

## The Advisers' and Advisees' Views about the Master's Thesis Advisers' Behaviors of Communication\*

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**Abstract:** Communication between advisees and their advisers has an important effect on master's students to cope with difficulties in scientific research process, to boost their attitudes toward scientific studies and to achieve their academic success. The aim of this study is to determine the views of advisers and advisees about master's thesis advisors' behaviours of communication. This study was a descriptive one. The sample consisted of 30 master's thesis advisers and 51 master's programme students. A questionnaire was used to gather the data. The items of the questionnaire was constructed as in 5-point likert-type scale. Cronbach coefficient alpha was calculated as 0.95 for advisee's questionnaire and for adviser's questionnaire as 0.86. In the analysis of the data, arithmetic means, standard deviations and t-test for comparisons were utilized. Findings of the research revealed that advisers viewed their behaviors of communication more positive than advisees', and advisees also perceived these behaviors as positive generally but not appreciated them sufficient. It was also determined that there had been a significant difference between the views of advisers and advisees.

**Key words:** Communication • adviser • advisee • graduate education • mentoring

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### INTRODUCTION

The word "mentor" comes from the ancient Greek name "Mentoras". Mentoras was the loyal and noble friend of Odysseus, who was the hero of epic "Odyssey" written by Homer, and teacher of Odysseus's son Telemachus. Mentoras was a wise man in charge of the education and guidance of Telemachus during Odysseus's long journey. In the recent years, the word "mentor" refers to a trusted guide, adviser, tutor, sponsor, counsellor, coach or teacher, and mentor is also an experienced person in any job and he or she transfers his/her experience to any person who will use it at work in future. The word "mentoring" refers to a guidance process in which an experienced and mostly older person (mentor/adviser) guides and provides with information and opportunities to a less experienced and skilled younger person (mentee/advisee) [1]. According to Anderson and Shannon [2], *mentoring* is "a nurturing process in which a more skilled or more experienced person, serving as a role model, teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels and befriends a less skilled or less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter's professional and/or personal development". Mentoring is one of the oldest information, training and support method and a process of planned and systematic formal activities. The significant *outcomes* of relationship between mentors and mentees in any organizations are promotion, self-improvement, organizational socialization, participation in occupational network, career satisfaction, higher incomes,

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commitment to job, career advancement, psychosocial development and keeping mentees in the field or in the organization successfully.

Knox and McGovern [3] state that the significant *characteristics* of mentors are honesty, competency, a willingness to share knowledge, providing both positive and negative feedback, leading to mentee's growth, and being open to communication in all matters concerning the mentee. Scanlon [4] and Erdem and Özen [5] assert that an ideal mentor should empower and improve occupational relationships, and be reliable and trust the abilities of mentee, and that those characteristics make mentor most successful. According to the mentees effective mentors are intelligent, encouraging, poised, caring, humorous, flexible, supportive, empathic and patient [6]. In related literature, mentoring is considered as multifaceted and very complicated fact and the *functions* and *roles* of mentors are analysed in a broad perspective. Kram [7] and Noe [8] claims that two types of the functions of the mentoring exist: "psychosocial mentoring" and "career mentoring". *Psychosocial mentoring* relates to enhancing the mentee's sense of competence, confidence, identity and role effectiveness by improving rapport relations and social interaction between mentors and mentees, and by providing a continued social support and by discussing the problems mutually [9, 10]. The *functions* of psychosocial mentoring include role-modelling, counselling, conveying respect and acceptance, and offering informational friendship [6, 10]. *Career mentoring* contributes to the mentee to acquire the new knowledge for her/his professional growth and to promote within the organizational structure [6, 9]. Career functions that fall in this category include protection, sponsorship, coaching, challenging work, exposure and visibility, and transmission of applied professional ethics [11, 10]. Anderson and Shannon [2] suggest that mentoring process has a three-part model consisting of (a) the roles of mentors, (b) the functions of mentors and (c) the activities of mentors. They claim that mentors should perform the *roles* of role model, nurturer, and caregiver, and that they fulfill the *functions* identified as teaching, sponsoring, encouraging, counseling, and befriending. The *activities* of mentors are described as acting as an observer who provides feedback, and studying with the mentees. Similarly, Burlew [12] also points out that mentors have the functions of training, education and development. When implementing these functions mentors play some critical roles such as *trainer*, improving mentees' study/work skills; as *educator*, teaching them ways of performing new tasks; and as *developer*, facilitating their growth [13].

One of the important objectives of the Graduate School is to improve the quality of the graduate student experience. In graduate education successful *advisers as mentors* play key roles to have positive effects on academic achievement of students, to assist them in adjusting to the academic and social culture of university. Therefore advisers in graduate education are expected to incorporate their psychosocial and career mentoring roles and functions. *Academic mentoring* refers to the guiding to students for personal and professional issues, participating them to open goal setting, giving honest feedback for their academic development and success, and introducing them to individuals who can facilitate their career advancement [14]. An effective academic mentoring includes the affecting students and assisting them to continue their studies in an academic setting [10]. Johnson [6] argues that mentoring is a unique and distinct interpersonal relationship in which faculty members guide the students at academic settings. Advisers should make it possible for the student to finish all academic studies on time using their skills of guidance and supervision [15]. Cawyer *et al.* [16] argue that advisers should be easily accessed by the students, respond the questions of students in a clear and understandable manner, and provide suggestions to improve the study of the students. Moreover, being volunteer to devote time to student is determined as a significant quality of advisers [17]. However, some research findings revealed that there were some problems in advising process. In their research, Güven and Tunç [15] found that master's students experienced some problems with their advisers' behaviors of "understanding of the advisee's opinions", "devoting sufficient time him/her to study with their advisee" and "giving positive feedback to advisee". In another study [5] it is found that advisers "sometimes" exhibit some adviser behaviours such as "providing regular feedback about the performance of the advisees", "behaving empathically", "sharing the advisees' views", and "paying attention to the advisees' personal problems". It is also found that the behaviours which "often" fulfilled by the advisers are: "sharing the advisees' fear and excitement", "talking to her/him constructively", and "being a good listener". Benson *et al.* [14] express that advisers "rarely" exhibit the competencies such

as “being empathic towards the advisee’ interests and feelings, and “having the skill of active listening”. Such findings indicate that adviser’s inadequate and/or negative behaviors of communication may create some problems which hinder an academic study. Removing the communication-related problems will help the advisee have support in the process of thesis writing.

Academic mentoring in graduate education is very significant for the students’ performance and satisfaction in their future academic, personal and professional life and career. A successful mentoring relationship is a professional process in which adviser and advisee cooperatively and collectively study. It is asserted that advisers’ behaviours of communication play a facilitating role through which advisers successfully implement their mentoring (advising) roles and functions, and also advisees achieve their academic assignments. In a sense, activities which require a collaborative work/study firmly depends on the quality of communication between them. Communication between thesis advisor and advisee is one of the factors affecting the quality of mentoring process. Communication process between advisor and advisee is particularly effective in students’ recognizing the academic life in depth, in enhancing their knowledge and skills to scientific research methods, processes and principles, and in putting their knowledge and skills into practice when preparing a thesis and during other scientific studies. The quality of communication process has a noticeable effect on coping with the problems experienced by the students during thesis process, on improving positive attitudes towards academic life and scientific studies, on increasing their motivation for life-long learning. Furthermore, an open dialogue between thesis advisor and advisee is a process that facilitates to reveal the mutual expectations [18]. Kalbfleisch and Davies [19] argues that communication between thesis advisor and advisee has a significant role in the academic achievement and satisfaction of advisee. Communication during the master’s thesis writing process is a necessary process that is needed for a collaborative study. As indicated by the related studies mentioned above, communication behaviour should be exhibit on a regular basis instead of irregular basis, and it should be well-planned, on purpose, detailed and based on good interpersonal relationships. Thus, the relationship between advisers and advisees should be given emphasis and reviewed, and the adviser who is the guide of this process should pay attention to his/her behaviours of communication.

The primary aim of the study is to identify the views of advisers and advisees about the advisers’ behaviours of communication in the process of master’s thesis. This current study attempts to answer the following specific questions: a) What are the advisers’ views about their own behaviors of communication?, b) What are the advisees’ views about their advisers’ behaviors of communication? and c) Is there any difference between the views of advisers and those of advisees about the advisers’ behaviors of communication during the master’s thesis process?

## **METHODS**

**Model of the study:** This study is a descriptive one which aims to determine the views of advisors and advisees about the advisors’ behaviors of communication during the master’s thesis process.

**Population and sample of the study:** *The population* studied included *thesis* (research) *advisers* who hold academic titles of instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, full professor and are formally appointed for any graduate student to achieve his/her master’s thesis, and the *students* who carry on his/her master’s thesis. *The sample of the study* includes the advisers and their advisees from the Faculties of Educational Sciences of Hacettepe University (H.U.) and Osman Gazi University (O.G.U.). Total number of advisers in the population is forty-two while that of advisees is eighty-one (Table 1).

“Proper sampling method“ which is one of non-random sampling techniques was used in selecting the sample of the study. The return rate of the questionnaires for advisor is 71.4%, while that of the questionnaires for advisee is 63%.

**Data collection and analysis of data:** The data of the study were collected through the administration of questionnaire developed by the authors. The survey questionnaire employed in the study includes the items reflecting the communication

Table 1: Population and Sample of the Study

University	Population of the Study		No. of questionnaires administered		No. of questionnaires evaluated	
	f (advisor)	f (advisee)	f (advisor)	f (advisee)	f (advisor)	f (advisee)
H.Ü.	30	43	27	40	20	30
O.G.Ü.	12	38	12	33	10	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>51</b>

Table 2: Frequencies and percentages of the participants, by gender

University	Advisers				Students			
	Female		Male		Female		Male	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
H.Ü.	11	55	9	45	26	87	4	13
O.G.Ü.	4	40	6	60	15	71	6	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>

behaviours of the advisers. The items of the survey questionnaire was identified through the interviews with the students and the review of literature. The items of the questionnaire were structured on the basis of a 5 point likert- type scale: “never (1), rarely (2), sometimes (3), often (4) and always (5)”. Two different forms of the questionnaire were administered to advisers and advisees. Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient was found to be .95 for the advisee form and .86 for the adviser form. The frequencies (f), percentages (%), mean values ( $\bar{x}$ ) and standard deviations (sd) of the data were estimated, and t-test was used to make comparisons between groups and significance level was accepted as 0.05 in the study. Mean intervals were determined to transfer numeric values to verbal expressions (5-1=4, 4/5= 0.80); interval bounds for each choice on the likert-type scale were as follows: (a) 1.00-1.80: never, (b) 1.81-2.60: rarely, (c) 2.61-3.40: sometimes, (d) 3.41-4.20: often and (e) 4.21-5.00: always.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Before the findings regarding sub-problems of the current study, advisers’ and advisees’ responses to the questions at the part of “general information” in questionnaires were handled.

**A. General information about participants of the study:** Table 2 indicates that half of advisers in the sample are female, and the other half are male. However, the 80% of the advisees is female while the rate of the male students is 20%.

In Hacettepe sample, the rates of female and male advisees, by gender, are as follows: 87% female and 13% male. The frequencies of advisers, by gender, on the other hand, is as follows: 55% female and 45% male.

In Osmangazi sample, the rates of advisees regarding their gender are as follows: 71% female and 29% male. The frequencies of advisers, by their gender, on the other hand, is as follows: 40% female and 60% male. The majority of the graduate students in Hacettepe and Osman Gazi universities are female (Table 2).

As seen in Table 3, the titles of the advisers, who responded to questionnaire, are as follows: 12 assistant professors (40%), eight full professors (27%), 7 associate professors (23%) and 3 instructors (10%).

Table 4 presents the frequencies of the students’ advisers in regard to their advisers’ academic titles. In Hacettepe sample, the majority of the students’ advisers is full professors while it is assistant professors in Osmangazi sample. If we

Table 3: Frequencies of the advisers, who responded to the questionnaire, by their academic titles

Title	H.U.	O.G.U.	Total
Full Prof.	6	2	8
Assoc. Prof. Dr.	6	1	7
Assist. Prof. Dr.	5	7	12
Instructor	3	0	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>30</b>

Table 4: Frequencies of students' advisers, by their advisers' academic title

Title	H.U. f (students)	O.G.U. f (students)	Total f (students)
Full Prof.	13	4	17
Assoc. Prof. Dr.	7	4	11
Assist. Prof. Dr.	6	13	19
Instructor	4	0	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>51</b>

Table 5: Distribution of advisers' thesis load

Thesis load of advisers	M.A.		Ph.D.	
	f (adviser)	%	f (adviser)	%
No student	-	-	19	63.3
1 student	7	23.3	4	13.3
2 students	11	36.7	4	13.3
3 students	6	20.0	-	-
4 students	-	-	2	6.7
5 students	3	10.0	-	-
6 students	-	-	1	3.3
7 students	2	6.7	-	-
8 students	1	3.3	-	-
<b>Total</b>	30	100.0	30	100.0

consider the sample as a whole, the majority of the students' advisers is academic staff titled as assistant professors, and this group is followed by full professors.

Thirty (30) advisers have a total of 84 master's students 26 doctoral students. On average, one adviser has three master's students and one doctoral student (Table 5). In other words, all advisers has master's student(s) but 63.3% of them do not have any doctoral student. The remarkable point in Table 5 is that 80% of the advisers have one, two or three master's students (24 advisers) and 20% of them have five, six or eight students. A similar thesis load pattern is also observed in regard to doctoral program. Such a thesis load pattern may be evaluated as a negative factor on the communication of adviser to advisee in terms of the frequency of meetings/contacts, time devoted to advisee, concentration on thesis.

Thesis load of the advisers in regard with their academic titles is presented in Table 6. It is remarkable point that in both universities assistant professors are charged with an excessive thesis load. The other significant point is that instructors who are not authorized formally to supervise any thesis have much thesis load. This finding may be related to the fact that the students are taken to graduate program without taking into consideration of the shortage of academic staff.

Table 6: Distribution of advisers' thesis load, by their academic titles

Titles	H.Ü.		Mean number of students*	O.G.Ü.		Mean number of students*
	M.A.	Ph. D.		M.A.	Ph. D.	
Prof.	9	12	4	8	-	4
Assoc. Prof. Dr.	9	7	3	7	-	7
Assist. Prof. Dr.	12	9	4	29	-	4
Lecturer	8	-	3	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>28</b>		<b>44</b>	<b>-</b>	

\* Mean number of graduate students per each faculty member

Table 7: Paths through which the advisers prefer in communicating to their advisees

Paths of communication	Adviser (n=30)		Advisee (n=51)		Total (adviser*)	Total (advisee)*
	H.U.	O.G.U.	H.U.	O.G.U.		
Face to face	20	10	26	14	30	40
By phone	6	-	4	-	6	4
By fax	1	-	-	-	1	-
By e-mail	6	-	9	7	6	16
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-

\* Participants are allowed to choose more than one path of communication.

The views of advisers and advisees about the paths of communication between advisers and advisees are presented in Table 7. All advisers express that they follow a face to face communication with their students and that they also follow other paths of communication with their students such as phoning, e-mailing and faxing.

Advisees claim that their advisers mostly prefer a face to face communication with them, and their other preference is to communicate via e-mail. Face to face communication is a convenient way of communication to investigate the matter/issue in depth and in detail, and to correct the possible mistakes instantly. However, a face to face communication should be accompanied by certain communication behaviour such as using a constructive, encouraging, motivating language, and an empathic behavior, etc.

**B. Findings and results on the sub-problems of study:** The findings are discussed by depending on the sub-problems of study.

**Discussion on findings of the first sub-problem:** "What are the advisers' views about their own behaviors of communication?" was the first sub-problem of the study. The related findings are given in Table 8.

Table 8 illustrates that all advisers' ratings focused on the choices of "often" and "always" in regard to eight items (the items of 2, 5, 7, 9, 11, 17, 18 and 20). In other words, advisers believe that they often or always exhibit these communication behaviours. Of advisers, 90% to 96.7% almost rated all the items as "often" and "always", except the 16th item. The lowest preferred item by the advisers is the 16th item (86.7% of advisers), namely "I make them to share their feelings and personal problems with me". In regard to this item, 10% of them state that they "sometimes" exhibit this behavior while 3.3% of them state that they "rarely" exhibit it. This finding can be evaluated as advisers do not perceive this behaviour as a part of their mentoring roles.

Table 8: Views of advisers about their own communication behaviours (n= 30)

Items	Views of advisers (f)					Views of advisers (%)					x̄
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
1. In every meeting I make an appointment for the next one.	0	1	0	15	14	0.0	3.3	0.0	50.0	46.7	4.40
2. I abide by the date and hour of the planned meeting.	0	0	0	17	13	0.0	0.0	0.0	56.7	43.3	4.43
3. I devote enough time to my student in every meeting.	0	0	1	21	8	0.0	0.0	3.3	70.0	26.7	4.23
4. I often meet with my students to enable them to complete their study on time.	0	0	2	17	10	0.0	0.0	6.9	58.6	34.5	4.28
5. I welcome my students friendly.	0	0	0	15	15	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	50.0	4.50
6. I provide my critiques and feedback on time and in a clear way.	0	0	3	15	12	0.0	0.0	10.0	50.0	40.0	4.30
7. I give feedback to my student objectively and honestly when her/his work is correct/wrong, satisfactory/unsatisfactory, adequate/inadequate.	0	0	0	13	17	0.0	0.0	0.0	43.3	56.7	4.57
8. When I appreciate her/his work as unsatisfactory I criticize them using a non-evaluative, but constructive and courteous language in explaining about what should be done.	0	0	1	11	18	0.0	0.0	3.3	36.7	60.0	4.57
9. When her/his work is adequate and satisfactory, I speak in an encouraging and motivating manner.	0	0	0	10	20	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3	66.7	4.67
10. I make it possible for my students to reach me through other ways of communication such as e-mail, phone, fax.	0	1	2	8	19	0.0	3.3	6.7	26.7	63.3	4.50
11. I listen carefully to my students' suggestions, explanations, thoughts and critiques about their study.	0	0	0	11	19	0.0	0.0	0.0	36.7	63.3	4.63
12. I understand their anxiety about their study and speak to diminish their anxiety.	0	0	2	12	16	0.0	0.0	6.7	40.0	53.3	4.47
13. When they do not understand my suggestions/explanations/ critiques I reexplain patiently what I mean.	0	0	2	16	12	0.0	0.0	6.7	53.3	40.0	4.33
14. I concentrate on exclusively my student in studying and speaking without dealing with any other affairs.	1	0	2	17	10	3.3	0.0	6.7	56.7	33.3	4.17
15. When there occurs any unusual situations such as cancellation of meeting, illness, any change in regulations, etc., I inform my students on time.	0	0	1	18	10	0.0	0.0	3.5	62.1	34.4	4.31
16. I make them to share their feelings and personal problems with me.	0	1	3	15	11	0.0	3.3	10.0	50.0	36.7	4.20
17. I ask them not only to listen to me but to participate to talking with me.	0	0	0	15	15	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	50.0	4.50
18. I make consistent but not contradictory explanations when we get together at different time periods.	0	0	0	16	14	0.0	0.0	0.0	53.3	46.7	4.47
19. I use the the word 'we' to make them feel that we assume a common responsibility of achieving a collaborative study.	0	0	2	12	16	0.0	0.0	6.7	40.0	53.3	4.47
20. I make them informed about what will be done in the next step.	0	0	0	13	17	0.0	0.0	0.0	43.3	56.7	4.57

From the point of means and interval bounds, the findings given in Table 8 indicate that advisers are of the opinion that they “often” perform the communication behaviors expressed as “*I concentrate on exclusively my student during our meetings and when I speak to him/her and I do not deal with any other affairs*” ( $\bar{x}=4.17$ , item no.14)”, and “*I make them to share their feelings and personal problems with me*” ( $\bar{x}=4.20$ , item no.16), and “always” for all other communication behaviors. Advisers consider that they do not have any communication-related problems with their advisees and that they are successful in establishing a quality communication relation with them. In other words, they have positive perceptions about their communication behaviour. They state that they do their best in regard to encouraging and motivating ( $\bar{x}=4.67$ ), carefully listening to the students and reducing their anxiety ( $\bar{x}=4.63$ ), provision of feedback ( $\bar{x}=4.57$ ), using constructive language in critiques ( $\bar{x}=4.57$ ).

Table 9: Views of the advisees about the communication behaviour of their advisors (n= 51)

Items	Views of advisors (f)					Views of advisors (%)					x̄
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
1. In every meeting s/he makes an appointment to me for the next one.	5	5	15	17	9	9.8	9.8	29.4	33.3	17.6	3.39
2. S/he abides by the date and hour of the planned meeting.	0	3	14	18	16	0.0	5.9	27.5	35.3	31.4	3.92
3. S/he devotes enough time to me in every meeting.	0	6	13	21	11	0.0	11.8	25.5	41.2	21.6	3.73
4. S/he often meets with me to enable me to complete my study on time.	1	9	16	14	11	2.0	17.6	31.4	27.5	21.6	3.49
5. S/he welcomes me friendly.	0	4	11	13	23	0.0	7.8	21.6	25.5	45.1	4.08
6. S/he provides her/his critiques and feedback on time and in a clear way.	1	5	17	12	16	2.0	9.8	33.3	23.5	31.4	3.73
7. S/he gives feedback to me objectively and honestly when my work is correct or wrong, satisfactory or unsatisfactory, adequate or inadequate.	1	5	9	14	22	2.0	9.8	17.6	27.5	43.1	4.00
8. When s/he appreciates my work as unsatisfactory s/he criticizes me using a non-evaluative, but constructive and courteous language in explaining about what should be done.	0	5	9	21	16	0.0	9.8	17.6	41.2	31.4	3.94
9. When my work is adequate and satisfactory, s/he speaks in an encouraging and motivating manner.	0	9	11	13	18	0.0	17.6	21.6	25.5	35.3	3.78
10. S/he makes it possible for me to reach her/him through other ways of communication such as e-mail, phone, fax.	0	8	8	13	22	0.0	15.7	15.7	25.5	43.1	3.96
11. S/he listens carefully to my suggestions, explanations, thoughts and criticisms about my study.	0	7	8	20	16	0.0	13.7	15.7	39.2	31.4	3.88
12. S/he understands my anxiety about my study and speaks to diminish my anxiety.	1	7	12	19	12	2.0	13.7	23.5	37.3	23.5	3.67
13. When I do not understand my suggestions/explanations/critiques s/he reexplains patiently what s/he means.	0	8	15	13	15	0.0	15.7	29.4	25.5	29.4	3.69
14. S/he concentrates on exclusively me in studying and speaking without dealing with any other affairs.	5	9	9	15	13	9.8	17.6	17.6	29.4	25.5	3.43
15. When there occurs any unusual situations such as cancellation of meeting, illness, any change in regulations, etc., s/he informs me on time.	3	12	7	13	16	5.9	23.5	13.7	25.5	31.4	3.53
16. S/he makes me to share my feelings and personal problems with him/her.	2	11	9	11	18	3.9	21.6	17.6	21.6	35.3	3.63
17. S/he asks me not only to listen to her/him but to participate to talking with her/him.	0	5	15	13	18	0.0	9.8	29.4	25.5	35.3	3.86
18. S/he makes consistent but not contradictory explanations when we get together at different time periods.	1	8	17	14	11	2.0	15.7	33.3	27.5	21.6	3.51
19. S/he uses the the word 'we' to make me feel that we assume a common responsibility of achieving a collaborative study.	1	13	11	13	13	2.0	25.5	21.6	25.5	25.5	3.47
20. S/he makes me informed about what will be done in the next step.	2	4	13	15	17	3.9	7.8	25.5	29.4	33.3	3.80

**Discussion on findings of the second sub-problem:** The second sub-problem of study dealt with the question of “What are the advisees’ views about their advisers’ behaviors of communication?”. The views of advisees are given in Table 9.

The items that are stated by the participants as “often” and “always” (choices handled together) are as follows: “S/he welcomes me friendly” (item 5, 70.6%), “S/he gives feedback to me objectively and honestly when my work is correct/wrong, satisfactory/unsatisfactory, adequate/ inadequate” (item 7, 70.6%), “When s/he appreciates my work as unsatisfactory s/he criticizes me using a non-evaluative, but constructive and courteous language in explaining about what should be done” (item 8, 72.6%) and “S/he listens carefully to my suggestions, explanations, thoughts and criticisms about



Table 10: T-Test results on the differences in the views of advisors and advisees

Items	N	Mean	sd	t	p
1. Making an appointment for the next one.	51 (Students) 30 (Advisors)	3.392 4.400	0.16587 0.12318	9.891	0.002*
2. Abiding by the date and hour of the planned meeting.	51 (Students) 30 (Advisors)	3.921 4.443	0.12786 0.09202	5.978	0.017*
3. Devoting enough time in every meeting.	51 (Students) 30 (Advisors)	3.725 4.233	0.13159 0.09202	12.712	0.001*
4. Meeting with advisee to enable her/him to complete the study on time.	51 (Students) 30 (Advisors)	3.490 4.266	0.15178 0.10649	16.952	0.000*
5. Welcoming them friendly.	51 (Students) 30 (Advisors)	4.078 4.500	0.13959 0.09285	11.330	0.001*
6. Providing critiques and feedback on time and in a clear way.	51 (Students) 30 (Advisors)	3.725 4.300	0.15102 0.11890	11.912	0.001*
7. Giving feedback to advisee objectively and honestly when her/his work is correct or wrong, satisfactory or unsatisfactory, adequate or inadequate.	51 (Students) 30 (Advisors)	4.000 4.566	0.15339 0.09202	9.296	0.003*
8. Criticizing advisee using a non-evaluative, but constructive and courteous language in explaining about what should be done, when adviser appreciates her/his work as unsatisfactory.	51 (Students) 30 (Advisors)	3.941 4.566	0.13258 0.10376	2.751	0.101
9. Speaking in an encouraging and motivating manner, when advisee's work is adequate and satisfactory.	51 (Students) 30 (Advisors)	3.784 4.666	0.15672 0.08754	26.278	0.000*
10. Making it possible for advisee to reach her/his adviser through other ways of communication such as e-mail, phone, fax.	51 (Students) 30 (Advisors)	3.960 4.500	0.15583 0.14183	4.878	0.030*
11. Listening carefully to advisee's suggestions, explanations, thoughts and criticisms about her/his study.	51 (Students) 30 (Advisors)	3.882 4.633	0.14183 0.08949	8.214	0.005*
12. Understanding advisee's anxiety about her/his study and speaks to diminish her/his anxiety.	51 (Students) 30 (Advisors)	3.666 4.466	0.14731 0.11480	7.822	0.006*
13. Reexplaining patiently what is meant, when advisee does not understand adviser's suggestions/explanations/critiques	51 (Students) 30 (Advisors)	3.686 4.333	0.14948 0.11073	16.142	0.000*
14. Concentrating on exclusively advisee in studying and speaking without dealing with any other affairs.	51 (Students) 30 (Advisors)	3.431 4.166	0.18419 0.15225	15.705	0.000*
15. Informing the advisee on time when there occurs any unusual situations such as cancellation of meeting, illness, any change in regulations, etc.,	51 (Students) 30 (Advisors)	3.529 4.300	0.18440 0.09767	36.998	0.000*
16. Making advisee to share her/his feelings and personal problems with adviser.	51 (Students) 30 (Advisors)	3.627 4.200	0.17924 0.13896	18.856	0.000*
17. Asking advisee not only to listen to adviser but to participate to talking with her/him.	51 (Students) 30 (Advisors)	3.862 4.500	0.14285 0.09285	15.714	0.000*
18. Making consistent but not contradictory explanations when getting together at different time periods.	51 (Students) 30 (Advisors)	3.509 4.466	0.14917 0.09264	17.822	0.000*
19. Using the word 'we' to make advisee feel that they assume a common responsibility of achieving a collaborative study.	51 (Students) 30 (Advisors)	3.470 4.466	0.16652 0.11480	21.182	0.000*
20. Making advisee informed about what will be done in the next step.	51 (Students) 30 (Advisors)	3.803 4.566	0.15598 0.09202	13.476	0.000*

P<0.05

*my study*” (item 11, 70.6%). These findings show that advisees think that their advisers provide them with objective feedback using a non-evaluative language and listen to them carefully in regard to their study. These findings are consistent with those of Erdem and Özen’s study [5]. However, the finding on the feedback given by the advisers is controversial in relation to those of Erdem and Özen’s study [5] and of Güven and Tunç’s study [15]. In the current study, the advisees state that their advisers mostly provide them with feedback about their thesis while, in other studies, the advisees indicate that their advisers rarely provide them with feedback about their thesis and that they have some problems on this matter. Moreover, the finding of Benson *et al.* [14] in which they conclude that advisers rarely exhibit the behaviour of active listening during the meeting with the advisees is not consistent with that of the current study.

The items which are rarely stated by the advisees are as follows: “*S/he often meets with me to enable me to complete my study on time*” (item 4, 31.4%), “*S/he provides her/his critiques and feedback on time and in a clear way*” (item 6, 33.3%) and “*S/he makes consistent but not contradictory explanations when we get together at different time periods*” (item 18, 33.3%). These findings indicate that the students believe that their advisers do not often meet with them and provide clear statements about their study. These findings are consistent with those of Güven and Tunç’s study [15]. Both of studies state that the related behaviours occur rarely.

The advisees stated that their advisers “never” or “rarely” exhibit the following behaviours: “*S/he concentrates on exclusively me in studying and speaking without dealing with any other affairs*” (item 14, 27.4%), “*When there occurs any unusual situations such as cancellation of meeting, illness, any change in regulations, etc., s/he informs me on time*” (item 15, 29.4%), “*S/he makes me to share my feelings and personal problems with him/her*” (item 16, 25.5%) ve “*S/he uses the the word ‘we’ to make me feel that we assume a common responsibility of achieving a collaborative study*” (item 19, 27.5%). These findings are in parallel to those of Erdem and Özen [5]. Nearly 25% of the students state that their advisers pay attention to other tasks during their meeting, do not communicate with them in regard to their personal problems and do not reflect that the study is a collaborative one.

When taken into consideration the means of views of the advisees’ in regard to all items it is seen that only the first item, namely “*In every meeting s/he makes an appointment to me for the next one*” ( $\bar{x}=3.39$ ) is in the interval bound of “sometimes” but the remaining items of “often”. This finding indicates that the advisees experience some problems concerning regular and planned meetings with their advisers.

**Discussion on findings of the third sub-problem:** “Is there any difference between the views of advisers and those of advisees about the advisers’ behaviours of communication during the master’s thesis process?” was the third sub-problem of the study. As seen in Table 10, there is significant differences between the views of the advisers and advisees in regard to all items except for the item of “*Criticizing advisee using a non-evaluative, but constructive and courteous language in explaining about what should be done, when adviser appreciates her/his work as unsatisfactory*”. In other words, the advisees share the views of the advisers’ view only concerning this item. However, the views of two groups differ regarding the remaining items. Such a difference also indicates that the advisees have more negative perception in contrast to their advisers. It also indicate that the advisees are not given necessary opportunities to improve their study.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes the following points based the findings obtained:

- The advisers perceive their communication behaviour more positive in contrast to the advisees. However, the graduate students have also positive perception about their advisers’ communication behaviour but some behaviours are not regarded as sufficient by them.
- It seems that the advisers rarely exhibit some behaviours which are part of psycho-social mentoring. Such behaviour is as follows: sharing the students’ feelings and problems, and concentration exclusively on the student during the meeting.

- Graduate students have negative perceptions concerning the frequency of meetings with the advisers, sharing significant points on time, and common responsibility over thesis study.
- There are significant differences between the views of advisers and advisees in terms of communication behaviours of advisers and graduate students have much more negative perceptions about it.

Based on the conclusions of the study it can be suggested that advisers can be informed about their functions and roles in order to increase their level of awareness about mentoring and necessary administrative steps should be taken to regularize the meetings between advisers and advisees.

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