

# Challenges Faced by Prospective Teachers in Universities and Solution Proposals<sup>1</sup>

Erkan Kiral

*Adnan Menderes University Faculty of Education, TURKEY*

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The number of universities in Turkey has reached to 193, among which 72 of them have their own faculties of education. The problem of quantity in teacher training seems to be eliminated; however, training qualified teachers has become a prioritized issue. Many responsibilities fall to universities in training qualified teachers including determining and solving the educational challenges of prospective teachers. Hence, this study elicits the challenges the prospective teachers face at the universities and their solution proposals. In this context, an open-ended question was raised to 140 prospective teachers that is selected with convenience sampling method. Sources of challenges and their respective solution proposals for prospective teachers are thematized under administration, instructor, physical, democracy and so on. The most common challenge they encounter is related with physical facilities and the least is related with democracy. Eliminating these challenges based on the solutions provided will contribute to training qualified teachers.

*Keywords:* prospective, teachers, challenges, solution proposals.

## INTRODUCTION

Education has a significant place in countries' development and growth. While every stage of education has significant importance, higher education has particular importance in training qualified labor force, producing and spreading knowledge, meeting individual and social expectations. Hence, countries that aim to move forward in modernization and forge ahead must put more emphasis than ever on education in general, and higher education in particular. Higher education institutions are the startles of economic and social progress where knowledge is generated and consumed intensively.

As stated in The Law on Higher Education No. 2547, higher education in Turkey applies to any level of education and training within the national education system

Correspondence: Erkan Kiral,  
Adnan Menderes University Faculty of Education, Aydin, TURKEY  
E-mail: erkankiral74@gmail.com  
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received following the secondary education. Higher education levels have been structured as associate degree, undergraduate and postgraduate. In general, higher education aims to educate students to become individuals who possess independent and scientific thinking power, have extensive philosophy of life, are respectful of human rights, utilize their interests and talents towards the national development and respond to the needs of country, do high-level scientific study and research, generate and spread knowledge and technology, cooperate with domestic and foreign institutions, support growth and development at the national level and ultimately contribute to universal and modern development. Higher education fulfills all these missions with its existing institutions (university, faculty etc.). Universities that are higher education institutions are public entity establishments with scientific autonomy that provide high education, publish scientific research and journals, provide consultancy services and embody colleges, faculties and institutes. However, faculties are institutions within the universities that provide high education, publish scientific research and journals.

The number of universities in Turkey, including the ones established in the recent years, has reached to 193 by year 2016. Among these universities, 109 are state universities, 76 are foundation universities and 8 are foundation vocational schools of higher education. Every city of Turkey has a state university (Council of Higher Education, 2016). It may be suggested that the number of universities in Turkey is considerably low when compared to 4,200 universities in the United States of America (European Union, 2013), 783 universities in Japan (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan, 2013), 1,134 universities in Russia (European Union, 2013) and 345 universities in Iran (Ministry of Science, Technology and Research of Iran, 2013). Likewise, according to 2013 data, schooling rate in primary school is %98.86; in secondary school is %93.09; in secondary education is %70,06, whereas, in higher education this rate is % 35.51 based on 2012 data (Ministry of National Education-MoNE, 2012). Needless to say, the schooling rate must be raised by increasing the number of universities that educate qualified labor force as the most important resource of development and progress of countries. In addition to this, it is important to make the existing ones more qualified as well. None of the Turkish universities took place in the 2013 world's top 400 university ranking of QS – Quacquarelli Symonds (England), global career and education network, whose head office is presently based in the U.S.A. Top 10 ranking was shared by six universities from the U.S.A. and four universities from England (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Harvard, UCL, Oxford, Imperial College London, Yale, Chicago, Princeton, California Institute of Technology). In addition to 20 universities from the U.S.A. and 18 universities from England, various universities from Australia, Japan, Germany, Switzerland, Netherlands, Canada, Hong Kong, South Korea, China, France, Sweden, Denmark, Ireland, Finland, Singapore, Taiwan, Belgium and New Zealand were ranked among world's top 100 universities; in addition to those countries mentioned above, universities from countries such as Brazil, Norway, Mexico, South Africa, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Italy, Chile and Spain were listed among world's top 101-200 universities; again, in addition to the countries listed above, universities from countries such as Thailand, India, Czech Republic ranked among world's top 201-300 universities; in addition to the countries indicated above, universities from countries such as Argentine, Philippines, Kazakhstan, United Arab Emirates, South Africa, Egypt, Colombia, were listed among world's top 301-400 universities, and again in addition to the countries mentioned earlier, universities from countries such as Pakistan, Indonesia and Turkey entered the world's top 401-500 universities ranking. Only Bilkent University and Middle East Technical University from Turkey made the top 500 ranking (Ince, O'Leary and Quacquarelli, 2013, pp.

21-25). Akin and Eren (2012) used Clustering and Multidimensional Scaling Analyses and elicited to what extent OECD countries are similar to or differ from each other with regards to education. They aggregated OECD countries in three clusters; while Turkey was the only element in a particular cluster, other countries such as Australia, Canada, Chile, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Japan, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, America, England were in another cluster. They attributed the considerably different position of Turkey from other countries to Turkey's retreat compared to other countries in terms of education indicators (Bolat, 2011).

In fact, this clustering manifests itself also in the world's top universities ranking. As a matter of fact, leading countries in world economy (U.S.A., England, Germany, Japan, Australia, etc.) have their places in the forefront of world's top universities ranking. While social injustice in higher education (Wilkins and Burke, 2015, Yilmaz and Kaya, 2015), challenges related with the differences of students (Preece, 2015), faculty members' ethical challenges (Altbach, 2015a), challenges faced due to globalization (Altbach, 2015b, Yilmaz and Sarpkaya, 2016); unsatisfied expectations from the program (Kiral & Altun, 2015) have negative effect on universities, fundamentally, universities have many positive explicit contributions to the society. In Life Satisfaction Survey (LSS), 67.4% of college and university graduates expressed that they were satisfied with the higher education service they received (TUIK, 2012). Accordingly, it can be proposed that a relatively high percentage of these graduates are not satisfied with the services provided at the higher education level, in other words, they think this education is insufficient.

Many challenges can be mentioned in education. In a study of Yilmaz (2011), challenges were observed in teaching profession, educational administration, public education and special education, educational-cultural policy, curriculum, secondary and higher education levels in formal education. During the 2011-2012 academic year, the total number of faculties and colleges was 1,914; teachers was 118,839; students was 4,112,687 (MoNE, 2013). Evidently, higher education is a massive system. It is natural for this system to have distinctive challenges of its own. Thus, Gedikoglu's study (2005) attributes the reasons of higher education challenges to universities being established without the necessary number of qualified instructors and infrastructure with specific standards, universities without adequate infrastructure and staff to produce further knowledge and technology with a few exceptions, losing the appeal of being a faculty member due to social and economic conditions, the lack of required resources, the lack of library and laboratory facilities, millions of secondary school graduates waiting to enter university, academic freedom and institutional autonomy.

Qualified education and training at universities is in relation not only with the administrators, instructors, students and other employees becoming qualified, but also with the elimination of existing challenges. The purpose of this study is to elicit the challenges of the upper level of education system, which are the university in general and the faculty of education in particular, that impair the characteristics of education, in other words its quality and therefore, the university's quality. Administration's awareness of the problem findings elicited and their respective solution proposals and putting these solution proposals into practice will ensure the elimination or the minimization of challenges. Hence, eliciting the challenges and finding respective solutions are the one of the fundamental duties of administrators. Such that challenges prevent the system to progress healthily and also may cause it to regress. The important aspect is to take precautions to overcome the challenges and to eliminate them. The greatest responsibility and the most important mission fall to the administration.

## METHOD

Due to its eliciting nature of existing situation, this research is a descriptive survey. Convenience sampling method is used in this research (Yildirim and Simsek, 2006). The study group of this research conducted consists of 140 volunteer prospective teachers during the 2012-2013 academic year spring semester whose various classes (social sciences, music, art, counseling, classroom teaching) were tutored by the researcher at the faculty of education. The question "What are the challenges you face at the university and what are your solution proposals to these challenges?" was raised to the prospective teachers. The written answers of prospective teachers are analyzed by using qualitative and quantitative research methods. As vast amount of descriptive information is gathered in quantitative researches, it is necessary to sort this information. Therefore, data obtained is primarily scrutinized and coded. Later, themes are formed from code files (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992). While forming the themes, visual and content validity was ensured by getting an opinion of another academic member specialized in the field. Miles and Huberman (1994) formula was used in forming the themes in the research. Consensus for the themes is 100%.

## FINDINGS

The distribution by grade and gender of 140 prospective teachers (3rd and 4th grade students) who participated in the research in accordance with the data obtained is summarized in Table 1.

As seen Table 1, 52 of the students participated in the research are in the 3rd grade (37.1%) and 88 of them (62.9%) are in the 4th grade. 92 (65.7%) of the students participated in the research are female and 48 (34.3%) are male. Participants' ages range between 21 and 29 ( $M=22.4$ ). Data obtained concerning the challenges and solution proposals of students are gathered under seven themes, (1) administration, (2) instructor, (3) physical, (4) education and training, (5) economic, (6) developmental, sociocultural and (7) democratic. The themes are explained below in detail.

### Administration-related challenges and solution proposals

Administration-related challenges in accordance with the data obtained are summarized in Table 2.

**Table 1.** Distribution of Prospective Teachers According to Grade and Gender

| Grade/Gender | Female<br>(n) | Percentage<br>(%) | Male<br>(n) | Percentage<br>(%) | Total | Percentage<br>(%) |
|--------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|
| 3rd grade    | 25            | 27.2              | 27          | 56.25             | 52    | 37.1              |
| 4th grade    | 67            | 72.8              | 21          | 43.75             | 88    | 62.9              |
| Total        | 92            | 100               | 48          | 100               | 140   | 100               |

**Table 2.** Administration-Related Challenges and Frequency Distribution

| Theme                  | Challenge Statements   | f   |
|------------------------|--|-----|
| Administration-Related | 1-Difficult subjects in the senior year                                | 77  |
|                        | 2-Administration under political influence                             | 74  |
|                        | 3-Challenges not spoken  | 72  |
|                        | 4-Challenges not taken seriously, ignored                              | 45  |
|                        | 5-Distant relations between administrators and students                | 41  |
|                        | 6-Lessons not planned according to the areas of interest and the needs | 38  |
|                        | 7-No feedback received from graduates                                  | 32  |
|                        | 8-Too much bureaucracy   | 13  |
| Total                  |  | 392 |

When Table 2 is examined, prospective teachers had 392 challenge statements under administration-related challenges theme. It is observed that these challenges faced are such as “difficult subjects in the senior year, administration under political influence, challenges not spoken, challenges not taken seriously, ignored, distant relations between administrators and students, lessons not planned according to the areas of interest and needs, no feedback received from graduates and too much bureaucracy” respectively. Among all challenges, the challenge with highest frequency is determined to be the difficult subjects in senior year, and the challenge with the lowest frequency is determined to be the challenge of extreme bureaucracy. Samples of student statements about these challenges and their solution proposals are provided below.

- *Difficult subjects in the senior year. This is a major challenge for us. Shall we prepare ourselves for KPSS exam or study our lessons? We cannot handle KPSS exam and school lessons together and have extreme hardship. Easier subjects could be transferred to the senior year (Female, 4th Grade).*

- *It is impossible to contact with university authorities. Every department and even every class at the university should have representatives and they should regularly meet and convey the challenges we face to university authorities. They, too, should provide solutions for our challenges (Male, 3rd Grade).*

**Instructor-related challenges and solution proposals:** Instructor-related challenges in accordance with the data obtained are summarized in Table 3.

When Table 3 is examined, prospective teachers specified 371 challenges under instructor-related challenges theme. It is observed that these challenges faced are such as “instructors disregarding the students, inadequate supervision of instructors, instructors disregarding their jobs, instructors not conforming to class hours, instructors discriminating among students, need for well-equipped instructors, mobbing by instructors, frequent sick leave of instructors, instructors not respecting different views, discrimination, instructors not paying attention to their wording, inadequate instructors (knowledge, skill and attitude) and instructors delivering the class subjectively according to their philosophy of life” respectively. Among all challenges, the challenge with highest frequency is determined to be the instructors disregarding the students, and the challenge with the lowest frequency is determined to be the instructors delivering the class subjectively according to their philosophy of life. Samples of student statements about these challenges and their solution proposals are provided below.

**Table 3.** Instructor-Related Challenges and Frequency Distribution

| Theme                     | Challenge Statements  | f   |
|---------------------------|---|-----|
| <b>Instructor-Related</b> | 1-Instructors disregarding the students   | 63  |
|                           | 2-Instructors disregarding their jobs   | 57  |
|                           | 3-Inadequate supervision of instructors   | 48  |
|                           | 4-Instructors not conforming to class hours   | 45  |
|                           | 5-Instructors discriminating among students   | 36  |
|                           | 6-Need for well-equipped instructors  | 35  |
|                           | 7-Mobbing by instructors  | 33  |
|                           | 8-Frequent sick leave of instructors  | 15  |
|                           | 9-Instructors not respecting different views, discrimination                            | 13  |
|                           | 10-Instructors not paying attention to their wording                                    | 11  |
|                           | 11-Inadequate instructors (knowledge, skill and attitude)                               | 8   |
|                           | 12-Instructors delivering the class subjectively according to their philosophy of life. | 7   |
|                           | Total   | 371 |

• Some of our instructors are friendly only during the class hour but do not even salute outside. Why doesn't s/he even salute? I think this is not even appropriate in our culture. These instructors should get humanity lessons first (Male, 3. Grade).

• Instructors deliver the class according to their philosophy of life. Yet, people working at higher education institutions should deliver the classes impartially and objectively. Being scientific requires this. They should be scientists (Female, 4th Grade).

**Physical-related (physical facilities, sheltering, etc.) challenges and solution proposals:** Physiological challenges in accordance with the data obtained are summarized in Table 4.

When Table 4 is examined, prospective teachers specified 1722 challenges under physical-related challenges theme. It is observed that these challenges faced are such as "inadequacy of the classrooms' physical facilities, unhygienic cafeterias, faculty buildings and classrooms in different locations, buildings not suitable for physically challenged students, inadequate number of faculty buildings and classrooms, unhygienic lavatory and toilets, unmaintained faculty buildings distance of the school from the city center, small classrooms, excessively crowded classrooms, unhealthy and unhygienic nutrition, inadequate use of cafeteria by the students, low capacity of state dormitories, insufficient technological hardware in the classrooms, location of the university on a steep terrain, no landscape planning, small library, lack of materials in the classrooms, hardship in transportation due to late-hour classes, houses not being rented to students, no maintenance and repair of buildings, security being disregarded" respectively. Among all challenges, the challenge with highest frequency is determined to be the inadequacy of the classrooms' physical facilities and the challenge with the lowest frequency is determined to be the security being disregarded. Statements of students about these physiological challenges and samples of their solution proposals are provided below.

**Table 4.** Physical-Related Challenges and Frequency Distribution

| Theme   | Challenge Statements  | f   |
|---|---|-----|
| <b>Physical-Related (sheltering, location, cleanliness, etc.)</b> | 1-Inadequacy of the classrooms' physical facilities         | 131 |
|   | 2-Unhygienic cafeterias                                     | 124 |
|   | 3-Faculty buildings and classrooms in different locations   | 119 |
|   | 4-Buildings not suitable for physically challenged students | 110 |
|   | 5-Inadequate number of faculty buildings and classrooms     | 106 |
|   | 6-Unhygienic lavatory and toilets                           | 103 |
|   | 7-Unmaintained faculty buildings                            | 102 |
|   | 8-Distance of the school from the city center               | 95  |
|   | 9-Small classrooms  | 91  |
|   | 10-Excessively crowded classrooms                           | 87  |
|   | 11-Unhealthy and unhygienic nutrition                       | 79  |
|   | 12-Inadequate use of cafeteria by the students              | 78  |
|   | 13-Low capacity of state dormitories                        | 77  |
|   | 14-Insufficient technological hardware in the classrooms    | 71  |
|   | 15-Location of the university on a steep terrain            | 61  |
|   | 16-No landscape planning                                    | 56  |
|   | 17-Small library  | 46  |
|   | 18-Lack of materials in the classrooms                      | 43  |
|   | 19-Hardship in transportation due to late-hour classes      | 41  |
|   | 20-Houses not being rented to students                      | 39  |
|   | 21-No maintenance and repair of buildings                   | 37  |
|   | 22-Security being disregarded                               | 26  |
| Total   | 1722  |     |

- *Seating plan in the classrooms is definitely inconvenient. It was the same in primary school. Same in university. Everyone faces the back of the person sitting in the front. We cannot see our faces. I could not get rid of these school desks. Little time left, though. Individual desks can be purchased. (Male, 4th Grade).*

- *Entrances and exits of the faculty should be supervised. Security guards at the entrances do not control identification cards as if they know everyone. People from all walks of life are at the faculty. This problem will easily be solved if card system is brought into practice at the entrances (Female, 3rd Grade).*

**Education and training-related challenges and solution proposals:** Education and training-related challenges in accordance with the data obtained are summarized in Table 5.

When Table 5 is examined, prospective teachers specified 625 challenges under education and training-related challenges theme. It is observed that these challenges faced are such as “teacher formation classes being delivered to Science and Literature graduates, too many theoretical classes, KPSS exam, very short duration of applied tutoring classes, early closure of libraries, unwillingness of students towards researching and analyzing, no elective classes, insufficiency of education in preparing students for life, instructors with no background in the field delivering lessons in that specific field, low quality of education, raising individuals who are not questioning but memorizing, no information provided about the programs, classes not correlating with current topics, lack of teaching competency” respectively. Among all challenges, the challenge with highest frequency is determined to be the teacher formation classes being delivered to Science and Literature graduates, and the challenge with the lowest frequency is determined to be the lack of teaching competency. Samples of student statements about these challenges and their solution proposals are provided below.

- *We are demoralized with the pedagogical formation opportunity for the Science and Literature graduates. Faculties of education raise sufficient number of teachers. We already have difficulty in being appointed. Why is the opportunity of being a teacher given to those who were not trained for four years to be a teacher? Opportunity of being a teacher shall not be given to Science and Literature faculties; there is already enough number of teachers in hand (Male, 4th Grade).*

**Table 5.** Education and Training-Related Challenges and Frequency Distribution

| Theme                           | Challenge Statements  | f   |
|---------------------------------|---|-----|
| Education and Training-Related  | 1-Teacher formation classes being delivered to Science and Literature graduates         | 115 |
|                                 | 2-Too many theoretical classes  | 101 |
|                                 | 3-KPSS exam   | 98  |
|                                 | 4-Very short duration of applied tutoring classes                                       | 81  |
|                                 | 5-Early closure of libraries  | 52  |
|                                 | 6-Unwillingness of students towards researching and analyzing                           | 33  |
|                                 | 7- Elective class being restricted elective   | 32  |
|                                 | 8-Insufficiency of education in preparing students for life                             | 24  |
|                                 | 9-Instructors with no background in the field delivering lessons in that specific field | 19  |
|                                 | 9-Low quality of education  | 19  |
|                                 | 10-Raising individuals who are not questioning but memorizing                           | 17  |
|                                 | 11-No information provided about the programs   | 13  |
|                                 | 12-Classes not correlating with current topics  | 12  |
| 13- Lack of teaching competency | 9   |     |
|                                 | Total   | 625 |

- *Admission of students to faculties of education should take place according to particular attributes. If some people with mental deflection become teachers, how will the children be educated? In my opinion, interviews should be held before admittance to the faculty (Female, 3rd Grade).*

**Economic-related challenges and solution proposals:** Economic-related challenges in accordance with the data obtained are summarized in Table 6.

When Table 6 is examined, prospective teachers specified 885 challenges under economic-related challenges theme. It is observed that these challenges faced are such as “tuition fees not being abolished, high food prices, health fees, fear of not being able to find a job, high cafeteria prices, limited job areas for graduates, being in financial difficulties, very limited opportunity to work part-time, not being able to earn money, unbalanced nutrition, not being treated well by the tradesmen, high house rents, limited opportunity for scholarship, high prices of textbooks” respectively. Among all challenges, the challenge with highest frequency is determined to be the tuition fees not being abolished, and the challenge with the lowest frequency is determined to be the high prices of textbooks. Samples of student statements about these challenges and their solution proposals are provided below.

- *In our country legal arrangement is made for the tuition fees. But this is insufficient. While students at daytime education do not pay tuition fees, students at evening time education still pay the same fees. Even though it may not be completely abolished, it may be decreased by a certain rate through settling. Evening time education tuition fees are too high (Male, 3rd Grade).*

- *Free textbooks may be provided for the students who cannot afford, and we may be freed from making photocopies of the textbooks (Female, 3rd Grade).*

#### **Developmental, Sociocultural-related challenges and solution proposals**

Developmental, sociocultural-related challenges in accordance with the data obtained are summarized in Table 7.

**Table 6.** Economic-Related Challenges and Frequency Distribution

| Theme                       | Challenge Statements                         | f   |
|-----------------------------|--|-----|
| <b>Economic-Related</b>     | 1-Tuition fees not being abolished           | 117 |
|                             | 2-High food prices                           | 102 |
|                             | 3-Health fees                                | 97  |
|                             | 4-Fear of not being able to find a job       | 96  |
|                             | 5-High cafeteria prices                      | 88  |
|                             | 6-Limited job areas for graduates            | 81  |
|                             | 7-Being in financial difficulties            | 77  |
|                             | 8-Very limited opportunity to work part-time | 47  |
|                             | 9-Not being able to earn money               | 39  |
|                             | 10-Unbalanced nutrition                      | 38  |
|                             | 11-Not being treated well by the tradesmen   | 32  |
|                             | 11-High house rents                          | 32  |
|                             | 12-Limited opportunity for scholarship       | 28  |
| 13-High prices of textbooks | 11   |     |
|                             | Total  | 885 |



**Table 7.** Developmental, Sociocultural-Related Challenges and Frequency Distribution

| Theme                                       | Challenge Statements  | f   |
|---|---|-----|
| Developmental,<br>Sociocultural-<br>Related | 1-Students not being able to participate in activities (Symposium, conference, conversation sessions, etc.) | 74  |
|   | 2-Limited living space of students  | 63  |
|   | 3-No wireless network connection  | 43  |
|   | 4-Improper orientation activities   | 36  |
|   | 5-Not enough self-development courses-programs in faculty   | 35  |
|   | 6-Need for psychological support  | 32  |
|   | 8-Limited artistic and social activities  | 29  |
|   | 9-Not enough R&D  | 8   |
|   | Total   | 320 |

When Table 7 is examined, prospective teachers specified 320 challenges under developmental, sociocultural-related challenges theme. It is observed that these challenges faced are such as “students not being able to participate in activities (Symposium, conference, conversation sessions, etc.), limited living space of students, no wireless network connection, improper orientation activities, not enough self-development courses-programs in faculty, need for psychological support, limited artistic and social activities, not enough R&D” respectively. Among all challenges, the challenge with highest frequency is determined to be the students not being able to participate in activities (symposium, conference, conversation sessions, etc.), and the challenge with the lowest frequency is determined to be the R&D not being enough. Samples of student statements about these challenges and their solution proposals are provided below.

- *R&D is not conducted in the university. If it were, something would have changed. I am graduating and everything is still the same, there is no progress. Isn't this the responsibility of university? What are the instructors doing? They should research (Male, 4th Grade)*

- *Many of my friends from evening time education cannot participate in the activities. We cannot participate in activities such as conversation sessions, concerts that are usually held during the class hours. It all rests under the instructors' initiative. If they let us, we participate. These activities may be held in the weekends or at more convenient hours (Female, 4th Grade).*

### Democracy-related challenges and solution proposals

Democracy-related challenges in accordance with the data obtained are summarized in Table 8.

When Table 8 is examined, prospective teachers specified 41 challenges under democracy-related challenges theme. It is observed that these challenges faced are such as “lack of freedom of speech in the classes, lack of respect towards different cultures, political and ideological arguments, prevention of freedom to manifest thoughts” respectively. Among all challenges, the challenge with highest frequency is determined as the lack of freedom of speech in the classes, and the challenge with the lowest frequency is determined to be the prevention of freedom to manifest thoughts. Samples of statements of students about these challenges and their solution proposals are provided below.

**Table 8.** Democracy-Related Challenges and Frequency Distribution

| Theme                 | Challenge Statements                         | f  |
|-----------------------|--|----|
| Democracy-<br>Related | 1-Lack of freedom of speech in the classes   | 19 |
|                       | 2-Lack of respect towards different cultures | 11 |
|                       | 3-Political and ideological arguments        | 7  |
|                       | 4-Prevention of freedom to manifest thoughts | 4  |
| Total                 | 41   |    |

- *I think adequate education is not provided in the universities in general. We still receive traditional training in a faculty where future's teachers are being raised. Universities should be the nests of science and we should be able to talk and debate freely with the instructors but we could not succeed. Instructors should be able to debate every topic during the classes as well (Female, 4th Grade).*

- *We are university students, yet we cannot deliver our thoughts fearlessly, we abstain from speaking. We simply agree with everything that is said and done and move on in order not to get low scores. We cannot speak freely. Forget the grading; let us speak everything (Male, 3rd Grade).*

Apparently university students have too many varieties of challenges. The challenges and solution proposals elicited with this research should be taken into consideration and eliminated or minimized by the policy makers and executors as much as possible. Challenges of higher education have also been expressed by different researchers (Erdem, 2013; Gedikoglu, 2005; Oguz, 2015) diversely. Erdem (2013) has listed the challenges of higher education and suggested solution proposals respectively in the following areas; inability of higher education institutions to meet the higher education system requirements, limited Turkish resources in the field; lack of universities' full autonomy in academic, financial and administrative fields, lack of democratic traditions in the university, outdated teaching methods, insufficient research and development, not being able to receive feedback from the graduates and employment. The challenges students of faculty of education face are discussed in detail in this research.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

Education system has various problems that somehow cannot be solved. These challenges in this research are gathered under seven themes, (1) administration, (2) instructor, (3) physical, (4) education and training, (5) economic, (6) developmental, sociocultural and (7) democratic. The prospective teachers commented that the most common challenges they encounter among all themes are related with physical facilities; the least challenges they encounter are democracy-related challenges. Under every theme, challenges are prioritized from the most important to the least. It is elicited that the faculty of education students' relatively most important administration-related challenge is the difficult subjects in the senior year; most important instructor-related challenge is the instructors disregarding the students; most important physical-related challenge is the inadequacy of the classrooms' physical facilities; most important education and training-related challenge is the teacher formation classes being delivered to Science and Literature graduates; most important economic-related challenge is the tuition fees not being abolished; most important developmental, sociocultural-related challenge is the students not being able to participate in activities (Symposium, conference, conversation sessions, etc.) and most important democracy-related challenge is the lack of freedom of speech in the classes. Among these, the relatively most important challenges are the inadequacy of physical facilities of classrooms, the tuition fees not being abolished, the teacher formation classes being delivered to Science and Literature graduates, the difficult subjects in the senior years, the students not being able to participate in activities (symposium, conference, conversation sessions, etc.), instructors disregarding the students and lack of freedom of speech in the classes.

Gedikoglu's study (2005) attributes the reasons of higher education challenges to the universities being established without the necessary number of qualified instructors and infrastructure with specific standards, the universities without adequate infrastructure and staff to produce further knowledge and technology, losing the appeal of being a faculty member due to social and economic conditions, the lack of required resources, the lack of library and laboratory facilities, millions of

secondary school graduates waiting to enter university, the academic freedom and the institutional autonomy. In a research conducted by Yilmaz and Altinkurt (2011), prospective teachers were asked to list five of the challenges faced in the Turkish Education System, and the prospective teachers listed these as central exams, crowded classrooms, education system based on rote-learning, lack of equipment and inadequate physical facility, qualification of existing instructors etc. Although their research highlights common challenges in the education system, it shows similarity with this research about higher education, which is a part of the education system. In addition to this, Oguz (2015) expressed the necessity to fulfill the need for instructors and to scrutinize the quotas for existing programs in order to overcome the challenge about education quality.

Ultimately, what is important is to overcome the challenges elicited and to take necessary precautions. It is one of the primary duties of policy makers and executors to overcome the challenges of the universities that are one of the main institutions, which determine the future of nations. For that reason, following solution proposals may be applied based on the research findings: In order to solve the physical-related challenges, this research may be used as an action research at the university where the research was conducted and thus, will be exemplary among other universities. Food prices may be reduced in order to solve the economic-related challenges. Scholarships may be awarded to more students by taking initiatives and meeting with businessmen, municipalities and NGOs in the city where the university is located. An application may be made to the rectorate for approval of late closing hours of libraries especially during exam periods. A recommendation may be made to the administrators for them to meet with the students on specific days of the month to understand their challenges. Especially the class hours of evening time education students may be taken into consideration when planning activities within the university. Challenges and their solution proposals at that particular faculty of education elicited by the research may be shared with the Dean's Office of Faculty of Education by preparing a report or making a presentation. A widespread research on all the faculties of education in Turkey may be conducted by using quantitative research methods. After all, when there is challenge, progress cannot be achieved; when there is no progress, development cannot be achieved. Universities are the main factors of the progress of countries. Overcoming the challenges of prospective teachers who will form the future of Turkey will contribute to a healthier new generation. Thus, it is necessary for the policy makers and administrators to overcome the challenges elicited by taking the solution proposals produced into consideration as soon as possible.

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