

## Teacher Candidates' Perceptions of Standards in an Education Program at a University in Turkey

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### Abstract

*Statement of the Problem:* This study focuses on the quality of teacher educators and teacher-training programs. In Turkey, both education instructors and teacher candidates have complained about teacher-training programs, courses, lack of a good education, and lack of readiness for the teaching profession. Therefore, the current researcher has examined the quality of courses and the efficiency of instructors in the education program at a university in Turkey.

*Purpose of the Study:* The purpose of this study was to determine teacher candidates' perceptions on the education program at their university in Turkey.

*Method:* A total of 441 teacher candidates majoring in various disciplines during the 2011–2012 academic year participated. Data were collected via a structured questionnaire consisting of 20 questions in two sections. The first section covered instructors' qualifications (ten questions), and the second dealt with the education programs in various departments and the courses offered (ten questions). Between March and May 2012 the data were collected at the university. Data were analyzed using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS).

*Findings:* According to the results of the study with regard to instructor effectiveness, almost all teacher candidates indicated that instructors were unqualified to provide progressive, practical training. The teacher candidates' responses revealed that they expected more practical courses instead of predominantly theoretically based courses. Additionally, the results of the study showed that there were significant differences among

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teacher candidates' perceptions according to their gender, class, and the departments in which they studied.

*Conclusions and Recommendations:* In conclusion, teacher candidates are the customers of education programs and the ones who will teach future generations. In this study they were asked whether they thought that the instructors and the education they received were effective. Overall, they were unhappy with their educational programs and critical of the quality of instructors. Therefore, university administrators should work to improve the quality of instructors and education programs at their schools. Teacher candidates require as much practice as theoretical knowledge, which has been the case throughout the history of Turkish education.

*Keywords:* Teacher training, quality of curriculum, instructors

## Introduction

Some people fail to perceive teaching as a profession, regarding it as merely a job that anyone can do; but it requires knowledge of the subject matter, the learner, and the political and social context of learning as well as skills that must be developed through actual practice. As Sural (2015) stated, "It is a well-known fact that there are many people, who didn't receive any teacher training, and are training future teachers" (p. 36). Christoph Helwig (1532-1617) and Joachim Junge (1587-1657) of Giessen University were the first to recognize teaching as a profession, proposing that effective teachers should engage in pedagogical education in addition to studying in their major fields (Cubberley, 1947). Despite Helwig's and Junge's recognition of teaching as a profession as early as the beginning of the seventeenth century, the debate as to whether teaching is a profession or simply a job that anyone with knowledge of particular subject matter can do has persisted into the twenty-first century.

During the Information Age with its characteristic rapid changes and requisite improvements, what is expected of teachers has not only changed but has, in fact, increased. A teacher's job involves more than teaching subjects and fulfilling students' learning needs. Teachers bear heavy workloads in terms of outside preparation and collaboration with colleagues (Walkington, 2005). While applying modern classroom management techniques, they are expected to use effective teaching methods and materials in the best possible ways and integrate them into the learning environment (Kahyaoglu & Yangin, 2007). According to contemporary education theory, teachers, students, administrators, and parents must interact closely in the educational milieu where the teacher is the key figure (Kahyaoglu & Yangin, 2007). Teachers have countless duties and responsibilities, and to be able to meet them, they must educate and improve themselves continuously; however, doing so would be meaningless or inadequate if they have been poorly educated during their undergraduate years. Thus, teacher-training institutions are crucial.

Nevertheless, because teaching has not been viewed as a profession by experts in other fields and because most people assume that anyone who knows the subject can teach it, teacher-training institutions and colleges of education have garnered little attention. At this particular university, the arts and sciences faculty and the economics faculty have traditionally occupied the center of interest of university administrators, leaving the education faculty (despite the large number of students taught) in a place of secondary importance; and the relatively low level of prestige enjoyed by education professors has affected the quality of teacher training. According to the results of a study by Okcabol (2005) and Oktay (1998), the following issues can be concluded as causes of low prestige associated with education faculties: (i) Although education departments at many universities are the largest in terms of the number of enrollees, they lag behind other departments in terms of building and personnel sharing, (ii) Administrators of colleges of education have been selected from among candidates whose expertise is not education, (iii) Even though most university administrators state the importance of the education of teachers, they exert little effort to raise the level of prestige awarded to colleges of education and their faculty members, (iv) In the university environment the common wisdom is that subject-matter knowledge is sufficient for teaching; a pedagogical foundation is unimportant, (v) Instructors are overloaded with too many sections of lecture courses dealing with professional teaching knowledge. Azar (2011) stated, "Due to lack of personnel, there are programs which continue only with 3-4 instructors and these instructors teach 40 hours every week" (p. 37). Administrators expect instructors, regardless of their expertise, to impart professional teaching knowledge, believing that "an educator can teach every professional teaching knowledge course" (Okcabol, 2005 & Oktay, 1998). Since instructors are too busy with courses sometimes they cannot help or assist teacher candidates.

The factors stated above provide a glimpse into the problems faced by colleges of education in Turkey. One such problem is instructor quality. A 1993 report by the Turkish Grand National Assembly on "teachers' problems" stated that instructors of education do not have a background in the field of education; most come from outside the field. At some universities only teaching assistants teach classes on professional teaching knowledge (Yuksel, 2011). Ayas (2006) raised the issue of the course loads of education faculty members, arguing that because instructors' course loads are too heavy, they cannot guide teacher candidates through applied courses and school practicums. Furthermore, office hours of instructors are not used effectively, and textbooks are not well-organized. Instructors fail to conduct proper assessments and ignore other problems, leaving their programs in disarray. Guneyli and Aslan (2009) addressed the importance of instructors' guidance and communication between instructors and teacher candidates by stating, "A healthy and useful communication process should be established between the prospective teachers who are the teachers of the future and the instructors. They often lower success standards in an attempt to please their students" (p. 318). Many instructors provide lesson plans to students, who then teach the subject to themselves (Unver, Bumen, & Balbay, 2008). Therefore, providing lesson plans to students might be a

way to establish a useful communication between the instructor and the prospective teachers.

Experienced teachers who mentor preservice teachers during student teaching often do so with insufficient guidance or with little understanding of what university education programs entail. They must then draw almost solely upon their own core beliefs and experiences as the basis for support and evaluation of preservice teachers' performance. Predictably, the idea that "school is where you really learn to teach" is commonly held at many universities (Walkington, 2005).

In Turkey, every teacher candidate must pass the Public Personnel Selection Examination (KPSS), a nationwide examination, to obtain a license and start working. This examination places a great deal of pressure on teacher candidates, who want instructors to teach to this test. They want to learn what will help them pass this examination; consequently, course content is more theoretical than practical.

General education requirements are designed to ensure that a teacher knows his or her subject matter well. All teacher education programs include some form of practice teaching that allows experienced teachers to help prospective teachers gain necessary skills. Some teacher education programs require observation periods before actual practice teaching. Other programs provide clinical experience before or during student teaching. However, in most education programs, student teaching is all the training a prospective teacher can expect. Unfortunately, it is not enough as some studies have shown (Azar, 2011). Azar (2011) stated that teaching profession program courses, general culture, teaching profession knowledge, and school practicum dimensions were ignored. In Turkish teacher-education programs applied courses and practicum courses are inadequate. They are typically ignored by instructors, who bear heavy course loads; and by teacher candidates, who view these courses as free hours. Thus, the Higher Education Board (YOK), which is responsible for higher education systems and programs in Turkey, addressed the problem and tried to raise standards of teacher education programs and education faculties. The following section includes a discussion of standards for teacher educators, measures enacted by the YOK, and the effectiveness of those measures.

#### *Standards for Teacher Educators*

To accommodate the shift from teacher as teacher to teacher as learner, teacher-training institutions have implemented changes (Yanpar-Yelken, Celikkaleli, & Capri, 2007) including alternative approaches. In addition, since 2003 higher education institutions and the number of students entering them have increased, raising the issue of quality standards around the world (Yanpar-Yelken et al., 2007). Although standards to which teacher educators are held have been theoretically determined by the YOK, no research has been conducted on whether or not those standards have been achieved (Tas, 2004).

In developed countries, efficiency has been achieved by determining and applying standards. To be able to meet the competition, developing countries have attempted to raise their educational systems to contemporary standards (Erisen,

2001). Thus, in Turkey appropriateness of standards should be evaluated and developed continuously and teacher- training courses should be examined (Yanpar-Yelken et al., 2007). Saglam and Adiguzel (2015) agreed with Yanpar-Yelken et al. (2007) and stated, "To be able to reach intended quality in teacher training is possible with developing teacher-training curriculum standards and accrediting teacher-training institutions' compliance with standards continuously" (p.1). According to Adiguzel and Saglam (2009), one of the determinants of quality and efficiency in a school of education is the quality of the instructors; thus, a basic condition for a strong education program is qualified teachers. Because standards are effective in helping establish excellent teacher-training programs and producing proficient teachers, the effectiveness of teacher-training programs depends on these guidelines. Ozkan (2012) also indicated the need for a durable teaching training policy, proposed that policies should not be changed continually.

Like other developing countries, Turkey has also tried to raise standards of teacher educators and teacher-training programs. Accordingly, the YOK conducted many studies and prepared many reports on the quality of education programs. However, two questions remain: (a) Have these reports or studies affected the quality of teacher-training? and (b) Have they eliminated the problems faced by teacher educators?

This study focused on quality of teacher educators and teacher-training programs. In Turkey, both education instructors and teacher candidates have complained about teacher-training programs, courses, lack of a quality education, and limited readiness for the teaching profession. Therefore, the current researcher has examined the quality of courses and the efficiency of instructors in the education program at a university in Turkey.

## Method

This section explains and justifies the methods used for determining teacher candidates' perceptions of the standards of the education program in which they were enrolled. It presents the participants, sources of data, and survey instruments and includes a description of the research design, information about the dataset, sampling procedures, and measurement of the variables used in this study. It also provides detailed information about the statistical analysis and techniques used in the data analysis.

### *Research Design*

Because this research was descriptive, the researcher has made no attempt to explain the reasons underlying the results. Instead, teacher candidates' perceptions of standards for their education programs were investigated, and sophisticated descriptive analysis was provided to address the problem. Most existing research on this subject is qualitative, based on the perceptions of faculty members and administrators. The current researcher, however, sought to determine empirically whether teacher candidates think that they study in a qualified program and have

qualified instructors to teach them. The perceptions of teacher candidates were important because they are the ones who benefit from the education program and ultimately put them into practice following graduation.

#### *Population and Research Sample*

Since “students’ opinions are not the only but one of the important information knowledge about teaching and learning process and the quality of education programs” (Sahin, Zoraloglu & Sahin Firat, 2010) and “this knowledge is more reliable and valid than other indicators showing the teaching quality” (Penny, 2003), teacher candidates were selected as participants for the study. The target population included juniors and seniors in the education program at a university. Freshmen and sophomores were excluded because they had not yet declared themselves as teacher candidates. To ensure that the population was adequately represented in the sample for analysis purposes and to improve sampling precision, all junior and senior teacher candidates were invited to participate to maintain the smallest sampling error.

**Table 1.**

#### *Participants’ Gender, Year in School, and Degree Programs*

		Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	252	58.3
	Female	180	41.7
	Total	441	100.0
Year in School	Junior	217	49.2
	Senior	224	50.8
	Total	441	100.0
Degree Programs	Guidance and Counseling	28	6.3
	Elementary Education	164	37.2
	Art	12	2.7
	Turkish	50	11.3
	Comp.Science	27	6.1
	Social Studies	79	17.9
	Physical Educ.	35	7.9
	Math	14	3.2
	Science	32	7.3
	Total	441	100.0

Samples derived from the target population of the study consisted of 441 teacher candidates enrolled in the teacher education program at a university in Turkey during the 2011–2012 academic year. More males ( $n=252$  or 58.3%) participated than

females (n=180 or 41.7%), and nine people did not indicate their gender. Participants were juniors and seniors in various departments of the university. Almost half the participants were juniors (n=217 or 49.2%); the others were seniors (n=224 or 50.8%). Participants were enrolled in the following departments: Guidance and Counseling, Elementary Education, Art Education, Turkish Language Education, Computer Science and IT, Social Sciences Education, Physical Education, Mathematics Education, and Science Education (see Table 1 for the gender, year in school, and departments of participants).

#### *Research Instrument and Procedure*

The questionnaire consisted of 20 questions in two sections: The first section covered instructors' qualifications (ten questions), and the second dealt with the education programs in various departments and the courses offered (ten questions). During the preparation of the questionnaire, the researcher improved the survey items based on comments from national experts on teacher education and added additional topics that required attention in order to ensure the validity of the items.

Between March and May 2012 the data were collected at the university. Participants completed the questionnaires in a classroom setting before their classes began. To encourage survey responses, the researcher added a brief statement at the top of the survey in order to let them know about the aim, scope, and possible outcomes of the study. All participated voluntarily and ethical guidelines for the protection of participants were observed. The researcher informed them that their names would neither be asked nor included in this study to ensure their anonymity. The researcher examined the returned questionnaires for quality and completeness.

The ratio of surveys completed with eligible respondents to the total number of eligible respondents yields a unit response rate. To understand whether portions of the population are underrepresented as a result of nonresponse, unit response rates are usually used as the most important measure of response. Unit response rates reflect the potential effects of non-sampling error as well (National Center for Education Statistics, 2004). Dividing the number of completed surveys (C) by the total sample size (T) yields the completion rate:  $C/T = 441/500 = 88.2\%$ . Although this figure represents the quality of the data collection operations, it does not necessarily represent the quality of the data.

#### *Validity and Reliability*

Regarding the validity of the questionnaire, the researcher also tried to identify potential problems with wording, formatting, and content. Some participants also responded to a series of scripted questions related to the survey items designed to test the clarity of terms, the appropriateness of response options, and the overall ease in responding to specific survey questions for possible modifications. Modifications were made to improve unclear terms and definitions, formatting, and the length of the questionnaire.

In terms of the reliability of the questionnaire in total and each item separately, the reliability test of Coefficient Alpha (Cronbach's alpha) was conducted. As a high

reliability score, Cronbach's alpha value was found at 0.85 (greater than 0.7) and all 20 items' alpha values ranged from 0.85 to 0.87, which did not suggest a need to delete an item from the questionnaire. To participate and complete the survey, including the time for reviewing instructions, an average of 20 minutes was required.

### *Data Analysis*

The research question that shaped this study was as follows: "How do teacher candidates perceive the standards imposed on education faculty?" Additional research questions included the following: (i) How do teacher candidates perceive the professional competence of education instructors? (ii) How do teacher candidates perceive the personal characteristics of education instructors? (iii) How do teacher candidates perceive the education program offered by their departments? (iv) How do teacher candidates perceive the qualifications of the education administration?

Data were analyzed using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS). Because the purpose of this study was not to explain why teacher candidates think in a certain way, descriptive statistics provided an understanding of what they think. First, univariate analyses, such as frequencies with number and percentages, revealed the thinking of teacher candidates about the qualifications of instructors and programs. Second, bivariate analyses, such as crosstabs statistics, revealed the relationships between two independent variables.

## **Results**

### *Univariate Analyses: Frequencies of Independent Variables*

When responding to the statement that instructors are "experts and have a grasp of their fields," 59.5% (n=261) of teacher candidates disagreed, and 13.4% (n=59) of them agreed. With regard to the statement that instructors are "good examples for students," 54.4% (n=240) disagreed and 13.8% (n=61) agreed. In response to the statement that instructors "have ability to manage a classroom," 50.1% (n=220) of teacher candidates disagreed and 15.9% (n=70) agreed. However, teacher candidates generally accepted that instructors "graduated from an education program," 34% (n=149) agreeing and 31.7% (n=139) disagreeing. Table 4 shows that teacher candidates disagreed with all other statements about their instructors, such as "Have a qualification of teaching profession," "Are able to plan coursework," "Know and are able to use various teaching techniques and methods," "Provide coursework directed to practice," and "Experienced in their fields," at various percentage rates, all higher than those agreeing with the statements (see Table 2).

**Table 2.***Questions on Instructors (First Section of Questionnaire)*

Questions on instructors	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree
Experts and have a grasp of their fields	261 (59.5%)	119 (27.1%)	59 (13.4%)
Qualified to teach	190 (43.7%)	130 (29.9%)	115 (26.4%)
Able to plan coursework	188 (43.3%)	125 (28.8%)	121 (27.9%)
Know and are able to use various teaching techniques and methods	217 (49.7%)	139 (31.8%)	81 (18.5%)
Provide coursework directed to practice	222 (50.3%)	87 (19.7%)	132 (29.9%)
Experienced in their fields	188 (43.1%)	146 (33.55)	102 (23.4%)
Graduated from an education program	139 (31.7%)	150 (34.2%)	149 (34.0%)
Able to manage a classroom	220 (50.1%)	149 (33.9%)	70 (15.9%)
Set a good example for students	240 (54.4%)	140 (31.7%)	61 (13.8%)

Teacher candidates generally disagreed with statements related to aspects of the program except two statements indicating that (a) "courses are related to the field," with which 60.7% (n=263) agreed and 20.1% (n=87) disagreed; and (b) "practical courses are available to freshmen and sophomores," with which 41.4% (n=179) agreed and 40% (n=173) disagreed. They disagreed with the following statements: (a) "courses are not based on memorization" at a rate of 70.9% (n=312), (b) "education given at teacher-training programs are qualified" at a rate of 67.8% (n=295), (c) "more practical courses than theoretical ones are offered" at a rate of 63.6% (n=280), (d) "a richness of method and technique characterized the program" at a rate of 59.9% (n=263), (e) "the program prepares teacher candidates to work with students of different cultures" at a rate of 56% (n=247), (f) "coursework is directed to practice" at a rate of 51.3% (n=224), and (g) "courses are designed to improve teacher candidates" at a rate of 38.4% (n=168) (see Table 3).

**Table 3.**  
*Questions on Programs (Second Section of Questionnaire)*

Questions on programs	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree
Coursework is directed to practice.	224 (51.3%)	94 (21.5%)	119 (27.2%)
Courses are related to the field.	87 (20.1%)	83 (19.2%)	263 (60.7%)
Practical courses are available for freshmen and sophomores.	173 (40.0%)	80 (18.5%)	179 (41.4%)
Courses are not based on memorization.	312 (70.9%)	64 (14.5%)	64 (14.5%)
Courses that will improve teacher candidates are available.	168 (38.4%)	122 (27.9%)	148 (33.8%)
A variety of methods and techniques are used in the program.	263 (59.9%)	125 (28.5%)	51 (11.6%)
A quality education is offered.	295 (67.8%)	119 (27.4%)	21 (4.8%)
The program prepares teacher candidates to teach students of different cultures.	247 (56.0%)	131 (29.7%)	63 (14.3%)
More practical courses than theoretical ones are offered.	280 (63.6%)	99 (22.5%)	61 (13.9%)

*Bivariate Analyses: Crosstabs of Independent Variables with Gender and Year in School*

For descriptive statistics, crosstabs were run to determine bivariate relationships in the following steps. Unlike the tables with two rows and two columns, chi-square was selected to calculate the Pearson for tables with any number of rows and columns. Because this study includes nominal data, the researcher could have selected the phi coefficient (or Cramér's V), the contingency coefficient, the lambda coefficient (symmetric and asymmetric lambdas and Goodman and Kruskal's tau), or the uncertainty coefficient. The contingency coefficient, which is a measure of association based on chi-square, was chosen. The value ranges between 0 and 1, with 0 indicating no association between the row and column variables and values close to 1 indicating a high degree of association between the variables. The maximum value possible depends on the number of rows and columns in a table.

The relationship between gender and "instructors' ability to use various teaching techniques and methods" was significant based on a Pearson chi-square at the .035 level. The nominal-by-nominal contingency coefficient value was .124; in other words the column variable explains the row variable at 12.4%. Most teacher candidates, both males and females, disagreed that instructors use a variety of teaching techniques and methods. Of the males 44.6% (n=111) disagreed, and 20.9% (n=52) agreed, whereas 57% (n=102) of the females disagreed, and 14.5% (n=26) agreed (see Table 4).

**Table 4.**

*Teacher Candidates' Perceptions of Instructors' Ability to Use a Variety of Techniques and Methods by Gender*

	Male	Female
Disagree	111 (44.6%)	102 (57.0%)
Don't Know	86 (34.5%)	51 (28.5%)
Agree	52 (20.9%)	26 (14.5%)
Total	249 (100.0%)	179 (100.0%)

A significant relationship existed between the year in school and the “instructors' ability to direct coursework to practice” based on a Pearson chi-square at the .000 level. The nominal-by-nominal contingency coefficient value was .210, which means that the column variable explains the row variable at 21%. Although most seniors disagreed that instructors were able to direct coursework to practice, juniors who disagreed and agreed with the statement were nearly equal. Of the seniors 58.9% (n=132) disagreed, and 20.5% (n=46) agreed; of the juniors 41.5% (n=90) disagreed, and 39.6% (n=86) agreed (see Table 5).

**Table 5.**

*Teacher Candidates' Perceptions of Instructors' Ability to Direct Coursework to Practice by Year in School*

	Junior	Senior
Disagree	90 (41.5%)	132 (58.9%)
Don't Know	41 (18.9%)	46 (20.5%)
Agree	86 (39.6%)	46 (20.5%)
Total	217 (100 %)	224 (100 %)

The relationship between gender and teacher candidates' perception that “practical courses are available to freshmen and sophomores” was significant, based on a Pearson chi-square of .038. The nominal-by-nominal contingency coefficient value was .123, which means that the column variable explains the row variable at 12.3%. Male teacher candidates mostly disagreed that practical courses are available to freshmen and sophomores, whereas most females agreed. Males disagreed at a rate of 40.4% (n=99) and agreed at a rate of 37.6% (n=92); females agreed at a rate of 46.1% (n=82) and disagreed at a rate of 41% (n=73) (see Table 6).

**Table 6.**

*Teacher Candidates' Perceptions of Whether Practical Courses are Available to Freshmen and Sophomores by Gender*

	Male	Female
Disagree	99 (40.4%)	73 (41.0%)
Don't Know	54 (22.0%)	23 (12.9%)
Agree	92 (37.6%)	82 (46.1%)
Total	245 (100%)	178 (100%)

The relationship between the year in school and participant perceptions that “coursework is directed to practice” was significant ( $p=.000$  and nominal-by-nominal contingency coefficient value=.185/18.5%). Most juniors and seniors disagreed that education is directed to practice. Seniors disagreed at a rate of 59.3% ( $n=131$ ) and agreed at a rate of 19.5% ( $n=43$ ); 43.1% ( $n=93$ ) of juniors disagreed, and 35.2% ( $n=76$ ) agreed (see Table 7).

**Table 7.**

*Teacher Candidates' Perceptions of Program Offerings by Year in School*

	Juniors	Seniors
<b>Coursework is directed to practice.</b>		
Disagree	93 (43.1%)	131 (59.3%)
Don't Know	47 (21.8%)	47 (21.3%)
Agree	76 (35.2%)	43 (19.5%)
Total	216 (100 %)	221 (100 %)
<b>Practical courses are available to freshmen and sophomores.</b>		
Disagree	66 (31.3%)	107 (48.4%)
Don't Know	46 (21.8%)	34 (15.4%)
Agree	99 (46.9%)	80 (36.2%)
Total	211 (100 %)	221 (100 %)
<b>Teacher candidates are prepared to teach students from different cultures.</b>		
Disagree	107 (49.3%)	140 (62.5%)
Don't Know	73 (33.6%)	58 (25.9%)
Agree	37 (17.1%)	26 (11.6%)
Total	217 (100 %)	224 (100 %)
<b>More practical courses than theoretical ones are offered.</b>		
Disagree	126 (58.1%)	154 (69.1%)
Don't Know	53 (24.4%)	46 (20.6%)
Agree	38 (17.5%)	23 (10.3%)
Total	217 (100 %)	223 (100 %)

The relationship between the year in school and participant perception that “practical courses are available to freshmen and sophomores” was significant based on the Pearson chi-square value (.001) and the nominal-by-nominal contingency coefficient value (.173). Although most seniors disagreed that practical courses are

available to freshmen and sophomores, juniors mostly agreed with that statement. Of the seniors 48.4% (n=107) disagreed and 36.2% (n=80) agreed; 46.9% (n=99) of juniors agreed and 31.3% (n=66) disagreed (see Table 7).

The significant relationship between the year in school and participant perception that "teacher candidates are prepared to teach students of different cultures" was based on the Pearson chi-square value (.019) and the nominal-by-nominal contingency coefficient value (.133). Both seniors and juniors mostly disagreed that teacher candidates are prepared to teach students of different cultures. Of the seniors 62.5% (n=140) disagreed, and only 11.6% (n=26) agreed; among juniors 49.3% (n=107) disagreed and 17.1% (n=37) agreed (see Table 7).

The relationship between the year in school and participant perception of whether "more practical courses are offered than theoretical ones" was significant ( $p=.032$  and nominal-by-nominal contingency coefficient value=.124/12.4%). Most seniors and juniors disagreed. Among seniors 69.1% (n=154) disagreed, and 10.3% (n=23) agreed; among juniors 58.1% (n=126) disagreed, and 17.5% (n=38) agreed (see Table 7).

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

The focus of this study was teacher candidates' perception of the quality of instructors and the education program at a university in Turkey. The ongoing problems of education programs have been discussed above. Although the importance of education and teacher-training programs has always been emphasized by higher education authorities, chronic problems persist and remain unsolved at universities. This study sheds light on these problems from the perspectives of teacher candidates.

Because of the common belief that anyone can teach if she or he knows the subject, teaching has not been viewed as a profession by experts in other fields. Thus, teacher-training institutions and education faculties at universities remain in the background. Because the faculties of colleges of arts and sciences and economics departments are often at the center of interest in Turkish universities, education programs (even with their high enrollment rate) have been of secondary importance. Therefore, the prestige of education faculties has never been high at Turkish universities.

First, a common problem surrounds the fields of study of education instructors. It is known that instructors in education programs in Turkey are generally assigned from fields other than educational sciences. The 1993 report by the Turkish Grand National Assembly on "teachers' problems" stated that instructors of education have not been instructed in the education field and generally come from other fields of study (Yuksel, 2011). In some universities teaching assistants conduct classes if no qualified instructor is on the teaching schedule. However, teacher candidates in this study assumed that their instructors had graduated from education programs. Teacher candidates generally accepted that instructors "graduated from education

faculty," 34% (n=149) agreeing with the statement and 31.7% (n=139) disagreeing with it. They mostly disagreed with all other statements about the instructors. For example, 59.5% (n=261) of teacher candidates disagreed that instructors are "experts and have a grasp of their fields"; 13.4% (n=59) of them agreed. In all, 54.4% (n=240) of them disagreed with the statement that instructors set "a good example for students" and 13.8% (n=61) agreed. Furthermore, 50.1% (n=220) of teacher candidates disagreed that instructors "have the ability to manage a classroom" and 15.9% (n=70) agreed. They also highly disagreed to varying degrees with other statements about instructors: They "are qualified to teach," "plan coursework," "know and are able to use various teaching techniques and methods," "direct education toward practice," and "are experienced in their fields." This shows that instructors lack the necessary skills to communicate effectively with teacher candidates. Ozkan (2012) focused on the importance of good communication and interaction among teacher candidates and instructors.

Second, education programs in Turkey are highly theoretical, and an infusion of more practical courses is needed. Fish (1995) argued that "reflecting on practice may not lead to immediate visible improvement, but rather to longer-term quality in practice and professionalism" (p. 85). Walkington (2005) emphasized the importance of the formation of a teacher identity by facilitating preservice teacher activity; furthermore, teachers should have the skills and confidence to make decisions that will make a difference. Because of the excessive course loads borne by some instructors, they cannot guide teacher candidates in the practical matters of teaching. Because of crowded classes and course loads, office hours of instructors cannot be used effectively (Ayas, 2006). Teacher candidates in this study generally disagreed with the statements related to characteristics of the program except for two statements: (a) "courses are related to the field," with which 60.7% (n=263) agreed and 20.1% (n=87) disagreed and (b) "practical courses are available to freshmen and sophomores," with which 41.4% (n=179) agreed and 40% (n=173) disagreed. With regard to the statement "more practical courses are available than theoretical ones," 63.6% (n=280) disagreed, and 51.3% (n=224) disagreed that "coursework is directed to practice." Parallel to the result of this study Bulca, Sacli, Kangalgil and Demirhan (2012) offered solutions to teacher-training programs in physical education, and remarked, "Professional teaching knowledge courses aren't enough just with theory and more practice should be added" (p. 90).

Third, teacher candidates, regardless of gender and year in school mostly disagreed with statements related to instructor qualifications. For example, most of the teacher candidates, both male and female, disagreed that instructors are able to use various teaching techniques and methods. Of the males 44.6% (n=111) disagreed and 20.9% (n=52) agreed; of the females 57% (n=102) disagreed and 14.5% (n=26) agreed. Although most seniors disagreed that instructors' direct coursework to practice, juniors disagreed and agreed at nearly the same rate. Among seniors 58.9% (n=132) disagreed and 20.5% (n=46) agreed; among juniors 41.5% (n=90) disagreed and 39.6% (n=86) agreed.

Fourth, with regard to gender and year in school, teacher candidates viewed the offerings of the education program differently. Male teacher candidates mostly disagreed that “practical courses are available to freshmen and sophomores”; females mostly agreed. Specifically, 40.4% (n=99) of males disagree, and 37.6% (n=92) agreed; 46.1% (n=82) of females agreed and 41% (n=73) disagreed. Although most seniors disagreed that practical courses are available to freshmen and sophomores, most juniors agreed.

Finally, teacher candidates need early experience in professional development school (PDSs) (Ornstein & Levine, 2003) as proposed by the Holmes Group. Like a traditional “laboratory school,” the PDS is designed to link a local school district with a college or school of education, but in a comprehensive and systematic fashion. College faculty members function as classroom teachers and serve as mentors for new teachers. Isik, Ciltas and Bas (2010) indicated that teacher candidates determined their own teaching strategies and beliefs while screening faculty members’ methods, strategies and tactics.

Morken, Divitini, and Haugalokken (2007) emphasized the necessity of the practice-based education in teacher-education programs. Yanpar-Yelken et al. (2007) also noted that teacher candidates demand a teacher-education program that includes more practical than theoretical courses. Teacher candidates believe that the more they view the issues in practice, the more experience they will gain before beginning the job.

In conclusion, teacher candidates are the customers of education programs and the ones who will teach future generations. In this study they were asked whether they thought that the instructors and the education they receive from them is effective. Overall, they were unhappy with the education they received. They were critical of the quality of instructors and the education program; therefore, university administrators should work to improve the quality of instructors and education programs at their schools. Teacher candidates require as much practice as theoretical knowledge, which has been the case throughout the history of Turkish education.

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## **Türkiye'deki Bir Üniversitede Öğretmen Adaylarının Eğitim Programının Standartları ile İlgili Görüşleri**

### **Atf:**

Dogutas, A. (2016). Teacher candidates' perceptions of standards in an education program at a university in Turkey. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 63, 1-20, <http://dx.doi.org/10.14689/ejer.2016.63.01>

### **Özet**

*Problem Durumu:* Öğretmenlik mesleği üzerine çeşitli görüş ve argümanlar sıklıkla dile getirilmektedir. Örnek vermek gerekirse; Bir taraftan öğretmenlik bir uzmanlık alanı ve kendine özgü bir meslek olarak görülmemekte, diğer taraftan meslek olsa bile herkesin yapabileceği bir meslek olarak nitelendirilmektedir. Fakat öğretmenlik; Alana hakim olmayı, öğretme ve öğrenmenin sosyal ve politik yapısını bilmeyi ve aynı zamanda pratik yaparak ve tecrübeyle gelişen öğretme becerisine sahip olmayı gerektirir. Bir öğretmenin görevi, sadece öğrencisine bilgileri yüklemek ve öğreteceği konuları bilmek değildir, bunun yanında ders harici hazırlık ve diğer meslektaşlarıyla işbirliği yapması da gerekmektedir. Öğretmenlik mesleği üzerine yapılan çalışmalar bazı varsayımlarda bulunmaktadır. Öğretmenlik bir uzmanlık alanı olarak görülmediğinden Türkiye'de Eğitim Fakülteleri düşük prestije sahiptirler. Ayrıca bina, yerleşim alanı ve personel istihdamı gibi lojistik ve insan kaynakları konularında yeterli destek göremeyen ve üst yöneticilerinin eğitim kökenli olmayışı nedeniyle Eğitim Fakültelerine yönelik olumsuz bir algı da söz konusudur. Çoğu gelişmekte olan ülkelerde olduğu gibi Türkiye'de de eğitim fakültelerinin kalite standartlarını artırmak için YÖK tarafından birçok çalışma yapılmıştır. Ancak bunların ne kadar faydalı ve yeterli olduğu konusunda tartışmalar günümüzde de devam etmektedir.

*Araştırmanın Amacı:* Eğitim alanında çalışma yapanlar bilirler ki; genellikle hem öğretmen adayları hem de eğitimciler öğretmen eğitim programlarından,

okutulan derslerin içeriğinden, iyi eğitim eksikliğinden ve öğretmenlik mesleğine yeterince hazırlanamamaktan yakınmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın amacı; Türkiye'deki bir üniversitede öğrenim gören öğretmen adaylarının kendi üniversitelerinin öğretim elemanı kalitesi ve eğitim programı ile ilgili algılarını belirlemektir.

*Araştırmanın Yöntemi:* Bu çalışmaya, 2011-2012 akademik yılı içerisinde farklı branşlarda öğrenim gören toplam 441 öğretmen adayı katılmıştır. Katılımcıların %58,3'ü erkek, %41'i ise kızdır. Eğitim Fakültesinde; İlköğretim, Psikolojik Danışma ve Rehberlik, Güzel Sanatlar, Türkçe, Sosyal Bilimler, Beden Eğitimi, Bilgisayar ve İletişim Teknolojileri, Matematik ve Fen Bilimleri olmak üzere dokuz farklı bölümde okuyan üçüncü ve son sınıf öğrencilerinin büyük çoğunluğu (%88,2'si) bu çalışmaya katılmıştır. Her ne kadar öğretmen adayı olsalar bile birinci ve ikinci sınıflar henüz kendilerini öğretmenliğe hazır hissetmeyecekleri yada üçüncü sınıfa kadar yeterince eğitim almadıkları için çalışmaya dahil edilmemişlerdir. Ancak örneklem hatasının en aza indirilebilmesi amacıyla fakültede kaydı bulunan ve derslere devam eden bütün üçüncü ve son sınıf öğrencileri çalışmaya katılım için davet edilmişlerdir.

Çalışmanın ana problem sorusu "Öğretmen adayları eğitim fakültesinde verilen eğitim standartlarını nasıl algılamaktadırlar?" şeklindedir. Konuyla ilgili öğretmen adaylarının görüşleri son derece önemlidir çünkü eğitim programlarında yararlanan ve ileride uygulamaya geçirecek olanlar bizzat onlardır. Alt problem olarak ise (i) Öğretmen adayları öğretim elemanlarının mesleki yeterliliklerini nasıl algılıyorlar? (ii) Öğretmen adayları öğretim elemanlarının kişilik özelliklerini nasıl algılıyorlar? (iii) Öğretmen adayları bölümlerinin eğitim programını nasıl algılıyorlar? (iv) Öğretmen adayları eğitim yönetiminin niteliklerini nasıl algılıyorlar? sorularından oluşmaktadır.

Veriler yapılandırılmış bir anket ile toplanmıştır. Anket öğretmen eğitimi üzerine uzman olan akademisyenlerin çalışma, görüş ve yorumlarına dayanarak hazırlanmış ve dikkate değer önemli bazı başlıklar da sonradan eklenmiştir. Ardından anket içerik, gramer ve anlatıma dayalı potansiyel hatalardan arındırılmıştır. Bu konuda bazı öğretmen adaylarına anket soruları okutularak soruların anlaşılıp anlaşılmadığı yada kolay cevap verilip verilemeyeceği noktasında yardım alınmıştır. Anketin üst kısmında bu çalışmanın amacını, kapsamını ve prosedürleri anlatan kısa bir açıklama ve soruları okuyup cevaplandırma için yaklaşık 20 dakikayı geçmeyecek şekilde anket uygulanmaya hazır hale getirilmiştir. Ankette katılımcıların isim ve diğer kişisel bilgileri sorulmamakta ve sadece konuya ilişkin görüşleri anonim olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Ankette iki bölüm halinde 20 soru bulunmaktadır. Birinci bölüm; öğretim elemanlarının kalitesi hakkında öğretmen adaylarının algılarını belirlemeye yönelik seçilmiş 10 sorudan oluşmaktadır. İkinci bölüm ise öğretmen adaylarının çeşitli bölümlerde takip edilen eğitim programları üzerine yaklaşımlarını öğrenme amacıyla belirlenmiş 10 sorudan oluşmaktadır. Anketler, Mart 2012-Mayıs 2012 tarihleri arasında, derse başlamadan önce öğrencilere

uygulanmıştır. Katılım tamamen gönüllülük esasına dayalı olarak yapılmış olup ankete katılmak istemeyenlere uygulanmamıştır.

Veriler SPSS (Statistical Packages for Social Sciences) kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Bu çalışma öğretmen adaylarının okudukları fakültede eğitim standartlarına yönelik algılarını betimsel olarak açıklamaya çalıştığından dolayı herhangi bir sebep sonuç ilişkisi iddiasında bulunmamaktadır. Konuyla ilgili çok sayıda nitel araştırma bulunmaktadır, ancak bu çalışma nicel verilere dayalı bir analiz ortaya koymaktadır. Öncelikle, birinci düzeyde tek yönlü analizlerle katılımcıların sosyo demografik özellikleri hakkında bilgiler verilmiştir. Ardından ikinci düzeyde analizlerle öğretmen adaylarının algılarında cinsiyetlerinin, okudukları bölüm ve sınıf seviyelerinin (üçüncü yada dördüncü sınıfa devam ediyor olmaları) anlamlı farklılıklar meydana getirip getirmediğine bakılmıştır.

*Araştırmanın Bulguları:* Çalışmanın öne çıkan bazı sonuçlarına göre; Öğretim elemanlarının etkililiği ile ilgili hemen hemen tüm öğretmen adayları, öğretim elemanlarının ilerleyici ve pratik eğitim sağlama konusunda yetersiz olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Örnek olarak; cinsiyet, okudukları bölüm ve sınıf düzeyi farketmeksizin katılımcıların %63,6'sı teorik derslerin pratik derslerden daha yoğun olduğu ve pratikten çok teoriye dayalı işlendiği düşüncesine sahip oldukları, %59,5'inin öğretim elemanlarının konularına hakim olmadıklarını düşündükleri, %54,4'ünün öğretim elemanlarının öğretmen adayları için eğitim verme konusunda iyi birer örnek olmadıklarını düşündükleri ortaya çıkmıştır. Ayrıca, cinsiyet, sınıf ve okudukları bölümlere göre öğretmen adaylarının görüşlerinde anlamlı farklılıklar olduğunu göstermiştir. Örneğin, kızların %57'si öğretim elemanlarının çeşitli öğretim tekniklerini başarılı bir şekilde kullanamadıklarını düşünürken erkeklerin %44,6'sı bu şekilde düşünmektedir. Öğretim elemanlarının teori yada pratiğe dönük eğitim vermesi açısından üçüncü sınıflarda anlamlı bir farklılık bulunmazken, son sınıf katılımcıların %58,9'u teoriye dönük eğitimin ağırlıklı olduğu görüşüne sahiptir.

*Araştırmanın Sonuçları ve Önerileri:* Sonuç olarak, gelecek nesilleri yetiştirecek olan öğretmen adaylarının nitelikli ve profesyonel anlamda yetiştirilmesi eğitim fakültelerinin en önemli ve vazgeçilmez hedefi olmalıdır. Bu noktada görülen eksiklik ve aksaklıkların bir an önce giderilmesi için durum tespiti yapılması ve gerekli tedbirlerin alınması büyük önem taşımaktadır. Bu çalışma ile öğretmen adaylarının aldıkları eğitimden ve öğretmenliğe hazır bulunma düzeylerinde pek memnun olmadıkları görülmekte ve bu konudaki algılarına ilişkin detaylı tespitler yapılmıştır. Konuyla ilgili bu ve benzeri çalışmalarla ortaya konan tespitler eğitim fakültelerindeki eğitim standartlarının yükseltilmesi adına üniversite yöneticilerine yol göstermesi bakımından önemlidir.

*Anahtar Kelimeler:* Öğretmen yetiştirme, program kalitesi, öğretim elemanı