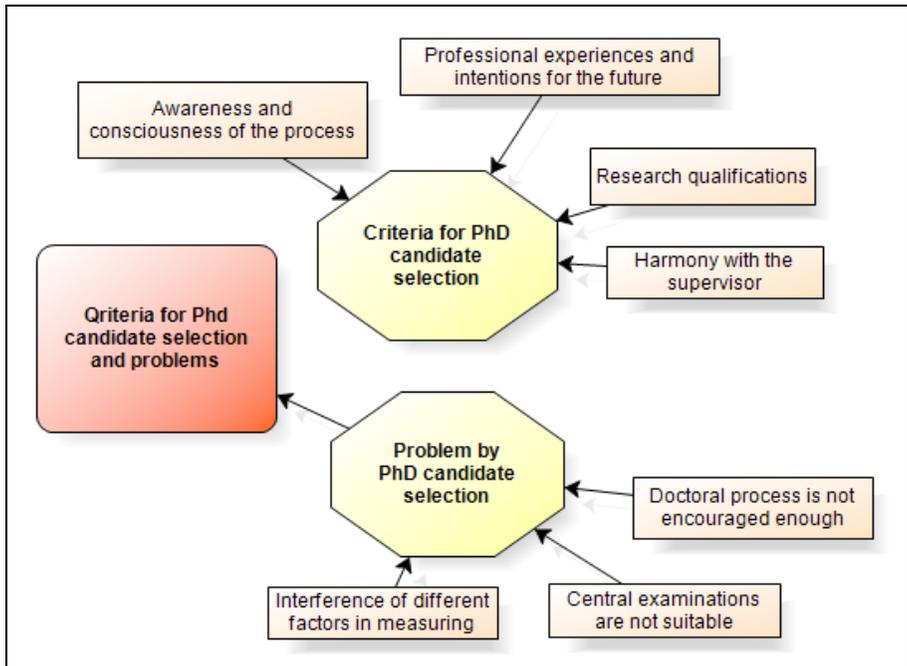


Figure 1 Criteria for PhD candidate selection and the problems

In Figure 1 and Table 1, the thematic criteria for PhD candidate selection and problems are gathered under four categories. Supervisors stated under the theme of “awareness and consciousness about the process” that factors such as the purpose of the student in undertaking a PhD, the candidate’s knowledge about the department chosen, and the conditions of the candidate to continue the PhD program all affect the decision-making about the candidate. The candidates’ pre-doctoral academic work and the topics that they want to study were also expressed by the participants of both universities.

Table 1

*Criteria for PhD Candidate Selection and the Problems*

Categories and subcategories	Exemplary quote
Criteria for PhD candidate selection	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Awareness and consciousness of the process</li> </ul> Knowledge of the main concepts and the literature about the discipline The conditions of the candidate to continue the program	<p><i>Sup.Ege3</i>–“The student has to concretely state why he wants to commence and convince the commission, in scientific aspects first. So, the main criterion is: “Why does he want to do it? Also, did he or she grasp the main concepts of this discipline?”</p> <p><i>Sup.Brm4</i>–“Is there awareness about what a PhD means? It is just not enough to explain verbally. Did he make arrangements and take precautions about the money and time it takes? The candidate has to explain this question in a clear way.</p> <p><i>Dr.Brm.3</i>- ‘... Some of these skills may be gained during the process, but what matters is being aware of the fact that being able to cope with these problems is as important as owning methods and theoretical knowledge. Have I the required competence to cope with stress or care? Am I a disciplined person? To participate in a colloquium or in a project is a good way to have an idea about these questions. ”</p>
Awareness of the difficulties and requirements	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional experiences and intentions for the future</li> </ul> Pre-doctoral academic work and topics	<p><i>Sup.Ege3</i>–“Of course, factors like the expectancies of candidates from a master’s degree or PhD, the topic they want to study, or the performances they showed until this stage (projects, publications, participation in academics–educational or institutional aspects), are key indicators in my decision-making.”</p> <p><i>Dr.Brm.8</i>–“His work or projects in the field can be considered. Activities in business, productions, original ideas and designs, and also all kinds of academic, artistic and intellectual activities may also be taken into consideration.”</p>
Visions for the future	<p><i>Dr.Ege4</i>–“Things like the former studies and experiences of a candidate, his visions for the future and ability to explain them are more important than his answering of knowledge-based questions. The candidate should reveal what kind of a career plan she has.”</p>

Table 1 Continue

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**Categories and subcategories**
**Criteria for PhD candidate selection****Exemplary quote**

- Research qualifications

Knowing how to conduct a research

*Dr.Brm.3-*"He has to be able to ground his own facts, create an open, clear pattern of research and apply critical strainers on all information reached."

Knowledge of survey techniques diversity

*Sup.Brm1-*"... Will he be able to conduct this study from beginning to the end? That is my point. Then this is the first stage of a dissertation, and then all the following processes are built on this stage. A candidate should know qualitative and quantitative research techniques. To use both perfectly in a design is mostly intended "

Ability to review literature

*Dr.Ege6-*"...to read and analyze the literature, and also to know how to use an academic database are pre-conditions to drawing up a dissertation and to write an extensive discussion.

- Harmony with the supervisor
- Knowledge and interest about the topic and method of the dissertation

*Sup.Brm2-*"Closeness to my study fields and also compliance with methods I am competent on are quite important. I know from my experience that the advisory function does not work effectively if you are incompetent, especially in methodical aspects"

**The Problems of PhD candidate selection process**

- Central examinations, are not suitable
- Not considering areas of expertise

*Dr.Ege5-*"Central exams that are prepared by considering areas of expertise should replace ALES. All candidates are responsible to choose the same questions. This examination is a broad competence test and it does not check the competence of the special discipline.

Not emphasizing the tendencies and interests in learning and to become a scientist

*Dr.Ege3-*"I believe that curiosity, willingness, excitement, educational infrastructure, patience, readiness for the postgraduate education and giving enough time for observation of all these are important. People with motivation and awareness must be selected."

- Doctoral process is not encouraged enough
- Possibility of fellowship

*Sup.Brm6-*"How this process is going to be financed is also of importance. It is more important for those applying from outside. If I do not have the quota to employ, I will encourage him to find a scholarship. But I would ask him to solve this problem first."

Prestige of scientist

*Dr.Brm.2-*"The system is not sufficient to choose the best. Working conditions, payments, form of contracts are not attractive. An important problem is the prestige of social science in society."

- Interference of different factors in measuring
- Prejudices against programs; attitudes or communication style.

*Dr.Ege3-*"The jury should be free of prejudices against the candidates or the universities and graduate-postgraduate programs they finished. Particularly candidates that come from different backgrounds do not have much chance"

Application style, duration of interviews and formation of commission

*Sup.Ege8-*"... sometimes interviews become controversial due to reasons like the application form of interviews, time allocated, and unconformity of committee members."

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Participants agreed on the need to be in “harmony” with the supervisor about the topic and method of the study for an efficient process of dissertation. Participants from the University of Bremen, where the candidates apply directly with their dissertation proposals, stated under the theme of “research qualifications” that a certain readiness about knowing how to conduct research is needed. Participants from Ege University made more negative comments under the category of “Suitability of existing applications for selecting ‘best fit’ candidates”. They stated that “an assessment that emphasizes the tendencies and interests in learning” should replace central exams. In the University of Bremen, the theme “Doctoral process is not encouraged enough” was emphasized. A PhD student expressed the view that although there are different options that the system offers and scholarship systems exist, due to low “economic charm” of being a researcher in the field of education, it is not a commonly preferred area. Supervisors in the University of Bremen were of the view that the application of candidates through different channels does not pose a problem. On the contrary, it was emphasized that this has positive aspects for detecting, selecting and testing more effectively. What is remarkable here is that the supervisor is free in his/her choices.

*Suitability of Learning Experiences during PhD process*

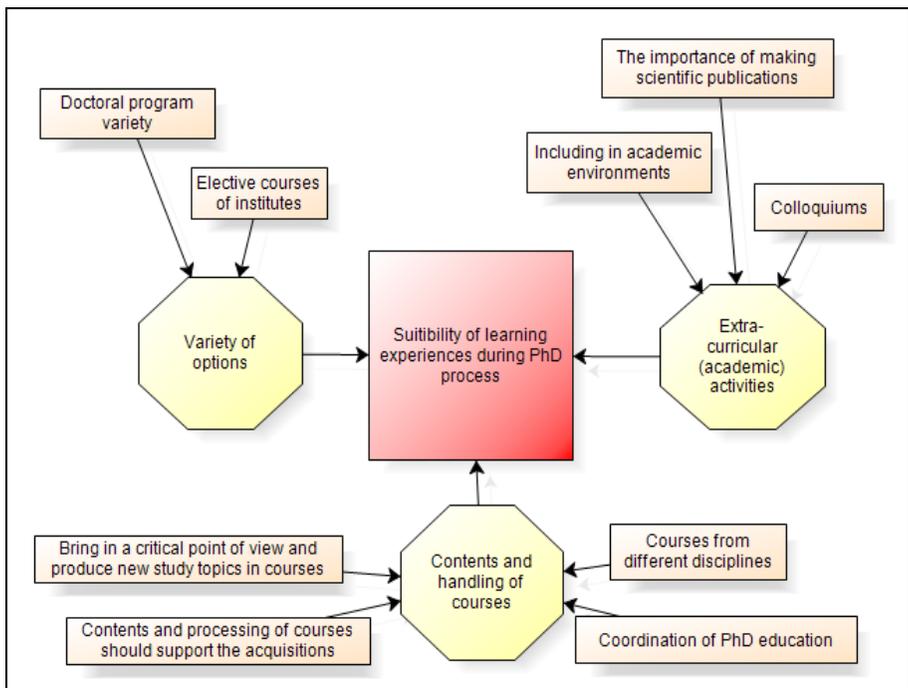


Figure 2 *Suitability of Learning Experiences*

In Figure 2 and Table 2, the themes “variety of options, contents and handling of courses and extra-curricular (academic) activities” were determined under this

category. A supervisor from the University of Bremen stated that different programs exist, and while there are ones that register for a program with compulsory courses, others can start writing their dissertation directly. PhD Students reach a consensus on the idea that elective courses should replace compulsory courses. It was emphasized that there should be courses from different disciplines that “can be continued”. A PhD student noted that if there will be a course, it should be done in a sense that “aims to bring in a critical point of view and produce new research topics.” Under the theme “Extracurricular academic activities”, the importance of making scientific publications and including them effectively in academic relationship was emphasized. Participants from the University of Bremen especially stated the benefits of colloquiums.

Table 2

*Suitability of Learning Experiences during PhD process*

Categories and subcategories	Exemplary quote
<b>Suitability of learning experiences during PhD process</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Variety of options</li> </ul> Doctoral program variety	<i>Sup.Brm8-</i> “Different PhD opportunities are possible. Those who wish may apply for credited programs. But we support the application of supervisory individuals in the field of social sciences. There are many programs of institutes ranging from preparing dissertation proposals to providing career management service.”
Elective courses of institutes	<i>Dr.Ege6-</i> “For one thing, the number of elective courses is highly limited. There are a very small number of elective courses from outside except instructors of related sciences. I am not sure if the compulsory courses are necessary. Perhaps there can be a preparatory course for those coming from outside.”
Coordination of PhD education	<i>Sup.Ege5-</i> “The way of every doctorate in the field of education must in a way fall into disciplines like sociology, philosophy, communication, psychology, history, literature, and economics. We cannot even bring together departments that are close to each other, let alone such coordination between faculties.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extra-curricular (academic) activities</li> </ul> Including in academic environments and making scientific publications	<i>Sup.Ege 4-</i> “In preparation for dissertation, interactions such as attending to congresses with students, introducing them to academics and writing essays together are all of great importance. I learned how to do research with the study we conducted with my supervisor when I was a PhD student rather than the related course.”
Colloquiums	<i>Dr.Brm. 5-</i> “Colloquiums are effective rather than sessions of faculty members. Those who study similar areas come together in environments with supervisors and they discuss. Not every professor has a colloquium, but they should have one. The only subject that all supervisors here agree upon is the contribution colloquiums have to the dissertation process.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contents and handling of courses</li> </ul> Bringing in a critical point of view and producing new study topics in courses Contents and processing of courses should support the acquisitions	<i>Dr.Ege7-</i> “The PhD should also be perceived as a process of creating awareness about the discipline. And this requires doing a lot of reading, discussions and evaluations in different disciplines. The course intent and discussion activities should lead to new and original research suggestions.” <i>Dr.Ege2-</i> “I suggest that lecturers conducting the program come together, revise the contents of lessons and share experiences about in-class practices. What could be the logic of putting the phrase “advanced” in front of the name of a graduate course and repeating the same content?”

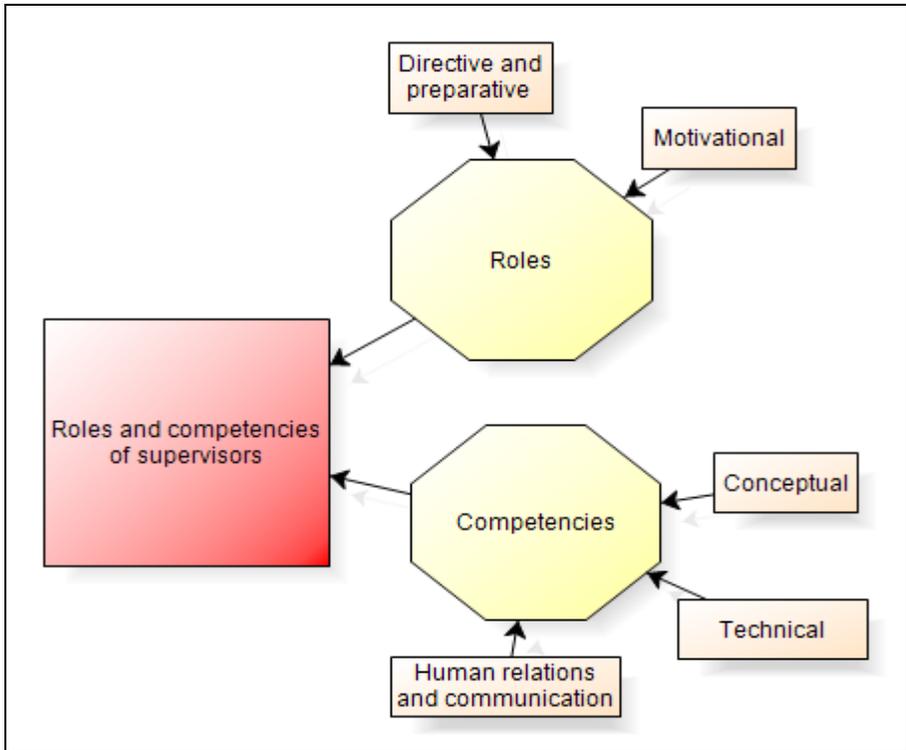
*Roles and competencies of supervisors*

Figure 3 Roles and Competencies of Supervisors

According to Figure 3, being "directive, preparative and motivational" stood out as the roles of a supervisor. In the same way, the themes of "conceptual technical and human relations and communication" stood out as their competencies. The participants mentioned that being directive and preparative for the process is the main role of the supervisors. One of the supervisors stated that rather than directing continuously, interference should be made only when necessary. He described the supervisor as "one who makes dose-adjusted interferences". Under the theme "conceptual competencies", expectations of doctorates from supervisors to be knowledgeable of different disciplines and intellectual individuals as well as knowledgeable of the dissertation topic stood out.

Table 3

*Roles and Competencies of Supervisors*

Categories and subcategories	Exemplary quote
<b>Roles of supervisors</b>	
Directive and preparative Prevent deviation and confine the study	<p><i>Dr.Ege2-</i>"The students observed tendencies and areas of interest that he realized at the stage of courses. Sometimes you realize such technical mistakes in thesis juries that the whole thesis needs to be re-written. Does not the supervisor have any responsibility?"</p> <p><i>Sup.Ege7-</i>"Counting on his previous experiences, the supervisor should explain potential handicaps and needed precautions and should direct the process when he realizes wandering off the goal."</p>
Offer options	<p><i>Dr.Brm.2-</i>"The supervisor should be open to study new, interesting, extraordinary topics. He should provide options rather than dictating. A supervisor has different roles from the acceptance of the dissertation to post-graduation stages. In this process, he should tell all the options and requirements."</p>
Guide to academic relation	<p><i>Dr.Brm. 8-</i>"... so a supervisor should be able to get out of his room, develop respectful relationships with academic networks and contacts, and share these with his students. One day is the PhD stage over and what then? I think it is the responsibility of your doctor father to give impulse for thinking about the academic career."</p>
Academic career	<p><i>Sup.Brm7-</i> You are a person, who gives trust, who says 'I'm here for you'</p>
Motivational	<p><i>Dr.Ege 1-</i> There are moments you need a hand on your shoulder that says 'you can do it,' so you need in all stages the recognition and endorsement of your doctor mother.</p>
Confidence, Encouragement, Endorsement	<p><i>Dr.Brm.5-</i>"He should surely have a background of working abroad in the field of application. He should be able to synthesize theory and practice rather than being a parrot of books."</p> <p><i>Sup.Brm4-</i>"The supervisor should study on the topic at least as much as his student. It would be useful if you at least review the literature and read studies that handle the topic in different ways."</p>
<b>Competencies of supervisors</b>	
Conceptual	<p><i>Dr.Ege.4-</i>"Consultants should be qualified in quantitative and qualitative research methods. But also about the rules of writing a scientific report. My supervisors' being of different fields helped me a lot. Then, this work cannot be done without knowledge of methodology."</p>
Knowledgeable of different disciplines	<p><i>Sup.Brm8-</i>"Supervisors should be better equipped with research knowledge to understand whether all these stages are in accordance with scientific principles and rules. Also, they should be able to use the new statistical programs. An advisor has to keep abreast of current programs"</p>
Knowledgeable of the dissertation topic	<p><i>Dr. Ege 5-</i>"He should listen to the student first and respect his decisions at stages like determining the thesis topic or changes in the process. A supervisor should arouse confidence, be understanding and sympathetic. It is important that he is close, sincere, open and accessible. With such a supervisor, other problems are handled easily."</p>
Technical	<p><i>Sup.Brm 2-</i>"Guidance services at different stages of the thesis will vary according to the needs and learning style of the student. You have to be communicative. I participated in training programs on the areas of social pedagogy, consulting, and drama, and I found them quite useful."</p>
Scientific research techniques	
Statistical software knowledge	
Human relation	
Being sensitive, respectful and communicative	

Participants seemed to care about the expertise of the supervisor in “scientific research techniques”. A participant noted that both a supervisor and a student who are not competent in research techniques may experience a hard time in their thesis defense.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

When the variety of expectations from PhD students are taken into consideration, the “right” selection of candidates is quite important in the training of an education scientist. While the process of acceptance to doctoral programs in Turkey is conducted in a way that is highly central and out of the control of the supervisor, the role of the supervisor in selecting a candidate for the program and in the whole process after seems to be more effective in Germany. Studies (Denicolon, 2004) and reports (Wissenschaftsrat, 2002) also show that successful students should be encouraged to pursue PhDs, and individuals with creative ideas and projects should be attracted to these programs.

In Turkey, there is an inability to attract and select “the best” of doctoral candidates due to reasons like centralized, bureaucratic structure and the problems that interview practices hold in them (Kilmen, 2007), along with public institutions’ not giving enough support for doing a PhD (Çelik, Katılmış & Kop, 2013). Participants from both universities agree upon the importance of “the level of awareness and consciousness” of candidates in the selection process. This can be explained by stating that the PhD is a long and rough process that requires intensive labor.

The quality of learning experiences is quite important for the effectiveness of the PhD process. Study findings (Denicolo, 2004; Katz, 1997; Sezgin, Kavgacı & Kılınc, 2012) show that postgraduate programs are useful only when they provide students with a richer point of view and the skills of exploring and interpretation. The attendance of PhD students to seminars, meetings, colloquiums, and more elective courses or activities according to their needs in the dissertation process would be more useful. This was expressed mainly by supervisors of the University of Bremen and all the PhD students. The interdisciplinary and inter-institutional nature of PhD programs in education faculties show that activities organized in this context cannot be limited with meetings within the department or faculty. This was stated by the academics of both universities. PhD students from Ege University find the course stage unproductive. Demirbolat’s (2005) findings show that postgraduate students have expectations such as the increasing of the number of elective courses or the structuring of programs to be more about practice. These results may be interpreted that the learning experiences during a PhD should not be restricted to the existing programs or meetings with the supervisor.

It is thought that the participants saw the basic role of a supervisor as being directive, preparatory and motivational, because obtaining a PhD is a long-term process that holds different difficulties at every stage. The findings of Katz (1997)

also show that postgraduate students see their supervisors as role models and support systems. In fulfilling these roles, the supervisors are expected to be competent in research skills and communication as well as knowledge of the field. They are also expected to be sophisticated individuals within widespread networks of academic relationships, and to encourage the students to join those environments; as well as to foresee possible problems, be role models with their attitudes, serve as career and life coaches; and have advanced motivating and communication skills and research skills. Lee (2008) emphasizes that effective supervisors fulfill roles like educator, coach, guide, model and director by not only helping in preparing the dissertation, but also affecting the student's career both inside and outside the faculty. Vilkinas (2005), remarks that good supervisors have managerial and interpersonal skills besides their information and skills on research. A directly effective supervising style was reported at Ege University, and that of the University of Bremen was reported to be indirect passive. It is thought that in addition to the system to determine a supervisor (selection, appointment) and training applications, cultural factors (collective-individualistic lifestyle) and also the meaning attached to the PhD process (controlled, detection-oriented, tradition of preparing structured dissertations or expectations of an autonomous, creative and exploratory research process) had an effect on these results. From the discourses of participants from both universities, it is assumed that supervisors should adopt an approach with limited but appropriate interventions. According to Gurr (2010), the supervisor should adopt either a directly or indirectly effective supervising approach or a passive supervising approach.

## Results

The purpose of this study was to compare the selection and training of PhD students of the education faculties of the University of Bremen and Ege University, as well as the role of the supervisor by investigating the views of PhD students, graduates and thesis supervisors. According the findings the results can be summarized as follows: a high level of awareness, consciousness and creativeness of candidates in the selection of the PhD process are thought to be important. The PhD program should be carried out with more variety of options and academic activities rather than standard programs. The supervisor's role is accepted as directive, preparative and motivational; their competencies are classified under technical, conceptual and human relationship categories.

## Suggestions

In Turkey, there could be tests that measure competencies of scientific research and knowledge about the field rather than central general aptitude tests. A system of PhD selection that rates conducted scientific publications, professional activities and authentic research proposals can be created. Different doctoral programs (Ph.D. and Ed.D.) can be opened, and they can be provided with different application procedures (directly with a dissertation proposal, joining scientific preparation programs, and programs that consist of credited compulsory and elective courses).

Institutions can organize activities with the aim of providing information (the variety of doctoral programs, qualifications and competencies required, the content of programs and the process, introduction of academic personnel and thesis proposals to be referenced) and awareness (introductory sessions, orientation meetings) about the PhD process. As for the PhD stage, they can carry out procedures like preparing a dissertation proposal, literature review and report, presenting scientific research techniques and statistical analysis software, giving the research techniques (i.e. "phenomenological method", which is a qualitative research design); a structural equation model for quantitative research; and in a more specific and applicable way, giving seminars on time, stress, and communication management; as well as providing career planning guidance. These activities may be done several times in a year in the form of periodic seminars. Supervisors may be encouraged to specialize on specific subjects and supervise dissertations on these, receive feedback from PhD students, participate in the academic environments commonly, create their own colloquiums and join other ones. A budget that PhD students coming from outside the university can make use of can be set, and a scholarship system can be developed. The number of elective courses, especially those from different disciplines (sociology, psychology, history, economics, etc.) can be increased instead. The contents (theoretical grounding, establishing practical relationships) and processing (critical approach, gains suitable for synthesis, etc.) of these courses can be structured according to the nature of the PhD process. The structures, authorities, facilities and cadres of institutes should be arranged in a way that enables these operations.

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## Doktora Programlarında Seçim, Yetiştirme ve Danışmanlık Uygulamalarına İlişkin Karşılaştırmalı Bir Araştırma

### Atıf:

Tonbul, Y. (2014). A comparative study of selection, training and advisory practices for doctoral education. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 55, 263-282. <http://dx.doi.org/10.14689/ejer.2014.55.15>

### Özet

**Problem Durumu:** Doktora programlarının etkililiğinde doktora adaylarının 'doğru seçimi' önem taşımaktadır. Doktora programları incelendiğinde, farklı ülkelerde, hatta aynı ülkede dahi doktora programlarına öğrenci kabulünde birden fazla yaklaşımın uygulandığı görülmektedir. Ulusal, bölgesel ve merkezi sınavlar ya da ilgili programın olduğu birim tarafından yapılan sınavlar, lisans akademik başarısı, tavsiye mektupları ya da doğrudan çalışmak istediği tez konusu ile doktora programlarına başvurular olabilmektedir. Öte yandan nitelikli tezlerin ortaya çıkmasında ve geleceğin bilim insanlarının yetiştirilmesi açısından doktora sürecindeki öğrenme yaşantılarının, bu amacı destekleyecek biçimde yapılandırılması gerekmektedir. Türkiye'de belirli sayıda krediden oluşan zorunlu ve seçmeli dersleri tamamlayarak tez aşamasına geçilen programların yanı sıra, Almanya'da olduğu gibi doğrudan tez çalışmasına da başlanabilmektedir. Enstitülerin sunduğu oturumlar, seminerler, dersler veya doğrudan akademik tez danışmanlarının oluşturduğu kolokyumlara ve akademik ortamlara katılarak, tez konusunun belirlenmesi, olgunlaşması ve yazımı için gerekli bilgi ve becerilerin kazanıldığı bir çok uygulamaya rastlanmaktadır. Doktora adaylarının belirlenmesinde, etkili öğrenme yaşantılarının ve verimli bir tez sürecinin geçirilmesinin yanı sıra doktoranları yönlendirmede danışmanın etkin bir role sahip olduğu genel olarak kabul görmektedir.

**Araştırmanın Amacı:** Bu çalışmanın amacı Almanya ve Türkiye yükseköğretim sisteminde eğitim fakültelerindeki doktora öğrencilerini seçme ve yetiştirme uygulamalarıyla akademik tez danışmanının rolüne ilişkin görüşleri karşılaştırmalı biçimde ortaya koymaktır.

**Araştırmanın Yöntemi:** Çalışmada bütüncül çoklu durum deseni kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın çalışma grubu, amaçlı örnekleme yöntemlerinden ölçüte dayalı örnekleme tekniği ile belirlenmiştir. Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu Bremen Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültelerinden sekizer akademik tez danışmanı ve 2011-2012 yılları arasında mezun olmuş veya mezun olma aşamasına gelmiş sekizer doktoralı katılımcı (32 kişi) oluşturmaktadır. Veriler görüşme tekniği kullanılarak yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu aracılığı ile toplanmış ve NVIVO 8 programı kullanılarak, içerik çözümleme tekniğiyle analiz edilmiştir.

**Araştırmanın Bulguları:** Türkiye’de doktora programlarına kabul süreci oldukça merkezi ve çoğunlukla akademik danışmanın dışında yürürken, Almanya’da danışmanın doktora adayını programa kabul etmede ve sonrasındaki tüm süreçte daha etkili olduğu görülmektedir. Doktora adaylarının sahip olması gereken yeterlikler ‘süreçe ilişkin farkındalık’ ‘akademik yeterlikler ve kişisel özellikler’, ‘mesleki deneyimler’, ‘doktora tez konusunun özgünlüğü’ gibi temalar altında oldukça çeşitlilik göstermektedir. Almanya’da, daha çok doktora yapmanın yeterince çekici hale getirilmemesi; Türkiye’de ise doktora yapmaya uygun yeterlikleri ölçmeyen merkezi sınavlarla öğrenci alınması eleştirilmektedir. Belirli sayıda krediyi tamamlayarak teze başlanılan programların yerine, kolokyumlara, akademik ortamlara-ağlara ve gereksinimlere bağlı olarak alınacak eğitimler aracılığıyla doktora adaylarınınun yetiştirilmesi daha uygun bulunmuştur. Akademik danışmanlık rolleri olarak ‘yönlendiricilik, hazırlayıcılık ve güdüleyicilik’ sahip olması gereken yeterlikler olarak ise ‘kavramsal, teknik ile insan ilişkileri’ temaları öne çıkmıştır. Danışmanların, yaygın bir akademik ilişki ağının içerisinde olmaları ve öğrencileri bu ortamlara katılmaya teşvik etmeleri;olası sorunları öngörebilmeleri; tutumlarıyla rol modeli olmaları, kariyer ve yaşam koçluğu yapmaları; güdüleyici ve iletişim becerileri gelişmiş, araştırma becerilerine sahip, çok yönlü bireyler olmaları beklenmektedir.

**Araştırmanın Önerileri:** Merkezi genel yetenek sınavları yerine bilimsel araştırma yapma yeterliklerini ve alana yönelik bilgi birikimini ölçen sınavlar yapılabilir. Gerçekleştirilmiş bilimsel yayınların, düzenlenen mesleki etkinliklerin ve özgün araştırma önerilerinin puanlandığı bir sistem oluşturulabilir. Farklı doktora programları . (Ph.D ve Ed.D-) açılabilir, bu programlara farklı başvuru olanakları (doğrudan tez önerisi ile, bilimsel hazırlık programlarına katılma, kredilendirilmiş paket programlar) sağlanabilir. Doktora programlarına, kurumlarında başarılı çalışmaları olan, yaratıcı fikirler geliştirebilen, disiplinler arası bilgi birikimine sahip ‘uygun’ bireyleri çekecek sistemler geliştirilebilir. Enstitüler, lisans aşamasından itibaren öğrencileri doktora programlarına yönelik bilgilendirme ve hazırlama; doktora aşamasında tez önerisi hazırlayabilme, kaynak tarama ve raporlaştırma, bilimsel araştırma tekniklerini ve istatistik çözümleme yazılımlarını sunma ve bunları etkin biçimde kullanabilme, zaman-stres ve iletişim yönetimi alanlarında seminerler verme; kariyer planlaması hizmeti sunma gibi işlemleri yerine getirebilirler. Bu etkinlikler, süreli seminerler biçiminde, yıl içerisinde birkaç kez yapılabilir. Akademik tez danışmanlığı eğitimleri düzenlenebilir. Tez danışmanlarının yaygın biçimde akademik ağların içerisinde yer almaları, kendi kolokyumlarını oluşturmaları ve kendilerinin de farklı kolokyumlarda yer almaları özendirilebilir.

Zorunlu ders uygulaması, yüksek lisansını farklı bir anabilim dalında tamamlamış olanların ve bütünlük doktora yapanların haricinde kaldırılabilir. Bunun yerine seçmeli derslerin, özellikle de farklı disiplinlerden (sosyoloji, psikoloji, tarih, ekonomi vb.) alınacak derslerin sayısı artırılabilir. Bu derslerin içerikleri (kuramsal temellendirme, uygulama ilişkisi kurma) ve işlenişleri (eleştirel yaklaşım, sentez

basamağına uygun kazanımlar vb.), doktora sürecinin doğasına uygun olarak yapılandırılabilir.

Enstitülerin yapılanmaları, yetkileri, olanakları ve kadroları bu işlemleri gerçekleştirecek biçimde düzenlenmelidir.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** Doktoraya seçme ölçütleri, öğrenme yaşantıları, danışmanın rolü