

## A Research About Turkish Educational System on Orientation in Primary Education (Istanbul Province Case)

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**Abstract:** As a result of social change and development, individual's interests, desires and talents should be unveiled and construction of vocational education should be done in accordance with them. Therefore "orientation" is defined as one of the fundamental principles in Statute of National Education and it is supported with governing instructions and regulations. However, in Turkey most of the students will not do the desired profession due to failure in achieving attendance to the related departments in universities. This fact has been rising suspicion of doubt about the effectiveness of orientation activities in primary education and, through research results of the effectiveness of the promising "Governing Instructions in Primary Education Orientation", teachers' perceptions and contributions in monitoring students' personal development and their orientation to upper educational level is assessed. The universe of the research is restricted to the primary schools in Istanbul province. According to research results, practicability of governing instructions and teachers' experiences, through passing some time together, have made the orientation process easier and give the teachers the advantage of having ideas about the students' interests and talents through the process.

**Key words:** Orientation • primary education • profession • educational orientation

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### INTRODUCTION

"Human being" is the main source for a society in achieving the desired results and maintaining the line of prosperity. Social development, attaining the standards of modern civilization, competing with ever-changing world and expanding productivity can only be possible by investing on *human*.

In our world, in which all resources are being used up rapidly, it is urgent that we should take the following prerequisites into consideration; first the rational and beneficial use of available resources, than providing next generation with enough resources to make them live in the pursuit of happiness through promoting skills and talents by acquiring knowledge, attitudes and professional habits. This could only be obtained by; first orientating them with the guidance of individual and social needs throughout the educational process, second letting him know himself in his whole self, third acquiring habits related to his professional development and last but not the least providing him with scientific problem solving skills in order to plan his own future and to make rationale decisions [1].

Scientific researches related to vocational development demonstrates that childhood period of our lives is very significant in life-long vocational development process. In this context, it is mentioned that the vocational development tasks intended to be taught to students during the primary education period is much more important than those of other education periods due to their effect on the subsequent stages of the vocational development process.

The orientation activities carried out at schools are divided into two: educational orientation and vocational orientation. In the education system, the activities served to help the individual about educational problems are called educational orientation; and the activities served to help the individual to make professional preferences, to orientate towards a field of profession, to choose a specific occupation in this field of profession and to prepare for this occupation is called vocational orientation [2]. Koçer (2005, 225) uses the term "orientating guidance" and explains it as "helping the individual to orient towards a field that is most suitable for him and in which he would obtain most satisfaction and helping him to improve himself in that field" [3].

The fundamental principle of educational orientation is to know the individual and helping him to know himself for future accomplishments in accordance with his talents, interests and desires. Educational orientation and field preference must be carried out in the orientation grade, namely 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Students are also orientated towards a profession while they are deciding on their field of study and lessons.

Student identification and observation studies should be initialized in the early years of the school life and a continuous programme should be executed for vocational orientation. Education should be considered within the framework of professional development rather than being in a more restricted activity such as choosing a profession. Student's psychological and social characteristics-besides growth and maturation-should be known thoroughly in order to guide the individual not to choose a profession too early. Rather than a specific occupation or job, choosing a profession and preparation for it should be emphasized in the framework of career concept [4].

The orientation activities of schools and guidance services are; gathering important data about each student; knowing the characteristics of different education programmes at the school and at other schools, introducing different education programmes and courses to students effectively, using more effective methods which will allow students to participate actively and developing and implementing an orientation programme for new students [2].

With the Statute No. 4306, which has raised the compulsory primary education period to eight years and which was come into force in 1997-1998 academic year, it is aimed to orientate the students towards appropriate fields in accordance with their interests, desires, talents and academic success to enhance the quality of education. With the Statute No. 4306, which has raised the compulsory primary education period to eight years and which was come into force in 1997-1998 academic year, it is aimed to orientate the students towards appropriate fields in accordance with their interests, desires, talents and academic success to enhance the quality of education. The mentioned statute also envisaged; first the orientation of elementary students to secondary education, second the arrangement of the National Education System in every way to enable this orientation and last but not the least the incorporation of preparatory classes in the secondary education institutions in accordance with the objectives of their curricula [5].

Aiming the offering of guidance services to orientate the students to different programmes considering their talents, interests and needs of the work life; some of the decisions made in 16<sup>th</sup> National Education Council meeting are as follows; first activities informing students about profession fields should be carried out in all grades of primary education, introduction of professions and orientation should be focused on in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade and the recommendation decision on the most appropriate field for the student should be given to the student and his/her parent at the end of the primary education period, second the definitions of most popular professions in the business life should be updated and categorized and the standards of these professions should be determined, guidance services to orientate the students to various programmes in accordance with their interests, abilities and the needs of the business life should be offered to students [4].

The 6<sup>th</sup> article and the 1<sup>st</sup> clause of the 30<sup>th</sup> article of the Statute of National Education No. 1739; the 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph added to the 23<sup>rd</sup> article of the Statute of National Education with the Statute No. 4306; and the related articles of the *Guidance Services Regulation* also make orientation practices compulsory in primary education [6]. With the "Governing Regulations On Orientation In Primary Education", which was come into force in the 2003-2004 academic year, the tasks assigned to *class teachers* and *advisors* who are responsible for implementing effective and appropriate orientation activities for the students in primary education process and the advisors' and administrators' being able to fulfill their duties effectively were planned on [7].

In the governing regulation, it is indicated that the scientific services intended to provide students with the characteristics such as noticing the alternatives, being aware of their potentials and trying to develop these potentials, being able to make decisions in this framework, being able to envisage the consequences of the decisions they have made and being able to take the responsibility. In the orientation process, it is aimed to help students:

- To recognize their talents, interests and personal attributes, to be aware of their desires
- To recognize that the *self* they have will effect their future and profession they'll choose,
- To become conscious about the profitability of all the professions for society,
- To be informed about different programs during educational process, optional courses which they can test themselves, extracurricular activities, upper educational level institutions and work field,

- To understand and practice research methods,
- To give decisions about their lives, realizing them and anticipating the consequences of their decisions beforehand,
- To realize that academic success is important in their orientation towards higher education or work life,
- To guide to go to towards academic, vocational and technical education and fine arts education considering their attributes.
- Public high schools for academic education,
- Relevant departments in vocational and technical secondary education,
- Fine arts programmes or programmes requiring special ability,
- Vocational education (apprenticeship) centres.

In addition to these, it is also aimed to inform the parents about the interests, desires, abilities and personal traits of the students and to ensure that the parents participate in the orientation process. The followings should be done to enhance the observation level:

- For each student, a student file is kept beginning from the nursery class,
- For each class, a class observation form is filled in and submitted to the class teacher until the end of April by all branch teachers teaching the class,
- For each student, a student observation report based on the class observation forms is prepared until the parent information meeting by the class teacher / advisor,
- Parents information meeting is held on an appointed date in may and a copy of the observation forms is delivered to parents at this meeting,
- In the observation report, a space is provided for the student and parent comment. if there is any point that the student or the parent wants to add or disagrees with, these are indicated in the report. These reports are sent back to school within one week,
- Observation reports are kept in student file after certified by the school director.

For the students qualified for a diploma, a two-copy orientation recommending form is prepared by the "Orientation Recommending Commission" with the attendance of the school director, the teachers, guidance service unit and if necessary the parents. One of the copies is given to the student with the diploma and the other copy is sent along with the student file to the education institution the student has registered at.

According to the Governing regulation, in accordance with the criteria above and grade point average, students can be orientated to one of the following:

For this reason, it is decided to search the reasons for ineffective implementation of the *orientation in primary education* process. In order to determine whether or not the *orientation in primary education* process is being implemented in accordance with its purpose and to identify the problems met during its implementation, perceptions of class and branch teachers have been examined. For each of the observation criteria in the *Student Observation Report* in the governing regulations on orientation in primary education, teachers' opinion about their observability level were asked and a level for each item was determined to be used in the study.

Five years have passed since the governing regulations were come into force. Educators, parents and non-governmental organizations concerned about education often claim that the *orientation in primary education* process is not being implemented in accordance with its purpose. Lack of acknowledging, the crowdedness of the classrooms and complexity of the process are shown as the source of the problem. The agglomeration and higher education qualifying exam has become a source of anxiety for students and their parents and can be considered as a problem for the community from educational and vocational point of view. In Turkey the unrealized meaning given to university exam and expectations, false conditioning, improper preferences is no more than a cause of disappointment for everyone regardless of the ones do well in. The reason for that is students at universities are studying the fields they have no intention to study at all. Another fact is that the inconsistencies between the preferences and interests and talents, in addition to not being acknowledged of professional fields. So it can be inferred from all of these that vocational guidance and consultancy services could not prove themselves effective at secondary education stage in terms of eliminating the conditions. The main sources of the problem are; lack of knowledge, crowd in the classes and complexity of the process

It is considered that in Turkey, orientation is perceived as guidance and psychological consultation activity including school guidance services. The failure in practicing the orientation process has made the students,

the real subject of the process, the object of it. The main reason for this is that the orientation services merely offer the students a guidance to know the school they'll probably attend after graduation. It is obvious that a program designated to emphasize the individual and vocational differences haven't been established yet. Thus, the *management dimension* to execute the *planned* programming and orientating activities has already been put aside.

**Purpose:** The purpose of the study is to define the problems occur during the execution of the orientation process in relation to achieving goals.

**Importance:** The primary school teachers working in Istanbul will be the first to have the opportunity to make use of the outcomes of this research. Research results will demonstrate the handicaps of the orientation process. Thus, the problems will be identified and the necessary precaution steps will be taken to establish an effective orientation service.

**Restrictions:** Orientation services are restricted to the ones being held in primary schools. From the aspect of orientation giving services, the study is restricted to the teachers in.

**Problem statement:**

- What is the primary school teachers' level of perception on orientating the students for higher education regarding personal traits, interests and talents? How is the practicability of orientation in primary education?

**Sub problems:**

- What is the primary school teachers' level of perception on orientating the students for higher education regarding personal traits, interests and talents?
- How is the practicability of orientation in primary education?

**Opinions on observation practicability level:**

- a. Seniority
- b. Does it show meaningful difference according to branch variables?

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Research model:** Research, which is intended to prove the present situation in instant determination, is in review model. According to this, the answers of the participants for each item, the grading of the answers given and total scores with the interpretation are given below.

**Population and sample:** The population of the study consists of class and branch teachers working at the primary education schools in the province of Istanbul. The number of teachers working at primary education schools within the city boundaries of Istanbul is 59.000. Since the population size is large, sampling is used.

Research sample is determined, for tolerable, 05, 383 teachers [8]. Determining the number of teachers to choose from every school of 32 districts in Istanbul to form the sample, the numbers divided to 383.

**Instrument:** A questionnaire which was developed by the researcher to collect data for the study and which was checked and corrected by field experts was based on the "Student Observation Form" in the "Governing Regulations on Orientation in Primary Education". In order to determine how much teachers can observe the characteristics mentioned in the questionnaire questions, a one-to-five scale (1= not at all, 5= completely) was applied.

The questionnaire consists of four parts. In the first part, there are questions to identify the personal identities of the teachers; in the second part, there are questions about observation level of students' interests and talents; in the third part, there are questions about observation level of students' personal traits; and in the fourth part, there are questions to identify the practicability of "Orientation in Primary Education" practice. Moreover, the 60 questions were also analyzed in 7 subdimensions, in accordance with the Governing regulation. Accordingly, questions 1-8 cover general opinions on "verbal-linguistic interests and abilities"; questions 9-14 cover general opinions on "shape-spatial interests and abilities"; questions 15-19 cover general opinions on "mechanical interests and abilities"; questions 20-24 cover general opinions on "numerical interests and abilities"; questions 25-44 cover general opinions on "artistic and sportive interests and abilities"; questions 45-56 cover general opinions on "personal traits"; and questions 57-60 cover general opinions on "orientation practices".

**Collection of data:** After taking necessary permissions, the questionnaires was handed in by the researchers to the teachers chosen as the sample of the research. The datas were obtained out of 383 questionnaires.

**Data analysis:** In the first place, the mean value and standard deviation value for the items replied by the participants under each dimension or scale were calculated. Then, they were ranked according to relative importance and the total mean value and total standard deviation value for the scale were calculated.

While analyzing data, the five-scale points were corrected and redefined. According to this, 1 and 2 were defined as 1 (1 & 2 = 1); 3 as 2 (3 = 2); 4 and 5 as 3 (4 & 5 = 3). The point range in the three-scale is determined as follows: 1,00-1,66 = little, 1,67-2,33 = average, 2,34-3,00 = much.

In order to determine the conformity with the normal distribution curve, Kolmogorov-Simirnav test was used and it is determined that the distribution was not normal ( $Z=1,598$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). For this reason, the data obtained was analyzed with non-parametric tests. For the branch and seniority variables, Mann-Whitney U Test and for the academic background and crowdedness of classes variables, Kuruskal-Wallis Test were used at 0.5 significance level. In order to determine between which groups the significant differences were in the Kruskal-Wallis Test, Mann-Whitney U Test was used. Moreover, for the groups consisted of opinions on verbal, numerical, shape-spatial, mechanical and artistic-sportive abilities, personal traits and orientation, a ranking was made according to the total point average.

**Findings and interpretations:** In this part of the study, there are the findings and interpretations obtained through the analysis of data collected to address the objectives of the study.

Primary School Teachers' Level Of Perception On Orientating The Students For Higher Education Regarding Personal Traits, Interests, Talents And Practicability of Orientation In Primary Education

The datas obtained out of the first and second sub dimensions analysis are shown on the table below:

According to table teachers think that the best attribute they observe is students' personal traits. Teachers express their observation level as "moderate" considering all sub dimensions of the interests and talents. Verbal-linguistic interests and talents sub dimension has the highest score, just the contrary

Table 1: Practicability of teachers' level of perception on orientating the students for personal traits

Sub dimensions	X
Personal traits	2.16
Verbal-Linguistic interests and talents	2.01
Visual-spatial interests and talents	1.98
Art-sports interests and talents	1.96
Logical-mathematical interests and talents	1.92
Mechanical interests and talents	1.86
Orientation Practice	1.68

N= 383

Table 2: Mann-whitney U test findings about the difference between class and branch teachers' observations on students' traits in the orientation process and its practicability

Subdimensions	Branch	$\bar{x}$	Z	p
Verbal-linguistic talents	Class teacher	205.43	-4.19	0.00
	Branch teacher	158.61		
Logical talents	Class teacher	220.45	-7.37	0.00
	Branch teacher	138.08		
Visual-spatial talents	Class teacher	215.00	-6.60	0.00
	Branch teacher	141.60		
Mechanical talents	Class teacher	206.15	-4.60	0.00
	Branch teacher	155.08		
Art-sport talents	Class teacher	220.56	-7.81	0.00
	Branch teacher	133.61		
Personal traits	Class teacher	220.56	-7.81	0.00
	Branch teacher	133.61		
Orientation practice	Class teacher	204.92	-3.49	0.00
	Branch teacher	165.75		

N=  
Class teacher 213  
Branch teacher 170

Table 3: Mann-whitney U test findings about the difference between class and branch teachers' observations on students' traits in the orientation process and its practicability according to seniority of the teachers

Sub dimension	Seniority	$\bar{x}$	Z	p
Verbal talents	1-10 year	168.84	-2.61	0.01
	11 years and above	197.58		
Logical talents	1-10 year	167.88	-2.81	0.01
	11 years and above	198.64		
Visual-spatial talents	1-10 year	170.70	-2.66	0.02
	11 years and above	195.52		
Mechanical talents	1-10 year	167.36	-2.92	0.00
	11 years and above	199.21		
Art-sport talents	1-10 year	171.28	-2.15	0.03
	11 years and above	194.89		
Personal traits	1-10 year	177.70	-0.92	0.36
	11 years and above	187.80		
Orientation Practice	1-10 year	178.25	-0.82	0.41
	11 years and above	187.19		
N=	1-10 year	201.00		
	11 years and above	182.00		

mechanical interests and talents sub dimension has the lowest. Teachers also think that their perceptions on the level of practicability of orientating process are very close to “low”.

The Differences Related To Primary School Teachers' Level Of Perception On Orientating The Students For Higher Education Regarding Personal Traits, Interests, Talents And Practicability Of Orientation In Primary Education According To Seniority And Branch Variables.

The datas obtained out of the third sub dimensions analysis are shown on the Table 2 and 3 below:

According to the branch variable, in observing the interest and talents of students it is put forward that there is a significant difference mean between the class and branch teachers at every sub dimension on class teachers' behalf ( $P < 0.05$ ). It is assumed that this outcome might be caused by class teachers' spending more time with the students. Moreover, for the very same reason, class teachers have the advantage of observing those interests and talents continuously. It won't be surprising to achieve the same results for the practicability of orientation process; again there is a significant difference mean between the class and branch teachers on class teachers' behalf ( $P < 0.05$ ). The account for this result will be class teachers' advantage to spare time for those kinds of extra work.

According to the table, in observing the interest and talents of students it is put forward that there is a significant difference mean for seniority variable at every sub dimension ( $P < 0.05$ ). It can be inferred from the result that the more senior the teacher is the higher becomes the observation level. It becomes self evident that experience definitely effects the level of observation. Likewise, senior teachers finds the orientation activities more practicable ( $P < 0.05$ ).

### CONCLUSION

The orientation process in primary education is profitable and must be persevered. Yet, “orientation” is restricted to offering recommendations on behalf of the students. Monitoring the practicing results, it can be turned into a more *sanctioned* process. All the managers, supervisors, teachers and parents must be informed about the orientation process and their active attendance must be encouraged in the mean time.

In primary education teachers fail to observe the personal traits, interests and talents of their students. Therefore they cannot orientate them in a proper way. Class teachers know their students better than branch

teachers in terms of their interests and talents. However, teaching in the first stage of primary education lessen their effectiveness on the orientation process. On the other hand branch teachers, who are teaching in the second stage of primary education where the orientation process is more effective, have more effect on orientating students. This conflict decreases the effectiveness of orientation process.

Orientation process can easily be put into practice effectively with the help of experienced teachers and the teachers who spend more time with their students.

### RECCOMENDATIONS

- The recommendation form and the observation report in the Governing Regulationson Orientation in Primary Education should be made adequately applicable by teachers.
- In order to make teachers spend more time together with their students, social activities can be organized.
- Class teachers can be exploited more in orientation process.
- Precaution steps can be taken to make teachers keep their students' files neatly.
- Single tier and multiple choice examination for higher education should be abandoned gradually and it should be ensured that the decision about the student's chosen field of study in higher education be taken by the school, parent and the student together.
- Senior teachers can guide the fresh teachers in orientation process in an effective way.
- Taking into consideration the alignment process with the EU, the vocational and technical education should be aligned with those in the EU countries and school types, programmes and diploma equivalences should be mutually recognized.
- In order to be able to convey more detailed and up-to-date information about professions; conferences, professional exhibitions and meetings for parents should be organized and articles, brochures, magazines and etc. introducing professions should be made available for students.
- Beginning from the 6<sup>th</sup> grade of primary education, enriched programmes addressing the abilities of students should be able to be implemented. Horizontal transition among these programmes should be ensured.
- All the teachers should be given informative seminars and courses on orientation in primary education.

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