

THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
SAKARYA UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

**AN EVALUATION OF M.A. PROGRAMS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION
FROM STUDENTS' AND GRADUATES' PERSPECTIVES: TURKISH CONTEXT**

A MASTER'S THESIS

PINAR KARABACAK

SUPERVISOR
ASSIST. PROF. DR. MERVE SAVAŞCI

FEBRUARY 2023

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DECLARATION

In this study that I prepared in accordance with the Sakarya University Institute of Educational Sciences Thesis-Project Writing Guide, I declare:

- I have obtained and presented all the information and documents included in the thesis within the framework of academic and ethical rules,
- I refer to the works I have used and cite them as a source,
- I have not made any changes in the data used,
- I do not present the whole or any part of this thesis as another thesis study.

Pınar KARABACAK

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ABSTRACT

AN EVALUATION OF M.A. PROGRAMS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION FROM STUDENTS' AND GRADUATES' PERSPECTIVES: TURKISH CONTEXT

Pınar KARABACAK, Master Thesis

Supervisor: Assist. Prof. Dr. Merve SAVAŞCI

Sakarya University, 2023.

The aim of this descriptive study, which employed a convergent parallel design and a mixed-methods approach, was three-fold: First of all, it aimed (1) to evaluate the perspectives of students and graduates on the Master of Art (M.A.) programs in English Language Education in the Turkish context. Program evaluation was investigated with respect to the program description, departmental support, the atmosphere in the department, program instruction-evaluation methods, classroom management-cooperation skills, program resources, program content, and overall evaluation. The second aim was (2) to investigate the students' and graduates' purposes and motivations for pursuing an M.A. degree and their overall satisfaction with the program they are enrolled in or graduated from. The third aim was (3) to investigate whether master's students and graduates' M.A. program evaluations vary according to their gender, years of teaching experience, and undergraduate academic achievement. To this end, sixty-nine participants (thirty-eight current students and thirty-one graduates of M.A. programs in Turkey) from 23 different M.A. programs participated in this study. Quantitative data came from an adapted Likert-scale questionnaire whereas qualitative data came from open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews. The findings of the study illustrated that the participants pursue their graduate studies mostly to become a researcher in an academic setting in terms of professional career choice. The study also revealed that according to participants, personal intellectual enrichment was the most important influential determinant to starting an M.A. study. More specifically, although findings did not yield any statistically significant difference across gender, years of teaching experience, or undergraduate academic achievement, the study revealed that female participants, experienced teachers, and mid-achievers had higher evaluation mean scores in terms of evaluating the M.A. programs. For the improvement of the M.A. programs, the participants overall suggested increasing the number of elective courses,

avoiding repetition of B.A. courses, and providing adequate feedback. The results of this study are considered to be a guide for program developers, M.A. faculty members, and M.A. candidates.

Keywords: English language education, Program evaluation, Master's program evaluation, Satisfaction



ÖZET

İNGİLİZ DİLİ EĞİTİMİ YÜKSEK LİSANS PROGRAMLARININ ÖĞRENCİ VE MEZUN AÇISINDAN DEĞERLENDİRİLMESİ: TÜRKİYE BAĞLAM

Pınar KARABACAK, Yüksek Lisans Tezi

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Sakarya Üniversitesi, 2023.

Yakınsak paralel tasarım ve karma yöntem yaklaşımı kullanan bu betimsel çalışmanın amacı üç yönlüdür: İlk olarak (1) öğrencilerin ve mezunların İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Yüksek Lisans programlarına bakış açılarını Türkiye bağlamında değerlendirmeyi amaçlamıştır. Program değerlendirme, program tanımı, bölüm desteği, bölümdeki atmosfer, program öğretim-değerlendirme yöntemleri, sınıf yönetimi-iş birliği becerileri, program kaynakları, program içeriği ve genel değerlendirme açısından incelenmiştir. İkinci amaç (2) öğrencilerin ve mezunların yüksek lisans yapmak için amaçlarını ve motivasyonlarını ve kayıtlı oldukları veya mezun oldukları programdan genel memnuniyetlerini araştırmaktır. Üçüncü amaç (3) yüksek lisans öğrencilerinin ve mezunların yüksek lisans programı değerlendirmelerinin cinsiyetlerine, öğretmenlik deneyimine ve lisans akademik başarılarına göre farklılık gösterip göstermediğini araştırmaktır. Bu amaçla, bu çalışmaya 23 farklı İngiliz Dili Eğitimi yüksek lisans programından altmış dokuz katılımcı (otuz sekiz mevcut öğrenci ve otuz bir mezun) katılmıştır. Nicel veriler uyarlanmış bir Likert ölçekli anketten, nitel veriler ise açık uçlu sorulardan ve yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmelerinden gelmiştir. Araştırmanın bulguları, katılımcıların mesleki kariyer seçimi açısından çoğunlukla akademik ortamda araştırmacı olmak amacıyla lisansüstü eğitimlerine devam ettiklerini göstermektedir. Çalışma ayrıca, katılımcılara göre kişisel entelektüel zenginleşmenin lisansüstü eğitime başlamada en etkili belirleyici olduğunu ortaya koydu. Daha spesifik olarak, bulgular istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir fark göstermese de çalışma kadın katılımcıların, deneyimli öğretmenlerin ve orta düzeyde başarılı olanların yüksek lisans programlarını değerlendirme açısından daha yüksek değerlendirme puanlarına sahip olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Yüksek lisans programlarının iyileştirilmesine yönelik olarak, katılımcılar seçmeli ders sayısının artırılması, lisans derslerinin tekrarından kaçınılması ve yeterli dönüt sağlanması önermişlerdir. Bu çalışmanın sonuçlarının program geliştiriciler, yüksek lisans öğretim üyeleri ve yüksek lisans adayları için yol gösterici olacağı düşünülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İngiliz dili eğitimi, Program değerlendirme, Yüksek lisans programı değerlendirme, Memnuniyet



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CoHE: The Council of Higher Education

EFL: English as Foreign Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

B.A.: Bachelor of Arts

M.A.: Master of Arts

Ph.D.: Doctor of Philosophy



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Chapter I first presents the background of the study, and continues with the aims, significance, and research questions of the current study that drive the aims of the study. Problem sentences, sub-problems, limitations, and definitions of the key terms are also discussed in detail.

1.1. The Background of the Study

In the rapidly globalizing world, there is a greater need and demand for learning and teaching English. Moreover, English has grown to be of utmost importance due to its stance as a “lingua franca”. Consequently, the academic world prioritizes teaching English as both a second language (ESL) and foreign language (EFL). To attract students, an increasing number of universities have established new departments of English study.

Specifically, English Language Education which aims to prepare future English teachers is seen as highly predominant, particularly in countries where the language is spoken as a foreign language, such as Turkey. The primary objectives of higher education are better employment opportunities and technological advancements (CoHE, 1982). Concerning the context of English Language Education in higher institutions in Turkey, the quality of the graduate education appears to determine the quality of the English teachers and, ultimately, the quality of English training in Turkey (Asmali, 2018). According to Copeland et al. (2017), the use of English as a language of international communication has led to many students pursuing graduate study in English language education and other relevant fields. From a broader perspective, the demand for programs that train language teachers has been growing due to Turkey's expanding school population, academic programs, and university population. There is an increasing need for language academics who can mentor prospective researchers in this field.

Master of Arts (M.A.) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degrees in English Language Education departments are essential for academic careers. According to Küçükoğlu (2015), graduate education is more thorough than undergraduate education and strives to teach students the skills they need for academic education. Also, emphasizing the importance of graduate education in his study, Kırmızı (2011) argued that program developers should prepare graduate education programs with high-quality and modern methods.

According to Regulations on Graduate Education, The Council of Higher Education, M.A. programs in English Language Education departments (as the first stage of graduate education) aim to train field experts who are knowledgeable in their English language teaching and who can conduct research and integrate them into their teaching. Therefore, students' choices and satisfaction may vary depending on the quality these programs offer. This is where evaluation comes into play. Evaluation is crucial in developing M.A. programs to ensure students receive a high-quality education. When the M.A. program evaluation studies conducted in Turkey are examined, it is seen that the studies are limited. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the general satisfaction of students and graduates in universities (both foundation and state) offering M.A. programs in Turkey and their aims and motivations when starting the program.

1.2. The Aim and the Significance of the Study

Many program evaluation studies have been carried out in English Language Education (ELE) both in the Turkish context and international context. It is seen that most of the earlier studies tend to focus on the evaluation of undergraduate (e.g., Özutku, 2016; Efeoğlu et al., 2018; Mutlu, 2018; Karim et al., 2019; Kuzu et al., 2021) or English preparatory programs (e.g., Marcinkonien, 2005; Mede, 2012; Bayram et al., 2019; Atar et al., 2020). However, regarding the evaluation of graduate programs, namely M.A. (e.g., Kanatlar, 1996; Kırmızı, 2011; Öztürk, 2015; Kader, 2016) and Ph.D. (e.g., Bilican, 2014; Küçükoğlu, 2015; Kordi & Koosha, 2018; Deniz Yücer, 2020) programs, the studies appear to be limited in terms of number and scope.

Concerning the graduate program evaluation studies, the research conducted is bounded both in the Turkish context and international context. Specifically, a few studies were conducted on

M.A. programs in Turkey (e.g., Kanatlar, 1996; Kırmızı, 2011; Kader, 2016), which generally focused on the content and courses of the programs. According to the findings reported in previous studies, some minor changes which were generally related to the program's content were made in these programs. Although students were the data source for these studies, the overall satisfaction of students and graduates with the program has not been thoroughly investigated. However, it is worth noting that the aim of this study is not to offer suggestions for making changes in any program; instead, the primary purpose is to explore students' and graduates' perspectives and satisfaction with the program. To be more specific, this study investigates the students' and graduates' aim and motivation for pursuing an M.A. degree and their overall satisfaction with the program they are enrolled in or graduated from. Nevertheless, it is also worth noting that this study does not measure the courses or department success of any specific M.A. program in any university in Turkey.

1.2.1. Research Questions

Based upon the aim to investigate the general satisfaction of students and graduates with the M.A. programs in English Language Education they are enrolled in/graduated from, the following research questions sheered this study. The research questions were as follow:

1. With what purpose and motivation did master students and graduates in Turkey start the Master of Art (M.A.) program in English Language Education?
2. Do master students' and graduates' M.A. program evaluations vary according to the following variables?
 - 2.a. gender
 - 2.b. teaching experience
 - 2.c. undergraduate academic achievement
3. What are the opinions of master's students and graduates regarding the M.A. program they are enrolled in/ graduated from with respect to
 - 3.a. content (purpose and objectives)?

3.b. teaching?

3.c. resources?

3.d. program achievements?

3.1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the M.A. program they enrolled in/ graduated from as perceived by

3.1.a. students?

3.1.b. graduates?

4. What are the suggestions for the improvement and development of the graduate program they are enrolled in/graduated from as perceived by

4.a. students?

4.b. graduates?

1.3. Problem Sentence

Many researchers have conducted program evaluation studies; however, the limited number of studies at the M.A. level (e.g., Kanatlar, 1996; Kırmızı, 2011; Kader, 2016) presents a gap in the field. Earlier studies have focused on the contents and courses of the M.A. programs, and the participants were generally students, graduates, and instructors of the related programs. However, in this study, the focus was on students' and graduates' perspectives on the M.A. program they are enrolled in or graduated from. To investigate their aims and motivations for pursuing an M.A. degree and their overall satisfaction were the primary foci of the present study.

1.4. Sub-problems

One of the sub-problems of this research is the need to collect more data from students in the program evaluation process. It is still one of the sub-problems that such (previous) studies, which completely evaluate the perspectives and satisfaction of students and graduates, are

carried out only in a single institution. Conducting research in a single institution and generally evaluating undergraduate programs are some of the sub-problems of this research.

1.5. Limitations

The current study has some limitations that future studies should consider. First, the academic staff who lectures in the M.A. programs in English Language Education were not included in the scope of the present study. The participation of other stakeholders (e.g., instructors or administrators) could change needs and perspectives. As a result, more generalizable results can be obtained by including academic staff in future studies.

Second, the number of participants was another limitation of the current study. The questionnaire and open-ended questions were shared online via Google Forms one by one to all universities offering M.A. programs in Turkey with the permissions of the Rector's Office (both private and state); nevertheless, the participation rate was low. The universities were about to wrap up the Spring 2022 term when the data collection tools were shared in May; thus, some students and graduates were unavailable to participate at that time. With a more significant number of participants, findings can be further generalized in the Turkish context. Lastly, another limitation was that the perspectives of students who took their master's courses online (i.e., distance education) due to the pandemic period could differ from the perspectives of students who received regular education.

1.6. Definitions

Program: A program represents a sequence of lessons connected to a single objective or final output (Lynch et al., 1996).

Program Evaluation: Program evaluation aids in figuring out if the experiences created and planned result in the desired outputs or outcomes. By doing so, the strengths and flaws of plans and organizations can be identified (Royse et al., 2010).

ELT: English Language Teaching is the teaching of English to people for whom it is not the first language (Oxford Online Dictionary).

M.A.: It is the abbreviation for 'Master of Arts'. A second university degree in an arts subject (Oxford Online Dictionary).



CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the explanation of the term evaluation and its types. It then continues with the presentation of details regarding program evaluation such as some approaches and the need for program evaluation. Finally, it offers thorough discussion of earlier studies conducted on graduate program evaluation in Turkish and abroad contexts.

2.1. Evaluation

There are several definitions of evaluation in the field of education, which mainly focus on determining the *value of* an entity. One of the oldest definitions was provided by Stufflebeam (1971). He defines evaluation as “the process of delineating, obtaining”, and “providing useful information for judging decision alternatives” (p. 4). Similarly, Scriven (1991) describes evaluation as “the process of judging the value of something, or the output of that process” (p. 53). In terms of its emphasis on program evaluation, Tyler (1965) sees evaluation as the last stage before program improvement.

2.2. Evaluation Types

The goal of the evaluation, according to Stufflebeam (2001), “is not to prove but to improve” (p. 117). Evaluation typically has a variety of meanings in an educational setting (Kiely & Rea-Dickins, 2005). *Evaluation* is defined by Worthen and Sanders (1998) as “a systematic investigation into a program in terms of its quality, efficacy, or worth” (p. 56). In other words, evaluation is a systematic data collection procedure to make decisions. The main evaluation types are formative, summative, qualitative, and quantitative (Anderson, 2005).

2.2.1. Summative and Formative Evaluation

The two main types of evaluation are formative and summative. Formative evaluation aims to offer information for program improvement. Summative evaluation, on the other hand, aims “to support judgments on the implementation, continuance, or development of a program” (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004, p.99). However, to offer opinions on the program’s worth or capacity to achieve the objectives at the end of a program, summative evaluation is employed. Also, participants are typically program staff in formative evaluation, whereas in summative evaluation it is generally conducted with students, teachers, professionals, or supervisors. When a program is established, a summative study would be carried out to evaluate its effectiveness. To better understand how these two evaluation models differ, Worthen et al. (1998) provided the comparison presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Difference between Formative and Summative Evaluation

	Formative Evaluation	Summative Evaluation
Aim	To improve program	To certify program utility
Audience	Program administrators	Students/Instructors
Who should do it?	Internal Evaluator	External Evaluator
Main characteristics	Timely	Convincing
Measures	Often informal	Valid/Reliable
Frequency of data	Frequent	Limited
Sample size	Often small	Usually, large

Questions	What is working?	With whom?
	What needs improvement?	At what cost?
	How can it be improved?	With what training?

Worthen (1998)

2.2.2. Qualitative and Quantitative Evaluation

Lynch (1996) defines *program evaluation* as “the systematic attempt to obtain information to make judgments or decisions” (p. 2). Rather than referring to evaluation methods, qualitative and quantitative phrases describe different types of data. As Lynch (1996) claims, “these terms are not equivalent, and their use as synonyms can be misleading” (p. 461). Quantitative evaluation is often experimental, whereas qualitative is naturalistic. Quantitative data can be understood statistically and converted into statistical data. As for the sources of quantitative data test results and rankings (of participants) could be exemplified. Comparatively, through observations or interviews, qualitative data are primarily gathered. This data type needs to be represented numerically. However, it offers crucial insights into educational procedures. Küçüköğlu (2015) suggests that evaluation may utilize both qualitative and quantitative methods.

2.3. Program Evaluation

The term program evaluation can be defined in various ways (Fitzpatrick et al., 2010). For example, Brown (1995) defines program evaluation as “the systematic collection and analysis of all necessary information essential to encourage the improvement of a program and evaluate its efficacy within the specific institutions involved” (p. 218). Stufflebeam (2001) also defines the program evaluation as “a study designed and conducted to assist some audience to assess an object’s merit and worth” (p. 11). Program evaluation generally includes the following steps: data collection, needs analysis, formulation of implementation and improvement strategies, and identification of program outcomes (Fitzpatrick et al., 2010). Program evaluation is carried out

to evaluate the effectiveness of any educational program. It is seen as necessary to raise the quality of educational programs; as a result, numerous goals can be achieved through evaluation. Cronbach (1991) identified three program evaluation categories, as tabulated in Table 2.

Table 2
Categories of Program Evaluation

Course Improvement	Determining which teaching strategies and resources are effective and which ones require improvement.
Individual Decisions	Determining the student's needs in order to design his education and assessing the student's merit in order to select.
Administrative Regulation	Evaluating the effectiveness of the educational system, individual teachers, etc.

Cronbach (1991)

Three primary steps are conducted throughout a program evaluation process; 1) objectives, 2) means, and 3) measures, respectively (Cronbach,1991). The studies on program evaluation concentrate on “objectives” in terms of whether they have been achieved or not, and if so, to what extent the programs were successful. The second stage, “means,” outlines the strategies and actions used during the evaluation process. “Measures” which is the last stage contain the instruments used to evaluate whether the program successfully achieves the predetermined objectives.

The definitions of program evaluation make clear that it is a systematic and ongoing series of actions rather than a one-time or excessive application (Pamukoğlu, 2019). According to Karataş (2007), program evaluation entails (1) choosing, collecting, analyzing, and relaying the planned information; and (2) utilizing the information that has been received to determine the effectiveness of the program. For developing, implementing, and improving educational

programs (Ornstein, 2018) program evaluation is critical. To better the quality of educational programs, program evaluation is necessary; as a result, numerous goals can be achieved through evaluation. With the aim of increasing the quality of educational programs program evaluation is seen as necessary and crucial. All definitions emphasize that program evaluation is an essential component of any educational program, not only for the predetermined objectives achieved but also for looking for program improvement.

2.4. Program Evaluation Approaches

Program evaluation has a wide range of definitions and a long history, which results in a set of methods and approaches due to the various perspectives of the evaluators (Brown, 1995; Fitzpatrick et al., 2010; Linfield & Posavac, 2019; Potter, 1999; Stufflebeam, 1983). It is essential to use multiple approaches to the program assessment to make it more professional and for its execution and scientific advancement (Stufflebeam, 2001). Stufflebeam (1983) developed the CIPP model for evaluation, which stands for context, input, process, and product, to offer a systematic method for program evaluation. Stufflebeam (1983) claims that “the objective of an evaluation is to improve the program itself rather than prove it” (p. 117). He views evaluation as a tool in the CIPP method for increasing program quality so that programs can better accomplish their aims. Also, the theoretical background of the present study stands for the CIPP model (Stufflebeam, 2000). Briefly, the CIPP model is chosen as the evaluation framework for the current study since it helps make educational programs accountable and is widely used in evaluating educational programs.

2.5. Need for Program Evaluation

Evaluation primarily focuses on identifying a program's strengths and weaknesses as well as determining whether the program's objectives have been fulfilled. Its significance is emphasized by Nunan (1998) who claims as “no curricular model could be complete without an evaluation component” (p. 116). Evaluation ensures that all curriculum elements work in unison in educational settings by tying them together and providing cohesion (Brown, 1995). Therefore,

program evaluation is necessary to improve programs. Program evaluation allows for identifying program side-effects (strengths and weaknesses) or students' satisfaction with the programs, which are crucial steps for improving the programs. Finally, Peacock (2009) concludes by asserting that given the scarcity of program evaluation research in this field, program evaluation is crucial in programs that train individuals to teach foreign languages. Consequently, program evaluation studies are considered effective in determining how programs work and whether they achieve their goals. Within the context of the present study, program evaluation studies conducted abroad and in Turkey are briefly reviewed in the following section.

2.6. Program Evaluation Studies

When the earlier studies on program evaluation are reviewed, it is seen that the majority of them tend to focus on the evaluation of English preparatory programs (e.g., Özutku, 2016; Efeoğlu et al., 2018; Mutlu, 2018; Karim et al., 2019; Kuzu et al., 2021) and undergraduate programs in English Language Teaching (e.g., Özutku, 2016; Efeoğlu et al., 2018; Mutlu, 2018; Karim et al., 2019; Kuzu et al., 2021). However, regarding the evaluation of graduate programs, namely Master of Arts (M.A.) (e.g., Fradd & Lee, 1997; Kırmızı, 2011; Kader, 2016) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) (e.g., Küçüköğlu, 2015; Kordi & Koosha, 2018; Deniz Yücer, 2020) programs, the literature seems to be much more limited. Having reviewed the literature both in the Turkish and international context, it can be stated that there are several program evaluation studies; nonetheless, many of them have focused on undergraduate or English preparatory programs (Deniz Yücer, 2020). First, program evaluation studies (undergraduate & preparatory programs) conducted both in the Turkish context and international context have shown that students' perspectives and overall satisfaction with the programs are highly significant. In conclusion, these earlier studies have revealed that it is crucial to identify students' needs. Finally, it is highly recommended to consider students' perspectives to improve the programs.

Concerning the graduate program evaluation studies, there is limited research both in Turkish and international contexts (Kırmızı, 2011). One of the earlier studies was conducted by Kanatlar (1996) who evaluated M.A. TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) program at a

foundation university, focusing on whether the M.A. TEFL program had met its objectives and students' expectations. Data were collected via questionnaires and interviews administered to students and program administrators. Document analysis was carried out as the first step in this evaluation study to learn more about the history and features of the program. To elicit the qualitative data, two participants, who took part in the development of the program, were interviewed about the establishment of the program and its objectives in detail. As for the last step of the study, two sets of questionnaires were created by Kanatlar, with sections on the respondents' backgrounds, the program's qualities, and the program's effects on students' personal and professional lives. Findings indicated, in general, that the M.A. TEFL program at the target university met its objectives in terms of enhancing the lives of its students as language teachers, personally and professionally. Also, findings suggested minor changes to improve the program, such as the curriculum and selection of instructors.

Another study addressing the evaluation of graduate programs was conducted by Kırmızı (2011), who conducted a mixed-method study in which M.A. programs in English Language Education in Turkey were evaluated in detail. The study aimed to evaluate M.A. programs (n=16) provided in the Turkish setting. Additionally, the study sought to identify potential adjustments that would be necessary for Turkish M.A. programs. A total of 90 participants including students, graduates, and instructors participated in the study. In addition to qualitative data through interviews, a Likert scale questionnaire developed by the researcher was administered to the participants to get quantitative data. Detailed questions were asked about the program's courses, as well as the aims and motivations of the participants for pursuing a master's degree. Findings revealed that student's decision to pursue an M.A. degree was mainly motivated by their desire to continue their academic pursuits. Findings also demonstrated that M.A. programs provided participants with a respectful atmosphere. An overall evaluation of the study was that the participants were primarily satisfied with their programs. On the other hand, the participants stated that the program lacked sufficient technology and required more up-to-date courses. In another attempt to evaluate M.A. programs, Öztürk (2015) conducted a study regarding the M.A. program offered at a foundation university. The study sought to investigate why the participants pursued an M.A. degree and how the participants, instructors, and program coordinators perceived the program's content, instruction, resources, and expected outcomes. Additionally, the strengths and weaknesses of the program were investigated with the

participation 50 students, five instructors, and the program coordinator. Questionnaires, surveys, and essays written by the participants were used as data sources in the study. In addition to program content and the program's commitment to professional development, findings illustrated that its instructors were highly regarded as its main strength. The study's results (Öztürk, 2015) offered minor changes in the content of the M.A. programs.

Regarding the studies conducted on Ph.D. programs in English Language Education in Turkey, Bilican (2014) conducted a mixed-method study in a state university to investigate the aspects of the program that required improvement. To this end, a survey was employed and responded to by twenty-four students, and seven students participated in a focus group interview. According to findings, the program was considered effective in enhancing analytical and critical thinking skills, as well as the research capabilities of the students. However, the program required improvement in terms of offering course materials and regular feedback. To find out students' and graduates' opinions towards Ph.D. programs, Küçükoğlu (2015) carried out a mixed-method study to evaluate twelve Ph.D. programs in Turkey. The data were gathered through a questionnaire including both open-ended and Likert scale items, with the participation of eighty-four current students and the thirty-two graduates of the programs. Findings demonstrated that graduates and students had favorable opinions about the departmental support and program descriptions. The study also revealed that the programs effectively prepared students to be reflective researchers. On the other hand, the teaching language skills of the programs needed improvement to meet students' expectations. In conclusion, most evaluation studies placed a high value on student perspectives, and they also investigated the graduates' and instructors' perceptions.

Findings of Küçükoğlu's (2015) study also highlighted the students' needs and the existing state of the programs, which called for specific changes and improvements to the programs. When the program evaluation studies at every level (e.g., preparatory, undergraduate, Ph.D.) are reviewed, it is seen that there is a notable gap in the program evaluation studies at the M.A. level in Turkey. As Kırmızı (2011) indicates, in Turkey, the number of studies is limited to investigate M.A. programs. The present study intends to address this gap by conducting a descriptive study investigating students' and graduates' perspectives on the M.A. programs in English Language Education in Turkish setting. The purpose and motivation of the students for pursuing an M.A. degree and the student's overall satisfaction with the program were investigated in-depth in the

present study. Due to the limited number of studies in this field and the fact that the researchers generally tended to focus on the programs in detail (i.e., M.A. courses) and suggest changes, this research was carried out in the hope of contributing to the field. For this purpose, the opinions and satisfaction of students and graduates from all over Turkey about the program were investigated in detail.



CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

First, this chapter presents the research design adopted in this study. Second, details regarding the setting and participants are presented, followed by other sections comprising details concerning data collection instruments and procedures. Lastly, data analysis procedures, including both quantitative and qualitative analyses, are discussed in the following sections.

3.1. Research Design

Programs, during or after their implementation, can be evaluated for various reasons. According to Royse et al. (2010), “there are always alternative, and perhaps better methods to handle problems” (p. 2); therefore, even already-settled services can be subjected to evaluative investigation. Program evaluation is “a way of determining the worth of a thing in improving some specific component of an educational system,” according to Worthen (1990, p. 42). In this regard, program evaluation focuses systematically on gathering pertinent data on various program aspects to investigate the program's effectiveness and the extent to which its objectives are being met (Nichols et al., 2006). This study aims to evaluate the perspectives of both students and graduates in Master of Arts (M.A.) programs in Turkey. Specifically speaking, their program contents, the atmosphere of the department from the students' and graduates' perspectives, purpose, and motivation for pursuing a master's degree, and their overall satisfaction with the program were the focal points of the study. With this aim, a descriptive study was conducted to investigate the perspectives of students and graduates of M.A. programs. A descriptive research design seeks data to methodically characterize a phenomenon, circumstance, or population. Instead of focusing on the *why*, it explicitly addresses the *what*, *when*, *where*, and *how* issues related to the study problem. Malagón-Amor et al. (2015) stated that “the descriptive approach facilitates the investigation of the target variables using a wide range of research techniques” (p. 476). Although occasionally qualitative data is employed for descriptive purposes, it primarily employs quantitative data. It must also be noted that the

researcher does not control or change any factors in the descriptive research design; instead, the variables are just identified, observed, and measured. This study aims to identify and evaluate the participants' perspectives regarding M.A. programs in Turkey. Also, this study adopted a cross-sectional design since the different data types are obtained from many individuals in one time period. A cross-sectional study is descriptive, and its purpose is “to provide a description of a population within a population in relation to a result” (Levin, 2006, p. 24).

Regarding the methodological approach to collecting data, the study adopted a mixed-method research design which entails gathering, analyzing, and combining both quantitative and qualitative in a single study (Creswell, 2012). Fraenkel et al. (2012) also define mixed-method research methodology as a “combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques to create a single study” (p. 11). By focusing on what is effective in a study, a mixed-method research design maintains a pragmatic approach (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2013); however, there are also types of mixed-method designs which are: 1) convergent parallel design, 2) explanatory sequential design, and 3) embedded design. The first design connotes that quantitative and qualitative data are collected concurrently and analyzed separately. The second design starts by collecting and analyzing quantitative data; however, as a follow-up phase, it ends with qualitative data procedures. In the third design, *before*, *during*, or *after* the primary data (e.g., quantitative data) are collected, and secondary data sets (e.g., qualitative data) are collected and then analyzed (Creswell, 2012). Among these designs, a convergent parallel design was determined to be suitable for the present study since quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously and analyzed separately.

This mixed-method study (i.e., convergent parallel design) gathered qualitative and quantitative data to provide reliable results. Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies is utilized in the present research to give a complete view of the problem. On employing a mixed-method research design, Riazi and Candlin (2014) also stated that “to achieve complementarity, qualitative and quantitative phases of research can be combined” (p. 13). Explicitly speaking, various data sources and analyses are appropriate for different research questions enhancing the power of any mixed-method research study. Overall, by implementing a mixed-method research design and a descriptive approach, both quantitative and qualitative analysis were used to investigate the perspectives views of students and graduates.

3.2. Setting

This study evaluated the perspectives on the M.A. programs in English Language Education departments offered by a number of universities —both foundation and state— in Turkey. According to the Council of Higher Education (1982) in Turkey, many universities, both foundation (e.g., Yeditepe University, Bahçeşehir University) and state (e.g., Sakarya University, Kocaeli University) universities offer M.A. programs. Essentially, M.A. programs are a two-year master's program that primarily consists of courses on English language teaching. These programs aim to train science experts who are knowledgeable in their field of English language teaching and who can conduct research, interpret its findings, and integrate them into their teaching skills (CoHE). There are three primary stages in M.A. programs: 1) taking M.A. courses, 2) choosing a thesis topic/conducting research, and 3) completing an M.A. thesis, respectively. More specifically, the first stage of an M.A. education is carried out through formal education. All students must complete at least twenty-one credits in this stage. Mainly, there are optional (e.g., Second Language Acquisition, Testing-Evaluation, Discourse Analysis) and compulsory (e.g., Research Area, Scientific Research Techniques and Seminar, Applied Linguistics) program courses in these programs.

The second stage is choosing a thesis topic relevant to the field and conducting research, where students gather data and analyze a variety of different data types. They finally chose a thesis topic under the supervision of their advisor. The writing stage, which serves as the final step, is where learners are required to complete an M.A. thesis (Kurnaz & Alev, 2009). It is also noteworthy that there is a preparation stage as well if the student is from a (partly) irrelevant field (e.g., English Language Literature). Briefly, M.A. candidates must complete their credits, take all compulsory and optional courses, and complete their field-specific thesis to graduate from the program. M.A. graduates are equipped with the knowledge and expertise necessary to conduct quantitative and qualitative research in applied linguistics. Finally, the degree of “Master Diploma in English Language Teaching” is granted to graduates who successfully finish the program and meet all the prerequisites; moreover, they receive the title of English Language Teaching Specialist in the field.

To sum up, the primary foci of M.A. programs in English Language Education in Turkey are to equip language teachers with a researcher identity and to give students a thorough understanding of language teaching and research techniques focusing on theory and practice.

3.3. Participants

Students and graduates enrolled in/graduated from M.A. programs in English Language Education in Turkey were the participants in the current study. They were sampled through convenience sampling which is “a type of non-probability sampling in which participants meet certain practical criteria such as easy accessibility or the willingness to volunteer” (Dörnyei, 2002, p. 99). Stratton (2021) also yields that it is a widespread technique due to its low cost, quick response compared to other sample methods, and simplicity. In this study, to collect the data, convenience sampling was employed.

The demographic data of the participants includes eleven items in the following order: (a) gender, (b) age, (c) current status in the M.A. program, (d) M.A. graduation year, (e) whether they teach actively or not, (f) type of school they work at, (g) teaching level, (h) teaching experience, (i) B.A. degree, (j) university they received their B.A. degree from, and (k) B.A. GPA (Grade Points Average) of the participants. A total of sixty-nine participants (49 females, 19 males, 1 preferred not to say) participated in this study whose ages ranged between 21 and 54 ($M = 29.93$, $SD = 6.057$). Among the participants, thirty-one were M.A. program graduates, while thirty-eight were taking M.A. courses or writing their M.A. thesis. Most participants had undergraduate degrees in English Language Teaching ($n = 57$) and English Language and Literature ($n = 9$) departments; however, some participants had undergraduate degrees in Translation and Interpretation, Linguistics, and others. The graduates of an M.A. program who participated in the research mostly received their M.A. degrees from the Department of English Language Teaching ($n = 57$), English Language and Literature ($n = 9$), and other related departments. Also, the teaching experience of participants varied from two to ninety-nine years, with different educational levels from kindergarten to teaching adults (over thirty years old). To sum up, except for the two participants who participated in the pilot study, the questionnaire was filled by sixty-nine ($n = 69$) people. For the selection of the interview participants,

purposeful sampling was employed. The number of graduates (n= 3) and students (n= 7) was determined by choosing among the participants who completed the questionnaire. First, participants were divided into two sub-groups: those who were overall satisfied with the M.A. program they were enrolled in or graduated from and those who were not satisfied. In other words, they were grouped according to their satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the program. In the following step, the participants were separated according to the type of university they were enrolled in or graduated from (foundation or state) and according to their current status (i.e., taking M.A. courses, n= 2; writing an M.A. thesis, n= 5; a graduate of an M.A. program, n= 3). Finally, a total of 10 participants were determined for the semi-structured interviews. An invitation e-mail was sent to the determined participants including details regarding the interview time and ethical procedures. The participants who volunteered to participate in the research were contacted, and the interviews were administered and recorded via Zoom. A sapling was donated to the TEMA foundation, The Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion, for Reforestation and the Protection of Natural Habitats, for each participant participating in the interviews, and certificates were sent to the participants. The details regarding the demographic information of participants are presented in Table 3.

Table 3
Participant Demographics

Gender	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Current status in the M.A. program	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Female	49	71.0	Taking M.A. courses	17	24.6
Male	19	27.5	Writing an M.A. thesis	21	30.4
Prefer not to say	1	1.4	Graduate of an M.A. program	31	44.9

Among the sixty-nine participants, fifty-eight were currently teaching in different fields of employment. Twenty participants were employed by higher education institutions, with thirty-one teaching in state schools, twenty-two in foundation schools, and some in other settings. More specifically, in terms of participants' employment status, most participants reported that they currently performed teaching professions ($n= 58$; 84.1%), whereas a minority of them ($n= 11$; 15.9%) stated they were not working ($M= 1.16$, $SD= .369$). While the number of participants working at state schools was 30 (43.5%), the number of participants working at private schools was 22 (32.9%). Also, some participants responded as “others” ($n= 7$; 10.1%) (e.g., private courses) or as “no answer” ($n= 10$; 14.5%) ($M= 2.20$, $SD= .815$) in terms of the type of institution they were working at currently. Details regarding the employment field in teaching English to the participants are tabulated in Table 4.

Table 4
Participants' Fields of Employment

Teaching level	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Kindergarten	3	4.3
Primary school	5	7.2
Secondary school	13	18.8
High school	11	15.9
University (at English preparatory school)	21	30.4
University (at faculty)	4	5.8
Other	12	17.4

As seen in Table 4, the participants worked at different levels of teaching as kindergarten (n= 3, 4.3%), primary school (n= 5, 7.2%), secondary school (n= 13, 18.8%), high school (n= 11, 15.9%), English preparatory schools at university (n=21, 30.4%), faculty at university (n= 4, 5.8%), and other levels (n= 12, 17.4%), (M= 4.48; SD= 1.668). Most participants taught English preparatory programs at universities. Also, the participants' teaching experience ranged from 1 to 29 years (M= 6.38; SD= 5.128). Also, the participants' undergraduate (B.A.) departments are shown in Table 5.

Table 5
B.A. Departments Distribution

Department	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
English Language Teaching	57	82.6
Translation and Interpretation	1	1.4
English Culture and Literature	1	1.4
American Culture and Literature	1	1.4
English Language and Literature	9	13.0

Table 5 shows that a great majority of the participants (n= 57, 82.6%) graduated from the English Language Teaching Department of various universities in Turkey. Also, it is seen that the percentage of undergraduate degrees from English Language and Literature (n= 9, 13.0%), which is relatively higher than the other departments (namely, Translation and Interpretation (n= 1, 1.4%), English Culture and Literature (n= 1, 1.4%), American Culture and Literature (n= 1, 1.4%) (M= 1.61, SD= 1.39). Furthermore, this study aimed to investigate the perspectives of the students and graduates in different M.A. programs within Turkish context; as a result, many participants got their B.A. degrees from various universities (both state and foundation). The

list of universities from which the participants graduated with their undergraduate degrees is shown in Table 6.

Table 6
Distribution of Universities According to Participants' B.A. Degree

B.A. University	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Anadolu University	1	1.4
Ankara University	1	1.4
B.Abant İzzet University	1	1.4
Balıkesir University	2	2.9
Bilkent University	1	1.4
Boğaziçi University	5	7.2
Bursa Uludağ University	1	1.4
Cumhuriyet University	1	1.4
Çağ University	1	1.4
Dokuz Eylül University	4	5.8
E.Osmangazi University	2	2.9
Gazi University	4	5.8
Gaziantep University	3	4.3
Hacettepe University	4	5.8
Haliç University	1	1.4
Inönü University	1	1.4
İstanbul University	1	1.4
Karadeniz Technical University	1	1.4
Kocaeli University	7	10.1
Manisa Celal Bayar University	1	1.4
Marmara University	6	8.7
METU	6	8.7
Ondokuz Mayıs University	1	1.4
Sakarya University	9	13.0

Trakya University	1	1.4
Uludağ University	1	1.4
Yeditepe University	1	1.4
Yıldız Technical University	1	1.4
Total	69	100.0

As seen, participants in the study had their B.A. degrees from various universities in Turkey. Most of the B.A. graduates participating in the research graduated from Sakarya (n= 9, 13.0%), Kocaeli (n= 7, 10.1%), Marmara (n= 6, 8.7%), and METU (Middle East Technical University) (n= 6, 8.7%) universities. As shown in the list, there were graduates from state and foundation universities in Turkey. Whereas the number of state universities was 65, the number of foundation universities was 4 in terms of the participation rate of the study. A high number of students got their undergraduate degrees (B.A.) in state universities.

Furthermore, participants varied according to their years of teaching experience. They were categorized into three sub-groups as follow: novice teacher (0-5 years), mid-career teacher (6-10 years), and experienced teacher (11 and above). Details are provided in Table 7.

Table 7
The Distribution of Participants' Teaching Experience

Experience	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Novice Teacher (0-5)	37	53.6
Mid-career Teacher (6-10)	21	30.4
Experienced Teacher (11+)	11	15.9

Table 7 showed that 53.6% (n= 37; M= 74.21; SD= 9.82) of the participants had teaching experience in the "0-5" year range, 30.4% (n= 21; M= 75.38; SD= 10.64) in the "6-10" year range, and 15.9% (n= 11; M= 70.94; SD= 6.82) in the "11+ year" range.

Regarding participants' undergraduate academic achievement, their undergraduate program GPAs were used. The average of the participants varied between 2.23 (58.70/100) and 3.87 (96.96/100). Participants were further categorized into three sub-groups: low (2.20-2.80), mid (2.81-3.40), and high (3.41-4.00). Details are presented in Table 8.

Table 8
Academic Achievement of Participant's Undergraduate Program GPA

Undergraduate Program GPA	Frequency (f)	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
Low	14	2.23	2.80	2.63	.17
Mid	31	2.81	3.36	3.10	.16
High	24	4.42	3.87	3.60	.13
Overall	69	2.23	3.87	3.18	.38

3.4. Data Collection Instruments

Three different data collection instruments were employed in the current study with the aim of triangulating the results and increase the validity: 1) A Likert scale questionnaire, 2) open-ended questions, and 3) semi-structured individual interviews. The distribution of data collection tools is tabulated in Table 9, which presents the data collection tool that serves which research questions of the study.

Table 9

Implementing Data Collection Instruments Regarding the Research Questions

Research Questions	Data Collection Instruments
1. With what purpose and motivation did master students and graduates in Turkey start the Master of Art (M.A.) program in English Language Education?	Questionnaire/Semi-structured Interviews
2. Do master students and graduates' M.A. program evaluation vary according to the following variables?	Questionnaire/Semi-structured Interviews
3. What are the opinions of master's students and graduates regarding the M.A. program they are enrolled in/ graduated from?	Open-ended Questions/ Semi-structured Interviews
3.1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the M.A. program they enrolled in/graduated from as perceived by students /graduates?	Open-ended Questions/ Semi-structured Interviews
4. What are the suggestions for the improvement and development of the graduate program they are enrolled in /graduated from as perceived by students/graduates?	Open-ended Questions/ Semi-structured Interviews

3.4.1. A Likert-scale Questionnaire

In this study, quantitative data were gathered through a questionnaire (see Appendix A) partially adapted from KIRMIZI (2011) with his permission. The questionnaire was a Likert scale and included three major sections and a total of sixty-nine items. After reviewing the literature, the questionnaire developed and validated by KIRMIZI (2011) was compatible with the current study in terms of its general content. Permission was obtained from the researcher for the adaptation of the sections required for the questionnaire, and necessary changes were made following the aims of the current study. In total, there were five sections in the original questionnaire: 1) Demographic Information, 2) Aims and Motivation Factors for Pursuing an M.A. Degree, 3)

Program Evaluation Scale, 4) Evaluation of Courses and Section, and 5) Program Goals. However, given that Kırmızı (2011) investigated the program courses in detail in his thesis, two of the sections, namely Section 4: Evaluation of Courses and Section 5: Programs Goals, were excluded because these sections were not relevant to the aims of the current study. There were three sections of the questionnaire utilized to gather quantitative data for the current study: 1) The participants' demographic data consisting of twelve items (e.g., age, gender, current status, type of university, B.A. degree) was covered in the first section. 2) Aims and Motivation factors for Pursuing an M.A. Degree (e.g., “Which of the following describes/described your professional career choice when you complete/completed your M.A. study?”) (5 items), and 3) Program Evaluation Scale (52 items) were the following two sections. The final form of the questionnaire used in the current study included a total of three sections and sixty-nine items. Detailed information on each section in the questionnaire is tabulated in Table 10.

Table 10
Details of the Questionnaire

Sections	Section Details
Section1	Demographic Information
Section 2	Aims and Motivating Factors for Pursuing an M.A. Degree
Section 3	Program Evaluation Scale
	3.1. Program Description
	3.2. Departmental Support
	3.3. Atmosphere in the Department
	3.4. Program Instruction/Evaluation Methods
	3.5. Classroom Management and Cooperation Skills

3.6. Program Resources

3.7. Program Content

3.8. Overall Evaluation

3.4.1.1. Section 1: Demographic Information

The participants' demographic data are included in the first section of the data collection tool. This section includes eleven items which consist of information on the age, gender, university, current occupation, graduation year, teaching level, teaching experience, and academic background of the participants.

3.4.1.2. Section 2: Aims and Motivating Factors for Pursuing an M.A. Degree

The items in Section 2 seek to investigate respondents' aims and motivations to pursue an M.A. degree in Turkey. Respondents are expected to number each item in order of importance by responding to Likert-scale items relating to the motivating determinants of enrollment in their M.A. program on a scale ranging from 1 (= the least important) to 4 (= very important). First, the respondents are requested to describe their professional career choice when they complete/have completed their M.A. program (e.g., “Which of the following describes/described your professional career choice when you complete/completed your M.A. study?”). In the second question of this section, participants are asked which important factors are influential in the decision to start an M.A. program (e.g., “Please choose the following factor(s) according to how influential each was/were in your decision to begin your M.A. study.”). Also, they are asked why they specifically chose to start in their M.A. programs (e.g., “Why did you start the M.A. program in Sakarya University/Gazi University/ Bahçeşehir University?”) in detail. Finally, the participants are asked about the following issues: what goals do M.A. programs assign more importance to (e.g., “In your opinion, which of the following purpose(s) does/did your M.A. program assign importance to?”) and which areas M.A.

programs should assign more importance to. On these issues, the participants are invited to number the items in order of importance (e.g., “Which of the following purpose(s) do you think an M.A. program should assign importance to?”).

3.4.1.3. Section 3: Program Evaluation Likert Scale Items

Program Evaluation Scale involves 52 items including seven sub-sections: program description (e.g., “M.A. candidates in my program are/were treated with respect by the faculty.”) (9 items), departmental support (e.g., “The faculty is/was helpful for the M.A. program students.”) (3 items), the atmosphere in the department (e.g., “The department has/had a humane environment characterized by mutual respect by M.A. candidates and professors.”) (4 items), program instruction/evaluation methods (e.g., “Quality of instruction in my courses is/was satisfactory.”) (9 items), classroom management/cooperation skills (e.g., “The program teaches /taught me classroom management skills.”) (3 items), program resources (e.g., “The institution offers/offered sufficient computer and Internet support. “) (4 items), program content (e.g., “The program is/was up to date.”) (13 items), and overall evaluation of the M.A. program (e.g., “What I have learned in this program will be/has been valuable for my future.”) (7 items). The items were rated on a Likert scale of 1 (= strongly disagree) to 5 (= strongly agree). Correspondingly, the respondents are invited to respond to the statement in a way that best reflects their opinions regarding the program they are enrolled in and graduated from.

3.4.2. Open-ended Questions

For eliciting qualitative data, open-ended questions were used in this study (see Appendix B). The researcher planned to make use of open-ended questions to make it easier for the participants to express themselves in written form after completing the questionnaire. The researcher can understand the respondent's true feelings and thoughts toward the research subject by using open-ended questions. Regarding the general satisfaction and suggestions on M.A. programs, the participants are asked to briefly respond to three open-ended questions about what they are/were most satisfied with and least satisfied with their M.A. programs. Lastly,

based on their experience, the participants are expected to provide suggestions for improving the program they are enrolled in and graduated from. The researcher developed the open-ended questions in parallel with the questionnaire and presented them to expert opinion. After receiving feedback from the experts, the questions were reformulated and used in the study. The qualitative data corroborated the quantitative data as open-ended questions were designed in accordance with the content of the questionnaire. Three major open-ended items are tabulated in Table 11.

Table 11
Details of the Open-ended Questions

Questions	Details
Question 1	What are/were you satisfied MOST about the M.A. program (e.g., content, courses, resources) you are enrolled in/graduated from?
Question 2	What are/were you satisfied LEAST about the M.A. program (e.g., content, courses, resources) you are enrolled in/graduated from?
Question 3	Based upon your own experience, do you have any suggestions for the improvement of the M.A. program you are enrolled in/graduate from? If yes, what are they?

3.4.3. Semi-structured Interviews

Considering they “enable much greater flexibility” (Burns, 1999, p. 120), the researcher also chose to utilize interviews to collect qualitative data in the present study. According to Gill et al. (2008), interviews are used “to explore the views, experiences, attitudes, and motivations of individuals on certain subjects” (p. 292). The semi-structured interview questions (see Appendix C) were employed as a second qualitative data collection tool in this study. Semi-structured interviews have several advantages, such as the opportunity to ask follow-up questions and get reliable data, compared to structured interviews, which offer limited flexibility. Accordingly,

the researcher developed the interview items and presented them to expert opinions before implementation. Within this framework, two experts, who had doctoral degrees in English Language Education and Educational Sciences, were consulted. To elicit more in-depth responses from participants, the interview questions were designed based on the questionnaire's content and open-ended questions. In total, semi-structured items included seven questions related to the M.A. programs the participants are enrolled in/graduated from. While the first item is about the participants' goal and motivation to pursue an M.A. degree, the second asks for the influential factor(s) in their decision while starting their M.A. studies. To elaborate further, the other items are related to the general satisfaction and dissatisfaction of the students and graduates with their M.A. program. Finally, the fourth and fifth items were about the strengths and weaknesses of the program they were enrolled in and graduated from. Details of semi-structured interview questions are shown in Table 12.

Table 12
Details of Interview Questions

Questions	Details
Question 1	What was your goal and motivation to pursue an M.A. degree?
Question 2	What was the most influential/important factor in your decision to begin your M.A. study?
Question 3	Are/were you overall satisfied or dissatisfied with the M.A. program you are enrolled in/graduated from?
Question 4	In your opinion, what are/were the strengths of the M.A. program you are enrolled in /graduated from?
Question 5	In your opinion, what are/were the weaknesses of the M.A. program you are enrolled in/graduated from?

Question 6 Based upon your own experience, what would be your suggestions for the improvement of the M.A. program you are enrolled in/graduated from?

To successfully conduct the interview sessions with the participants, the researcher adhered to the helpful advice provided by Galletta (2013). The specific sections guided the researcher in conducting efficient interview sessions. Table 13 presents the details regarding the sections of the semi-structured interview suggested by Galletta (2003).

Table 13

Segments of the Semi-structured Interview

Opening Section of the Semi-Structured Interview	Middle Section of the Semi-Structured Interview	Concluding Section of the Semi-Structured Interview
Provide a feeling of comfort and guarantee understanding of participant rights	Pay attention to details in the narrative to this point, and ask questions that might represent theoretical considerations	Give participants the chance to investigate the opening narrative in relation to theory-driven topics
Introduce wide queries that provide participants with opportunities to start sharing their experiences.	As they pertain to your research question, turn to more detailed questions	Whenever you can, go back to the metaphors and stories that need more explanation
Ask for clarification as necessary.	When appropriate, loop back to the participant's story to show how it relates to the questions	Seek out the opportunity to investigate contradictions.
Make a mental note of significant turning points in the participant's narrative that you'll revisit later in the interview for more in-depth discussion.	Investigate more the participant replies that the introductory narrative deemed significant.	Try to give the participant the impression that the interview is coming to an end.

Support the narrative's flow with questions that direct it toward the subject of your study.	Extend your questions past clarification to the participant's interpretation of the research topic.	Demand more details or closing remarks from the participant acknowledge the participant's participation and highlight the role they played in the study.
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Galletta (2013)

3.5. Data Collection Procedures

Quantitative and qualitative data were gathered simultaneously to investigate the research questions of the present study. Permission to use and adapt the questionnaire developed by Kırmızı (2011) was granted to the researcher conducting the current study. In this study, Kırmızı was contacted via e-mail and approved the implementation and adaptation of his data collection instrument (namely the questionnaire). Also, the researcher developed open-ended questions and interviews upon consulting expert opinions.

Before being implemented, data collection instruments were presented to the experts with doctoral degrees in the program of English Language Teaching (n= 2) and Educational Sciences (n= 2). An expert opinion form regarding the data collection tools was forwarded to the experts to ensure their content validity. Four experts who provided their comments and suggestions on the instruments were consulted. Based on the experts' opinions and suggestions, minor changes were made to the data collection tools, and the items were finalized to be piloted. Pilot studies are defined as “small scale version[s], or trial run[s], done in preparation for the major study” (Polit et al., 2001, p. 467). A good study design must include a pilot study as a critical component. Although they do not necessarily ensure success in the main study, pilot studies increase the likelihood of success in a study (Teijlingen & Hundley, 2002). In this study, quantitative (i.e., questionnaire) and qualitative (i.e., open-ended questions and interviews) data collection instruments were piloted before their implementation with actual participants. The pilot study was conducted with two participants who were graduates of M.A. programs at a state and a foundation university in Turkey. To contact these volunteers, the researcher reached out to them through her network. Upon receiving their consent, the piloting took one day, during which the participants filled out the online questionnaire. Finally, minor changes (e.g., the

number of items & wording) were made to the questionnaire following the results of the piloting process to ensure validity.

After the pilot study, the researcher received ethical permissions from Sakarya University Ethics Committee (See Appendix D) to carry out the study. After obtaining ethical permission, the Institute of Educational Sciences sent a formal letter to all universities around Turkey (offering an M.A. program). Invitations for research were sent to all universities approved to participate, and the questionnaire was shared via an online link. In this invitation sent to department heads and faculty members, they were politely requested to contact their program students and graduates to fill out the questionnaire. The students and graduates responded to the questionnaire via Google Forms, and subsequently, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews online with 10 interviewees individually. In this study, interviewees were selected with purposeful sampling, a method frequently employed in qualitative research to maximize the effectiveness and reliability of the data (Patton, 2002). Indeed, they were chosen among the participants who participated in the questionnaire. Identification and selection of individuals or groups with expertise or experience with a phenomenon of interest are part of the purposeful sampling process (Cresswell & Clark, 2011).

Additionally, Bernard (2002) and Spradley (1979) emphasize the value of being available, willing to contribute, and thoughtfully expressing thoughts while conducting research with purposeful sampling. Having received the consent of the students and graduates who voluntarily agreed to be interviewed, the researcher sent an invitation e-mail to those participants to set a date for interviews. Moreover, the participant's right to leave the study at any time was made clear to them by the researcher. Since the participants were from around the country, it was most practicable for the researcher and the participants to meet online, which is why the interviews were held online. After obtaining verbal consent from the interviewees to record the meeting, the interviews were conducted online via Zoom. Although there was no time restriction, it took an average of ten minutes to complete each interview, ranging between seven and twelve minutes.

3.6. Data Analysis Procedures

A convergent parallel design was employed in this study. Both qualitative and quantitative data were obtained through three data collection instruments, and finally analyses were made simultaneously. The following information gives detailed data analysis procedures for each type of data. The SPSS 26.0 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software was employed for descriptive analysis, percentages, frequencies, non-parametric tests for the quantitative data obtained through a questionnaire. A Shapiro-Wilk test was performed to check normality, and since data were not distributed normally ($W = .954$, $p = .015$), non-parametric tests were used. To answer research question 1 and 3, descriptive statistics and frequency analysis were run. In order to answer research question 2, a Man-Whitney U test and Kruskal Wallis H test were conducted to investigate whether participants' program evaluation varies according to gender, and teaching experience and undergraduate academic achievement, respectively. Second, content analysis was administered to analyze qualitative data obtained through open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews. Cohen et al. (2018) define content analysis as "the act of summarizing and reporting written data" (p. 674). After reading the open-ended questions several times, the researcher took note of the critical points and the most frequently given answers. The answers to the questions asked about the general satisfaction of the participants from the M.A. programs which they are enrolled and graduated from were manually coded, and the categories (e.g., courses, content, resources) they were most satisfied with and least satisfied with were explored. Finally, the participants' answers who were asked to make suggestions for improving the M.A. programs they are enrolled in/graduated from based on their own experiences were examined in detail, and a list of suggestions was created. After the interviews were conducted with 10 participants, the researcher transcribed interview recordings. In other words, content analysis was employed in which the researcher conceptualized the data, then classified the concepts into meaningful categories, and ultimately identified the themes to explain the data (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). After reading the data several times, the identifying codes were determined to analyze by the researcher. To ensure reliability, the transcription was also reviewed by an English language teacher, a colleague of the researcher. Finally, during the data collection process, the researcher did not intervene with the participants to avoid bias.

To sum up, the present study aimed to evaluate the perspectives of students and graduates on the M.A. programs they are enrolled in/graduated from in English Language Education departments in Turkey. Data came from both quantitative and qualitative instruments: (a) questionnaire, (b) open-ended questions, and (c) semi-structured interviews. Whereas quantitative data from the present study were analyzed by the SPSS software, qualitative data were analyzed by content analysis (Dörnyei, 2002). Findings obtained through analyses are given in the following chapter.



CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Findings of the study are presented in this chapter. Whereas the first section presents the quantitative data findings gathered from a Likert-scale questionnaire, the second section presents the qualitative data analyses obtained through open-ended items and semi-structured interviews.

4.1. Findings of Quantitative Data

As previously detailed in the methodology chapter (see Chapter 3), to evaluate the perspectives of students and graduates on the M.A. programs in English Language Education in Turkey, quantitative data came from a questionnaire focusing basically on aims and motivating factors for pursuing an M.A. degree and program evaluation. After the inspection for missing data, frequency and descriptive statistical analyses were run with the software SPSS. Findings are given and tabulated in detail under the following sections.

4.1.2. Findings Related to Aims and Motivating Factors for Pursuing an M.A. Degree

The five items in Section 2 sought to investigate the aims and motivations of participants to pursue an M.A. degree. Participants numbered each item in order of importance by responding to Likert-scale items relating to the motivating determinants of enrollment in their M.A. program on a scale ranging from the least important (1) to very important (4).

First, the participants were invited to describe their professional career choice when they completed or would complete their M.A. program. Findings are presented in Table 14.

Table 14

Description of Professional Career Choice When Completing an M.A. Study

Professional career choice	M	SD	1= The least important n (%)	2= Not important n (%)	3= Important n (%)	4= Very important n (%)
Researcher in an academic setting	3.42	.77	2 (2.9%)	6 (8.7%)	22 (31.9%)	39 (56.5%)
English teacher in a state school	2.37	1.04	18 (26.1%)	18 (26.1%)	22 (21.9%)	11 (15.9%)
English teacher in a state school	2.37	1.04	18 (26.1%)	18 (26.1%)	22 (21.9%)	11 (15.9%)
English teacher in a private school	1.92	.98	30 (43.5%)	20 (29.0%)	13 (18.8%)	6 (8.7%)
Management or administration	1.84	.88	29 (42%)	26 (37.7%)	10 (12.5%)	4 (5.8%)

When participants were asked to describe their professional career choice when they completed/complete their M.A. study, the majority found being a researcher in an academic setting more significant (n= 39, 56.5%) (M= 3.42, SD= .77) compared to other career alternatives. Also, some participants found being an English teacher in a state school very important (n= 11, 15.9%) (M= 2.37, SD= 1.044). On the other hand, most participants stated being an English teacher in a private school (n= 30, 43.5%) (M= 1.92, SD= .98) whereas working in the fields of management or administration were the least important professional career choice (n= 29, 42.0%) (M= 1.84, SD= .88) among others. Being a researcher in an academic setting (M= 3.42, SD= .77) had the highest mean score among the other career choices whereas management or administration (M= 1.84, SD= .88) had the lowest mean score.

The participants also chose the influential factor(s) to begin their M.A. studies. They were asked whether it was their primary career choice, or due to their desire for a change of career, advanced degree required for career advancement, increased income-earning potential, or personal intellectual enrichment. The details of findings are presented in Table 15.

Table 15

Influential Determinants to Start an M.A. Study

Influential Factors	M	SD	1= The least important n (%)	2= Not important n (%)	3= Important n (%)	4= Very important n (%)
personal intellectual enrichment	3.60	.64	1 (1.4%)	3 (4.3%)	18 (26.1%)	47 (68.1%)
advanced degree required for career advancement	3.47	.83	3 (4.3%)	6 (8.7%)	15 (21.7%)	45 (65.2%)
primary career choice	3.44	.73	1 (1.4%)	7 (10.1%)	21 (30.4%)	40 (58.0%)
increased income-earning potential	2.79	.97	9 (13.0%)	14 (20.3%)	28 (40.6%)	18 (26.1%)
change of career	2.66	1.12	15 (21.7%)	13 (18.8%)	25 (30.4%)	20 (29.0%)

Findings showed that many participants (n= 47, 68.1%) chose personal intellectual enrichment as the most influential factor in their decision while beginning their M.A. studies. Whereas the second most favored factor was the advanced degree required for career advancement (n= 45, 65.2%), the third influential factor was primary career choice (n= 40, 58.0%). Finally, some (n= 20, 29.0%) participants found a change of career important, and some of them (n= 18, 26.1%) opted for increased income-earning potential. The highest mean score was the personal

intellectual enrichment ($M= 3.60$, $SD= .64$), whereas the lowest mean score was the change of career ($M= 2.66$, $SD= 1.12$).

Findings presented in Table 16 also indicated that the most influential factors in enrolling in the M.A. programs were the opportunity to work with faculty members ($n= 19$, 27.5%), job opportunities for graduates ($n= 19$, 27.5%), and the location of campus ($n= 19$, 27.5%).

Table 16

Influential Determinants to Start an M.A. Program

Influential Factors	M	SD	1= The least important n (%)	2= Not important n (%)	3= Important n (%)	4= Very important n (%)
Opportunity to work with particular faculty members	2.66	1.10	15 (21.7%)	12 (17.4%)	23 (33.3%)	19 (27.5%)
Graduate program's reputation	2.62	1.00	13 (18.8%)	13 (18.8%)	30 (43.5%)	13 (18.8%)
Job opportunities are good for graduates	2.56	1.14	17 (24.6%)	15 (21.7%)	18 (26.1%)	19 (27.5%)
Location of campus	2.43	1.23	24 (34.8%)	10 (14.5%)	16 (23.2%)	19 (27.5%)
Received fellowship, assistantship, or scholarship	2.05	1.12	28 (40.6%)	22 (31.9%)	6 (8.7%)	13 (18.8%)
Availability of housing in the area	1.92	1.12	37 (53.6%)	9 (13.0%)	14 (20.3%)	9 (13.0%)
Recommendation of a friend, acquaintance	1.91	1.01	32 (46.4%)	17 (24.6%)	14 (20.3%)	6 (8.7%)

Moreover, findings also demonstrated that the reputation of the graduate program (n= 13, 18.8%) and receiving a fellowship or assistantship (n= 13, 18.8%) were other influential factors in starting an M.A. program. While the highest mean score was found as the opportunity to work with faculty members (M= 2.66, SD= 1.10), the lowest mean score was found as the recommendation of a friend/acquaintance (M= 1.91 SD= 1.01).

Finally, the participants were asked about what goals M.A. programs assign more importance to, and which areas M.A. programs should assign more importance to. On these issues, the participants were invited to number the items in order of importance based on their experience in their M.A. programs. Findings are presented in Table 17.

Table 17

The Importance Assigned to the Purposes of M.A. Programs

Purposes	M	SD	1= The least important n (%)	2= Not important n (%)	3= Important n (%)	4= Very important n (%)
Preparing scholars and researchers	3.42	.65	1 (1.4%)	3 (4.3%)	31 (44.9%)	34 (49.3%)
Preparing M.A. candidates for more advanced study	3.36	.85	1 (1.4%)	6 (8.7%)	29 (42.0%)	33 (47.8%)
Preparing teachers	3.21	.70	1 (1.4%)	8 (11.6%)	35 (50.7%)	25 (36.2%)
Providing personal enrichment	3.21	.85	3 (4.3%)	10 (14.5%)	25 (36.2%)	31 (44.9%)
Preparing other practitioners	2.75	.88	7 (10.1%)	16 (23.2%)	33 (47.8%)	13 (18.8%)

Findings illustrated that preparing scholars and researchers were considered as the most significant aim of an M.A. program by most participants ($n= 34, 49.3\%$). Additionally, a considerable number of participants ($n= 33, 83.7\%$) found preparing M.A. candidates for more advanced study as the second most crucial purpose of their M.A. programs. On the other hand, other important purposes of M.A. programs seen by the participants were providing personal enrichment ($n= 31, 44.9\%$) and preparing teachers ($n= 25, 36.2\%$). Preparing scholars and researchers ($M= 3.42, SD= .65$) had the highest mean score among the other purposes of M.A. programs, while preparing other practitioners had the lowest mean score ($M= 2.75, SD= .88$).

Table 18

The Importance that Should Be Assigned to the Purposes of M.A. Programs

Purposes	M	SD	1= The least important n (%)	2= Not important n (%)	3= Important n (%)	4= Very important n (%)
Preparing scholars and researchers	3.72	.53	1 (1.4%)	16 (23.2%)	0 (0.0%)	52 (75.4%)
Preparing teachers	3.34	.83	3 (4.3%)	7 (10.1%)	22 (31.9%)	37 (53.6%)
Preparing M.A. candidates for more advanced study	3.65	.61	5 (7.2%)	14 (20.3%)	0 (0.0%)	50 (72.5%)
Preparing other practitioners	3.18	.87	3 (4.3%)	12 (17.4%)	23 (33.3%)	31 (44.9%)

Regarding the purposes that departments should assign to the M.A. programs, most participants ($n= 52, 75.4\%$) found preparing scholars and researchers critical. Secondly, preparing M.A. candidates for the more advanced study was considered very important by a considerable

majority of participants (n= 50, 72.5%). Finally, preparing teachers (53.6%) and preparing other practitioners (44.9%) were rated as very important. The highest mean score was found for the preparing scholars and researchers (M= 3.72, SD= .53), whereas the lowest mean score was found for the preparing other practitioners (M= 3.18, SD= .87).

The last section of the questionnaire contains a program evaluation scale of 52 items rated on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (= strongly disagree) to 5 (= strongly agree). Correspondingly, the respondents rated the statements in a way that best reflected their opinions regarding the program they were enrolled in and graduated from in Turkey.

4.1.3. Findings Related to the Program Description

Regarding program description, there were nine items in the scale, which gives a general overview of the participants' perspectives regarding the M.A. programs they are enrolled in or graduated from. Findings, including an analysis of each item related to the program description, are tabulated in Table 19.

Table 19

Participants' Perspectives on the Program Description

Items	M	SD	1= Strongly Disagree n (%)	2= Disagree n (%)	3= Undecided n (%)	4= Agree n (%)	5= Strongly Agree n (%)
1. M.A. candidates in my program are/were treated with respect by the faculty.	4.37	.84	1 (1.4%)	3 (4.3%)	1 (1.4%)	28 (40.6%)	36 (52.2%)
2. The rapport between faculty and M.A. candidates in the program is/was good.	4.18	.92	1 (1.4%)	3 (4.3%)	9 (13.0%)	25 (36.2%)	31 (44.9%)

3. There are/were tensions in the faculty that affect M.A. candidates.	2.50	1.3	19 (27.5%)	23 (33.3%)	10 (14.5%)	7 (10.1%)	10 (14.5%)
4. The program meets/met my needs.	3.94	.96	1 (1.4%)	3 (4.3%)	19(27.5%)	22 (31.9%)	24 (34.8%)
5. The program encourages /encouraged taking courses outside the department.	2.95	1.3	14 (20.3%)	13 (18.8%)	15 (21.7%)	16 (23.2%)	11 (15.9%)
6. The M.A. entrance exam was a good test of my knowledge.	3.84	1.2	6 (8.7%)	6 (8.7%)	9 (13.0%)	20(29.0 %)	28 (40.6%)
7. Interaction between the department and related disciplines or programs on the campus is/was satisfactory.	3.55	1.2	5 (7.2%)	11 (15.9%)	15 (21.7%)	17 (24.6%)	21 (30.4%)
8. The M.A. ELT program employs /employed qualified professors.	4.28	1.0	3 (4.3%)	2 (2.9%)	7 (10.1%)	17 (24.6%)	40 (58.0%)
9. The number of support and clerical staff in the department is/was satisfactory.	3.72	1.1	3 (4.3%)	9 (13.0%)	16 (23.2%)	17 (24.6%)	24 (34.8%)

As illustrated in Table 19, findings revealed that most of the participants (n= 36, 52.2%) strongly agreed that they were treated with respect by the faculty, that the rapport between faculty and M.A candidates was good (n= 31, 44.9%), and that the program employed qualified professors (n= 40, 58.0%). Furthermore, they agreed that the M.A. entrance exam was a good test of their knowledge (n= 20, 29.0%), and the program met their needs (n= 22, 31.9%). Nevertheless, some participants were undecided about whether the program met their needs (n= 19, 27.5%). Also, some participants reported that they were unsure about the quality of the support of the clerical

staff in the department (n= 16, 23.2%), and interaction between the department and related disciplines (n= 15, 21.7%).

Lastly, most of the students and graduates (n= 19, 27.5%) considered there were no tensions in the faculty that affected them; however, according to what some participants stated, the program did not encourage taking courses outside the department (n= 14, 20.3%).

4.1.4. Findings Related to Departmental Support

There were three items delving into students' and graduates' perspectives related to departmental support in the M.A. program they were enrolled in or graduated from. Findings are shown in Table 20.

Table 20
Participants' Perspectives on Departmental Support

Items	M	SD	1= Strongly Disagree n (%)	2= Disagree n (%)	3= Undecided n (%)	4= Agree n (%)	5= Strongly Agree n (%)
10. The department actively helps graduates find appropriate employment.	3.20	1.14	6 (8.7%)	10 (14.5%)	28 (40.6%)	14 (20.3%)	11 (15.9%)
11. The program is providing/provided me with very good preparation for my future professional work.	3.85	1.01	4 (5.8%)	0 (0.0%)	17 (24.6%)	29 (42.0%)	19 (27.5%)
12. The faculty is/was helpful for the M.A. program students.	4.10	.97	1 (1.4%)	4 (5.8%)	11 (15.9%)	24 (34.8%)	29 (42.0%)

Table 20 demonstrates that the majority of the participants (n= 28, 40.6%) were undecided about the help provided by their departments in terms of offering employment opportunities; nevertheless, some of them agreed (n= 14, 20.3%) and some strongly agreed (n= 11, 15.9%) on this item. Furthermore, many of the participants (n= 48, 69.5%) thought that their M.A. program prepared them well for their future professional work while some of them stated no decision on that issue, nearly one fourth of them (n= 17, 24.6%). Additionally, they considered the faculty was helpful for students (n= 53, 76.5%).

4.1.5. Findings Related to the Atmosphere in the Department

The participants were also asked to rate four items based on the atmosphere in the department. The details of findings are shown in Table 21.

Table 21

Participants' Perspectives on the Atmosphere in the Department

Items	M	SD	1= Strongly Disagree n (%)	2= Disagree n (%)	3= Undecided n (%)	4= Agree n (%)	5= Strongly Agree n (%)
13. The department has/had a humane environment characterized by mutual respect by M.A. candidates and professors.	4.2 6	.94	1 (1.4%)	5 (7.2%)	3 (4.3%)	26 (37.7%)	34 (49.3%)
14. The program head is/was in cooperation with the faculty administration.	4.2 8	.97	2 (2.9%)	1 (1.4%)	10 (14.5%)	18 (26.1%)	38 (55.1%)
15. M.A. candidates tend/tended to help and support each other to meet the academic demands of the department.	4.1 8	.94	0 (0.0%)	6 (8.7%)	7 (10.1%)	24 (34.8%)	32 (46.4%)

16. There is/was good communication between faculty and M.A candidates regarding student needs, concerns, and suggestions.	4.0 7	1.17	3 (4.3%)	6 (8.7%)	9 (13.0%)	16 (23.2%)	35 (50.7%)
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Findings related to the atmosphere in departments highlighted that most students and graduates thought that the program had a humane environment (n= 34, 49%), that the program head cooperated with faculty administration (n= 38, 55.1%), that the M.A. candidates help and support each other to meet the academic demands of the department (n= 32, 46.4%), and that it provided good communication between the faculty and M.A. candidates (n= 35, 50.7%). Lastly, item 14 concerned with the cooperation between head and faculty administration had the highest mean score (M= 4.28, *SD*= .97) while the item 16 concentrating on the communication between faculty and M.A. candidates had the lowest mean score (M= 4.07, *SD*= 1.17).

4.1.6. Findings Related to the Program Instruction and Evaluation Methods

Regarding participants' perspectives on the program instruction and evaluation methods of their M.A. programs, nine items were asked the participants to be rated from 1 to 5. Findings are tabulated in Table 22.

Table 22

Participants' Perspectives on Program Instruction/Evaluation Methods

Items	M	SD	1= Strongly Disagree n (%)	2= Disagree n (%)	3= Undecided n (%)	4= Agree n (%)	5= Strongly Agree n (%)
17. Quality of instruction in my courses is/was satisfactory.	4.0 2	1.16	4 (5.8%)	4 (5.8%)	9 (13.0%)	21 (30.4%)	31 (44.9%)
18. The program has/had a good linkage between different courses.	3.8 2	1.17	5 (7.2%)	4 (5.8%)	12 (17.4%)	25 (36.2%)	23 (33.3%)
19. The program balances /balanced teacher-centered and student-centered learning on its course.	4.0 7	1.03	2 (2.9%)	3 (4.3%)	13 (18.8%)	21 (30.4%)	30 (43.5%)
20. The program equips/ equipped with the necessary instructional technologies and other resources.	3.9 1	1.09	2 (2.9%)	6 (8.7%)	14 (20.3%)	21 (30.4%)	26 (37.7%)
21. The program encourages /encouraged me to be a reflective teacher.	4.3 1	.88	1 (1.4%)	1 (1.4%)	10 (14.5%)	20 (29.0%)	37 (53.6%)
22. The department promotes /promoted intellectual development.	4.4 2	.81	1 (1.4%)	0 (0.0%)	8 (11.6%)	20 (29.0%)	40 (58.0%)
23. The program puts/put emphasis on the balance between theory and practice.	4.1 0	1.0	1 (1.4%)	4 (5.8%)	13 (18.8%)	20 (29.0%)	31 (44.9%)
24. The program prepares /prepared me to be a good researcher in the field of ELT.	4.1 4	.98	1 (1.4%)	3 (4.3%)	14 (20.3%)	18 (26.1%)	33 (47.8%)

25. I receive/received valuable feedback from my professors.	4.1 0	1.17	3 (4.3%)	7 (10.1%)	5 (7.2%)	19 (27.5%)	35 (50.7%)
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Findings, as seen in Table 22, found that the highest mean score was the intellectual development promoted by the department ($M= 4.42$, $SD= .81$). In contrast, the lowest mean score was the excellent linkage between different courses provided by the programs ($M= 3.82$, $SD= 1.17$). Indeed, most participants were content with their M.A. program regarding the quality of instructions in their M.A. programs ($n= 52$, 75.3%); however, some ($n= 8$, 11.6%) were not completely satisfied. They also stated that their program offered a good linkage between different courses ($n= 48$, 69.5%), a balance between teacher-centered and student-centered learning ($n= 51$, 73.9%), necessary instructional technologies, and other resources ($n= 47$, 68.1%). Furthermore, almost half of the participants stated that the program encouraged them to be reflective teachers ($n= 37$, 53.6%), and promoted intellectual development ($n= 40$, 58.0%). In terms of the balance between theory and practice offered by the programs, most participants agreed; however, some were undecided. Findings also indicated that most participants (73.9%) agreed that their program prepares good researchers in the field of ELT. In comparison, with a percentage of 20.3%, some were undecided. Lastly, a high number of participants ($n= 54$, 78.2%) stated that they received valuable feedback from their professors in the departments; nevertheless, a low number of participants ($n= 10$, 14.4%) disagreed with this statement. More importantly, the highest mean score was found for the intellectual development promoted by the programs ($M= 4.42$, $SD= .81$). In contrast, the lowest mean score was found for the good linkage between different courses provided by the programs ($M= 3.82$, $SD= 1.17$).

4.1.7. Findings Related to Classroom Management and Cooperation Skills

Concerning classroom management and cooperation skills, there were three items to be rated. Findings obtained through descriptive analysis are tabulated in Table 23.

Table 23

Participants' Perspectives on Classroom Management and Cooperation Skills

Items	M	SD	1= Strongly Disagree n (%)	2= Disagree n (%)	3= Undecided n (%)	4= Agree n (%)	5= Strongly Agree n (%)
26. The program teaches /taught me classroom management skills.	3.15	1.39	10 (14.5%)	15 (21.7%)	15 (21.7%)	12 (17.4%)	17 (24.6%)
27. The program teaches /taught me how to prepare and use foreign language teaching materials.	3.60	1.26	4 (5.8%)	11 (15.9%)	16 (23.2%)	15 (21.7%)	23 (33.3%)
28. The program teaches /taught me how to adapt to foreign language teaching materials.	3.42	1.29	6 (8.7%)	12 (17.4%)	17 (24.6%)	15 (21.7%)	19 (27.5%)

Findings, as presented in Table 23, illustrated that almost half of the students and graduates thought that the program taught classroom management skills ($n= 29, 42\%$), preparation of foreign language teaching materials ($n= 38, 55\%$), and adapting foreign language teaching materials ($n= 34, 49.2\%$). On the other hand, some participants showed disagreement on the role of the M.A. programs in teaching classroom management skills ($n= 25, 36.2\%$), preparing and using ($n= 15, 21.7\%$), and adapting ($n= 18, 26.1\%$) foreign language teaching materials. Overall, the highest mean score was found in item 27 ($M= 3.60, SD= 1.26$) whereas the lowest mean score was in item 26 ($M= 3.15, SD= 1.39$).

4.1.8. Findings Related to the Program Resources

Concerning program resources provided by their M.A. programs, four items were asked to the participants. Table 24 presents the details regarding the descriptive analysis of each item related to program resources.

Table 24

Participants' Perspectives on the Program Resources

Items	M	SD	1= Strongly Disagree n (%)	2= Disagree n (%)	3= Undecided n (%)	4= Agree n (%)	5= Strongly Agree n (%)
29. The institution offers /offered sufficient computer and Internet support.	3.52	1.34	8 (11.6%)	9 (13.0%)	11 (15.9%)	21 (30.4%)	20 (29.0%)
30. University library holdings are/were relevant to the field.	3.97	.99	1 (1.4%)	2 (2.9%)	23 (33.3%)	15 (21.7%)	28 (40.6%)
31. Specialized facilities, such as laboratories or studios, and equipment needed for teaching are/were satisfactory.	3.31	1.18	3 (4.3%)	16 (23.2%)	21 (30.4%)	14 (20.2%)	15 (21.7%)
32. Overall adequacy of financial resources in support of the program is/was satisfactory.	3.33	1.32	8 (11.6%)	8 (11.6%)	26 (37.7%)	7 (10.1%)	20 (29.0%)

As illustrated in Table 24, item 30 had the highest mean score ($M = 3.97$, $SD = .99$), while item 31 received the lowest mean score ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 1.18$). Findings of item 29, which was concerned with whether there was enough computer and Internet assistance in the programs,

showed that most participants (n= 41, 59.4%) were satisfied; however, some of them reported negative statements (n= 17, 24.6%) or uncertainty (n= 11, 15.9%). As for the university library holdings opportunities offered in the programs, most participants (n= 43, 62.3%) were satisfied; nevertheless, almost one third of them (n= 23, 33.3%) were undecided. Furthermore, whereas most participants (n= 29, 41.9%) reported that the equipment needed for teaching was satisfactory, some of them (n= 21, 30.4%) were undecided or showed disagreement (n= 19, 27.5%) on that issue. Although most participants (n= 26, 37.7%) were still determining the overall adequacy of financial resources in support of the program, many participants (n= 27, 39.1%) expressed their satisfaction with it

4.1.9. Findings Related to the Program Content

A total of thirteen items related to program content were asked in this section. Findings of the descriptive analysis are shown in Table 25.

Table 25

Participants' Perspectives on the Program Content

Items	M	SD	1= Strongly Disagree n (%)	2= Disagree n (%)	3= Undecided n (%)	4= Agree n (%)	5= Strongly Agree n (%)
33. The courses offered within the program follow/followed a logical sequencing.	3.9 2	1.11	4 (5.8%)	4 (5.8%)	9 (13.0%)	28 (40.6%)	24 (34.8%)
34. The program is/was up to date.	4.0 7	1.00	2 (2.9%)	5 (7.2%)	5 (7.2%)	31 (44.9%)	26 (37.7%)

35. The program allocates /allocated sufficient time for each course.	4.21	.96	2 (2.9%)	3 (4.3%)	5 (7.2%)	27 (39.1%)	32 (46.4%)
36. The program gives/gave me adequate training in making research in ELT.	4.00	1.20	5 (7.2%)	4 (5.8%)	7 (10.1%)	23 (33.3%)	30 (43.5%)
37. The program gives /gave me adequate training for the needs of the local context (Turkey).	3.97	1.01	2 (2.9%)	5 (7.2%)	9 (13.0%)	30 (43.5%)	23 (33.3%)
38. The program gives/gave me adequate training in teaching skills.	3.62	1.21	4 (5.8%)	9 (13.0%)	17 (24.6%)	18 (26.1%)	21 (30.4%)
39. Teaching methods used in graduate courses (e.g., lectures, seminars, audiovisual aids) are/were well-tailored for our needs.	3.75	1.20	4 (5.8%)	8 (11.6%)	12 (17.4%)	22 (31.9%)	23 (33.3%)
40. There is/was a variety of M.A. level courses and program offerings.	3.49	1.27	6 (8.7%)	10 (14.5%)	16 (23.2%)	18 (26.1%)	19 (27.5%)
41. The program is/was relevant to my needs.	4.13	.92	0 (0.0%)	5 (7.2%)	10 (14.5%)	25 (36.2%)	29 (42.0%)
42. The program encourages /encouraged me to reflect on my past experiences as a language learner.	4.30	.86	0 (0.0%)	4 (5.8%)	6 (8.7%)	24 (34.8%)	35 (50.7%)
43. The program teaches /taught me how to follow the current trends in ELT.	4.27	.99	1 (1.4%)	4 (5.8%)	9 (13.0%)	16 (23.2%)	39 (56.5%)

44. The program avoids /avoided overlapping information between different courses.	3.7 5	1.27	4 (5.8%)	9 (13.0%)	15 (21.7%)	13(18.9 %)	28 (40.6%)
45. The program gives/gave adequate training in research methods.	3.8 1	1.17	2 (2.9 %)	9 (13.0%)	16(23.2 %)	15 (21.7%)	27 (39.1%)

Findings demonstrated that most participants (n= 52, 75.4%) agreed that the courses offered within their M.A. programs followed a logical sequencing. Moreover, a great majority of the participants (n= 57, 82.6%) agreed that their program was up to date; nevertheless, a low number of participants disagreed (n= 7, 10.1%), or were undecided (n= 5, 7.2%). Likewise, findings highlighted that most students and graduates thought the program gave sufficient time for each course (n= 32, 46.4%), adequate training in conducting research in ELT (n= 30, 43.5%), adequate training for the needs of local context (n= 30, 43.5%), and adequate training in teaching skills (n= 21, 30.4%). However, some (n= 17, 24.6%) of the participants were undecided regarding adequate training in teaching skills by the program, which is a striking finding of the current study.

As reflected in Table 25, findings highlighted that almost half of the students and graduates expressed that the program encouraged them to reflect on their past experiences as language learners (n= 35, 50.7%), taught how to follow current trends in ELT (n= 39, 56.5%), avoided overlapping information between different courses (n= 28, 40.6%), and gave adequate training in research methods (n= 27, 39.1%).

4.1.10. Findings Related to the Overall Evaluation

Finally, participants' overall satisfaction was investigated through the 7-item overall satisfaction section. Participants were invited to indicate the degree of their satisfaction with their M.A. programs, whether what they learned was valuable after graduating, and whether they had

developed enough to conduct research in ELT. The descriptive analysis of the items is presented in Table 26.

Table 26
Participants' Perspectives on the Overall Evaluation

Items	M	SD	1= Strongly Disagree n (%)	2= Disagree n (%)	3= Undecide d n (%)	4= Agree n (%)	5= Strongly Agree n (%)
46. What I have learned in this program will be/has been valuable for my future.	4.36	.89	1 (1.4%)	2 (2.9%)	7 (10.1%)	20 (29.0%)	39 (56.5%)
47. The program increases /increased my powers of self-evaluation.	4.39	.82	0 (0.0%)	2 (2.9%)	9 (13.0%)	18 (26.1%)	40 (58.0%)
48. By the end of this program, I feel/felt competent enough to do research on ELT.	4.17	.93	0 (0.0%)	5 (7.2%)	10 (14.5%)	22 (31.9%)	32 (46.4%)
49. I have developed the knowledge and necessary skills required for my chosen career.	4.10	.98	1 (1.4%)	3 (4.3%)	15 (21.7%)	19 (27.5%)	31 (44.9%)
50. By the end of this program, I feel/felt that I will /would be able to carry out research in my field on ELT-related studies.	4.15	.90	1 (1.4%)	2 (2.9%)	11 (15.9%)	26 (37.7%)	29 (42.0%)
51. The variety of the courses offered in the program meets /met the needs of the M.A. candidates.	3.95	1.00	2 2.9	3 (4.3%)	15 (21.7%)	25 (36.2%)	24 (34.8%)

52. Overall, I am/was satisfied with the quality of my learning experiences at the M.A. program.	4.01	1.05	1 (1.4%)	7 (10.1%)	10 (14.5%)	23 (33.3%)	28 (40.6%)
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Data analysis related to the overall evaluation revealed that most participants (n= 59, 85.5%) stated that what they learned in their program was valuable for their careers. As detailed in Table 26, findings illustrated that a great majority of the participants (n= 58, 84.1%) stated that they were satisfied with the program, which increased their powers of self-evaluation. Similarly, a great majority of participants reported that they felt competent enough to conduct research in the field of ELT (n= 54, 78.3%) and that they would be able to carry out research in their area by the end of the program (n= 55, 79.1%). Lastly, most participants reported that the courses offered in the program met their expectations (n= 49, 71%) and they developed the necessary skills required for their career (n= 50, 72.4%). Overall, they were content in terms of their learning experience in the M.A. programs (n= 51, 73.9%). What is more, the highest mean score was received for the rise of self-evaluation powers ($M= 4.39$, $SD= .82$), whereas the lowest mean score was found for the variety of the courses offered in the programs ($M= 3.95$, $SD= 1.0$).

4.1.11 Evaluation of M.A. Programs in English Language Education According to Different Variables

In light of research question 2 (RQ2), M.A. students' and graduates' overall program evaluation were investigated according to different variables, namely, gender, teaching experience and undergraduate academic achievement. Findings are reported in the following sub-sections.

4.1.11.1. Evaluation of M.A. Programs in English Language Education According to Gender

Research question 2a sought to investigate whether students' and graduates' M.A. program evaluation vary between males and females. Not only their overall evaluation, but also their

evaluation of sub-categories (i.e., program description, departmental support, atmosphere in the department, program instructions and evaluation methods, classroom management and cooperation skills, program resources, program content, and overall evaluation) were investigated. Findings of descriptive statistics are provided in Table 27.

Table 27

Descriptive Statistics of Program Evaluation Scale According to Gender

Program evaluation and sub-categories	Females (n= 49)		Males (n= 19)		Prefer not to say (n= 1)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Program Description	33.65	5.52	32.47	5.74	37.00	-
Departmental Support	11.30	2.33	10.73	3.26	12.00	-
Atmosphere in the Department	17.04	2.74	16.26	3.14	16.00	-
Program Instruction and Evaluation Methods	37.79	6.91	34.73	9.34	36.00	-
Classroom Management and Cooperation Skills	10.10	3.84	10.26	3.42	13.00	-
Program Resources	14.34	4.16	13.84	4.01	10.00	-
Program Content	52.36	11.14	48.15	10.13	61.00	-
Overall Evaluation	30.06	5.18	26.73	6.40	31.00	-
TOTAL	206.67	35.73	193.21	39.42	216.00	-

As can be seen in Table 27, in all sub-categories and overall program evaluation, females had slightly higher mean scores than males, except for the sub-category of classroom management and cooperation skills. To investigate whether these differences were statistically significant or not, a Mann-Whitney U test was run, and findings showed that their program evaluation did not differ significantly between male and female participants ($U = 381, p = .248$).

4.1.11.2. Evaluation of M.A. Programs in English Language Education According to Teaching Experience

Research question 2b aimed to reveal whether students and graduates' M.A program evaluation differ according to their years of teaching experience. Findings of descriptive statistics are tabulated in Table 28.

Table 28

Descriptive Statistics of Program Evaluation Scale According to Teaching Experience

Program evaluation and sub-categories	Novice Teacher (n= 37)		Mid-career Teacher (n= 21)		Experienced Teacher (n= 11)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Program Description	32.37	5.25	33.57	6.36	36.36	3.93
Departmental Support	11.18	2.55	10.66	3.13	12.00	1.18
Atmosphere in the Department	16.27	3.08	17.47	2.85	17.36	1.36
Program Instruction and Evaluation Methods	36.05	8.45	37.52	7.48	38.72	4.75
Classroom Management and Cooperation Skills	9.59	3.89	10.85	3.86	10.90	2.42
Program Resources	13.48	4.38	15.04	4.00	14.63	3.07
Program Content	50.13	11.86	52.09	11.18	53.90	6.70
Overall Evaluation	28.59	5.97	29.95	5.63	29.54	4.84
TOTAL	197.70	39.55	207.19	37.20	213.45	23.08

As reported in Table 28, although experienced teachers (M= 39.05) were more content with their M.A. program as compared to mid-career (M= 37.33) or novice teachers (M= 32.47), findings of Kruskal Wallis H test did not report a statistically significant difference among three groups of teachers ($\chi^2(2) = 1.319$, $p = .517$).

4.1.11.3. Evaluation of M.A. Programs in English Language Education According to Undergraduate Academic Achievement

Research question 2c investigated whether students and graduates' perspectives on evaluation of M.A. programs vary according to their academic achievement in their B.A. studies. Descriptive statistics are tabulated in Table 29.

Table 29

Descriptive Statistics of Program Evaluation Scale According to Academic Achievement

Program evaluation and sub-categories	Low (n= 14)		Mid (n= 31)		High (n= 24)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Program Description	32.64	6.23	34.12	5.77	32.83	4.91
Departmental Support	10.00	3.23	11.74	2.19	11.08	2.55
Atmosphere in the Department	15.85	2.95	17.16	2.77	16.91	2.85
Program Instruction and Evaluation Methods	33.42	8.92	37.90	6.94	37.70	7.50
Classroom Management and Cooperation Skills	8.64	3.71	11.000	3.38	10.04	3.91
Program Resources	12.64	4.71	15.41	4.07	13.37	3.37
Program Content	46.14	13.95	53.16	9.50	52.00	10.25
Overall Evaluation	26.21	6.50	29.77	5.05	30.08	5.56
TOTAL	185.57	44.60	210.29	33.21	204.04	34.29

As shown in Table 29, mid achieving participants had the highest mean score for M.A. program evaluation whereas those who were categorized as low achieving participants were the ones having the lowest mean score. Findings also illustrated that participants with low academic achievement evaluated M.A. programs in a less favorable way in all sub-categories of program evaluations when compared to mid and high achieving participants. Findings of the Kruskal Wallis H test, which was run to explore whether the overall evaluation of participants varied

across academic achievement levels, did not yield statistically significant difference between three sub-groups ($\chi^2(2) = 3.287, p = .193$) either.

4.2. Findings of Qualitative Data

As stated earlier in this chapter, qualitative data came from (a) open-ended questions and (b) semi-structured interviews, which were analyzed via content analysis. A summative content analysis includes comparisons and counts of specific keywords or content, followed by an interpretation of the underlying context (Hsieh et al., 2005). The following sections present detailed analyses regarding each instrument.

4.2.1 Open-ended Questions

After the questionnaire, the participants were requested to provide brief responses to three open-ended questions regarding their overall satisfaction with and suggestions for M.A. programs as well as what they were most and least satisfied with. Specifically, participants were asked to offer suggestions for improving the program they were enrolled in or graduated from based on their own experience. The researcher coded the data case-by-case after reading all the open-ended responses repeatedly. The codes were also cross-checked by three colleagues who had their degrees in English Language Education.

To begin with, the first item of the open-ended questions delved into what participants were satisfied most about the M.A. program (e.g., content, courses, resources) they were enrolled in/graduated from. Consequently, the answers provided by the participants were categorized under three major themes. As presented in Table 30, three themes and nine codes emerged from the data.

Table 30

Issues that Participants were Most Satisfied with M.A. Programs

Themes	Frequency (f)	Codes	Frequency (f)
Instructors	27	<i>Supervisor's support & supervision</i>	22
/Academic Staff		<i>Qualified & Knowledgeable</i>	5
Courses	17	<i>Up to date</i>	6
		<i>Content of the courses</i>	11
Content	15	<i>Satisfactory training in research skills</i>	3
		<i>Content of the courses</i>	12

Findings revealed that participants were most satisfied with the instructors and academic staff, courses, and content of their M.A. programs in English Language Education. As indicated in Table 30, most participants stated that their *instructors and academic staff* were qualified and knowledgeable. Specifically, most participants stated that their supervisors greatly supported them during their M.A. studies. The support and supervision of advisors were the issues the students and graduates were most satisfied with the M.A. programs they were enrolled in and graduated from. A couple of excerpts from participants (abbreviated as P) who were most satisfied with the instructors of the M.A. programs are presented as follow:

"Teachers are knowledgeable and respectful to the students." (P14)

"I'm satisfied with the availability of our teachers." (P15)

"Some professors are really qualified in both teaching and researching. They help us to be a good researcher and a good teacher at the same time. So, what they teach regardless of the course becomes valuable." (P66)

"I felt the support of my thesis advisor and was comforted by him during the thesis writing process. I also enjoyed each class of the program." (P64)

“My advisor is the best thing about my MA experience. He was kind and supportive all the time.”
(P68)

“The instructors were supportive and qualified.” (P27)

“The harmony and linkage between the professors and courses, they are well-governed of their field of the profession”. (P5)

Another issue that participants were most satisfied with regarding their M.A. programs was the *courses*. The participants reported that the M.A. courses were almost up-to-date and taught new methodologies in the ELT field. Concerning the content, most participants found the content of the program as relevant and satisfactory; nevertheless, they were not fully satisfied with some aspects of the program, which are discussed in detail in the following section. To exemplify, some of the answers are presented in the following excerpts:

“Courses. Because I really believed that I learned new things about English Language Teaching.” (P10)

“Certain courses and instructors such as SLA, Current trends in ELT, and Research basics were positively influential on grasping the requirements of field knowledge and conducting research in our field.” (P9)

“Courses because they are useful” (P1)

“I liked the courses focusing on contemporary education and new methodologies in ELT.” (P13)

“In my opinion, the courses generally were good and met our needs as master students.” (P42)

Finally, most participants also declared themselves satisfied with the content of the M.A. program they were enrolled in or graduated from. Findings revealed the M.A. program content was satisfactory in training research skills. Most students were taught how to conduct research in the field; nevertheless, they were not fully satisfied with the content. Excerpts some of the participants stated are as follow:

“I was mostly satisfied with the faculty in terms of their knowledge about the field. The content of the MA program was satisfactory, though there might have been a variety of elective courses to choose from.” (P50)

“Content / Because I had chance to explore different areas in ELT.” (P39)

“Content of the lessons. They are designed to teach us how to do research and also collect and analyze data. I have found it very satisfactory.” (P58)

“Content and stability of the program were the most qualified parts to me.” (P68)

The second item of the open-ended questionnaire was about what participants were satisfied least about the M.A. program (e.g., content, courses, resources) they were enrolled in/graduated from. After content analysis, three main themes and six codes emerged from the data. Findings showed that most participants were least satisfied with the feedback they received during their M.A. studies. Specifically speaking, the participants stated that the feedback given to the assignments, the selection of the thesis topic, and the feedback during the thesis writing process were insufficient. Table 31 shows details regarding findings of the components that participants are least satisfied with their M.A. programs.

Table 31

Issues that Participants were Least Satisfied with M.A. Programs

Themes	Frequency (f)	Codes	Frequency (f)
Feedback	21	<i>Inadequate feedback</i>	21
Courses	16	<i>Inadequate elective courses</i>	6
		<i>Needs to be updated</i>	10
Resources	9	<i>Technological shortcomings</i>	5
		<i>Library</i>	4

The following excerpts are examples of the participants’ perspectives on this issue:

“Resources and feedback because we cannot get enough feedback from the instructors.” (Pa)

“It might be benignant to implement a conditioned course whose only concern is to give student-specified feedback even before the procedure of dissertation.” (P70)

“The feedback we have been receiving and the way courses are conducted.” (P16)

“The fact that we did not receive any feedback on assignments, except for one course.” (P26)

As indicated in Table 28, although most participants were satisfied with the courses offered in the M.A. programs, some reported that the courses should be updated and follow a logical sequence. Emphasizing that the elective courses were insufficient, some participants expressed their opinion about adding more elective courses to the M.A. programs. The perspectives of the participants on courses are reflected in the following excerpts.

“More elective courses, a second foreign language, more focus on research methodology.” (P18)

“From time to time, I saw that various course contents did not follow each other. This caused our outputs to be negative. For example, we were asked to do a task for another course without fully learning the APA7 rules in the “Academic Writing” course.” (P17)

“Courses because there weren't too many elective courses.” (P24)

“There should be more options to select courses according to the needs and field of interest of MA students.” (P33)

Most participants also indicated that they were least satisfied with the resources offered in their M.A. programs. They also stated that better opportunities should be developed in terms of library use. Many participants thought that the technological possibilities offered in the M.A. programs should be improved, as well. Some excerpts from the answers of the participants are as follow:

“I was satisfied with the content of my MA program in general. Only faculty facilities like technological devices, etc. were quite limited.” (P36)

“The library of the university did not offer up-to-date materials.” (P8)

“There are some problems about the resources of the institution, and technological shortcomings that need to be addressed. Though minor, it causes some dissatisfaction.” (P56)

“Maybe resources because some of them were not available, thus, we had to pay for it.” (P40)

In addition to items regarding satisfaction and dissatisfaction, the participants were asked to provide suggestions for improving the M.A. programs they were enrolled in/graduated from

based on their own experience. Some of the suggestions appeared to focus on content, courses, and feedback from the instructors who lecturing the courses in the M.A. programs as follows:

“Courses should be organized thoroughly. I took Research and Seminar course before I took data analysis or evaluation courses. Research courses should be divided into two as theoretical and practical. Also, feedback is very important, in our department, there is a lack of professors and teachers compared to M.A. candidates and B.A. students. That's why they cannot keep up with everything. I empathize that there is a ton of workload on them. However, unfortunately, the M.A. program does not meet my expectations” (P5)

“More elective courses could be provided for different needs and interests such as Neurolinguistics, and Psycholinguistics. ELT is not all about methods and techniques.” (P64)

“Sustaining and increasing quality in course content as well as providing an active consultation system for MA students. Ensuring the quality of quantitative and qualitative research basics course.” (P10)

“I didn't like the courses focusing on old-fashioned models in ELT. There could be more innovative courses. It would be more effective if the theoretical background of the topics covered were touched upon more.” (P14)

“There should be more options to select courses according to the needs and field of interest of MA students.” (P32)

“Feedback sessions should be more while conducting research.” (P47)

“I think the courses should be altered because most of the courses are the same as the courses we took in the undergraduate program, such as Language Testing, Research Methods).” (P62)

4.2.2. Semi-structured Interviews

Findings presented in this section came from the data obtained through focus-group semi-structured interviews to deeply understand the participants' perspectives about the M.A. programs in English Language Education they were enrolled in or graduated from. To this end, the interview sessions (lasting 92 minutes in total) were conducted with ten interviewees chosen through purposeful sampling: Two of them were taking M.A. courses (n= 2), five of them were writing an M.A. thesis (n= 5), and three were graduates of an M.A. program (n= 3). To analyze

the data, content analysis was employed in which the researcher conceptualized the data, then classified the concepts into meaningful categories, and ultimately identified the themes to explain the data (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). As a result, the major components and their codes that emerged from the data within the scope of the participant's goals, motivations, and influential factor(s) for pursuing an M.A. degree are tabulated in Table 32.

Table 32

Goals, Motivations, and Influential Factor(s) to Pursue an M.A. Degree

Components	Frequency (f)	Codes	Frequency (f)
Personal intellectual enrichment	7	Self-improvement & Intrinsic motivation (Interviewee7) (Interviewee8) (Interviewee9) (Interviewee1) (Interviewee6) (Interviewee4) (Interviewee5)	7
A requirement set by government	4	Change of institution (Interviewee3) (Interviewee9) (Interviewee5) (Interviewee7)	4
Being an academic	3	Instructor at university level (Interviewee2) (Interviewee10) (Interviewee4)	3

As seen in Table 32, personal intellectual enrichment was considered the most influential factor in pursuing an M.A. degree among most of the interviewees. The majority of interviewees said they wanted to advance themselves, which is why they pursued an M.A. They also stated they had intrinsic motivation to get an M.A. degree and followed their dreams after a B.A. degree. Being an academic was another reason for some interviewees to continue their post-graduate studies. Some interviewees, for example, stated they wanted to be instructors at the university level and work with adult groups. Moreover, the requirement set by the Turkish government

was considered among the other essential and effective reasons for pursuing an M.A. degree. Some participants, currently working as instructors at universities, stated that they need to have an M.A. degree if they want to change their institutions. Some of the answers of the interviewees are given below as excerpts:

“First of my goal is to start my academic career. I must graduate because you know in Turkey, we have to graduate from M.A. in order to start as a lecturer. So that was my second goal. When I started my M.A program I was teaching as a part-time instructor so that was motivated to me also in order to be a full-time instructor. I need to graduate from ELT MA program.” (Interviewee 5)

“First thing I wanted to improve myself and wanted to see my potential about what I can do for my school, my students and myself. After this program I will have a chance to maybe work in university, so it is an opportunity for change my career. Main reasons and important factors to start this program.” (Interviewee 4)

“There were two important factors in my decision. First of all, personal intellectual enrichment was my aim however the amendment in the YÖK legislation, it became a requirement for my career, so it became even more important for my career.” (Interviewee 7)

“Actually, my goal is to be a professor in the university so that’s why I have to do a master’s degree and doctoral as well. I motivate myself as you will be a professor and then you will work with university students, I really like university students. That’s my motivation.” (Interviewee 1)

“I would like to do my M.A. because I want to like go on with a Ph.D. degree in my field of English Language Teaching. And at the same time, I wanted to work as an instructor the at university level. In Turkey you know it is actually quite new, but it is a must to have an MA degree to work with adult learners at university, so my goal was this.” (Interviewee 10)

Besides, the interviewees were further asked which subjects (e.g., content, instructors, courses) they were most satisfied with their M.A. programs in Turkey. Most of them stated that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with their M.A. programs but were in between. Some excerpts from interviewees are as follows:

“I can’t say I am totally satisfied or dissatisfied. I am satisfied with some parts and dissatisfied with others. For example, I learned many academic and practical knowledge I learned many things evaluation was not very classical. I am dissatisfied with time management. Always I was

trying to finish something it was bad for me to... I could not feel I did my best just did it on time. This was not I wanted to do in this program.” (Interviewee 4)

“I think I am somewhere in between, not completely satisfied or dissatisfied. As I took my classes during the pandemic period, I was satisfied with I could get period comfortably at home. But as I live in a different city, I am also dissatisfied with the lack of communication with the school and therefore with the teachers.” (Interviewee 3)

It was also found that the most satisfying point was the instructors of the program. According to findings, all interviewees stated that the instructors in the M.A. programs were very qualified and supportive, stating that they were especially content with their supervisors’ help. Findings are tabulated in Table 33.

Table 33

The Most Satisfied Issues in M.A. Programs

Components	Frequency (f)	Codes
Instructors/Academic staff	10	Qualified & Supportive (Interviewee1) (Interviewee2) (Interviewee3) (Interviewee4) (Interviewee5) (Interviewee6) (Interviewee7) (Interviewee8) (Interviewee9) (Interviewee10)

Furthermore, the interviewees stated their satisfaction about their instructors as follows:

“Our instructors. They motivate us to research. Now we know how to research how to conduct a study. How to research on a topic in a detailed way.” (Interviewee 2)

“What I was most satisfied with was I worked with my B.A. instructors. You know they were quite qualified people. They were great in ELT field. So, the quality of my instructors.” (Interviewee 10)

“Academic staff. Our instructors are very good and qualified.” (Interviewee 2)

“I have been most satisfied with the support of my supervisor.” (Interviewee 7)

A common view amongst interviewees was that all indicated that they were highly satisfied with their academic staff in their M.A. programs. They stated that their instructors were always very helpful and reachable whenever they needed them. Lastly, most participants especially emphasized that their instructors were very knowledgeable and qualified. To better understand the participants’ perspectives, another interview question was directed about what subjects (e.g., content, instructors, course) they were least satisfied with their M.A. programs. Findings of content analysis are detailed in Table 34.

Table 34
The Least Satisfied Issues in M.A. Programs

Components	Frequency (f)	Codes
Courses	6	Repetition & Insufficient elective courses (Interviewee1) (Interviewee8) (Interviewee9) (Interviewee2) (Interviewee10) (Interviewee4)
Feedback	4	Lack of feedback (Interviewee3) (Interviewee9) (Interviewee5) (Interviewee7)

A high number of interviewees stated that they were satisfied with the general content and courses of the M.A. program they graduated from and were enrolled in. However, as a dissatisfaction, especially for ELT B.A. graduates, some M.A. courses were seen as a repetition of the B.A. courses. Specifically, most participants who emphasized that the courses were repetitive in nature received their B.A. degrees from the ELT departments. The opinions regarding this issue are given in the following excerpts:

“Most of the course are very similar to the ones in B.A. We have got SLA and Linguistics. Applied Linguistics and the content were totally the same. SLA the same. We have got testing and

evaluation. It is totally the same. It is like some of the courses were repetitive. For example, I took some of the exams right now and I did not study at all. I answer the questions depending on my B.A. knowledge. I am not satisfied with some of the courses.” (Interviewee 2)

“I studied at ELT department during my bachelor’s degree, so we already took those courses. So, before the MA program, I had high expectations from the MA program you know I would be learning more, more about language teaching second language acquisition, you know new stuff I thought I would be learning. But it wasn’t like that; the topics were repeating we exposed the same kind of info. It was theoretical we don’t have any practical things.” (Interviewee 9)

Most participants indicated the insufficient amount or lack of feedback on assignments, support in choosing a thesis topic, and the feedback given during the thesis writing process as additional reasons they were unsatisfied with the M.A. programs. The interviewees stated the following:

“The least satisfied is the lack of feedback because only one lecturer provided us with feedback for assignments that we prepared. But around 10 courses I took, we did not get any feedback in most of them. That’s why we did not know which part to improve. We were not aware of the strengths and the weaknesses. So that was the missing part in the courses.” (Interviewee 9)

“I was least satisfied with the research methodology class. I think it could be better if I received feedback weekly on the research paper we started working on because we started to work on it very late in the semester. It was mostly presentation by students, from which I could not benefit a lot. So rather than that, if we had received feedback and assignments to prepare a paper throughout the semester it could have been very helpful.” (Interviewee 7)

When the participants were asked about the strengths of the M.A. programs, the responses were primarily related to the following topics: instructors and courses. On the other hand, participants' views on the program's weaknesses showed that the lack of elective courses, resources, and repetitive nature of courses were among the top responses. Finally, based on their experience, the interviewees were also invited to provide suggestions for improving the M.A. programs. Some of the suggestions provided by the interviewees for the improvement of the M.A. programs are listed as follow:

“For my M.A. program I can suggest that they should let people have more hands-on experiences, okay other things were great, but it is not only talking and discussing when we want

to teach something. Quite like B.A. classes, for example, I strongly suggest some internship or some class observations, etc. for these types of M.A. program as well. And especially, for instance, we are always talking about to continue our professional development in our field, it is so important we need to do it that or this way. But in the M.A. program the only the professional thing I earned was this all theory. I guess people need more practical information because we call ourselves experts in the field after we get our M.A. degree, and I believe that we need to develop in terms of practices in the field.” (Interviewee 10)

“The focus is English Language teaching. Less courses from B.A. from ELT department. Maybe English language literature courses maybe included into the program. Some of them should be added some of them should excluded and order of the courses should be changed.” (Interviewee 2)

“Maybe they could increase the number of their elective courses. ELL with ELT integration. Also, maybe beside from electives, maybe in the second term, they can create a lesson about how to select a thesis topic and write a thesis, so most students would not quit.” (Interviewee 5)

“All volunteer students work on a project together. One of the requirements was to write an article however it was difficult to come up with a paper and thesis dissertation. In order to promote that, there should be a project where multiple students work together also for approaching students with special needs.” (Interviewee 7)

“I think they should allow us if we want to take the course no matter what, otherwise I take an irrelevant course just to fulfill the needs of the course to finish it. The limitation of the participants for the course should be questioned again.” (Interviewee 6)

All in all, most interviewees indicated that their aim in pursuing an M.A. degree was to be an academician and to work at a university. They also stated that their intrinsic motivation and personal intellectual enrichment were the other important factors for starting an M.A. study. Additionally, most participants stated that they were generally satisfied with the M.A. program they were enrolled in or graduated from, especially since the instructors were the strengths of the programs, and they were very knowledgeable and qualified. Finally, the interviewees emphasized that they received insufficient amount of feedback and that it would be better to give more efficient and regular feedback.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION, AND SUGGESTIONS

This chapter addresses an overview of this study which includes the quantitative and qualitative data discussions and conclusions. The chapter concludes with suggestions based on the study and future research studies.

5.1. Conclusion and Discussion

This descriptive study, which employed a convergent parallel design and a mixed-method approach, aimed to evaluate the students and graduates' perspectives on the Master of Art (M.A.) programs in English Language Education in the Turkish post-graduate education context. To this end, the data came from 1) a questionnaire, 2) open-ended questions, and 3) semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire comprised three sections, namely the participants' demographic data, the aims and motivation factors for pursuing an M.A. degree, and the program evaluation scale. Program evaluation questionnaire contained nine sub-categories as program description, departmental support, the atmosphere in the departments, program instruction/evaluation methods, classroom management and cooperation skills, program resources, program content, and overall evaluation, respectively. Besides, to triangulate the data, there were three main open-ended questions as follow-up questions presented after the questionnaire, and seven main semi-structured interview items. The SPSS 26.0 software was employed for descriptive analysis, percentages, frequencies, and non-parametric tests for the quantitative data that came from the questionnaire. Second, content analysis was administered to analyze qualitative data obtained through open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews. A total of 69 participants (49 females, 19 males, and 1 preferred not to say) who were enrolled in or graduated from various universities (both state and foundation) all over Turkey voluntarily took part in this study. The general satisfaction of students/graduates and their goals/motivations for pursuing an M.A. degree were investigated with both qualitative and

quantitative data. Findings are overall presented concerning each research question of the current study.

RQ1: With what purpose and motivation did master students and graduates in Turkey start the Master of Art (M.A.) program in English Language Education?

To investigate the aims and motivations of M.A. students and graduates in Turkey for starting an M.A. degree in English Language Education, quantitative and qualitative data were gathered and analyzed simultaneously. First, the participants numbered the items in order of importance relating to the motivating determinants of enrollment in their M.A. program on a scale ranging from 1 (= the least important) to 4 (= very important) (Questionnaire, Section 2). Second, open-ended questions and semi-structured interview questions, which the researcher, upon expert opinions developed, answered by the participants for the qualitative data.

Findings illustrated that the participants mostly preferred to become a researcher in an academic setting in terms of professional career choice. Some also desired to continue their further academic studies with a Ph.D. degree. Kırmızı (2011) similarly concluded that the participants in his study had a high opinion of becoming a researcher in an academic context. It is possible to hypothesize that recent graduates want jobs immediately after receiving their diplomas; that is, they want to begin their professional lives right away and continue their Ph.D. studies. According to the findings, the participants wanted to be instructors at the university level and teach adult groups. In addition, to become a teacher in a state school was another highly ranked item by the participants, showing that the participants want to increase their knowledge of and proficiency in teaching English. On the other hand, the decision to enroll in an M.A. program did not appear to be significantly influenced by other alternatives, namely management or administration or to become an English teacher in a private school.

A significant finding that emerged from the analysis is that most participants ranked personal intellectual enrichment as the most important reason and influential determinant while starting their M.A. studies. This is the most influential factor for pursuing an M.A. study for the participants. Most participants stated that they pursued an M.A. degree to improve themselves intellectually and follow their dreams after having a B.A. degree. The third most important factor was primary career choice, whereas the second most important factor was advanced degree required for career advancement. Furthermore, it was discovered that one of the other

significant and influential motivations for getting a master's degree was the requirement established by the Turkish government. Some participants, who were employed as university instructors, claimed that they require an M.A. degree to change institutions.

Another important factor influencing student decision-making regarding their M.A. programs was the opportunity to work with particular faculty members. Because they can work with a particular instructor in a program, students may prefer a specific M.A. program; thus, it can be interpreted that instructors and academic staff play a crucial role in enrolling in an M.A. program. Kırmızı (2011) also found similar results in his study, reporting that “professors are extremely important in post-graduate education” (p. 160). Other influential determinants in starting a specific M.A. program were graduate program's reputation and job opportunities. Regarding the aims in M.A. programs, the participants viewed preparing scholars and researchers and preparing M.A. candidates for further advanced study as the two most crucial functions, which can be speculated that the M.A. programs are seen as the fundamental step of the post-graduate education.

In brief, M.A. students and graduates perceived M.A. programs as an essential step toward further academic studies and a way to advance personally and intellectually. The results of the first research question are consistent with those of Küçüköğlu (2015), who found that most Ph.D. students in ELT desired to work as academic researchers at universities rather than English teachers; in addition, the students enrolled in the program to advance their intellectual development personally and professionally. It is reasonable that new graduates want employment as soon as they possibly can after receiving their degrees; that is, they want to begin their professional careers and make a living as soon as possible. Naturally, their second goal is to continue their academic studies by pursuing a doctoral degree in order to work as an academician in an academic environment. Furthermore, the opportunity to work with faculty members and the reputation of the program were among the significant determinants influencing students' decision to enroll in a particular M.A. program. In a similar vein, Deniz Yücer's (2020) study found that the possibility to work with a particular faculty member and the program's reputation were the two most motivating factors for enrolling in the program. In conclusion, the findings of previous studies were found in parallel with the findings of the present study.

RQ2: Do master students' and graduates' program evaluation vary according to gender, teaching experience and undergraduate academic achievement?

Research question 2 (RQ2) investigated whether master's students and graduates' M.A. program evaluation vary according to their gender, years of teaching experience, and undergraduate academic achievement. Findings did not reveal any statistically significant difference according to these variables. With respect to gender, whereas female participants had higher evaluation mean scores than males (see Table 27), this difference was not statistically significant ($U= 381$; $p= .248$). Similarly, the results of Küçüköğlu's (2015) study revealed that there was no statistically significant difference between male and female participants' perceptions of the graduate program; nevertheless, females showed a higher mean score when compared with males. Although participants mean scores varied (see Table 28), with experienced teachers having higher mean scores, this difference was not statistically significant ($\chi^2(2) = 1.319$, $p = .517$), either. Along similar lines, in his study Kırmızı (2011) also concluded that graduates with more than 11 years of teaching experience had a better understanding of the goals of an M.A. program in English Language Education and placed a higher value on program than did students with less experience. On the contrary, in her Ph.D. evaluation study Küçüköğlu (2015) revealed that “the lower the teaching experience, the more enthusiasm to promote professional competencies” (p.230); nevertheless, this finding did not show any statistically significant difference. This can be associated with the participants' early-career motivation to develop their abilities in all program components. Participants' program evaluation was investigated according to their undergraduate academic achievement, too. Although mid achieving participants had the highest score for M.A. program evaluation (see Table 29), findings did not yield any statistically significant difference ($\chi^2(2) = 3.287$, $p = .193$) among groups. To sum up, although findings of the present study did not yield any statistically significant difference, the study concluded that female participants, experienced teachers, and mid-achievers had more favorable opinions and positive perspectives in terms of evaluating the M.A. programs.

RQ3: What are the opinions of master's students and graduates regarding the M.A. program they are enrolled in/ graduated from with respect to content, teaching, resources, and program achievements?

To investigate master's students' and graduates' opinions regarding the M.A. program they are enrolled in/graduated from, the program evaluation scale (Questionnaire, Section 3) was employed in the current study.

Program description

The first section was related to the program description, which was heading the respect in the program, the rapport between faculty members and M.A. candidates, the tension in the faculty which affects M.A. candidates, and whether the program met the needs of the M.A. candidates or not. Besides, it provided enough support for students in terms of taking courses outside the department, the M.A. entrance exam, interaction-related disciplines, qualified professors, and clerical support in the department. The study revealed that most M.A. candidates were treated with respect by the faculty, which can be interpreted as M.A. programs providing learners with a respectful and pleasant atmosphere. The study further indicated harmony between the faculty and the M.A. candidates and that the M.A. candidates were not much affected by any tension in the department. Most participants stated that the program met their expectations, yet some expressed their indecision on this issue. While there were some participants who found insufficient support from the program in taking any course outside the department, there were also participants who stated that the program provided support in this regard. It turned out that this situation was utterly dependent on the program they were enrolled in/graduated from. Lastly, the study indicated that M.A. programs employed qualified instructors in the field, and the number of clerical staff was satisfactory.

Overall, based on the findings, it can be stated that most participants were content with the program description of the M.A. programs in English Language Education departments. The participants thought that they were respected, the members of the faculty had favorable attitudes towards them, and the programs worked hard to hire qualified instructors/academic staff and meet learners' expectations. Specifically, the interviewees stated that they were particularly satisfied with the academic staff in their M.A. programs.

The departmental support

According to the results of this section, almost half of the participants considered that they were undecided about the department's active help in finding suitable jobs for graduates. On the other hand, several participants provided positive answers on this issue. In addition, the participants

stated that the program provided a nice department atmosphere for their future professional work. In contrast, the participants stated that the department was quite helpful to M.A. candidates. It is noteworthy that these results were similar to Küçükoğlu's (2015) study in which she reported that Ph.D. ELT programs provided adequate help for learners. It is well known that in addition to effective training, the department's support is crucial for M.A. students. The results showed that the programs assist students. However, given that M.A. students did not strongly agree the departmental support they received from their departments, it can be said that better support can be given to them based on the results.

The atmosphere in the department

One of the more significant findings to emerge from this study was that the participants had favorable opinions toward the atmosphere in the department, especially concerning the humane environment characterized by mutual respect by M.A. candidates and professors. Also, they perceived satisfying cooperation between the faculty administration and the program head and the support to meet the academic demands of the department. Finally, according to most of them, the department atmosphere fostered good communication between faculty and M.A. candidates concerning students' expectations. In conclusion, most of the M.A. candidates had favorable opinions regarding the atmosphere in their departments and showed high satisfaction.

The program instruction and evaluation methods

In promoting intellectual development and encouraging learners to be reflective teachers in the field, the participants perceived the program as entirely satisfactory. As previously stated, one of the main factors motivating graduates to pursue a master's degree is the opportunity for intellectual development that it offers. Given that students placed high importance on this component, it can be concluded that Turkish M.A programs satisfy students' needs in terms of intellectual development. Most of the participants indicated that the quality of instruction in the courses was satisfactory. The results also suggested a good balance between teacher-centered and student-centered learning within the programs, as well as between the various courses. As for the emphasis of the M.A. programs on maintaining a balance between theory and practice, most participants were satisfied with it. The conclusion that can be drawn is that M.A. programs place an adequate value on the issue and recognize the importance of maintaining a balance

between theory and practice. The findings highlight how well the programs prepare future English instructors. Yet a low percentage of participants reported being undecided in this matter.

Classroom management and cooperation skills

As for the classroom management and cooperation skills provided by M.A. programs, most participants stated their dissatisfaction; in contrast, some stated that they were satisfied with this issue. The lack of balanced answers depends on the course content of the universities. Thus, the departments needed more content to teach their student's classroom management techniques and cooperation skills. The participants stated that they were not satisfied with the scope of teaching and adapting foreign language teaching materials. The profession of English language teaching (ELT) includes developing and implementing foreign language instructional materials. To better prepare future academicians for this field, the necessity in this sense should be taken into consideration. It is recommended to change in this regard since preparing materials in language teaching is seen as crucial by many scholars in ELT (Garton & Graves, 2014; Ahmed, 2017; Galloway, 2017).

The program resources

This section examined whether the institutions provided enough computer and Internet support and whether the relevant library resources met students' needs. Most participants were moderately satisfied with the resources; yet, given that the results showed that resource satisfaction was not very high, it has been shown that resources can be improved. Another important conclusion in this respect was that a large percentage of the students thought the program curriculum encouraged intellectual development. As pointed out in the first research question, one of the most significant motivating factors for enrolling in this particular program is one's own intellectual development.

The program content

This section was the most important in the program evaluation scale since it deeply questioned the opinions of the students and graduates regarding the program content. This study concluded that the courses given in M.A. programs followed logical sequencing, were up to date, and sufficient time was allocated to all courses. Furthermore, most participants stated that they were satisfied with the following: the program was sufficient to conduct research in the field of and provided adequate training in the local context (Turkey). To teach the ability to conduct research

in the field of ELT is one of the fundamental aims of the M.A. programs; with this in mind, it is undeniably crucial that M.A. programs provide adequate training on this subject based on findings of the present study. The majority of the students expressed moderate levels of satisfaction with the curriculum, even though they believed that it provides enough training for doing ELT research. This aspect might need some thought in order to better satisfy the needs and expectations of the students because M.A. level programs aim for higher academic ability. Another important finding of the study is that most participants stated that the program followed the current trends in ELT, avoided overlapping information between different courses, and gave adequate training in research methods. The programs were well-regarded for educating students how to keep up with contemporary trends in ELT programs.

The overall evaluation

The fact that many participants gave favorable ratings to the items in this section suggests that students' program experience will be invaluable to them in their future careers. Therewithal, most participants perceived that the programs were beneficial in boosting their capacity for self-evaluation and that they were qualified enough to research ELT. These results highlight how effectively the programs work at training M.A. candidates to become successful and competent ELT researchers. As a result, the programs significantly assist the students in acquiring the knowledge/skills needed for their future careers and increase student satisfaction. In conclusion, the participants expressed their satisfaction with the quality of the learning opportunities provided by the M.A. program they are enrolled in or graduated from in the field of English Language Education in Turkey. These results highlight the programs' success in transforming M.A. candidates into productive researchers in the field of ELT and how well they aid students in acquiring the information and abilities essential for successful careers. It is obvious that the programs are effective at preparing students for research in fields relevant to ELT. It can be concluded that M.A. programs in English Language Education in Turkey provide the students what they want despite the parts that require improvement.

RQ3.1: What are the strengths and weaknesses of the M.A. program they enrolled in/ graduated from as perceived by students and graduates?

When asked about the strengths of the M.A. programs, they were enrolled in or graduated from, the participants primarily mentioned the courses and instructors of the programs. These findings

indicated that, in general, the M.A. programs in Turkey employed qualified and knowledgeable instructors, which was seen as the most satisfying factor for students and graduates. Along with similar lines, Öztürk (2015) revealed in his study that the M.A. programs' instructors, content, and commitment to professional development were highly regarded as their strength.

In contrast, insufficient feedback, the lack of elective courses, and the repetitive nature of courses were highlighted regarding the perceived weaknesses of the programs. The most obvious conclusion which emerged from this study was that the instructor's feedback was considered very valuable and guiding in the eyes of the participants. For this reason, students and graduates who needed more feedback expressed their dissatisfaction with this regard.

RQ4: What are the suggestions for the improvement and development of the graduate program they are enrolled in/graduated from as perceived by students and graduates?

Findings showed that the participants' degree of satisfaction with some issues was not very high. Participants, who were asked to advise on the development and improvement of M.A. programs they were enrolled in or graduated from, generally touched on the following issues: 1) increasing the number of elective courses, 2) avoiding repetitive courses, and 3) providing adequate feedback. Most participants stated that they could not choose the elective courses they wanted and that they had to choose some courses in order to complete the required credits. It was suggested by most participants that they wanted to choose the elective courses they were interested in and that the M.A. departments should develop themselves in this regard. According to Bilican (2014), the lack of variety in the elective courses was cited as the primary concern of Ph.D. students in ELT. Additionally, the majority of students did not believe that the program provided them with any teaching-related training. It is reasonable to draw the conclusion that this may be because the curriculum places a greater emphasis on academic achievement and research capabilities than on language teaching abilities.

Furthermore, most of the participants reported that the M.A. courses were a repetition of the B.A. courses. This situation causes the repetition of lessons already known in the past, instead of learning new ELT methods or up-to-date topics in the field. The study found that while ELT B.A. graduates expressed their dissatisfaction with this situation, those who graduated from different departments did not touch upon this situation.

Finally, according to the findings, many participants signified that the programs provided insufficient feedback. Specifically speaking, the participants stated that the feedback given to the assignments, the selection of the thesis topic, and the feedback during the thesis writing process were insufficient. As one of the participants suggested “It might be benignant to implement a conditioned course whose only concern is to give student-specified feedback even before the procedure of dissertation” (Interviewee 69-Open-ended questions), M.A programs should take a step in this regard and develop themselves with the aim of offering a better and more quality program. The results of this study are considered to be a guide for program developers, M.A. faculty members and M.A. candidates.

5.2. Suggestions

In this section, several suggestions based on the present study and for future research studies are presented in detail.

5.2.1. Suggestions Based on the Present Study

The present study investigated the perspectives and the overall satisfaction of students and graduates who are enrolled in or graduated from M.A. programs (in English Language Education departments) in Turkey. Within the framework of the results, this study revealed that M.A. programs in Turkey generally fulfill the students’ expectations and needs; nonetheless, minor changes need to be made in terms of providing adequate feedback by instructors and increasing the number of elective courses. Another suggestion based on the present study is that more up-to-date issues and approaches concerning English Language Education could be covered in M.A. programs to improve the satisfaction level of the students. Enhancing the efficacy of the M.A. programs is the primary goal of program evaluation. These program evaluation studies may be useful in identifying the programs' strengths and limitations as well as the requirements and expectations of the students who are enrolled in them. It is reasonable to suggest that M.A. programs could take students’ needs and expectations into consideration.

5.2.2. Suggestions for Future Studies

In this study, several suggestions were made for future research studies. First, the present study investigated only the perspectives of students and graduates. The participation of other stakeholders (e.g., instructors or administrators) could change needs and perspectives. As a result, a second research study on the same programs could be carried out with more participants and additional stakeholders. Although program evaluation is crucial to enhancing education programs, the studies conducted on M.A. programs are limited. Thus, it is advised that more systematic and thorough evaluation studies be conducted to evaluate M.A. programs in English Language Education. According to the results of this study, the students' opinion is that the number of elective courses is limited. If the elective courses of the M.A. programs are examined by the program developers and prepared according to the needs/expectations/interests of the students, student satisfaction is expected to increase. It is recommended that future studies should conduct detailed research on this subject (i.e., number and content of elective courses). In this study, the content of courses (i.e., compulsory courses) at any institution was not investigated specifically; however, the general satisfaction and perspectives of students and graduates were mainly focused. Moreover, the views of students and graduates on courses offered by the M.A. programs could also be the subject of further research in the field. Finally, the perspectives of students who took their master's courses online (i.e., distance education) due to the pandemic period could differ from the perspectives of students who received regular education. Further studies may conduct research which investigates whether there is a difference or not between two types of education (i.e., distance education vs regular education).

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Questionnaire

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please carefully read the statements below and respond in the spaces provided. Please mark the most appropriate choice when answering questions that have multiple options.

SECTION 1

1- Gender:

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Prefer not to say

2- Age: (.....)

3- You are...

- ☐ taking M.A. courses
- ☐ writing M.A. thesis
- ☐ a graduate

4. If you are a graduate and hold an M.A. degree, when (in which year) did you graduate?

5. Are you teaching currently?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

6. What type of school are you working at?

- ☐ state
- ☐ foundation

7. At which level are you teaching?

- ☐ Kindergarten
- ☐ Primary School (1st-4th grades)
- ☐ Secondary School (5th-8th grades)
- ☐ High School (9th-12th grades)

☐ University (at English Preparatory School)

☐ University (at Faculty)

8. Years of experience (.....)

9. From which department did you get your undergraduate degree?

☐ English Language Teaching

☐ Translation and Interpretation

☐ English Culture and Literature

☐ American Culture and Literature

☐ English Language and Literature

☐ Linguistics

☐ Other

10. What is the name of the university from which you received your undergraduate degree?
(.....)

11. Your undergraduate program Grade Point Average (GPA) (out of 4.00) (.....)

SECTION 2

1. Which of the following describes your professional career choice when you complete your M.A. study? (You can choose more than one option.)

☐ Researcher in an academic setting

☐ Researcher in a non-academic setting

☐ Management or administration

☐ Other non-academic position

☐ English teacher in a state school

☐ English teacher in a private school

☐ Other (.....)

2. Please choose the following factor(s) according to how influential each was/were in your decision to begin your M.A. study. (You can choose more than one option.)

☐ Primary career choice

☐ Change of career

☐ Advanced degree required for career advancement

- ☐ Increased income-earning potential
- ☐ Personal intellectual enrichment
- ☐ Other (.....)

3. Which of the following factor(s) was/were influential in your decision to enroll in your M.A. program? (e.g., Why did you start the M.A. program in Sakarya University/Gazi University/ Bahçeşehir University?) (You can choose more than one option.)

- ☐ Opportunity to work with particular faculty members
- ☐ Graduate program's reputation
- ☐ Received fellowship, assistantship, or scholarship
- ☐ Recommendation of a friend, acquaintance
- ☐ Recommendation of undergraduate advisor
- ☐ Job opportunities are good for graduates
- ☐ Encouragement of program faculty while deciding
- ☐ Campus
- ☐ Location of campus
- ☐ Proximity of family members
- ☐ Availability of housing in the area
- ☐ Other (.....)

4. Which of the following purpose(s) does/did your M.A. program assign importance to?

- ☐ Preparing scholars and researchers
- ☐ Preparing teachers
- ☐ Preparing other practitioners
- ☐ Preparing M.A. candidates for more advanced study
- ☐ Providing personal enrichment

5. Which of the following purpose(s) do you think an M.A. program should assign importance to?

- ☐ Preparing scholars and researchers
- ☐ Preparing teachers
- ☐ Preparing other practitioners
- ☐ Preparing M.A. candidates for more advanced study

☐ Other (.....)

SECTION 3					
Program Evaluation Scale and Its Subscales Directions: Dear Respondent, in this section you will find statements about the program evaluation scale and its subscales. Each of the following items asks you about your opinions on M.A. programs. Please give the response that best reflects your opinions.					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Program Description					
1. M.A. candidates in my program are/were treated with respect by the faculty					
2. The rapport between faculty and M.A candidates in the program is/was good.					
3. There are/were tensions in the faculty that affect M.A candidates.					
4. The program meets/met my needs.					
5. The program encourages/encouraged taking courses outside the department.					
6. The entrance exam was a good test of my knowledge.					
7. The entrance exam was a good test of my ability to be a scholar.					
8. Interaction between the department and related disciplines or programs on the campus is/was satisfactory.					
9. The M.A. ELT program employs/employed					

qualified professors.					
10. The number of support and clerical staff (including student assistants) in the department is/was satisfactory.					
Departmental Support					
11. The department actively helps graduates find appropriate employment.					
12. The program is providing/provided me with very good preparation for my future professional work.					
13. The faculty is/was helpful for the M.A. program students.					
Atmosphere in the Department					
14. The department has/had a humane environment characterized by mutual respect by M.A candidates and professors.					
15. The program head is/was in cooperation with the faculty administration.					
16. M.A. candidates tend/tended to help and support each other to meet the academic demands of the department.					
17. There is/was good communication between faculty and M.A candidates regarding student needs, concerns, and suggestions.					
Program Instruction/Evaluation Methods					
18. Quality of instruction in my courses is/was satisfactory.					
19. The program has/had good linkage between different courses.					
20. The program balances/balanced teacher-centered and student-centered learning on its course					
21. The program equips/ equipped with the necessary instructional technologies and other					

resources.					
22. The program encourages/encouraged me to be a reflective teacher.					

23. The department promotes/promoted intellectual development.					
24. The program puts/put emphasis on the balance between theory and practice.					
25. The program prepares/prepared me to be a good researcher in the field of ELT.					
26. I receive/received valuable feedback from my professors					
Classroom Management and Cooperation Skills					
27. The program teaches /taught me classroom management skills.					
28. The program teaches /taught me how to prepare and use foreign language teaching materials.					
29. The program teaches /taught me how to adapt foreign language teaching materials.					
Program Resources					
30. The institution offers/offered sufficient computer and Internet support					
31. University library holdings are/were relevant to the field.					
32. Specialized facilities, such as laboratories or studios, and equipment needed for teaching are/were satisfactory.					
33. Overall adequacy of financial resources in support of the program is/was satisfactory.					
Program Content					

34. The courses offered within the program follow/followed a logical sequencing.					
35. The program is/was up to date.					
36. The program allocates/allocated sufficient time for each course					
37. The program gives/gave me adequate training in making research in ELT.					
38. The program gives /gave me adequate training for the needs of the local context (Turkey).					
39. The program gives/gave me adequate training in teaching skills.					
40. Teaching methods used in graduate courses (e.g., lectures, seminars, audiovisual aids) are/were well-tailored for our needs.					
41. There is/was a variety of M.A. level courses and program offerings.					
42. The program is/was relevant to my needs.					
43. The program encourages/encouraged me to reflect on my past experiences as a language learner.					
44. The program teaches /taught me how to follow the current trends in ELT.					
45. The program avoids/avoided overlapping information between different courses.					
46. The program gives/gave adequate training in research methods.					
Overall Evaluation					
47. What I have learned in this program will be valuable for my future.					
48. The program increases/increased my powers of self-evaluation.					
49. By the end of this program, I feel/felt competent					

enough to do research on ELT.					
50. I have developed the knowledge and necessary skills required for my chosen career.					
51. By the end of this program, I feel/felt that I will/would be able to carry out research in my field on ELT-related studies.					
52. The variety of the courses opened in the program meets/met the needs of the M.A. candidates.					
53. Overall I am/was satisfied with the quality of my learning experiences at the M.A. program.					

Appendix B

Open-ended Questions

1. What are/were you satisfied MOST about the M.A. program (e.g., content, courses, resources) you are enrolled in/graduated from? (Please explain briefly.)
2. What are/were you satisfied LEAST about the M.A. program (e.g., content, courses, resources) you are enrolled in/graduated from? (Please explain briefly.)
3. Do you have any suggestions for the improvement of M.A. programs? If yes, what are they?
Do you have any other comments/suggestions?

Thank you for your
participation.

Pınar KARABACAK

Appendix C

Interview Questions

1. What was your goal and motivation to pursue an M.A. degree?
2. What was the most influential/important factor in your decision to begin your M.A. study? Was it due to
 - 2.a. primary career choice?
 - 2.b. change of career?
 - 2.c. advanced degree required for career advancement?
 - 2.d. increased income-earning potential?
 - 2.e. personal intellectual enrichment?
 - 2.f. other?

Please elaborate further.

3. In your opinion, what are/were the strengths of the M.A. program you are enrolled in/graduated from regarding
 - 3.a. the courses offered in the program?
 - 3.b. the program resources available for you?
 - 3.c. the program content?
 - 3.d. the academic staff?
4. In your opinion, what are/were the weaknesses of the M.A. program you are enrolled in/graduated from regarding
 - 4.a. the courses offered in the program?
 - 4.b. the program resources available for you?
 - 4.c. the program content?
 - 4.d. the academic staff?

5. Are/were you overall satisfied or dissatisfied with the M.A. program you are enrolled in/graduated from? Why/why not?

5.1. What are/were you MOST satisfied with? Please elaborate.

5.2. What are/were you LEAST satisfied with? Please elaborate.

6. What would be your suggestions for the improvement of M.A. programs in Turkey?

7. Would you like to add any other issues than those we discussed?

Appendix D

Sakarya University Ethics Committee Permission

Evrak Tarih ve Sayısı: 10.02.2022-105433



T.C.
SAKARYA ÜNİVERSİTESİ REKTÖRLÜĞÜ
Etik Kurulu



Sayı : E-61923333-050.99-105433
Konu : 04/17 Pınar KARABACAK

10.02.2022

Sayın Pınar KARABACAK

İlgi : Pınar KARABACAK 02.02.2022 tarihli ve 0 sayılı yazı

Üniversitemiz Eğitim Araştırmaları ve Yayın Etik Kurulu'nun 09.02.2022 tarihli ve 04 sayılı toplantısında alınan "17" nolu karar ile Pınar KARABACAK'ın başvurusu **uygun** görülmüş ve karar örneği ekte sunulmuştur.

Bilgilerinizi rica ederim.

Prof. Dr. Murat İSKENDER
Eğitim Araştırmaları ve Yayın Etik
Kurulu Başkanı

Ek: Karar Yazısı (1 Sayfa)