

Perceived Fairness of Teacher Selection Process in Turkey

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Research Article

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Abstract

This paper uniquely applies organisational justice theory to the teacher selection process and analyses the interview method in a centralised, heavily competitive context, with a non-autonomous selection process. The survey model was benefited in the study. A total of 146 participants determined by criterion sampling were accessed. Data were collected and analysed through the data collection tool used in line with the purpose of the research. Regression analysis indicated that the variables procedural justice, interactional justice, public personnel selection examination score, interview score, being hired, gender, and branch have a significant relationship with distributive justice perceptions. Furthermore, the teacher selection interview method was perceived as unjust and unfair; it is subjective to influential contacts and favouritism, ignores candidates' labour and efforts by simply disqualifying most, and has poor reliability and validity structure. The most significant implication and consequential recommendation of this study is that under conditions of intense competition, in societies in which political conditions become influential, and in collectivist cultures, using interviews for teacher recruitment might be less reliable and less objective compared to other selection methods such as centralised pedagogical examinations or field test results.

Keywords: Teacher selection, teacher recruitment, interview method, organisational justice, Turkish education

Türkiye'de Öğretmen Seçiminin Hakkaniyet Algısı Öz

Bu makale, örgütsel adalet teorisini öğretmen seçim süreci bağlamında inceleyerek mülakat yöntemini merkezileştirilmiş ve oldukça rekabetçi bir eğitim ortamında analiz etmektedir. Araştırmada tarama modeli kullanılmıştır. Ölçüt örnekleme ile belirlenen 146 katılımcıya ulaşılmıştır. Araştırma amacına uygun kullanılan veri toplama aracı ile veriler toplanmış ve analizler yapılmıştır. Regresyon analizi sonuçları prosedürel adalet, iletişimsel adalet, kamu personeli seçme sınavı puanı, mülakat puanı, işe alınma, cinsiyet ve branş değişkenlerinin dağıtım adalet algısı ile anlamlı bir ilişkiye sahip olduğunu göstermiştir. Ayrıca, öğretmen alımında kullanılan mülakat yönetimi hakkaniyetsiz ve adaletsiz bir seçim olarak algılanmıştır. Katılımcıların bu sınavın öznel, kayırmacı ve iltimaslı bir sınav olduğu, adayların emek ve çabalarını görmezden geldiği algısına sahip oldukları görülmüştür. Bu çalışmanın en önemli sonucu ve sonuca dayalı önerisi; yoğun rekabet koşulları altında, siyasi koşulların etkili olduğu toplumlarda ve kolektivist kültürlerde öğretmen alımı için görüşmeleri kullanmanın, merkezi pedagojik sınav veya saha testi sonuçları gibi diğer seçim yöntemlerinden daha az güvenilir ve daha az objektif olabileceğidir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Öğretmen seçimi, öğretmen alımı, görüşme yöntemi, örgütsel adalet, Türk eğitimi.

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INTRODUCTION

Compared to research conducted in other workplaces, applying organisational justice theory in educational settings is insufficiently explored, particularly in teacher selection methods (Klassen & Kim 2019; Engel & Curran 2016; Waldow 2013). However, teacher selection methods are vital, and closely concern educational institutions, policymakers, school districts, teacher candidates, and their families. The primary concern for this issue arises from the central place of teachers in education. Research indicates that teachers' academic backgrounds and job screening test results predict their performance (Jacob et al., 2018) and that student success is significantly dependent on teacher performance (Davies et al. 2016; Ritzema 2016; Taut et al. 2016).

However, how to select successful teachers through reliable, objective, and fair procedures and methods still needs investigation. The most widely used tools in employee selection include interviews, assessment centres, situational judgement tests, self-report measures, and socially desirable responding (Ryan & Ployhart 2014), each with advantages and disadvantages. Selection methods that interest many groups and people may be publicly debatable and objectionable. This is simply because there is no neutral selection method; therefore, the argument and discourse for a value-free selection procedure cannot end the quarrel.

More importantly, selection methods become more imperative and an important question of justice in countries with high unemployment rates. This study was conducted in such a context. With new universities established in the last two decades in Turkey, the number of young adult graduates between 25-34 years old doubled in the last ten years (OECD 2019). This rapid growth, has increased unemployment rates among graduates. From 2005 to 2019, the rate of registered unemployed university graduates increased from 12% to 26%. Despite Turkey being among the countries with the lowest teacher salaries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, teachers' leaving their employment is not an issue in this country. Of the total 907,567 state school teachers in the 2018-2019 academic year, only 1,837 (0.20%) left their jobs for several reasons, including death, and dismissal due to discipline problems (MEB Statistics, 2019).

In this study, we examined the perceived fairness of procedural, distributive, and interactional justice of teacher applicants who took a nationwide teacher selection interview. This study is unique in that it (1) applies organisational justice theory to the teacher selection process, (2) analyses the interview method in a centralised and non-autonomous selection process, (3) studies the selection process in terms of interviewees' perceived perceptions, and (4) investigates the selection procedure in a highly competitive condition.

Literature review

Teacher selection methods

While in some countries, teachers are considered high-status and teacher education programmes are very competitive (O'Doherty & Harford 2018; You, 2014), research indicates that in countries such as the US, teaching is not considered a desirable profession and many selected teachers leave their jobs in their early years (Chang 2009; Lindqvist, Nordänger, & Carlsson 2014). Due to the lack of long-term planning for the teaching profession, many countries are facing serious challenges in teacher recruitment, and an unbalanced distribution in terms of geographic regions, high-and low-income school districts, and subject areas, thereby indicating diversity in terms of teacher supply and demand (Schleicher 2012; Eurydice Report 2018; Garcia & Weiss 2019). While countries like Israel and Sweden still experience teacher shortages (Donitsa-Schmidt & Zuzovsky 2016; European Commission 2019), others like the US and the UK are facing a moderate shortage only in fields like science, mathematics, and special education (White et al. 2006; Berry and Shields 2017, Wan, Pardo, & Asson 2019; Ingersoll & Perda 2010; Peyton et al. 2020). Countries like Germany, Greece, Spain, Italy, Liechtenstein, and Montenegro have both shortages and oversupplies (Eurydice Report 2018); however, in countries like South Korea and Turkey, there is an excessive supply in most subjects (You, 2014; MEB, 2017).

The most widely used teacher selection and recruitment methods by school districts or states are standard test scores, situational judgement tests, pedagogical content and/or field knowledge examination scores, writing a sample, interviews, and auditions (Jacob et al. 2018; Ryan & Ployhart 2014). In European Union (EU) countries, fully qualified teachers are recruited via open recruitment, competitive examination, and candidate list methods (Eurydice Report 2018). However, numerous studies have found striking inconsistencies between the rationale of the proposed selection methods and their actual implementation or practice (Hextall, Mahony, & Menter 2001). More importantly, research reveals that school principals with autonomy in the teacher selection process may follow different strategies (Engel & Curran 2016) and that research-based practices are not followed in actual teacher selection (Kimbrel 2019). For example, in a study of teacher selection for 31 public schools in Chicago,

Engel and Curran (2016) found that the most frequently used strategic hiring practices were referrals from and outside schools, and that some school districts engaged in very few strategic hiring practices.

The interview method is the most widely used selection tool, specifically in small organisations and decentralised selection procedures. This is largely because it has important advantages over other employee selection methods, such as providing in-depth information, encouraging a good fit for the required position, allowing both applicants and schools to exchange information and expectations, and mutual evaluation (Liu and Johnson 2006). Generally, interviews are preferable teacher selection methods by schools and administrators (Schaefers & Terhart 2006; Mertz, 2010; Kimbrel, 2019). However, this method might be unfavourable for decision makers because of disadvantages, such as time consumption, cost, bias of interviewers, and interpretation.

Research findings indicate that although the interview method is a reliable selection technique (Goldhaber, Grout, and Huntington-Klein 2014), there is mixed evidence about its effective implementation and its acquisition of intended results in practice. In a study of 30 teachers in a large urban district in the US, Ebmeier and Ng (2006) found that teacher effectiveness ratings were positively correlated with teacher ratings and explained 28 % of the variance. Based on a meta-analysis of 24 studies of the predictive validity of the Teacher Perceiver Interview (TPI) instrument, which is widely used in teacher selection processes, Metzger and Wu investigated the relationship between the TPI and teaching quality and found a moderate correlation between these two variables. They said that 'the TPI does seem to measure something, but we are not convinced that what it measures relates meaningfully to what matters for teaching effectiveness' (2008, p. 933). Liu and Johnson (2006) studied four states' selection processes in the US and examined the extent to which required skills and expertise, and applicants' and schools' expectations and needs were properly met. They found that the interaction between schools and prospective teachers was based on an information-poor process and that many new teachers were only hired after the school year commenced. The study conducted by Schaefers and Terhart in Germany also demonstrated that a vast majority of the principals and members of the selection committee welcomed the interview method because 'the school has the chance to select among candidates *on the basis of personal impressions!*' (2006, p. 514).

The context of the study

The Turkish education system has a very centralised administrative structure, which is designed and governed by educational programs, the selection of textbooks, selection and recruitment of teachers and principals, their rotation, and salaries by the Ministry of National Education and the central government. School districts or provincial directorates have no autonomy in the teacher hiring process, except for hourly wage hiring of substitute teachers. Moreover, although it changes from time to time, the curriculum and course descriptions of student teacher programmes included at the Faculty of Education and pedagogical programme for graduates from other faculties, are determined by the Turkish Higher Education Board. Therefore, the teacher selection method in Turkey is based on both centrally administered process and product control.

The 'Teacher Proficiency Examination' was held for the first time by the Ministry between 1985-1991. During that period and afterward, the teacher selection method has often been a controversial issue in Turkey, as stated and addressed in government and political parties' programmes and agendas. A frequently stated argument with a populist discourse has been defended over 'unrecruited teachers' by asserting that if these teacher candidates are graduated with sufficient qualification, why we would force them to take that examination? When the major opposition party who declared in its election manifesto that the examination would be abolished during their administration, came into power in 1991, teacher recruitment was conducted randomly (Soydan 2015, p. 590).

With the extension of compulsory education from five grades to eight grades in 1997, more primary school teachers than graduates were needed; however, most teaching vacancies were filled in the following year by the appointment of graduates of different faculties such as agriculture, business, economics, and journalism (Akyüz, 2004). Immediately thereafter, since more teacher candidates joined the teacher pool than vacancies required, the teacher selection examination integrated into the Public Personnel Selection Examination (PPSE) was started again in 1999. This time, objection and criticism focused on the content of the examination, as a disqualifying examination rather than to measure teachers' qualities (Baskani 2001; Arı & Yılmaz 2015; Doğan & Çoban, 2009). Moreover, adding the Teaching Field Knowledge Test (TFKT) to the PPSE in 2013 did not end the debates and objections (Eskici, 2016).

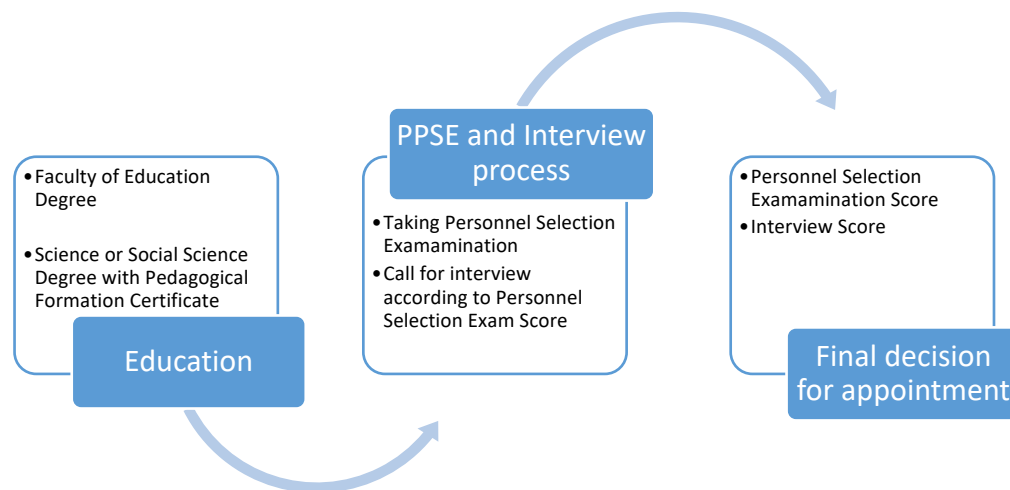


Figure 1. *Current teacher selection process*

For the first time in 2016, the interview method became part of teacher selection. Teacher candidates with test scores of 50 or above were called for interviews, and their total scores were calculated based on composite scores of their PPSE and interview points (MEB 2016). The interview examination was conducted by a five-person delegation appointed by the Provincial/District National Education Directorates. Interview scores of each candidate were evaluated by the delegation on the basis of some criteria such as candidates' ability to understand a topic and summarise it, the ability to express and reason, communication skills, self-confidence, persuasiveness, openness to scientific and technological developments, the ability to represent themselves in society, and the quality of teaching. The delegation scored these criteria on a scale from 1 to 5 and calculated the averages of these scores for each candidate (MEB 2016). Under these regulations, 311,759 candidates took the PPSE examination, a total of 36,876 candidates were called for interviews and 14,873 candidates were deemed successful and recruited across the country by the Ministry of Education (ÖSYM 2016; Tonbul & Ağaçdiken 2018).

Recently, it has been estimated that the total teacher pool of graduates from the Faculty of Education and Faculty of Science and Letters who received a teaching certificate from the Pedagogical Formation Program surpassed approximately one million unemployed teacher candidates (MEB, 2017). Despite this, the number of teachers appointed in the last four years between and 2016-2019 by the Ministry of Education across the country were only 29,699, 23,396, 25,516, and 41,379, respectively. These numbers are sufficient to demonstrate the heavily competitive conditions for teacher selection and the stress and strain that teacher candidates have experienced in Turkey. This situation is worse for some teaching fields such as history, Turkish language, social studies, physics, chemistry, philosophy, and sociology, in which the recruitment possibility is less than two percent.

Having a teaching position in a public school in Turkey provides a powerful sense of job security, which means there is little chance of being dismissed unless a teacher commits a serious professional or general crime. However, getting a teaching position is certainly extremely competitive and pressuring as graduated candidates have spent years studying and preparing for the teacher selection examinations. Further, the improbability of being employed causes them distress, anxiety, stress, hopelessness, and uncertainty. It is not difficult to predict that selecting qualified teachers under such extremely competitive conditions would generate intense criticism and debate closely related to many groups (Eğitim Bir-Sen, 2016; AYÖP, 2020). Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine the perceived fairness of teacher candidates who participated in teacher selection interviews, as part of the recruitment procedure, under the conditions described thus far.

Organisational justice literature

Procedural justice refers to the allocation schema or method through which certain goods, positions, benefits, and burdens are distributed among individuals or parties, affected by the consequences and their side effects (Tyler 1989; Brashear, Mrooks, & Boles 2004). Whether an outcome is just, or fair depends in part on the fairness of the distribution procedure. If the procedure is fair, people get what they deserve, no matter what the consequence is. Procedural justice takes its normative roots from rational decision theory and the concept of fairness. Research has indicated that procedural justice affects people's attitudes and perceptions about institutions, organisations, and authorities (Lind & Tyler 1988; Folger & Konovsky 1989).

Distributive justice is concerned with whether applied allocation rules, principles, norms, or decisions fairly allocate certain goods, positions, costs, and rewards among individuals or group members. In organisational justice

theory, both the conceptions of procedural and distributive justice are related to Adams' (1965) equity theory. Interactional justice, which appeared later in the literature, concerns how people are treated interpersonally and informationally in any situation where questions of justice are relevant. In earlier studies of organisational justice literature, interactional and procedural justice were aggregated in the same way. However, as Mikula et al. suggested, subsuming interactional justice into procedural justice loses predictability and 'it would be difficult and even impossible to distinguish between process of decision-making and interpersonal treatment by decision makers' (1990, p. 142). For the current study, therefore, interactional justice was considered as a separate measure that could provide a better understanding of the teacher selection process. The fairness of a teacher selection method depends not only on procedural rules and regulations of the selection method, but also on how candidates are treated during any stage of the selection process. For a selection procedure to be fair, it is not only necessary that the selection method is reliable, valid, and fair to all applicants, but that it must be 'perceived' to be fair by applicants (Klassen et al., 2014).

Studies investigating organisational justice theory in educational settings are limited. Smith, Todd, and Laing (2018) analysed the descriptions by 80 students, ranging in age from 16 to 18 years, about fairness in education and found that interactional justice and stake fairness were the primary concerns of students. Gouveia-Pereira et al. (2003) also studied 448 students aged 16-18 years and found a strong correlation between the perception of interactional justice and students' evaluations of their teachers, demonstrating an impact on the legitimization of the authority of teachers. In a university setting, Burger (2017) found that the implementation of different assessment and instruction methods significantly affects students' perceptions of the fairness of the assessment process. Nesbit and Burton (2006) also found a positive correlation between students' perceptions of procedural justice and grade satisfaction.

METHOD

Sample and procedures

Participants of the research consisted of 146 candidate teachers who participated in the interviews carried out by Turkey's Ministry of Education between 10-31 December 2018. Participants were selected using candidate social media platforms and asked whether they would like to participate in the study by completing the scale by e-mail. Data were obtained using a survey e-mailed to teacher candidates just after they received their final scores and recruitment results in February 2019. The *participants were assured that* their replies were confidential and will be used for research purposes only. Of the total 146 respondents, 74 were female and 72 were male. The mean age of the participants was 27 years and 6 months. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the participants.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for study variables (N = 146)

		(f)	(%)
Gender	Female	74	50.7
	Male	72	49.3
Mean Age		27.6	
Grade level of teaching	Primary school	20	13.7
	Secondary school	80	54.8
	High school	40	27.40
Number of interviews	First time	103	70.55
	2	25	17.05
	3	5	3.5
	4 and more	13	8.9
PPSE score average		77.78	
Interview score average		64.73	
Hiring position	Hired	22	15.1
	Not hired	124	84.9
Total		146	100

Data collection tool

The data collection tool consists of procedural justice, distributive justice, interactional justice, and demographic questions regarding the variables of the research such as age, gender, the number attending the examination, PSSE score, interview score, appointment/non-appointment status, political orientation, and religiosity. Five questions were also asked about the factors that possibly determined their scores in the interview. The final section included one open-ended question for our qualitative analysis, asking participants to reply in written statements about their general evaluation of the interview.

The *Procedural Justice Scale* consists of eight items measuring impartiality, equity, fairness, consistency, relatedness, and global procedural fairness domains, adopted from researchers (Brashear, Brooks, & Boles 2004; Fondacaro et al. 2002; Kravitz et al., 1997; Bauer et al. 2001). The participants were asked to rate each item on a five-point Likert scale ranging from totally agree (1) to totally disagree (5).

The *Distributive Justice Scale* consists of five items measuring responsibility, knowledge and education, experience and skills, time, energy and effort, study, stress, and strains, all of which were adopted from Price and Mueller (1986), Moorman (1991), and Kashhap et al. (2007). Participants responded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from not at all good (1) to very good (5).

The *Interactional Justice Scale* consists of six items taken from Bies and Moag (1986). Participants rated items on a five-point Likert scale ranging from totally disagree (1) to totally agree (5).

The psychometric properties of procedural justice, distributive justice, and interactional justice scale have been extensively measured and found reliable and valid (Bauer et al. 2001; Colquitt 2001; Tyler 1989). The items contained in the three scale are included in Table 2.

Table 2. Mean, standard deviation and item total correlation scores for procedural, distributive, and interactional justice scales

	Mean	SD	Item total correlation
Procedural Justice			
The principles and rules followed in this interview, treat everyone equally.	1.91	1.214	.822
This interview does not favour one group of candidates over another.	2.44	1.419	.432
This interview is a fair examination.	1.73	1.092	.861
This interview examination follows different rules and principles to measure candidates' successes with different knowledge and skills.	1.71	1.044	.736
I find the principles and rules adopted in this interview unfair. (R)	2.47	1.590	.095
This interview is possibly the most just examination under the existent conditions.	1.62	1.005	.684
This interview gives all candidates an equal chance.	1.67	1.051	.839
A person who scored well on this this interview will be successful in the teaching profession.	1.47	.857	.655
Distributive Justice			
To what extent are you fairly rewarded by this interview...			
taking into account the amount of education and knowledge that you have?	1.94	1.182	.921
in view of the amount of experience and skills that you have?	1.88	1.142	.969
for the amount of effort, energy and time that you invested put forth?	1.82	1.127	.969
for study that you have done well?	1.84	1.161	.969
for the stress and strain that you have experienced?	1.75	1.088	.927
Interactional Justice			
The members of the interview committee treated me with respect.	2.76	1.381	.814
The organisers of this interview showed concern about my rights as a teacher candidate.	2.29	1.384	.930
The members of the interview committee treated me fairly.	2.31	1.387	.940
The members of the interview committee were completely unbiased.	2.37	1.424	.910
I believe that the evaluation of this interview committee was correct.	1.89	1.204	.864
My performance in this interview was collected accurately.	1.88	1.242	.831

Data analysis

Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS 22.0 (IBM, 2022), and descriptive and inferential statistics. Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to measure whether independent variables could predict distributive justice perceptions. To determine whether our data met the required statistical assumptions of linear regression analysis, we examined the independence, normality, and homogeneity of variance. Qualitative data

were first coded separately by researchers. Subsequently, overlapping common codes were decided. Data were interpreted and evaluated using these codes.

Research Ethics

Ethical approval was granted by the Social and Behavioural Sciences Ethics Committee, Bartın University (Reference Number: 2022-SBB-0405).

FINDINGS

In what follows, we provide quantitative results including descriptive statistics of participants, reliability and validity analysis, correlations, means, standard deviations for three justice scale, and regression analysis results predicting the target variable. For qualitative analysis, we also provided frequencies of common coding patterns along with sample statements.

Reliability and validity

Cronbach's alphas for procedural justice, distributive justice, and interactional justice were found to be .849, .983 and .962 respectively. Three scales were subjected to explanatory factor analysis using the principal component method and varimax rotation. *The Procedural Justice Scale* yielded a two-factor structure, with seven items gathering in the same factor and one negative item in a separate factor. Since the scree plot demonstrated a strong one-factor tendency, we conducted a forced one-factor solution. In a one-factor solution, eight items explained 53% and 246 % of the total variance. Factor loadings were found to be between .565 and .932. *The Distributive Justice Scale* indicated a one-factor structure with factor loadings ranging between .949 and .981. Five items explained 93.875 % of the total variance. *The Interactional Justice Scale* also yielded a one-factor structure, which explained 84.388 % of the total variance. Factor loadings were between .866 and .960. Table 2 includes the correlations, means, and standard deviations.

Correlations were assessed to identify associations between the scale and are presented in Table 3. According to the correlation results, there is a fairly strong positive correlation among the three scales, the highest of which, as seen in Table 4, was between distributive justice and interactional justice. Procedural justice was positively related to distributive justice ($r = .75, p < .01$), interactional justice ($r = .74, p < .01$), and distributive justice related to interactional justice ($r = .82, p < .01$).

Table 3. Multiple regression analysis results to predict distributive justice

Variable	B	Std. Error	B	T	p	Bivariate R	Partial r	Tolerance	VIF
Constant	.753	.378	-	1.991	.048	-	-	-	-
Procedural justice	.393	.090	.293	4.385	.000	.752	.350	.418	2.391
Interactional justice	.079	.011	.528	7.107	.000	.828	.518	.338	2.957
PPSE Score (80 \geq)	.073	.119	.033	.611	.542	-.055	.052	.646	1.548
Interview score (80 \geq)	-.036	.194	-.013	-.185	.853	-.463	-.016	.376	2.656
Hired	-.418	.181	-.136	-2.306	.023	-.498	-.193	.537	1.861
Gender (Female)	-.009	.099	-.004	-.093	.926	.182	-.008	.927	1.078
Branch (Primary School Teacher)	.151	.159	.044	.950	.344	.307	.081	.872	1.147
Dependent variable: Distributive justice			*p<0.01						
R = 0.862				p = 0.000					
R ² = 0.742				VIF \leq 2.957					
F ₍₇₋₁₃₈₎ = 56.781				Tolerance \geq 0.376					

Table 4. Correlations among scales

	1	2	3
1. Procedural justice	-		
2. Distributive justice	.752**	-	
3. Interactional justice	.748**	.828**	-

**p<0.01

Regression analysis

For regression analysis, a scatter diagram of standardised predicted values (Z-Prediction) and standardised extreme (residual) values (Z-Residuals) were drawn. It was observed that dots are scattered around 0 (zero) values randomly, and it was found that the error shows a normal distribution ($-1 < \text{skewness} < +1$), and the assumption that the variations of residual values can be considered a constant, is accurate. Since the political view and religiosity variables did not show a normal distribution, these two variables were not included in the regression analysis. To determine the extreme value, the Mahalanobis distance was examined, and it was found that there was no extreme value. Furthermore, to examine the common effects of all predictive variables on the predicted variable, a standard approach and the enter method were used. Since distributive justice was considered as the outcome of the overall teacher selection method, we assessed which variables have significant effects on distributive justice perception by conducting multiple linear regression analysis. We tested the statistical significance of procedural justice, interactional justice, PPSE score, interview score, being hired, gender, and branch in predicting the perceived fairness of distributive justice perceptions of teacher candidates. Having 80 scores or above in the PPSE and interview examination, being appointed as a contracted teacher, being female, and being a primary school teacher in a branch were taken into consideration in the analysis. Table 3 shows the results of multiple linear regression analysis.

As demonstrated in Table 3, procedural justice, interactional justice, PPSE score, interview score, being hired, gender, and branch variables together indicated a significant relationship with distributive justice ($R = 0.862$; $R^2 = 0.742$). $F(7, 138) = 56.781$; $p < 0.01$). These seven variables together explain 74% of the distributive justice variables. Given the standardised regression coefficients, procedural justice ($\beta = 0.393$) indicated the highest predictive score, followed by interactional justice ($p < 0.01$) and recruitment ($p < 0.05$) variables for distributive justice perceptions. Since the VIF and tolerance were found to be 2.957 and 0.376, respectively, these findings indicate that there are no multiple correlation characteristics in error terms. According to the results of the regression analysis, the regression equation predicting distributive justice is: $\text{Distributive justice} = (0.393 \times \text{Procedural justice}) + (0.079 \times \text{Interactional justice}) + (0.073 \times \text{PPSE score}) + (-0.036 \times \text{interview score}) + (-0.418 \times \text{being recruited}) + (-0.009 \times \text{Gender [Female]}) + (0.151 \times \text{Branch [Class teacher]}) + (0.753)$.

Qualitative analysis

To evaluate whether findings from the quantitative analysis are supported by qualitative data, we analysed participants' statements according to the codes we identified. Of the 146 participants, 76 participants provided a specific written comment about their interviews and the teacher selection method in general. Of those who provided feedback, only two participants stated a positive view, one simply responded 'Good' and the other '*I do not believe that there is influential contact in the interview. The test exam (PPSE), rather than the interview score, determined the final score*'. Another participant declared a conditional statement that '*it is really a useful application only if the criteria are obeyed*'. The other 73 participants' perceptions were negative. The most frequently declared statements were unjust/unfair (35), influential contact and favouritism (10), ignoring labour (7), poor reliability and validity (6), unnecessary (4), must be changed/removed (4), ignoring qualification (4), arbitrary/subjective (2), unjust suffering (2), and eliminative (2). Some participants' statements included suggestions about how to modify the selection system and turn it into a more efficient, dependable, and objective one. Selected samples of negative statements are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Themes, codes and selected samples of negative statements

Theme	Code	Meaning unit
Justice	Unjust/ unfair	'The interview is an injustice, and it is an unjust treatment'. 'I think it is unfair. How did they understand that I could not be a teacher within 2 minutes while I have been studying for the teaching profession all these years?' 'It was never bad for me. But generally, I do not find it right and fair'. 'It is not a fair exam and needs to be removed'. 'It was nothing more than a three-minute [interview] in which our efforts were totally destroyed and ignored'.
	ignoring labour	'High PPSE scores obtained with great efforts were wasted easily. The interview was not fair'. 'I believe that the interview exam is not held fairly in the appointment of teachers and that the efficiency and merit are ignored'.
Subjectivity	influential contact and favouritism	'I think it is a system where candidates' political tendencies are used as a criterion in favouritism and in the results of the interview'. 'In my view, interview means influential contact'. 'Unfortunately, undeserving candidates were appointed'.

	arbitrary		‘The oral exam is an absurd system in which favouritism and influential contact are at the highest level. People are unfairly accused, and their rights are ignored; any scientific and ethical principles are not valid’.
	eliminative/ disqualifying		‘In the interviews, those whose scores are less in PPSE got ahead of high-scoring people who should actually be appointed, via unfair practices’.
Negative Emotions	Frustration/anger		‘We have endeavoured heavily so far. We were eliminated with high scores. The appointments have been realised today. I do not have trust ... anymore’. ‘Teaching skill cannot be measured in a few minutes. And the commissions are in different moods. Which one will hold the exam depends entirely on your luck. People were like lambs to the slaughter, they were very afraid ...’. ‘The interview is unfair and full of injustice. Although I got a high score in my field, a low score was given in the interview even though I know all four questions asked. The interview has become an arbitrary situation. The person is deprived of his/her rights, his/her hopes are left to the temper of the commission members within a period of two minutes. I would like it to be removed immediately’.
Reliability and validity	poor reliability and validity	and	‘While the written exam has been more objective than the oral exam due to the measurement and evaluation, I think that the validity and reliability of the oral exam are low. After studying for 16 years (primary-secondary-high-school-university) four questions are asked and whether you can be a teacher or not is determined in this way’. ‘It cannot be an accurate measurement and an evaluation technique. This situation hurts the consciences of people. It does not change the fact that this is wrong even if you are appointed. Moreover, the evaluation objectivity is very low, and it is subjective. My opinion is that after the written exam is held, I consider it more accurate to have a final evaluation of the process by recording the performance of the evaluation of the individuals during the candidate teaching period’. ‘Teaching exam can be held in one session only through field teaching’. ‘Instead of this system, individuals’ PPSE exam results, their university diploma scores, internships and studies that they carried out and security investigation after the appointment must be taken into account’. ‘Absolutely it is based on an unqualified selection. It is processing contrary to its purpose’.
	unnecessary		
	must be changed		

Most participants stated that the interview procedure is unjust, unfair, and unnecessary, and it must be changed and eliminated. In accordance with their perceived fairness of the interview procedure, the participants also said that rather than selecting qualified persons who deserve the position, the interview method allows influential contact and favouritism. Some participants expressed their frustration and anger by saying that the selection system ignores their labours and efforts and simply disqualifies some candidates. They suggested that certain changes in the structure of the selection system were required.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study is the first to provide quantitative and qualitative evidence about teacher candidates’ perceived fairness of procedural, interactional, and distributive justice regarding interview procedures as part of the teacher selection method. Our study supports previous findings that these three justice types are statistically correlated (Colquit 2001; Moorman 1991; Brasher, Brooks, and Boles, 2004) and that they can significantly predict outcome satisfaction (Gilliland 1993). We found statistically significant differences in procedural justice [$t_{(144)} = 4.472$; $p = .000$; $p > .05$], distributive justice [$t_{(144)} = 6.272$; $p = .000$; $p > .05$] and interactional justice [$t_{(144)} = 7.088$; $p = .000$; $p > .05$] perceptions of teacher candidates whose interview scores were above 80 points and below. We also determined a significant difference between perceptions of appointed and unappointed teacher candidates’ perceptions of procedural justice [$t_{(144)} = 4.342$; $p = .000$; $p > .05$], distributive justice [$t_{(144)} = 6.886$; $p = .000$; $p > .05$]; interactional justice [$t_{(144)} = 6.608$; $p = .000$; $p > .05$], with higher scores for the former.

Both quantitative and qualitative evidence demonstrate that teacher candidates have strong negative perceptions and attitudes toward the interview procedure they participated in. Although there is a statistically significant difference between the perceptions of those who were hired and those who were not about the perceived fairness of distributive justice, the vast majority of participants stated that the interview is unjust and unfair; it generates influential contact and favouritism, ignores their labour and effort by simply disqualifying most candidates, and has a poor reliability and validity structure. These findings coincide with the findings of Gürgil (2019), who determined that preservice teachers are mostly against the interview method.

As demonstrated in previous studies, such negative perceptions can be partially explained by some social psychological factors, including high anxiety and depression (Arı and Yılmaz 2015; Eskici 2016), and negative psychological factors that may affect individuals' judgments and perceived fairness (Vermunt & Steensma, 2005). However, more needs to be said to explain the findings of this study. First, it is important to note, once again, that the present study was carried out in a highly competitive condition with a low chance for teacher candidates who spent many years preparing for the examination to get a teaching position. Such a condition of competition, would have a causative effect on the fairness of the selection procedure. What is unjust or unfair is not the selection procedure itself, its rules, or implementation, but the conditions surrounding it. To align the selection conditions within the framework of justice, it is necessary to take certain measures for teacher planning in Turkey. The Eurydice Report states that while forward planning in teacher training and recruitment in EU countries is managed and put into practice by authorities at the uppermost levels, 'many countries still carry out forward planning on a year-by-year basis only' (2018, 23). Such planning is necessary for Turkey, both for qualified teacher education and fair selection. Considering this context, our suggestion is that policy makers in higher education first address these moderating conditions in teacher supply and demand to bring teacher selection procedures to a fair and effective equilibrium. This study supports previous research findings that the solution of the supply demand balance in teacher appointments depends on government policies (See & Gorard 2020).

Second, there are societal and cultural aspects that are closely related to the findings of the study. It is worth noting that Turkey has been identified as a collectivist culture (Triandis 1995; Tekeş et al. 2020; Hofstede 2001) and among the countries with the highest political polarisation (Lindqvist and Östling 2010; Aydın-Düzgit & Balta 2018). Moreover, among the 30 countries examined in the World Value Survey, Turkey has the lowest rate in terms of autonomous individuals (Bavetta & Navara 2012). These social-cultural features are also likely to affect the implementation of the interview process and perceptions arising from it. Empirical studies indicate that social and political polarisation causes less trust in organisations (Grechyna 2016) and is more likely to result in the selection of lower-average-quality candidates (Duell & Valasek 2019). Ordabayeva (2019) found that fairness beliefs mediate the relationship between social similarity and support for redistribution. The findings of this study should nonetheless not be interpreted as evidence that undermines several strengths of interview methods per se, over other selection procedures. Rather, the study points out a certain limitation in that unless properly implemented with necessary ethical commitment and objective and unbiased attitudes, the interview method may cause more problems and become more controversial than its alternatives.

This study has some limitations. First, while we provided both quantitative and qualitative data in support of our results, our findings are based on a relatively small sample size and one general written statement for qualitative analysis. One of the surprising observations in this study is teacher candidates' hesitation or their fear, we feel, in responding to the scales. Even though we provided full assurance that our aim is only to conduct a scientific study and that their replies would be confidential, most candidates refused to reply. Second, as Gilliland and Hale (2005) suggested, the selection process includes a series of stages, such as initial communication, recruiting, screening, interview, and decision making between applicants and hiring organisations, each of which has different justice rules. Although we have used three types of organisational justice in this study, our study is limited to the fairness of the interview process, the most controversial part of the selection system. The study of overall fairness of the teacher selection method in Turkey requires the inclusion of other stages of selection, perhaps beginning with teacher candidate selection, distribution of teacher vacancies each year, and among different fields and the PPSE examination; these are possible areas of future research. The conclusion we have drawn from this study is that using interviews for teacher recruitment under heavily competitive conditions, in politically polarised societies and collectivist cultures might be less reliable and less objective than the other selection methods such as centralised pedagogical examination or field test results.

Statements of Publication Ethics

All procedures used in this study involving participants are in accordance with the ethical standards of the authors' institution and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments.

Researchers' Contribution Rate

All authors contributed equally to this work.

Conflict of Interest

This study has no conflict of interest.

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