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Teacher Educators' Perceptions of Terrorism and the Role of Education: A Qualitative Inquiry

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Introduction

As a sociopolitical issue, terrorism has great impacts on many areas of society and it is nurtured by social areas as well. Sometimes, both the impacted and nurturing areas could be the same, such as education, which constitutes the main focus of this study. In a broader sense, terrorism is defined as the unlawful use of violence and coercion for political aims, especially against civilians. Although terrorist actions are mainly taken for political aims, there are often other goals, such as causing economic damage and disruption to an “enemy” state, taking revenge for some alleged injustice, forcing a government to release terrorist prisoners, obtaining ransoms, expressing hatred, etc. (Kurtulus, 2017; Wilkinson, 2012). Neighbouring the Middle East and Eastern Europe, Turkey has been fighting against separatist terrorism since the early 1980s when PKK (Kurdish Workers Party) first launched its terrorist attacks in the eastern and southeastern provinces of the country (Feridun, 2016). It was founded in the 1970s during a period of political and social discontent, advocating the need for an armed struggle to create a socialist Kurdish state (Barrinha, 2011; Criss, 1995; Roth & Sever, 2007). The nation-building policy of Turkey, which started in the pre-republican period and gained momentum in the early republican period, has a significant role in the emergence of PKK, which has been fuelled from and seeking its ground on ethnic conflict. In its fight against PKK, the Turkish state used different methods in order to eliminate terrorism threats, such as prohibiting the use of Kurdish language (1983–1991), declaring a state of emergency (1987–2002), displacing people in southeastern Turkey (1992–1998), and making changes in foreign policy (1998) (Kim & Yun, 2008), all of which indicate that nation-building policy had still impacts, although to a lesser extent compared with the early republican period. Even the leader of PKK, Abdullah Ocalan, was captured in 1999 in Kenya (Ciftci & Kula, 2015).

Since the 2000s, Turkey has pursued a different strategy involving democratic and political solutions aiming at minimizing the ethnic conflict in its fight against PKK representing separatist terrorism. The candidate status given to Turkey in December 1999 at the European Union Helsinki Summit and the acceptance of the Accession Partnership Document in December 2000 have played important roles in the shift in Turkey's counterterrorism strategy. Providing a legal status for some cultural rights based on the recommendations offered to Turkey within the scope of EU progress reports has weakened the legitimacy of

separatist terrorism. Within this context, Article 26 stating that “a prohibited language cannot be used to express and disseminate any information” and Article 28 stating that “publication may not be made in any language prohibited by law” were excluded from the constitution in 2001, which were among the improvements in terms of cultural rights (Oran, 2010). Thus, the legal limitation in the use of local languages has been abolished.

In 2002, the AKP (Justice and Development Party) came to power. In its early period, its eager attitude towards EU membership affected Turkish policy to carry out counterterrorism operations on democratic grounds in addition to security policies. Between 2002 and 2003, a number of legal amendments within the scope of seven EU harmonization packages improved cultural rights significantly. For example, Article 216 of the Turkish criminal code was added to say that “any person who openly humiliates another person just because he belongs to a different social class, religion, race, sect, or comes from another origin, is punished” (Oran, 2010). Moreover, legal amendments in 2002 allowed the opening of private courses in local languages other than Turkish and enabled publication in these languages. In July 2004, Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT) started to broadcast TV and radio in five minority languages and dialects. Additionally, TRT founded a new channel to broadcast in different languages, including Kurdish (Ergin, 2010).

The disruption caused by the capture of the PKK leader led to a decrease in terror attacks. Moreover, the expectations from the AKP government depending on the “normalization process” caused by improvements in cultural rights within the scope of the EU harmonization process resulted in a decrease in PKK’s actions, especially in the first half of the 2000s. However, the failure to follow a steady policy on cultural/ethnic rights and the loss of momentum that had been gained in early 2000s disproved expectations, and terror attacks started again in the second half of 2000s. Turkey had to wait until 2013 for a new period without terror acts.

In 2013, a “peace process” between the Turkish government and Kurdish groups was initiated. In this process, the government halted the counterterrorism policies that had been in place until that point and started an indirect dialogue with PKK. “Homework” for both sides was determined and scheduled. However, their long history of mutual distrust delayed the steps that were to be taken reciprocally, and the peace process collapsed, leading to much more violence (Lindenstrauss, 2016).

Despite all of these efforts, PKK is still actively carrying out terrorist attacks in Turkey. Furthermore, it is the most resistant, longest-lasting, and most destructive organization among all terror groups active in Turkey (Bal, 2016). The political uncertainty in Northern Iraq and Syria provided PKK with open space to recover, especially after the Democratic Union Party (PYD), closely associated with PKK, emerged as a game-changer in Syria with the support of United States (Gunter, 2015). Therefore, it seems difficult to annihilate the terror threat from PKK in the near future. In addition to PKK, left-wing terrorist organization DHKP-C (Revolutionary People’s Liberation Party/Front) and religious organizations such as Hezbollah, Al Qaeda, and ISIS have been launching bombings, assassinations, suicide attacks, and armed attacks (Rodoplu, Arnold, & Ersoy, 2003). Turkey has lost more than 35,000 Turkish citizens to terrorist attacks within approximately 40 years (Global Terrorism Database, 2017). The most recent terrorist organization that Turkey faced was the Gulen Movement, which tried to overthrow the elected government with the help of its supporters in the Turkish military force on July 15, 2016, leaving 249 dead (Ataman & Shkurti, 2016).

Increasing PKK actions since 2015, ISIS attacks on Turkey, and the deaths caused by the Gulen organization through the failed coup d'état in 2016 have made the terrorism issue a hot topic again. Like any other social problems, terrorism does not have a single and simple cause or solution. This situation shows that solving the issue of terrorism requires the contribution of different social parties, one of which is education.

The Relationship Between Terrorism and Education

A number of studies investigated the costs, effects, and ways to end terror attacks in Turkey (Bilgel & Karahasan, 2015; Ensaroglu, 2013; Feridun & Shahbaz, 2010; Mutlu, 2011). Some researchers mention education as one of the ways to prevent terrorism. For example, in their study involving data from 133 countries between 1984 and 2007, Brockhoff, Krieger, and Meierrieks (2015) mentioned a nontrivial effect of education on terrorism. They found that lower education tended to promote terrorism in countries with unfavourable socioeconomic, political, and demographic conditions, while higher education reduces terrorism in countries with more favourable conditions. Feridun (2016) examined the impact of education and poverty on terrorism in Turkey and concluded that education had an adverse impact on terrorism. Elbakidze and Jin (2015) interestingly found that educational improvement from the elementary level to the secondary level was positively correlated with the frequency of participation in transnational terrorism events, while further improvement from the secondary level to the tertiary level was negatively correlated with participation in transnational terrorism. In their theoretical study, Ghosh, Chan, Manuel, and Dilimulati (2017) focused on how education could be incorporated into policies as a preventive measure that not only makes students resilient citizens but also addresses the psychological, emotional, and intellectual appeal of narratives that terrorists purport. On the other hand, Malečková and Stanišić (2013) were unable to find evidence supporting that higher education decreased support for terrorism, and suggested that education was not by itself a sufficient means of counter-terrorist policy.

The different results of the aforementioned studies show that the relationship between education and terrorism is not a linear one. This indicates that the content of education rather than the duration can be more effective in explaining the relationship between education and terrorism. Violent events involving terrorism during the 20th century led progressive educators to develop peace education theory, which aims to provide information about the destructive effects of conflicts and strategies for peace (Harris, 2004). Peace education programs that are based on this theory but developed for different purposes have been implemented in various countries around the world (Johnson & Johnson, 2005). Peace education programs aim to make students aware of the violence in school and society, and to teach students about peace strategies such as negotiation, reconciliation, nonviolent struggle or agreement to resolve conflicts without violence (Harris & Morrison, 2003). They have the potential to spread peace culture and ensure positive social change by making people see that things can be different and better than they are today (Boulding, 2000).

Peace education not only teaches different approaches about protecting and maintaining peace, but also provides a comprehensive framework in which these approaches and strategies can be taught and practiced in classrooms (Yemenici, 2016). Peace education programs are significant for places such as Turkey where terror incidents based on ethnic conflicts occur frequently. Peace education programs, which are expected to be implemented in these locations, aim to reduce the aggression, hostility and humiliation among people by considering the education system as a whole (Salomon, 2002).

The report authored by Bush and Saltarelli (2000) draws attention to the two faces of education in terms of ethnic conflict, which can nurture terrorism. According to the authors, education can play a major role in both reducing and increasing conflict. The uneven distribution of education, using education as a weapon in cultural repression, manipulating history for political reasons, and manipulating textbooks are among the negative functions that could be carried out through education. At the same time, it can serve as a conflict-dampening impact, nurture and sustain an ethnically tolerant climate, and ensure linguistic tolerance and inclusive citizenship through peace programs. In support of the positive face of education, Waghid and Davids (2013) outline an education that ought to inspire people to counteract terrorism. According to them, terrorism can be reduced if education is guided by recognizing the other and being responsible towards one another. Abdi and Schultz (2010) argue that educational efforts and educators may play a role in the diffusion of social justice, which in turn will relaunch multicultural spaces that value all histories, achievements, and aspirations, and achieve an intercivilizational dialogue. This kind of education would diminish terrorism. In a similar manner, Zembylas (2011) argues for an account of how an ethics of responsibility and hospitality might enrich the interpretations of tolerance and coexistence in educational settings of conflicting societies.

When Turkey's educational history is reviewed, it is possible to see examples of both faces of education in terms of terrorism based on ethnic conflict. Creating a homogenous society has been one of the most important goals of education since the early republican period (Yıldız, 2010). In this sense, it can be stated that the ideal of creating a homogenous society desired by the nation-state has been the biggest governmental tool in the republican period. Although the expectations of creating a homogenous society from the education system have lost their validity compared with the early republican period, the traces of these expectations can still be seen. For example, the Basic Law of National Education foresees that education should have determining and transforming effects on ethnic, national, religious, and political identities. Moreover, this law prohibits discrimination; however, it does not define discrimination. The lack of regulations about to where and how the individuals who are subject to discrimination apply poses an important problem, which sometimes leads people into violence (Kaya, 2012).

Moreover, the international conventions and documents that are signed by Turkey require respecting the right of parents to decide what kind of education their children would receive and respecting parents' religious and philosophical decisions, cultural identities, language, and values; however, no concrete steps regarding these aspects were taken except for in the last few years (Kaya 2012). In this situation, ethnic or religious groups worried about not being able to reproduce their identities, languages, and values, or hand them down to their children politicized their identities, and they formalized their demands through these identities. It is clear that such a process has the potential to lead to micronationalism based on identity politics and social conflicts.

Trying to overcome these issues, Turkey's education system has for the past 10 years undergone significant transformations regarding the demands for rights stemming from differences in cultural and religious identities. These improvements include enabling elective language lessons in the Kurmanji, Zazaki, Abkhazian, Adyghe, and Laz languages; clearing the way for education in the mother tongue considerably; and including elective courses about the Koran, the life of the Prophet Muhammad, and basic religious knowledge. Thus, it can be said that an improvement has been made in terms of discriminatory statements and

violation of rights compared to previous years, although some differences are still ignored and issues regarding gender discrimination still exist in textbooks (Çayır, 2014).

Despite these vicarious efforts to eliminate the legitimacy of ethnic and religious terrorism through Turkey's educational practices, it does not seem possible to address practices that directly target reducing terrorism or the tendency of violence. Turkey, which has been fighting against terrorism through military and political means, has not developed or begun implementing peace education programs that suit its own social conditions. Moreover, no direct efforts to reduce terrorism or social violence have been observed in the content of lessons or current curriculums. Instead, the issue is addressed from the political perspective in some lessons such as social studies or history.

Current Study

The literature review revealed important aspects regarding the role of education in the fight with terrorism although there was a limited number of studies. The relationship between education and terrorism is not a linear relationship depending on the duration, but rather a complex relationship based on the content of education. This relationship is shaped through a very wide context involving the development and implementation of peace education processes aiming to reduce the tendency toward terrorism and violence and reorganize the current course contents. Considering Turkey's educational bureaucracy and practices, teacher educators mostly fulfill the highest degree of responsibilities in terms of deciding which lessons to involve in different stages of education, developing the curricula that determine the goals and contents of the current lessons, writing textbooks for lessons, and making decisions regarding the practices of the teacher training system. Therefore, teacher educators' opinions about the terror problem and the role of education in ending it are valuable so that the content of education can have a better chance of pushing back against terrorism and violent tendencies. With reference to this situation, this study aimed to reveal the perceptions about terrorism that are held by members of schools of education working in Ankara, the capital of Turkey, and their opinions regarding the role that education that may play in ending terrorism.

We hope the current study, which approaches the issue in terms of content from a qualitative perspective, will contribute to the literature that currently contains a limited number of studies on the relationship between terrorism and education in Turkey and mainly from a quantitative perspective. Moreover, this study is significant since it seeks to reveal what teacher educators think about the terrorism-education issue, whether they have developed structural suggestions in terms of the role of education system in reducing tendencies toward terrorism, and what the implications may be for practice.

Methodology

For this study, we purposefully chose teacher educators working in the school of education of three different universities in Ankara. In addition to their roles in training teachers, these scholars have other roles in many other processes of education in Turkey. We also purposefully chose Ankara because it is both the capital of Turkey and has been subject to

several terror attacks.¹ A total of 30 scholars (11 male, 19 female) participated in this qualitative study. The age of participants ranged from 25 to 67, and the mean age was 36.9. 14 participants (46.7%) were working at Gazi University; 13 (43.3%) were working at Hacettepe University; and three participants (10%) were working at Middle East Technical University. Twelve participants (40%) had completed their PhD, while 18 participants (60%) were still doctoral students. The biggest group among participants was the research assistants (n=19, 63.3%). Three lecturers (10%), two assistant professors (6.7%), three associate professors (10%), and three professors (10%) took part in the study. The doctoral students among the participants were also serving as research assistants at universities. In Turkey, there is no distinction between teaching assistants and research assistants, and research assistants also conduct lessons formally or informally (under the supervision of higher-order scholars). Acknowledging this, they were accepted as teacher educators as well in the study. Four participants (13.3%) reported that they were exposed to a terror attack at least once in their life. Five participants (16.7%) expressed that they lost someone close to them because of a terrorist attack.

We collected the data for this study using a questionnaire composed of open-ended questions. After an extensive literature review, we generated an item pool composed of nine open-ended items. Then, we sent the draft to three academics for review. One of these academics completed his PhD in sociology and was working as an associate professor. The second one was teaching in the department of primary school teaching as an assistant professor. The third academic was teaching in the department of curriculum and instruction as an assistant professor. All of these scholars had significant experiences with qualitative data collection tools. These academics were asked to examine the items and assess them in terms of comprehensibility and content validity. At this point, we excluded two items from the tool since they were found to overlap with other items. Additionally, we made minor modifications to the remaining items. Then, we conducted the pilot study with two academics. They did not report any negativity related to the items. As a result, the questionnaire was composed of seven open-ended items in addition to questions related to demographic information such as age and gender.

The first two items in the questionnaire had somewhat of a demographic nature. They asked, “Have you ever been exposed to any terror attack? If yes, please explain.” and “Have you lost someone close to you in a terror attack? If yes, please explain.” We asked these questions to see if the participants had previously had direct contact with terror attacks. The next three items were, “Can you define terrorism?” and “In your opinion, what is the purpose of terrorist attacks?” and “What do you think is the best reaction to terrorist attacks?” We asked these questions in order to understand how the participants perceived of concept and purpose of terrorism and so that we could compare their responses with the literature to how they fit in. Moreover, we aimed to prompt their thinking on terrorism in a variety of aspects prior to asking more detailed and relevant items. The sixth item was “What do you think can end terrorism?” By asking this question, we wanted to understand the participants’ priorities regarding the various ways of ending terrorism, and we wanted to see if education was among the priorities of teacher educators. The seventh item was, “What roles can education

¹ On October 10, 2015, a total of 109 civilians died as a result of the largest terror attack to that point, which was carried out in Ankara Train Station by ISIS. On March 10, 2016, 36 citizens lost their lives because of a PKK attack in Kızılay, Ankara. On July 15, 2016, a total of 146 people, including 2 soldiers, 56 policemen, and 88 civilians, were killed during the coup attempt in Ankara, which is recognized as a terror attack.

play in ending terrorism?” This question helped us to see whether or not the participants viewed education as a game-changer in ending terrorism and how they approached education as a means of ending terrorism. Would they express superficial statements, such as making more demands of education, or would they comment on the “how” aspect or the function of education in ending terrorism through mentioning the current content of education or by making critical remarks? These points were of interest to us.

The questionnaire was e-mailed to the school of education staff in three state universities in Ankara. The objective and scope of the research were explained in e-mail, and recipients were requested to participate in the study. A total of 30 teacher educators responded to the e-mail. Participants’ responses were analysed using content analysis technique. Some measures were taken at this point in order to ensure the validity and reliability of the study. First, a coding scheme was discussed and agreed upon prior to the analysis. Then, we requested that a colleague who completed his PhD in sociology analyse the responses of 6 participants. His analyses were compared with one of the authors’ findings using Cohen’s Kappa (Cohen, 1960). We observed that the two coders had good agreement (.55). Secondly, the authors interpreted the responses of five participants. Then, this interpretation was sent back to those participants in order for them to check. All of the participants stated that the authors comprehended and interpreted the responses correctly.

Findings

The results of the content analysis are presented in this section. This section is structured in the same order in which the questions in the questionnaires. Firstly, we present the participants’ definitions of terrorism. Thereafter, we present their descriptions of the goal of terrorism, the best reaction to terrorist attacks, and ways to end terrorism. Finally, we present teacher educators’ perceptions about the role of education in ending terrorism. The age and gender of participants quoted are noted within parentheses.

Defining Terrorism

First, the participants were asked to define terrorism. The analysis revealed three categories that constituted participants’ definitions: the action/method, the target, and the purpose. The categories and the codes are illustrated in Table 1 on the next page.

Table 1. Participants' definitions of terrorism

Action/Method	f	%	Target	f	%	Purpose	f	%
Using violence	6	24	Civilians	10	64	Achieving political and ideological goals	6	26
Massacring	5	20	Society	1	6			
Attacking	3	12	Social order	1	6	Spreading fear	5	22
Disturbing peace	3	12	Constitutional order	1	6	Disturbing the peace	4	17
Intimidating	2	8	Country	1	6	Disturbing the constitutional order	3	13
Any kind of action	2	8	Humanity	1	6	Damaging	2	9
Destructive action	1	4	Living creatures	1	6	Tyrannizing	2	9
Separatist action	1	4				Disrupting unity	1	4
Illegal action	1	4						
Using people	1	4						
Total	25			16			23	

The analysis of participants' definitions revealed that they mainly emphasized action/method and purpose of terrorism. The most common word in action/method category was using violence, followed by massacring, attacking, and disturbing the peace. Within this scope, terrorism was defined by a male participant aged 36 as "violent acts committed by the armed individual(s) to disturb or eliminate the constitutional order." When we examined participants' definition of the targets of terrorism, we observed that civilians were mentioned by ten participants. A participant (male, 32), who had been subject to a terrorist attack, defined terrorism as "any kind of activity attacking innocent people, which tries to violate the order of the state and get what it wants through anarchy." Participants ascribed a variety of purposes those who commit terrorism. Achieving political and ideological goals, spreading fear, and disturbing peace were among the frequently mentioned goals of terrorism. In line with this, a participant (female, 52) defined terrorism as "a deadly attack planned to spread fear within the scope of a goal."

The Goal of Terrorism

The second question asked to participants was about what they think the goal of terrorism is. Their frequently expressed responses can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Participants' opinions on the goals of terrorism

Goals	f	%
Spreading negative emotions	15	41.7
Disturbing the social, constitutional or state order	8	22.2
Obtaining recognition or attracting attention	6	16.7
Protecting the interests of others	4	11.1
Imposing its demands	3	8.3
Total	36	100

As can be seen in Table 2, a considerable number of participants viewed spreading negative emotions among the population as an important goal of terrorism or terrorist attacks. Twelve different emotions were expressed within this scope. These were fear, horror, chaos, tumult, frustration, disturbance, insecurity, anxiety, worry, indignation, desperation, and separatism. Some of the participants ($n = 8$) expressed that terrorists target the social, constitutional, or state order. As quoted from one participant (male, 31), “the goal of terrorism is to disturb the ordinary flow of social life by creating fear and indignation among people.” Another participant (male, 32) stated that “the goal of terrorism is to gain ground by disseminating fear and horror among society.”

The Reaction to Terrorist Attacks

The participants were asked about the proper reaction that should be given to terrorist attacks. When compared with responses to other questions, the participants explained their opinions in much longer sentences. There was a great variety of opinions; therefore, different categories emerged from the reactions proposed by participants during the content analysis. These categories were social, administrative and political, legal, and military reactions. The categories and proposed reactions can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Participants’ opinions on the proper reaction to terrorist attacks

Categories	Reactions	f	%
Social	Solidarity and continuing normal life	8	24.3
	Defending the peace	2	6.1
	Taking a stand against it	1	3
	Anger	1	3
	Being careful	1	3
	<i>Total</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>39.4</i>
Administrative and Political	Improving socioeconomic status of disadvantaged regions	5	15.2
	Revealing the reasons behind it	2	6.1
	Eliminating civilian support to it	1	3
	Ensuring the flow of true information and transparency	1	3
	Compromising with terrorists	1	3
	Making no compromises to terrorists	1	3
<i>Total</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>33.3</i>	
Legal	Sentencing severe and capital punishment	4	12.1
	Fighting through legal means	2	6.1
	<i>Total</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>18.2</i>
Military	Armed struggle	2	6.1
	Early military interventions	1	3
	<i>Total</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>9.1</i>
Grand total		33	100

First of all, the category with the highest frequency was social reactions. Five different reactions were proposed by participants. Solidarity and continuing with life as normal is the most repeated reaction. Administrative and political reactions involved six different proposals. Five participants referred to the necessity of improving the socioeconomic status of disadvantaged regions in order to prevent terrorists from recruiting more people by exploiting the poverty of relevant regions. A participant expressed that “the best reaction to terrorism is to improve the socioeconomic conditions, which are nurturing terrorism now.” Legal reactions proposed by participants included severe and capital punishment and fighting through legal means. For example, a participant (female, 30) expressed, “When convicted legally, the most severe punishment should be imposed on terrorists.” Finally, a small number of participants ($n = 3$) proposed military reactions. On the other hand, one participant (female, 28), whose response was left out of the categorization of reactions, criticized the current situation by saying “the most proper reaction against terrorism is to do nothing (!!)

Ways to End Terrorism

The participants were asked what they thought about how to end terrorism. The responses varied, and a total of 12 different ways to end terrorism was proposed by teacher educators. These proposals can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4. Participants’ proposed ways to end terrorism

Proposed ways	f	%
Demonstrating common sense and solidarity	6	15
Improving democracy	4	10
Revealing the powers behind it	4	10
Eradicating cash resources	4	10
Raising awareness	4	10
Taking part in international cooperation	3	7
Improving socioeconomic status	3	7
Imposing severe and capital punishment	3	7
Education	3	7
Political Determination	2	5
Fair governing	2	5
Security policies	2	5
Reconciliation	1	2
Total	41	100

Table 4 shows that teacher educators mentioned common sense and solidarity most. A participant (female, 50) expressed that “one of the best ways to seize terrorism is to display social unity and increase national and moral awareness.” Democratic values and policies were another way to end terrorism. Among these democratic values, human rights and freedom were verbalized by participants. A participant (male, 48) replied to the question of how to end terrorism as “becoming part of something bigger, making coalitions with other states, and upholding universal laws of democracy and human rights.”

Education was mentioned by three participants. A participant (male, 47) expressed “terrorism can be fought through scientific education and socioeconomic development.” Another participant (male, 32) mentioned “imposing the culture of democracy and providing quality education.”

The Role of Education in Ending Terrorism

The participants were asked about the possible roles that education could play in ending terrorism. The responses were analysed and 10 different categories emerged. These categories can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5. Participants’ views on the effect of education against terrorism

The roles of education	f	%
Improving the socioeconomic status of individuals	7	20
Through values education	6	18
Through antiterrorism education	6	18
Through training individuals who can think analytically/autonomously/logically	4	11
Through eliminating prejudices	3	8
Through strengthening national values	3	8
Not enough by itself	3	8
It can decrease the tendency to commit a crime	1	3
Through objective education	1	3
Through citizenship education	1	3
Total	35	100

Of all the participants, seven mentioned that improving the socioeconomic status of individuals would be a way to end terrorism. One participant (male, 30) stated, “Terrorism can be fought by giving people jobs.” Some participants mentioned values education while answering the possible roles of education in ending terrorism. The responses included such values as morality, ethics, empathy, love, tolerance, compassion, democracy, equality, solidarity, patriotism, and citizenship. They expressed that education can provide these values as tools in the fight against terrorism.

However, three participants stated that education was not enough to end terrorism on its own; instead, it should be accompanied by something else. Related to this category, a participant (male, 35) expressed, “Education has a huge role; however, it is not possible to end terrorism only by education. Politics has a greater role than education in fighting terrorism.”

Discussion and Conclusion

This study attempted to reveal teacher educators’ perceptions of terrorism and their opinions regarding the role that education may play in ending terrorism. Within this scope, the analysis of their descriptions of terrorism covered different aspects of an ordinary definition and they were mostly consistent with the literature. For example, participants perceived terrorism as violent attacks targeting civilians to reach political goals, which is consistent with the findings of other researchers (Bryan, Kelly, & Templer, 2011; Garfield, Dresden, & Rafferty,

2003; Hoffman, 2006; Keenan, 2014; Malvern & Koureas, 2014; Pattison, Kim, & Lee, 2016; Richards, 2014; Sunstein, 2003). Nearly half of the participants mentioned spreading negative emotions while expressing the goal of terrorism. Spreading these emotions among society might be the hidden or implicit goal of terrorism since terrorist organizations don't declare it as the goal of their actions (Kurtulus, 2017). Other goals of terrorism expressed by the participants are supported by the literature involving disturbing social, constitutional or state order (Ackerman, 2006; Blakesley, 1989; Haimes, 2002; Weigert, 2003) and obtaining recognition or attracting attention (Crenshaw, 1981; Frey, 1987; Nacos, 2000). Additionally, some participants expressed that the goal of terrorism was to protect and preserve the interests of other countries. This finding could be linked with the studies on state-sponsored terrorism (Collins, 2014; Ganor, 2002; Gotchev, 2006; Wilner, 2017). It must be noted that Turkish people have a perception that the United States and European Union countries are backing the terrorists due to the US military aid given to Syrian Kurdish forces, the reluctance of the United States to extradite the leader of the Gulen Movement, and Germany and France's denial of the extradition of Gulenist criminals taking part in the failed coup d'état (Carden, 2017; Ellis & Labropoulou, 2017; Hacoglu, 2017; Kiper, 2016). Finally, teacher educators' responses regarding the best reaction to terrorism involved 15 different codes that were categorized as social, administrative and political, legal, and military reactions. Neither these codes nor the categories involved any aspect directly related to the content, process, or output of education.

It can be inferred from the discussion up to here that participants' perceptions of terrorism were mainly in line with the mainstream understandings of it. Unexpectedly, findings regarding the goal of terrorism and the best reaction to terrorism revealed responses that had no association with education. In particular, the finding that pointed to protecting other countries' interests as the goal of terrorism is intriguing. Although there might be reasonable grounds to associate terrorism with external powers from the perspectives of the participants, it can be stated that some teacher educators ignored the internal dynamics nurturing terrorism and directed the responsibility of solving a social problem towards outer agents.

Regarding how to end terrorism, 41 codes were elicited from the participants' responses. The most popular way proposed by participants was to demonstrate common sense and solidarity. This aspect was also mentioned while discussing the best reactions against terrorism. Cutting the resources and aids supplied to terrorist organizations including cash flow, arms, food, etc. as well as human resources were also expressed by participants. However, this is only possible through successful international cooperation, which was also a proposed way to end terrorism by participants as well as some studies (Basile, 2004; Bensahel, 2006; Levitt, 2002; Raphaeli, 2003; Weintraub, 2002). Some of the participants proposed harsh punishments such as the death penalty. It must be stated that the restoration of the death penalty in Turkish law is an opinion increasingly expressed both by political leaders and the public in Turkey (Avundukluoglu, 2017; Agence France-Presse, 2016). Demonstrating political determination and persistence in the fight with terrorism and improving the socioeconomic status of poor regions were other two ways proposed by participants to end terrorism.

It is significant that only four responses given by teacher educators were about democracy. However, terrorists are more likely to spring from countries that lack civil rights (Krueger and Malečková, 2003; Kurrild-Klitgaard, Justesen, & Klemmensen, 2006). Injustice can also be stated as a factor (Ahmad 2017). Therefore, the solution of this problem lies in true democracy because the true democracy provides the inclusion of all minority groups and differences (Karstedt, 2006; Kopstein & Wittenberg, 2010; Young 1997, 2002). Considering

that PKK was nurturing from ethnic conflict, importance of social justice, democracy, and human rights will be better understood. The low number of participants mentioning democracy shows that teacher educators in Turkey either ignore the grounds of terrorism or are not able to comprehend the importance of democracy in the solution of terrorism issue. Finally, education was proposed by only three participants among 41 responses as a way to end terrorism, which was surprising since all of the participants were academics training future teachers. According to frequencies, education has equal importance to economic status and severe punishment. Thus, it can be stated that teacher educators viewed other options as more effective means to fight terrorism. Of course, it is not argued here that the majority of participants do not believe in the role of education. They just did not think of it as a prior answer. As a matter of fact, participants' responses regarding the role of education in ending terrorism support this finding.

Regarding the role of education in ending terrorism, one-quarter of the participants mentioned values education as a powerful tool, as have some authors (Aplin 2007; Omede & Omede, 2015; Preston, 2009; Thomas, 2016). It is known that great efforts are devoted to values education in the face of persistent and debilitating problems, including terrorism (Lovat, 2009). The values mentioned by participants were morality, ethics, empathy, love, tolerance, compassion, democracy, equality, solidarity, patriotism, and citizenship. These values define the content of such an education program. Raising awareness and fighting with ignorance and poverty were proposed as the two other roles that education could play. The link between poverty and the tendency to join terrorist groups has been shown in some studies (Ergil, 2000 as cited in Pedahzur, Perliger, & Weinberg 2003; Piazza, 2011). However, plenty of other studies have denied this link, as contrary to common belief (Berrebi, 2007; Mitra, 2008; Piazza, 2006). Through education, measures can be taken to prevent violent extremism in children (Miller, Mills, & Harkins, 2011) by informing people about the underlying factors and effects of terrorism; however, it must be emphasized that terrorists can be as educated and economically well-off as the rest of the population (Atran, 2013).

Considering the perceptions regarding the role of education in ending terrorism, it can be stated that the majority of teacher educators expressed that education can play a role; however, they put some conditions forward. The solutions through education as provided by teacher educators seem a bit superficial. Moreover, the most frequent response was based on the assumption that education increases people's economic status, and that prevents them from being terrorists. This situation shows that teacher educators assigned an instrumental role to education. Therefore, it can be expressed that the majority of teacher educators were not aware of the role that should be adapted by education in ending terrorism.

The content of education must consider terrorism and violent tendencies within society so that education can be among the solutions to terrorism in a country. Moreover, it is not possible to propose a universal educational approach that could be the solution for the issue of terrorism in every country around the world. Education should focus on the subjective conditions from which terrorism arises so that education could be an effective way to deal with it. However, considering the participants' responses regarding the role of education in ending terrorism, it is notable that they did not draw attention to any subjective condition about Turkey and that they established universal relations about the terrorism issue. This situation could be a sign that they had not previously given any thought to how education could be the solution to the issue of terrorism issue in Turkey.

On the other hand, the practical reflections of participants' suggestions about the role of Turkish education in preventing terrorism seem problematic. Although some subjects such as values or citizenship or higher-order thinking skills, all of which were proposed by the participants, have already been involved in curriculums of various lessons, no direct or indirect relationship between achieving them and terrorism is present. Moreover, the values such as tolerance and respect for differences, which are very important values for a country like Turkey in which terrorism based on ethnic conflict has been an issue for decades, were removed from the values education with the curriculum changes in 2019.

Although the majority of participants accept some shortcomings of the Turkish education system when it comes to the topic of terrorism, they are not aware of the possible role of education itself in addressing the emergence of terrorism. In countries that don't approach cultural/ethnic differences from an egalitarian perspective, differences can turn into conflicts, and the education system paves the way for the constant reproduction of this conflict. Therefore, the solution of this problem that in Turkey specifically requires educational policies targeting discrimination and prejudice, and not the differences between people. It also requires teachers who can implement these policies. In their responses, teacher educators had no criticisms about the current educational system in terms of its possible roles in nurturing ethnic conflicts, partly arising from discrimination and prejudices. Therefore, it can be stated that the lack of teacher educators' awareness of this point is one of the obstacles in the solution of the ethnic conflict and terrorism issue in Turkey.

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